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Pope creates 22 new cardinals, including three from U.S., Canada

by Cindy Wooden by Catholic News Service



New U.S. Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan greets fellow cardinals after receiving his red hat from Pope Benedict XVI during a consistory Saturday in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Benedict XVI created 22 new cardinals from 13 countries -- including three from the United States and Canada -- placing red hats on their heads and calling them to lives of even greater love and service to the church.

The churchmen who joined the College of Cardinals Feb. 18 included Cardinals Timothy M. Dolan of New York; Edwin F. O'Brien, grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem and former archbishop of Baltimore; and Thomas C. Collins of Toronto.

In their first official act in their new role, the new cardinals were asked to join their peers in giving the pope their opinion, in writing, on the canonization of seven new saints, including Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, an American Indian, and Blessed Marianne Cope of Molokai, Hawaii.

The pope announced at the consistory that the canonization ceremony would be celebrated Oct. 21 at the

Vatican.

Cardinal Collins said, "I am delighted that my first action as a cardinal was to join with the College of Cardinals in affirming the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, who has been such an inspiration for the people of our First Nations and so many others in Canada and the United States."

Cardinal Dolan also mentioned the consultation on the canonization of Blessed Kateri, who was born in what is now New York state, and Mother Marianne, who served there before going to Hawaii.

"As grateful as I am for being a cardinal," he told reporters later, "I really want to be a saint. I mean that, but I have a long way to go."

St. Peter's Basilica was filled to overflowing for the ceremony, and several thousand people sat in a sunny St. Peter's Square watching on large video screens. Choirs from New York and from several Italian dioceses provided music for the service.

At the end of the ceremony, the College of Cardinals had 213 members, 125 of whom were under the age of 80 and, therefore, eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a new pope.

The consistory took the form of a prayer service. After the Gospel reading, in what the Vatican described as an allocution, not a homily, the pope told the cardinals that love and service, not an air of greatness, are to mark their lives as cardinals.

"Dominion and service, egoism and altruism, possession and gift, self-interest and gratuitousness: These profoundly contrasting approaches confront each other in every age and place," Pope Benedict said, but the cardinals must model their lives on that of Jesus, loving others to the point of giving up his life for them.

Cardinal O'Brien told reporters afterward that the ceremony and the pope's remarks underlined that becoming a cardinal "is not a reward, it brings on greater responsibilities -- something the pope experiences every day."

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He said that when he knelt before the pope, "I thanked him; I said I'd serve him completely with my whole heart."

Cardinal Dolan, who delivered the main address on evangelization at a meeting of the College of Cardinals the day before, said that when he knelt before the pope, the pope thanked him again for his presentation. "I said thank you, for this, I'm the one who is grateful," he said.

"The Gospel and the homily were very sobering," he said, because they recalled the words of Jesus that "we're not in it for the prestige, we're not in it for the honor, we're not in it for the glory. We're in it to serve."

In all things, Pope Benedict had told them, "the new cardinals are entrusted with the service of love: love for God, love for his church, an absolute and unconditional love for his brothers and sisters, even unto shedding their blood, if necessary," a fact underlined by the red color of the biretta -- a three-cornered hat -- and the red cardinal's robes.

"He is servant inasmuch as he welcomes within himself the fate of the suffering and sin of all humanity. His service is realized in total faithfulness and complete responsibility toward mankind," the pope said.

"The free acceptance of his violent death becomes the price of freedom for many," he told the new cardinals, praying that "Christ's total gift of self on the cross" would be "the foundation, stimulus and strength" of their faith and that it would be reflected in their love and charity toward others.



During the ceremony, Pope Benedict placed rings on the fingers of the 22 new cardinals and assigned them a "titular church" in Rome, making them full members of the Rome clergy and closer collaborators of the pope in governing the universal church.

Cardinal O'Brien's titular church is the historic Church of St. Sebastian on the Palatine Hill. Cardinal Collins was assigned the Church of St. Patrick in the Via Veneto neighborhood, where an English-speaking congregation worships; and Cardinal Dolan became the titular cardinal of the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the Monte Mario neighborhood.

The new cardinals, the pope said, "will be called to consider and evaluate the events, the problems and the pastoral criteria which concern the mission of the entire church."

The pope asked the new cardinals "to serve the church with love and vigor, with the transparency and wisdom of teachers, with the energy and strength of shepherds, with the fidelity and courage of martyrs."

The Bible reading at the service was taken from the Gospel of Mark and recounted how the disciples were tempted by the idea of honor, but Jesus told them that greatness means becoming the servant of all.

"Serving God and others, self-giving: This is the logic which authentic faith imparts and develops in our daily lives and which is not the type of power and glory which belongs to this world," the pope told them.

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