

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception To Celebrate 50th Anniversary of Dedication

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of its Dedication from Thursday, November 19 through Sunday, November 22, 2009, to culminate the celebration of its Jubilee Year.

Thursday, November 19, 2009—The 50th Anniversary Mass commemorating the Dedication of the National Shrine will be held at 5 p.m. in the Basilica's Great Upper Church. Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, Chairman of the Basilica's Board of Trustees, will be the principal celebrant. Bishop Michael J. Bransfield of Wheeling-Charleston, former director/rector of the Basilica from 1986-2005, will be the homilist. Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, will play a special role at the Mass, reading the letter from Pope John XXIII addressed to the bishops of the United States (read then by the Most Reverend Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Delegate to the United States) on the occasion of the dedication of the National Shrine on November 20, 1959. Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston, and Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, will concelebrate the Mass with over 40 other bishops from across the United States. This special Mass is open to the public and will be broadcast live worldwide by the Eternal World Television Network (EWTN), Catholic Television of Boston, and Salt + Light Television of Canada.

Friday, November 20, 2009—A Jubilee Concert of Marian Music, *Ad Jesum per Mariam (To Jesus through Mary)*, featuring the Choir of the Basilica under the direction of Dr. Peter Latona, Director of Music, will be held in the Crypt Church of the Basilica at 7:30 p.m. The concert is free and open to the public.

Saturday, November 21, 2009—Reverend Monsignor Walter R. Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, will lead the year's final Jubilee Pilgrimage Hour beginning at 2 p.m. from the Narthex of the Great Upper Church. Monsignor Rossi will guide pilgrims to various chapels and oratories of the Great Upper Church and lead the recitation of litanies, devotions and songs. At 3 p.m., Dr. Geraldine M. Rohling, Archivist and Curator of the Basilica, will present a lecture entitled, *The Fulfillment*, based on her recently published book *Jubilee 2009—A Photographic History of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception*. The lecture will feature the history of the Basilica from 1953 to date. Held in the Visitor Center on the Basilica's lower level, the lecture is free and open to the public.

Sunday, November 22, 2009—The Solemn Closing Mass of the Jubilee Year will be celebrated by Monsignor Walter R. Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, at 12 noon in the Great Upper Church. Of special note, Monsignor Rossi will wear the vestments made for the dedication and worn by Cardinal Spellman, the celebrant of the Dedication Mass in 1959. The processional cross will be the same one used from the 1959 Mass of Dedication as well.