

## **The Scandinavian Bishops' Conference Spring Session 7.-12.3. 2008**

The education and ministry of permanent deacons, the status of the Sunday, and the religious education of adults were the most important questions discussed by the Nordic Catholic bishops when they met recently.

The Catholic bishops of Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland have just finished their plenary session 7 – 12 March at Stiklestad in Mid-Norway. Physically, they have been close to the sacred and political history of Norway; Stiklestad is the place where St. Olav fell in battle in 1030. They have visited Trondheim, Tautra with its monastery of Cistercian nuns, and made the acquaintance of a recently established group of monks from Cîteaux (France) who are starting a foundation at Munkeby, the site of a medieval abbey of their order.

The Bishop-Prelate of Trondheim, Mgr. Georg Müller hosted the Conference. In this part of Norway the number of Catholics is growing, partly due to Polish immigration. The vitality of the Catholic community in Mid-Norway is especially noticeable through its religious communities: Cistercians (two houses), Brigidines, a community of sisters in Molde, the Neo-Catechumenate, and the Institute of St. Boniface.

On this occasion, the bishops were pleased to receive the recently appointed Nuncio to the Nordic countries, Archbishop Emil Paul Tscherrig who resides in Stockholm. He travelled on to Oslo to present his letters of credential to His Majesty King Harald. This was the first session in which bishop Peter Bürcher, of Reykjavik took part; he took this diocese over in December 2007.

About 300 young Scandinavians will take part at the World Youth Day with Pope Benedict in July 2008 in Sydney, Australia. The bishops of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Oslo will accompany them. In May this year, Scandinavian Catholics are welcomed to Osnabrück for the *Katholikentag* of the

German Catholic Church. A substantial group of the faithful with their bishops and priests is expected to take part.

The next session of the Bishops' Conference will take place in Lourdes (France) in September this year.