

DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH
**CELEBRATION OF ORDINATION & INSTALLATION
OF DIOCESAN BISHOP**
Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Bishop Manuel's Remarks

Your Eminence, Cardinal Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States,
Your Excellency, Most Reverend Thomas Wenski, Archbishop of Miami, who
presides over this solemn celebration,

Your Excellency, Most Reverend Héctor R. Rodríguez, Archbishop of Santiago de
los Caballeros and President of the Dominican Episcopal Conference,

Your Excellency, Most Reverend Gerald Barbarito, Bishop Emeritus of Palm
Beach,

Your Excellency, Most Reverend Robert J. Brennan, Bishop of Brooklyn,

Your Excellencies, the Most Reverend Bishops in attendance,

Very dear priests, deacons, religious, seminarians, and lay faithful of the Diocese of
Palm Beach,

Dear visiting priests, deacons, religious, seminarians, and lay faithful from other
dioceses,

Dear Brothers and sisters in Christ,

How beautiful is our Church! How beautiful it is to walk in the path of Christ Jesus
in the company of so many beloved brothers and sisters! How beautiful is the
Diocese of Palm Beach!

At the conclusion of this most solemn liturgical celebration, in which Our Lord has united my humble person to the Diocese of Palm Beach as her Diocesan Bishop, I wish to express a heartfelt word of greeting and gratitude. The very utterance of these words fills me with awe and trembling—not only because only a few weeks ago I could scarcely have imagined pronouncing them, but also because they recall the timeless affirmation of Saint Augustine: *Vobiscum sum Christianus, vobis sum episcopus* — “With you I am a Christian; for you I am a bishop.”

Indeed, together we share the same faith and the same commitment to Our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet it is now my vocation and solemn responsibility to be, for you in this Diocese of Palm Beach, a shepherd and guardian of the faith we hold in common. Thus, I am a bishop for you—meaning that tonight a new relationship has been born. We are in this together. From this day forward, until the Lord wills otherwise, I am your bishop and you are my people, united for the sake of the one faith we profess as members of the family of Jesus Christ. And together we remain sheep of the one flock shepherded by Him. Therefore, though ordained today as a bishop, I must always “smell like the sheep,” as our unforgettable Pope Francis so often reminded us.

As the Word of the Lord so clearly proclaimed, the faith that makes us the People of God and His flock is born from the miracle of divine love—a love freely given so that we may never lack the means or opportunities necessary to live the gift of salvation He bestows upon us. Sacred Scripture and the Second Vatican Council teach us that love is the true law of the Church (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 9; Jn 13:34), and that the salvation of souls is always her supreme law (cf. can. 1752).

Under the loving pastoral care and gracious heart of your Diocesan Bishop until now, Bishop Gerald Barbarito, and through the devoted service of so many priests, deacons, and lay collaborators dedicated entirely to the Kingdom of God, you—the family of the Diocese of Palm Beach—have experienced the renewing power of that love. We must now continue advancing along that same path, knowing that Christ Jesus, Love of all loves, inspires and sustains our journey. We cannot stand still, for we are the Body of Christ here in Palm Beach.

Through our fervent spirit of prayer, this Diocese must continue to adore and reverence the Lord with ever greater devotion and zeal. Through our apostolic boldness, the Word of God must be proclaimed more widely; the sacraments must be celebrated abundantly; charity must be lived intensely—by visiting the sick and the imprisoned, assisting the poor, accompanying immigrants, educating children and young people in the faith, and listening to and caring for our elderly. Ours is the vocation and the mission to make present in Palm Beach the Kingdom of God—beautiful, flourishing, expansive, united, and radiant.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, let the love of Jesus Christ be our strength and our motivation. We must not allow ourselves to be poisoned by hatred or bitterness, which belong to mentalities foreign to our faith and our identity as Church. We need not search elsewhere for what we already possess in abundance within our own home: we have Christ and His Gospel of love.

The Church, as Mother and Teacher, instructs us to read the signs of the times and to engage in dialogue with science, with other religions, and with social and political leaders. Yet we do so without ever forgetting the treasure of our own faith—our essential values and principles—and the manner in which we communicate them in the light of Sacred Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium. That is more than enough to make us joyful and to transform the world. For the world is hungry for Jesus Christ—and we can and must share Him with all. Today it is fitting to recall what Saint Paul proclaimed to the Christians of Ephesus: “You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Eph 2:19). As Pope Francis and Pope Leo have reminded us, in the Church there are no foreigners or immigrants—only brothers and sisters.

With humility, we recognize one of the marks that makes our Church a beacon of light and a model of communion for humanity. Ours is the Church that enabled Father Thomas F. Reilly, born and raised in Boston, to become the founding Bishop of San Juan de la Maguana in the Dominican Republic and later a courageous defender of human dignity against tyranny. Ours is the Church that led Father Stanley Rother of Oklahoma to serve the Mayan people of Guatemala, to translate the New Testament for them, and to become the first U.S.-born priest to die a martyr and be beatified. Ours is the Church in which a young Augustinian priest from Chicago, generous of heart and missionary in spirit, could become the Successor of Peter and the first American Pope in history.

And ours is the Church in which a boy born in Moca, Dominican Republic, formed in the school of Don Bosco and ordained for service in Brooklyn, now comes to serve as Bishop of Palm Beach. We are such a Church—dynamic, passionate, courageous, and unafraid of renewal.

Let us therefore begin this journey placing all our trust in the one and living God who chooses us and makes us His Church: “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain” (Jn 15:16).

The Lord sends us to believe in the beauty and possibility of building joyful Christian families rooted in marriage in the neighborhoods of Delray Beach, Jupiter, and Port St. Lucie. He urges us to feed the poor in Stuart and Vero Beach, to preach generosity and solidarity in Boca Raton and Wellington. He commands us to defend and cherish the gift of life from conception to natural death, to accompany and protect our children and young people, offering them a true experience of Church and formation in the values of our faith.

To my brother priests I say: Guys, here I am. There we go. Use me and count always on my full support. My beloved Bishop Emeritus of Brooklyn, Nicholas DiMarzio, once told us: “Having a new bishop is like wearing a new pair of shoes—at first it may feel uncomfortable, but eventually the feet adjust.” I simply pray that these shoes will be neither too tight nor too loose, but just right for walking together along the path of the Lord’s will for His holy people who journey in Palm Beach.

To our seminarians: You are our great joy and our hope, for in you we can touch the future with our hands. Take courage! Saint John Bosco promised his boys three things: “bread, work, and paradise.” I will add two more: good health and car insurance—and many followers on Instagram.

To our deacons: Be encouraged—I am here to support and serve you.

To parents: Count on me—you and your families are our highest priority and deepest concern.

To grandparents and the elderly: You are a treasure; I rely on you as teachers and guides.

To the men and women of our parishes and schools: Do not be afraid—Christ is our freedom.

To our youth: We are going to do great things together—prepare yourselves for World Youth Day.

To our children: You are our peace troops and our troops of joy and hope—Jesus blesses you.

To our diocesan team and to the Catholic Charities team: Let’s keep the good work at the service of the Church and the People of God. Thank you for your dedication and commitment.

To my brother Bishops: it is my honor to join you to share your unwavering dedication to God’s people. I am here to learn from you and to work with you at the service of our beloved Church.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Immaculate Mother of the Church and Star of the Sea, inspire and assist us, together with Saint Joseph her spouse and Saint Michael the Archangel, to live our Christian vocation with steadfast courage and joyful zeal, trusting always in God, who never disappoints and never abandons His people. I cannot claim to know with certainty what the ultimate outcome of this journey will be, nor how the Lord will choose to unfold its course. Yet, in His Holy Name, let us begin.

- Que viva la Diócesis de Palm Beach!
- Viv Dyosèz Palm Beach la!
- Mabuhay ang Diyosesis ng Palm Beach!
- Ka Diocese nke Palm Beach dịrị ndụ!
- Diocese Palm Beach muôn năm!
- Viva a Diocese de Palm Beach!
- Vive le diocèse de Palm Beach !

May God bless us all.