The Catholic Diocese of Orange Turns 40

Description

Regional Church History Extends Far Beyond this Contemporary Milestone Anniversary Event is Open to All People of Faith **Garden Grove, calif., (Aug. 31, 2016) –** Tourists and locals heading south from Los Angeles or Orange County might overlook the *Cristianitos* road sign or the historical markers dotting the gateways to one of California's premier surfing areas. Where today restaurants and expensive hillside homes are bracketed by light industry or the occasional golf course or riding stable – simple trails and rudimentary Native American huts once stood. It was that environment – the original Orange County – that welcomed Spanish adventurers and their clerical associates over two-hundred years ago. It was here the first baptisms took place, where holy waters introduced indigenous peoples to a new faith within sight of the broad Pacific and above what is known to surfers world-wide as Trestles beach. Over time those early conversions and the beginnings of commerce led to the founding of Mission San Juan Capistrano, a comfortable day's walk from the original *Cristianitos* baptismal site. The relationship between the Catholic Church and what came to be Orange County is intertwined by time, growth, connectedness and the abiding promise of something more to come. So it was that forty years ago – 1976 – the sprawling Archdiocese of Los Angeles was released from liturgical governance of the very area where the regional church began. By Vatican dictate, Orange County would be its own diocese and is today the nation's 12th largest Catholic Community. "As we enter the diocese's fortieth anniversary year it is important for Catholics young and old – and all regional residents – to consider the two hundred year relationship our faith and Church has built with the geographic and cultural phenomenon now known around the world as Orange County. For illustration, Mission San Juan Capistrano was operational in 1776 – the year our nation was founded. Our Church was here before the citrus revolution, before Disneyland, before the transportation corridors and shopping centers," said the Most Reverend Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange. It is that history of involvement that makes the 40th Anniversary a hallmark for the regional Church. The diocesan footprint now includes 41 schools, 62 parishes and centers, three hospitals and care centers and an assortment of Catholic service agencies serving the needs of the poor or disenfranchised. Over the last decade alone Catholic Charities of Orange County served the needs of over 300,000 people. Catholic hospitals tended to hundreds of thousands of patients and various social service adjuncts like the Knights of Columbus assisted thousands seeking help with every day, real-world concerns. With growth comes the need to build effective infrastructures. Such was the case as California came of age as a State and particularly during the post-War population boom that saw Los Angeles spread in all directions and the eventual creation of suburban communities. By the 1990s the Diocese of Orange had already outgrown its administrative campus, its Cathedral too small to host all worshippers, its parish and schools networks growing to meet the steady influx of new Catholics from differing ethnicities and cultures. "The ability to appreciate Church history and our 200 year relationship with this region is less important than the need to consider the future. Credit goes to my predecessor Bishop Todd Brown and his administration for seeing the future and taking the many difficult steps that resulted in where we are today; notably the decision to seek to acquire the former Crystal Cathedral and its campus. That resolve may be the second-most important decision for the diocese; the first being the Vatican's creation of the Diocese of Orange. Both set in motion our future ability to meet the many needs of an expanding Catholic community." Bishop Vann continued. **CELEBRATION PROGRAM:** Acknowledging both past and future – recognizing the cultural, social, liturgical and communal needs of the diocese, a day-long series of events is planned to celebrate the diocesan anniversary.

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- 5K Run/Walk & 1 Mile Fun Run: 7:30 a.m.
- 40th Anniversary Mass: 9:30 – 11 a.m.
- VR Cathedral Tour: 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Family Fun Zone with Real Snow Sledding Area: 11:00 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Live Music on the Plaza Stage: 12 – 3 p.m.
    - Performers: Matt Maher, Colton Dixon, Phil Wickham, Andy Mineo, and Jordan Feliz

- Speakers Series in the Freed Theater: 12?3 p.m.
- Music Festival: 3-9:30 p.m.
    - Doors Open at 3 p.m. – Performances start at 4 p.m. and conclude by 9:30 p.m.

- Photo Exhibit All Day in Cultural Center
- Family friendly games, rides, etc.: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Food vendors and beer garden: 11:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m.

The September 18 anniversary is not restricted to Catholics; it is a celebration open to all. “As the first missionaries met strangers along a trail that led to a village and today leads to Christ Cathedral and its beautiful campus, we are eager to meet every person of faith. All are welcome to join the celebration and to share in our optimism for California’s future – especially for our diocesan home, Orange County,” Bishop Vann concluded. **Pastoral Center:** Communications Department 13280 Chapman Ave. Garden Grove, CA 92840 **office:** 714-282-3075 **fax:** 714-282-3029

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