

Friends, family jubilant over installation service

Sitting in the front pews of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Homeland, friends and relatives of Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien said they were overwhelmed by the majesty of the ceremony.

"All of the cardinals and bishops who traveled from all over the country, and the world, just to be here for my uncle, really drove home to me how important his new role is," said Tim O'Brien, 43, of Miami Beach. "This cathedral is enormous and it's packed. I'm overcome with pride right now."

The front right-hand pews were reserved for the newly installed archbishop's family and friends, many of whom traveled from the far ends of the United States.

"I wouldn't have missed this," said Christian O'Brien, 41, a nephew of Archbishop O'Brien who flew to Baltimore from Austin, Texas, for the occasion. "I wanted to be here for Uncle Ed."

Though nephew Adam O'Brien, 33, of Red Bank, N.J., attended his uncle's 1996 ordination as an auxiliary bishop at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, he wasn't prepared for the splendor of the Baltimore installation.

"I thought I knew what to expect, but this was a bit of a surprise," he said. "What an honor."

Archbishop O'Brien commented on the lavish ceremony and thanked the organizers from the cathedral and the archdiocese who planned the celebration.

So moved during the ceremony, longtime friend and former colleague Jerry Costello was nearly brought to tears.

"I just filled up during his homily," said Mr. Costello, 76, the founding editor of Catholic New York newspaper when Archbishop O'Brien was the communications director for the Archdiocese of New York. "He was so clear and precise about his mission, especially the part about abortion and reaching out to the women and

helping to find loving homes for the babies they are carrying.”

Making the three-hour drive from Pompton Plains, N.J., with his wife, Jane, the retired Mr. Costello called the event the proper venue to introduce Archbishop O’Brien to the people of Baltimore.

“He really had a great opportunity to show everyone here the kind of leader he is going to be,” he said. “He was very effective. He was able to communicate his intentions and show that he will listen to the people here to understand their concerns. He’ll knock himself out here.”

After the installation ceremony was complete, Archbishop O’Brien made his way to a reception tent in front of the cathedral to greet a long line of well-wishers, many of whom were guests he personally invited.

Peter Bazzel, 60, of Washington, D.C., waited patiently in the reception line to see the man who had been his parish priest when he was a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point in the 1960s.

Mr. Bazzel was thrilled to receive his invitation for Archbishop O’Brien’s installation and was eager to congratulate the man who helped convince him to convert to Catholicism nearly 40 years earlier.

“Peter, I knew I saw you out in the crowd,” a delighted Archbishop O’Brien said as the man reached the front of the line.