



The Diocese of Knoxville

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Living our Roman Catholic faith in East Tennessee

August 24, 2023

Feast of St. Bartholomew, Apostle

"... and He chose from them Twelve" (Luke 6:13).

To all the faithful of the Diocese of Knoxville,

The choice of the Twelve Apostles by Christ after a night of prayer (cf. Luke 6:12) is a mystery that continues to unfold in the life of the Church with the appointment of bishops as their successors. Truly, the selection of a bishop is as important today as was the choice of the Twelve for Jesus. And at this particular time within the Diocese of Knoxville, we too, as members of Christ's, Mystical Body, are called to participate in His prayer in asking the Heavenly Father, through the Holy Spirit, to "appoint" a new shepherd after the heart of His Son, the eternal shepherd.

It is most fitting, then, that we begin praying for the future shepherd of this diocese, both as a community of the faithful, and individually in your daily prayers. Therefore, I have asked that all the Masses on the weekend of September 10, 2023 be celebrated for the appointment of a bishop, in accordance with the norms established by the Church. Furthermore, at the conclusion of all Masses and after the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, I ask that the following prayer also be prayed until such time as the appointment of a new bishop is announced:

Prayer to Receive a New Bishop

Praise to you, Lord our God, our Eternal Shepherd and Guide. We know that all authority comes from You. With confidence in Your providence, we entreat You to provide the Diocese of Knoxville a new shepherd after Your own heart. In Your love for us, send us a shepherd who will lead us in being Christ's heart of mercy, voice of hope, and hands of justice. Help him to fill our minds and hearts with the truth of the Gospel, the power of the sacraments, and the desire to build up Your Holy Church. We pray through Christ our Lord, Amen.

I encourage everyone to also include this prayer intention in your daily prayers as well. For the awesome and serious responsibility of the office of Bishop as a successor of the Apostles, is a most weighty one in which he must shepherd the local Church with a threefold responsibility of sanctifying, teaching, and governance. But he cannot do it alone—he will ever need your daily prayers, as do all the priests who share in the fullness of the priesthood of their bishop. Pray always for them. And I would ask that you pray for me.

"You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one... you have chosen" (Acts 1:24).

Know of my prayers for you, even as I ask your prayers for me. I remain,

Sincerely in the Lord,

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Knoxville