



ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE

It is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks.

Lucky Thirteen

Media exposure works. At my annual visit to one parish shortly after Pope Benedict XVI's visit to these shores, a little girl said right into my microphone in the middle of the liturgy, "Are you the Pope?" She had been made so aware of pointy



BY BISHOP PAUL V. MARSHALL

hats by the coverage of the papal visit that when she saw one she made a single connection.

My favorite moment of disguise, however, was at St. Luke's, in Scranton, where a little child in a huge stage whisper asked his mother, "Who's the man in the pirate hat?" It is a question I pay good money to ask somewhat regularly.

The answer keeps evolving, as it does for every human being, but one thing is clear to me: I have no perception other than that I am called to be here. So later this month I will recall with gratitude the 12th anniversary of my consecration as Bishop of Bethlehem.

This is a bit of a shock to my system because a much wiser and holier head had assured me that the shelf life of a bishop is but 12 years. At age 48, I did not find that observation hard to believe.

As I approach 61, however, it looks very different: there is plenty for us to do, and the New Hope Campaign, which has now surpassed its basic goal by nearly \$100,000, is taking us into exciting territory.

I nonetheless retain the suspicion that my older colleague may have been on to something. The fact is that we haven't had a long-haul bishop in Bethlehem in living memory. If I continue to believe myself called to be here, being long-haul will put me at 24 years of service if God gives me the health to persevere until mandatory retirement at 72.

I wrestle with many questions as I think about persisting in office, but one above all. Dare any human become a trans-generational institution? I do not mean such a question in any self-aggrandizing or monumental way, but in a common-sense, ordinary anthropological way. We have term limits to prevent ossification in other areas of life. In a parish church a rectorship of that length is at best a mixed blessing.

On the one hand, persistence in office is a way to enact the truth that the Church is a community that transcends generational boundaries. If that is the case, there is only one really important question. Does the bishop manage to be present as one

who loves Christ's people, regardless of their parents. They can't possibly of when they were born or what their cultural context might be?

On another hand, as I read our history, we haven't had a truly hip bishop since Bishop Talbot, who had worked on Indian reservations

Each phase of life has its challenges. The last phase of life, beyond age 60, is said to be marked by the struggle between integrity and despair. Can cutting edge of his day. Perhaps it is time for that. I am happy to report a person whose body (along with that Bishop Jack is already bringing gravity) is increasingly betraying us touches that enrich us on several levels, including hip-ness. important to offer the species? Can someone who cannot compete physically, and to some extent mentally, with younger members of the species dare to lead?

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On June 29, 1996, bishops of the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America laid hands on Paul Marshall, ordaining him the 919th Episcopal bishop in the American succession and the eighth bishop of the Diocese of Bethlehem. "When we put ourselves in God's hands to be bread," Bishop Catherine Roskam said that day during the consecration sermon, "God keeps messing around in our lives, elbow deep in flour, never quite finished, making us ever more delicious and nourishing. The process is dynamic, creative, intimate and sometimes painful. It's not easy being bread ... May the bakerwoman God bake, break and remake you. May Christ the bread of life, feed and sustain you. And may this House of Bread flourish under your care."

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