Artifacts of the Papal Visit

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Pope Benedict XVI wears a century old cope of silver and gold thread during Solemn Vespers in the Crypt Church of the Basilica as he is seated in the Papal Chair.

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception welcomed Pope Benedict XVI on April 16, 2008. Artifacts of the Papal Visit that are displayed in Memorial Hall include the cope and stole worn by the Holy Father during Solemn Vespers, the papal chair, and the Golden Rose.

Solemn Vespers is marked by the vesture of the celebrant, the use of incense, and the music. On this occasion, Pope Benedict XVI wore a 19th-century silver and gold **French Cope (Coronation of Mary)** given to the Shrine in the early 1920s. The cope, one-of-a-kind, is of woven gold and silver threads. It is the design and craftsmanship of the textile artist J. A. Henry, of Lyon, France, who won the "Grand Prize" in this category at the Universal Exposition of Paris in 1900. This cope was woven between 1900 and 1905.

The front panels (silver and gold threads) depict invocations from the Litany of the Blessed Mother. The body of the cope is a litany of prophets, popes, apostles, and saints—particularly French saints, among them: Margaret Mary Alacoque, John Baptist de la Salle, Charlemagne, and Blandina, a relic of whom is sealed in the Mary Altar of the Crypt Church, where Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Vespers. Also featured on the Cope is "Venerable Joan of Arc," prior to her beatification in 1905 and her canonization on May 16, 1920, the same day on which Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Bonzano blessed the land on which the National Shrine now stands.

As there was not a matching stole for this cope, Sr. Lucyna Chabera, SSMI, sacristan and seamstress of the Basilica, was charged with the task of making a matching stole.

The Papal Chair (5 feet 9 inches) is of American walnut with raised hand-carved crosses on either side. The construction is "lock-mitered" or "dovetailed," which means no screws or nails were used. A dye stain, rather than a heavy pigment, was used to accentuate, not darken, the walnut grain; the wood finish is

Monsignor Walter R. Rossi, Rector, graciously receives the Golden Papal Rose from the Holy Father on behalf of the Basilica.

a quick-drying lacquer, with a hard surface. The Papal Crest is hand-sewn embroidered needlework, in the traditional Old World style. The cushions are of ivory damask: a mixture of silk and wool imported from Belgium. The chair was designed by St. Jude Liturgical Arts Studio, Havertown, PA. The carpentry work is by Matt and John Huprich (father and son) of Perkasie, PA.

The **Golden or Papal Rose** is made of hand-forged iron. Each petal, each rose and rosebud is meticulously forged, crafted and attached by hand. In keeping with this traditional, old world technique, the rose is finished in a classic black patina. The softwood base is hand carved and carries the coat of arms of Pope Benedict XVI. The wooden base and the rose depict the "root of Jesse" from which this rose or flower has sprung. (Isaiah 11:1)

The tradition of the Golden Rose, dates back to the 11th century. The rose, a symbol of joy and hope, was blessed on Laetare (Rose) Sunday, when rose-colored vestments and adornments replaced the penitential purple of Lent. A natural rose at first, over time it became a single golden rose of natural size and eventually a cluster or branch of roses crafted by famous an artist of renown.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the Golden Rose was an exceptional gift. Pope Paul VI presented five roses during his pontificate (1963-1978) and Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) presented only three. To date, Pope Benedict XVI (2005 -) has presented six roses: the Shrine of Jasna Gora (Czestochowa, Poland), 2006; the Shrines of Aparecida (Brazil) and Mariazell (Austria), 2007; and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (Washington, D.C.), 2008. In August 2008, the Bavarian Shrine of Our Lady of Altötting, Germany, became the sixth recipient of this papal honor.

Other items on display are the zucchetto (skullcap) worn by Pope Benedict XVI, the papal copy of The Roman Missal that was used during the Vesper service, the Guest Book of the Basilica with the signature of the Holy Father, and a gold papal medallion commemorating this visit. ❧

Musical Contributions of the Basilica to the Papal Visit

The Department of Music of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception had the great honor of contributing significantly to Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Journey to the United States in April 2008.

Beginning with the Holy Father's first full day in the United States, Dr. Peter Latona, Director of Music for the Basilica, was invited by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, to play the organ during the private Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI in the chapel of the Apostolic Nunciature the morning of April 16.

Later that day, Dr. Robert Grogan, Organist Emeritus and Basilica Carillonneur, pealed the bells of the Knights Tower that heralded the Holy Father's arrival to the Basilica and later marked his departure.

The Choir of the Basilica, conducted by Dr. Latona, sang Solemn Vespers which preceded the Holy Father's address to the Bishops of the United States in the Crypt Church. Dr. Latona also played the organ and composed music for the evening prayer service. Daniel Sañez, Assistant Director of Music, assisted as organist.

Dr. Latona was also commissioned by the Archdiocese of Washington to compose music for the entrance procession for the Papal Mass celebrated at Nationals Park on April 17. He was also commissioned by the Archdiocese of New York to write music for the Pope's entrance to the Mass for Clergy and Religious at St. Patrick's Cathedral on April 19.

A live recording of Solemn Vespers with Pope Benedict XVI and the Bishops of the United States is available on CD in the National Shrine's Gift Shop and Book Store and online at **www.nationalshrineshops.com**.

Matthew Barrick