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## *DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA*

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### Department of Communications

The Florida Catholic • Radio - TV Apostolate • Media - Public Relations

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Interim Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 25, 2006

### **Bishop Frank J. Dewane Ordained Today**

Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane was ordained coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Venice today in a solemn Mass at Epiphany Cathedral by Bishop John J. Nevins, the first and founding bishop of the diocese.

Bishop Dewane, 56, will have the right of succession of Bishop Nevins when he retires on his 75th birthday in January 2007. In the meantime, Coadjutor Bishop Dewane will serve as a vicar general of the diocese, Bishop Nevins said.

“Bishop Dewane will familiarize himself with the workings of the diocese, visiting parishes and schools, attending meetings and getting to know the Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Venice,” he said.

Bishop Nevins said he has strong faith in his soon-to-be coadjutor and future successor.

“Bishop Dewane is very much a man of faith and justice. Formed by his parents and his Catholic community as a child in the farmland of Wisconsin, and seasoned in doing the good works of the Holy Father in the Pontifical Councils *Cor Unum* and Justice and Peace, Bishop Dewane has a deep respect for the family and its needs,” he said. “He also has an understanding of the needs of the peace and justice issues currently taking place within our diocese, such as those facing immigrants, farmworkers and their families, the elderly, the incarcerated and the environment.”

Bishop Dewane was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Green Bay, Wis., July 16, 1988. He was born March 9, 1950, to the late Eleanor (Prendergast) and Ben Dewane in Green Bay and is one of four children. He comes to the Diocese of Venice from the Vatican where he served as the Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and has held that position since March of 2001. The primary responsibility of the Pontifical Council is to promote justice, peace, development and human rights.

The co-consecrators for the ordination were Most Rev. John C. Favalora, D.D., Archbishop of Miami, and Most Rev. Diarmuid Martin, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. Other dignitaries included Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Councils for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerants and *Iustitia et Pax*; Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, SDB, of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, the first cardinal of Honduras; Cardinal Adam Maida of Detroit, chairman of Michigan Catholic Conference; and Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities. An additional 19 bishops were in attendance.

In addition to the many dignitaries, Bishop Dewane was surrounded by dozens of his family and friends from Wisconsin and representatives from each of the 55 parishes, six missions, seven chapels of convenience within the 10-county, 9,000-square-mile Diocese of Venice. To accommodate the remainder of the diocese's total 233,000 Catholic population, the Mass was aired live on television in all 10 counties and on two radio stations out of Fort Myers and Naples.

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[www.dioceseofvenice.org](http://www.dioceseofvenice.org)



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**MESSAGE FROM COADJUTOR BISHOP FRANK J. DEWANE**

It is a pleasure for me to be here this morning beside Bishop John Nevins, Bishop of the Diocese of Venice. Today I will be ordained by Bishop Nevins as the Coadjutor Bishop of this Diocese. It is indeed humbling as I reflect upon the responsibilities involved, being ordained into the line of succession stemming from the Apostles.

Most of all, this day has a profound spiritual meaning for me and for the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Venice. It is a time for reflection on the life I have lived, the tremendous gift of life given by God our Creator, and to reflect on the other gifts I have been given, particularly the gift of Faith. The challenge for each one of us is to discern how we are to use the gifts given in our lives for the greater honor and glory of God. For the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Venice, it is a day to witness the work of Christ continuing through the Sacrament of Ordination.

I am indeed fortunate to have been named Coadjutor Bishop of Venice and to have the time to assist Bishop Nevins as he continues to lead the People of God entrusted to his care. I thank His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for nominating me to serve in this beautiful Diocese in Southwest Florida.

In particular, I wish to thank all the people of the Diocese who have prayed for me at this time of transition in my life. I am especially appreciative of all those who participated in prayer services and vigils this past evening that have been held in the parishes throughout the Diocese, as well as those who have prayed for me in their homes. It is through the intercession of the priests and the faithful of the Diocese, through their prayers, that God will continue to bless us all. Please continue to keep me in your prayers as I take on these new responsibilities. The people of the Diocese of Venice can be assured of my prayers.

In closing I address myself to the members of the media, those here present and their colleagues. The media sector is the means through which the message is delivered, including the faith-based message. I thank all of you for accepting this challenge. May Almighty God continue to bless you and your families with peace!

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