

# A History of the Diocese of Arlington

## Part IV: A Time of Hope and Promise

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The untimely death of Bishop John R. Keating on March 22, 1998 caused a sense of shock throughout the Diocese of Arlington. Although Bishop Thomas J. Welsh's transfer to Allentown nearly 15 years earlier was also greeted with surprise and sadness, Bishop Keating's sudden death



HERALD File Photos

**NEW FACES — Third Arlington Bishop Paul S. Loverde greets a woman at St. James Church in Falls Church during a deanery meeting.**

left the diocese in a state of mourning and grief that intensified the anxiety and uncertainty that accompany an unforeseen vacancy in the office of diocesan bishop.

On March 28, 1998, cardinals, bishops, priests, deacons and hundreds of religious and lay members of the faithful of the diocese gathered at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington. Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore presided and Bishop Edward Egan of Bridgeport, Conn., preached at the Mass of Christian Burial of Bishop Keating.

Prior to the celebration of Bishop Keating's funeral Mass, the diocesan College of Consultors elected Msgr. James W. McMurtrie, pastor of St. Theresa Parish in Ashburn, to serve as diocesan administrator until a new bishop was installed. Msgr. McMurtrie, who served as diocesan administrator for nearly a full year, observed the dictum that "while the see is vacant there are to be no innovations."

Among the milestones of Msgr.

McMurtrie's tenure as diocesan administrator was the construction and dedication of a crypt in the lower level of the cathedral, which serves as Bishop Keating's final resting place and is available to his successors.

In June 1998, following the ordination of three new priests by

port on the rapid growth of the Catholic population in the diocese, identifying several potential sites for new parishes and schools.

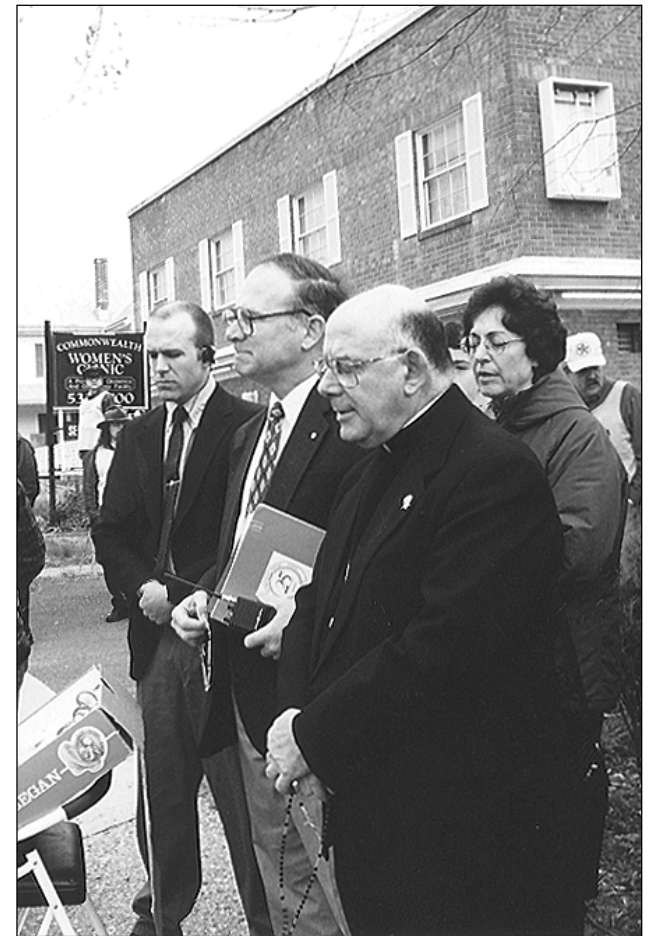
The diocese was grateful for the months of stewardship offered by Msgr. McMurtrie during his tenure as diocesan administrator, which came to an end with the appointment of a new bishop by the pope. On Jan. 25, 1999, Pope John Paul II named Bishop Paul Stephen Loverde, Bishop of Ogdensburg, N.Y., to succeed Bishop Keating as the third Bishop of Arlington.

Bishop Loverde, born on Sept. 3, 1940, was ordained a priest for the diocese of Norwich, Conn., on Dec. 16, 1965, and auxiliary bishop of Hartford, Conn., on April 12, 1988. On Jan. 17, 1994, Bishop Loverde was installed as the 11th bishop of Ogdensburg,

lay members from around the diocese, as well as visitors from other dioceses, members of other Christian churches and ecclesial communities, and representatives of non-Christian religions.

In his installation Mass homily, Bishop Loverde identified the principal themes of his ministry as bishop of Arlington. He called on the people of his diocese to join him in the effort to promote unity, service, evangelization and reconciliation as we approach the beginning of the third millennium of Christianity. Bishop Loverde's episcopal motto indicated to all that he had come to the diocese to "encourage and teach with patience."

Bishop Loverde wasted no time in embracing the work entrusted to him by the pope. Shortly after his installation, Bishop Loverde celebrated the



**PRAYER FOR UNBORN — Bishop Loverde prays in front of a Falls Church abortion clinic on Holy Saturday 1999.**

clinics on Holy Saturday. Bishop Loverde has continued to visit various parishes regularly for the celebration of Mass and prayer for an end to abortion.

Following the celebration of these holiest days of the Church's year, Bishop Loverde immediately embarked on a schedule that included the celebration of Confirmation in several parishes. He visited each deanery in the diocese twice during his first two months in office. Bishop Loverde celebrated the Liturgy of the Hours with the priests of the deanery and then met with the priests both in a large-group setting and individually. He also traveled to each deanery to celebrate Mass with the faithful.

During his first weeks in office, Bishop Loverde celebrated Masses to honor priests and religious celebrating the anniversaries of their ordinations and religious professions. He also celebrated Mass and offered prayers for expectant parents, and participated in the celebration of graduations at



**PRECIOUS GIFT — Bishop Loverde presents a chalice to a newly ordained priest.**

Bishop Welsh (who returned to Arlington for the occasion), Msgr. McMurtrie provided for the annual transfer of clergy and the appointment of parish administrators to secure the continued pastoral care of God's people in Arlington until a new diocesan bishop would be named.

Msgr. McMurtrie also gathered the priests of the diocese in January 1999 to re-

and on March 24, 1999, he took possession of the diocese at a celebration of evening prayer at the cathedral.

Bishop Loverde was installed at a Mass on March 25, 1999, the feast of the Annunciation, at the cathedral. In attendance were Baltimore Cardinal William Keeler, Washington Cardinal James Hickey, more than 80 bishops, 200 priests and 1,700 religious and

Holy Week liturgies at the cathedral, presiding and preaching on Palm Sunday and the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday and at the liturgies of the Easter Triduum.

In the midst of these holy days, Bishop Loverde signaled his commitment to leading the people in their witness to the dignity and value of all human life by leading the rosary outside two abortion

diocesan high schools.

Bishop Loverde has also encouraged the preparation and planning of celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the diocese and the jubilee year 2000.

Following the ordination of seven new priests in the diocese, Bishop Loverde made his first clergy appointments in June 1999, at which time he established St. Veronica Parish in Dulles.

This latest chapter in the history of the Diocese of Arlington encompasses only a few short months on a calendar, but it represents not the end of a story but the beginning of a new era in a journey of faith. An essential part of the story is the people of God in Arlington — a family of faith rich in tradition and eager to bring the Word of God and the love of Christ to a world that hungers for these gifts now and will continue to do so in the next 25 years and into the new millennium.

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