

Celebration of Cardinal William H. Keeler's 50th Anniversary of Priesthood Set for Wednesday

A Mass of Thanksgiving will take place on Wednesday, October 5, 2005 at 2 p.m. at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, to commemorate the 50 years of priesthood and 25 years of episcopacy of Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore.

The Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of Milwaukee, will be the homilist.

The Mass is open to the general public and will be preceded by a brief press conference at 1:15 p.m. in the Parish Center, directly behind the Cathedral.

William H. Keeler was ordained a priest on July 17, 1955 in the Church of the Holy Apostles, Rome. He was ordained an auxiliary bishop of Harrisburg on September 21, 1979 and installed as the Bishop of Harrisburg on January 4, 1984. Bishop Keeler was named the 14th Archbishop of Baltimore in 1989 and appointed to the College of Cardinals by the late Pope John Paul II in November, 1994.

An influential participant in a wide range of national and international issues, Cardinal Keeler was elected President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now the USCCB) and the United States Catholic Conference in November 1992. He had been elected as the organizations' Vice President in November of 1989, when he hosted Baltimore's bicentennial celebration of the founding of America's first Roman Catholic diocese. He is also Chairman of the Maryland Catholic Conference, Chair of the Board and Chancellor of St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, as well as of Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg.

As part of his work with the USCCB, Cardinal Keeler developed a reputation for effectively building interfaith bonds. He is particularly noted for his work in furthering Catholic-Jewish dialogue and serves as moderator of Catholic-Jewish relations for the USCCB. He has been a member of the International Catholic

Orthodox Commission for Theological Dialogue since 1986. As Chair of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs from 1984 to November 1987, he helped arrange the Pope's meetings with Jewish leaders in Miami and with Protestant leaders in Columbia, S.C., during the 1987 papal visit. The Archbishop was appointed to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in the summer of 1994, and to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in November 1994. From 1998-2001 and again since November 2003, he has served as Chair for the Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Since coming to Baltimore, one of Cardinal Keeler's priorities as leader of the oldest Catholic See in the United States has been the strengthening of the Catholic school system. He also has been a vigilant leader of the pro-life movement and an outspoken advocate for expanded evangelization throughout the Catholic community. In 1992 the Cardinal initiated the Lenten Appeal, a giving campaign that has raised over \$44 million in support of area Catholic schools, the needs of the less fortunate, and a variety of spiritual development efforts. Further, the Cardinal's Partners in Excellence scholarship program, in its 10 year, has raised \$16 million in tuition assistance for at-risk children.

The Cardinal is also responsible for the effort to restore America's first cathedral, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore. Work to restore the Basilica began in 2004 and is due to be completed by November 2006, in time for its 200th anniversary. Due to the Cardinal's leadership, the vast majority of the \$32 million is being financed by private donations. An invitation has been extended to Pope Benedict XVI to visit the restored Basilica in October, 10 years after the late Pope John Paul II concelebrated Mass with Cardinal Keeler at Oriole Park at Camden Yards.

Cardinal Keeler is the President of the American Division Catholic Near East Welfare Association, and Chair of the Black and Native American Missions Board. He serves on the Boards of The Catholic University of America; the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington; and Mount St. Mary's College. He is Chairman of the Board of Catholic Charities, the largest non-governmental agency providing assistance to the needy of Maryland. He is president of the Cathedral Foundation and publisher of The Catholic Review.

Honorary degrees: Lebanon Valley College; Mount St. Mary's; Gettysburg College; Susquehanna University; Gannon University, Erie, Pennsylvania; Loyola College, Baltimore; St. Mary's College of Minnesota, Winona, Minnesota; Shippensburg State University, Pennsylvania; Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania, University of Notre Dame, South Bend; Ateneo University, Philippines, College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Baltimore, Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio; and Viterbo University, LaCrosse, Wisconsin.