



## June 21, 2007 - Archdiocese of Boston Welcomes Renew International Program of Spiritual Renewal Cardinal Calls Spiritual Renewal Central to Bicentennial Efforts

**Boston, MA** -The Archdiocese of Boston announced today that a comprehensive process of spiritual renewal will serve as a centerpiece of its celebration of its two-hundredth anniversary in 2008. This process, to be offered by RENEW International, is entitled *ARISE: Together in Christ* and all parishes and campuses will have the opportunity to participate in the process in Fall 2008.

Speaking on RENEW, Cardinal Seán said, "We join together on the threshold of our Bicentennial with great promise for the future of our Archdiocese. RENEW provides an opportunity for clergy, parishioners and all members of our Catholic community to experience God's wondrous love by committing to a period of renewal through prayer and sharing of our faith. The time is right to bring our people together in an endeavor centered on the loving and healing message of Jesus."

The Cardinal has appointed Auxiliary Bishop John A. Dooher and Mary Ann McLaughlin, Co-Director of the Office of Worship and Spiritual Life, as co-coordinators to lead the initiative for the local Church.

The groundwork has been laid over the past several years. With the Cardinal's blessing, clergy, staff, and RENEW International team members have collaborated to develop a process specifically designed to meet the needs of the Church in Boston. This initiative was advocated by the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC), a consultative body comprised of laypeople from throughout Boston's parishes, and was approved by the Presbyteral Council.

The process kicks off this month when every parish will receive an introductory packet with information about RENEW and a survey to gather parish input. The parish survey is available in multiple languages online at [www.renewintl.org/rcab](http://www.renewintl.org/rcab).

"We encourage every parish's pastoral council and staff to review the information thoroughly and have as many parish members complete the survey as possible. This renewal process will be effected in large measure by the responses we receive back from the surveys," Ms. McLaughlin said.

*ARISE: Together in Christ* offers a total renewal experience for the parish, spiritually transforming people through Sunday Eucharistic celebrations, small group faith-sharing, daily personal meditations, special parish activities, resources for families with children, and Christian social action.

Because of the variety of ways in which people are engaged, something is available for every parishioner, creating a unifying and enthusiastic spiritual climate in the parish.

Basic to the process from RENEW International is the establishment of small Christian communities: groups of eight to twelve people meeting weekly to read and reflect on Scripture, share how the Word of God relates to their daily life, and encourage each other into active discipleship. Groups will meet during six-week seasons starting in Fall 2008. Each of these seasons has a major gospel theme that is broken down into weekly themes and experienced in a variety of ways.

Bishop Dooher noted that, "Importantly, *ARISE: Together in Christ* responds to the rich diversity of cultures present in Boston." Participant materials and pastoral support will be offered in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese.

The plan calls for RENEW International staff to train local parish leadership. These leaders will in turn, invite, prepare, and train the lay leaders who will shepherd the process within the parishes. Pastors, staff, and selected leadership are invited to attend an information session. Sessions will be offered in all five regions this October (2007). At that time, parish survey results and more detailed information about the process will be provided. Dates and locations of the meetings will be announced in advance.



“I worked with RENEW International during my tenure in the Diocese of Fall River, an experience that enlivened parishes. I am confident that this process will also be life-giving here in the Archdiocese,” related the Cardinal.

### **The Archdiocese of Boston**

*The Archdiocese of Boston was founded on April 8, 1808 and was elevated to Archdiocese in 1875. Currently serving the needs of approximately 2 million Catholics, the Archdiocese of Boston is an ethnically diverse and spiritually enriching faith community consisting of 295 parishes, across 144 communities, educating nearly 50,000 students in its Catholic schools and 156, 000 in religious education classes each year, ministering to the needs of more than one million patients annually in its hospitals and 200,000 individuals through its social service outreach. Mass is celebrated in nearly twenty different languages each week.*

### **About RENEW International**

*RENEW International is a canonically-recognized Catholic organization based in Plainfield, NJ, in the Archdiocese of Newark. RENEW International fosters spiritual renewal in the Catholic tradition by empowering individuals and communities to encounter God in everyday life, deepen and share faith, and connect faith with action.*

*RENEW International has a 27-year record in revitalizing parish life in over 130 dioceses in the United States, touching the lives of 25 million people through its renewal processes. RENEW International also reaches many thousands outside the United States, having served people in 23 countries, across six continents and in 44 languages.*

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