



THE BASILICA

of the NATIONAL SHRINE of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 31, 2022

Statement from Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the Basilica On the Passing of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

It is always sad when anyone dies, no matter how old or how young. At the passing of Pope Benedict XVI, we at Mary's Shrine are sad because we knew him personally, he came to visit us in 2008. Today we offer prayers for his eternal rest, but also give thanks to God for his 71 years as a priest, his 45 years as a bishop, and his almost eight years as Pope. A life of service to the Church and God's people. May he rest in peace and Our Lady usher him into the presence of her Son.

###

ABOUT THE 2008 VISIT OF POPE BENEDICT XVI TO THE BASILICA

On April 16, 2008, 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 or shrine of special significance.

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.