

From Bishop Larry Silva – October 13, 2014

Reflections on the Elevation of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace to the Status of Minor Basilica

Throughout the Roman Catholic Church, there are many churches noted for their historic, liturgical, and architectural excellence. Some of these are given a special Papal honor by being named basilicas.

There are four major basilicas, all in the city of Rome: the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, the Cathedral Church of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope; St. Peter's Basilica, with which we are all familiar; St. Mary Major; and St. Paul-outside-the-Walls. There are many minor basilicas in Rome and throughout the world, and now Hawaii is graced to have the blessing of a basilica in our Diocese of Honolulu.

The Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace is certainly deserving of this honor, and with the help of Father Mark Gantley, Judicial Vicar, Bishop Larry Silva submitted a request to the Vatican that the honor be bestowed upon it. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, under a special faculty granted to it by Pope Francis, declared our Cathedral a minor basilica on May 10, 2014, the liturgical Memorial of St. Damien. The bestowing of the honor was publicly celebrated at a Mass of Thanksgiving on October 11, 2014, the fifth anniversary of the canonization of Father Damien.

Our Cathedral, dedicated on August 15, 1843, is one of the oldest buildings in the city of Honolulu and is one of the oldest cathedrals in the United States. (Since August 15 is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the anniversary of the Dedication is permanently transferred to August 16.) It is the only Cathedral in the U.S. that can claim the presence of a reigning monarch, King Kamehameha III, at the laying of its cornerstone. Two canonized saints worshipped in our Cathedral. Father Damien DeVeuster was ordained a priest in the Cathedral on May 21, 1864. Mother Marianne Cope and her Franciscan Sisters first worshipped at the Cathedral when they arrived in Hawaii on November 8, 1883. The Cathedral now enshrines the mortal remains of St. Marianne and a relic of St. Damien. And, of course, thousands of faithful have gathered in the Cathedral for generations to celebrate their faith in Jesus Christ, to be nourished by the Word, to feast at the Eucharistic table, and to go forth to witness to Jesus.

There are two symbols that traditionally are displayed in a minor basilica. Since the title of basilica connects the church in a special way to the Supreme Pontiff, the symbols are related to the Pope.

An *ombrellino*, or little umbrella, is a ceremonial canopy that would have been held over the head of the Pope as he entered the basilica. Its fabric panels are in the Papal colors of red and yellow. The frame and processional pole of our symbolic umbrella are made of koa wood and were fashioned by Mr. Taufa Samisoni of Lahaina, Maui, a Tongan wood carver and craftsman. Its fabric panels were sewn by Ms. Claudette Takimoto of Party Dress by Claudette. There are four symbols embroidered on the edges of the *ombrellino*: an image of Our Lady of Peace,

modeled after the statue that stands outside the Cathedral; the coat of arms of the Diocese of Honolulu; the coat of arms of Pope Francis, the Pope who granted the honor of minor basilica to our Cathedral; and the coat of arms of Bishop Larry Silva, who has the privilege of presiding over the community of faith that is the Diocese of Honolulu at the time of the elevation of the Cathedral to this honor.

A *tintinabulum* is a bell that would have been rung as it was carried in procession to signal the approach of the Pope. Its name comes from the “tin-tin” sound of the bell. The frame for the bell and its processional pole were also fashioned by Taufa Samisoni. The setting for the bell is a heart, reminiscent of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the religious congregation that first brought the Catholic faith to Hawaii and that led the building of the Cathedral. Carved into the heart are olive leaves in honor of Our Lady of Peace. Beneath the heart are two crossed keys, symbols of the Pope as the Successor of St. Peter, to whom the Lord Jesus entrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The bell itself comes from a set of liturgical items that was given to Bishop Gulstan Ropert in 1893, shortly after he was ordained a bishop and on the 50th anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral. In addition to the bell, the set includes a bishop’s staff (crozier), an ornate chalice, cruets, a hand-washing basin and pitcher, and other items used by the bishop in the liturgy.

We are grateful to Sacred Heart Church, Punahou and its Maryknoll School for donating the *ombrellino* and the *tintinabulum*. Maryknoll School students brought the bell and umbrella into the Cathedral in a dramatic procession at the Mass on October 11. The items were then blessed by Bishop Larry Silva and set in their places of honor.

We pray that this great honor bestowed on our Cathedral may bring greater glory to God, a renewed faith to all who visit it, and a new dedication to our mission to give witness to Jesus.