

A HISTORY OF THE ANNUAL CHAUTAUQUA CELEBRATION

The year 1992 marked the commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Evangelization of the Americas. Native Americans first encountered European immigrants and the merging and clash of two cultures began. Despite the agony of the sword, the cross prevailed as the ultimate sign of hope and reconciliation. Evangelization makes it possible to proclaim the presence of the Spirit of Jesus in all cultures and in all places throughout modern history.

The Diocese of Oakland, like many West Coast Churches, continues to experience the arrival of many new immigrants. The fabric of life changes for our cities and towns. New voices rise in praise of the one God. The stranger and refugee in our midst is our brother Joseph who comes to claim his or her place among the People of God.

Since 1985, the Ethnic Pastoral Centers have created occasions to gather to celebrate the richness that diversity brings to our Diocese. With the advent of the 500th anniversary, we sought to create a celebration that would reflect the hospitality of the first Native Americans and celebrate the richness of our diversity today.

As a group, the Ethnic Centers of the Diocese chose to call this celebration *Chautauqua*, a Native American word means “the gathering of peoples.” Our first celebration was held at Saint Monica, Moraga. People’s enthusiastic response to this experience led us to decide to make the experience an annual diocesan event. The succeeding host parishes continued to embody the generous hospitality of our Diocese. Past hosts are Saint Monica, Moraga, 1992; Saint Joachim, Hayward, 1993; Saint Felicitas, San Leandro, 1994; Saint Augustine, Oakland, 1995; Saint Francis of Assisi, Concord, 1996; Assumption Parish, San Leandro, 1997; Saint Joseph, Pinole, 1998; Saint Lawrence O’Toole, Oakland, 1999; Transfiguration, Castro Valley, 2001; All Saints, Hayward, 2002; Our Lady Queen of the World, Bay Point, 2003; St. Anne’s, Union City, 2004; St. Raymond’s Parish in Dublin 2005; St. Lawrence O’Toole in Oakland, 2006; St Stephen Parish in Walnut Creek, 2007; St. Joseph the Worker in Berkeley, 2010, St. John in San Lorenzo, 2011; St. Jarlath Parish in Oakland 2015; Cathedral of Christ, the Light, 2015.

What happens at a Chautauqua event? First, a religious procession honoring Our Lady begins the mid-morning gathering rites. It is followed by multicultural, multilingual Liturgy. The celebration continues with ethnic foods and cultural entertainment.

Chautauqua 20 combines with the 100th Anniversary at St. Lawrence O’Toole Parish. The blowing of shofar will mark the start of the Procession with Liturgy following. Festivities follow in the customary fashion.