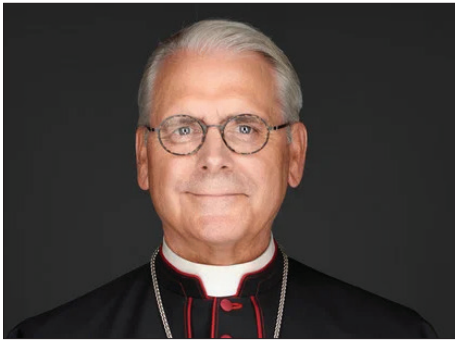


Go Make Disciples

Archbishop Coakley elected president of USCCB



Archbishop Paul Coakley

By John Helsley
The Sooner Catholic

Archbishop Paul Coakley emerged from a list of 10 candidates in a vote Nov. 11 to be named president of the United State Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Archbishop Coakley, who has served as archbishop of Oklahoma

City since 2010, was elected on the third ballot during the second day of the USCCB Fall Plenary Assembly in Baltimore. He will step into the role immediately.

"I'm humbled by the trust which my brother bishops have placed in me by choosing me to serve as president of our episcopal conference," Archbishop Coakley said. "When I became a bishop, I chose as my episcopal motto, 'Duc in

altum,' or 'Put Out into the Deep.' "Once again, the Lord is inviting me to put out into deep waters in calling me to accept this service and burden of leadership today. I accept it in faith and with great hope."

The 10 candidates on the ballot were selected by the bishops. The

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Archbishop Coakley celebrated a Mass of Christian Burial for homeless people on All Souls' Day. Photo Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.

'I believe everyone deserves a final resting place'

Sister BJ's commitment to the homeless carries on

By Sally Linhart
The Sooner Catholic

The procession toward the mausoleum at Resurrection Memorial Cemetery stood fitting for All Souls Day.

All souls.

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Christ to others: 20 candidates ordained as permanent deacons



Twenty men were ordained to the permanent diaconate by Archbishop Coakley on Nov. 7 at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City. Photo Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.

By Eliana Tedrow
The Sooner Catholic

On Nov. 7, 20 men of God were ordained as permanent deacons within the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The ordination Mass was celebrated at the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine and marked the culmination of a rigorous five-year formation journey.

Deacon Norm Mejstrik, director of the permanent diaconate for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, noted this year's deacon formation class's rapid progress since beginning their formation more than four years ago. He said the candidate couples possess a deep spirituality that was strengthened

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Nov. 30 - Dec. 24

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Archbishop Coakley celebrated a Mass of Christian Burial for homeless people on All Souls' Day, Nov. 2, in the Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel at Resurrection Memorial Cemetery in Oklahoma City. Sr. Barbara Joseph Foley, of Sr. BJ's Pantry, organized the first Mass for homeless friends in 2022. *Photos Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.*



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On Nov. 2, All Souls Day, the unclaimed remains of 45 departed souls were solemnly carried to their final resting place. Archbishop Coakley led the procession, which included knights and dames of The Order of Malta.

The remains of each, whose names were written on the urns, were prayed over as the urn was carried to the crypt at the mausoleum, to be finally interred.

Sister Barbara Joseph Foley, C.S.T., who started the annual tradition of honoring those unclaimed three years ago, said “I wanted it to be personal and prayerful.”

A day to honor the deceased, All Souls Day is a time to recognize and pray for all who have died. At Resurrection Cemetery, that extends to those unclaimed, with a Mass of Remembrance, celebrated by Archbishop Coakley in the Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel, preceding interment.

“We are like brothers and sisters,” Sister BJ said. “This cause is close to their heart, too, so they are part of it.”

This special Mass for the homeless was first held in 2022 after Sister BJ learned of the shocking number of remains that go unclaimed.

“In my heart, I felt called as a work of mercy to bury all these people and make sure they have a final resting place,” said Sister BJ. “It was so beautiful that I decided I wanted to do it every year.”

A long-time advocate for the homeless, Sister BJ opened Sister BJ’s pantry at NW 4 and Classen nearly 20 years ago. Through donations made to the pantry, she was able to purchase a crypt, and the unclaimed remains of 90 men and women were interred the first year the Mass was held.



“For me, this is an extension of the Corporal Work of Mercy of burying the dead,” Sister BJ said. “I believe everyone deserves a final resting place.”

The crypt, which can hold the remains of 300 people, is expected to be full by next year.

Through donations raised by Nolan Reilly, director of music and organist at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a second crypt was purchased, allowing for the interment of an additional 300 unclaimed remains.

Sister BJ called her mission to provide the deceased with the dignity of proper interment “a beautiful way to honor homeless people – people who have names.”

Jason Zimdars, regional hospitalier for the Order of Malta, described the event as a way to provide Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, “by burying and praying for the dead.”

“This is one of the highlights of each year for our members,” he said of the order, “and it’s impossible to not be moved emotionally by the experience.”

Sally Linhart is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.