

## **In the Heartland**

### **Diocesan Centennial to Kick-Off November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>**

The celebration marking the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Diocese of Des Moines will be officially launched in the 82 parishes of Southwest Iowa on the weekend of Nov. 20 and 21. The Diocese was officially established on August 12, 1911 by Pope St. Pius X.

At the heart of the preparation for the Centennial has been the Evangelization Program: On a Journey Together. Pope Paul VI in his landmark encyclical, Evangelium Nuntiandi, stated that the Church exists to evangelize. Thus, the core identity of the church of Des Moines is to be about this task of Evangelization.

Our centennial theme: “On a Journey Together, Celebrating Evangelization Past, Present and Future” enables us to honor our forbears who heroically dedicated themselves to planting and passing on the faith. We are indebted to the bishops and priests, the enormously generous women religious, the hearty and determined laity all of whom sacrificed much because of their steadfast religious convictions which they acted upon.

We best pay tribute to those who have provided such a rich legacy by the renewal of our personal and corporate faith and reenergizing our hearts to enthusiastically engage the perennial mission of Evangelization. It is my sincere hope that as many parishioners as possible will participate in the spring 2011 session of On a Journey Together. In so doing, we will honor the past, fulfill our present calling, and strengthen the foundation for the future of our faith community. We will enrich our communities by embracing our identity as the Body of Christ and “making Jesus Christ known and loved in our time by choosing to live out the Gospel at every moment.”

One practice I strongly encourage is both the individual and also the community recitation at Mass each Sunday of the Diocesan Centennial Prayer which has been prepared to mark this special year. It will serve to establish an appropriate mindset for our diocesan-wide gathering on Sunday, Nov. 6, 2011 at Hy-Vee Hall in Des Moines.

**Congratulations to organizers of *Christ Our Life Conference*.** On several occasions, Cardinal Francis Arinze, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship, remarked to me how impressed he was by the fact that the conference was under the direction of the laity. “Surely,” he said, “this most likely would not be the case with the dioceses in Europe.”

Thus, well-earned commendation is extended to Marilyn Lane and Ellen Miller who, benefiting from the guidance of Monsignor Joe McDonnell, conceived, organized and managed this marvelous event. These two women were supported by generous donors, legions of competent volunteers and the presence of the Spirit which was life-giving.

The conference began and concluded with beautiful Eucharistic celebrations. The speakers headlined by Cardinal Arinze were stimulating and challenging. Opportunity for prayer, Eucharistic adoration and participation in the Sacrament of reconciliation along with the spirit-filled interaction of the attendees created a “weekend” community all of whom departed renewed with their searching souls nourished.

The outcome of the conference was remarkably positive with person upon person testifying to its personal and communal benefit. A reading from Ephesians in the daily Mass of Thursday, Oct. 21 captured this sentiment:

“Brothers and Sisters: I kneel before the Father, from whom every family on heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and the height and the depth, and to know the love of Christ so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3; 14-19).

In the afterglow of this successful event, the organizers are exploring the possibility of another conference in the fall of 2012.

### **Happy Thanksgiving**

Heartfelt best wishes to all for a Happy Thanksgiving!

I hear so often from those newly arrived in our country of how grateful they are for the opportunity that is provided to them here in the United States that is not the case of their country of origin.

While there are obviously challenges in our society, on balance, we know that we comparatively live in a land of abundance. Truly thankful hearts generate sharing and loving hearts with all our sisters and brothers in the human family in the Spirit of God who has provided all that we enjoy.