



September 9, 2021

Dear Members of the ECC Rocky Mountain Region:  
Blessings and peace to each of you.

The cooler nights cue us that the seasons are changing. Time flies and our holy gathering for our Bishop Consecration is nearly upon us! As I pray with and into all the facets of the consecration celebration, I would like to give you a preview, so you may fully participate in, witness and bless with greater awareness these rich traditions.

When we gather for any Catholic liturgy or sacrament – weekend Mass, a wedding, a baptism, an ordination – we witness and participate in intentional gestures, actions and words that have deep, symbolic meaning. When Bishop Frank and I were nominated for Presiding Bishop in 2014, we studied the symbols that traditionally accompany “bishop” in many traditions. Recently, I re-visited our exploration and it led me to question in my mind, heart and soul: How might I fully embrace the symbols, postures, words and gestures of my call to bishop of the people of the Rocky Mountain Region of the ECC? As I studied the prayer-soaked words and actions of the consecration rite, and the symbols of the ring, pectoral cross, miter, and crosier (staff), profound meaning penetrated my heart. Tears rolled down my face as I realized more deeply the commitment of service I am making to God and to you, the faithful.

The bishop consecration takes place during the celebration of Mass. This is a special Liturgy. All Masses are special, of course, but with this consecration we will have a large gathering of numerous lay and clergy people, those representing all the communities in the Rocky Mountain Region, family, friends, lay leaders, deacons, priests and bishops from far and near. It is a sign that the Church is indeed a family, a household of faith, the gathered Body of Christ. We come together to re-member Who and Whose we are in Eucharist, in the breaking of the bread.

Presiding Bishop Francis will process in as principal celebrant with his crosier (staff), as shepherd of the ECC and, up until now, our Region’s ordinary bishop. During the Liturgy of the Word, with prayerfully selected scripture passages, together we will pray especially for Wisdom and Unity, and to remain connected to the True Vine. We also pray for continual openness and guidance for our shared vision of leadership and service.

After the homily, representatives of the region will affirm our election and my call. As bishop-elect I will be asked to make a number of promises, including committing my life to love and service to God and the people of the Church. My daily prayer will continue to include a request for guidance to live into these promises.

Our prayer continues. I will kneel, as Jesus knelt in the garden, in self-abandonment, bending my human will and placing all trust in God alone. I will lay prostrate on my family’s pall, remembering our baptism and equality in the eyes of God, laying down my life in apostolic service. We will call on the saints in a beautifully sung litany asking for the intercession of those who are models of faith and discipleship. Bishop Francis and all our bishops will lay their hands on my head, a biblical and ancient gesture of prayer, consecration, and blessing. This tactile blessing of our presiding bishop, along with at least two other bishops is a sign that I am entering into the wider council of bishops, in

communion with each other and the church. I pray to be wise in honoring Tradition and the movement of the Spirit.

Presiding Bishop Francis will then invite the laity and clergy to extend their hands in blessing as we pray the long and rich prayer of consecration or ordination. The Book of the Gospels is held open over my head. This is a sign that the bishop is always subject to and guided by the Spirit of the Gospel and the faith that flows from the Word. I will continue to pray that all I say and do may reflect the Way of Jesus.

Once the prayer of consecration is complete, rituals and symbols further illustrate outwardly the ordination prayer:

- The fragrant Chrism Oil that is used to anoint each of us as God's own during our baptism and confirmation is poured on my head, another ancient biblical gesture, a visible sign that I am chosen and consecrated as a bishop to God's service.
- I am presented with the Book of the Gospels as the bishop is to "preach the Word of God with unfailing patience and sound teaching."
- I will receive four symbols of the office of bishop:
  - *The ring*, a sign that I am now "wedded" to this Region and to the wider Church and must always be faithful to that special bond. The ring is worn always - a daily reminder of my commitment to you, the people of the Rocky Mountain Region. The traditional amethyst stone has spiritual significance invoking purity of spirit, supporting the divine connection, opening one to receive wisdom, guidance and insight, and protection.
  - *The pectoral cross* - The pectoral cross is worn close to my heart as a reminder of the Paschal Mystery and the Love of Christ expressed in my ministry. The cross is gifted by the Regional Council and will be passed on, bishop to bishop serving the region.
  - *The miter*, the headdress worn by bishops at liturgical functions, is a sign of my role as a bishop and is suggestive of the flames that hovered over the heads of the Apostles when the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost; and
  - *The crosier*, the pastoral staff that looks like a shepherd's crook, signifies the bishop as chief shepherd of her flock. The pastoral staff is held by the bishop during solemn functions when she acts as pastor: in the procession and recession, during the reading of the gospel and solemn blessing. My crosier was custom carved by a local woman chainsaw artist from Loveland with local wood. Truly a Rocky Mountain crosier.

The Mass continues - I celebrate the Eucharist as the new bishop of the Rocky Mountain Region! The altar cloth is my grandmother Georgia's linen tablecloth – the family gathered to share a meal. As our celebration continues and adjourns to the reception, I will process out with my crosier, fully consecrated as your bishop. Joy overflows.



May God who calls each according to the Spirit, be with us and give us all that we need to be faithful disciples of Jesus. Let us love one another and strengthen one another to serve, our new "Yes" together. Alleluia!

Peace and blessings,  
Bishop-Elect Kae  
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