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7:46 PM (55 minutes ago)

to me

"My Experiences as Chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Francisco - 1983-1997"

After the 1984 revision of Canon Law, a lay person was permitted to fill the role of Chancellor. Archbishop John R. Quinn of the San Francisco Archdiocese, wished a woman for that position and began a search. I was one of several women interviewed and Iwas offered the position and, with the permission of my Provincial, Sr. Nance O'Neil, I accepted the appointment with the stipulation that I be paid the salary and received all the privileges and perks granted to a priest in that role.

The "canonical" duties of a chancellor are to act as a "civil and canonical notary for all major documents sent to Rome; and to be responsible for the documents and archives of the (arch)diocese. I was also automatically a member of the Curia - the Archbishop's advisory staff. Other duties and responsibilities are determined by whether it is an archdiocese or a diocese, local needs, and the administrative style of the ordinary. AB Quinn also added charge of the chancery itself - its overall operation, staffing and maintenance - as well oversight of several departments, chairmanship or membership on several boards and Committees. However the most extraordinary responsibility was to be a co-ordinator of the Papal Visit of Pope John II to San Francisco in 1987. That began a three-year intensive preparation.

Among other specific responsibilities, mine included providing for the entourage, actual supervision of the "event for religious", and supervision of Candlestick Park the day of the Papal Mass with 36,000 persons attending . In appreciation for my endeavors, I was awarded the medal "Pro Ecclesia", the highest papal honor that can be awarded to a lay person.

Later, upon the death of the Vicar for the religious women and men of the Archdiocese, Archbishop Quinn assigned those duties to me as well. Upon Quinn's retirement in 1996, I served with then Archbishop, now Cardinal, Leveda. I told him I would be willing to remain six months, as I knew he did not know the priests or the diocese yet, and that would give him time to familiarize himself with both. He was grateful. My decision was based on these facts which I explained to him. "I had held the position for 14 years, I was 65 years old, and my mother now needed someone to be with her, so the time was right.

I know the experience changed me profoundly and I will always be grateful to God for the gift of those fourteen years.