

# NEWS RELEASE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Archbishop George J. Lucas installed as Archbishop of Omaha**

Invited guests fill St. Cecilia Cathedral, seat of the archbishop, for historic event

July 22, 2009 (OMAHA, NE) – “It is a thrill for all Catholics to see so many priests celebrate this Mass. It is a particular thrill for me,” says Archbishop George J. Lucas. “As we begin the Year of the Priest, the Lord is giving me as a father, brother and friend to the priests of the Archdiocese of Omaha.”

That was the message from Archbishop George J. Lucas today, moments after being installed as the Archbishop of Omaha at St. Cecilia Cathedral. St. Cecilia Cathedral, the formal seat of the archbishop, was overflowing for the installation celebration. Lucas, 60, most recently served as the Bishop of Springfield in Illinois.

The procession of clergy included diocesan seminarians and nearly 300 priests, bishops and archbishops from across the country. Also participating in the Mass were Cardinals Justin Rigali of Philadelphia and Francis George of Chicago.

After the reading of the Apostolic letter of appointment from Pope Benedict XVI, known as a *papal bull*, the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, presented the new archbishop with a shepherd’s staff, known as the *crozier*. Lucas was then welcomed by a procession of the faithful, including Omaha’s ethnic communities. Native Americans from the Winnebago and Omaha tribes were among the first to greet Lucas.

St. Cecilia Cathedral was overflowing for the historic event. Music performed by the 55-member cathedral choir, which included a brass ensemble, included a cappella selections, Gregorian chants, traditional hymns and original works written specifically for the installation. One of the largest cathedrals in the United States, the Spanish Renaissance structure restored for the Jubilee Year of 2000 is on the national register of historic places. The global Catholic network, EWTN broadcast the Mass to more than 82 million homes in the U.S. and Canada. It will be rebroadcast 11 p.m. CST.

Archbishop Lucas, 60, served as Bishop of Springfield in Illinois from December 14, 1999 until his installation as Archbishop of Omaha today. A Saint Louis, Missouri native, he was ordained a priest of his home archdiocese on May 24, 1975. 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. Find more information including photos, news releases, and the crest of the archbishop at [www.archomaha.org](http://www.archomaha.org).

Beginning this Sunday, Archbishop Lucas will travel to four parishes across the archdiocese to celebrate Mass with members of the faithful. Each regional Mass will be followed by a reception, and all are open to the public.

“Our new archbishop is eager to meet parishioners of the Archdiocese of Omaha. Everyone is welcome to come and worship with him.” Taphorn said.

Archbishop Lucas’ public Mass schedule:

- July 26: St. Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha, 9:30 a.m.
- August 2: St. Mary Church, Norfolk, 2 p.m.
- August 9: St. Patrick Church, O’Neill, 2 p.m.
- August 16: St. Isidore Church, Columbus, 2 p.m.

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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).