

## **Most Reverend Louis Tylka, Coadjutor Bishop of Peoria**

### **What is a Coadjutor Bishop? (Has rite of succession)**

Bishop Jenky is our ordinary and continues to be our Bishop. In reality, I function in more of what we call an auxiliary Bishop until the day he retires. The day he retires I automatically will become the ninth Bishop of the diocese of Peoria. (:17)

### **How will you approach your new role? (First 6 months)**

It's a very large Diocese, in fact the largest by land in the state of Illinois. And so being able to travel around the diocese and get to know better the people of God that make up our diocese, our priests and our religious who serve us so well. I have time to kind of get to know us better so I will be better prepared when I do have to resume the responsibility as the Bishop of Peoria to offer that leadership. (:29)

### **How would you describe yourself as a leader? (Shepherd)**

The reality is we all have the same responsibility and that is the great mission that Jesus gave us all to go make disciples, and so we have to interpret how that happens in our local church. But that is the mission that we are all entrusted with by the Lord and that is the mission that I bring in my heart and in my ministry. (:21)

### **We are living in an interesting time.**

The church is called to mission and my hope and my dream for myself as well as for all the faithful in this diocese is to accept our responsibility to be those missionary disciples. A disciple is someone who has a relationship with Jesus and wants to walk with Jesus and learn from Jesus. A missionary disciple realizes that not only must they foster the relationship that they have with Jesus, they must invite others into that same relationship. So my hope and my dream for myself is to deepen my relationship with Jesus so that I can do what the Lord asks of me now as a bishop. My hope for all of us it is that we foster that relationship with Jesus to the extent that we are so excited and filled with the love of Jesus that the Holy Spirit then prompts us, to send us out so that we can invite others into this relationship. It's no doubt that society's becoming more and more secularized, and so the more we can go out into the world as missionary disciples and invite people into the relationship that we already share in, the better our church will be in the long run. (1:05)

### **What was it like when you got the call about your appointment?**

I had literally walked into my office I set my cell phone on my desk I turned on my computer I went to get a cup of coffee and as I came back into the room my cell phone started ringing and when I looked at it, it said 'unknown caller Washington, DC' and my assumption was that it was another call telling me that my warranty was up on my car because I've gotten many from Washington, DC telling me I needed to re-up my warranty on my car, so I almost didn't answer the call. And something prompted me, probably the Spirit, to pick up the phone and of course it was Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Nuncio. And we had a conversation in which he announced that I would be named, he said 'I have good news, the Holy Father's naming you the coadjutor Bishop of Peoria' and I almost literally fell out of my seat. And so it was kind of overwhelming. One of the things I did before I said yes was I went and I celebrated Mass. Of course the reading of that day was about being a shepherd, and I said it was God saying 'you have to say yes.' (1:04)

### **Can you address the situation with the pandemic?**

We do have to take the necessary steps to try to provide the safest, cleanest, environment for anyone who does want to worship. The Bishops have come up in the state of Illinois with wonderful guidelines that really do promote safety and a safe environment for folks to come and worship in the church. We need to adhere to those guidelines for our own safety, but more so to provide a safe environment for all those who would like to come. We have to do every step that we can to try to mitigate the spread of this virus so wearing a mask, making sure we wash our hands, keeping the social distance - all of the advice that the experts, especially the medical experts, are giving to us, we really have to adhere to it and bring that into our practice so we can provide the safest environment for everyone who wants to worship and praise God. (:48)

### **Can you comment on the beatification of Archbishop Sheen?**

It is a very big deal for this Diocese, in fact I'm wearing Bishop Sheen's cross right now. Obviously, Bishop Sheen was a key figure in the church and we certainly need to continue to push for that process to move forward because he's given the church a great example of being an evangelizer, which is more important to us today. He used the new technology of his time, which seems odd to us because we get watch TV on our cell phones these days, but he used the technology of his time to get the message of Jesus out, and so for that reason alone I think it's a good example of trying to invite us into our role as evangelizers as missionary disciples. I can't comment specifically because I haven't had time yet to learn the full details of the whole story of the process of his beatification, but I assure you that I will certainly be looking into that and anything that I can do, I'm certainly praying that the church and the spirit moves us forward in that process to honor such a wonderful archbishop. (1:10)