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## The Rev. Daniel Flores, in his own words

**Gregg Krupa / The Detroit News**

The Rev. Daniel Flores, who is to be ordained an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit at 2 p.m. today, was interviewed Monday in the St. Thomas More Room of the Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit.

The following are excerpts from the interview:

"I know initially I am going to be spending a lot of time just visiting parishes throughout, just to kind of become familiar, getting to know the organization of the archdiocese all across the board. And then, based on that familiarization, kind of a focus on our ability to kind of go into some of the parishes where the Hispanic community is particularly large and active and, you know, saying Mass there, and preaching, and talking, and kind of helping to give a sense of the life of the church and trying to support that in whatever way I can.

"I wouldn't call the competition (with Protestant evangelical churches) a priority of mine. The priority in the church I think of a priest or a bishop is to kind of preach and propose the mystery of what the Catholic Church offers; the mystery of the sacraments, the mystery of the life and of grace, the mystery of the communal life of the church. And I see it as kind of the mission of the church and my mission as part of that is to kind of announce and help make effective the full commune of life and grace that the Catholic Church offers and then to invite. I think if we set about doing the good that Jesus asks us to do then by God's grace people are attracted to that. So I would say that's kind of my focus, upon doing the good that can be done in the life of the church.

"Now there is, of course, a strong Catholic tradition in the various Hispanic communities in the United States and Mexico and in South America. And there's a rich tradition of life and faith and culture that we can build upon and that becomes an expression of people's lives.

"When I was quite young, I kind of grew up with the notion that one of the things I would like to do is probably (be) a lawyer, and go to college and go into law. And it was a notion that was kind of generally supported by my wider family, my parents and my uncles and aunts and because that was seen as a good and noble thing and I always thought it was a noble thing. And I like to study and I thought I could probably do fairly well at that. I would be happy doing that and that was always kind of an issue.

"I must say when I was 16 an 17 you start thinking about colleges, and all of a sudden these questions start to be more concrete. What do I want to do with the rest of my life? And that is about the time I started thinking about the priesthood. It was something that kind of came into my mind. It wasn't something that anyone kind of encouraged in a vociferous way. It kind of came to mind. And I knew my pastor and I admired his devotion and his leadership in the community. And it kind of made me think, well, you know, maybe I could do that. And that kind of tussled around in my head for a while. After a year or two and through high school I went to talk to him, that is, my pastor, and a couple of other priests that I knew. And, you know, in high school you are talking to your friends and your teacher and your folks and you are talking to different people. But for me it came down to a great desire to think, well, what kind of life would I find fulfilling and worthwhile?

"What I've discovered, and this is upon subsequent reflection, is that early on, say about the age of 15 or 16, the question for me was: Do I want to be a priest? I think that is the subtle way the mystery of grace works. By the time I was through with high school the question was quite different -- and it's almost imperceptible about how this happens or when it happens -- but the question I asked then was: Would you let me be a priest? And that is when I said to myself, hmm, I guess things have changed, and that is when things kind of happened.

"So I'll just be whoever I am wherever I go and, you know, let that be a part of how God's grace works.

"I'm just very happy to kind of come to a new place. It's kind of an adventure. I've always been very happy as a priest and I expect to be very happy in just kind of getting to know people. I think one of the most important things a priest does is that he has an opportunity to spend time with people and I think that's an important part of what priest does and I'm looking forward to that."

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