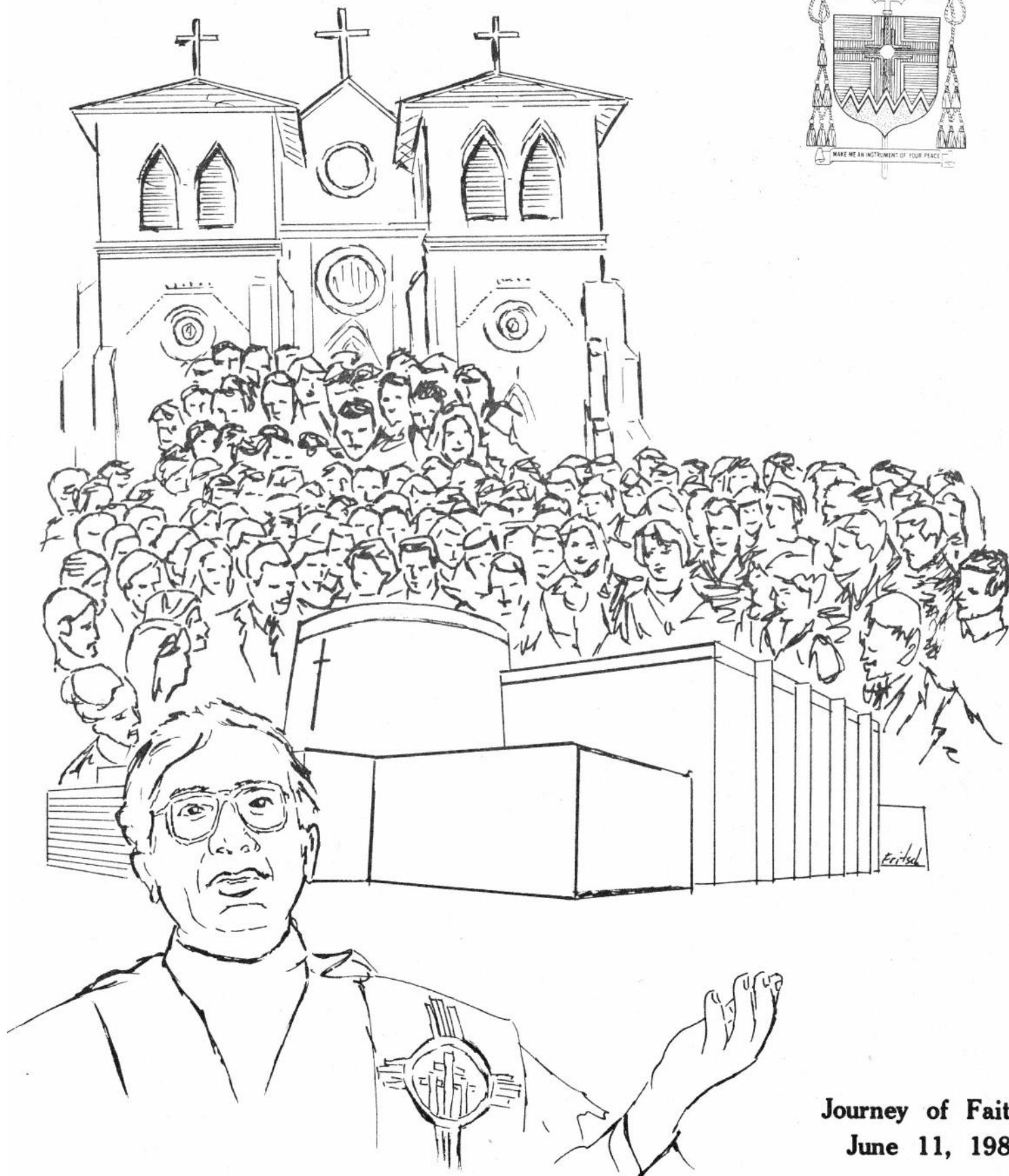
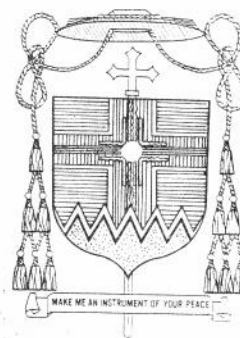
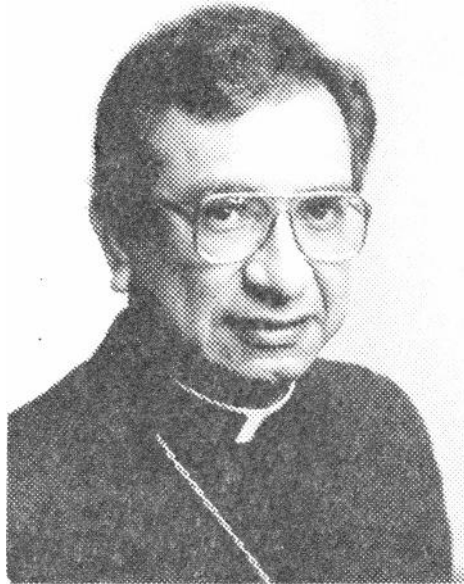


The Mass of Dedication



Journey of Faith
June 11, 1983



Dear Friends:

The dedication of the Cathedral of a diocese is an event which invites us all to reflect on the role of the Church in the world. The Church is first a people, then a building. The Cathedral is the house for the people of God.

The Second Vatican Council teaches us that "All should hold in very high esteem the liturgical life of the diocese which centers around the bishop, especially in his Cathedral Church" (SC.no.41). The word cathedral comes from cathedra which means chair, the chair of the one who presides over the community. The cathedral then reminds us of the role of the bishop in relation to the people he serves.

The bishop is a minister or servant of the truth of God. His function is to teach as God or as Jesus would. The bishop clarifies and interprets His word according to the present time, he challenges and calls his people to renew themselves and to grow in the following of Jesus.

The bishop is an instrument of unity. He calls people to be one and to express their unity in eating the one bread and drinking from the same cup.

The bishop invites people to share in the mission of the Church, to make Jesus known in the world, especially through their witness of service performed in love and as bearers of the Spirit.

The Cathedral is a church among churches. Its liturgy should be the example to the other communities. The community life of the cathedral parish bears a special responsibility to practice hospitality, extend a helping hand to the disadvantaged and share in the missionary effort of the Church.

The cathedral as well as all the churches of the Diocese, by this Christian dedication, must echo the words of our Lord.....COME TO ME.

+ Ricardo Ramirez c.m.

Most Reverend Ricardo
Ramirez, Bishop of the
Diocese of Las Cruces

History of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish

In 1847 Father David Kirgan, pastor of St. Genevieve's, built and dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary a 250 seat chapel of convenience on the corner of Idaho and Espina to accommodate God's people living in the Southeast part of the city.

That chapel became a church and parish in 1953 with Fr. William Ryan

as pastor. Often in those days, with the population of Las Cruces continuing to grow, the 250 seats were insufficient to hold the increasing crowds celebrating mass on Sundays. In 1957 a school was completed, staffed by

the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood and lay apostles from the east. Soon a rectory was built to provide housing and office space for the priests.

In 1960 when Fr. Ryan was transferred to St. Genevieve's, Fr. Everett Finley came to IHM. The number of Catholic families continued to increase and the need for a larger church became urgent. A campaign to raise funds for a new building was initiated in January, 1965. Before construction began, Fr. Finley returned to the U.S. Army as chaplain, and Fr. Thomas O'Mahony, as administrator, took charge of shepherding the growing flock and completing the building plans. With the opening of the beautiful new church, the

Chapel was converted into a parish hall. At this time, according to the directives of the Second Vatican Council, greater laity participation began with the formation of a parish committee, school board, and home and school association.

Fr. Finley returned in the mid-60's, soon being elevated to Monsignor. This beloved man served the parish faithfully, continuing lay involvement

in parish affairs until ill health forced him to move to El Paso in 1975. Fr. John Anderson had joined IHM as associate pastor and undertook more pastoral duties as Fr. Finley's health failed. In the early and mid-70's, the parish council became a viable decision-making body for the parish. A parish manager was also appointed. Under the direction of the council president and with the motto "Becoming the Servant Church," a parish wide stewardship campaign was launched, seeking out parishioners in their homes, speaking to them about their parish and asking for a commitment of time, talent and treasure.

Fr. Bob Getz became pastor during the formation of this campaign. He instituted an austerity program in the rectory and indeed in all church spending. In the fall of 1975, with the help of many volunteers, Fr. Bob visited and blessed the homes of his parishioners. Due to these efforts, the parish finances improved immeasurably. He recruited three nuns for pastoral ministry, the first of several permanent deacons from IHM were ordained; he personally guided the charismatic prayer community and the parish hall and Blessed Sacrament chapel were dedicated.

Fr. Ed Sullivan became pastor of IHM in 1977, following the transfer of Fr. Getz. He continued to encourage lay involvement in parish life, seeking their voice in decisions. A Home visitation "Listening Program" was started and carried out by parishioners to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the parish. Because of the many activities in the parish with volunteers and staff in every available space, the rectory became exclusively an office and the priests moved to other quarters.

In 1980 Fr. Sullivan was transferred to El Paso as rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Fr. John Tickle became pastor of IHM and then rector when our church was designated the cathedral of the Diocese of Las Cruces. Since Fr. John's arrival a new residence has been acquired for the priests and church and school facilities have been renovated and remodeled. Many new ministries have been added to our parish life including the adoption of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Palomas, Mexico.

As Cathedral of the new Diocese of Las Cruces, the future of our parish should be a most challenging and rewarding one.