

# **Episcopal Consecration of Bishop-elect Luis Romero**

## **Homily of the Most Reverend John O. Barres**

### **Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul**

**St. Agnes Cathedral**

**June 29, 2020**

**En esta Solemnidad de los Santos Pedro y Pablo, celebramos la Consagración Episcopal del Obispo electo Luis Miguel Romero Fernández, M. Id., DD, nuestro Vicario para el Ministerio Hispano y la Evangelización, y el párroco de la iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Loreto.**

**Este es un gran día de celebración para nuestra comunidad hispana evangelizadora de Long Island y para todo el pueblo de Dios en Long Island.**

**En este día histórico para la Iglesia Católica en Long Island, buscamos la intercesión de los Santos Pedro y Pablo para que nos ayuden a tocar las heridas del mundo con las heridas glorificadas de Cristo resucitado.**

**El Obispo electo Romero ha elegido "Manso y humilde de corazón" como su lema episcopal, y su escudo episcopal rinde homenaje a la aparición de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, la Patrona de las Américas, al humilde San Juan Diego (1474-1548).**

**También rinde homenaje al místico fuego evangelizador de la comunidad Idente fundada por el Siervo de Dios Fernando Rielo Pardal (1923-2004), y nos unimos hoy a la comunidad en la oración por la canonización de su fundador. También celebramos que hoy**

**es la primera vez que un miembro de la Comunidad Idente ha sido consagrado Obispo.**

**El Obispo electo Romero, doctor en medicina y biología, es un vibrante testigo de la defensa de la Iglesia Católica del desarrollo científico ético en la historia. Ha sido un importante portavoz de la relación entre la religión y la ciencia.**

**El sirvió como Canciller y Rector-Canciller de la Universidad Técnica Privada de Loja, en Ecuador, y dirigió un importante cambio en esa Universidad de acuerdo con la Constitución Apostólica de San Juan Pablo II sobre el papel de la Universidad Católica, Ex Corde Ecclesiae (1990). También dio prioridad al fomento de las oportunidades académicas y de liderazgo para las jóvenes talentosas que habían experimentado una verdadera pobreza.**

**Esperamos la experta colaboración del Obispo electo Romero a nuestra Iniciativa Morningstar para las escuelas primarias Católicas y nuestra aspiración diocesana de aumentar el número de niños y familias hispanas que asistan a la educación Católica en la Diócesis de Rockville Centre.**

**Hemos hecho progresos significativos en los últimos años, pero nos queda mucho por hacer, por lo que hoy hacemos de esto una intención especial.**

**El obispo electo Romero ha sido un pionero latinoamericano y europeo del movimiento de educación Universitaria a distancia.**

**El ha dado conferencias en América del Norte, América Central, América del Sur y en Europa sobre biología, filosofía, teología, ética, educación a distancia y gestión universitaria.**

**Al igual que el fundador de la Comunidad Idente, el Siervo de Dios Fernando Rielo Pardal, el obispo electo Romero es un hombre del Renacimiento.**

**El es un hombre de Iglesia global, un intelectual católico y un destacado pastor de las parroquias católicas, conocido por su innovador enfoque a la evangelización católica y la formación en la vida parroquial. Los fieles de la parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Loreto le dirán que su amado pastor "conoce el olor de las ovejas".**

**Damos gracias al Espíritu Santo y a la Santa Sede por su nombramiento y por su Consagración Episcopal hoy y nos alegramos de manera especial con la comunidad hispana de Long Island, los feligreses de la parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Loreto y la comunidad Idente.**

**On this Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, we celebrate the Episcopal Consecration of Bishop-elect Luis Miguel Romero Fernandez, M. Id., DD, our Vicar for Hispanic Ministry and Evangelization, and the pastor of Our Lady of Loretto parish.**

**His Episcopal Consecration today occurs against the backdrop of the traumas and deaths of the COVID-19 crisis. We continue to pray for all medical personnel and front-line responders, including our brother priest and deacon hospital chaplains. We remember the souls who have died from COVID-19 and their families.**

**We also continue to experience the societal upheaval ignited by the killing of George Floyd on a Minneapolis street and our call as a Church to witness for racial justice, and social justice and change grounded in the sanctity of human life, non-violence, and Spirit-driven conversion.**

**On this historic day for the Catholic Church on Long Island, we seek the intercession of Saints Peter and Paul to help us to touch the wounds of the World with the Glorified Wounds of the Risen Christ.**

**Bishop-elect Romero has chosen “Meek and Humble of Heart” as his episcopal motto and his episcopal coat-of-arms pays tribute to the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of the Americas, to the humble Saint Juan Diego (1474-1548).**

**It also pays tribute to the mystical evangelizing fire of the Idente community founded by the Servant of God Fernando Rielo Pardal (1923-2004), and we join the community today in praying for the canonization of their founder.**

**We also celebrate today that this is the first time a member of the Idente Community has been consecrated a Bishop.**

**We are so grateful for the presence of:**

**Fr. Luis Casasus LaTorre, the General Superior of the Idente Missionaries men;**

**Fr. Fernando Real, the General Procurator of the Idente Missionaries Men;**

**Fr. Robert P. Badillo, the Provincial Superior of the Idente Missionaries Men;**

**Sr. Elaine Shenk. the Provincial Superior of the Idente Missionaries Women;**

**We send our prayers and best wishes to the President of the Idente Missionaries, Fr. Jesus Fernandez Hernandez who could not be present with us today.**

**Bishop-elect Romero is a Doctor of Medicine and Biology who is a vibrant witness to the Catholic Church’s advocacy of ethical scientific development in history. He has been an important global spokesman on the relationship between Religion and Science.**

**He served as the Chancellor and Rector-Chancellor of the Private Technical University of Loja in Ecuador and led a major turnaround of that University in accord with St. John Paul II’s Apostolic Constitution on the role of the Catholic University, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990). He also made it a priority to advance academic and leadership opportunities for talented young women who had experienced real poverty.**

We are looking forward to Bishop-elect Romero's expert assistance to our *Morningstar Initiative* for Catholic elementary schools and our diocesan aspiration to expand significantly the number of Hispanic children and families served by Catholic education in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

We have made significant progress in recent years but we have so far to go and so we make that a special prayer intention today.

We are grateful for the presence today of Brother Thomas Cleary, SM, the President of Chaminade High School and the Chief Revitalization Officer of Catholic Education for the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Brother Tom, we are so grateful for your innovative, contemplative and missionary leadership and your insistence on Catholic mission, formation and academic excellence in our schools as we face together the many challenges that every diocese in the country is now facing. We know that your partnership with Bishop-elect Romero will result in many new Hispanic families on Long Island benefiting from a Catholic education.

Bishop-elect Romero has been a Latin American and European pioneer of the University Long Distance Learning movement.

He has lectured in North America, Central America, South America and in Europe on Biology, Philosophy, Theology, Ethics, Distance Education and University Management.

Like the founder of the Idente Community, Servant of God Fernando Rielo Pardal, Bishop-elect Romero is a Renaissance man.

He is a global Churchman, a Catholic intellectual and an outstanding Catholic parish pastor known for his innovative approach to Catholic evangelization and formation in parish life. The parishioners of Our Lady of Loretto parish will tell you that their loving pastor "knows the smell of the sheep."

The Solemn Blessing of the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul reads: "So that by the keys of Saint Peter and the words of Saint Paul, and by the support of their intercession, God may bring us happily to that homeland that Peter attained on a cross and Paul by the blade of a sword."

**St. Paul's iron will to persecute Christians was broken down and transformed as he encountered the Risen Christ on the Road to Damascus.**

**Paul's Conversion teaches us that the Risen Lord can break down our prideful and egocentric resistances to God's grace and transform our lives with a fresh new commitment to Christ and the mission of His Church.**

**Paul teaches us in Galatians 2:20: "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." When we open up at a deeper level to the presence, power and peace of Jesus Christ within us we join the saints at the crossroads of history and live Christ in every moment of crisis.**

**Paul teaches us in 2 Timothy 2:9 that "The Word of God cannot be chained." Pope Francis echoes this insight when he says in *The Joy of the Gospel* that "God's word is unpredictable in its power."**

**And so we open ourselves joyfully to "God's perpetual surprises" as we open ourselves to daily immersion and prayer in the Word of God.**

**Paul teaches us to love the Cross. He had many weaknesses and many struggles. He had an unspecified "thorn in his flesh."**

**But he teaches us that God wants to use us precisely with our weaknesses, our failures, our falls, our weaknesses, our struggles, our problems and our limitations. We discover Christ's glory shining in our lives with a joyful embrace of his holy Cross.**

**Paul teaches us that a love for the Eucharist ignites a love for the Body of Christ. Our reverent and humble love for the Body and Blood of Christ opens us up to Christ's cosmic power and our call to be missionary disciples.**

**May the Fire that the Holy Spirit cast down into the heart of St. Paul, which in turn lit up the earth, inflame our hearts to be vibrant and effective global missionaries.**

**May we with St. Paul, pour out our lives like a libation. And may we finish the race, keep the faith and believe deeply that eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God has prepared for those who love him.**

**Bishop-elect Romero, may St. Paul intercede for you today, this day of your Episcopal Consecration.**

**The Lord called Peter from his fishing nets and Peter responded immediately and decisively.**

**And yet perhaps what comforts and encourages us most about Peter are his weaknesses. He was stubborn, impulsive, verbally imprudent, unreliable and cowardly.**

**And yet Peter became the Rock of the Church, a zealous and effective preacher of the Risen Christ, a courageous man who was crucified upside down because of his humility and love for the Lord.**

**Somehow when we pray the figure of Peter in the Gospels we realize that there is hope for us yet. We can humble ourselves and begin again many times – the way that Peter did.**

**Jesus accepted Peter where he was and worked with him, strengthened him and helped him to grow and change.**

**Think of Peter being called from his fishing nets. Think of Peter boldly proclaiming: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Think of Peter sinking in the water. Think of Peter at the Transfiguration. Think of Peter hearing the cock crow. Think of Peter running to the Empty Tomb. Think of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles boldly expressing his love of the Risen Christ and think of the Angel who rescues Peter from prison, a double set of chains falling from his wrists. Every one of these images stirs our faith and our hope in the Son of the Living God.**

**Very often when we pray, we experience distractions, boredom, weakness and prayer attention deficit disorder. We are as impulsive and as irresolute and moody as Peter was.**

**And yet when we pray with all these weaknesses we know that Jesus sees right through us with his merciful eyes the way he saw through Peter. He understands us the way he understood Peter. And he strengthens and guides us the way he strengthened and guided Peter.**

**We ask for St. Peter's intercession for our prayer, our loyalty to Christ and the Church.**

**We pray that as we gaze on the Face of Christ in prayer that we could say with Peter's bold faith and conviction: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."**

**Bishop-elect Romero, may St. Peter intercede for you today, the day of your Episcopal Consecration.**

**With Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the papal nuncio representing our Holy Father Pope Francis today, with our Metropolitan Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan, with Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, with Archbishop Nelson Perez of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, with Bishop Nicholas DeMarzio of the Diocese of Brooklyn, with the Bishops from New York and other Bishops from around the country and the world who could not be here today, with co-consecrators Bishop-Emeritus William Murphy and Bishop Robert Brennan of the Diocese of Columbus, with Bishop Andrzej Zglejszewski, Bishop Richard Henning, Bishop Robert Coyle, Bishop John Dunne, Bishop Emil Wcela, and all the People of God on Long Island and beyond, we give thanks for the Gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of Pope Francis of Luis Miguel Romero Fernandez, M. Id., DD. becoming a Successor of the Apostles and Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre.**

**Bishop-elect Romero, our prayers are with you as you embrace this new ecclesial mission with meekness and humility of heart. May the Holy Spirit cast the Fire of global mission on Long Island and throughout the Universal Church on this historic day.**

**Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!**

**Sts. Peter and Paul, pray for us!**

**St. Oscar Romero, pray for us!**

