

# Pilgrimage for Cardinal-Designate O'Brien's Elevation to the College of Cardinals

A pilgrimage to the Vatican has been organized for Catholics from the Archdiocese of Baltimore and others of good will interested in attending the February 18 consistory during which Cardinal-designate Edwin F. O'Brien, Pro Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem and Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, will be elevated to the College of Cardinals.

Pope Benedict XVI named the Archbishop a Cardinal on January 6, 2012. Cardinals serve as advisors to the Pope and are eligible to vote in a Papal election until their 80th birthday.

**The pilgrimage is being organized by [Peter's Way Tours Inc.](#) (800-225-7662 ext.14) and includes flights, hotels, and access to the Consistory ceremony and an audience with Pope Benedict XVI. Three options are available: February 14-21, February 15-21 and February 16-21. A brochure with details is online at [www.archbalt.org](http://www.archbalt.org).**

On Saturday, February 18, Pope Benedict XVI will create the 22 new cardinals. During a ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica, he will give each a traditional scarlet biretta (a square hat with three ridges), a ring, and assign each his titular church in Rome.

As he places the red hat on each new cardinal's head, the Holy Father says, "Receive this red hat as a sign of the dignity of the office of a cardinal, signifying that you are

ready to act with fortitude, even to the point of spilling your blood for the increase of the Christian faith, for peace and harmony among the people of God, for freedom and the spread of the Holy Roman Catholic Church.”

On Sunday, February 19, the Holy Father will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving with the new cardinals at St. Peter’s Basilica.

The February 18 consistory will be the fourth of this Pope’s pontificate.

Cardinal-designate O’Brien served as Archbishop of Baltimore from October 1, 2007 until August 30, 2011, when he was appointed Pro Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem. At that time he was also named Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, a role he will continue to assume until his eventual successor is installed.

Cardinal-designate O’Brien is the first Apostolic Administrator in the history of the Archdiocese of Baltimore to receive this honor. Three other Archbishops of Baltimore were elevated to the College of Cardinals since the Archdiocese was founded as the first American diocese in 1789: Cardinal James Gibbons (1886), Cardinal Lawrence Shehan (1965) and Cardinal William Keeler (1994).

Currently, there are 192 total members of the College of Cardinals 109 of whom are voting Cardinals. Seventeen Cardinals are from the United States.