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Redemptorist Tobin ordained archbishop

by Carol Glatz by Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- In a ceremony rich with symbolism, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone ordained two new bishops and two archbishops, including U.S. Redemptorist Father Joseph W. Tobin.

"The fundamental mission of a bishop is proclaiming the Good News," said Cardinal Bertone, the Vatican secretary of state, who presided over the ordination Mass Oct. 9 in St. Peter's Basilica.

Archbishop Tobin's ordination came after Pope Benedict XVI appointed him secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The cardinal also ordained three other recent papal appointees: Archbishop Giorgio Lingua, the new apostolic nuncio to Iraq and Jordan; Bishop Ignacio Carrasco de Paula, head of the Pontifical Academy for Life; and Bishop Enrico dal Covolo, rector of the Pontifical Lateran University.

The new bishops and their families met with Pope Benedict Oct. 11 in a private audience at the Vatican.

In his homily Oct. 9, Cardinal Bertone said Archbishop Tobin, 58, will have "the delicate task of collaborating with the Roman Curia" as secretary of the Vatican office that oversees the world's religious orders.

The first job of a bishop is to spread the Gospel "with strength and authority," the cardinal said, because "the word of God is not chained" and can offer salvation to all people.

The sacred Scriptures possess "a freedom and strength" that help the faithful rise above worldly affairs, so that events, both good and bad, "aren't able to suffocate" the individual, he said. The power of the word transforms people, he said. Healing begins when people stop following their own opinions and old habits and start listening to God's word.

During the ceremony, the cardinal conferred the Book of the Gospels, the bishop's ring, miter and pastoral staff to each new bishop.

Placing the Book of the Gospels on each new bishop's head is a reminder that evangelization is their primary task, Cardinal Bertone explained in his homily.

The ring "will remind you every day the duty of fidelity to the church, the bride of Christ," he said, while the staff reminds the bishop to imitate the Good Shepherd and to give himself completely to others with "courage and love."

A bishop's other duties include making Christ present in the Eucharist and the sacraments "through which one builds the church, the community of believers," to foster unity, and to guide the church with love, he said.

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Archbishop Tobin was born May 3, 1952, in Detroit. He made perpetual vows as a Redemptorist in 1976 and was ordained a priest two years later.

After ministering in Detroit and Chicago, he was elected to the Redemptorists' general council in 1991 and served on the Rome-based council until his election as superior in 1997.

While serving as superior general of the worldwide Redemptorist order from 1997 to 2009, Archbishop Tobin also served as vice president of the Union of Superiors General and, for the last eight years of his term, was a member of the special council for relations between the union and the Vatican's congregation for religious.

In late May, Pope Benedict named Archbishop Tobin to the nine-member team scheduled to conduct an apostolic visitation of the Catholic Church in Ireland in the wake of the clergy sexual abuse crisis there.

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