

**OF TWO THINGS**

**An Historical Event** took place a week ago. Our Diocesan Church officially initiated the Diocesan Inquiry phase for the Cause of Canonization of the Servant of God Demetrius A. Gallitzin. This occurred on Sunday, March 11, at the Basilica of Saint Michael the Archangel. There, in the shadow of Father Gallitzin's tomb and with solemnity, a number of individuals took their oath of office. They took upon themselves both the responsibility and the privilege of pursuing the process, which, God be willing, will result in having the Reverend Prince recognized by the Universal Church.

The Basilica was filled to capacity, including the choir loft. Such a considerable turnout of the Faithful from various parts of our Diocese, along with their clergy and religious, testifies to the fact that this Servant of God continues to be acclaimed almost two centuries later. This is significant for the process, as the regard that the Faithful have for Father Gallitzin, even today, plays an important part.

Responses to the event were extremely positive. While expressions varied, the message was the same. "We are finally doing it." "It was a very moving experience." "I wanted to get up and shout with joy." "There was this desire in me to get up and proclaim him a saint already." "Other events that we attend get repeated at another time. But, this was absolutely unique in that it will never again take place in our Diocesan Church; at least, not during our life-time."

Indeed, those who were able to attend can justifiably boast that they were a part of history. It is something to record, to talk about, and to relate to our younger generations. It is something for which to thank the Lord.

**The Ecumenical Movement** can take different forms. Frequently, the most effective is a simple presence at and an appreciation of the other's liturgical prayer. A week ago, I had such an opportunity. I felt honored to have been invited to join the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Community in Altoona, as they celebrated the first Eucharistic Liturgy in their new church.

A sign over the doorway proclaims the church to be *The Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church of Saint Mina*. That is followed by *formerly Saints Peter and Paul*. This recognition of the former faith community that used this worship site touched me. It was once one of our churches. The Saints Peter and Paul parishioners joined with those of Saint Leo to form the new parish of *Our Lady of Fatima*.

Several of the Coptic Orthodox faithful asked what happened to the believers that preceded them. They were pleased to hear that they continue to worship nearby. As for the church that they left, they can be assured that it continues to pour forth praise of the Father, by the Son, through the Holy Spirit.

The memory of the Saint Peter and Paul Faith Community is carried on. They and the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Faithful have entered into an ecumenical relationship of sorts, if only by a sign over the door of a church. Nevertheless, the sign does proclaim an association to everyone who passes by. Thanks to the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox leadership for wanting to remember those who worshipped in their church before them.