

WESTERN BISHOPS CELEBRATE CENTENNIAL AT SPECIAL MASS

by Frank Flegel

The Western Canada Bishops, held their annual meeting at St. Michael's Retreat House, Lumsden. They came for a special mass at Regina's first Roman Catholic parish, Blessed Sacrament as part of the Regina Archdiocese Centennial celebrations in March.

Archbishop Daniel Bohan



Bell ringers Scott and Todd Pilon.

recounted how the parish played a role in the early history of Regina: Louis Riel's body was held for about three weeks under the main altar of the original church until it became safe to transport it to St. Boniface where he was buried. He also recounted how the great Chief Sitting Bull came to Southwest Saskatchewan, now part of the Regina Archdiocese, after



Students from Athol Murray College of Notre Dame sang.

defeating General George Custer in the Battle of the Little Big Horn. "These events underline the importance of the Plains Indian people to the Archdiocese," Bohan said.

The Blessed Sacrament Choir and a choir from Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox, added special songs during and after the service.

Following the celebration, the bishops, attended a banquet at the Hotel Saskatchewan.



Procession of priests, bishops and archbishops prior to mass;

FIRST NATIONS CELEBRATE THE CENTENNIAL IN LEBRET

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Jeramie Bellegarde

"This is certainly the most unique centennial celebration in the Archdiocese," Said Archbishop Daniel Bohan addressing the gathering April 18 at the Pipe Ceremony Feast in the Lebrét Community Hall. A Eucharistic Service celebrated by Bishop Bohan with co-celebrants Reverends Wojciech Wojtkowiak OMI of Lestock, SK and Janusz

Blazejak OMI Oblate Provincial, Toronto, ON. Several priests, sisters and local residents also attended.

The traditional ceremony was conducted by Elder Robert Bellegarde from the Little Black Bear First Nation and his two sons, Jason and Jeramie. Jeramie prepared the smudge in a small, shallow, hollowed out stone using sweet grass, sage and cedar and the tobacco used in the pipe. Jason performed welcoming and thanksgiving chants accompanied with a hand drum.

The ceremony/feast began when the pipe was removed from its elaborately beaded bag and laid on the carpet in front of the Elder Bellegarde. A stone container with the smudge was passed to the special guests.

Bellegrade explained the meaning of what was happening; the importance of the drum as the heart beat of

mother earth, the pipe that speaks to the Creator for everyone and is a signal that those gathered were permitted to speak, "as long as they wanted," he joked. The women seated on one side of the hall and men on the other represent a circle and balance in the Cree culture. "This time of year is a time for our feasting to begin," said Bellegarde, "We celebrate life and all that has gone before." He also explained that the servers are men and the women are honoured by being served first. Gifts of tobacco and coloured cloth were then presented to the special guests seated with Bellegarde. The pipe was then lit, Bellegarde took several puffs to get it going and it was then



Rev. Janusz Blazejak OMI, Toronto, Archbishop Bohan (also pictured below receiving a star blanket) and Rev. Wojciech Wojtkowiak OMI of Lestock,

passed to the special guests after which the food was served. Following the feast several special guests were honoured by being robed with star blankets usually given only to people held in high esteem by First Nations people.

