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Sacred Space

University of Dayton

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NEWS



Wednesday August 12, 2015

Sacred Space

The University of Dayton will start the school year with a series of events to rededicate the spiritual and geographical focal point of its mission — the iconic Chapel of the Immaculate Conception—after a 14-month, \$12-million renovation.

It all begins with an invitation-only event Sunday, Aug. 16; video of the Mass and photos will be

available the next day on the chapel renovation website. Faculty and staff tours will take place after a prayer service at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 19, for the new academic year. The first full slate of Sunday Masses begins Aug. 30, when students will be back on campus; each Mass will include a prayerful recognition of the rededication. Daily midday Masses (12:30 p.m.) will resume Monday, Aug. 17.

"Nearly every week during the past two years, the chapel renovation committee met to consider every detail behind the building's first complete renovation since it was constructed in 1869," University of Dayton President Daniel J. Curran said. "They were guided by faith, vision and unwavering principles.

"Every great Catholic university needs a sacred space in the heart of its campus. The Chapel of the Immaculate Conception is more than a treasured landmark on campus. Its long-overdue renovation goes beyond bricks and mortar to the heart of our identity. We are — and will always be — a community of faith."

The privately funded renovation addressed space, design aesthetics and seating to accommodate the full range of the Catholic Church's liturgical activities and to enhance prayer, said the Rev. James Fitz, S.M., University of Dayton vice president for mission and rector. Fitz said the chapel renovation committee also remained faithful to the chapel's historical dimensions, while providing universal accessibility and meeting other building code requirements.

The University is applying for LEED certification for the project. According to the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED certification provides independent verification a building was designed and built using strategies aimed at achieving high performance in sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Among the renovated chapel's features are:

- * Restored dome.
- * Refurbished and accessible front doors. All entrances lead to the gathering space.
- * Baptismal font fashioned from woodcuts of Mary and the four evangelists preserved from the chapel's former wooden pulpit.
- * New altar, lectern, presider's chair, processional crucifix, cantor stand and Easter candle stand.
- * Eucharistic reservation chapel for private prayer and adoration. Following Catholic Church guidelines, the reservation chapel is a space distinct from the altar, connected to the sanctuary and easily accessible to the congregation. It too uses elements of the former wooden pulpit in its design.

- * Reconciliation room accommodates either face-to-face or anonymous confessions.
- * Curved solid walnut wooden pews and kneelers bring the assembly together more closely in community. The main floor and balcony seat 376 people.
- * State-of-the-art digital organ.
- * Restored stained glass windows — the west wall rosettes, the four saints in the apse (ceiling), and the east crucifixion rosette.
- * New stained glass windows — 10 tall nave (main part of the church) windows, reconciliation room, the south pathway of discipleship windows, and the alpha and the omega rosettes on the east wall.
- * Three new devotional spaces on the north side of the chapel for private prayer.
- * New restrooms, a wedding preparation space, meeting room, sacristy, storage and office spaces, plus up-to-date information technology and WiFi.
- * St. Mary's Courtyard featuring an area for donor recognition, a memorial garden and places to pray and gather for outdoor receptions or classroom experiences.
- * University Circle now ends at the chapel and is a two-way street between chapel and Frericks Center.

"We put great priority in formation in faith as a Catholic and Marianist university," said Crystal Sullivan, director of campus ministry. "Celebrating vibrant and dynamic liturgies are an essential part of that mission. The Chapel of the Immaculate Conception will once again play an integral role in nourishing transformative relationships with God and in fostering a deeper appreciation for the Catholic liturgical tradition among members of our campus community. We are blessed to welcome all to this spiritual home."

The chapel dedication booklet in the related links details the entire project.

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