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# Rt. Rev. Celestine de la Hailandiere

SECOND BISHOP OF VINCENNES.

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## An Address

Delivered at St. John's Cathedral, Indianapolis, Ind., June 7th, 1882, on  
the occasion of a Solemn Funeral Service in His Honor,

BY REV. E. AUDRAN, OF JEFFERSONVILLE, IND.

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## RIGHT REV. BISHOP DE LA HAILANDIERE.

On Wednesday, June 7, a Solemn Mass of Requiem for the repose of the soul of Rt. Rev. Bishop Hailandiere, second Bishop of Vincennes, was celebrated in St. John's Church, Indianapolis, by Very Rev. Aug. Bessonies, in the absence of Bishop Chatard on a Confirmation tour in the southern part of the diocese. Many of the clergy of the diocese were present, including two or three ordained by the deceased prelate. After the Gospel one of the clergy delivered the following address on Bishop Hailandiere:

**Text:** Remember your prelates who have spoken the word of God to you, whose words follow considering the end of their conversation. Heb. 13:7.

Right Rev. Celestine Rene Lawrence Gymeier De La Hailandiere, second Bishop of Vincennes, who resigned his see in 1847, died May 1st of the present year and was buried on May 8th, in the parish church of the town of Combours, (Brittany) France.

We are assembled here to-day to pray for him and pay our respect to the memory of this remarkable prelate, who, dying away, after an absence of thirty-five years, from this country, can now hardly be said to be known by most, and is well remembered only by a few. He was born in the town of Combours, May 2, 1798. This was during the revolutionary period. A priest hidden in the house of his father baptized him on the same day. When a child the family went to reside in Rennes, the old capital of Brittany, and entrusted his education to a worthy priest. Under his care he was prepared for his first Communion, under his care also he commenced a course of classical studies, and finished it at Rennes. He was studying law at the age of nineteen when confirmed. Admitted to the bar, he made his entrance into society, pleaded a few times, and from the first displayed such talents, force of character, and aptitude for affairs that he attracted considerable attention. A brilliant future prospect now presented itself for

him, for by this time things in the political world had taken a great change. Napoleon was fallen; the throne of France was again occupied by its legitimate king; his family and all his connections likewise had long been known for their devotedness and steadfast adherence to the royal cause even in the most critical days, and they had social standing; but the same family, if noted for loyalty, were still more conspicuous as unswerving Christians. They had imbued their son with the most thorough Christian sentiments.

He attended in 1822 a mission preached by the "Fathers of the Faith," and all of a sudden, to the astonishment of all his friends, resolved to give up the world and renounce all hopes of human preferment. At that very moment, through the representations of influential friends of the Royal party to M. De Corbiere, one of the ministers of King Louis XVIII., a Breton himself and neighbor to several of the family, he had been offered the office of substitute to the King's attorney for the Department. This he refused, and they had him appointed a judge at the Civil Tribunal of Redon, a subprefecture and town of considerable importance. He was twenty-four years old only! This resolution of his seemed too sudden. His excellent father wished to try his vocation. He enjoined on him to proceed to Redon and take possession of his judgeship. Trained to obedience he complied with his father's wish, but shortly afterward handed in his resignation.

He entered the Seminary of Rennes in the latter days of October, 1822; was ordained a deacon in 1824; went to the Seminary of St. Sulpice, in Paris, to complete in that famed house of clerical learning his ecclesiastical studies and his preparation for the priesthood. Whilst there he was assigned—on Sundays—the task of teaching the celebrated catechism class "of perseverance," together with the Abbe Dupanloup, afterward so well known as the Bishop of Orleans. He was ordained priest, May 28, 1825. He returned to his diocese, and, after spending six months at a little town on the sea shore, was made one of the assistant priests of the parish of St. Germain in the city of Rennes.

In 1830, the Bourbons, on whom, had he remained in civil life, he would have based all hopes of future advancement, were driven away. He saw the Orleans step in their place, and one after another of his former friends, guided by the same old spirit of loyalty, refuse to swear allegiance to the new power, step out of public life to again return to obscurity which likewise condemned them to honest poverty, and he could already recognize the guiding hand of Divine Providence in the contrary choice

he had himself made. He continued the simple exercise of his duties as a priest. Five more years passed, and now in a far off country—the very shores of which could only be reached after a hazardous sail of nearly two months—in the new republic of the United States, comparatively little known and thought of at that time amid the turmoil of French affairs—and in one of its newly constituted States in a portion of its immense Western territory, Indiana, the successor of Peter had been petitioned to create a new diocese. Rt. Rev. Dr. Brute, also a Breton of good family which had been driven away years before by the bloody scenes of the first revolution, a voluntary exile to America, while at Emmitsburg devoting his time to the preparation of young men to the priesthood, was named as the first Bishop of Vincennes. He had through obedience accepted the evident burden; but he felt it to be one of unusual heaviness, and knowing it would require of him extraordinary efforts, bethought himself of his old native province of Brittany, of his old native city of Rennes. He arrived there for help when I, who speak to you, was a very young boy, but well do I remember the commotion caused all over the Catholic city when it was known that the venerable missionary Bishop had returned looking for assistance. He went directly to the Bishop of Rennes and besought him to point out and give him a priest, whom he could at once make his Vicar General and Coadjutor in the full meaning of the term, and assist him in undertaking so great a work. Celestine De La Hailandiere was designated to him, and he did not hesitate, but at once accepted the burden, and was nominated Vicar General.

One year afterward, July 1, 1836, he left Rennes accompanying Bishop Brute. That year, however, had not been spent idly. The extraordinary talents and remarkable energy which had attracted attention to Hailandiere in the world when so young, were now brought into full activity. Bearing in mind the nature of the work to be done, he now thought of everything to be prepared and looked to before proceeding on so long a journey, and so serious a task as the founding of a diocese in a wild new country, far distant from all centers of civilization and deficient in every resource needed for such a purpose. Indiana and the eastern half of Illinois allotted to the new diocese of Vincennes was a real wilderness, thinly inhabited. There were only a few small towns, farmers here and there in the country, and in the northern part of Indiana two tribes of Indians, the Pottowattamies and the Miamis still remaining. Only a few Catholics were to be found. These were to be gathered into congregations and provided not only with priests,

but also with everything necessary for divine worship. Devoted priests prepared for that hard work had to be found then, also sacred vessels, sacred vestments, books and money. The result of the now combined labors, those of the saintly Bishop, of his pleading the cause of his mission in many a church and seminary, chiefly in Rennes, Paris and Lyons, and of the assistance given him, by his Vicar General, whom no labor would frighten, no obstacle would stop, who was ever sure to find amid surrounding embarrassments, a practicable and ready means to any attainable end, became manifest when the hour of departure arrived. Among others in Rennes they were followed by Father Corbe and Benjamin Petit, a fine young lawyer who renounced his worldly career, asking as a particular favor to be sent to the Indians so soon as he would have been prepared for the priesthood; in Paris and Lyons, Michael Edgar Gordon Shawe, formerly of the British army, but then a student of St. Sulpice; Father Julian Benoit, now Vicar General of Fort Wayne; Father Maurice De St. Palais, who was also at a later time to become Bishop of Vincennes. They took along with them at the same time large sums of money and great stores of all kinds to furnish the different missions in charge of which priests were to be appointed.

There were no steamers on the ocean, no railways on the new continent, and it took a long time and much money to reach their destination. Arrived at last, both the Bishop and his Vicar General set to their task with all ardor. Dr. Hailandiere knew no English, and had to confine for the present his spiritual labors to the wants of the French population of Vincennes, meanwhile also helping and assisting Bishop Brute in the administration of the affairs of the diocese, especially during the absence of the holy prelate, who had to visit his extensive diocese from the banks of the Ohio river to the shores of Lake Michigan, riding on horseback. The coming in of a certain number of German emigrants at different points of the diocese soon made the importance of providing them with priests felt, and two years only after their arrival it was resolved that Dr. Hailandiere should return to Europe to procure both priests and students who could speak their language. He hastened back accordingly, and having visited Strasburg, obtained from the Bishop permission to take along with him all the young men whom he could persuade to follow him.

Whilst engaged in this work, and when momentarily in Paris, he heard of the death of Bishop Brute, and also heard the news of his appointment as Coadjutor with right of succession. By a Bull of Gregory XVI., dated May 17, 1839, he had been preconized

Bishop of Axiern. The death of Dr. Brute happening so soon, he found himself to be his successor before his consecration as Bishop.

Now that the holy Bishop, whose sanctity had attracted him, was dead; that he who had called him to his help, was to him an example of every virtue, a sparkling fountain of theological knowledge and ecclesiastical science, a counselor whom he knew ever to be guided by the spirit of God, would no more be with him and by him; now that he knew that all responsibility would rest upon himself alone—he hesitated. It was not the labor which frightened him—he was equal to any. It was a dread of his spiritual weakness—a mistrust of himself. He sought advice from a venerable priest of St. Sulpice, M. Mollevaut. He represented to him the inconvenience and danger to the welfare of the mission which a protracted delay in the succession would necessarily produce. He was, therefore, consecrated August 18, 1839, in the chapel of the Sacred Heart, in Paris, by Mgr. De Forbin Janson, assisted by the Bishop of Versailles, Blanquart de Bailleul, and Mgr. Le Mereier, Bishop of Beauvais, on the same day and at the same time with Mgr. Morlot, who died since Archbishop of Paris and Cardinal.

He sent ahead quite a number of clerical students and several priests, under the lead of Father Aug. Martin, a clergyman of the Diocese of Rennes, widely known there at the time for his abilities, and who relinquished the post of chaplain of the Royal College of Rennes; the same who afterward became Bishop of Natchitoches. With them he also sent large stores of sacerdotal vestments, sacred vessels, books, etc., which he had procured all over France by visiting friends of Bishop Brute and his own. He had worked very hard, indeed, to procure all this. Great as was the quantity procured on the first voyage, it could not be compared to what was then brought along.

He soon followed, bringing along with him large sums of money which he had obtained from various sources, but chiefly by pleading the needs of his mission before the Councils of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Paris and Lyons, and they promised a continuance of help for several years, giving it afterward steadily and largely.

But he had done more. It was not enough, in fact, to have priests and material aid to organize congregations in the newly and yet very sparsely settled country which could not give any aid. Institutions which must ensure the permanent establishment of the Church had to be looked to. Now he persuaded, in Rennes, the Eudists to send a body of priests to found a college in Vincennes at their expense; the newly established Society of the Holy Cross to send a

delegation of Brothers, with a priest at their head, to prepare the way for the creation of schools for boys all over the diocese; the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence, whose mother house was at Ruille, in the Diocese of Mans, under the protection of the illustrious Bishop Bouvier, to send also six chosen Sisters for the purpose of beginning in his diocese a house of their own, who in course of time would take charge of the education of girls, of orphan asylums, hospitals, etc. He also induced to follow him skilled workmen, who were not to be found so far in the Western settlements. It was with their aid that he afterward finished the Cathedral and crowned it with a steeple, the elegance of which all admired. It was with their aid that he afterward put up all the other necessary buildings in Vincennes, St. Mary's of the Woods and various other places.

Nor were those whom he induced to answer his call to begin religious establishments in Indiana persons of mean abilities. It is sufficient to name Father Sorin, Father Bellier, Mother Theodora Guerin and Elvire Lefer (Sister St. Francis Xavier) to make it manifest that they were not ordinary persons. The works which they have achieved—the establishment of Notre Dame du Lac in the Diocese of Fort Wayne; detached now from Vincennes,—the Mother house and numerous branches of St. Mary of the Woods, show the real worth of their founders; and if partly through want of administrative abilities on the part of the President, though more from circumstantial obstacles, St. Gabriel's College went down never to rise again, even Father Bellier who tried hard to establish it, was not an ordinary man, as all who knew him will readily admit.

One of his first cares on his return was to give his attention to a grievous schism which had done already a great deal of harm in the town of Chicago on the Shores of Lake Michigan. With great tact and foresight he had ordered Father De St. Palais to proceed there. Three Bishops, at one time met there and also the eloquent Father Shawe to try to remedy the evil, but without success. His cool judgment, untiring, patience, persevering energy and quiet activity achieved the work.

A more grievous trouble, soon after came to weary his mind. One of the chosen young men whom he had obtained from the Bishop of Strasburg, had been ordained a priest and sent to Evansville. Father Roman Weinzöpflein was pious, he was learned and he was zealous. At the outset of his labors in that small town on the Ohio river, he had found himself confronted by the ugly spirit of Protestant bigotry which was then quiet intense all over, indeed, but there in a particular manner. A

foul accusation had been brought against him and fanned into a tremendous excitement by the vilest passions of sectarian hatred. He had been first cast into prison and then brought before a court of justice as a mean culprit to answer to the charge. He sent Benjamin M. Thomas, a lawyer of Vincennes whom he had recently brought to the faith and baptized, to defend him. Assisted by the able counsel of two more able attorneys, they all fought in vain vile and blind prejudices that would not down for the moment, and the Bishop had the grief of seeing the poor, young, innocent priest sent to the penitentiary. Only for a time though, thank God! For a reversion of public sentiment soon began to manifest itself, and petitions of all kinds, from non-Catholics as well as from Catholics, pouring in on the Governor of the State, he was the following year honorably released. Two years afterward to complete his justification had it been necessary at all, his accuser in a letter confessed to the perjury.

Now, priests as soon as ready, were sent out on missions appointed to them with complete suits of vestments, all the sacred vessels needed, a horse, saddle and bridle and generally a sum of money sufficient for first needs. At home in Vincennes, a Seminary was built complete in all its details and organized on the European plan; a summer place also where during the hot summer days of vacation the students could retire; a Superior, able and pious, Father Corbe, placed over it. A building was put up expressly to set in order and preserve for future use the valuable theological library left by his predecessor together with the equally valuable additions of books which he had himself procured.

Considering the particular position of his priests as a missionary clergy, he began an active correspondence with Rome to regulate disciplinary matters—called his clergy to meet in an Ecclesiastical retreat and held at the close a Synod through whose wise regulations they were enabled to return to their work with a settled rule of conduct. Everything that called for his attention was looked to with untiring activity. Knowing the importance of preserving documents of all kinds, a matter which heretofore could not be well attended to, he gathered together all the documents received from Rome, and whilst carefully preserving the originals, had copies of all recorded in separate books. He did the same in regard to every mission established in his diocese. Every letter of his priests, of superiors of religious communities, etc., was likewise preserved. Had this been attended to and continued as carefully afterward, it would be easy to trace out at any time in the archives of Vincennes everything required

for a complete history of the birth and growth of every congregation in the diocese; but opinions on this subject differ. Hardly two years after his departure all these letters of priests on each mission to their Bishop containing details on all matters were thrown into the fire as useless. His predecessor had collected materials for the early history of Indiana and Illinois. He applied himself also to this, collecting all the documents available and placing them in his library.

He seemed to think of everything, looked into everything, watched over everything—and everything passing through his hands was not only well done, but bore the peculiar stamp of his remarkable talents and superior abilities. In a short time all was in order and in that little village of Vincennes which did not have a population of more than three thousand souls, Cathedral, house, grounds all connected with the church was transformed from the rudeness and roughness attending an almost frontier place into a thing of beauty and order. Strangers coming to the little town were astonished when they looked at its size and its isolation, to find the tasty, elegant completeness of all over which his influence and care extended. He neglected nothing, would attend personally to all that had to be done, giving plans himself, watching over their strict execution, insisting always on carrying out the requirements of art in smallest details.

Meanwhile, knowing that the European resources on which he had depended so far, could not always be counted upon; that the assistance which could be received from the Catholic population amounted to nothing—(Vincennes, where the largest body was to be found with its vicinity, numbered hardly three hundred families and all poor)—he set himself to the task of preparing revenues for the future. There were 400 acres of land belonging to the church which adjoined the town. He bought more, had all cleared, fenced. Had houses built for farmers and placed all in cultivation. He also bought property in the town which he proposed to rent, and in this respect did all that could, under circumstances, be attempted. But being at a great distance from the main avenues of travel, Vincennes would not grow. The flow of immigration passed on north and south of Indiana leaving only a few families here and there at the extremities. In Illinois, Chicago had been a point of attraction, the town had grown largely, promising already to become, in time, if not as large a place as we see it to-day, at least an important city. In 1844 it was separated from Vincennes and erected into another diocese by the Holy See, on the petitions of the Bishops assembled in the preceding Council at Baltimore. The

Bishop had valuable priests there whose services he would not lose and whom he recalled, among other Fathers De St. Palais, Dupontavice and Guiguen.

Casting his eyes about on that portion of the former Diocese which remained under his jurisdiction, for a more eligible point than Vincennes, he petitioned the Propaganda at Rome for permission to move his See to some of the other towns in the State of Indiana, which promised, by the energy of their population and greater natural advantages, a more rapid growth, designating three towns in particular; chief among whom was the very capital of the State—Indianapolis. His petition was granted, the choice being left to him, and at once he set to work to secure property in Indianapolis, waiting however to move his See there for further signs of its growth and more certain indications of future prosperity. But Indianapolis itself then would not grow; it was hardly as large as Vincennes, and the number of its Catholic inhabitants was so very small that a priest living in Shelby county visited it only once in three months to say Mass and administer the Sacraments to little more than half a dozen Catholic families, chiefly Germans, who met in a poor little frame building, but forty feet long by twenty wide. He determined to remain in Vincennes. Yet, this want of population was a very serious drawback and very disheartening, for, as to conversions, families were so scattered, so newly arrived, so occupied with material necessities, and withal so deeply prejudiced, that they could hardly be attempted on any large scale, especially by priests who, in general, spoke but imperfectly the language of the country. Now he saw dissatisfaction around him, caused by his active energy which, ever bent on pushing things in the way he thought proper, brooked not contradiction. It grew all around him, the institutions he had established with so much labor, were suffering.

In the fall of 1845, he left suddenly for Europe, proceeded to Rome directly, submitted his difficulties to Pope Gregory XVI. and offered his resignation. But he was honorably received by the Holy Father and encouraged to continue his work. He departed from Rome with a beautiful chalice presented to him by the Pope, valuable presents of books, and, if we are not mistaken, invested with the dignity of Assistant to the Pontifical throne. More valuable than all, with several entire bodies of saints, which, on his earnest demand, he had obtained through the Cardinal Secretary of the Propaganda, to enrich his diocese—a favor rarely—very rarely granted.

He hastened back, bringing with him more priests and students. During his absence the discontent had taken greater pro-

portions. But he never relented in his activity and his fertile mind continued, as before, on the alert for what could be done, and he would attend to this himself. Therein, however, was the chief source of all his troubles. He attended to everything personally, and, although he had a Vicar General near him, a superior of his Seminary, a superior over the Community of St. Mary's, a rector for his Cathedral, he hardly would allow them to do anything. All over the diocese, as far as his hand could stretch out, it was about the same. There was in consequence a general feeling of uneasiness, nobody knowing what he was to do or not to do—continual changes, the result not only of the varying necessities attendant on the infant condition of affairs, but also of real and now loud dissatisfaction. He saw it, felt it. He reproached himself for it. Yet his ardent and lofty spirit could not well check itself. It was hardly a year since his return from Rome. He determined on asking to be relieved, this time for good. Rome accepted his resignation.

As soon as he knew of it he proclaimed the news to his clergy and the people in a Pastoral Letter in which, humbly taking blame on himself he advised all to obey and reverence the successor given him, whom he hoped would do better than he had done, perform the works which he had himself desired to perform and could not accomplish.

He remained long enough to assist in the consecration of his successor, the Right Rev. Dr. Bazin. His health was somewhat shattered by the conflicting emotions which this great step had aroused in his heart and mind. He spent the winter in New Orleans to recruit a little. Then coming up the Ohio river, he stopped in Louisville to ask a blessing of an older and more venerable prelate, Bishop Flaget. Arrived in Philadelphia, he already heard of the death of his successor! consoled some of his former clergy by announcing to them the probable appointment of one of their own number, whom he would not name (Dr. St. Palais). In New York he made with Bishop Hughes arrangements, which he thought final, for the publication he had at heart—that of the life of his ever loved, ever honored predecessor, Simon C. Brute—and entered the vessel which was to convey him back to France—a Bishop without a See.

Thus ended in the United States the life of that remarkable man who helped Bishop Brute to found and establish the See of Vincennes and was his immediate chosen successor. His private fortune had been rather shattered by heavy drafts on his brother during his sojourn in Indiana. He made the necessary efforts to repair it in a degree and retired on a family estate of his

which yielded himself only a very modest income.

It has pleased God to leave him there thirty-five years! to survive two of his successors, one of whom, the late Dr. St. Palais, dividing again the old Diocese, remained in Vincennes over a quarter of a century, administering successfully the Southern portion of Indiana, which continued under his jurisdiction and, thanks to altered circumstances, began rapidly to grow in importance till finally on his death, Rome called the Superior of the American College in the Eternal city, Dr. Chatard, the present Bishop, to take the reins in hand and continue the work, his first step being to transfer the seat of administration to Indianapolis. The venerable old man now over four-score years of age, saw it, rejoiced and confidently surrendered himself to die.

Two Archbishops, those of Rennes and Laryssa, Coadjutor of Cardinal Guibert, and one Bishop, Mgr. Couille, of Orleans, successor of the celebrated Dupanloup, visited the dying Prelate in his retirement, and on the day succeeding that on which he died, May 1st, 1882, the Archbishop of Rennes, Mgr. Place, then on a confirmation tour, hastened to publish from the village where he was a Pastoral Letter to announce his death solemnly to his clergy and people and convoke them to attend a week after, on the 8th, the funeral over which he would himself preside.

Bishop Hailandiere was a man of majestic appearance; his smile, when pleased, full of grace and dignity, exercised a bewitching attraction which none could resist; his frown, when displeased, made everybody quail. Called to judicial honors when he had hardly more than attained his majority, by the force of character and the extraordinary talents of which he had very early given proof, he renounced the world and brilliant young friends who looked up to him with pride and a certain confidence that he might under circumstances be a leader, to consecrate his life as a priest, to God the King of Kings. And when after ten years of humble services as an ordinary priest in his own country, he answered the call of the Sainly Brute, to follow him to Vincennes, and help him found his Diocese in that wild and to him unknown country of Indiana, he went there in the same spirit of sacrifice. When after ten other years of hardest labors he left—those who knew him well, as the writer of this did, have many times wondered, thinking of that man of uncommon powers chaining himself as it were, in his retreat of Triandin, near Combourg—through a religious mistrust of his ownself.

*"Sacramentum regis abscondere bonum est opera autem Dei revelare et comitare honorificum est. (Tobias 2: 8.)* Had that man followed a



civil career as he at first designed, if events which seemed very propitious just then had only favored, he would in a short time have advanced himself to the very front rank in his own country as a minister to his King and there—these, for weal or woe (who would dare say that is aware of human frailty and the temptations of the strong) would have made his power known and felt far and wide as others, Richelieu, Mazorin and one nearer his own home did before—De Corbiere, a minister of Louis XVIII, a neighbor and friend of his family. "*Vanity of vanities and all is vanity*" says the wise man, except adds the follower of Jesus Christ, *to love God and serve him alone. To serve God is to reign more grandly than any potentate can.* God revealed this to Celestin De la Hailandiere in the hour of his early success as a man in the world when he could be great. He became a priest; when honors followed him in the Church, it seemed then as if Almighty God would allow him only to help laying down the first stones of the foundation of a Diocese, and then bid him to retire. He helped! was a partner of Bishop Brute, in founding the Diocese of Vincennes! Ah! this is glory enough, honor enough and meritorious indeed, for ever and ever.

It was the will of God—who needs no one, but will have all do what he chooses them to do, and do only so far as he intends to be

done by each in turn, to bend down that strong man—down, down. A man of deep, of unwavering faith all his life, his life was a never ending struggle, during which he would repeatedly cry out with St. Paul: "*Infortunatus homo quis me liberabit a corpore mortis hujus!*" and would also with the Apostle repeatedly hear the answer of Jesus Christ: "*Sufficit tibi gratia mea.*" He slept on straw to the last, got up summer and winter at 4 A. M., invariably made at least half an hour meditation before Mass, followed strictly the regulations at the Church in the recitation of the Divine Office, never failed to practice as a Bishop the exercises of piety he had been taught as a student in the Seminary; when asked, helped in his retirement the neighboring Bishops all he could, and spared on his scanty revenues to assist his old Diocese.

Celestine Rene Lawrence Guynemer De la Hailandiere, (all names given him on the day of his baptism as a reminder through all his life of special honor and a duty of special virtues), died in the peace of God, 84 years old lacking a day. May all, simply bearing in mind that he helped found this Diocese, pray for him and teach so to their children. "Remember your Prelates who have spoken the word of God to you; whose words follow considering the end of their conversation." Heb. 13—7.