

Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth
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Bishop Kevin Vann Announces Plans for Spiritual Renewal To Commemorate Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth's 40th Anniversary

Bishop Kevin Vann announced Friday that the 28-county Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth will observe a year of spiritual renewal to commemorate the diocese's 40th anniversary. The anniversary observance will begin on Sunday, August 9, 2009 with a diocesan Mass at the Fort Worth Convention Center and will conclude on Monday, August 9, 2010 with Evening Prayer at St. Patrick Cathedral.

"As we, the local Church of the Diocese of Fort Worth, prepare for our 40th anniversary, we are reminded that throughout Sacred Scripture 'forty' is a significant number," Bishop Vann explained, "both for the frequency of its occurrence and its relevance to a time period of preparation that leads to a deeper relationship with God.

"It is my hope that in our 40th year as a diocese, we can deepen our commitment to live more fully in spiritual union with our Savior and with one another, as our call to "communio" urges us." (*Communio* refers to what is the source, the means, and the goal of the Church's life: The Trinitarian communion that graciously will draw all of creation into its loving embrace through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the Spirit keeps perennially present in the *communio* and its universal mission.)

The cornerstone of the spiritual renewal will be the "Why Catholic" program which helps adults deepen their Catholic faith and connect the Church's teachings to their everyday lives by exploring Catholic teaching in a prayerful small group setting.

Bishop Vann has formed a committee to assist with planning and implementing activities throughout the anniversary year. The members include Charlene Hymel, Steve Landon, Father Hector Medina, Elaine Petrus, Debbie Phifer, Tessy Ross, Joe Rodriguez, Sister Rosemary Stanton, and Sister Patricia St. Marie.

The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth was established on August 9, 1969, after being a part of the Diocese of Dallas for almost 80 years.

The Fort Worth Diocese is made up of 28 North Texas counties which include: Archer, Baylor, Bosque, Clay, Comanche, Cooke, Denton, Eastland, Erath, Foard, Hardeman, Hill, Hood, Jack, Johnson, Knox, Montague, Palo Pinto, Parker, Shackelford, Somervell, Stephens,

Tarrant, Throckmorton, Wichita, Wilbarger, Wise, and Young Counties. The area covers 23,950 square miles.

On October 21, 1969, Bishop John J. Cassata, a native of Galveston, was installed as the first bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. Before coming to the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth as Auxiliary Bishop to Bishop Thomas K. Gorman in 1968, Bishop Cassata was a parish priest in Houston for more than 35 years.

From 1969, when the Diocese of Fort Worth was established, to 1986 the Catholic population in the diocese increased from 67,000, which represented only 5 percent of the total population in the region, to 120,000.

Pope John Paul II named Joseph P. Delaney the second bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. He was installed on September 13, 1981. During his tenure, new Catholic elementary schools opened, new parishes were established, and a new Catholic Center was built, bringing together under one roof all pastoral and administrative offices of the diocese. His leadership of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth spanned 24 prosperous years, and the diocese grew to 400,000 Catholics.

Pope Benedict XVI named Kevin Vann as the third bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. Bishop Vann was installed as the bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth on Wednesday, July 13, 2005. Today, the diocese has an estimated 550,000 Catholics.

The diocese has 88 parishes throughout the 28-county region served by 97 priests.