

NEWS

Office of Communications

Contact: Doug Mandelaro or Michael Tedesco
585-328-3210



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NEWLY RENOVATED SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL TO RE-OPEN WITH DEDICATION MASS

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Bishop of Rochester Matthew H. Clark – joined by Edward Cardinal Egan of the New York Archdiocese, seven bishops from across New York State, the clergy of the Diocese of Rochester and hundreds of worshippers – will dedicate the renovated Sacred Heart Cathedral tonight.

More than 700 people are expected to attend the special Dedication Mass at 4 p.m. at the Cathedral on Flower City Park.

In a late-morning briefing for the news media today, Cardinal Egan accompanied Bishop Clark through the Cathedral, publicly praised the renovation and congratulated Bishop Clark on his leadership.

After years of planning and more than a year of construction, the Cathedral underwent several major changes aimed at bringing it into full compliance with liturgical requirements of the Roman Catholic Church and adding elements designed to fully recognize its place as the “Mother Church” of the Diocese and seat of the Bishop of Rochester.

“All who see our renovated Cathedral will marvel at its beauty, at lovely elements they may have never noticed before and new elements that will make the worship experience memorable,” Bishop Clark said. “I personally welcome all Catholics to the Cathedral and wish to extend many thanks to the thousands of people who supported the project financially and with their prayers, and to the neighborhood around the Cathedral to which we are fully committed.”

The Rev. John Mulligan, pastor of Sacred Heart, added, “Our newly renovated Cathedral is designed to be a more welcoming, more intimate and more comfortable place for the worship of God and for the gathering of community than ever before. Sacred Heart was built as a parish church and never had a major renovation that would allow it to fully function as the Mother Church and model for our Diocese. We are so very grateful to God, to the dedicated workers, and to all of our people that the work went so well.”

Sacred Heart was founded as a parish church in 1911. In 1937, following the closing of the former St. Patrick’s Cathedral downtown, Sacred Heart was named pro-Cathedral, or temporary Cathedral. It was officially designated the Cathedral of the Diocese of Rochester in 1952.

The preservation and renovation work included:

- **A new altar**, placed closer to the people and designed to create a better sense of community among the worshippers.

- **A new full-immersion baptismal font** in the south end of the main body of the Cathedral
- **The addition of a new Eucharistic Chapel** for the sacred tabernacle, designed to allow for intimate private devotion. The tabernacle is from the old St. Philip Neri Church in Rochester. When the church burned in 1967, Father George Weinmann and Sister Lillian Marie died after trying to save the tabernacle. The sides of the restored tabernacle are adorned with artwork from the former St. Patrick's Cathedral downtown. The ceiling of the Chapel is painted to depict the night sky the day the Diocese was officially formed on March 3, 1868.
- **A hand-crafted cathedra**, or Bishop's chair, a gift to Bishop Clark from the priests of the Diocese on the occasion of his 25th Anniversary as Bishop of Rochester
- **New niches** to provide a specially lit places of honor for statues of St. John Fisher, the patron saint of the Diocese; the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and St. Joseph
- **A new, life-sized statue of the Blessed Mother and Infant Jesus**, created in Italy by an artist whose family has been carving since the 15th Century
- **Full accessibility** for people with disabilities
- **Re-installation of a restored rood beam and crucifix** in the north end of the Cathedral. It graced the Cathedral until the 1950s
- **Intricate renewal of interior paint** and artwork
- **Restoration of the pulpit (ambo)**, which has been used by six bishops in the Cathedral's long history
- **Cleaning and repair of many of the Cathedral's majestic stained glass** windows, which were long overdue for needed preservation
- **A new narthex, or gathering area**, which can hold more than 600 people and will be used for both hospitality and such liturgical ceremonies as processions
- **New restrooms**, meeting rooms and other amenities
- **The installation of state-of-the-art** sound and lighting systems
- **New seating** designed to add comfort and allow for a variety of arrangements
- **A gift shop**
- **A new office wing** for the Cathedral parish
- **Two landscaped and lighted outdoor pocket parks**, designed to add green space to the neighborhood and provide a setting for quiet contemplation
- **A new parking area** on the Ridgeway Avenue-Primrose Street side of the Cathedral
- **Replacement of the slate roof**, along with restoration and renewal of other parts of the building's infrastructure.

Following the Mass this evening, an open house and tours will be held Saturday, Jan. 22, at the Cathedral from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., with evening ecumenical prayer at 7:00 p.m. On Sunday, the regular Mass schedule resumes. Masses will be at 7:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

The LeChase Companies of Rochester coordinated the renovation work. Architect was award-winning Williamson Pounders of Memphis, working with Labella Associates of Rochester. Liturgical designer was Father Richard Vosko, a priest of the Diocese of Albany and a nationally known and award-winning expert on Roman Catholic Church renovation. Bishop Clark also formed a special Renovation Committee of members of the Cathedral parish and representatives of the 12-county Diocese to advise on the project.

People from throughout the Diocese and within the Cathedral parish donated generously to a Capital Campaign aimed in part at funding the renovation project, surpassing their goal.

REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS: PLEASE NOTE

Due to the sacredness of the Mass and large number of people in attendance, **special media coverage guidelines** will be in effect during the pre-ceremonies and the Mass. Please do not arrive late. **Parking of live-broadcast trucks will be in designated**