

Ordination

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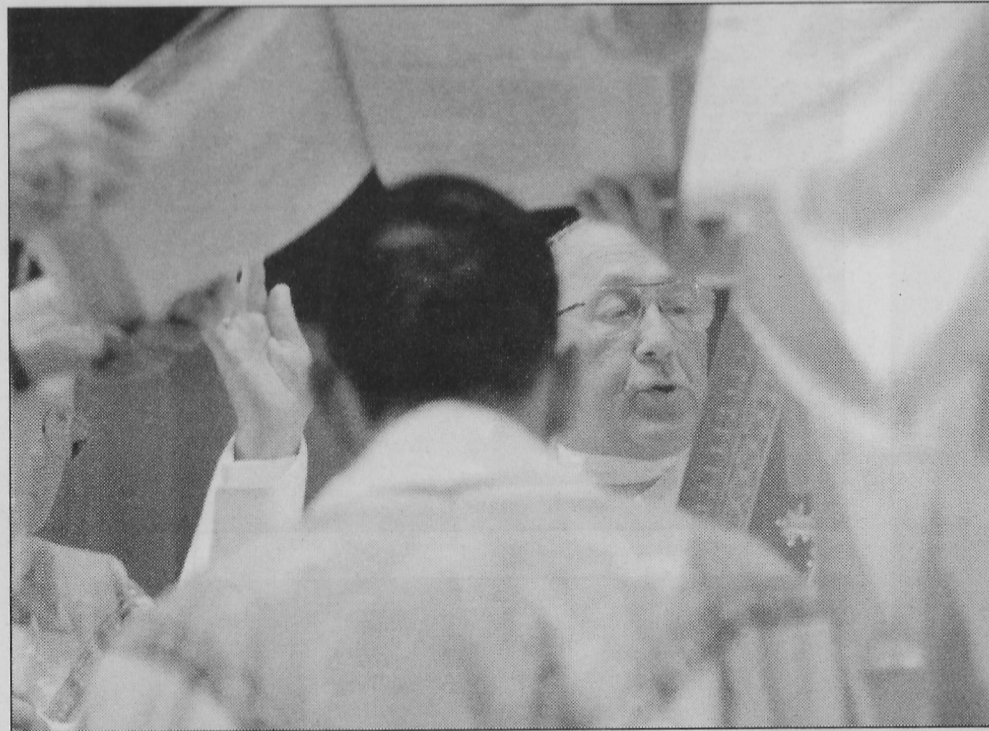
Dr. Robert Kraus and Dick Orians of Memphis to read the Scriptures. Eight nieces and nephews brought up the gifts. Bishop J. Terry Steib of Memphis, along with Bishop Andrew J. McDonald, was a co-consecrator in the ordination rite.

The bishop's chaplains, who flanked him during the service, were Msgr. Charles Elmer of the North American College in Rome, where the bishop got his theology degree, and Father John Valentine Atkinson, the bishop's associate pastor while in high school.

The congregation was well represented by Tennesseans, including 50 Dominican nuns from Nashville who were dressed in floor-length habits and black veils. The religious order includes one of the bishop's sister, an aunt, and several teachers who taught the bishop at St. Paul School in Memphis.

The Diocese of Little Rock contributed with numerous volunteers who organized the Mass and four separate choirs. The diocese commissioned an orchestral arrangement of "Here I Am Lord" as the presentation hymn. Diocesan priests and seminarians acted as masters of ceremonies and servers. Behind the scenes was Father John Antony, who assisted in the production of the live broadcast of the Mass that aired in Arkansas and Memphis.

The apostolic letter from Pope John Paul II was read by the pope's representative in the United States, Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo. Bishop Sartain lay prostrate before the archbishop for seven minutes while the congregation sang the litany



Bob Ocken

Archbishop Beltran of Oklahoma City presides over ordination rite.

of saints, which included the bishop's patron saints — St. Thomas More, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati — and the patron saint of his former parish, St. Louis IX of France.

Forty-one bishops joined Archbishop Beltran and Bishops Steib and McDonald in laying hands on the newly ordained. The bishops also extended a kiss of peace to Bishop Sartain following his seating in his episcopal chair.

The bishop was presented his ring, miter

and pastoral staff, symbols of his office of bishop. He received a standing ovation as he sat for the first time in his chair.

"When he sat in the cathedra, his chair, I just got cold chills," said Anne Raney of Little Rock.

The green upholstered chair, brought over from the Cathedral of St. Andrew, has been the cathedra for more than 120 years.

"It was just impressive. I shook his hand a while ago and I said, 'Do you get to keep that big green chair,'" Sidney Sanderson of Stuttgart said during the reception, "and

he said, 'That's my chair now.'"

Bishop Sartain said he was most moved during the ordination rite when he laid prostrate and when the other bishops laid their hands on him.

"It was overwhelming to experience that," he said. "To feel very deeply was a very profound thing for me."

The Mass was very emotional for many Arkansans.

"It was awesome to see all the bishops, that was really the highlight of the whole thing. It brought tears to my eyes," said Bill Holzknecht, a member of Christ the King Church in Little Rock.

"It was real awesome when the bishop embraced his mother," said Jeannette Lisko of Little Rock. "That brought tears and I was thinking his mother must be so proud."

Bishop McDonald, in his welcome address, reminded his successor that he is expected to serve in the diocese for decades. The tenure of the previous five bishops ranges from Bishop Andrew Byrne's 20 years to Bishop John Morris' 40 years. "You know, Bishop Peter, records are made to be broken. When you break Bishop Morris' record you will be 87 years old. Go for it."

Bishop McDonald fought back tears, saying, "Your measure of appreciation for what I have tried to do among you and with you will be the way in which you receive Bishop-elect Peter."

Looking forward to his tenure, Bishop Sartain echoed his episcopal motto. "My heart has spoken of God, and my heart has spoke of all of you," he said.

"Be not afraid, God says to us, my grace is enough. What shall we do? We shall put our trust in the grace of God. Everything is a grace."

Kathy Neal contributed to this article.