



Diocese of Madison

P.O. Box 44983
Madison, WI 53744-4983
Phone (608) 821-3002
Fax (608) 821- 4552

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Contact: Brent King
Director of Communications
Office - (608) 821-3033
Cell Phone - (608) 345-2877
bking@straphael.org

Area Catholics Mark 3rd Anniversary of Cathedral Fire quietly with Prayer; Have Great Hope for the Future

(Madison) – The Diocese of Madison will quietly mark the third anniversary of the arson fire that destroyed St. Raphael Cathedral in downtown Madison on March 14, 2005. In a memo distributed to the diocese’s 133 area churches earlier this week, parishioners have been asked to “*pray for the continued healing of the wounds caused by this destructive act; wisdom for the bishop and those charged with making important decisions regarding the future of the Cathedral Church; and for an increased spirit of generosity in the diocese, that all may see and support the Diocese of Madison’s need for a Mother Church, for the greater glory of God and for the service to His people.*”

Demolition at Cathedral Site Planned – Last year on the Feast of Corpus Christi, Bishop Morlino announced that a new cathedral will be built on the site of the former, therefore the diocese will be proceeding with the demolition of the remaining ruins.

“We acknowledge and thank the City of Madison for being very understanding in giving us time to determine how we want to proceed, prior to doing anything with the ruins of the cathedral,” remarked Monsignor Kevin Holmes, Rector of St. Raphael Cathedral and Pastor of Holy Redeemer and St. Patrick Parishes in Madison. Moreover, “a committee of cathedral parishioners has been meeting to discuss which elements of the fabric of the cathedral can be realistically salvaged for future use” commented Msgr. Holmes.

The elements of the destroyed Cathedral that have been, or will be, removed for reuse include:

- ✘ the cathedral spire – newly constructed in 2004,
- ✘ three bells from the steeple,
- ✘ three mosaics from the sanctuary,
- ✘ marble sanctuary furnishings,
- ✘ at least one large stained glass window that was not damaged by the fire,
- ✘ three smaller semi-circular windows from above the front doors of the church,
- ✘ ornamental stone work around the three front doorways of the cathedral, and
- ✘ a limited amount of the stone of the cathedral.

Since the design for the new cathedral has not yet been developed, it is not known exactly how or where these elements will be used in the new cathedral or on its grounds.

It is anticipated that the salvage operation and the demolition of the remaining ruins of the cathedral will begin in April, after the plan is approved by the City of Madison. It is hoped that the work will be completed by the end of June 2008.

Landgraf Construction, Inc has been hired as the Construction Manager for the demolition phase of the project.

Future of the Cathedral – still a dateless timeline

Over the course of recent months, the Diocese of Madison has undertaken an in-depth-feasibility study for a Diocesan Capital Campaign. The information collected will be crucial in guiding the diocese toward a vision for the future; a vision that includes a newly constructed Cathedral Church; and a vision rooted in the person of Jesus Christ, who will not and cannot disappoint. The information collected will assist the bishop to make a reasonable and responsible judgment about the plans for upcoming diocesan projects. If the study indicates that sufficient resources will be available, a concrete plan for a new Cathedral, including a specific timeline, will be developed.

Regardless of these specifics, Bishop Morlino has stated repeatedly that the new Cathedral space and adjoining facilities will accommodate:

- ✘ the spiritual need of the people of the diocese to have a worthy cathedral for diocesan celebrations;
- ✘ the spiritual and temporal needs of the Cathedral Parish Community, estranged by this tragic event, who seek a return to the ordinary life as a parish;
- ✘ the physical needs of those less fortunate in the Madison area, who will be served through charitable activities;
- ✘ the need for dialogue with the political and other civil authorities of the State of Wisconsin and City of Madison, to assure that we serve the truth and the common good of all people; and
- ✘ the need for dialogue with the Wisconsin academic system, because of the influence that our educational institutions have on forming young minds and thereby shaping the future, here in Madison and beyond.

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