

RCIA class of 892 largest this decade

Sharon Bogusz could not contain herself when she saw the number of people committing to the Catholic faith in Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion ceremonies.

This year's class of 892 is the largest of the decade.

Ms. Bogusz, the Archdiocese of Baltimore's coordinator for evangelization and adult catechesis, was on hand March 1 as part of the class was invited into the faith by Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland. The ceremony was one of three simultaneous gatherings throughout the archdiocese.

"I've been dancing through the halls all week," she said. "The number of people is such a powerful sign of the way that God continues to be present and active in our world. Each of the 892 people comes with a story of a unique and profound experience of God acting in their lives. Every year I am left in awe by God's grace-filled work."

Archbishop O'Brien welcomed 223 catechumens, who are those seeking baptism and other sacraments of initiation. There are also 421 candidates, those who are joining the Catholic faith.

Monsignor John Dietzenbach, vicar forane for Frederick and Washington Counties, was at Hagerstown's St. Ann witnessing the commitments of 41 catechumens and 93 candidates, while Auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski guided 36 catechumens and 78 candidates at St. John Neumann in Annapolis.

Ms. Bogusz said the high number of new Catholics can be attributed to many factors.

"Our parish faith communities are authentic and welcoming places where seekers consistently find Christ," she said. "Christ's work continues through the ministry of the church and the men and women who commit themselves year after year to the

work of building the kingdom of God. This is especially evident in the committed and tireless ministry of parish RCIA teams. These men and women are strong in their own faith and offer 'seekers' a safe place to ask questions about life, God, spirituality, prayer and morality."

Those in the class will complete their sacramental journeys during Easter Vigil.

For more information about Jesus Christ, his teaching and the difference knowing him makes, contact 410-547-5440 or go to www.archbalt.org/faith.