

Jubilee celebrations begin for the Centennial of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg (1915-2015)

Centennial banners are being raised in churches throughout the Archdiocese of Winnipeg as the Jubilee Year of 2015, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the archdiocese, is now underway.

The banner was designed by Fr. Patrick Neufeld, parochial Vicar at St. Augustine of Canterbury Church in Brandon, Man.

The archdiocese has also called upon other of its clergy to add their creativity to the celebrations. Retired Msgr. Ward Jamieson, former rector of St. Mary's Cathedral, who continues in his years of service as archdiocesan Vicar General, has composed a Centennial Prayer.

Rev. Geoffrey Angeles, current rector of St. Mary's Cathedral, and Bernadette Gasselin, have been commissioned to compose a Eucharistic Hymn for the Centennial Year.

Central to the Centennial celebrations will be a grand liturgical celebration for the whole archdiocese at the MTS Centre in downtown Winnipeg on Sun., May 3, at 1 p.m.

"All of the Confirmations throughout the archdiocese will be celebrated at this liturgy and the parishes, religious communities, schools, institutions and charitable apostolates will be invited to be part of the Liturgical procession," wrote Archbishop Richard Gagnon in his Pastoral Letter, The Great Jubilee of our Centennial Year. "This will be a celebration of the Holy Spirit as we enter our second 100 years," the Archbishop added, "and a significant way to worship as a Church of Communion in the heart of Winnipeg. I invite everyone in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg to mark your calendars in anticipation of this event and to wait for further details to follow in the near future."

A piece of art that is to become a focal point over the next 12 months and will mark the Jubilee Year over the next century and beyond, is being created by iconographer Andre Prevost, originally from Manitoba, now working and residing in North Vancouver, B.C.

Prevost has accepted a commission to create an icon of the Holy Family to travel to all churches throughout the archdiocese before being permanently installed at St. Mary's Cathedral. The Knights of Columbus have been enlisted to undertake the safe and solemn transport of the icon. Prevost's body of work extends through British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ireland, and the United States, including icons and murals.

The inauguration of the Jubilee Year began with solemn vespers Dec. 4 at St. Mary's Cathedral.

"The century of faith that we celebrate this year, was lived and continues to be lived by real people within the context of an incredible period of history," said Gagnon at the evening vespers. "Is it any wonder that so many are amazed that our Church is still present and continues to live in a spirit of renewal and even youthfulness."

On Dec. 4, 1915, Pope Benedict XV announced that the Archdiocese of Winnipeg was to be formed out of part of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface. The first archbishop of Winnipeg, Most Reverend Alfred Arthur Sinnott, was installed Dec. 24, 1916.

Gagnon related how Sinnott, at his installation as archbishop, told the people of the archdiocese, "your name and your fame have long since gone abroad beyond the limits of Manitoba, and people in other provinces have spoken of you in terms which I conceive to be the highest form of commendation. They have spoken of you as Catholics whose fidelity had been tested and had not failed, whose practice, carrying

with it the element of sacrifice, contained a promise and a hope for great achievement. Your name and fame have gone even beyond the broad Atlantic. And Rome, the mother and mistress of all the Churches, has seen fit to recognize and reward your fidelity by erecting a new Cathedra in your midst, to be your crown and glory, not for a day but for generations yet unborn.”

From Oct. 22 to 24, St. Paul’s College at the University of Manitoba is hosting a conference entitled The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Winnipeg at 100: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. The college has issued a call for abstracts for academic papers to be presented at the conference. Organizers are seeking proposals that will provide insights into the Roman Catholic Church in western Canada and provide a better understanding of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

The year will also include an event honouring the Religious Orders in our archdiocese as well as a special focus for the Chrism Mass during Holy Week. Further details will be available on the archdiocesan website, www.archwinnipeg.ca, in the archdiocesan weekly bulletin and in upcoming editions of the New Wine Press. The Centennial Year will be concluded on December 4, 2015, at a special Liturgy in St. Mary’s Cathedral.

The Archdiocese of Winnipeg covers 116,400 square miles, west from the Red River and Lake Winnipeg to Saskatchewan, north to Barrows, Man., and south to the U.S. Border, serving 165,000 Catholics in six deaneries containing 67 parishes, 22 missions and 10 reduced service churches. There are currently 66 diocesan priests, including 19 retired, 16 religious priests, 106 sisters, 20 deacons, four seminarians and one brother.