

Vesper Homily for +AMP

9-27-1001

There is a poem of thanksgiving which in part says:

- We thank you for remembering and forgetting
- For patient friends and challengers
- For the endless nights that helped us know the Dawn
- For Jesus, for the Spirit, for You, Father
- For Life. We give you thanks.

We thank for remembering and forgetting which allows us to appreciate over and over again God's gifts, especially this afternoon, the gift of Bishop Anthony M.

Pilla

- He was a son, a brother, an uncle, a great uncle
- He was a teacher, an administrator, a priest, a bishop for over 40 years—our bishop for over 25 years
- A superior to many
- A friend

And so, the memories are many and varied

- Certainly you as family knew him in a very different way than most of us
 - He loved his family
 - Though he didn't talk often he would talk about his family and the importance of family.
 - He would talk about his Father and especially his Mother and you his nieces and nephews and especially his neice, Tony, who "cooked just like his Mother.
 - Your memories are precious
- Those of you who worked closely with him throughout your Ministries—colleagues, staff, seminarians, lay, religious, clergy all have your memories
 - He had a special relationship with his priests and often reminded us we were good priests and this was a good diocese.

I will share with you three very short memories I have:

- One was a meeting in April, 2001 when I was called into his office
 - He told me John Paul II wanted me to become an Auxiliary Bishop in Cleveland
 - I don't remember anything else he said.
- The second was in October of 2006 when I called him to tell him that the Nuncio had called and said Pope Benedict wanted me the bishop of a Diocese of Davenport
 - I do remember his response; he said: "Davenport, Iowa; Davenport. Iowa"
- And finally a memory a month ago when Fr. Ted Marszal and I took him out for lunch at his favorite restaurant—a time I will always remember.

All these memories are signs to us of God's love and presence in his life and in ours.

When a bishop installs a new pastor in a parish there is one line in the Installation Ritual that has always moved me: "Remember my Brother, always be a wise teacher, // a gentle shepherd // and a loving Father."

Bishop Pilla was a wise Teacher

- He regarded education as essential for everyone.
- He was involved in the formation of seminarians as teacher and rector
- He showed himself as a wise Teacher not just in the classroom but in the wisdom he showed in leading the Diocese of Davenport
- He reached out to the Jewish Community, The Ecumenical Community, the Civic Community as well

Bishop Pilla was a gentle Shepherd

- Sometimes he did, however, need to get the attention of the Sheep first-- which is probably why the seminarians early on gave him the nickname "Chopper."
- He sought out the lost, bound up the wounded and lead the flock

- I truly believe he never wanted to hurt anyone but he wanted to do what was right and wanted to challenge us to do our best.

Bishop Pilla was a loving Father

- He loved his family
- He loved his Church
- He loved the Diocese of Cleveland—it people: lay, religious and clergy, especially his priests
- He had a fatherly love for the poor and for social justice

Joined to us in life, we commend him to the loving care of Jesus the High Priest, who is a wise Teacher and a Gentle Shepherd and to loving mercy of God our loving Father.