

THE MAGNIFICAT

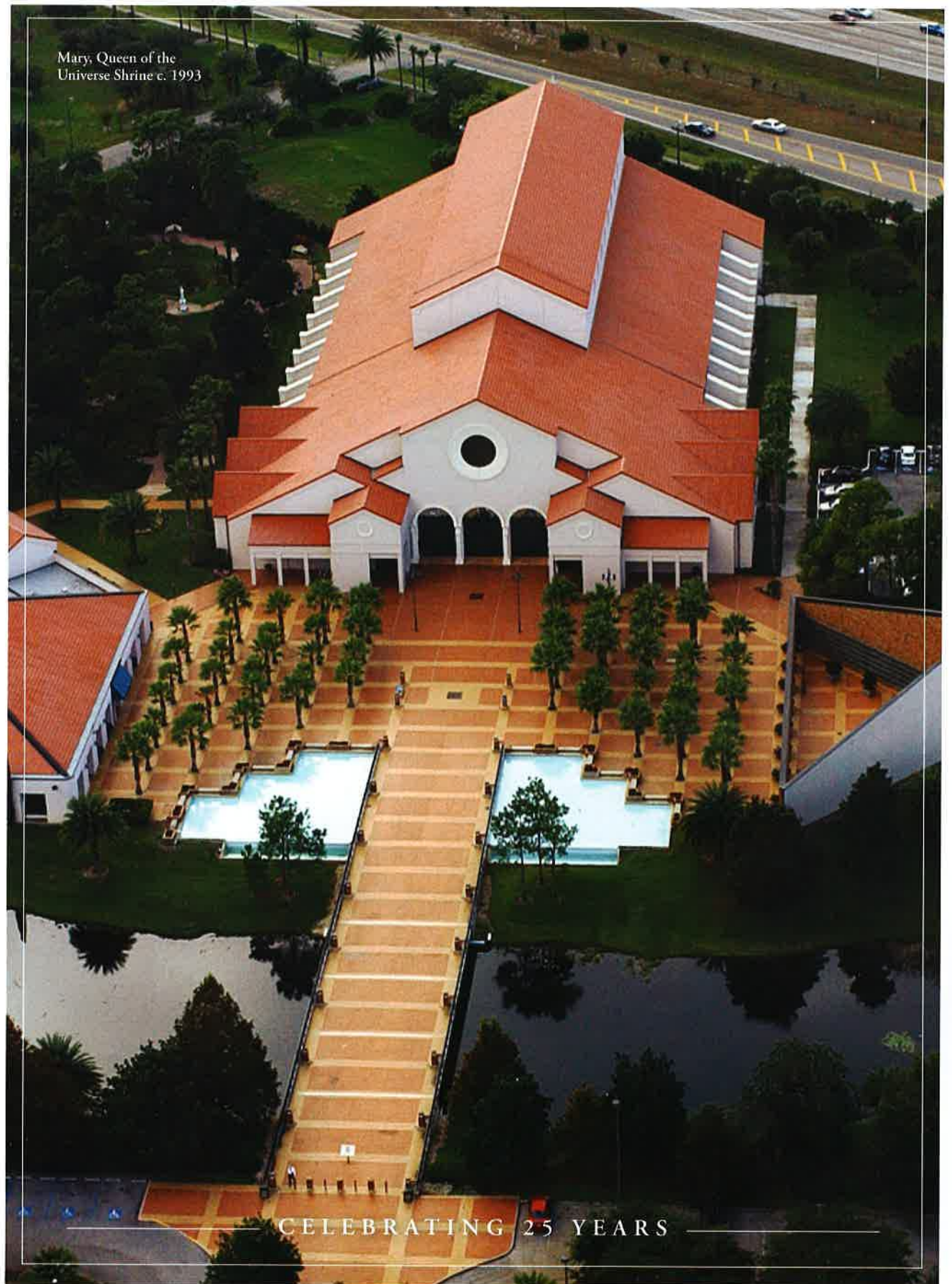
Spring/Summer 2018 | Volume XXIX, Issue 1



Special Commemorative Edition

THE BASILICA OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF MARY, QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE

Mary, Queen of the
Universe Shrine c. 1993



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

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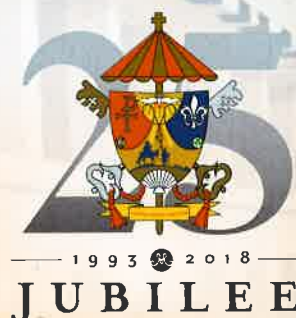
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Shrine under construction



ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SHRINE CHURCH DEDICATION

BY DANIEL FREEDMAN

On the morning of August 22, 1993, the City of Orlando awoke to blue skies with a possibility of afternoon rain. Yet not even a grim forecast could dampen spirits among the thousands of Christ's faithful who had journeyed to celebrate the dedication of a new main church at Mary, Queen of the Universe Shrine.

Skies were still clear hours later as the solemn procession of red-cloaked cardinals, archbishops and bishops, priests and dignitaries first made its way into the church, then down the center aisle and up marble steps to the altar. On either side of the sanctuary, the pews and corridors were already crowded with more than 2,000 guests from near and far. Here were craftsmen, whose skilled hands and industry had raised the new church. Present, too, were generous friends who had helped build the dream with their hearts and prayers. Pilgrims from around the world gathered in Mary's shrine, all brought together on the feast of the Queenship with a shared purpose: to *Open Wide the Doors for Christ* in one of the world's most popular visitor destinations. Nearly 20 years had passed since the dream of this new center for worship was born. And now its fulfillment was at hand.

Seven months earlier, on January 31st, 1993, the Most Reverend Norbert M. Dorsey, Bishop of

Orlando, had come to celebrate the first Mass ever held within the still-unfinished new church. Tapping on the outer doors three times with his crozier, the Bishop intoned the words "*Holy, Holy, Holy*," and led a crowd upwards of 3,000 into the worship space.

Among that day's concelebrants was retired Bishop of Orlando, the Most Reverend Thomas J. Grady, who had given his blessing to the project years earlier in the spring of 1980. Recognition of Bishop Grady's presence brought a moment of thunderous applause, as did the moment when Bishop Dorsey presented Shrine Director, Father F. Joseph Harte with keys to the new church. The cheering continued as Father Harte went on to praise by name many of those who had worked hard and long in transforming the vision of Mary's Shrine into the reality now dawning before them. Noted Fr. Harte, "*This is what we have all dreamt about for years and years.*"



Yet, in January 1993, the dream was still very much in progress. Even as that day's historic first Mass was ending, contractors were back at work installing electrical lines and plumbing. New glass art and statuary were set in place. Conversion of the Shrine's temporary church followed, promising a new center for evangelization, a museum for sacred art and a greatly enlarged shop for religious gifts and reading materials.

Then at last came August, with a week of ceremonies and special events leading to the Dedication Mass on Sunday the 22nd. Following a welcome by the Most Reverend Norbert M. Dorsey, Bishop of Orlando, and readings from the Book of Nehemiah, Paul's letter to the Ephesians and Luke's Gospel, the marvelous voices of guest choir members stirred the congregation, filling the worship space with hymns of faith and thanksgiving. It seemed a perfect afternoon. But even as Bishop Dorsey rose to deliver his homily, a heavy rain began to fall, washing over the Shrine and drenching the grounds below. Within the church, though, voices could be heard joining in the *Profession of Faith* and a special *Prayer of Dedication*.

Yet then, just as these prayerful voices were drifting into silence, just as preparations were being made to anoint the Altar and walls of the church, suddenly, dramatically, the rain ceased. The sky grew silent. And clouds opened a path for the sun to re-emerge.

An attendee who had witnessed the deluge's end offered that perhaps the heavens themselves had chosen to anoint this holy ground and bless this new church that was already serving God's people from all nations. His words echoed those of Pio Cardinal Laghi, once Papal Nuncio, the Holy

Father's representative to the United States, who had championed the Shrine's cause in Rome, and later served as head of the Vatican's Office of Catholic Education worldwide. Cardinal Laghi had brought with him to the Dedication of Pope John II's own

"This is what we have all dreamt about for years and years."

Apostolic Blessing on the new Shrine – as His Holiness was first to call *"this house of pilgrimage"* – and shared with the congregation a special message in which the Pope invoked the Queen of Heaven's loving protection upon all those who continued to help in fulfilling the Shrine's great promise.

As the anointing of the church moved ahead, it was accompanied by the choir singing *The Fragrance of Christ* and then *Out of Darkness*. Through the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Christ renewed His Presence in the hearts of those who had come together that day. And with the Rite of Peace and concluding hymns, it was apparent that Jesus and His blessed mother would remain ever present in the life and work of Mary's Shrine. ✠



LEFT TOP: Bishop Dorsey addresses attendees of the Dedication Mass - August 22, 1993
LEFT BOTTOM: Lt to Rt Bishop Grady - Ctr, Bishop Dorsey, Back Rt. Msgr Harte
CENTER: Bishop Grady processing up aisle for Dedication Mass in 1993

TOP RIGHT: Cardinal Pio Laghi
BOTTOM RIGHT: Dedication Mass - church set up - with metal chairs

1975

*Diocese of
Orlando's
Tourism Ministry
is born*

1986

First Magnificat window
created by Judson
Studios



*Mother and Child
bronze statue by
Jerzy Kenar is installed*



1991

*Universe Glass
Windows by
Ken vonRoenn Jr.
is installed*



1997

*Marble statue of
Mary, Queen of the
Universe by artist
Jill Burkee arrives at
Shrine from Pietra
Santa, Italy*

1979

Diocese purchases
17 acres for future
site of Shrine
Church



1984

*April 17th
First Mass
held on Future
Site of Shrine
Church*



1990

Ground Breaking
of future Church



1993

*January 31st
Shrine Church Opens*

*August 22nd
Dedication Mass held*



MILESTONES *at* MA



2000

Statue of St. Paul
Writing at Desk by
Bruno Lucchesi is
installed



2009

Mary's Shrine
Designated as a
minor basilica by
Pope Benedict XVI

SCHOENSTEIN & CO.
EST. 1877



2019

Basilica Pipe Organ
Anticipated Installation

1999

Rose Window, by
Domus Dei Studios
Roma, installed



2006

Bronze Doors
installed by Artida Artists,
Jill Burkee & Giancarlo Biagi



2018



2020

*The Dream
Continues...*

MARY'S SHRINE



PASTORAL REFLECTIONS ON MARY'S SHRINE

THE DREAM IS BORN

BY MONSIGNOR F. JOSEPH HARTE

Most every narrative has a prologue; and so it was with the 'dream' that gave rise to our Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe – often called "the last great shrine of the 20th century." Indeed, I've been asked many times whose dream it was to build a Catholic shrine here in the heart of Central Florida. And each time, I've explained that our inspiration was and remains even today the holy Mother of God.

Let me take you back to 1970, a time when Central Florida's quiet community of Orlando was being developed as the site for an ambitious new theme park, to be called "Disney World." Opening that next year, Disney's most costly venture became an overnight success, attracting huge crowds and quickly helping to transform sleepy Orlando into a popular choice for vacationing families from all over the world. Soon joining Disney World was the new, science-themed Epcot Center, a Universal Studios movie-themed adventureland and still others. People were arriving by the millions each week. And soon Orlando was more than a 'destination'; it had become the gateway to an extraordinary world of tourist attractions and entertainments.

A boom for real estate, hotels and Orlando businesses, of course. Yet this swelling tide of short-term visitors was soon overburdening tourist outreach services, most notably, local churches. The concern was acutely painful for Catholics who were disheartened to learn

their nearest Catholic church was in downtown Orlando, many miles from the tourist hotels where they were staying. The thought of thousands of Christ's faithful roaming around asking "Where's the church?" dismayed our bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas J. Grady. And I soon found myself tasked with establishing a ministry to serve these visiting Catholics. For a time, it was enough for us to offer masses at area hotels. Yet it was a stopgap solution, our priests rushing to get the word out, then offer the Eucharist from one makeshift hotel space to another – every weekend, all weekend long! But we could not do it alone. There were simply too many tourists to be served. In answer to the need, Bishop Grady created a small local parish whose ministry was to include a spirit of welcoming hospitality and outreach. He named it Holy Family. And I was soon joined by growing numbers of volunteers from

"Our dream then was to build a church that could bring Jesus and His holy mother ever nearer to those who might come to us for spiritual guidance, confession and, above all, to share in the Eucharist. "

the new parish, generously caring people who would rise early on their own weekend days of rest to spend time with me at the hotels, greeting Christ's faithful, preparing the altar, passing out literature and helping

during the mass.

Yet, we knew our ministry could be doing more. If tourist families were coming to Orlando by the tens of thousands each week to enjoy the likes of Mickey Mouse, Cinderella and a supporting cast of other delightful characters, here was our opportunity to reach out, not through fantasy but in illuminating Gospel truths that engage the mind; not with diversions that entertain for the moment but through the reality of God's word that alone can turn hearts, lift the human spirit and ignite a lasting joy. So while these millions of Catholic visitors might still remember the fun of their Disney adventure years later, they would never forget the spiritual renewal, encouragement and enrichment they found here among us.

Our dream then was to build a church that could bring Jesus and His holy mother ever nearer to those who might come to us for spiritual guidance, confession and, above all, to share in the Eucharist. It was an ambitious plan and, like most such undertakings, would demand resources well beyond our reach: land upon which to build, financial support, wise counsel, leadership and many laborers for the harvest. With equal parts excitement and trepidation, I took the plan to Bishop Grady. In those post-Vatican years, the entire church was enthusiastically committed to evangelization, and to greater involvement by the laity. Happily, the Bishop was quick to approve. He, too, saw what this proposed church, indeed, a holy shrine, could bring: a place where people might congregate or come on their own; a church where the faithful could receive the Eucharist; a place where people of all faiths could spend time in prayer or quiet reflection, and more.

Still, the Bishop's approval was only a first step. The new church would require millions of dollars in underwriting support and we had neither donors

or dollars. For us then, the giant leap would come in successfully encouraging others to share with us this dream – Catholics who would give even though they might never return to Orlando to see what their offerings and sacrifices had brought. A matter of faith; and most everything would depend upon it.

Which took me to Lourdes. It would not my first pilgrimage to that site where the Mother of God appeared to young Bernadette and asked for a shrine

to be constructed, then consecrated in her holy name -- a place long since revered as "Our Lady's Grotto." Nor would it be my first time praying in that very grotto, beseeching the Blessed Mother's guidance in my life and future ministry. Still, it proved to be the most memorable, most consequential pilgrimage I'd ever undertaken. Even today, I can recall arriving by train, confident in the purpose of my journey. But standing there at the Lourdes station, surrounded by the rising majesty of the Pyrennes Mountains, I was not without my doubts. To build a holy shrine was a monumental task. It would

take years, even decades to complete. It would require tens of millions of dollars, all donated. There would need to be good people energetically committing to the cause and capable of steering the enterprise. And what if we were to fail, falling short in our fund drive and disappointing the many who had come to share our dream. After all, I was but one man, a parish priest whose church was on the outskirts of Orlando. I had no network of support. It would have been so easy for me to turn back. It would have been so comfortable, so safe.

All these thoughts were with me as I approached the Grotto that afternoon. All these doubts were with me as I began to pray. I cannot say just when or how Our Lady choose to enter the conversation. I had been thinking about the countless thousands who were making their way to Lourdes each year;



CENTER: Monsignor Harte with Pope John Paul II



some with their own seemingly impossible hope for a cure, others seeking strength in the face of physical trial or emotional adversity; yet most simply desiring to feel themselves in the presence of Mary, the mother of grace, the mother of love. All around me that afternoon I could see good people at work. Volunteers were escorting elderly visitors, helping them get to and from the great basilica. Family members were bringing their frail, infirm loved ones to the grotto, the baths or Bernadette's spring, bubbling with the waters of life. So much love. So much faith. How wonderful if all the world could experience the love of Mary and her Divine Son so passionately, so intimately! And that's when I began to realize God's holy mother would surely bless our shared efforts to open new doors to faith here in Central Florida. And so I returned to Orlando a few days later, more convinced than ever before that our cause was God's cause; more committed than ever before to help realize the dream!

In the months and years that followed, despite having my own fast-growing parish at Holy Family to oversee, I became something of an itinerant preacher, traveling from hotel to hotel, offering mass, sharing our dream and asking for support. The people listened. They asked good, inquiring questions. And their outpouring

of generosity made the effort at hand all the more fulfilling. Indeed, the great lesson I learned from this experience was just how the Holy Spirit works in us and through us to strengthen the Church.

The work had begun. Bishop Grady guaranteed a diocesan loan which enabled us to purchase a 17-acre lot in Lake Buena Vista, on the edge of Disney World, and authorized our launch of a \$7 million fund drive to construct the new church. Yet it was a rocky start. Overgrown with wild foliage and mired in a swamp of muck, our future home for Mary's Shrine was not a pretty sight, but it was within sight of Orlando's burgeoning tourist hotels and attractions. And we were emboldened by a nearby sign promoting Disney's new Epcot Center: If you can dream it, you can do it.

We could and we did: Together.

More than 300 members of our Holy Family parish signed on as lectors, ministers of the Eucharist and ushers. Most important was the strong campaign leadership team that emerged during those early months. By the time we began the ministry in 1975, this steering committee was already at work overseeing most every aspect of the project, from helping to select an architectural firm to determining the structure of our fundraising drive itself.

Early friends of Mary's Shrine are long familiar with the names of these dedicated men and women, most notably: Marcia Pietrzak, Dick Kelley, Jack Larkin, Jim Nagy, Wade Hargadon and Bill Kramer. Yet few can know how influential their wise counsel has been in marshaling scarce resources and maximizing the value of each. I had come into this new ministry totally raw. I had never asked for money beyond what it took to manage a parish. But these were business people, community leaders; they had the 'know-how.' And together we developed campaign strategies, wrote and designed fundraising literature.

One such strategy was to prove especially fruitful, commemoratives: the opportunity to personally dedicate a space, work of art or other element within the Shrine complex; in this way, forever linking one's family name with the holy work of Mary's Shrine. While the most visible and impressive commemoratives allowed donors to attach their name to a chapel, statue or perhaps a work of stained glass art, more affordable opportunities included the naming of a landscape

TOP: Monsignor Harte, 1st Rector of the Shrine

RIGHT: Monsignor Harte & Artist Loura Dobbs unveiling the bronze bust of Monsignor Harte

tree, rosary garden brick, even one of the tiles set in place upon the church roof. And the response was overwhelming. People who might never visit Orlando again nonetheless chose to leave a piece of their own generous heart with us, knowing they would always be remembered here at the Shrine and would always share in the blessings of this ministry's outreach to a world of others.

For our Shrine family, though, the greatest blessing came when Pope St. John Paul II promised that he would remember each of us in his daily prayers. It

"We could and we did: Together."

came during my first audience with the Holy Father at his residence in the Vatican. Just after I had shared with him our plans and a rendering of the new Shrine church, he responded enthusiastically, offering that our new apostolate would truly be a house of pilgrimage and for that, he blessed us all!

In time, we were able to build at the new site.

Soon our first permanent facilities took shape: first, a temporary church that would later become the Shrine's administrative complex, with offices, a museum, evangelization center and popular gift shop. By the time we held our first mass in these permanent facilities in April 1986, visitors were already marveling at our unique outdoor chapel, with a bell tower that soared upward into the warm Orlando skies. Just four years later, we were ready to break ground for the landmark centerpiece of our shrine complex: the 2,000-seat church that was to become the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe.

On August 22, 1990, the feast of Mary, our queen and patroness, Orlando's bishop, the Most Reverend Norbert M. Dorsey, launched the Shrine campaign's new building phase, telling an audience of friends and special guests: We want the Shrine to be a temple, a sacred place to give glory to God and honor our mother . . . above all, we want it to be a spiritual home, a real hearth.

What followed were three years of dizzying activity.

Even as contractors, plumbers, electricians and carpenters were giving form and structure to the rising church, landscape architects were developing a tranquil environment for devotional prayer and reflection, a world of grass, pond and shade trees uniquely laid out in the shape of a rosary. In time, this living retreat would recognize our patron in Rome, now canonized, becoming the Saint John Paul II Rosary Garden. A home for religious art was opening inside the Shrine's newly-reconfigured administrative center. And commissions were going out to prominent artists, sculptors and craftsmen, challenging them to create works that would illuminate the rich pageant of Christian life, history and teachings while forever magnifying the graces of Mary, our Queen, and the glories of the Lord.

Yes, the dream was awakening. We could hear it in the sound of jackhammers; witness it as this wilderness of sodden marshes woven from tangled roots and overgrowths began transforming itself into a welcoming landscape of gardens, pools and courtyards; and we could sense within its holy ground the eternal presence of faith.

Finally, as always, I ask you to stay close to the Holy Mother of God ... pray the rosary, and ask her to keep you close to Jesus her Son. This is what we are called to in our lives. *✠*

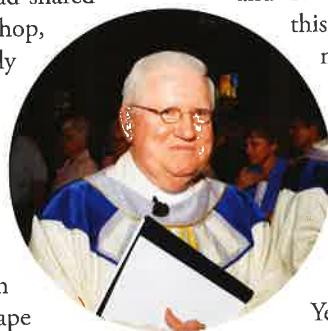


REALIZING THE PROMISE

BY FATHER ED McCARTHY

When

I first arrived to assume the rectorship of Orlando's Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe in November 2007, the dream of building a Marian shrine to serve the pilgrim faithful here in the heart of Central Florida's robust new tourist mecca was already a reality. Indeed, the Shrine's founding rector, Monsignor F. Joseph Harte, had shared this audacious dream with his bishop, friends, parishioners and even the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, more than three decades earlier. And by the time of my arrival at the Basilica, that dream was very much alive in the Shrine's quietly majestic, 2,000-seat main church, as well as in the site's Museum of Sacred Art, evangelization center and across a meditative landscape that today reaches from the Shrine's uniquely designed Rosary Garden to an equally unique Mother & Child outdoor chapel.



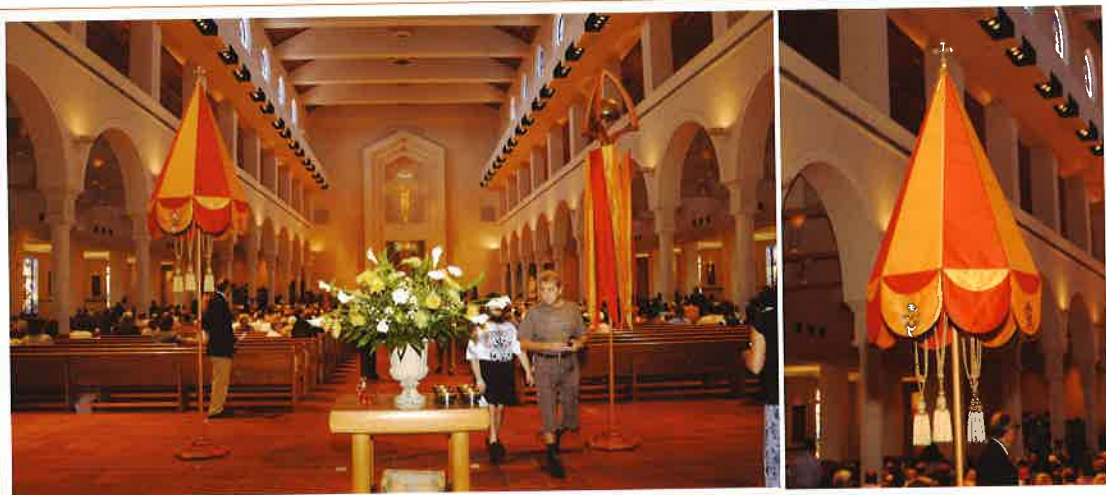
present; and where a spirit of evangelization made welcome the pilgrim heart, travelers of every faith. And while I had greatly looked forward to my time at the Shrine, it seemed to me a daunting challenge – as it would I imagine have been for most any priest. After all, who among us had been trained to compete with entertainment goliaths such as Disney and Universal Studios. I, for one had come to this new apostolate from a life of parish ministry and diocesan management.

Nothing in my experience could have prepared me for this fast-growing ministry of welcome – above all, how to manage the Shrine's outreach to a widening world of visitors without the financial support of a parish to rely on.

Yet, I soon found that Mary's Shrine was much like a parish – a community of shared identity, values and purposes. And the personal generosity of this shrine family proved enormous.

My mission then was not to build with bricks and mortar but to help realize the Shrine's still unfolding promise: to be something of an oasis, a place of quiet refuge from the flickering, neon adventure lands that beckoned family vacationers and groups alike; a place where Jesus and His holy mother seemed ever-

In those next three years, we busied ourselves with energizing the ministry's outreach program, our spirit of welcome and even repairing and replacing basic facilities. Yet, even amidst these week-to-week activities, we were once more embraced by history. Our moment came in 2009, when Mary's Shrine



CENTER: Father Ed McCarthy, 2nd Rector of the Shrine

LEFT: Mass to commemorate Mary's Shrine designation as a minor basilica, 2009

RIGHT: Ombrellino, a symbol of the papal court, gifted to the Basilica from Knights of Columbus

was named a minor basilica. Here was an honor almost always reserved for older, established churches, as The Vatican officially signified their historical, artistic or religious import. For us, though, it seemed a recognition of just how much we had accomplished here in such a short span of time. Fittingly, it was a recognition that brought members of our worldwide Shrine family together at the Basilica on August 22, 2009, feast of the Queenship of Mary. Included in the events of that day was a Celebration Mass of Elevation which I was privileged to concelebrate with Orlando's bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas Wenski, and Msgr. Harte.


Just one year later, we hosted a much larger gathering. For this joyful, first anniversary Mass, special guests, friends and tourist visitors were greeted by papal flags raised high and bunting-adorned church portals. Among the day's highlights were the Shrine Choir's prelude songs, including "Wind Beneath My Wings." It was a song I chose for the program as a poignant tribute both to the benefactors who had largely underwritten the basilica's construction and to our own Shrine volunteers, those wonderful people who can be found here most every day of the year greeting friends old and new. Equally memorable was the assembly's solemn procession through the entrance portals, then down the church's center aisle to begin our celebration of the Queenship Mass. First came members of the Knights of Columbus, followed by altar servers with the incense, the cross bearer and the

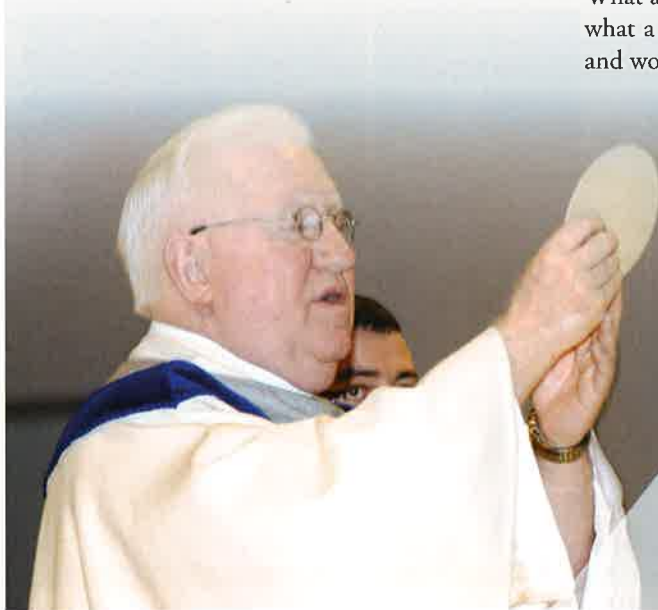


acolytes, the Basilica's ombrellino (umbrella), then deacons and clergy, and the tintinnabulum (bell) – all to the echoing strains of "Immaculate Mary." Not to be outdone was the church itself. Here was our signature statue of Mary, Queen of the Universe, a floral wreath seemingly stretching out from its base.

Florally bedecked as well was the Basilica's statue of St. Peter which, together with our St. Paul, welcomes Christ's faithful as they enter the nave. Immediately after the homily, attendees processed to the statue of Mary with flowers and crowns which they placed at the base.

Finally, as "Hail Holy Queen" signaled an end to our celebration of the Mass, we gathered under the gaze of Holy Mary for a special anointing of the sick, then joined together for a final prayer.

What a blessing it was to be present that day. Indeed, what a blessing for me to have had a role in the life and work of this remarkable ministry. 



*"Nothing in my experience
could have prepared me for
this fast-growing ministry
of welcome..."*

TOP: Father McCarthy blesses a small pilgrim
BOTTOM: Father McCarthy consecrates the Eucharist

THE DREAM CONTINUED: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

REFLECTIONS OF THE VERY REVEREND FR. PAUL HENRY, RECTOR

I first became familiar with the Shrine on a visit with my mother 24 years ago. A must-see, brand new destination, intended to be at the center of world travel... to us it was both immense and beautiful. My mom stood at the back of the Church. Her reaction was "how could I ever make it up that aisle?" My own first impression of this new shrine to Mary was, indeed, one of awe and admiration.

Back then, I could not have anticipated that, 25 years later, I would receive a new assignment on a particular day in March 2011 as the rector of that same shrine.

On my first Sunday morning I concelebrated Mass with Monsignor Harte. He is a man with unique gifts who has been so instrumental in creating the Shrine ... the whole enterprise being driven by his dream.

On that day, he welcomed me, he said kind things, and handed me the keys of the kingdom. I looked out at the sea of faces before me. It was high season and with nearly 3,000 people at Mass it was an overwhelming sight on my first day!

To greet so many people after Mass is to be privileged to receive their first impressions of this sacred place. I remember a time when two men on an Irish country road stopped to talk with me and my brother, Peter. One of them asked me, "What are you doing now, Father?" I replied, "I am at a rather large church, a place of pilgrimage in the City of Orlando." They shared how they, too, like everyone else in my little home town, had visited Orlando. Specifically, they made mention of a huge church and an amazing priest with a strong, west of Ireland accent who got their attention.

When people approach me after Mass, they oftentimes will ask for a blessing or share their experience of worshipping at Mary, Queen of the Universe Shrine.

Most often, there is an edge of delight and surprise in their words: "We have felt so touched by it all and it was a moment of holiness."

So, what is the draw to the Shrine for so many people? Maybe it begins with a practical insight: "Here is a place we can go to Mass!" or some will say "I am not even Catholic, but I just felt drawn to this place." And, that is where the surprise begins...we all bring our own immediate life's experiences when we gather for Mass. You might say we are hungry. We have our questions and wonderings. We have our needs for God to know us by name and for Him to hear our prayers.

When we celebrate the Mass, we hear the Word of God. It is preached in word and further communicated through every facet of the church architecture and sacred music which remains with us long after we leave the Church building. Our faith is expressed in poetry, in wonderful liturgy, in symbolism...in the visual impact of painting and in sculpture. There was a gentleman from Switzerland who said to me recently "It is unusual, Father, at a church in this part of the world so much beauty and original artwork. It has a powerful impact".

"We rejoice that our Catholic Church is open to all people. Mary's embrace is open to all the people of the earth. Our Basilica our Shrine is a powerful and beautiful outreach to all people that come from everywhere."

For these and many reasons, people delight in Mary, Queen of the Universe. Practically there is the question "What would we do if it wasn't here?" It is a reflection of the Church's priority to celebrate the Eucharist. Many millions of people over the last 25 years have



CENTER: Father Paul Henry, 3rd Rector of the Shrine

received God's mercy and forgiveness, hearts have been lifted and spiritually renewed through the powerful sense of the Divine.

What I hear most frequently is about the sense of gratitude people feel and how their lives have been touched by this Shrine. I think it has something to do with the Catholic principle that we are led to God by the truth of His word but also by beauty.

Over 25 years ago, under the guidance of Bishop Grady, Monsignor Harte had a dream...where he felt the early call to build a church in honor of Mary...a holy place to welcome God's people.

We have exciting things coming in the new year – the most dramatic being the arrival of a magnificent new pipe organ, currently under construction. It will be the realization of, as Monsignor Harte hoped, the last major element of the Dream. It has also become very clear to us in the growth of the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, 30,000 pilgrims came during the Jubilee year of Mercy in 2016. We are busy preparing a new expansion for that area of our ministry.

We rejoice that our Catholic Church is open to all people. Mary's embrace is open to all the people of the earth. Our Basilica, our Shrine is a powerful and beautiful outreach to all people that come from everywhere.

As we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of this Shrine, we are reminded that the Church is a sacred place. It is

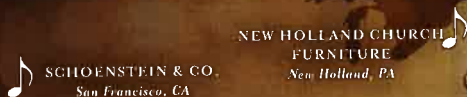
made holy by the Holy Eucharist and the Eucharistic Presence of the Lord. It is holy in its attraction to people who come seeking reconciliation and peace. It is holy because of the prayers that give voice to our faith and Jesus' promise that He would be with us always. It is a beautiful reminder of the fulfillment of the dream that has led people to come in the quiet hours of the afternoon to be apart, to be healed, to pray.

Like Mary herself, the Basilica is often described as a *spiritual home away from home*. It is an oasis that can nurture the soul; it evangelizes those who feel lost, challenging us to make our life, our work, and our family a home for Christ. I join with you in prayer for the Lord's continued blessings to be bestowed upon this holy place of pilgrimage. That is my prayer for this ministry. May The Dream and the legacy of those who built this shrine through prayer, love and support continue to flourish for centuries to come. ✠



TOP: Installation Mass of Fr. Paul Henry as Rector
 BOTTOM LEFT: Frs. Paul and Peter Henry celebrate 50 Years of Priesthood in 2018
 BOTTOM RIGHT: On the occasion of Fr. Paul's Installation; Lt to Rt: Fr. Peter Henry, Fr. Ed McCarthy, Fr. Paul Henry, Bishop John Noonan, Msgr. E. Joseph Harte

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Church Furniture

- Established in 1919
- Based in Lancaster County, PA
- Master craftsmen of custom
- woodwork for Church Furnishings
- Notable Project: Fordham University Church's Gallery Organ Case



JACKSON + RYAN
ARCHITECTS

- Established in 1986
- Based in Houston, TX
- Specializing in Design and Engineering of Religious Spaces
- Featured Work: Church of St. John, the Divine (Houston, TX)

*The organ reminds us of the immensity
and the magnificence of God*

- POPE BENEDICT XVI

CAMPAIGN FOR Mercy

CAMPAIGN FOR MERCY: THE CONFESSIONAL EXPANSION

Artists Jill Burkee and Giancarlo Biagi of Artida Studios in Pietra Santa, Italy have completed the marble relief of St John Vianney, which will grace the wall near the reflection area of our soon-to-be-expanded Reconciliation space.

Look for this work of art to arrive at the Basilica this coming fall!

This expansion will accommodate even more visitors with an additional

confessional room and more seating to afford a reverent, contemplative area of reflection for those who will wait to have their confession heard.

Your gift of any size allows us to ensure that thousands of souls will be given the opportunity to discover mercy and grace through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



BRONZE PORTALS OF FAITH

The narrative church portal is among the oldest, most magnificent traditions in sacred art and architecture.

TAPESTRY OF NAMES

A wonderful way to honor the spiritual legacy of your family or special loved one with a gift of \$750.

NARRATIVE PANELS

Each original panel includes an image symbolic of our Catholic faith and name recognition for your family. Panel sizes range from approximately 6 in. x 6 in. up to 10 in. x 8 in. Giving opportunities range from \$2,500 to \$7,500.

PORTRAITS OF MARY

These original 17 x 23 bronze portraits celebrate some of the most adored titles and images of Our Lady. Sponsorship of a custom portrait is a gift of \$18,000.



For further information on how you can become a part of the Shrine's Legacy, contact our Campaign Manager at (407) 239-6600 or development@mqus.org.



PILGRIMS' PERSPECTIVES

Volunteer Corps, 1993

These are some reflections from just a few of the hundreds who serve with their time and talents every day, here at Mary's Shrine. To all our volunteers who serve and have served, Thank you.

My first encounter with the ministry of Mary's Shrine was while my family and I visited Walt Disney World back in the 1980's. We attended Mass at Disney's Polynesian Resort and I can still recall collections that were being used for the building fund of the future permanent home of the shrine.

In the 1990's our family relocated to Central Florida, working for Disney. Because of our demanding and fluid work schedules, the Mass schedules at the church newly built for tourists, worked best for us.

Once we became regular attendees to Mary's Shrine it became like a magnet pulling us more and more toward serving at the shrine. We came full circle, from our first encounter with this place of pilgrimage on our own journey as travelers to being newly retired and fully committed volunteers to this rapidly growing ministry.

After my beloved wife, Fran, passed away, the sense of community I already felt at this holy place became strengthened and today the Shrine is my second family.

- William "Woody" L.

Many years ago, driving down what was then an uneven gravel road, my husband, Regis and I did not expect to find a church. Being new to the area and newly retired, we decided to stop and check it out. As we parked on the grass and walked across the bridge toward the brand-new Shrine church we were in awe. "WOW, what a church! So beautiful!" was our first impression.

It was not long after our first encounter of the Shrine and meeting Msgr. Harte that we became avid volunteers. Regis and I enjoyed many years serving together in the ministry of hospitality at the Shrine.

We are all on a journey and sometimes, we need a place that allows us fewer distractions so we can tune in to God's pursuit of our hearts. This is a church for the world, for the universe. The peace that is felt here is something so unique it keeps visitors returning. I count my blessings every day to have the opportunity to volunteer at this place dedicated to pilgrims from all around the world.

- Mary M.

When I first visited the shrine in 1992, I was amazed at how impressive and enormous it was! It has been wonderful to be part of such a special ministry and to be able to watch it grow over the last 25 years.

In 1995 when I made the permanent move to Orlando, one of my new neighbors happened to work for the builder of the Shrine. After we got to talking and found the Shrine as a common place of interest, he told me they still needed volunteers there, so soon after I began to volunteer and have been serving at Mary's Shrine ever since!

I have been volunteering for the Basilica's Concert Series for several years, so it is always wonderful to recognize the faces of return visitors, many of who when they arrive recognize me in return, I've been here for so long! It is an honor to help and give to those who walk through the doors of the Basilica... being a retired Army nurse, that is all I have ever known.

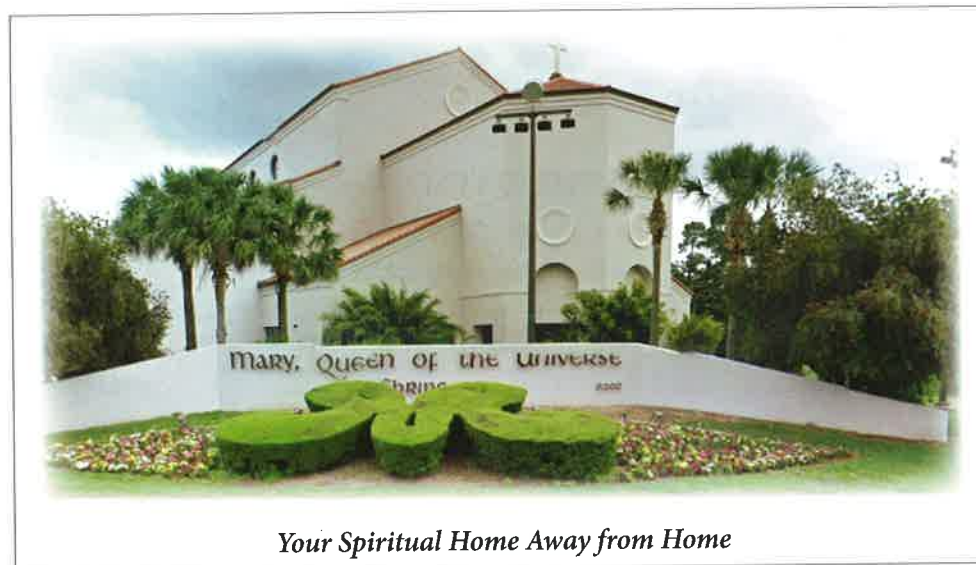
- Joan R.





**Basilica of the National Shrine
of Mary Queen of the Universe**
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