

Eastern Diocesan Chrism Mass – A Sacred and Solemn Celebration

Bishop Paul Sobiechowski, Bishop Ordinary of the Eastern Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church, along with the clergy and many faithful of the Eastern Diocese gathered at St. John the Baptist Parish in Manchester, CT on Holy Tuesday, April 3, 2012 for the Sacred Chrism Mass. More than



90 gathered as the Mass began with our diocesan choir from eight parishes singing “O Redeemer and Messiah” under the direction of the organist, Karen Sobiechowski.

Fr. Henryk Wos served as the thurifer and Cliff Nemkovich (Blessed Trinity, Fall River, MA) was the crucifer and sole altar server. Fourteen diocesan clergy all vested in the beautiful white concelebration set of vestments processed in and took their places.

Bishop Paul was greeted by the parish chairperson Maureen Johnson with bread and salt and then began the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. Lectors from the diocese proclaimed the readings and led the intercessions. They were: Dorothy Stahelski (St. Joseph’s, Westfield, MA), Joe Pelland (St. Joseph’s Stratford, CT) and Sally Watson (Our Savior, Woonsocket, RI). Fr. Henry Smolinski the host pastor proclaimed the Gospel.

Bishop Paul in his homily spoke about the importance of this sa-



cred Mass and ritual of the Church, the essential role of the Holy Priesthood and the Holy Oils that were blessed during the Mass. Following the homily Bishop spoke to the priests of the diocese and they renewed their commitment to priestly service through our Holy Polish National Catholic Church. The faithful were also encouraged by the bishop to pray for all the clergy of our diocese.

During the Sanctus the diocesan clergy gathered around Bishop and the Altar and concelebrated the Mass using the most ancient Rite of the Church – the Canon of St. Hippolytus from the third century.

Prior to the Minor Elevation and the Our Father the Oil of the Infirm (Oil of the Sick) was blessed by the Bishop. This oil is used in administering the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick/Holy Unction. Fol-



lowing the distribution of Holy Communion, Bishop Paul blessed the Balsam – this was extremely solemn as following the Bishop all diocesan priests breathed over the vessel of blessed balsam for the Holy Chrism and after the Chrism was consecrated the Bishop, then Clergy and finally the Bishop

with the clergy sang “Behold, the Holy Chrism”. The Holy Chrism is used for children and adults who are baptized and confirmed, presbyters and bishops who are ordained and consecrated and altars and churches that are consecrated. The blessing of the Oil of the Catechumens (Oil used for those being baptized) concluded the ritual for the blessing of Holy Oils. These oils will be received by all the parishes of the diocese during the Mass of Institution on Holy Thursday and will be stored in the Ambry for use in the sacramental life of the parishes.

Bishop Paul concluded the Mass with his Episcopal Blessing and Deacon Joseph Stafford sang the dismissal. Fr. Henry Smolinski welcomed everyone to the parish hall where a delicious dinner was enjoyed by all.

Thanks are extended to the host parish for their warm hospitality, to all who participated in the diocesan choir, our organist (Karen Sobiechowski), the diocesan liturgical commission (Fr. Sr. Joe Soltysiak, Frs. Michal Gitner, Rob Nemkovich and Henryk Vos) for serving as the Masters of Ceremony and to all who joined in prayer and praise for this Blessed Day in our Eastern Diocese.

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