



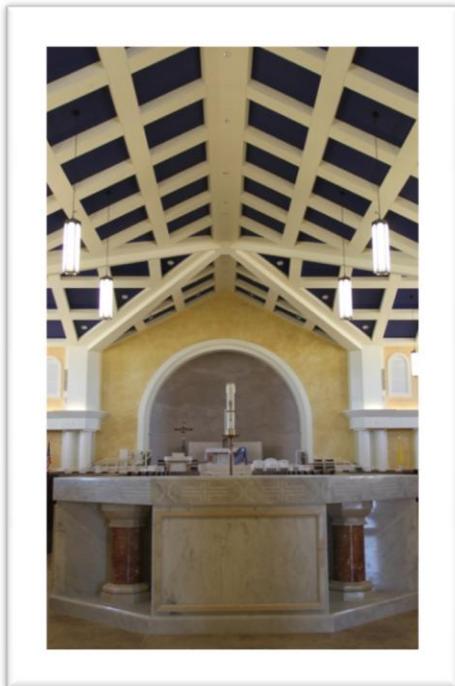
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan to Dedicate Archdiocese's  
Newest Church  
Church of the Incarnation  
2309 Monterrey Rd NE Rio Rancho, NM 87144  
Friday, September 23, 2011  
7:00 P.M.**

*We are eager to make Christ present to the world.*  
Church of the Incarnation Building Campaign Prayer



ALBUQUERQUE, NM –September 22, 201 --  
IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan will dedicate the Archdiocese of Santa Fe's newest church, Church of the Incarnation located in Rio Rancho, NM Friday, September 23, 2011. To accommodate one of the fastest-growing Catholic communities in the Archdiocese, the newest church is 26,717 square feet. It is built in a Romanesque/Cruciform design and will seat about 1,300 people. Church of the Incarnation is modeled after the Basilica of St. Paul outside the walls of Rome. After many years of design meetings and challenges, construction began in March 2010. The new church building is designed to be energy

efficient and is expected to serve the community well for many years to come. Chairman of the Building Committee was Dave Jensen; the architect was Mark Baczek of Dorman Breen; construction was done by Britton Construction; liturgical designer was Rohn and Associates Design, Inc. The marble furnishings were fabricated by Pedrini Sculptors in Avenza, Italy.

It is with great anticipation that the parish community of Church of the Incarnation under the leadership of Rev. Rick Zerwas, pastor, awaits its formal dedication.

For more information call Church of the Incarnation Parish Office 505.771.8331

Visit our website  
[www.archdiosf.org](http://www.archdiosf.org)

## ***Background:***

The Church of the Incarnation in Rio Rancho, NM has indeed risen up in the desert from humble beginnings 16 years ago. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, under the leadership of Rev. Msgr. Douglas A. Raun, was instrumental in bringing the Mass to the Catholic faithful. The first Mass was celebrated on the first Sunday of Advent in 1995. Approximately 50 families attended the weekly Sunday morning Mass at 9:30 a.m. in the Mountain View Middle School gym. At that time, the church was still a mission of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in southern Rio Rancho.

Early on, plans were made to move to a permanent site, A total of 14.5 acres of land on Monterrey Road was a gift from the Archdiocese. A large portable building was purchased and remodeled to become the temporary church building. Unfortunately, the original marble altar had cracked and was put into storage.

Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan dedicated the temporary church on July 1, 2003.

A building campaign began immediately and thus with the start-up funds, an initial infrastructure was created. Rev. Guy Roberts was named as founding pastor. Rev. Rick Zerwas succeeded him as pastor 18 months later.

A core of 500 families diligently and sacrificially contributed to two subsequent building campaigns conducted during Incarnation's first decade. Other fundraisers included several Golden Autumn Ball celebrations, golf tournaments, and many other fundraisers.

On Oct. 31, 2009, Archbishop Sheehan blessed the site and broke ground for the new church. The original marble altar which was removed from the temporary building was broken apart and placed directly under the site of the new altar along with a variety of religious artifacts from parishioners including prayer cards, rosaries, missals, and statues. The following summer, parishioners witnessed the frame being raised. One of those metal beams, which forms the apse (the projecting portion of the church that is semicircular and vaulted), contains the signatures of many parishioners.