

## A Little Bit of History

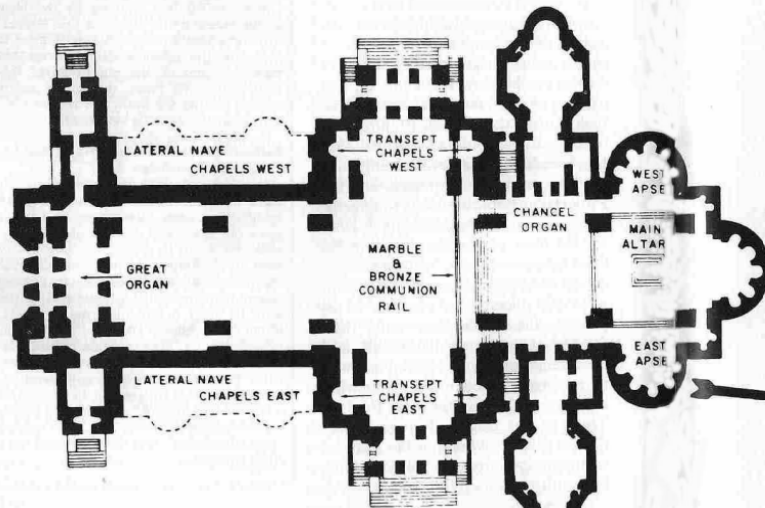
# Pope Visits the National Shrine

By Bill Wicks, SFO  
National Historian

As you know, in mid-April, our nation was blessed with a visit by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. On April 16, he celebrated vespers at the Basilica of the national shrine of the Immaculate Conception, in Washington D.C. What you may not know is that the East Apse (see plan shown below), known as the Franciscan memorial, was sponsored by the Franciscan family in the United States. The Tertiaries donated their share, \$100,000 – amounting to \$1.00 for each member. The five apsidal chapels are dedicated to the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. Six statues of Franciscan Saints are positioned between the chapels, and a large mosaic of St. Joseph the Defender of the Church, rises above the chapels to the dome. If you are ever fortunate enough to visit the basilica, search out this Franciscan memorial that was gifted in our name. (Franciscan Herald and Forum 1964)



EAST APSE  
FRANCISCAN MEMORIAL  
GREAT MOSAIC

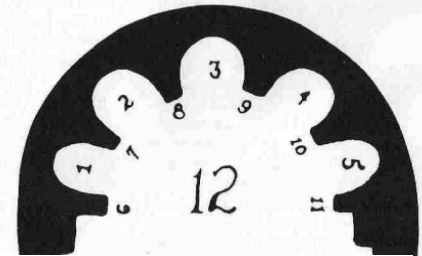


FIVE APSIDAL CHAPELS  
Dedicated to the  
Sorrowful Mysteries  
of the Rosary

1. Christ's Agony in the Garden
2. Christ is Scourged at the Pillar
3. Christ is Crowned with Thorns
4. Christ Carries His Cross
5. Christ Dies on the Cross

SIX STATUES OF  
FRANCISCAN SAINTS

6. St. Francis of Assisi
7. St. Clare
8. St. Anthony
9. St. Bonaventure
10. St. Joseph Cupertino
11. St. Lawrence Brindisi
12. ST. JOSEPH,  
THE DEFENDER  
OF THE CHURCH



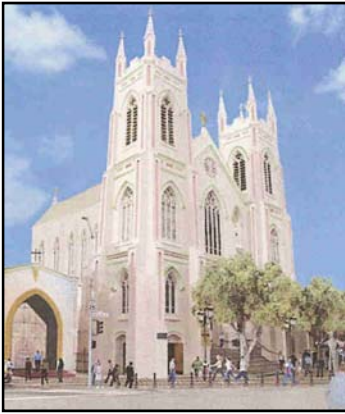
The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., is the preeminent Marian shrine of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. This beautiful votive church of pilgrimage...honors the Blessed Mother under the title of the Immaculate Conception, as the Patroness of the United States. Built as the medieval cathedrals of Europe, without structural steel beams, framework, or columns, the Shrine is entirely of stone, brick, tile and mortar. It is a blending of techniques, both ancient and new, in which architecture mingles with symbol.

“...the Shrine is home to the largest collection of contemporary ecclesiastical art in the United States. Amid a rich patina of mosaics, sculptures, and artistic renderings, the more than 65 chapels and oratories reflect not only the devotional traditions of the American Church but also the rich ethnic *mélange* of the Universal Church. In 1990, Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) named the National Shrine a minor basilica, the 36th in the United States.

See: [www.nationalshrine.com](http://www.nationalshrine.com)

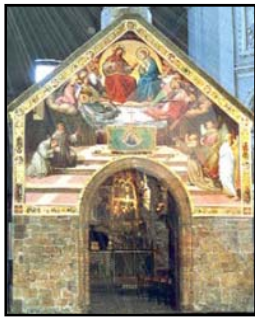
# The Renaissance Project

By William Wicks, SFO  
National Historian



St. Francis of Assisi Church (at left), the first parish church of San Francisco, was recognized a National Shrine by the National [United States] Conference of Catholic Bishops in September, 1999. The Renaissance Project is an inspired plan to bring the Shrine to its true potential, in four phases (see below): The Porziuncola, The Piazza, Preservation, and Programs.

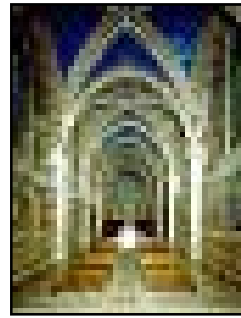
The first phase of the Renaissance Project, the building of a replica of the Porziuncola Chapel (next to the Church), will be completed this year and will be dedicated on September 27<sup>th</sup> by Cardinal William Levada, Protector of the Congregation of the Doctrines of the Faith. All are invited to participate in this grand celebration. For up-to-date information, access [www.shrinerenewal.org/overview](http://www.shrinerenewal.org/overview).



Porziuncola



Benny Bufano Statue



Preservation



Programs

- A replica of St. Francis' **porziuncola** chapel from Assisi, Italy, right next to the Shrine's main Church
- A welcoming **piazza** on Vallejo Street, featuring the renowned Benny Buffalo statue of St. Francis
- A beautiful upgrade of the exterior and interior of the Church – a **preservation** of our national treasure
- An international spiritual center with **programs** that express Franciscan prayer and thought

## Francisco's Rock



Francisco's rock is one of the two rocks that were reclaimed during the retrofit of the Porziuncola in 1998. The Vatican believes the rock was handled by St. Francis during his building of the chapel. One of the rocks was a gift to the shrine. It is a cherished relic that will be permanently installed in the altar of the Porziuncola replica in an open enclosure so pilgrims can touch it.