

**EPISCOPAL ORDINATION OF
THE MOST REVEREND JOHN S. BONNICI AND
THE MOST REVEREND JOSEPH A. ESPAILLAT
AS AUXILIARY BISHOPS OF NEW YORK
ST. PATRICK CATHEDRAL, NEW YORK
MARCH 1, 2022**

Your Eminence Cardinal Dolan, Your Eminence Cardinal Tobin, Your Excellencies Bishops Byrne, Colacicco, Whalen, Your Excellencies Bishops Emeritus O’Hara, Walsh, Lagonegro, and Iriondo. My Brother Archbishops and Bishops, Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious and Lay Faithful of the Archdiocese of New York, Dear Friends:

I am truly pleased to be with you again today, in this venerable St. Patrick’s Cathedral, as Father John Bonnici and Father Joseph Espailat are ordained to the fullness of the priesthood and begin their ministry as Auxiliary Bishops of the Archdiocese of New York and close collaborators of the Chief Shepherd of this local church, Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

Bishop-Elect Bonnici and Bishop-Elect Espailat, as you are ordained to the fullness of the priesthood and calls you to the vocation of a bishop, I offer you the words of the Holy Father, which he gave just two weeks ago:

“Our vocation is before all else a response to the One who loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19). This is the source of our hope, for even amid crises, the Lord never ceases to love us and to call us. Each of us can testify to this: one day the Lord found us, where we were and as we were, in uncertain circumstances or complex family situations; yet this did not discourage him from using each of us to write the history of salvation. So it was from the beginning – we can think of Peter, Paul and Matthew, just to name a few. Jesus did not choose them because they were perfect, but because he was concretely committed to each of them.” (ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE SYMPOSIUM PROMOTED BY THE CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS, 17 FEBRUARY 2022)

The Holy Father identified four types of closeness of the priest: closeness to God; closeness to the Bishop, in your case the Cardinal; closeness to his brother priests; and closeness to the People. Of this last type of closeness, Pope Francis said:

“Closeness to the People of God, a closeness that, enriched by those other forms of closeness, invites and indeed demands that we imitate the Lord’s own “style”. That style is one of closeness, compassion and tenderness, in which we act not as judges, but as Good Samaritans who acknowledge the wounds of our people, their silent sufferings, the self-denial and sacrifices made by so many fathers and mothers ... A style of closeness that allows us to pour balm upon wounds and to proclaim a year of favor from the Lord (cf. Is 61:2). It is imperative to remember that the people of God are hoping to find shepherds in the style of Jesus.” (IBID.)

Dear Auxiliary Bishops-elect, you have already made significant contributions as priests to this Archdiocese. We are confident that here in the “Big Apple”, you will remain close to the “little ones” who are so dear to God.

Invoking St. Patrick, St. Joseph, and the Holy Mother of God, we pray that the Holy Spirit will endow you and your ministry with learning and virtue for the betterment of this family of faith and the community at large.

And now, with great joy, I will read for you a translation of each of the Apostolic Letters of Appointment.