

## The Installation Of A New Pastor

On Saturday, the 14th of October 2017, the family of St. Bernard jubilantly welcomes the chief shepherd of our local Church that is in Metuchen, the Most Reverend James F. Checchio. Together we will give thanks to Almighty God on this 163rd anniversary of the parish's legal incorporation. On this occasion, Bishop Checchio will further express his paternal care addressing us with these words, "My dear friends, because I am aware of your pastoral needs and I am confident of Msgr. Vashon's qualifications for the office of pastor, I present him to you as your new pastor." This confidence comes after the discernment of our needs alongside the many names submitted by priests themselves or nominated by the personnel board.

The Rite of Installation of a pastor takes place in the presence of the bishop or his delegate. After the introduction of the new pastor to the faithful the bishop gives the homily followed by the presentation of the parish clergy, staff, councils, and trustees to the new pastor instructing him to "share this ministry in a spirit of mutual trust, common prayer, and genuine concern". The Rite concludes with Monsignor leading us in the profession of faith and then making an oath of fidelity. Since we know Msgr. Vashon comes to us from his well served tenure as pastor of Immaculate Conception School in Annandale, you may be curious why the Holy Mother Church requires a pastor to make a profession of faith and oath of fidelity before taking canonical possession of his new assignment.

Pastors, seminary professors, candidates for Holy Orders, and men who upon their creation as Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church are some of the examples of those who must make professions of faith and take an oath of fidelity. With the beginning of new responsibilities these acts remind the new pastor and his congregation that his role as pastor is not a role of individual governance of the parish, but that his responsibilities are to "adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate when they exercise the authentic magisterium, even if they proclaim those teachings in an act that is not definitive." He is servant and steward not lord and master himself. So, this responsibility and leadership is not of the individual whim of Randall Vashon but of the One, Holy Catholic, Apostolic Church that is present here in Bridgewater whom Msgr. Randy serves as priest and shepherd. On the role of the priest, the famed theologian Rev. Karl Rahner, S.J. reminds us that the faithful and loyal priest does not act nor speak as his own but is a man called and sent. He writes:

*"The priest is not an angel sent from heaven.*

*He is a man chosen from among men, a member of the Church, a Christian.*

*Remaining man and Christian, he begins to speak of you the Word of God.*

*The word is not his own. No, he comes to you because God has told him to proclaim God's Word.*

*Perhaps he has not entirely understood it himself. Perhaps he adulterates it.*

*But he believes, and despite his fear, he knows he must communicate God's Word to you.*

*For must not some of us say something about God, about eternal life;*

*about the majesty of grace in our sanctified being?*

*Must not some one of us speak of sin, the judgement and mercy of God?*

*So, my dear friends, pray for him, carry him, so that he might be able to sustain others*

*by bringing to them the mystery of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ."*

So, let us give thanks to Almighty God for sending us a wise and charitable priest whose concern is not for himself but to "sustain others by bringing them the mystery of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ."