

Bishop Joseph A. Galante



Serving as 'our' bishop

By Carl Peters

A key word in understanding Bishop Joseph Galante is "our." As in "our faith," "our church," "our God."

When the bishop came to the Camden Diocese in 2004 he said his goal was summed up in his episcopal motto, "Have the mind of Jesus."

"I invite all of you to join with me in coming to know Jesus more intimately, to love Jesus more ardently, and to live Jesus more totally," he said in a prepared statement at the press conference announcing his appointment.

In a recent interview as he prepares to leave that appointment behind, he stressed the Catholic — meaning catholic — vision of the Jesus relationship he preaches.

"What I do not say is that I accept Jesus as *my* own personal Lord and Savior," Bishop Galante said. "He is not mine. He is *ours*."

The bishop has said many times that his sense of church is formed by the Second Vatican II document Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*). Promulgated Nov. 21, 1964, it presents the church as a mystery, as a communion of baptized believers, as the people of God, as the body of Christ and as a pilgrim moving toward fulfillment in heaven but marked on earth with "a sanctity that is real, although imperfect."

The bishop's understanding of the church as a communion of baptized believers was integral to his work in the diocese, beginning with the nearly year and a half he devoted to 138 "Speak Up Sessions," an outreach that obtained feedback directly from parishioners, clergy, religious and others on the ministerial priorities of the diocese. This consultation led to a multi-year planning process that has sought to address challenges and revitalize parish life.

The bishop also has put a strong emphasis on lay ministry by establishing a virtual university by reaching agreements with several institutions of higher learning to provide cost effective education in ministry and church administration.

The "our" of the bishop's thinking is evident in less sweeping initiatives as well, such as the yearly Advent and Lenten retreat days for diocesan employees that he started.

This wide-ranging and inclusive "our" also figures into his vision for



Bishop Joseph Galante's vision of the church emphasizes a strong sense of community and the importance of lay leadership. Above, Bishop Galante greets Gwendolyn Schell, a student of St. John of God Community Services, Westville Grove, and her mother Mary Ellen Schell.



the church's future, which he sees shaped largely by the spirituality of the developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. "They will bring a different kind of spirituality," he said. "There is a vitality and dynamism in their faith."

In the United States, he added, the "deep faith and

wonderful sense of community" of Hispanic Catholics will continue to be a positive influence.

Looking back on his years in the diocese, the bishop said he is not unhappy about leaving administrative tasks behind. But, in summing up, he said, "It was a wonderful time."



Above, the bishop sits with Franciscan Father Frank Danella (left) and Jesuit Father James Martin, an author who was the guest speaker at a retreat for Camden Diocesan employees. Left, the bishop says Mass for migrant farmworkers.

"I've had great acceptance and wonderful support," he said. "God has blessed me in allowing me to come here and serve. If I have offended anyone, I ask for their forgiveness."

He added that his new home has a chapel, where he will continue to pray for the people of the diocese.



Ministry in the Camden Diocese

On March 23, 2004, Pope John Paul II named Bishop Joseph Galante the seventh shepherd of Camden. The Philadelphia native, having served as coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Dallas since 2000, Bishop of Beaumont from 1994-2000, and before that, Undersecretary for Religious in Rome, came back to the East Coast.

In his almost nine years serving the Diocese of Camden, Bishop Galante has been a champion to the poor and needy, strengthened schools and parishes, and inspired priests, religious and laity to know their faith more fully. Those who work with him say he has been guided by a deep conviction of God's love and his desire to be a servant in God's vineyard.

At his installation on April 30, 2004, Bishop Galante told his people of his desire for "us, the Church of Camden, to become more and more the fruit of love."

To ensure compliance with the U.S. Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, in October of that same year he established the diocese's first Office of Safe Environment for Children, Youth, and Adults (since renamed Office of Child and Youth Protection), with Rod J. Herrera as head, a position he still holds.

Consultation and Planning

Bishop Galante soon announced a plan to visit every parish in the diocese, beginning in early 2005. In these "Speak-Up" sessions, he would hear directly from the faithful of South Jersey, seeking the input of laity, clergy, and religious of every parish, to identify diocesan pastoral priorities.

The people of the diocese "will have the opportunity to share with me your concerns about the future of the church; those areas of the church that you feel may need improvement, development or change; the priorities that you believe require our resources and energy," he said in February 2005, announcing the Speak-Up schedule.

In June 2006, the Speak-Up Sessions were completed, with more than 140 sessions taking place with 125 parish/mission sessions, and

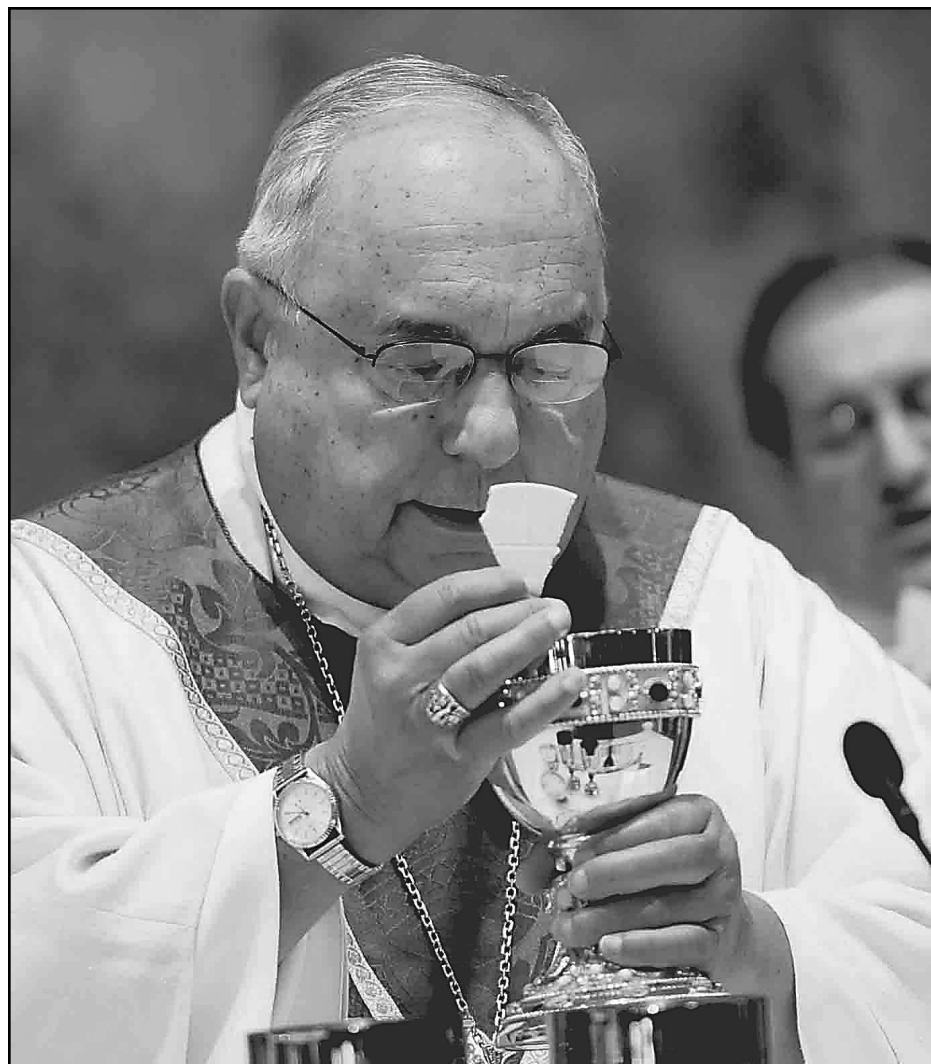


Photo by Alan M. Dumoff

more than a dozen sessions for priests, deacons and their wives, women religious, Catholic youth, diocesan employees, and Hispanic leadership. More than 8,200 faithful answered the question of "Looking to the future, what are the three most important areas of concern for the church in South Jersey?"

A few months later, Bishop Galante sent out a mailing to households with the findings of the Speak-Up sessions, and the six pastoral priorities most identified by parishioners: Lifelong Formation, Priestly Vocations, Lay Ministry, Youth and Young Adults, Liturgy, and Compassionate Outreach. These priorities formed the foundation of the diocese's efforts in cultivating a devout people, with a Pastoral Planning Office put in place to assist priests and parishioners in implementing these priorities.

In November 2007, Bishop Galante reorganized the diocesan offices in support of the pastoral priorities, grouping the faith and spiritual formation efforts of the multiple offices to encourage the pooling of resources, greater collaboration, and improved service to the parish communities. He named Sister Roseann Quinn, SSJ, as the Delegate of Lifelong Faith and Spiritual Formation.

The Camden bishop also sought to strengthen the

schools and the parishes. In January 2006, the diocese published a report on the status of the elementary schools in the diocese, which revealed rising deficits, rising parish subsidies, and declining enrollment for many of the schools.

In December of that year, a two-year school planning initiative, "Faith in the Future," began, designed to boost enrollment, improve programs and facilities, reconstitute school boards, address school funding, and institute advancement programs. The schools also held planning meetings in clusters, with a steering committee from each cluster making recommendations on how best to grow Catholic school education in each area of the diocese.

In November 2007, Bishop Galante held a press conference, announcing the reconfiguration of 35 Catholic elementary schools in nine clusters, to take effect in the 2008-09 school year. Today, there are 30 elementary schools, and 10 secondary schools in the diocese.

Seven months later, in June 2008, he announced that by the end of the 2008-09 school year, there would be almost 30 full-time, paid advancement directors working in diocesan elementary schools.

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Working with Bishop Galante

"I most remember his collaborative nature. He always listened to people gathered around him; as a person, he was kind, caring, considerate, he was always concerned for the well-being of people who came to him," said **Father Thomas Newton**, pastor of the Parish Community of Christ Our Light, Cherry Hill.

"In his commitment to strengthening parishes, he worked hard to make that reality, for the benefit of people...he took bold steps to address the issue of creative, dynamic parishes."

"He did some things in the diocese such as mergers, reconfiguration of the deaneries, listening to the people in Speak-Ups, that needed to be done, changes that were needed," said **Sister Roseann Quinn**, diocesan delegate for Lifelong Faith Formation.

She has known Bishop Galante since 1976, when he was Vicar for Religious and she was a "baby nun" who was "attracted to his vision way back then."

"Everything matters so much to him, because of his relationship with Jesus," she added. "Jesus affects every friendship. Every relationship, every interaction with people, is based on his friendship with Jesus. He acts toward people as Jesus would act."

"He is truly a man of prayer, spirituality. He wanted people to have a deeper relationship with Jesus," said **Father Joseph Szolack**, pastor of Infant Jesus Parish, Woodbury Heights.

"He'll be known as a man of simplicity, with great love of poor, Hispanics and others."

"He empowered us to use our gifts and our strengths in our ministries. I found him to be incredibly open to any ideas and thoughts," said **Msgr. Robert T. McDermott**, vicar general and pastor of St. Joseph Pro-Cathedral, Camden.

He "took us through a difficult time, presented that vision, and had the courage to make it happen. People are going to want to look back and see the mergers, but another part of his legacy is his desire to empower the lay people of our diocese to be leaders for the church."



Ministry in the Camden Diocese

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Funded through the Catholic School Development Program, advancement directors have focused on marketing, enrollment growth, and alumni relations.

In November of that same year, the Diocese and the International Education Foundation/Catholic School Development Program announced a partnership, calling on the expertise of top education, management, finance, and advancement executives in order to aid Catholic elementary schools in Camden.

In strengthening parishes in the diocese, the beginnings of change came about after a 12-page diocesan report was published on September 22, 2006. The report, called "Demographic Factors Impacting the Diocese of Camden," showed population trends, changes in demographics, declining Mass attendance, the number of priests available for ministry, and changes in school enrollment.

In January 2007, more than 700 clergy, religious, and laity, from each parish, met at Camden Catholic High School in Cherry Hill, for a daylong gathering to launch the planning phase of "Gathering God's Gifts," an initiative which would address the challenges facing the church of South Jersey, and with the aim of bringing about stronger parishes. Each Deanery had planners making preliminary recommendations on how to strengthen parishes to Bishop Galante and the Diocesan Planning Commission for review.

After reviewing the deanery planning recommendations, and in consultation with the Diocesan Planning Commission and the Presbyteral Council, Bishop Galante announced his intentions to reconfigure parishes during a press conference on April 3, 2008.

Lay Ministry Formation

Bishop Galante was also instrumental in educating the laity who were working in the parishes. In October 2008, he announced the start of the Lay Ministry Formation Program to help the laity engaged in parish work obtain the educational credentials relating to their area of ministry. With partners such as Georgian Court University and Villanova University, the program has been able to provide courses for students at satellite locations throughout the diocese. Those individuals accepted in the program pay a third of the tuition cost, while their parish pays another

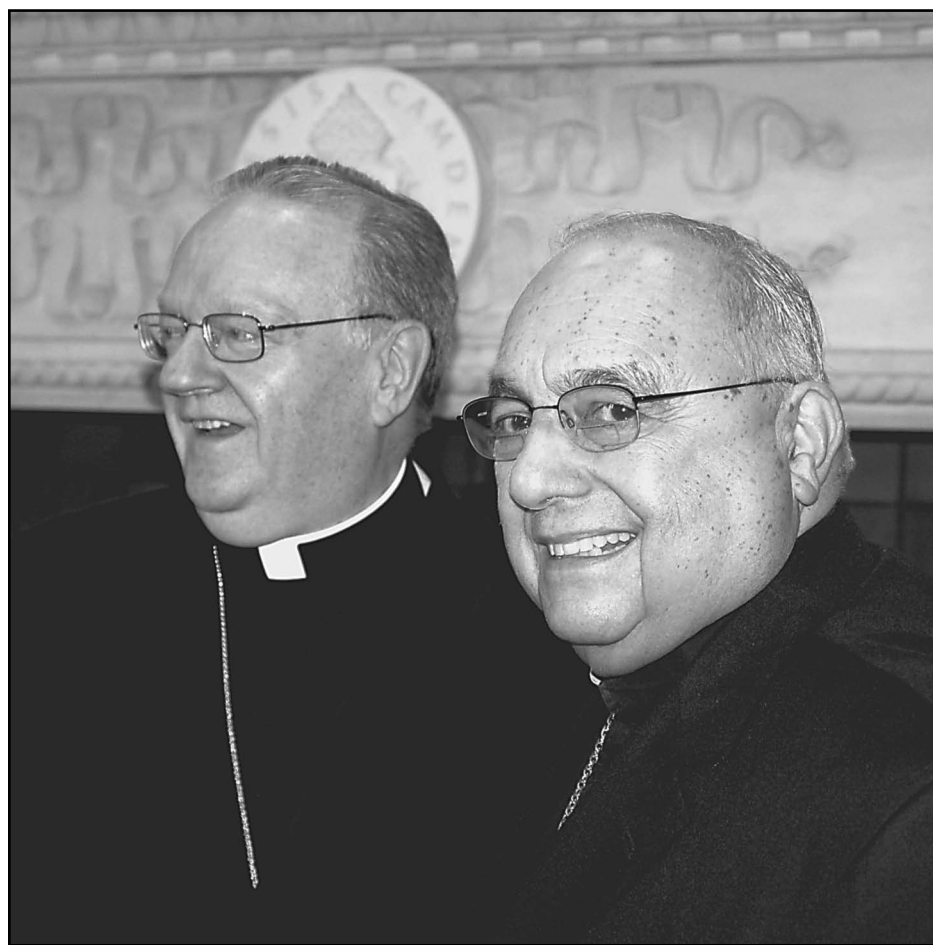


Photo by James A. McBride

Bishop Joseph Galante stands with Auxiliary Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan of New York, who will be installed as Camden's eighth bishop on Tuesday, Feb. 12, at St. Agnes Church (Our Lady of Hope Parish), Blackwood.

er third, and the diocese pays the final third.

Defending the Faith

When dealing with matters outside his diocese, Bishop Galante was not shy about defending his faith.

In March 2009, Bishop Galante responded to Barack Obama's executive order reversing the ban on federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.

The president, he wrote, "tragically has placed defenseless human life at the disposal of political expediency and so-called 'medical progress.' The destruction of human life, no matter what the hoped-for result, is inhumane and irresponsible, a grave moral wrong and never permissible."

A year later, Bishop Galante cited "grave concerns" with the Senate version of the health care bill before Congress, which expanded government funding of abortion, would violate the conscience rights of pro-life healthcare providers and failed to provide adequate coverage for immigrants.

"I urge the Catholic people in the region, and all people of good will who are concerned about the dignity of human

life, to let members of Congress know that the current legislation, absent these protections, is morally unacceptable and must not become law," he wrote.

Bishop Galante also fought for immigration reform, most notably in his 2010 pastoral letter, "Every Person Is A Neighbor," where he wrote that everyone is "worthy of care and concern, not because they've earned it or because they're legally entitled to it, but because they have inherent dignity by virtue of their creation in God's image."

The Camden leader, in 2011, also lent his support to the proposed DREAM ACT in Congress, which would offer young, undocumented individuals in the United States to be able to achieve citizenship.

"Catholic bishops support the DREAM Act because as religious leaders we are committed to promoting the dignity of every human being," he wrote. "As Americans we have prided ourselves on the potential that exists here. As Catholics we are morally obligated to uplifting and pointing out the God-given dignity of every human being."

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Working with Bishop Galante

Bishop Galante embodies the Gospel and treated me with great courtesy, friendliness and respect. And, patience. It is that quality I think of as I picture sitting in meetings with bishop and noting how patient he was as he afforded people the opportunity to speak their piece and give him their opinion," said **Kevin H. Hickey**, executive director of Catholic Charities.

"One of my lasting impressions, and lesson learned, is the image of bishop reading his breviary in all manner of situations, as he waited for a meeting to begin or before a service. He is a prayerful man and I would imagine that he would say that whatever good he has been able to accomplish, whatever patience and charity he extends to all, is due in part to his constancy to a deep prayer life."

"History will acknowledge with profound appreciation the courageous steps Bishop Galante took to revitalize parishes and schools in order to better serve the needs of the people of the diocese (notably, other dioceses, having seen the early fruits of these efforts, already are following his lead)," said **Andrew Walton**, who served as diocesan director of Communications, 1999-2010.

"He was able to accomplish so much and to persevere through the inevitable challenges of renewing parish life because of a remarkably clear and consistent vision of Church and discipleship, rooted in the Gospel and the Second Vatican Council. He was able to lead the diocese toward a realization of this vision because he was driven by a deep and obvious love for the Church and the People of God in South Jersey."

"Bishop Galante was a bishop among the people. He had a heart for the poor and was a prayerful man," said **Sister Marilyn Vollmer**, Provincial Superior for the Sisters of Sorrowful Mothers.

"He will be remembered as the bishop who changed the face of the Camden Diocese." With the Lay Ministry Formation programs, he brought a "much more literate Catholicism flourishing in the Diocese of Camden."



Ministry in the Camden Diocese

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Bishop Galante also wrote a message last June, published in the Catholic Star Herald, on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Mandate, which requires all private health insurance plans to include coverage for all FDA-approved prescription contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs.

Discussing the narrow parameters for "religious exemption" outlined in the federal mandate, and the government's desire to define religion, he urged Catholics to remember how to "define for ourselves what it means to be Catholic," and fight for "freedom of conscience," and reject the mandate.

Outreach

Bishop Galante authorized Catholic Charities in the Diocese to initiate "Project One" in 2006 to respond to the need for volunteers in Louisiana and Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina. With this initiative, up to 30 teams of 12-15 parishioner volunteers helped rebuild and repair homes.

Bishop Galante also believed in providing affordable housing to low and middle-income families in South Jersey, and spoke



Photo by James A. McBride

Bishop Joseph Galante is pictured at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Oct. 13, 2012, during the Marian pilgrimage on the occasion of the diocese's 75th anniversary.

at a ceremony where Gov. Jon Corzine signed a bill reforming affordable housing laws. Critical of the Regional Contribution Agreement, which allows wealthy suburban towns to pay poor towns to accept their share of affordable housing, Bishop Galante called it "inherently unfair, for it concentrates the poor in the most impoverished cities, locking them into enclaves of disadvantage, out of sight and out of minds, with jobs and opportunities out of reach."

Illness and Spirituality

In October 2011, the bishop shared with the diocese the struggle he had been dealing with for the past 11 years, Type II Diabetes. In a press release, he revealed that for more than a year, he had been suffering from chronic kidney disease, and was soon to begin dialysis.

"This illness...has provided me with a graced opportunity for deeper prayer and reflection," Bishop Galante wrote. "I daily offer to our Heavenly Father my illness with all that goes with it for you, that you may have a deeper faith and trust in Jesus and more fervent practice of that faith."

In December 2012, during Mass for the celebration of the 75th year of the diocese at the

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Camden, he recalled the good work of the faithful "for your responsiveness to God's call," and urged parishioners to have the "courage to live, love Jesus, and make him known and experienced."

Last year, after the findings of a study of religious attitudes in the diocese was announced, Bishop Galante reminded the faithful of their mission to "give people a better view of who Jesus is."

Last May during the press conference announcing the results of the diocese-commissioned Barna Study, he said that the church needs "to get back to teaching" to a group that seems to have a poor understanding of church doctrine, and "be more inviting," and "help people understand that (Jesus wants to) have a relationship of love and friendship."

In the announcement of his resignation on Jan. 8, Bishop Galante thanked the priests, deacons, religious, lay men and women, and young people, for their work.

"These past eight years and nine months have been the happiest, thanks to you all," he said.

Standing with the man who will become Camden's eighth bishop, Auxiliary Bishop Dennis Sullivan of New York, Bishop Galante said, "I joyfully welcome you to the wonderful people of God of this diocese. I trust you will come to love them as I do."

Compiled by Peter G. Sánchez

Working with Bishop Galante

"It has been a pleasure to work with Bishop Galante. His sense of humor and his wisdom are qualities that I admire," said **Father Robert E. Hughes**, chancellor and pastor of Holy Family Parish, Washington Township.

"He has been supportive of our work with the poor in Camden, and for those in desperate situations," said **Sister Helen Cole**, director of Guadalupe Family Services. "He was a champion for those in need."

"He had a great vision. He understood that something had to be done with the parishes and schools," said **Father Anthony Manuppella**, pastor of St. Peter Parish, Merchantville.

"He's a very spiritual bishop. Makes a holy hour every day, says

the rosary, he meditates, he loves saying Mass."

"In all of my encounters with him I found a man who was deeply rooted in his relationship with God. He was collaborative and valued working with colleagues. I respected the fact that he was not afraid to collaborate with women and in fact he valued the competency and wisdom of women....both laywomen and consecrated religious," said **Father Terry Odien**, Vicar for Clergy.

"His legacy was that he always wanted to bring people closer in their relationship with Jesus and he desired that our parishes would become more active, dynamic places where people could experience the presence of Christ not only through the sacred

liturgy but also in the overall life of the parish. I believe he planted those seeds in the restructuring of the parishes of the diocese, and it will take time for that to take root, but he was courageous in taking the necessary steps recognizing the signs of the times we live in."

Bishop Galante's legacy will undoubtedly be that he oversaw the large scale re-structuring of schools and parishes," said **Deacon Larry Farmer**, Pastoral Planning. "Yet there is so much more to what he has done for the Diocese of Camden. He has not only tackled these serious problems, as unpopular as they may have been to some, but he has called us to be something more as the People of God. He has reminded us that by our baptism 'we are con-

figured to Christ,' as he put it so often. If we really take this to heart, it changes much of how we think about life and about what we do daily. It does so because — at least for me — it calls us to a more intimate relationship with God rather than having a checklist Catholic life.

"He has said that the results of the work done to revitalize parish life will likely not be realized until after his episcopacy. That it happens in our parishes across the diocese will be part of his legacy only if each of us has the heart and mind of Jesus, as his coat of arms states, because we know Jesus more now than we did before Joseph Galante called us to live our baptism with new passion."

Compiled by Peter G. Sánchez



An often photographed shepherd

An anecdote about Albert Einstein: Once when filling out a government form, the scientist — who by then had become one of the most recognizable individuals in the world — filled in the space for “Occupation” with “Photographer’s Model.”

From the press conference announcing their appointments, through a multitude of confirmations, other church services and events, and public appearances, diocesan bishops also are photographed over and over again. Star Herald photographer James A. McBride was nicknamed Shadow by a previous bishop.

During his 35 years as a photographer, he recalled, some church leaders were more accommodating than others, and one wanted two weeks notice if the paper or someone else had a special request. In contrast, at the reception following Bishop Galante’s installation, McBride had a request and the bishop helped set it up.

“This is going to be easy,” McBride remembered thinking at the time.

“At ordinations and large ceremonies, and everything else, he’s always been good with pictures,” McBride said nearly nine years later. “There has never been a time or situation where he said no.”

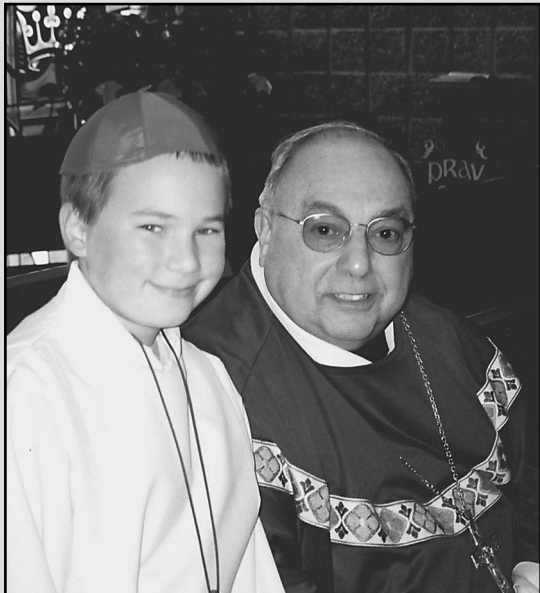
In choosing a favorite photo that he has taken, McBride picked the image at right from Oct. 22, 2009. The bishop joined a group of more than 100 pro-lifers to pray the rosary outside the Cherry Hill Women’s Center during the 40 Days for Life observance.

To McBride, it shows the bishop in his role as a shepherd, leading a group of people of different ages and backgrounds together in prayer for the same cause.



Bishop Joseph Galante prays the rosary outside the Cherry Hill Women’s Center during the 40 Days for Life observance in 2009. At left, the bishop with Star Herald photographer James A. McBride.



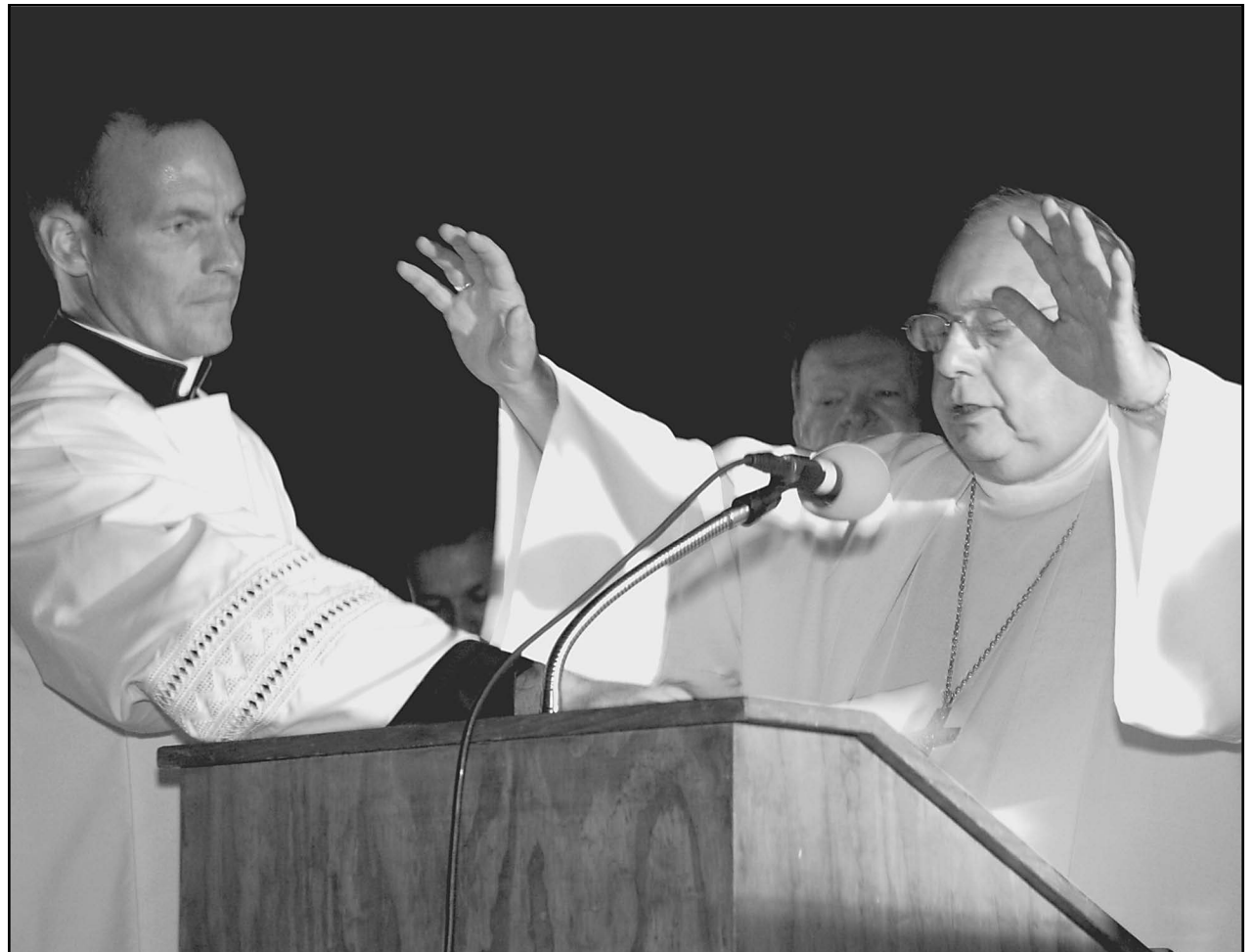


He 'gets along with everybody'

"The man gets along with everybody," said freelance photographer Alan M. Dumoff, who has photographed Bishop Joseph Galante in churches, schools and public places in all six counties of the Diocese of Camden,

Dumoff went on to say that at public events the children felt comfortable with the bishop and liked having their picture taken with him.

Dumoff recalled a time after the bishop celebrated Mass for farmworkers in Cumberland County. "Someone asked if he could take a photo. He had two kids. The two kids became 25 kids," Dumoff said, explaining how other children flocked to have their picture taken with the bishop.



Intense concentration

These images of Bishop Galante at the Wedding of the Sea in Wildwood a few years ago — showing his intense concentration in a ceremonial role out in the elements and among the people — are among the favorites of the numerous photos freelance photographer Alan M. Dumoff has taken over the years. Pictured above with the bishop is Msgr. Peter Joyce.



What you see is what you get

By Peter Feuerherd

Let's be frank: a communication director for a diocese is not about to write critically about the man who, at least metaphorically, signs his paycheck.

That is not an issue here. I lucked out in this job over the past two years. Anyone who has dealt with Bishop Joseph A. Galante knows that what you see is what you get. And in the case of the bishop, that's a good thing.

One of the first things I noticed about the bishop was the omnipresent black book, the Daily Office of prayers and Scripture.

Every time I would come in for a meeting with the bishop, his head was in the book. At first, I wondered: Is he just expecting me to notice, to fulfill my expectation of what a bishop is supposed to be?

And then, I discovered much of what he had to say at our meetings, where we would discuss his columns for the Catholic Star Herald, were coming near direct from that book. The Scripture readings and prayers are simply one with the bishop. He has a friend in Jesus and he wants the world to know it. His spirituality merges with who he is.

I discovered early how much he sees everything in the light of the Gospel with a default response of compassion.

I was just coming out of a divorce and wondered if the expectation would be that a spokesman for the diocese would require a perfect resume on the personal front. I raised it with the bishop. His email response: "I will pray for your family." Simple, yet just what I needed to hear. I signed on quickly.

In the two years since, I've learned much about the man: his encyclopedic knowledge of movies; his humor, often based on a few awful puns which he is willing to accept the requisite pained responses that lighten up long meetings; knowledge of country music, not something common to Philadelphians, honed in his years in Texas.

Also: the bishop has a great knowledge of sports, and will occasionally drop a few names of people

he has known through the years, such as his cousin Matt Galante, a major league coach. He likes reporters — not necessarily a common trait among bishops — and has a way of

“He has a friend in Jesus and he wants the world to know it.”

winning their trust, asking them as many questions as they would ask him. In particular, he liked to talk at length to reporters involved in Jewish-Catholic marriages, describing the differences and

common points between the two traditions. He had a simple yet effective media strategy: treat reporters with interest and respect, ask them questions, be willing to banter, and the end result is a media/diocese relationship unusual in today's church.

Although not a native of the Diocese of Camden, at meetings he can recall the makeup of all the diocesan parishes, and quickly note which ones were lively and those which are not-so-lively and could use a little prodding. He liked to talk about his time in Texas where, as a young priest in the border town of Brownsville, he encountered Mexican immigrants and those with long family histories to the north of the Rio Grande. He admired the way an early mentor, Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, would challenge Anglo Catholics in Brownsville to treat Mexican workers with respect and dignity.

“Mi corazon es Latino,” he would tell a Hispanic group. Immigrants are always close to the heart of this grandson of Italian immigrants.

Not to say everything was harmonious with Bishop Galante's tenure here. He has the mark of a good leader: He is a man who made decisions. Not everyone

liked them, for sure (I found I was often the first point of contact for those who didn't like the way things were in the diocese). Bishop Galante would be the first to say that they were not all done perfectly. Yet what I have found is that the closer you are to the bishop, the more you admire the way he is. Understandably, those further away may find a decision off-putting and then ascribe it to the qualities of the man who made it. That would be a mistake.

Frequently over the past year, the bishop has described never being closer to God

than when he is in dialysis, a process done three times a week that takes hours. Most of us would be impatient at the thought of sitting still for such long periods. Not Bishop Galante. Now, instead of the black book, he prays his Office and contemplates Scripture via electronic means. The end result is the same: He sees it as an opportunity to get to better know his friend Jesus. The Diocese of Camden has been fortunate to reap the fruits of that friendship.

Peter Feuerherd is director of communications for the Diocese of Camden.

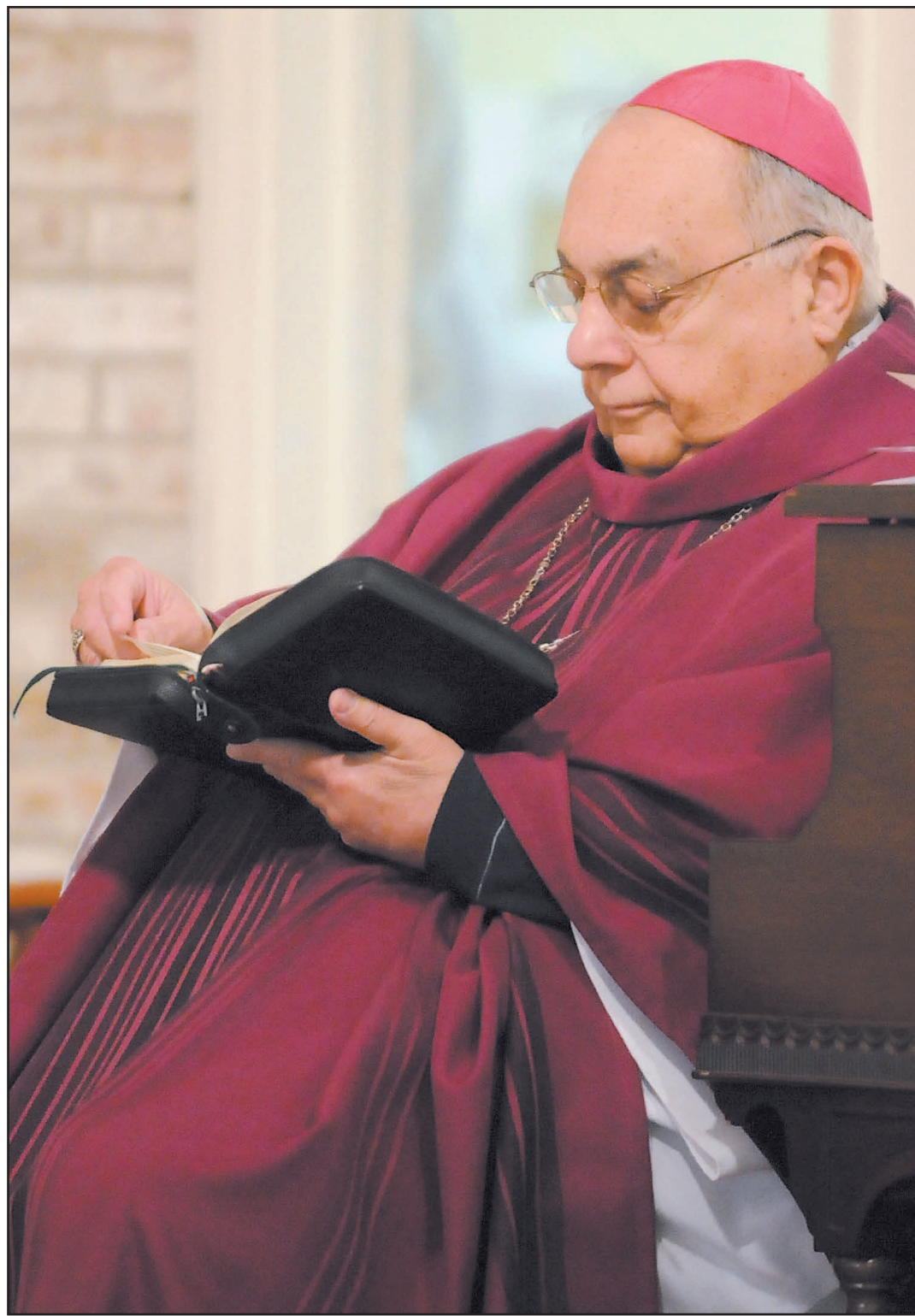


Photo by Alan M. Dumoff



View from the secretary's desk, where the bishop sometimes sits

By Carl Peters

A visitor gets off the elevator on the fifth floor of the Camden Diocesan Center and opens the glass doors to the chancery offices. That's where Dolores Orihel sits.

There is a second swivel chair at her work station, one with a low back and slightly faded upholstery. That's where Bishop Joseph Galante sits.

The bishop has his own desk, of course, in his own office, where he can look out large windows and see the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and Philadelphia skyline. But on days he doesn't have dialysis, he spends much of his time working with his secretary at her work station. The chancery staff is small, and Orihel works with several diocesan officials. Bishop Galante sits with her — rather than she in his office — so she doesn't get behind with important email messages or phone calls.

Bishop Galante has been ordinary of the Diocese of Camden at a time when dioceses across the United States and especially in the Northeast have been forced to reduce the number of parishes and schools and reduce their own workforce. While the parish merger process was going on, Orihel would often answer the phone and find herself talking to an upset, angry — even abusive — caller. Then the bishop would take the phone and talk to the person himself. Always calmly and patiently.

"I have great respect for the strength that he possessed in those difficult times, and I admire the approach and humility that he displayed while making the necessary decisions," Orihel says.

She respects her boss as a thoughtful but decisive administrator, but she has also come to know him as a deeply spiritual and compassionate man, one who never loses his temper, is unfailingly considerate, and prays before meetings.

"He is so kind to people. People call and say, 'I just need 10 minutes' — and it is never just 10 minutes," she says.

And if one of his priests calls for an appointment, she never even asks what he wants to see the bishop about. She knows it doesn't matter. The bishop will see any of his priests for any reason, any time he can.

Bishop Galante collaborated with any number of people during the past years, and he worked closely with some over a long period of time, but few have known him as Orihel has. She helped make his medical appointments, sometimes helped with transportation and communicating with doctors. There was the knee surgery, the stenosis, the worsening diabetes, and for the past year, the dialysis.

"I know what he deals with everyday. He offers all that up for the people of the Diocese of Camden," Orihel says. That includes everyone, she adds — both those who have loved and admired him, and those who vented their anger at him.



Bishop Joseph with his secretary Dolores Orihel and Deacon Michael Carter.



Bishop Joseph Galante is pictured with, from left, Msgr. Joseph Pokusa, a priest of the Camden Diocese who serves on the staff of the Apostolic Nunciature in Washington, and chancery workers Rita Bernert, Susan Patullo and Anna Summers.



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*Thank you, Bishop Galante
for your courageous leadership,
your inspiring love for Jesus,
and for being a voice for the "unwanted."*

The Parish of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta



'Give comfort to my people'

By Michael Canaris

At the celebration of Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan, the official end to the liturgical Christmas season, the readings make a full-circle return to the Advent themes and figures which opened the season six weeks earlier. One of the optional first readings was from the Book of Isaiah, and is familiar from the traditional Advent performances of Handel's "Messiah", and from readings in the preparatory season:

"Comfort; Give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem...In the desert, prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The rugged land shall be made a plain; the rough country, a broad valley.... Like a shepherd he feeds his flock, and gathers the lambs in his arms" (Is 40).

As I sat and listened to this passage, I reflected on the changes taking place in our diocese. But it was not maudlin farewells or banal reflections on the outgoing or incoming bishop "tenderly leading his flock" which came to my mind. Rather, I pondered the opening lines of the reading where God demands of Isaiah: "Comfort; Give comfort to my people."

Bishop Galante has recently claimed that "Over the 20 years that I have been a bishop, these past eight years and nine months have been my happiest" and that "the most effective work I've done has been being hooked up to the [dialysis] machine and offering all of that, along with my other aches and pains, for the good of the church in South Jersey and those that I love."

These are profound claims which reflect a theology of suffering which lies at the very heart of Christianity.

How is it that pain, brokenness,

and frailty can be transformative not only to the person undergoing them, but to the wider community and society at large?

How can it be that in suffering we as human beings experience "comfort" at a core and holistic level?

Is pain not merely the dark side of human existence

which is only to be endured, or better yet, avoided?

The cross, from which we learn the essence and pinnacle of what it means to be authentically human, would teach us differently. Good Friday is both the best and worst

moment in the saga of creation, the axis upon which all

of cosmic history turns. And deeply imbedded, in fact completely interwoven, in this climatic moment central to the rise and fall of every civilization that ever existed and the unfathomable galactic expansion of countless worlds is grief, pain, betrayal and death.

What the Greeks called *agape* — altruistic, self-giving, other-centered love (as opposed to other experiences, such as *philia* and *eros*, which we translate into modern English as "love") — is responsible for any real ministry, whether for a bishop, a hospital chaplain, a catechist, any baptized Christian, or an outcast Samaritan binding up the wounds of an enemy who despises him as he lies beaten by the side of the road.

In emulating Christ, we exhibit compassion. This is not feeling sorry for someone, but literally *cum/passio* "suffering with" another. We walk in solidarity with the Lord, and with our brothers and sisters, in our affliction and despair, dying to self so as to share in his victory over death, both in the next life and in this one.

Yes, the great saints from stained glass windows in ages past did this wonderfully well and are rightly recognized for their successes in this universal vocation. But so did Joseph Galante recently, and so must each of us. Holiness in suffering, diligence in compassion, redemption in blood, trust in providence, victory in defeat. This is the faith of the church which we are proud to profess, and we are fortunate to have been reminded so well of the lesson by our brother in the faith.

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Photo by Alan M. Dumoff

The crucifix at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Linwood. A theology of suffering lies at the very heart of Christianity.



The All-knowing and Ever-present God

Bishop Joseph Galante says that while his health has forced him to cut down on his workload, he has devoted more time to prayer and reflection. When asked for a favorite psalm, he mentioned Psalm 139.

I

For the leader. A psalm of David.

I

LORD, you have probed me, you know me:

you know when I sit and stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.

You sift through my travels and my rest;
with all my ways you are familiar.

Even before a word is on my tongue,
LORD, you know it all.

Behind and before you encircle me
and rest your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
far too lofty for me to reach.

Where can I go from your spirit?
From your presence, where can I flee?

If I ascend to the heavens, you are there;
if I lie down in Sheol, there you are.

If I take the wings of dawn
and dwell beyond the sea,

Even there your hand guides me,
your right hand holds me fast.

If I say, "Surely darkness shall hide me,
and night shall be my light"—

Darkness is not dark for you,
and night shines as the day.
Darkness and light are but one.

II

You formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother's womb.

I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;
wonderful are your works!
My very self you know.

My bones are not hidden from you,
When I was being made in secret,
fashioned in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw me unformed;
in your book all are written down;
my days were shaped, before one came to be.

III

How precious to me are your designs, O God;
how vast the sum of them!

Were I to count them, they would outnumber the sands;
when I complete them, still you are with me.



Photo by Alan M. Dumoff

When you would destroy the wicked, O God,
the bloodthirsty depart from me!

Your foes who conspire a plot against you
are exalted in vain.

IV

Do I not hate, LORD, those who hate you?
Those who rise against you, do I not loathe?

With fierce hatred I hate them,

Probe me, God, know my heart;
try me, know my thoughts.

See if there is a wicked path in me;
lead me along an ancient path.



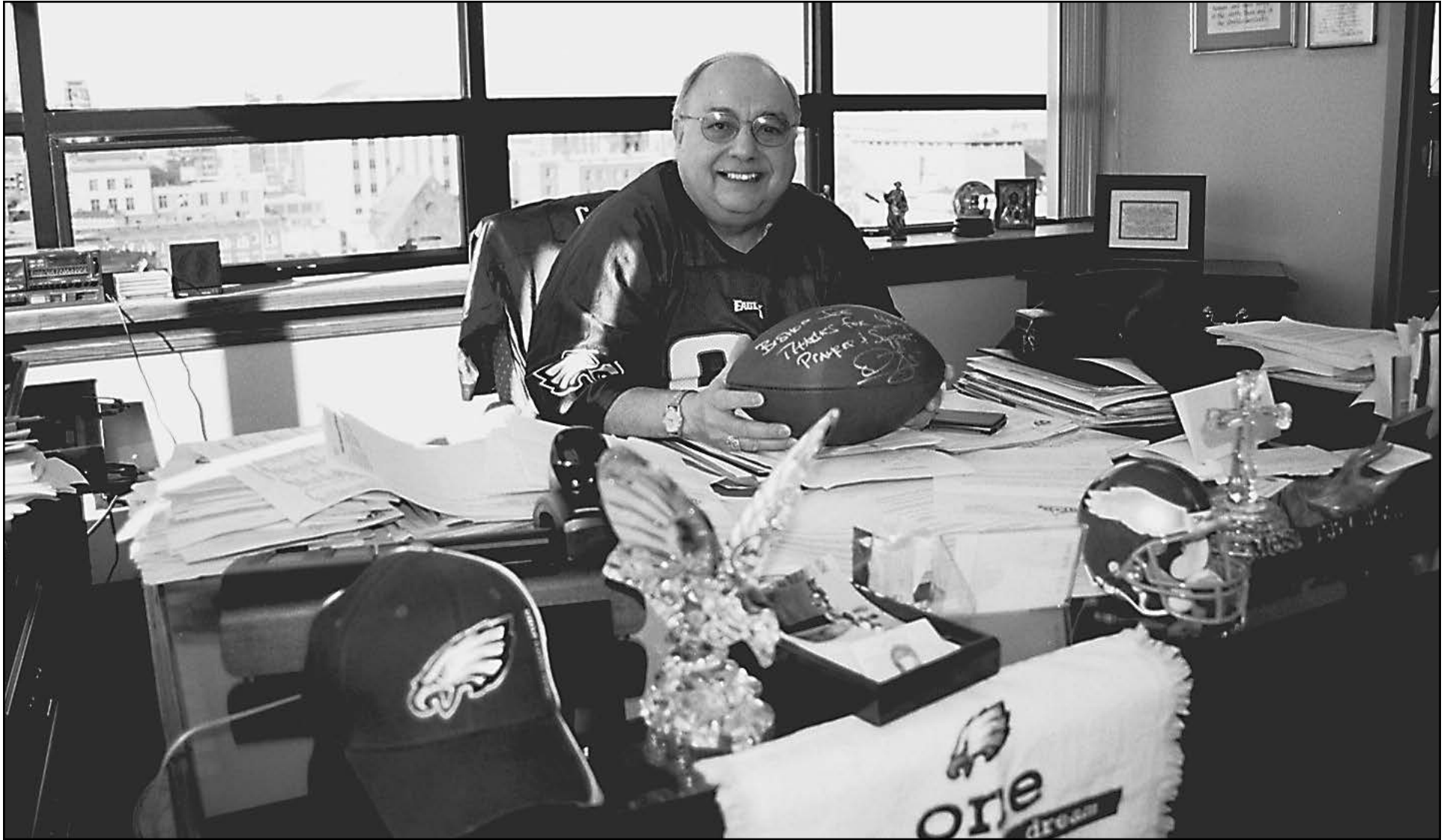


Photo by James A. McBride

Diehard Eagles fan Bishop Joseph Galante is pictured at his desk at the Camden Diocesan Center, Camden, a few days before the Eagles played in the 2005 Super Bowl.

Lastly, a thumbs-up and a 'wait and see'

By Carl Peters

As it turns out, news that Pope Benedict XVI had accepted Bishop Joseph Galante's resignation came not long after the news broke that Andy Reid's time as coach of the Philadelphia Eagles had come to an end.

Bishop Galante's love of the game, and the Eagles in particular, is well known, and he still speaks enthusiastically about being home from the seminary and attending the 1960 NFL championship played at Franklin Field, when they defeated the favored Green Bay Packers, 17-13.

Camden Diocesan employees remember him leading a rally in the Camden Diocesan Center in 2005 before the Birds met the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl. As for the hiring of Chip Kelly as the new coach, the bishop is taking a "wait and see" attitude.

The bishop is also an avid Phillies fan, who first fell in love with the game watching the Philadelphia A's.



CNS photo/ARC Entertainment

Andy Garcia stars in a scene from the movie "For Greater Glory." Garcia, a Catholic, plays a Mexican Revolution-era general lured out of retirement a decade later to fight his own government's severe curbing of religious freedoms.

Bishop Galante also enjoys watching movies. Although he can enjoy light escapist fare, a favorite recent film is "For

Greater Glory," a 2012 movie about the struggles of the church under government persecution in Mexico. It stars Andy

Garcia as Enrique Gorostieta, a religious skeptic who becomes the unlikely commander of those taking up arms in the name of faith.

"It takes place in the 1920s when people were dying for their faith in Mexico," Bishop Galante said. "It is a very powerful film for me."

What many people don't know is that Bishop Galante has a love of country music, a taste he developed even before he went to Texas. Among his favorites are Patsy Cline, the Statler Brothers, The Oak Ridge Boys, and perhaps most of all, Tom T. Hall.

So, if there were a soundtrack to Bishop Galante leaving his office in the chancery, one can imagine him walking out to the music and second verse of Tom T. Hall's "Me and Jesus":

Jesus brought me through all my troubles

Jesus brought me through all my trials.

Jesus brought me through all my heartaches.

And I know that Jesus ain't gonna forsake me now.

