

# NEWS RELEASE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Papal delegate to install Lucas as Archbishop of Omaha**

July 17, 2009 (OMAHA, NE) – Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the Papal Nuncio or the Vatican’s ambassador in the United States, will install Bishop George J. Lucas, former head of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois at St Cecilia Cathedral on July 22 at 2:00 p.m. Lucas will be the fifth archbishop and the tenth to lead the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Preparations are in full swing for the ceremony that will be attended by some prominent members of the Catholic Church hierarchy in the United States, including Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, Nebraska Bishops Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln and William Dendinger of Grand Island, and nearly 40 other U.S. Bishops, in addition to many local clergy.

At the installation ceremony, the Italian-born Sambi who, as papal representative, enjoys diplomatic status, will read out the papal bull issued by Pope Benedict XVI, appointing Lucas as the Archdiocese of Omaha’s new archbishop. Later, he will lead Lucas to the *cathedra*, or seat, symbolically the position of authority in the cathedral.

The papal bull is written in Latin, the official language of the Holy See, and will be hand-delivered on Wednesday by Archbishop Sambi, according to the Rev. Joseph C. Taphorn, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Omaha.

A papal bull is a special kind of elaborate papal document issued in the form of a decree or privilege by a pope. It gets its name from the seal (*bull*) that is appended to the end of a document to authenticate it. Papal bulls were originally issued by the pope for many kinds of communication of a public nature, but after the 15<sup>th</sup> century, only for more formal or solemn occasions.

Because Lucas is already a bishop, there will not be any consecration ceremony, which is conducted to ordain a priest as a bishop. Lucas replaces Archbishop Elden F. Curtiss, whose resignation was accepted by Pope Benedict XVI on June 3, 2009, after serving nearly 16 years here.

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Lucas will lead more than 221,000 Nebraska Catholics in an archdiocese that is made up of 23 northeast Nebraska counties, 148 parishes and missions and 76 primary and secondary schools.

Lucas has been the leader of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois for nearly 10 years. A native of Saint Louis, Missouri, he completed studies at Cardinal Glennon College and Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in Saint Louis. He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of St. Louis on May 24, 1975. He took advanced studies at Saint Louis University and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy and Master of Arts degree in history.

In the years leading to his ordination as a bishop in Springfield, he served on the faculty of St. Louis Preparatory Seminary-North and St. Louis Preparatory Seminary, as the chancellor and vicar general of the Archdiocese of St. Louis and rector of Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. He was named Honorary Prelate of His Holiness in 1994.

As a member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, he holds appointments on the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People, Subcommittee on the Catechism, and Task Force for the 2010 Special Assembly.

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Founded as a diocese in 1885, the Archdiocese of Omaha serves spiritual and human needs in a 23-county area of Northeast Nebraska. Through its 148 parishes and missions, the archdiocese reaches out to more than 221,000 Nebraska Catholics. With two Catholic universities, 58 elementary schools, 18 high schools and a parish-based religious education program within its boundaries, Catholic education enriches the lives of some 44,000 young people. The Archdiocese of Omaha is one of the largest private social service providers in the region. Catholic Charities and the Office of Family Life lead a network that ministers to the broadest and most fundamental needs of our community. Generous support to the Annual Appeal is symbolic of the collective faith that allows the Archdiocese of Omaha to continue the mission of Jesus Christ. [www.archomaha.org](http://www.archomaha.org)