

# Baltimore welcomes new archbishop

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Baltimore, buzzed with excitement, July 12, as Catholics gathered to meet Pope Benedict XVI's newly appointed head of the Premier See, Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien.

Rounds of applause greeted the archbishop for the Archdiocese for the U.S. Military Services as he stepped into the basilica for a morning press conference and later for the 12:10 p.m. Mass.

"I think it's exciting," said Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, superintendent for Catholic Schools for the archdiocese. "I think it shows how the succession runs and how the continuity of the church is so consistent. There's obviously a great deal of prayerful discernment in a decision of this nature, and I think it brings about a heightened awareness of where we are and what we must do to continue."

Michael Ruck, who worked closely with Cardinal William H. Keeler as chairman of Basilica of the Assumption Historic Trust, described the day as "bittersweet."

"I've been privileged to work with the cardinal on a number of projects," he said, noting that he would certainly be happy to continue working on the Historic Trust if the new archbishop wishes him to do so.

Harold A. Smith, executive director of Catholic Charities, said, "I think all of Catholic Charities is really excited about the appointment and pleased that the Holy Father has responded in the way that he has. I think that the Holy Father's first encyclical kind of set in motion his philosophy, his priorities, and we see this appointment as a manifestation of that."

He said Catholic Charities has a lot of fine people doing some great work and he looks forward to showing the new archbishop that.

Mark Pacione, director of the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, also

described the day as bittersweet, noting the cardinal's extensive work with young people in Baltimore.

Mr. Pacione said Archbishop O'Brien started some "terrific" youth programs for the Archdiocese for the U.S. Military Services, and added that the new leader will "bring his own special spin" to the youth programs in Baltimore.

Dozens of high school youths participating in the High School Leadership Institute and Justice Action Week programs were present for the Mass.

"I think it was an extremely wonderful experience," said Jeremy Battle, a 16-year-old Resurrection of Our Lord, Laurel, parishioner and junior at Meade Senior High School in Fort Meade. "I was very happy to be here with my leadership team."

Kate Cohagan, a 17-year-old St. Mark, Catonsville, parishioner, who will be a freshman at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, said when she and other JAW participants woke up, they were informed they would be attending a special Mass at the basilica.

"It's amazing to be here," she said. "I hope we welcomed him very well."

Carolyn Monette contributed to this story.