

Installation, homily garner praise from attendees

Swift, certain and sure was the reaction to the installation of Archbishop Edwin O'Brien.

Those attending were inspired by the celebratory event and the 3,800-word homily. When asked what most moved him, Gov. Martin O'Malley said, "His humility and his commitment and his passion for serving the people of the church."

When Archbishop O'Brien said "our city has been in crisis for decades," and resolved to tackle urban problems, at least one person in attendance took note: Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon.

"I am delighted that Archbishop O'Brien expressed his commitment to the city and people of Baltimore. The leaders and members of Baltimore's Catholic community have and continue to make important contributions to the culture of our city. I look forward to working with Archbishop O'Brien to make Baltimore a more dynamic and attractive city for everyone."

Said Tom Lorsung, a parishioner from St. John the Evangelist, Columbia, "I was impressed by the archbishop's clarity of statement and the strength of his commitment to the really difficult issues, especially strengthening the life of the city, a city characterized on television by 'The Wire' - that's the city he wants to save. That's a very difficult job."

Democratic Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski said that in her capacity as the senior senator from Maryland she attended to formally welcome the archbishop, but she also had a personal interest.

"As a Roman Catholic and a product of their schools, it's also a very special day and I want to give him a warm welcome," Sen. Mikulski said. "I look forward to working with him on issues of social justice such as health care for the elderly."

She was particularly interested in his background as a military chaplain. "I really want to benefit from his insight as a chaplain of the military as to how we can help

military families because the chaplains see everything," she said.

Sen. Mikulski also believes that background will serve him well here. "As a former military chaplain, Archbishop O'Brien knows how to build bridges between people of all faiths," the senator said. "I know he will continue the good works of Cardinal Keeler as a spiritual leader of the Catholic Church in Maryland. I look forward to listening and learning from him in the days to come."

Rabbi Elan Adler of Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah Hebrew Congregation hopes the interfaith spirit that characterized the archdiocese under Cardinal William H. Keeler will continue.

"I'm actually here because I've enjoyed warm relations with Cardinal Keeler," he said. "I'm here to meet Archbishop O'Brien and hold out a hand to him and help him with his entrée into the Jewish community."

U.S. Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin, Democratic senator from Maryland, added "I am looking forward to working with Archbishop O'Brien in fostering interfaith dialogue and in addressing issues of concern to all members of the Baltimore faith community - peace in the world, respect for human rights and economic and social justice."

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Baltimore City Council president, said, "It is a historic day for Baltimore when the church installs a new archbishop. From the services it provides to the poor and hungry, to the counseling it provides to those in need, the Catholic Church in Baltimore plays such a vital role in the lives of all Baltimoreans. I am proud to be a part of this momentous occasion, and wish Archbishop O'Brien all the best in his new role."

"We in Baltimore are so grateful to Cardinal Keeler for his truly remarkable work and leadership in lifting up our communities, said Rep. John Sarbanes, a democratic congressman from Maryland. "By his own expression, Archbishop O'Brien is similarly eager to be 'in the midst of the people ... to get to know them, to love them, to serve them.' We look forward to that leadership approach and to his continuing the tremendous work of Cardinal Keeler."

His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of the Greek Orthodox Church said the ceremony revealed the presence of God. "The spirit of God is moving the hearts and

minds of people," he said. "On behalf of all orthodox, we send our love and our willingness to work together."

"I think it has been wonderful," said Susan Coyle from Our Lady of Sorrows in Takoma Park, who particularly liked Archbishop O'Brien's homily. "He's very close to the people in the way he preaches."

Archbishop O'Brien called the right to life "the greatest civil rights issue of our time."

A nun from the contemplative order Sisters of Life in New York said, "All of us at the end said he sounds like (the late Cardinal John O'Connor). He made it life-giving. He was calling people to another level, and he sounded like such a humble servant."

George Weigel, a senior fellow with the Ethics and Public Policy Center, said "What struck me as forceful was linking the pro-life cause to the civil rights cause. This gives it particular force under these circumstances and in this place."

The entire installation, with its stirring procession, moved many. "That's something that's the strong suit of the Catholic church," said Deborah Holly, a member of St. Peter Claver, Baltimore, and a docent at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Baltimore. The ritual, she added, leads to "ever more riches of faith."

Philip Johnson, who worships at St. Joseph's Passionist Monastery Church, Irvington, converted to Catholicism in April. "The actual installation was fantastic," he said. "The entourage entry really blew me away - it was really spectacular."

"It was such an historic moment in time; I felt so honored to be here, just to be a witness," said Betty Long of St. Margaret, Bel Air.

"When I saw all those priests and deacons, I thought the line would never end," said Sister Agnes Blee of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, "You don't get these very often."