

March 2, 2008

Bicentennial Moments

Since its earliest days the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has thrived on the rich cultural diversity of its people. Throughout its history the Archdiocese has worked with all Ethnic groups to improve the lives, strengthen the faith and unite all within our Catholic Community. His Eminence, Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua established the Office for Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees in 1990 to meet the growing needs of the Various Ethnic Groups contained within the Archdiocese. Some of these groups include people from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas and regions of the Caribbean. Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees continues to be a priority for Cardinal Rigali in following Christ's mandate to go out and bring the Good News to all nations.

In 1976, the first Ethnic Heritage Mass occurred as part of the preparation for the Bicentennial remembrance of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Ethnic Heritage Mass has been celebrated every year since during National Immigration Week in March. The annual Migration mass will be held this year on Sunday, March 2, 2008 at 2:30 p.m. in the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter & Paul. A colorful ethnic procession precedes the Liturgy at 2:00 p.m. All are welcome.

For further information, please contact the office for Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees at 215-587-3540 or migrefug@adphila.org.

March 16, 2008

Bicentennial Moments

The Chrism Mass, which the bishop concelebrates with his college of presbyters and at which he consecrates the holy chrism and blesses the other oils, manifests the communion of the presbyters with their bishop. This Mass is therefore a clear expression of the unity of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, which continue to be present in the Church.

Did you know:

1. As of today, the Archdiocese has a total of 1,002 priests with faculties including 622 diocesan, 348 religious and 32 externs.
2. The holy chrism consecrated by the bishop is used to anoint the newly baptized, to seal the candidates for confirmation, and to anoint the hands of presbyters and the heads of bishops at their ordination, as well as in the rites of anointing pertaining to the dedication of churches and altars.
3. The oil of catechumens is used in the preparation of the catechumens for their baptism.
4. The oil of the sick is used to bring comfort and support to the sick in their infirmity.

The Chrism Mass, this year will take place on Holy Thursday, March 20, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter & Paul. All are welcome.

March 9, 2008

Bicentennial Moments

Did you know:

1. "Permanent deacons" assisted the Bishop in administering to the early church. The first definite reference to deacons, occurring perhaps as early as 53 A.D., is in St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, addressed to "all the holy ones at Philippi, with their bishops and deacons in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:1)
2. There have always been deacons in the Church but as the church grew and changed over the years most deacons went on to be ordained priests. The diaconate for those preparing for the priesthood is referred to as the transitional diaconate. St. Francis of Assisi is an example of someone who remained a deacon and was not ordained to the priesthood.
3. In 1967, following the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI formally restored the Order of Deacon as a permanent office in the church and permitted married men to be admitted to Holy Orders as Permanent Deacons.
4. In 1981, Cardinal Krol ordained the first Permanent Deacons for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Currently there are 236 active permanent deacons serving in the Archdiocese and 75 men in formation to be ordained deacons.

For Further Information, please contact the Office for Permanent Deacons at 610-664-2213.

February 24, 2008

Bicentennial Moments

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.) is the journey of faith by which unbaptized persons and those who have been baptized in another Christian tradition gradually become members of the Catholic Church.

Did you know:

1. Use of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was mandated in the dioceses of the United States on September 1, 1988, making 2008 the 20th anniversary of R.C.I.A. in the United States.
2. The first celebration of the Rite of Election in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia was held in 1989 with one ceremony. Since 1991 the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has celebrated three ceremonies of the Rite of Election annually to accommodate the large numbers of people desiring to become Catholic.
4. The celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist) takes place at the Easter Vigil, at which catechumens receive the Sacraments of Initiation and candidates are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
5. A catechumen is an unbaptized person who seeks full initiation into the Catholic Church.
6. A candidate is a validly baptized non-Catholic who wishes to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church.

Want to know more about R.C.I.A.? Please visit the Office for Formation of the Laity at <http://www.archdiocese-phl.org/evangelization/formlaity/rcia.htm>