

HOMILY FOR THE MASS OF WELCOME**Most Reverend Jaime Soto,****Newly Appointed Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento****Monday, November 19, 2007**

My heart is glad as I come to Sacramento to assume this honored place alongside Bishop Weigand, caring for the devoted clergy and faithful people of the Diocese of Sacramento. I am grateful to the Holy Father, Benedict XVI for his confidence in me and most appreciative of the warm manner with which Bishop Weigand has welcomed his brother from the South. His hospitality is echoed in the many kind gestures of bienvenida extended to me by his coworkers as well as many of the priests, deacons, religious and laity of this vast, bountiful valley of faith.

It is a joy to share this day with my parents and family. The people of this Church have been very kind to welcome them here. In doing so, you have given to them and to me a treasured gift. I know they would want me to express our sincere gratitude for your kindness. My parents are also reassured to know that I will be kept busy.

Tanto gusto me da, poder compartir este día con mi familia — mis papás, hermanos, cuñados, y sobrinos. Gracias a Dios la mayor parte nos acompañan hoy. Me alegra felicitar anticipadamente a mis papás. Mañana celebrarán cincuenta y tres años de matrimonio. My parents will celebrate their 53rd wedding anniversary tomorrow. Espero que el Señor les conceda muchos años mas de salud y amor.

Las enseñanzas con que mis papás nos crearon ahora me permiten apreciar el sentido sincero de esta calorosa bienvenida que el pueblo católico nos ha brindado. Soy yo el afortunado por haber sido enviado a esta dichosa parte de la viña del Señor.

I am very honored by the number of brother priests, deacons, and friends from the Diocese of Orange who have come to share this joyful occasion for the Church of Sacramento. Among them are many who have been my teachers, mentors, confessors, colleagues, and compañeros. Your love and support have carried me to this day. I hope my ministry here in Sacramento can give a glimmer of the wisdom, kindness, and laughter with which you have graced me.

While I am honored by this beautiful Mass of Welcome, it is important for me as well as for all of us to remember that our time is best spent in preparing for another coming. Yesterday's Sunday readings and those we can anticipate for the coming weeks turn our attention to the approach of the Lord Jesus and the coming of His kingdom. To warmly welcome him is to open the door to salvation and grace. His arrival brings "glad tidings to the lowly, heals the brokenhearted, and proclaims liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners."

Ustedes me han honrado con esta hermosa convivencia pero vale la pena en este momento hacernos conscientes y atentos a la venida de aquel quien nos ha convocado de diversas razas y culturas para incorporarnos a su rebaño, nuestro único pastor, el Señor Jesús. El gozoso festejo de estos días es solo una preparación para la venida gloriosa del reino de Dios, cuyo rey es Cristo.

The approaching kingdom promised by Christ brightly looms over our happy gathering this afternoon and keeps us mindful of why we do this. Our days together have a purpose and our efforts are charged with a mission, to announce the glad tidings of the kingdom and prepare for the coming of the king of glory. The responsorial psalm gave voice to this task: "Lift up your heads, O gates; rise up, you ancient portals, that the king of glory may enter."

This is not a divination about what is to come. It comes from our understanding of what we do right now. The Eucharist is an eschatological event. The Book of the Apocalypse unfolds before us. We welcome the one for whom we hope and the

Lord Jesus sets before us a taste of the kingdom for which we long. Our grains of wheat have together become the one Body of Christ, the Bread of life broken and shared. The Lord Jesus fulfills his promise made in the gospel today: "Where I am, there also will my servant be." We are now where the Lord wants us to be: in his presence, around the altar of gladness and joy, before the throne of the Lamb of God.

Esta Misa y cada Misa es una celebración de bienvenida. Es un momento de acogida cuando el sol de justicia entra por la puerta de nuestra alma, la luz de la esperanza amanece en nuestro corazón, y el gozo del espíritu hace su morada en la persona humilde y hospitalaria. Así el Señor Jesús nos prepara para su venida gloriosa. La Eucaristía nos acostumbra a ver con los ojos de fe la presencia misteriosa de nuestro amigo divino no solo aquí en el pan partido y el cáliz derramado. La devoción al Cristo presente en el Santísimo nos prepara para reconocerlo igual presente en el hermano desamparado y marginado. Recibir al Jesús sacramentado con las manos abiertas y sumisas nos dispone a recibir a nuestro prójimo con la misma reverencia.

In the Eucharist then, we both welcome and worship the King of Glory, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For this reason both welcome and worship are defining elements of our faith. We live to welcome and worship the Lord who stands knocking at the door of our heart. The rituals we perform in this elegant sanctuary built to shelter the Body of Christ, are a rehearsal for that final and eternal encounter with the crucified King of Glory. These signs and gestures also awaken our hearts and accustom our eyes to see the King in those encounters less solemn but no less sacred: our brothers and sisters wearied and unwelcomed by the world — the immigrant, the incarcerated, those living with AIDS, and the homeless. The Eucharistic manner calms our fears so that those who come to us are not a threat to avoid but an opportunity to welcome and serve. The rituals of worship incline our souls to see and revere the sacredness of life. Our hands, opened humbly to reach the Lord in communion, dispose us to

receive and hold in like manner all those “little ones” whom the King sends in his name.

Of these there are many encounters that may be unplanned and unexpected but none should be unwanted, especially the unborn child who comes in innocence and hope.

This is a bold posture, to hope and hold the kingdom of God, to live reverently in the spirit of welcome and worship both here in this sacred space as well as the public square. Some might call this an imposition, an unwanted and unwelcomed intrusion of a particular creed. For this reason, we must take to heart the words of Paul to Timothy: “to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord.” We have “glad tidings” to bring that spring from our faith. What we offer is also reasonable and beneficial to the common good of all. We come not to impose but to welcome the truth and worship the goodness of God revealed in the human person. This is a task we are eager to share with men and women of all creeds.

Las palabras de San Pablo en la segunda lectura de hoy, nos recuerdan que el espíritu que todos hemos recibido no es un espíritu tímido ni cobarde. Es un espíritu de amor y valentía. La bienvenida del pueblo de Sacramento me consuela mucho. Me siento muy en casa con ustedes. A la vez, me siento obligado exhortar a todo católico para que estemos mas atentos a la venida en que depende nuestra propia salvación, la llegada del sumo sacerdote y rey del universo, Jesucristo, nuestro Señor. Nunca cansemos de hacer el bien y buscar el bienestar para todos. Así estaremos donde el Señor quiere encontrarnos, cumpliendo las tareas que nos llevará a nuestro último destino. Como Jesús nos dijo en el evangelio: “El que quiera servirme, que me siga, y donde yo esté, allí estará también mi servidor.” Mientras trabajamos para la venida del reino,

confiemos que el buen pastor nos encaminará. Supliquemos al mismo tiempo la poderosa intercesión de nuestra Santísima Madre con aquellas hermosas palabras del canto mariano: “Santa María de la esperanza, mantenga el ritmo de nuestra espera, mantenga el ritmo de nuestra espera.”

I am very grateful for these liturgies of welcome over the course of two days. I am eager to take my place among the vibrant communities of Sacramento. I hope every Liturgy we celebrate together can be an occasion to welcome and worship. May all our charitable and apostolic works be known for their hospitable and reverent manner. May we welcome the Word of God as did the Blessed Virgin Mary. May we carry the gospel message with the same hope and joy as she did. In this manner we can confidently sing as well as live those words of the beautiful American spiritual: “Soon and very soon we are going to see the King. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King.”