



Good and Faithful Servants

The phone rang at my home in Eugene. It was March 2012. "Father Liam speaking," I answered. "Hello, Bishop," said the voice on the other end. "This is Peggy Buselli in Bend."



"Bishop"? It startled me to hear myself called by this title. Only days before I had been told, in greatest secrecy, of the Pope's decision to name me Bishop of Baker. It would be weeks before anyone who knew me would hear about this out-of-the-blue change of life. Everyone still called me "*Father Liam*."

But Peggy Buselli didn't. She knew what was in the works. She had to. It was her job to get the new bishop ordained, installed, and up to speed.

I would be the fourth Bishop of Baker Peggy worked for. Bishop Connolly hired her in January 1999 to help with administration, religious education, and youth ministry, and then called on her talents in bookkeeping and clergy support. These multiple, wide-ranging responsibilities extended Peggy's reach far beyond Bend, into virtually every parish in the Diocese. She learned how things worked—and who made them work. Parish staff members and parish priests as well as priests and lay people in the Diocesan Office found her receptive to their questions and wise in her responses. To priests from abroad (and Sisters from Kenya) Peggy devoted especially kind and careful attention all the way along—before

they arrived, throughout their complex immigration process, and during their period of adjustment. From the deep well of her cheerfulness Peggy drew forth consistently sound and well-balanced advice for those she served so selflessly as executive secretary: Bishops Vasa, Skylstad, and me. Little did I know that day in March when Peggy called that the Lord had put me in the best of hands.

Now, after 17 years, those hands are laying down their burden. Peggy and Ray have bought a home in Florida and will be moving there this spring. Those of us who had the joy of working daily with Peggy will be grateful to God for her as long as the sun comes up in the sky.

To take Peggy's place we stole Leah Bickett from St. Pius X Parish in Klamath Falls, and the children she has been preparing for First Holy Communion there do not approve of her move! They are the latest of many she has helped along in her 15 years as a Religious Education teacher at St. Pius, where she sings in the choir as well. Leah graduated from Oregon State with a degree in Business Administration and Accounting. For the last 12 years she has been the Accountant and Accounting Supervisor for the Klamath County School District. There she acquired skills that will serve her well in her new task of keeping the Bishop accountable! We are most happy to have Leah with us at the Diocesan Office.

