

Year for Priests

MELCHISEDEK



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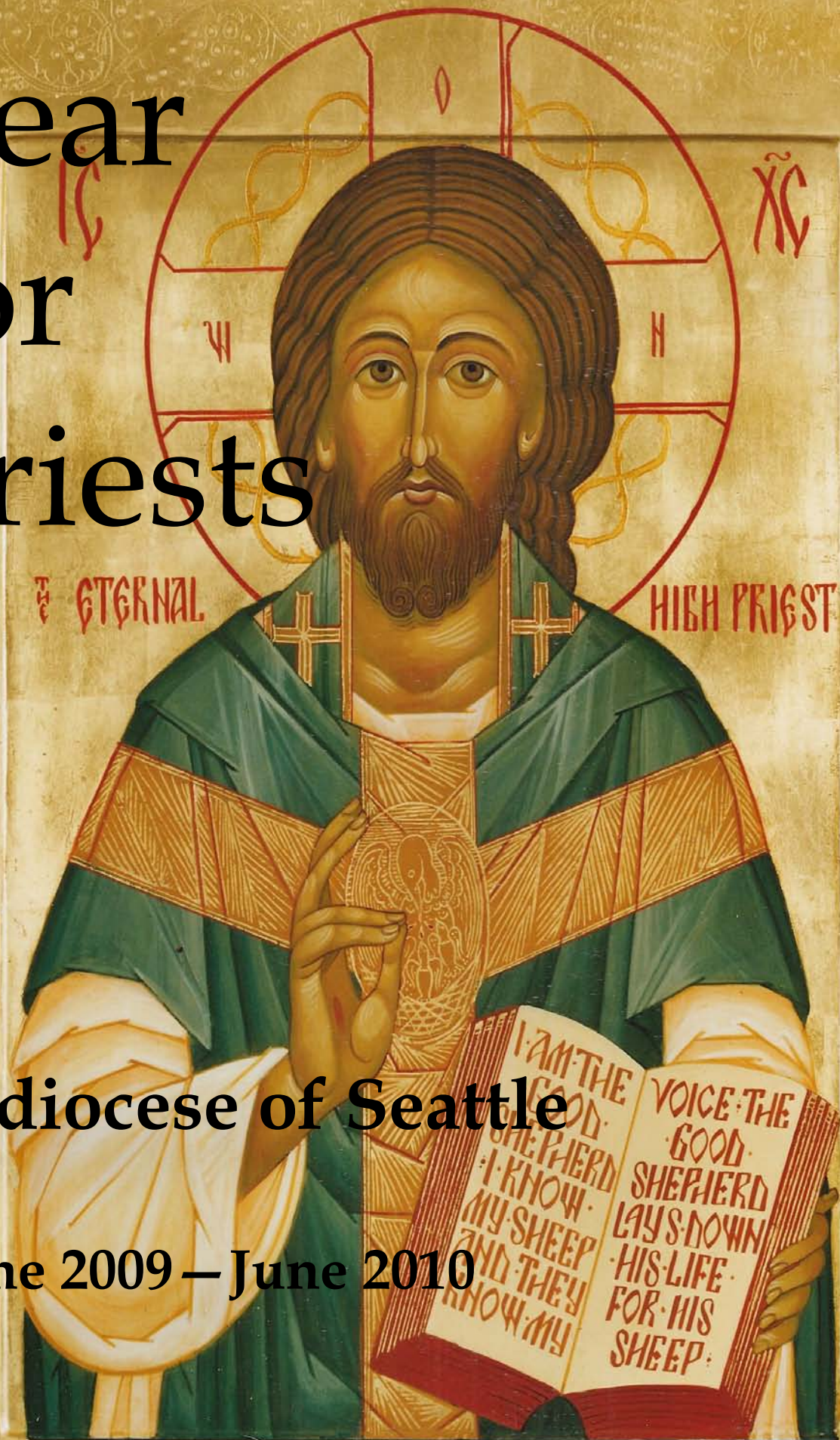
HIGH PRIEST

JOHN-MARIE-VIANNEY



Archdiocese of Seattle

June 2009 – June 2010



Archdiocese of Seattle

Year for Priests

Celebration and Activities

List of Initiatives (for www.annussacerdotalis.org)

Publications

- Archbishop Brunett publishes pastoral letter to priests formally initiating Archdiocesan celebration of the Year for Priests.
- *Catholic Northwest Progress*
 - Archbishop Brunett dedicates his column with his reflections and highlighting future events and activities for Year for Priests;
 - Throughout the year, each pastor will be profiled in the Archdiocesan Catholic newspaper.

Events

- Archbishop engages Presbyteral Council in developing celebration elements and appoints Year for Priests Special Council Committee to oversee celebration.
- Annual Fall 2009 Priests' Gathering
- *VIANNEY* plays throughout the Archdiocese
- Ordinations - June 12, 2010
- Priest Pilgrimage Delegation to International Meeting of Priests - Rome, June 2010
- Priests' Days - Ocean Shores, Washington - June 25-28, 2010 focus and closing ceremonies

Activities

- **Sunday Mass Intentions for Priests of the Archdiocese**
- **“Modest Proposal” - Weekly prayer remembrance priests from various continents**
- **Special Parish Activities (Examples from *Catholic Northwest Progress* articles)**

Resources

- **Webpage created on Archdiocesan website with Year for Priests local information and resources and links to resources from the USCCB and the Vatican.**
- **“Year for Priest” posters of Iconographer Marek Czarnecki’s icon of Christ the Great High Priest were distributed to priests and parishes throughout the Archdiocese.**
- **Prayer Cards of “Year of Priests” made available.**

Archdiocese of Seattle

Year for Priests

Celebration and Activities

Introduction

Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated the Year for Priests on Friday, June 19, 2009, the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The purpose for this year, he said, was “to deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a more forceful and incisive witness to the Gospel in today’s world.”

Archbishop Alex J. Brunett, in his October 15th pastoral letter to the presbyterate, inaugurated the Year for Priests for the Archdiocese of Seattle. He indicated his personal gratitude to the Holy Father for declaring this year of renewal for priests because of the opportunity it provides to once again “express my appreciation to you (our priests) for your fraternal unity with me over the past 12 years. As I look forward to the next phase of my own priestly ministry, I want you to know how deeply grateful I am for your pastoral care and dedicated service to the people of the Archdiocese of Seattle. “

In September 2009, Archbishop Brunett established a Special Committee of the Presbyteral Council to assist him in developing plans so that the Year for Priests in the Archdiocese of Seattle would fully respond to the Holy Father’s challenge of priestly renewal. In October 2009, the Special Committee made its recommendations to the Archbishop.

This report to the Congregation for the Clergy highlights the major initiatives, publications, events, activities and resources that were developed for or focused on the Year for Priests in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Inaugural Letter by Archbishop Alex J. Brunett

On October 15, 2009, Archbishop Brunett published a major pastoral letter to priests formally initiating the Archdiocesan celebration of the Year for Priests (Appendix A). In the Archbishop's letter, he expressed his ongoing gratitude for their fraternal unity with him over his twelve years as Archbishop. He noted that the Year for Priests is a timely opportunity for "each of us to reflect on the importance of our vocation to the life of the Church and to recommit ourselves to the vows we made at ordination. It is also an appropriate time to remember in prayer those priests who went before us and dedicated their lives to the service of God and others."

The Archbishop went on to say that "this year of reflection and renewal also gives us an opportunity to re-examine the call to cooperate more fully with the lay faithful and our religious communities of sisters as we carry out our pastoral duties. We are all one priestly people living and working together. Parish priests in particular have a responsibility to lead the people of God toward greater unity and charity in the one spirit of Christ. We cannot live our own vocation fully without a sincere appreciation for the unique vocation of the laity and our religious sisters in the mission of the Church."

The Archbishop identified this Year as also providing an opportunity to promote vocations to the priesthood, religious life and lay ecclesial ministry. The Archbishop stated, "By emphasizing the witness of priests, we can teach others who are seeking a deeper conversion and commitment to the Gospel the great joy and beauty of living in intimate union with God and striving in everything for God's glory."

Finally, the Archbishops identified specific activities being planned for the year which included:

- Sunday, October 25 Year for Priests Kick Off with special prayer intentions offered at Masses throughout the Archdiocese of Seattle
- Creation of a Year for Priests Web page on the Archdiocesan Web site (www.seattlearch.org)
- Prayer card for priests (order form available online)

- Parish posters for Year for Priests
- “Priesthood Profiles” appearing in The Catholic Northwest Progress
- A Presbyteral Day of Reflection, February 1, 2010
- Parish celebrations focused on vocations including: National Vocation Awareness Week (January 10-16, 2010); World Day for Consecrated Life (February 7, 2010), and World Day of Prayer for Vocations (April 25, 2010)

The Archbishop closed his letter asking that each priest consider preaching on the “Year for Priests” on October 25th, expressing their desire to serve the faithful, acknowledging in humility times of failure and the need for ongoing prayers for all priests.

Special Mass Intentions

In mid-October, Archbishop Brunett asked that a general intercession be used at all Sunday Liturgies throughout the Archdiocese. Each Sunday, celebrants are asked to specifically pray for individual priests serving in the Archdiocese. A schedule was then published, identifying which priests would be remembered at given weekend Masses (Appendix B). The names of six priests are designated to be inserted for each Sunday’s general intercessions until August 29, 2010.

The intercession states:

“For the priests that serve in the Archdiocese of Seattle, most specifically (*insert names of priests from schedule*) may this Year for Priests provide an opportunity to express appreciation for their dedicated service and may it be an occasion of grace to deepen their love for Christ and His Church. We pray to the Lord.”

Priests were also encouraged to include the following intercession on occasion at Sunday Liturgies:

“For our pastor _____, may this Year for Priests refresh and encourage him to lead our community to be a beacon of Christ’s love and hope for all. We pray to the Lord.”

A Prayer for Priests

Priests and parishioners throughout the Archdiocese were encouraged to pray the "Prayer for Priests" distributed by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. Many parishes ordered the prayer cards for distribution among parishioners.

Catholic Northwest Progress

Special Edition:

In October, the *Catholic Northwest Progress*, the bi-weekly Archdiocesan newspaper, published Archbishop Brunett's pastoral letter as well as other articles, reflections and information about the Year for Priests events, activities and resources.

Priest Profiles:

Throughout the Year for Priests, each edition of the *Progress* is profiling six to ten priests of the Archdiocese (Appendix C). Each article includes the priest's photograph, their current and previous assignments, their hometown, the date and place of their ordination, their greatest joys and challenges as a priest, a scriptural passage they find of inspiration, and their favorite recreations. These columns have been very well received and provide a wonderful opportunity for the entire Archdiocese to know these priests better and to remember them in prayer.

Parish Activities:

The *Catholic Northwest Progress* has highlighted not only special archdiocesan events and activities celebrating the Year for Priests, but has also had a special focus on parish celebrations (Appendix D). In a typical article published February 4, 2010, several parishes' activities were featured. Two parishes in the Olympic Peninsula distributed the names of all the archdiocesan priests at random to their parishioners. Parishioners receiving a name committed to pray daily for that priest. Another parish sent a delegation of 50 parishioners on pilgrimage with their pastor to his hometown and learned about the people and experiences that shaped his vocation. A small parish in Anacortes is planning to send their pastor to the Year for Priests closing services in Rome. Articles will continue to be published throughout the Year for Priests.

Archdiocesan Website (www.seattlearch.org)

A special page has been created on the Archdiocesan website to provide education and resources about the Year for Priests (Appendix E). Besides local resources, links are provided to the Vatican website, Pope Benedict XVI' letter proclaiming the Year for Priests, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishop's information and resources, as well as links to the National Coalition for Church Vocations.

Archdiocesan Events

Fall Priests' Gathering:

On September 23, 2009, the Archbishop convened a meeting of the entire presbyterate to discuss Archdiocesan efforts at enhancing Catholic Identity throughout the Archdiocese and to lay the foundation for the Year for Priests. During that session, the presbyterate committed to participate in the Catholics Come Home advertising effort (www.catholicscomehome.org), discussed the pastoral response to the recently approved state initiative allowing for physician assisted suicide, and discussed the Year for Priests planned initiatives.

Vianney Tour:

In January and February 2010, the Archdiocese sponsored Leonardo Defilippis's one-man stage production, *VIANNEY*, in parishes throughout Western Washington (Appendix F). The production opens amidst the chaos of the French Revolution, a time which mirrors the secularization, materialism and anti-religious sentiment of our own day. Against this dramatic backdrop, a simple peasant priest enters the backwater town of Ars, a place where no one cares much about their faith or sees the Church as particularly relevant. The production highlights the impact of this simple priest's faith and ministry on his community and ultimately the world.

Annual Priest Retreat:

In January 2010, approximately fifty priests gathered at the Palisades Retreat and Formation Center, the Archdiocesan Retreat Center, for a week of prayer and reflection led by Rev. Thomas Vandenberg, a senior priest of the Archdiocese (Appendix G).

As this retreat for priests progressed, it became apparent that a reoccurring idea was the need for deepening a sense of fraternity within the presbyterate in the Archdiocese of Seattle. Fr. Vandenberg wrote that, "while it is important to understand who we are as priests, and an important part of our identity comes from our relationship with brother priests. What meaning does this have for us, that we are brothers? What is the

condition of our health as a fraternity of priests? In an attempt to encourage our sense of unity with one another, especially since we are such a diverse group of men, it was agreed upon by those present at the end of the retreat to endorse the following modest proposal. Who knows where it may lead us?

Fr. Vandenberg then made a proposal that is now being shared throughout the presbyterate. His proposal is as follows:

“On Mondays: We pray as a presbyterate for all the priests from the countries of **Africa**.

On Tuesdays: We pray as a presbyterate for all the priests from **Asia**, including **China, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, India**, and also any priests from the **Pacific Islands** like **Samoa**, plus **Australia** and **New Zealand**.

On Wednesdays: We pray as a presbyterate for all the priests from the countries of **Europe**.

On Thursdays: We pray as a presbyterate for all the priests from **Mexico** and the countries of **Central and South America**.

On Fridays: We pray as a presbyterate for all the priests from **North America**, the **United States** and **Canada**.

On Saturdays: We pray as a presbyterate for all **seminarians**.

On Sundays: We pray as a presbyterate for all the **priests no longer with us**, who have passed away or are no longer active in ministry.”

Ordinations:

On July 12, 2010, Archbishop Brunett will ordain four men for priesthood and service in the Archdiocese. During Archbishop Brunett’s twelve years as Ordinary, 52 priests have been ordained for the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Priest Pilgrimage Delegation to International Meeting of Priests in Rome, June 2010

Archbishop Brunett, as a sign of his gratitude, for their priestly ministry, is sending ten priest representatives to Rome for the Year for Priests closing ceremonies. In his letter of invitation, the Archbishop stated, that “this expression is particularly meaningful to me, not only as a way to celebrate the end of the Year for Priests, but also in gratitude for the gift you have been to me as I near the conclusion of my appointment as Archbishop of Seattle.”

The Archbishop noted that because resources are limited, he was not able to send every priest who would be interested in going. He therefore, invited all the priests to participate in the selection of the priests to represent the presbyterate. Each priest was invited to nominate three priests, including themselves.

The Archbishop closed this invitation by writing, “There are very few ways for a bishop to express his gratitude and his love for the care and support he has received from his priests. This challenge is magnified for me because in my own experience you have been such an extraordinary fraternity in my ministry as Archbishop of Seattle. While I wish that I could send each of you to this celebration, I hope that this pilgrimage of a representative group of priests will be a sign of gratitude to each of you for the outstanding ministry you provide to the People of God and for your personal support of my own ministry over the last twelve years. “

Ninety priests responded to his invitation and 120 priests were nominated, some priests receiving numerous nominations. The response in and of itself is a tremendous affirmation of the leadership and collegiality present among this presbyterate. Those selected represented senior priests, those celebrating significant anniversaries, some priests who had never been to Rome, and some newly ordained.

Priests’ Days - Ocean Shores, Washington - June 25-28, 2010 Closing Ceremonies

Special services will be held at the annual four day gathering of priests at Ocean Shores, Washington to close the Year of the Priests celebration.