



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth 800 West Loop 820 South Fort Worth, TX 76108 (817) 560-3300

**Homily for the 100th Anniversary of St. Boniface Parish
St. Boniface Catholic Church, Scotland, Texas
November 6, 2011**

Dear brothers and sisters,

I would like to thank you, and Father David, for the invitation to be with you on your 100th Anniversary. St. Boniface figured prominently early on in ministry for me, as the parish where I served as a transitional deacon in 1980 to 1981, and a stained glass window of St. Boniface greets me in the sacristy of St. Patrick's Cathedral each time I celebrate Mass. The oak tree, which figures notably in the "hagiography" of St. Boniface, represents to me the strength of the faith of the German pioneers who came to this part of Texas when the need became apparent to Bishop Dunne of Dallas that a Catholic parish was needed in the county of Archer. The first years of this parish start with the story of Mr. Henry Scott who provided the land, his agent J. H. Muerer, and the first settlers who came to Scotland by train and wagon. Mr. Muerer is, by the way, the maternal grandmother of Msgr. Weinzapfel who is with us today. So, Tom, you are our link with the past today, but you are very much the present as well! It is a journey which continues through all of you. The journey of this parish family began 100 years ago with great rejoicing upon the arrival of its first pastor. We read: "On September 22 the members of St. Boniface Congregation of Scotland, Texas, manifested great joy at the arrival of their new pastor, Rev. Father F. J. Schissel, by meeting him at the train with a band and conducting him to the new church. The latter is certainly a beautiful edifice, erected as the result of a great self-sacrifice by the people, to be the home of our great King, our dear Lord Himself; nothing is too good or beautiful for Him, and the people here surely realize it."

The importance of this day is highlighted by the Liturgy for this Sunday, because instead of the Sunday Mass for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, the prayers and readings for the Mass are for the anniversary of the dedication of a Church. It is not very often that this can be done, but the dedication of a "House of God" where the "People of God" are formed has such importance, that the Church's Liturgy reflects this...Even on Sunday! As we come together to give thanks to the Lord on His day, we do so in the month of November and the last days of the Liturgical Year. The theme of the last days of the Liturgical Year is that of being prepared to meet the Lord when he comes to us: at His birth, at the end of time, and when He comes to meet us in our daily life. The vision of the pioneer families, their Faith, the ministry of Bishop Dunne and all involved from 100 years on, has certainly prepared, and prepared well, generations of Catholics to be disciples and friends of the Lord: To "know, love, and serve Him, and be happy with him forever in heaven." The role of Bishop Dunne in establishing your parish is also a moment of reflection on what it means to be truly Catholic—that the strength of the witness of a parish family is such because it is part of the family of Faith of the local Church, in union with Universal Church and the successor of Peter. The month of November is also the month of the Faithful Departed. Our communion with all of those who "have gone before us marked with the Sign of Faith" is exemplified in the care for your cemetery, especially in this month, where your loved ones who built this community

of Faith, await the Resurrection.

St. Boniface is called the “Jewel of the Prairie.” A jewel is something that can reflect light onto everything around it. Its beauty is not unlike the beauty of the stained glass windows in the Church, which the sun pours through on this beautiful fall morning. This family of Faith has reflected the light of Christ to all here for these many years. Your calling is to continue to do that here in this time and place and beyond. The presence of Christ must be reflected from here to an often disinterested and hostile Western culture. The light of Christ, the beauty and truth of our Catholic Faith, is reflected in your committed lives, your ministries, in the support of your pastor, in the support and promotion of vocations to the consecrated life and priesthood, the sacredness of life at its most vulnerable moments, family life and marriage shows that the Lord Himself is the measure of all who shows us the way, because truly He is “the Way, Truth, and the Life.”

God bless you always,
+ Most Reverend Bishop Kevin Vann