

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein: A shepherd committed to 'seeking the face of the Lord'

Compiled by Brandon A. Evans

Here are some of the major events and moments in the life of Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., and during his leadership of the archdiocese.

• April 20, 1938—Born in Jasper, Ind.

• Aug. 15, 1963—Solemn profession as a Benedictine monk at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.

• May 3, 1964—Ordained a priest.

• August 1971—Appointed president-rector of Saint Meinrad School of Theology.

• March 2, 1987—Ordained and installed as the third Bishop of Memphis, Tenn.

• July 14, 1992—Pope John Paul II names Bishop Daniel M. Buechlein the fifth archbishop of Indianapolis.

Six months after the death of Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara, the man who preached at his funeral is called to be his successor. Bishop Buechlein held a press conference on July 14 in Indianapolis and met with archdiocesan employees before flying back to Memphis. Bishop Buechlein said that his "first duty as your archbishop is to be a man of prayer. It is also the greatest gift I can bring with me."



• Sept. 9, 1992—Archbishop Buechlein is installed during a Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Forty years to the day that a young man entered Saint Meinrad Seminary as a high school freshman, he is installed as the fifth Archbishop of Indianapolis. Archbishop Buechlein became the eighth successor to Bishop Simon Bruté, the first bishop of Vincennes, which later became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. "Like the Apostles Peter and Paul," the archbishop said at the installation Mass on Sept. 9, "I am charged to be a living sacrament of the paschal mystery of God, to be a humble servant for the unity of the body of Christ, and to be teacher in the person of Christ, the head of the body of the Church. What a marvelous way of life! What a great challenge!"

• January 1994—Archbishop Buechlein is named chairman of the U.S. bishops' Subcommittee for the Implementation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

• June 1995—Archbishop Buechlein is named co-moderator of the Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Dialogue.

• October 1996—The first Celebrating Catholic School Values Awards dinner is held.

The annual fundraiser, which honors the values and accomplishments of individuals because of their Catholic education, continues to this day. More than \$4.4 million has been raised through corporate and individual investments to offer tuition assistance to enable low-income elementary and high school students in central and southern Indiana to attend Catholic schools.

• December 1996—The archdiocese kicks off Journey of Hope 2001 on the first Sunday of Advent.

The archbishop leads Catholics in central and southern Indiana on a symbolic journey as a "way of preparing for the opportunities and challenges of the third millennium of Christianity." "Journey of Hope 2001 is more than a program," he wrote. "It is a 'window of opportunity' that allows us to place special emphasis on three vital aspects of our journey to God: spiritual renewal, evangelization—or a new sense of mission—and stewardship as a way of life."

• January 1998—Archbishop marches with archdiocesan youth and pilgrims at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.

The archbishop attended the annual march with tens of thousands of other pro-life supporters for many years. As recently as 2009, the archbishop could be seen walking, speaking and praying with youths on the march as well as concelebrating the annual Vigil for Life Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception with other bishops.



• August 1998—Ground is broken for the new Holy Angels School in Indianapolis.

The new school facility, which opened in the fall of 1999, was believed to be the first new center-city Catholic school built in the United States in the past 40 years. That feat was repeated when ground was broken the same fall on a new Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis. The archdiocese currently has 68 Catholic schools. The archbishop considers his efforts to solidify Catholic education as his primary accomplishment in his nearly 20 years of ministry here.



• October 1998—Catholic schools reach expected enrollment plateau.

Most archdiocesan schools are noted to be at or near their full capacity for students. The official number was 25,329, which represented a 30 percent growth since 1990 and the reversal of a 25-year decline.

• October 1998—Archdiocesan pilgrims, led by the archbishop, travel to the Holy Land and then to Rome for the beatification of Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

• January 1999—Archbishop Buechlein travels with youths and other archdiocesan Catholics to see Pope John Paul II in St. Louis.

• February 1999—Legacy of Hope from Generation to Generation capital campaign raises \$94 million.

The parishes of the archdiocese raised a total of \$84 million in pledges and another \$10 million in planned gifts. Individual parishes used \$68 million for their own capital and endowment needs, while the remaining \$26 million was earmarked for the needs of the broader archdiocesan mission and ministries, including seminarian education, priest retirement, lay ministry development and ongoing Catholic educator training.



• March 1999—Building Communities of Hope partnership raises \$27 million.

From a Criterion news story: "It's a partnership that's been a year in the making, and its success is bigger than anyone could have imagined. The Archdiocese of Indianapolis' Building Communities of Hope capital and endowment campaign to benefit Catholic schools and social services agencies in the center city of Indianapolis has received more than \$27 million in gifts and pledges—reaching 135 percent of its minimum goal set last January when the campaign began."

• January 2000—St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish is established in Bright.

More than 500 people filled the chairs and bleachers in the gymnasium of the new Bright Elementary School to mark with a special liturgy the founding of the parish under the patronage of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. However, icy, snow-covered roads prevented the archbishop from attending. The parish was one of two opened by the archbishop. The other is SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood, which was founded in 1993.

• September 2000—30,000 Catholics gather at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis to celebrate the Great Jubilee.

Archbishop Buechlein celebrated a Mass which gathered Catholics from across the archdiocese to celebrate 2,000 years of Christianity, and to thank God for all his blessings. Eighteen bishops, two archbishops and several priests of the archdiocese helped Archbishop Buechlein confirm nearly 3,200 youths and adults at the archdiocese's Celebration in the Spirit of Hope: The Great Jubilee. It was the largest gathering of Catholics in the history of the archdiocese, and one of the largest Jubilee celebrations in the United States that year.



• June 2002—Eight men are ordained to the priesthood.

In two Masses, a total of eight men were ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Buechlein—the largest ordination class for the archdiocese in nearly 30 years. "This is a joyful occasion for our Church," he said to those gathered on June 1 for the first ordination. To the families of the priests, he said, "we thank you for the gift of your sons." In total, there are now 40 active priests in the archdiocese who were ordained by the archbishop.



• November 2002—The archdiocese receives \$10 million from Lilly Endowment for Catholic schools.

The money was part of an educational grant that would only be awarded if the archdiocese could raise \$5 million in matching funds for its Project EXCEED. In the end, nearly \$8 million was raised. The goals of the project were curriculum changes, better technology, and new programs that will help students and teachers. In 2008, the archdiocese also received a \$5 million grant from Lilly Endowment to support center-city schools and two urban high schools.

• March 2003—The annual United Catholic Appeal exceeds its \$5 million goal.

Pledges totaling about \$5.17 million make for another success of the annual appeal. Funds from the UCA go to directly fund the shared ministries of the archdiocese, such as seminarian formation and Catholic Charities, as well as home missions—those parishes and schools in the archdiocese that are struggling to continue providing their services. In total, during the archbishop's tenure the archdiocese raised more than \$300 million through the annual stewardship appeal and separate capital campaigns. The funds supported building projects and ministry needs, and are in addition to contributions that parishioners made through Sunday and Holy Day collections.



• May 2003—Approval is given for the establishment of permanent deacons' ministry.

Thirty-eight years after the restoration of the permanent diaconate by the Second Vatican Council, the archbishop approves its implementation here for the first time. Previously, the only deacons in the archdiocese were transitional deacons on their way to priestly ordination. In 2004, 25 men begin formal preparation to become deacons. After four years of spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation, the men are ordained in 2008 as our first class of permanent deacons.



• August 2003—Archbishop Buechlein is appointed a consultant to the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy.

• November 2003—100 young adults attend the first Young Adult Mass at Marian College.

The regular monthly Mass would eventually move to other locations—now it is held at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis—but its goal is the same: to encourage regular Mass attendance among young adults, and give them a chance to grow in friendship. Over the past decade, Archbishop Buechlein has placed greater emphasis on young adult ministry, starting a Theology on Tap program, adding more campus ministry options and creating staff positions at the archdiocese to head up young adult outreach.



• August 2004—Archdiocese opens the Bishop Bruté House of Formation in Indianapolis.

Originally founded on the campus of Marian University in Indianapolis, its purpose was to have a place within the archdiocese to prepare college seminarians for major seminary. The title of the house of formation was later changed to the Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and, in 2008, it moved to the grounds of the Monastery of the Resurrection, previously a Carmelite monastery a mile south of Marian University. By 2011, the seminary reached its capacity of 35 seminarians and archdiocesan officials are looking to expand it.



• September 2004—Six Catholic schools in the archdiocese are named Blue Ribbon Schools.

Five archdiocesan schools and one private Catholic high school in the archdiocese are named No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. As of today, 26 Catholic schools in the archdiocese have been honored with 32 Blue Ribbon distinctions—more than any other diocese in the country.

• November 2004—Improving financial outlook is the focus of the Catholic Community Foundation annual meeting.

For the first time in seven years, the archdiocesan operating budget is projected to break even. It is a trend that will continue for eight consecutive budgets—including to the present day. It is also announced that nine new endowments—and nearly \$15 million—were added to the Catholic Community Foundation. Today, the foundation has a value of \$170 million—up from less than \$5 million before the archbishop arrived—and manages nearly 400 endowments. Nearly \$70 million from the endowments has been distributed to parishes, schools and archdiocesan agencies for ministry.



• June 2005—Despite a rainy day, 1,000 Catholics from around the archdiocese join Archbishop Buechlein in Indianapolis to celebrate the Year of the Eucharist.

• August 2005—Six center-city schools start the new academic year as part of the archdiocesan schools consortium.

The consortium, later renamed the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies, was called for the previous year by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein. It operates as an umbrella organization for six—now four—Indianapolis center-city schools. The schools are able to operate more efficiently by sharing some resources, such as finances, maintenance and marketing. The schools also developed a common academic curriculum.



• September 2005—The Cause of Canonization of Bishop Simon Bruté is opened.

Fulfilling a goal which he had set only two years earlier, Archbishop Buechlein officially opens the Cause of Canonization of Bishop Simon Bruté, the first bishop of Vincennes, now the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

• June 2006—The first class of the new Seton Catholic High School in Richmond graduates.

• October 2006—Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin is canonized by Pope Benedict XVI.

At a Mass held in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods became the first canonized saint from Indiana. Archbishop Buechlein led a pilgrimage to Rome for the historic event. Upon returning, he announced that, starting in November, he would commemorate the canonization throughout the archdiocese in the coming year during eucharistic celebrations in each of its 11 deaneries.



• January 2007—The five bishops of Indiana release a joint pastoral letter urging Catholics to welcome immigrants.

Titled "I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me: Meeting Christ in New Neighbors," the pastoral was the first of its kind issued collectively by the Indiana bishops in recent times. "We Catholic bishops of Indiana recommit ourselves and our dioceses to welcoming others as Christ himself," the pastoral said. "Together with all our sisters and brothers throughout the state of Indiana, we embrace an authentic and enduring form of Hoosier hospitality that goes beyond superficial slogans to the heart of what it means to be a community of faith that welcomes all who wish to share our way of life."



• March 2007—Archbishop Buechlein celebrates 20 years as a bishop, recalling his ordination in Memphis in 1987.

• August 2007—Providence Cristo Rey High School opens its doors.

The school, led by the Sisters of Providence, is part of a national network that has built a reputation for helping students from low-income families through a work-study program. In 2011, the first four-year class of students—25 in all—graduated.

• January 2008—The archbishop is diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer affecting the lymph nodes.

Catholics across the archdiocese were invited to take part in a nine-day novena for the archbishop and all the sick. It began on Feb. 3 and ended on Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and also the World Day of the Sick. A Mass was celebrated that day at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. In June, Archbishop Buechlein announced that his treatment was successful, and his cancer was in remission.

• June 2008—History is made as 25 men are ordained the first permanent deacons in the history of the archdiocese.

• September 2008—The Legacy for Our Mission capital campaign winds down after meeting goals.

The lay leaders of the Legacy for Our Mission: For Our Children and the Future archdiocesan capital campaign celebrate the successful conclusion of the effort. 33,000 Catholics across central and southern Indiana pledged \$104 million, and some 14,000 volunteers worked to make the campaign a success. Thanks to the campaign, parishes across the archdiocese's 11 deaneries constructed new activity centers, made extensive renovations to their current facilities and established new endowments or grew already established ones.

• May 2009—25,000 Catholics celebrate the 175th anniversary of the archdiocese at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

"Sisters and brothers, for 175 years in our part of the world, the message of Christ, the Good Shepherd, has been a message of hope," Archbishop Buechlein said at the start of his homily at the Mass. That hope was embodied during the Mass in the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation and in other ways. About 200 couples were honored for 50 or more years of married life. And religious jubilarians were praised for their many decades of faithful ministry and consecrated life.



• December 2009—A new facility to house Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis is dedicated by Archbishop Buechlein.

Twenty-five years after welcoming its first temporary residents, the shelter had outgrown its facilities near Sacred Heart of Jesus Church and moved into a brand-new building near Holy Trinity Church. "Holy Family Shelter is a concrete and practical expression of the mission and ministry of charity, which we all share," the archbishop said. The previous year, the shelter served 229 homeless families and helped 206 residents obtain employment. In 2010, Catholic Charities and other social outreach ministries of the archdiocese served nearly 180,000 people.



• March 2010—The archbishop has surgery to remove a benign tumor from his stomach.

• April 2010—Archdiocese gets OK to create two charter schools.

The archdiocese received approval from the City-County Council of Indianapolis and Marion County to create two charter schools in Indianapolis—a move that made it the first Catholic diocese in the United States that has committed to overseeing a school involved in this educational approach. When the 2010-11 school year opened in August, St. Anthony Catholic School and St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy became charter schools. While they are still managed by the archdiocese, they had to change their names and they are no longer able to promote the Catholic faith or display crucifixes and religious statues during school hours. The move helped keep the schools open.

• July 2010—Archbishop Buechlein ordains Bishop Timothy L. Doherty as the new bishop of Lafayette.

• March 2, 2011—Archbishop Buechlein ordains Bishop Christopher J. Coyne to serve as his auxiliary bishop.

In light of his health struggles, Archbishop Buechlein requests a coadjutor bishop—a man who would become his successor. The Vatican declines, but sends a priest from Boston to be ordained as auxiliary bishop. Bishop Christopher J. Coyne was ordained by Archbishop Buechlein on March 2 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The new bishop is known for his eagerness to engage people through his blog, podcast and Twitter feed.



• March 2011—The archbishop suffers a mild stroke.

• Sept. 21, 2011—Pope Benedict XVI accepts the resignation of Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein for health reasons.

Because of ongoing health struggles, Archbishop Buechlein is granted an early retirement at age 73. He will return to Saint Meinrad Archabbey, the monastic community that he entered more than 50 years ago, to live a life of prayer and poverty. He plans to continue writing, including penning his memoirs. †

