



THE BASILICA

of the NATIONAL SHRINE of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 29, 2022

Statement from Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the Basilica Special Prayers for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

“We at Mary’s Shrine continue to offer very special prayers for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, placing him in the care of Mary Immaculate. We have fond memories of the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the Basilica in 2008 when he met with the Bishops of the United States in the Crypt Church and greeted the faithful gathered in the Great Upper Church. May God sustain him, and the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for him.”

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ABOUT THE 2008 VISIT OF POPE BENEDICT XVI TO THE BASILICA

On April 16, 2008, his 81st birthday, Pope Benedict XVI visited the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the first full day of his Apostolic Journey to the United States. He presided over Solemn Vespers, addressed the Bishops of the United States, and bestowed the Golden Rose upon the Basilica, a rare honor granted to a church of special significance by the Holy Father.

ABOUT THE BASILICA

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is the largest Roman Catholic church in North America, and it is among the ten largest churches in the world. Dedicated to the patroness of the United States, the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception, the Basilica is the nation’s preeminent Marian shrine and patronal church and has been designated a national sanctuary of prayer and pilgrimage. Among those who have visited the National Shrine during its 100+ year history are Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI, Saint Pope John Paul II, and Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta.