



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

PAPAL VISITS TO WASHINGTON: THEN AND NOW

- **Papal Firsts:** The Archdiocese of Washington will be the first place Pope Benedict XVI visits on his inaugural apostolic journey to the United States and was among the locations Pope John Paul II visited in 1979. Since then:
 - 45% increase in Catholic population in the Archdiocese
 - 17 additional parishes, missions and Catholic communities
 - 72% increase in the number of men studying for the priesthood
 - Greatly expanded social services: affordable housing, legal and healthcare networks and doubling of patients served by area Catholic hospitals
-

Significant Growth and Diversity

Since 1979, the number of Catholics in the Archdiocese of Washington has grown from fewer than 400,000 to more than 580,000 today. Masses are now celebrated in more than 20 languages weekly versus seven in 1979.

The growth and increased diversity has led to 17 additional parishes, missions and Catholic communities either to serve areas of growing population or to meet specific language and ethnic/cultural needs.

Increased Diversity

- Our Lady of Vietnam (Vietnamese, 1990)
- Our Lady, Queen of Americas (Spanish, 1986)
- Nigerian Catholic Community (1994)
- Syro-Malankara Mission (Indian, 1985)

Growing Populations

- Church of the Resurrection (Burtonsville, 1981)
- Jesus the Good Shepherd (Owings, MD, 1985)
- Our Lady of the Visitation (Poolesville, MD, 1991)

Increased Vocations to the Priesthood

In 1979, the Archdiocese had 43 seminarians. After an initial drop in the early 1980s, the Archdiocese proudly claims 74 men in priestly formation (as of April 2, 2008).

The Archdiocese of Washington recently was identified as one of the top three dioceses for the number of ordinations to the priesthood in a given year. Although numbers of priests continue to decline slightly nationwide, the Archdiocese of Washington sees hope and light as our seminary programs continue to thrive under the leadership of our archbishop and the prayer and support of the clergy and laity.

Serving the Local Community

Since 1979, the number of people receiving care at the area's three Catholic hospitals has more than doubled, from 231,000 people to nearly 500,000. In addition, Catholic Charities has opened numerous shelters for the homeless and established programs such as the Archdiocesan Legal and Healthcare Networks, which provide millions of dollars in *pro bono* care annually. Through public-private partnerships, Victory Housing provides 1,200 families and seniors with safe, affordable housing while uninsured pregnant women find help with pre-natal, delivery and post-natal medical care and more at Birthing and Care.

D.C. through the Eyes of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI

While in Washington, Pope Benedict XVI will visit some of the same locations as Pope John Paul II did in 1979. For example, he will meet with the bishops at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and will address educators at The Catholic University of America. He will also celebrate Mass with more than 45,000 people at Nationals Stadium. Pope John Paul II also celebrated a Mass in Washington, though he was on the National Mall.