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Bishop Lawrence Persico heading to Rome

Every Catholic bishop in the world is required to travel to Rome periodically for two purposes: first, to pray at the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, and second, to meet with the pope. The visits, officially known as the “*ad limina Apostolorum*” — to the tombs of the Apostles — continue a tradition that dates back to the fourth century.

The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie, will depart for Rome the morning of Friday, Nov. 22, for a nine-day visit that will include meetings with numerous Vatican officials as well as a two-hour audience with Pope Francis. He is attending along with all of the bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Last spring, the bishop submitted the required “Quinquennial Report” to the Vatican. Various chapters were then distributed to dicasteries, or offices, in Rome. The bishops will participate in a series of discussions with officials in offices including Laity, Family and Life, the Congregation for Bishops, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for Clergy. Bishop Persico also will attend meetings focused on the protection of minors, Catholic education and consecrated life. In each situation,

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Vatican officials will have read the reports from all of the bishops and be able to discuss trends, challenges and opportunities with them.

In addition to Mass at St. Peter's Basilica and St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls, the bishops will offer Masses at the other two major papal basilicas: St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran. The Pennsylvania and New Jersey bishops are the third group from the United States to make their *ad limina* visit; it is expected all of the American bishops will complete their *ad liminas* by the end of February 2020.

Timing is interesting for this particular week, as the meeting with the Holy Father will occur on Thanksgiving Day. That evening, Bishop Persico and his fellow bishops will enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner at the North American College in Rome, the major seminary for American seminarians studying for the priesthood abroad.

The Diocese of Erie plans to cover the *ad limina* visit using its Facebook and Twitter accounts. In addition, beginning Monday, watch for daily updates on the diocesan news-release page at www.Eriercd.org/news/News-releases.html.

More information about the "Quinquennial Report," as well as personal insights provided by Bishop Persico prior to his departure, can be found in an excerpt from the October edition of *Faith* magazine available at:

https://www.eriercd.org/images/pdf/QuinquennialReport_BishopMessage.pdf

Anne-Marie Welsh, director of Communications for the Diocese of Erie, will be in Rome to cover the event. Questions may be emailed to her at amwelsh@ErieRCD.org.