

DIOCESE OF LUBBOCK
40TH ANNIVERSARY
SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2023

REMARKS

Dear Friends,
Brothers and Sister in the Lord Jesus Christ the King:

We are preparing ourselves for this prayerful celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of our beloved Local Church, the Diocese of Lubbock.

I would like, first of all, to make a profession of faith in the Real Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of His Flock—the Local Church of the Diocese of Lubbock, fully established by the Supreme Pontiff, Saint John Paul II and duly equipped with its present Local Bishop, Most Rev. Robert Coerver, D.D., with his full Presbyterate and Diaconate. Christ is indeed present among us. And just as our ancestors in this Catholic Faith have taught us to profess, we say:

Long live Christ the King!
¡Viva Cristo Rey! ¡Viva Cristo Rey!

Throughout these privileged years of ministry among you, you asked me and encouraged me to sow my “*dreams*” throughout this Diocese of Lubbock and today on this the 40th Anniversary, I will continue to sow more “*dreams*,” much like the seeds in the parable of the Sower, which we find in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 13:1-9.

On that day Jesus left the house and was sitting by the water’s edge. And as great crowds gathered about him, he got into a boat and sat down. And all the crowd stood on the shore. And he spoke to them about many things in parables, saying, “*Behold, the sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the birds came and ate them*

up. And others seeds fell upon rocky ground, where they had not much earth; and they sprung up at once, because they had no depth of earth; but when the sun rose they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And other seeds fell among them; and the thorns grew up and choked them. And other seeds fell upon good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. He who has ears to hear; let him hear!"

The Word of the Lord!

Let us refresh our memories and recall the deeds of the past 40 years, knowing well that this history of ours is guided by the **Hand of God**, or as others would express it, it is "*Divine Providence*," who lovingly guides our history of 40 years ago. Our recalling is not "*nostalgia*," but is a re-living of our faith that has grown "*miraculously*."

First and foremost is the Chair of Saint Peter, the Successor of Saint Peter, *Saint* John Paul II, the Saintly Pope established this local Church, and has given us three Bishops, and growing in holiness. Since its establishment on June 17, 1983, we counted 30,000 Catholics in all of our territory. We are most grateful for the first gift of a Successor of the Apostles the Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan, D.D., our very first founding Bishop.

At this fresh start of the Holy Spirit, the Diocese of Lubbock began by counting close to 30,000 Catholics. The seed of the Catholic Faith took deep roots so that 10 years later, the Diocese could count *twice* as many Catholic about 70,000. The growth of the Catholic Faith continues to surprise our eyes of faith. God indeed has bigger dreams than ours. In fact, we continued to see its growth, doubling its number again. It is his Holy Ground!

Again, we dreamed that God would provide us with workers in this local area, and indeed he has multiplied priestly, diaconal, and ministerial workers and leaders. We have witnessed a double-fold. The parishes in the Diocese were strengthened, and in fact, we were looking for improving building facilities. We looked to building new Churches and

Parishes, such as Holy Spirit, Saint John the Baptist, and improving new buildings such as Our Lady of Grace, Saint Elizabeth University Church, and so forth....

As Scripture says, the Sower does not know how it grows, but it grows miraculously. As God has been blessing *“the field,”* we enjoyed a *“peace”* that can only come from *“above.”* *“And other seeds fell upon good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”* (Matthew 13:8-9). For this we give thanks!

To be allowed to dream is indeed a blessing. We have indeed dreamed on so many areas of our Catholic Faith. We have connected to the historical roots of our Catholic Faith through the presence of the Coronado Expeditions of 1541, when the first Eucharist was celebrated in Blanco Canyon in 1541, 10 years after the Guadalupe Apparition in El Tepeyac. We dream of the rootedness of our Catholic Faith through the First Franciscan Missionary and Martyr, Frey Juan de Padilla, OFM.

We have also dreamed of providing Catholic Education to our families. Through the Diocesan Schools of Christ the King, we dream of an out-reach to the entire Diocese, thus providing *“deep roots”* to our Catholic Faith. We can rebuild this Catholic Tradition of Excellence and Service to Society. We are standing at the very heart of the Diocese and we can *“dream”* of building a beautiful tradition of learning and Catholic Education.

Our dreams would be incomplete were we not to include our dreams of ever maintaining our Christian Unity of Faith, and unity with the Apostolic See. This is our privilege and uniqueness of our Catholic Faith, with roots to the Apostles through the Episcopal Charism. This is our unique contribution in the Ecumenical arenas, for the sake of Christian Unity.

The final dream that holds all other dreams together is the Dream that Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, may hold each one of us, hold us by the hand, and together will lead us! May she help us see our dreams be realized, just as her Dreams are realized in El Tepeyac.

On this 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Diocese of Lubbock, June 17, 1983, by His Holiness, Saint John Paul II, may we give Glory and Praise to God as we prepare for this Eucharist....

LONG LIVE CHRIST THE KING!
¡VIVA CRISTO REY! ¡VIVA CRISTO REY!

Most Rev. Plácido Rodríguez, CMF
Bishop Emeritus of Lubbock

June 17, 1983 - 2023