

Dec. 1, 2010

A Message from Bishop John M. Smith
Diocese of Trenton

On July 1, 1997, I became the ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, succeeding my beloved predecessor Bishop John C. Reiss, under whom I served as coadjutor for a little over a year. Since that July date every day has been a grace and a blessing as I attempted to serve and shepherd the extraordinary priests, deacons, men and women religious and our over 800,000 lay people, all of whom make up the Great Diocese of Trenton.

As I am succeeded by Bishop David O'Connell, C.M., the 10th Bishop of Trenton, I want to express my sincere gratitude to each and every one of you for your prayers, cooperation, support and good will during my years as chief shepherd of our diocese.

As I think of my years here my mind is flooded by a million memories of events and moments of grace that we have shared. I pray that you have come to know, love and serve Jesus Christ more fully and come to appreciate the wonders of His Church more completely through my humble ministry. If my human frailty has disappointed any of you, I beg your forgiveness and prayers.

We are indeed blessed to now have Bishop O'Connell as our Bishop. I have daily assured him of the goodness, grace, piety and generosity of the wonderful people of the Diocese of Trenton. I know that you will love and support Bishop O'Connell's efforts to make Jesus Christ and His Church more real for you.

I promise you my prayers and continuously ask for your prayers for me as I enter this new period of my ministry as a priest and a bishop. The words of St. Augustine perhaps say best what is in my heart: "I am a bishop for you, but a Christian with you."