

A vibrant local church

Though I have previously been reluctant to use this column as a sort of “calendar review” – a rundown of my comings and goings – I thought such an exercise this week might prove beneficial, given the significance, if not the volume, of the events which occurred in the Archdiocese last week. Though I detail only a few, these examples succeed in reminding us that ours is a vibrant Church with an abundance of people doing an abundance of good for God, His people and His Church.

The week began with Mass at St. Ignatius, Ijamsville, where the officers of the Chaplain Vincent R. Capodanno Assembly No. 3162 of the Knights of Columbus were being installed. It was a beautiful liturgy and a welcome reminder to those present of the selfless and often unheralded works of our Knights. We are extremely fortunate to have so many dedicated Knights here in our Archdiocese and their commitment to our Church can be seen in nearly every parish of this Archdiocese.

The following day found me in beautiful Pylesville, at the parish of St. Mary’s for a Confirmation Mass for 35 youths of the parish. I was most impressed by the enthusiasm of the young people and the supportive presence of the parish. May that enthusiasm remain and, if it be God’s will, may it mature and blossom into vocations that serve the Lord and His Church.

On Tuesday, I visited Emmitsburg and the Daughters of Charity to celebrate Mass and to visit the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born Saint and the foundress of the first community for religious women in the United States. A tour of the Shrine reveals the impressive history of service of this dedicated community, especially in the areas of health care and education. I hope many of our people, especially our Catholic children, will visit Emmitsburg and be inspired by the lives and works of Mother Seton and her “daughters.” Our Church and this Archdiocese have been blessed to have so many consecrated religious women and men serving in parishes, schools, hospitals and other institutions; their holy works give glory to God and His Church.

Loyola College officially became known as Loyola University Maryland on Friday and I was proud to receive one of two honorary degrees bestowed by the University that

afternoon. Loyola has been educating minds in the Jesuit tradition since 1852 and the presence of the institution and the dedicated Jesuit priests in Baltimore has been a blessing for our Church. I am especially grateful to Father Brian Linnane, S.J., for his commitment since his first days on campus to improving our city through his “Year of the City” campaign, and to the Church’s belief in providing an education to disadvantaged children through the school’s partnership with St. Mary’s School, Govans.

Finally, the first of what I hope will be an annual Archdiocesan Gala took place last Saturday night as more than 600 people came out to celebrate 200 years of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. It was a tremendous show of support for our Archdiocese, our schools, and for the many teachers and administrators providing a quality, Catholic education to the more than 30,000 students currently enrolled in Catholic schools. I pray that such grassroots enthusiasm will develop into a larger movement that will include people of all faiths, united in their belief in the value of a strong Catholic school system.