



**STATEMENT OF CARDINAL WILTON GREGORY
ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF CARDINAL ROBERT MCELROY'S
APPOINTMENT AS ARCHBISHOP OF WASHINGTON**

This morning Pope Francis announced that he has accepted my resignation as Archbishop of Washington and has named as my successor Robert Cardinal McElroy, until now the Bishop of San Diego. I receive this news with many emotions; though, as I reflect upon the past nearly six years in this wonderful local Church of Washington, my heart is filled predominantly with joy and gratitude for the many blessings, always appreciated but rarely deserved that God has granted me.

I am grateful, more than anything, for the people of God who have welcomed and supported me since I arrived, allowing me the privilege of serving them in the best of times and in the more difficult ones. We have loved one another, cared for one another, challenged one another to be the Catholic Church Jesus Christ calls us to be. Together, “We are the Lord’s!”

I thank the priests, deacons, and religious men and women who have offered themselves so tirelessly and selflessly in service to the faithful in our parishes, schools, and Catholic institutions. My brother priests, deacons and women and men religious, you have humbly brought Christ to your parishes, and you have been an image of Christ in your communities. You have freely offered me your wisdom and your guidance, and I have learned much from you - compassion, empathy, kindness, and care.

I am thankful for the staff of our archdiocesan offices and agencies, who skillfully manage the day-to-day operations of this local Church with such competence and grace. It is not hyperbole to say I could not have done this without you, and I will remember you always with esteem and deep affection.

To my brother bishops who share my ministry in the Archdiocese, I offer my sincere appreciation. It is said that “many hands make light work.” I simply cannot imagine exercising my episcopal ministry effectively without your steady and unceasing collaboration. I remember with profound gratitude, the wisdom and example of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin that continue to inspire me by his way of shepherding and pastoring God’s People.

Finally, I offer my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, who entrusted me with this important work in the spring of 2019 and raised me to the College of Cardinals in 2020.

It is only through his trust and confidence as well as that of his predecessors - Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict - that I stand here today. Indeed, "We are the Lord's!"

Today, I ask for your continued prayers, even as I assure you all of mine.