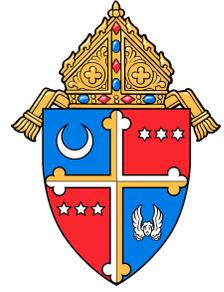


ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON



HISTORY

- Site of the first Mass in English-speaking North America (March 25, 1634)
 - Religious Act of 1649: first legislation a representative body ever enacted for religious freedom. Yet, from 1690-1776, Catholics suffered under penal laws
 - Home to John Carroll, who in 1789 was appointed the first U.S. bishop
 - Originally part of Baltimore, was established in 1939, with five Maryland counties added in 1948
 - Celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2014
 - Today: 620,000 Catholics, 139 parishes and 95 schools as well as a diverse and extensive network of social services throughout the region
-

Early Years

Catholicism was brought to Maryland in 1634 when Jesuit Father Andrew White celebrated the first Mass held in the original 13 colonies, on the shores of St. Clement's Island. From that humble beginning in St. Mary's County to the thriving, diverse Catholic community which exists today, the story of the Archdiocese of Washington is one of struggle, hope and faith.

Founded as a haven for Catholics and a place of religious tolerance, Maryland was the site of the Toleration Act of 1649 – the first legislation a representative body ever enacted for religious freedom. Sadly, this freedom did not last. Between 1690 and 1776, Catholics in Maryland suffered under oppressive penal laws. They persevered, however, and many became patriots for the cause of American independence.

Despite these early obstacles, the Catholic faith flourished. Historic parishes abound today, including St. Francis Xavier, Newtowne, which dates to 1640; St. Patrick, the first Catholic church in the original Federal City; and St. Augustine, founded by freed slaves in 1858 and canonically established in 1865. Archbishop John Carroll, appointed the first archbishop in the United States in 1789, was born in Upper Marlboro. Georgetown University, the nation's first Catholic college, was founded here in 1789. The archdiocese also is home to The Catholic University of America.

A New Archdiocese is Established

Originally part of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the City of Washington was named a separate archdiocese by Pope Pius XII in 1939, under the direction of Baltimore's Archbishop Michael J. Curley. Eight years later, Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle was named the first resident archbishop, and Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties joined Washington as part of the new archdiocese. Archbishop O'Boyle immediately began his pioneering work to desegregate Catholic schools and parishes, build new churches and establish new social service ministries. He was elevated to Cardinal in 1967 and retired in 1973.

Meeting the Needs of a Diverse and Growing Community

Archbishop William Baum succeeded Cardinal O'Boyle. Elevated to Cardinal in 1976, he was transferred to the Roman Curia four years later, where he served until 2001. While Archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Baum was joined by the faithful of the archdiocese in welcoming our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, on his first papal visit to the United States.

In 1980, James A. Hickey, a native of Michigan, was appointed Archbishop of Washington. He was elevated to the College of Cardinals in 1988. Under Cardinal Hickey's leadership, the Archdiocese of Washington built and

renovated churches and schools and he greatly expanded service ministries, establishing programs such as Victory Housing, Birthing and Care and the Archdiocesan Health Care and Legal Networks.

The archdiocese also grew in diversity, with Mass celebrated in over 20 languages, including Chinese, French, Korean, Polish, Portuguese and Vietnamese. Today, Spanish-language Masses are celebrated at 38 locations to meet the needs of the nearly 270,000 Catholics of Hispanic ancestry living in our community. The Archdiocese also is enriched by the gifts of the 100,000 Catholics of African and Caribbean descent.

In November 2000, Cardinal Hickey retired as archbishop. His successor, Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, then-Archbishop of Newark, was installed in ceremonies held in early January 2001. Just six weeks later, on February 21, he was elevated to the College of Cardinals in a ceremony held at the Vatican.

Cardinal McCarrick quickly put his mark on the archdiocese, emphasizing vocations and ministry to the diverse cultures within the archdiocese, particularly the Hispanic community. Within his first year, he visited all 140 parishes, opened a new seminary for missionary priests of the archdiocese and started a diocesan-wide stewardship initiative.

In May 2006, Pope Benedict XVI appointed then-Bishop Donald W. Wuerl as the new Archbishop of Washington. He was installed on June 22, 2006. Archbishop Wuerl, the former Bishop of Pittsburgh, is known nationally for his commitment to finding new and innovative ways to keep Catholic education affordable for parents and to ensuring all children have access to a quality education. In his first year, he initiated archdiocesan-wide initiatives to strengthen our Catholic schools, enhance catechetical programs and renew Catholic Charities. He has also made renewing sacramental life a priority, introducing a successful initiative on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in 2007 that has since been adopted by the Catholic bishops for use throughout the United States. He regularly visits parishes, schools and Church programs administering the Sacrament of Confirmation, installing pastors and celebrating anniversaries. His teaching ministry is expressed in his many pastoral letters, including recent ones on the New Evangelization and the Church as well as his many articles and books. The archbishop is active in community and interfaith activities, joining with civic and business leaders to promote education, service to the poor, pastoral assistance to refugees and immigrants as well as interfaith understanding.

As Archbishop of Washington, he also hosted Pope Benedict XVI during the Holy Father's historic visit to Washington, DC in April 2008. While in Washington, Pope Benedict celebrated Mass for nearly 50,000 people from around the nation at Nationals Park, visited the White House, met with the United States bishops and leaders of other faiths, and addressed Catholic educators.

In 2010, Archbishop Wuerl was named to the College of Cardinals and in 2012 was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to oversee the Vatican Synod on the New Evangelization.

The Archdiocese Today

On June 8, 2014, Cardinal Wuerl convoked the first Archdiocesan Synod as he celebrated Mass at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle on the Solemnity of Pentecost. The statutes and recommendations produced through the Synod preparatory process were based on more than 15,000 suggestions collected from the faithful across the archdiocese through parish listening sessions and online surveys over the past two years. The Synod gave the faithful the opportunity to reflect on the mission of the Archdiocese of Washington as well as to provide their insight on the life of the local Church and how best to carry out its work in the future.

Today, the Archdiocese of Washington is home to over 620,000 Catholics. The 95 Catholic schools educate more than 27,000 children while service agencies, including Catholic Charities and Victory Housing, have made the archdiocese one of the largest private social service providers in the region. Every year, tens of thousands of people receive counseling, shelter, adoption and foster care assistance, health care, immigration and legal aid, affordable housing and more through the care of archdiocesan staff and volunteers.