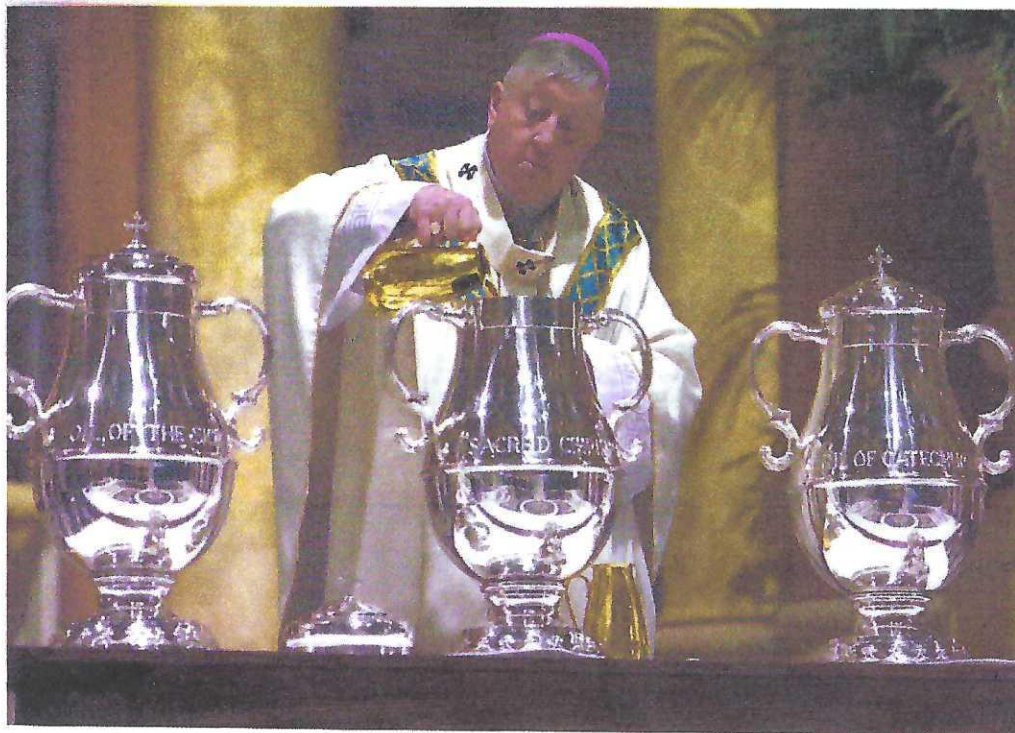


Photo by Jacob Wiegand
Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski
poured balsam into olive oil for
making sacred chrism during
the Chrism Mass last year at the
Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis.



Twenty years and change

By Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski

Let me recall a local story, tell a personal story and then make a point.

The local story is this: Do you know how many years it took from the initial design of the Gateway Arch until its opening to the public? Twenty years. The first stage of the design competition opened in 1947. And while the exterior of the Arch was completed in 1965, it didn't open to the public until 1967. Twenty years

"We're still at the beginning of a process of transformation in parish life as we shift toward becoming a more evangelizing Church."

saw a great deal of change here in St. Louis!

My priestly story has a similar timeline. I was ordained to the priesthood in 1984 and served in many priestly assignments until I was named an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 2004. Twenty years saw a great deal of change in my priestly life! After serving as auxiliary bishop in Baltimore for 10 years, I was moved to the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts, in 2014 and then to the Archdiocese of St. Louis in 2020. Twenty years have brought a great deal of change to my life as a bishop!

The point I want to make is this: We're still at

the beginning of a process of transformation in parish life as we shift toward becoming a more evangelizing Church.

I don't think we should be impatient with the seeds of change that we're planting, which will take something like 20 years to come to fruition. To be sure, some things will not change — like the sacraments and the teachings of the Church! But some things will change about how we organize parish life. And if we look around, two years after parish restructuring, and we haven't yet become an evangelizing Church, that's OK! These things take time.

Think, for a moment, about the change that 20 years can bring. The iPhone began development in 2004 and was launched in 2007; we've seen a lot of changes since then! Netflix was created in 1997, launched streaming services in 2007, had "Netflix" buttons installed on remote controls in 2012 and stopped its DVD-by-mail service in 2023. The Augustine Institute

was established in 2005 and had just 11 students in its first graduating class in 2007. In 2024, the Augustine Institute — with 30 resident students and 450 online students — moved its headquarters to St. Louis. A mere decade ago, in 2015, the Augustine Institute partnered with Lighthouse Catholic Media and Ignatius Press to create the FORMED platform, which now has 1.6 million users in more than 5,000 parishes.

If we look back, we see that 20 years can bring a lot of change. I think we can (and should!) use that knowledge of the past and cast it toward the future with hope. ●



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