

**REMARKS OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL CHRISTOPHE PIERRE
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
EPISCOPAL ORDINATION OF THE MOST REVEREND DENNIS E. SPIES
AS AUXILIARY BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF JOLIET IN ILLINOIS
CATHEDRAL OF ST. RAYMOND NONNATUS – JOLIET, ILLINOIS
NOVEMBER 6, 2024**

Your Eminence Cardinal Cupich, Your Excellency Bishop Hicks, and all of my brother bishops; dear priests and deacons; consecrated women and men; members of the faithful; dear friends:

Before reading the Papal Bull, I wish to greet all of you on behalf of the Holy Father and assure you of his spiritual closeness. I also want to congratulate you, Bishop-elect Spies, on your appointment to become Auxiliary Bishop here.

As you know, Pope Francis has called priests and bishops to be close to God and close to God's people.¹ To be close to the people is to be down-to-earth: to remember that you yourself have been called from among the people. It means relating to people's way of life and understanding their concerns. At the same time, by being close to God – especially through your daily personal encounter with him – you will help people to draw close to God themselves. You will help them to know that their ordinary, daily concerns are not far from the heart of God. On the contrary, God wants to be close to them; and he proved this by sending his Son to become one of us. Christ has a heart that is “meek and humble”.² His heart is full of love for the people whom he calls, not “slaves”, but “friends”.³

Continue to be a friend of God – in your daily prayer, and by drawing close to the heart of Christ – and continue to bring that friendship to the people whom you serve. By doing this, you will be a good bishop.

Now, I will read an English translation of the letter from the Pope.

¹ Cf. Pope Francis, Address to Bishops Participating in the Course for Newly Ordained Bishops, 12 September 2019.

² *Matthew* 11:29.

³ Cf. *John* 15:15.