



NEWS ARCHIVE:

## Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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# Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic Church dedicated

By Kiply Yaworski

The new church home of Saskatoon's Chaldean Catholic community was consecrated Nov. 15, 2009 in a celebration bursting with joy.

Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic Parish includes some 180 families with roots in Iraq. After a major fund-raising effort this year, the parish purchased St. Timothy's Anglican Church in southeast Saskatoon, to replace the three-bay industrial building in the Sutherland area that they have been using as a church for several years.



Applause, cheers, trilling and tossed candy greeted the opening procession as it moved into the flower-bedecked church sanctuary, led by a banner of the Sacred Heart that parishioners reached out to touch as it passed by. Children carrying candles and singing youth led the procession, followed by a number of visiting priests, Sacred Heart Pastor Fr. Sabah Kamora, and three bishops.

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Bishop Ibrahim Ibrahim of the Eparchy of St. Thomas the Apostle in Michigan presided at the dedication and consecration. Ibrahim is the apostolic exarch for Chaldean Catholics in North America. The Chaldean Catholic Church is one of several non-Latin Eastern traditions in full communion with Rome.

Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, Archbishop Albert LeGatt of the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Boniface, Saskatoon Diocesan Administrator Fr. Ron Beechinor, former Sacred Heart pastor Fr. Noel Farman, and several visiting Chaldean Catholic priests and dignitaries from across Western Canada were among those participating in the celebration.

Representatives of the Anglican community were also in attendance and were acknowledged during the celebration. It was the desire of the St. Timothy's community that the building continue to be used for worship, the gathering heard.

During the dedication and consecration ceremony, Ibrahim walked through the sanctuary, blessing the walls and entranceway, as well as anointing the altar with assistance from LeGatt and Bayda. The dedication was followed by celebration of the Eucharist.



Words of greeting from outgoing Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Ventura were read, conveying in the name of Pope Benedict XVI his prayers that having a permanent place of worship will be the source of many blessings for the Chaldean Catholic community.

Ibrahim thanked the diocese of Saskatoon, and in particular former Saskatoon bishop LeGatt for the help and support provided to the Chaldean Catholic community in recent years.

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LeGatt expressed his joy at being present to share in the dedication of the parish's new church home for the glory of God. "You have worked very, very hard to be able to come to this point. You have been generous – very, very generous," LeGatt said, noting how the community united to achieve the goal of obtaining a new parish home.

"You have worked together – and that is my joy," he said, expressing his hope that the Chaldean Catholic community in Saskatoon would continue to grow and thrive.

"You are a richness to this community, and you are very much a richness to the whole of the Catholic Church and to the Christian Church," LeGatt said. "Continue to be generous in welcoming newcomers, supporting them, and continue to be generous in welcoming children and in having families that are large and filled with joy and with love."

Bringing greetings from the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, Bishop Bayda noted the importance of having "a place to call your own, to worship, and to nurture so many things; particularly, Christ as he is present in your families."

Bayda said that the Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic community would be a light for other Christians and for other Catholics of every tradition. "You will be light for the richness of your service and your traditions, your melodies – and you will pass this on to your children and to your children's children," Bayda said.

"Today it is a personal joy of mine to taste these mysteries, with the showering of candies, with the beauty of flowers, and the radiance of every one of your faces. There are many stories to be told by each of your eyes – I read so beautifully the eyes of Christ in each and every one of you," Bayda said.



The liturgy concluded as it began – with cheering, applause and tossed candy – and was followed by a banquet and program.

Having a strong vibrant parish combined with a supportive community will serve to draw more Chaldean Catholics to the community, parishioner Alex Istifo noted in a recent interview.

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“We now have our own priest, we have only had him about six months,” said Istifo, explaining how Fr. Sabah Kamora arrived from Iraq, via Turkey and then Michigan. “Bishop Albert LeGatt has been very supportive of us, of course, a huge factor for our community. Bishop Albert and Bishop Ibrahim in Michigan were in contact and this is how having our own priest came about.”

Besides weekly celebrations, catechetical instruction for the children is offered in the parish, with some 200 youth ages five to 18 years meeting every Saturday to study Church teachings with the pastor and celebrate their faith, while those preparing for sacraments meet on Wednesdays as well as weekends.

“The community all came together to make this happen,” explained Istifo of the \$1.3 million purchase. Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic parish had looked at several churches that were too small, and finally settled on St. Timothy’s, which had closed down this summer with fewer than 50 families registered. The building includes programming space and meeting rooms.

