

CANADA

Episcopal ordination of Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie, OMI

Approximately 600 family and friends gathered in The Pas, MB, on Tuesday, August 29, 2005, to witness the Episcopal Ordination of Most Reverend Sylvain LAVOIE, OMI. The Principal celebrant was Most Reverend Peter A. SUTTON, OMI, who was assisted by Most Reverend Blaise Morand, D.D. and Most Reverend Gerald WEISNER, OMI. Most Reverend Luigi Ventura, D.D., Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, gave a greeting from Pope Benedict XVI. Sylvain is the first Archbishop named by the new Pope. There were approximately 16 Bishops and 30 priests in attendance. Marcel DUMAIS, OMI, General Councilor for Canada-United States, spoke on behalf of Wilhelm STECKLING, OMI, Superior General.

The Saskatchewan Local Community Leadership Team was represented by Nestor GREGOIRE, Paul FACHET and Lucie LEDUC. Lucie said the ordination had many very moving moments. One moment she described was during the procession when Sylvain appeared and the community applauded spontaneously then went quiet and rose in applause once again when Peter Sutton appeared. Another moment was during the ordination when Peter Sutton anointed Sylvain with the oils. He poured the oil and affectionately rubbed it on Sylvain's head much like a father would welcome his son.

It was estimated that half of those in attendance were Métis and First Nations people from all parts of Saskatchewan and other Provinces. A special blessing and acceptance ceremony for their new Archbishop was given by a group of Elders. The drumming and singing added to the already moving ceremony. Sylvain has ministered to the Métis and First Nations community for most of his priesthood.

Due to the large number of people in attendance, not everyone could be accommodated in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Cathedral. A closed-circuit broadcast was set up a few doors down at Guy Hall. Many people generously contributed to this wonderful celebration. (Saskatchewan Local Community "*Sights and Sounds*" September 1, 2005)