



AMERICAN NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH



American National Catholic Church Marks 15-Year Milestone with Sixth Convocation

The American National Catholic Church (ANCC) recently celebrated its 15th anniversary, marking a significant milestone in its journey as a progressive and inclusive Catholic community. The event culminated in the church's sixth convocation, held in Adamstown, MD on August 15-17, 2024, where clergy, parishioners, and guests gathered to reflect on the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future.

A Community Rooted in Inclusivity and Compassion

Since its founding in 2009, the ANCC has positioned itself as a welcoming and inclusive branch of the Catholic faith, rooted in the core values of compassion, social justice, and openness to all people. The church was established to provide a spiritual home for those who may have felt marginalized or excluded by more traditional Catholic institutions. Over the past 15 years, the ANCC has grown to include numerous parishes across the United States, each committed to living out the Gospel in ways that resonate with modern sensibilities while remaining deeply rooted in Catholic tradition.

The sixth convocation was a time of deep reflection and celebration. The event highlighted the church's commitment to living out its mission in a rapidly evolving societal landscape. The convocation included a series of workshops, liturgies, and panel discussions that explored topics ranging from social justice initiatives to the role of the church in contemporary society.

Ecumenical Participation and Collaborative Dialogue

The ANCC was blessed to have Most Reverend Armando Leyva, Diocesan Bishop of California of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC), join the convocation as an official observer. He was accompanied by a priest and a seminarian from the ECC. This

participation marks a significant step in the growing relationship between the ANCC and the ECC. Both jurisdictions have initiated a dialogue about joint theological education for seminarians, with plans to collaborate through the American National Catholic Theological Institute (ANCTI.org).

Bishop Leyva's presence, along with his delegation, underscored the importance of ecumenical dialogue and the shared commitment to a Catholic faith that embraces diversity and inclusivity. The discussions held during the convocation focused on exploring ways to provide comprehensive theological education that reflects the values and mission of both the ANCC and the ECC.

Keynote Address by Fr. Ricky Manolo, CSP, Ph.D.

A highlight of the convocation was the keynote address delivered by Fr. Ricky Manalo, CSP, Ph.D., a renowned theologian, musical composer, and artist. On the first night, Fr. Ricky set the tone for the gathering with a prayerful musical meditation through the liturgical year, which deeply resonated with attendees and created a reflective atmosphere for the days ahead.

On the second day, Fr. Ricky delivered an inspiring keynote presentation titled "Encountering the Body of Christ: Cultivating Intercultural Unity for Pastoral Ministry." His address challenged and encouraged participants to consider how the church can foster greater intercultural understanding and unity within its ministries, an essential focus in today's diverse and globalized world.

Reflections on the Past and Hopes for the Future

The convocation was also an opportunity to reflect on the church's 15-year history. Founding members and new parishioners alike shared stories of their journeys within the ANCC, offering testimonies of how the church has provided a safe and loving environment for spiritual growth. Many spoke of the church's role in advocating for LGBTQ+ rights, social justice, and other critical issues, emphasizing how these efforts have shaped the identity of the ANCC.

The Most Rev. George Lucey, the Presiding Bishop of the ANCC, delivered a moving address during the convocation Executive Council reports. He reflected on the church's origins and the vision that inspired its creation. "Fifteen years ago, we set out to build a community rooted in the Spirit of Vatican Council II, where all are welcome, where the teachings of Christ guide us to love without condition and serve without hesitation," he said. "As we celebrate this milestone, we are reminded of our ongoing call to be a light in the world, especially for those who feel lost or forgotten."

Looking Forward

As the ANCC moves into its 16th year, the church is committed to expanding its outreach and deepening its engagement with contemporary social issues. The new partnership with the ECC in theological education is expected to enhance the formation of seminarians, equipping them to serve in a diverse and dynamic church. Plans are already underway for the next convocation, with a focus on furthering the church's mission of radical inclusivity and social justice. Parishioners left the convocation with a renewed sense of purpose and a shared commitment to continue building a church where everyone is welcome, and where the love of Christ is lived out in word and deed.

The sixth convocation of the ANCC was not only a celebration of the past 15 years but also a powerful reminder of the church's ongoing mission to be a beacon of hope and love in an ever-changing world. As the ANCC continues to grow, it remains steadfast in its commitment to a Catholic faith that is inclusive, compassionate, and deeply engaged with the world around it.