



# DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF The Most Rev. Paul G. Bootkoski Installed Bishop of Metuchen, March 19, 2002

- Reorganized the administration of the Diocese to include new office of Administrative and Legal Services, headed by a layperson.
- Immediately addressed the child sex abuse scandal and has continued to implement initiatives to eliminate child abuse including: establishing the Office of Child and Youth Protection, headed by a former supervisor in the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office Sex Crimes division; expanding the Diocesan Review Board; and requiring all employees and volunteers working with minors to undergo Criminal History Background Checks and complete "Protecting God's Children" program. For his efforts with victims named the Model Bishop in America by SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests).
- Initiated the charge at Saint Peter's University Hospital, the Diocese's only hospital, to retain its status as the only Regional Perinatal Center in Central New Jersey. Also provided new leadership for the hospital and took an active role in ensuring its ability to face powerful and growing competition.
- Implemented new strategies and procedures which enabled the Diocese not only to realize its Annual Bishop's Appeal goal of 5.2 million, but also to raise 14 percent more than the previous year. This year, the goal of \$5.4 million was also achieved.
- Revitalized the Flame of Charity Foundation providing it new goals to help insure its growth and a positive future for Catholic Charities which benefits from its work.
- Established the Office of Parish Leadership to prepare the laity to implement and maintain programs which strengthen and energize their Church community and to serve as a valuable resource for the clergy.
- Established the Spotlight on Education Dinner to benefit Catholic schools, as well as fund the Diocese's Catholic Education Foundation which provides tuition assistance.
- Re-established the "Blue Mass" honoring law enforcement personnel, and the "Firefighters' Mass" honoring those in the fire service.
- Convened the Diocese's first Pastoral Council to gain the insight of the laity on issues affecting the Diocese.
- Established a formal partnership with the Diocese of Santa Rosa in Guatemala, and led a delegation there to determine the needs of the people.
- Named 20<sup>th</sup> in the New Jersey Politics list of the "100 most influential individuals" in New Jersey.
- Sponsored Legislative Dialogue to inform the 30 state legislators who represent the Diocese's four counties—Middlesex, Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren—of the issues which concern the Diocese.
- Prepared to strengthen the Catholic presence on the campus of Rutgers University by planning to build a new campus center on the site of the existing building. Over 20,000 Catholic students attend Rutgers, our state university.
- Approved \$11 million expansion project at the Diocese's largest high school, Bishop Ahr.

- Established the first Diocesan Youth Day held September 17, 2005, attended by over 300 teens who gathered for a day of prayer, worship, fellowship and fun.
- On November 6, 2005, re-instituted the diocesan Red Mass honoring lawyers, judges and others in the legal profession and judicial system.
- Signed the decree convening the first diocesan synod which formally opened on November 19, 2005.
- Led a diocesan-wide celebration to open the Diocese of Metuchen's Silver Jubilee year in 2006.
- Following opening sessions of the first diocesan synod, heard feedback generated at Speak Up sessions with participation by over 6,000 Catholics. Final recommendations were accepted from synod delegates who, on January 31, 2007, promulgated 59 norms marking the synod's formal conclusion.
- Broke ground in January, 2007, for a crematory in East Brunswick, the first to be built by a diocese in the United States in a Catholic cemetery. The crematory was later dedicated on May 26, 2008.
- Engaged Meitler Consultants, Inc., to develop a strategic plan to insure the future health and vitality of the Diocese's Catholic schools. The study concluded with a strategic plan focused on Catholic identity and mission, academic excellence, school structure, governance, school leadership, enrollment, marketing, facilities and finance.
- To ensure greater efficiency and relevance, restructured diocesan departments and added The Department of Diocesan Planning.
- In April, 2008, hosted the Diocese's first Symposium to Foster Awareness for People with Disabilities.
- Concelebrated Mass with Pope Benedict XVI on his historic visit to the United States in April, 2008, and participated in seven papal events.
- Led over 2,000 pilgrims to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., to pray for an increase in vocations.
- Issued his first pastoral letter, "The Family You Have Gathered: A Pastoral Letter on Vibrant Parish Life," presented in each of the four counties of the Diocese in June, 2009. Highlights include the key elements of a vibrant parish including intergenerational faith formation, youth ministry, pastoral councils, inclusion, and collaboration between the clergy and laity and social justice.
- To prepare for the future, realigned deaneries and established the Future Staffing of Parishes Task Force to consider various models of pastoral leadership including the role of the laity.
- Observed the Year of the Priest as proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI, to help priests "rediscover the grace and goal of priestly ministry."
- Appointed two priests to co-direct the newly created Office for Hispanic Ministry to help serve the growing needs of the Diocese's Spanish-speaking population.
- In September 2009, introduced a new program, "Called to Protect," to teach high school students about boundaries and how to respond if their personal boundaries are violated.
- Launched the 2009-10 Bishop's Annual Appeal showing growth of 20% from \$5.4M in 2005 to \$6.7M in 2009.
- In January 2010, opened the new Catholic Center at Rutgers, New Brunswick, in a renovated 19<sup>th</sup> century former convent, listed on both the New Jersey and the National Register of Historic Places.