

## Bishop Thomas Confirms 20 in Sandy Valley



At the secluded southern end of the expansive Pahrump Valley is Sandy Valley, where a small Mission of Christ the King Catholic Community in Las Vegas stands.

On Sunday, March 14, Bishop George Leo Thomas, Ph.D. made the hour trek, including the steep mountain-pass road winding between the mountainous Shenandoah Peak and Table Mountain to Sandy Valley. The only paved road into Sandy Valley.

This rustic refuge tucked away 35 miles Southwest of Las Vegas lies among the rolling sand dunes for which it is named. Among the circular Alfalfa fields and small ranches is St. Catherine of Siena Mission, where Bishop Thomas administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 20 Catholic youth.



Bishop Thomas was touched by his visit to the rural parish, saying, "I had a very special visit to Saint Catherine of Siena Mission in Sandy Valley." Upon entering the valley, he encountered a hint of what was to come that day, musing he said, "I was greeted by a large welcome sign at the edge of town, and warmly received by enthusiastic parishioners."

Concelebrating with Bishop Thomas was Fr. Shawn Dresden. He is not only the pastor of St. Catherine, Fr. Shawn, is also a favored son of sorts. He received his First Communion and Confirmation there as a parishioner.

Assisting at the Confirmation Mass was Deacon Rick Minch. He also was the catechist for the class and handles the daily operations of the mission parish.

The collaboration between Fr. Shawn and Deacon Rick has proven successful in propagating the faithful. Bishop Thomas said, "The Confirmation class was so well prepared, and very eager to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation." With admiration, he continued, "Hats off to Fr. Shawn Dresden, Deacon Rick Minch and their volunteers for a job well done."

Although this is Bishop Thomas' first time coming to Sandy Valley, it likely won't be his last. He always enjoys the warm hospitality and friendly atmosphere in the Diocese's rural parishes. Departing St. Catherine of Siena Mission, he said, "Already I look forward to another visit to this very special place."

