

Press Release

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A MASS ON THE ROCKS AND BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS?

PHILADELPHIA, PA, SEPTEMBER 8, 2008: On Sunday, October 5th the Parish Community of Saint Miriam will celebrate Saint Francis Day with a wonderful and unique outdoor Mass in their beautiful amphitheatre, made up of large boulders. Dubbed, "*A Mass on the Rocks with a Blessing of the Animals*" it will be sure to bring a unique twist to a wonderful occasion. The amphitheatre is sounded by beautiful lawn and a small stream along with the large boulders that make for unique seating.

At barely 6 months of age, the newest Independent Catholic parish of Saint Miriam, in the Roxborough neighborhood of Philadelphia, is growing strong. They already average 25-35 parishioners in attendance each Sunday and have well over 55 members; the panorama of personal stories would be impressive by any measure.

Created in 1957, the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch traces its line of bishops back to the first apostles and says its priests and bishops - male and female - are "valid" Catholic clergy. The Roman Catholic Church does not view such offshoots as being "in union" with it, however they are considered 'valid and sufficient.' In other words, this is a Catholic Church, just not a Roman Catholic Church. This

allows this vibrant and unique community to open its hearts and Communion Table to everyone.

In such a short amount of time, they have healed many souls already. They boast two families with children along with many gay and lesbian and straight couples, too. Single men and woman, and even a few former Roman Catholic nuns, make up their diverse population. They also have already achieved two new seminarians. All of this as they grow to include everyone without reservation.

Once more, this growing parish community is housed within the Reconstructionist Jewish Synagogue of Mishkan Shalom. This congregation felt it a sacred duty to co-locate with Saint Miriam, as they were once housed with a Christian Community, the Chestnut Hill United Methodist Church, when they were first formed. Now, they are repaying the favor forward. Further, both communities have a lot in common: they are bent on social justice issues, have inspiring services with unique modern twists, they serve the needs of the poor, the marginalized, and their community, and they believe that everyone is welcome regardless of any label. Both share the same vision: communities of faith that are fun, interesting, enlightening, and are without barriers of any kind.

Saint Miriam has two services each week, Thursday at 6PM and Sundays at 10:30 AM. The services are Catholic, but inclusive and inspiring with a mix of music from old and new, modern touches and incense smoke that finally warms the heart, as well as the senses! Please contact Father Jim St. George for more information or visit www.MySaintMiriam.org.

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