



# ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

PRESS RELEASE

Office of Communication & Mission

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## **Pope Francis Designates the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains a Minor Basilica**

*-- The Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains is First in the Cincinnati Archdiocese to Hold the Title of Minor Basilica --*

Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr announced today that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, has granted the title of Minor Basilica to the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains located at 325 W. Eighth Street in Cincinnati, Ohio. The title is given to churches around the world in recognition of their historical or cultural importance, artistic beauty and significance in the life of the Church. The title denotes a closer relationship to the Pope. The title of Major Basilica is reserved to certain churches in Rome only. The Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains will now go by the name Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains and becomes the 89<sup>th</sup> basilica in the United States.

“For all of us who live and worship in our archdiocese, this is a great blessing and honor that has been bestowed on our cathedral church,” said Archbishop Schnurr. “Let us pray on this day, as we honor Our Lady in her Assumption, that the Church of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, her clergy and faithful, along with all the people of this great city, may benefit from this blessing and give thanks for all that the Lord has brought to fruition.”

In 2018, Father Jan Kevin Schmidt, Rector of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains since 2017, with permission from Archbishop Schnurr, requested that the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments grant the title of minor basilica to the historic church in Cincinnati. The cathedral, which will celebrate its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary this November, is the oldest cathedral, built as a cathedral, that is still in use in the United States.

The designation of minor basilica, the first such in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, is both an honor for the region and a reason for the local faithful to celebrate, said Father Schmidt. “It’s the quality of the cathedral’s structure, the absolute beauty of its architecture, the biblical symbolism throughout, the quality and prayerfulness of its liturgy and ecclesiastical significance as a

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cathedral that make it very important and very special for the archdiocese and in the American Catholic scene," he said.

Designed by Henry Walter, architect of the Ohio capitol building in Columbus, the cornerstone of St. Peter in Chains was laid on May 20, 1841. It was formally dedicated on Nov. 2, 1845. Its striking single spire, constructed of pure white limestone and soaring 220 feet above street level, was the tallest manmade structure in the city for many decades. The cathedral's interior is dominated by a large mosaic portraying three scriptural events from the life of St. Peter. Its eclectic design style also incorporates artistic inspiration from diverse sources, including Art Deco, Ancient Greek, Eastern Christian and early Roman Christian basilica architecture. A significant renovation of the structure, overseen by renowned Cincinnati architect Edward Schulte, was completed in 1957.

The announcement of the minor basilica designation was made today, on the Solemnity of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the beginning of Mass celebrated by Archbishop Dennis Schnurr along with Father Jan Schmidt, Rector, and Father Ray Larger, Parochial Vicar of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains. The Mass was open to the public but included social distancing and other safety precautions due to COVID-19. The Mass was also livestreamed at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnG\\_41UiMh0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnG_41UiMh0)

In attendance at the Mass to hear the historic announcement were Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley and his family. "The Catholic Church and the large number of Catholics in our region have helped make the Greater Cincinnati area the great place it is to live, work, play and pray," said Mayor Cranley. " From starting the major hospitals that have cared for the sick, to feeding the hungry and helping the poor, to educating generations of Catholics who have risen out of poverty and to the heights of civic and business leadership, the Catholic Church has provided a living testament to its core beliefs, and this Basilica has served as beautiful physical embodiment--a sort of Statue of Liberty-- of these good works and serves as an ever present reminder to Catholic Cincinnatians that they have a proud spiritual home. "

In addition, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine offered words of congratulations to mark the occasion, "Fran and I are delighted that Pope Francis has bestowed this honor upon St. Peter in Chains Cathedral and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The Cathedral is one of the oldest operating Roman Catholic cathedrals in the United States, and it is a historic place special to Cincinnati and to Ohio. I congratulate Archbishop Schnurr, Fr. Schmidt, and the entire Archdiocese. Having St.

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Peter in Chains Cathedral named as a Basilica by the Pope is an honor that the Catholic faithful across Ohio should celebrate!" said Governor DeWine.

The Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains has a rich liturgical life. Prior to the decreased Mass schedule amid the current pandemic, the cathedral celebrated more than 1,000 Masses a year, including the archdiocesan liturgies. It serves as a pilgrimage site for many local Catholics. In addition to the beautiful liturgies, the cathedral is available for tours. More information can be found here: <https://www.stpeterinchainscathedral.org/>

In addition to the announcement today, a special Mass of Thanksgiving will be celebrated at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains on Saturday November 7, at 11:00 a.m. to mark the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the dedication of the church. During the Mass, the symbols granted in virtue of the church's designation as a minor basilica will debut for the first time and be enshrined.

For additional information about today's announcement please visit <https://www.thecatholictelegraph.com/cathedral-basilica-of-st-peter-in-chains/68495> and <https://www.thecatholictelegraph.com/cathedral-of-st-peter-in-chains-a-minor-basilica/68489>

Digital copies of this release and a Basilica Fact Sheet can be found here <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/communication-office/live-streaming/>

Photos will be posted on *The Catholic Telegraph* website after the Mass.

*The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati is the 44<sup>th</sup> largest Catholic diocese in the country, with more than 450,000 Catholics, and has the fifth largest Catholic school system in terms of enrollment with more than 40,000 students. The 19-county territory includes 211 parishes and 111 Catholic primary and secondary schools.*

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Pastoral Center



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