Self-Guided Tour of the Basilica

This tour takes you from the baptismal font near the main entrance, down the center aisle to the sanctuary, then right to the east apsidal chapel, and then to the west side chapels. The Basilica museum may be reached through the west transept.

BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART FLOOR PLAN

1. Font, Ambry, Paschal Candle
2. Holtkamp Organ (1978)
3. Sanctuary Crossing
4. Seal of the Congregation of Holy Cross
5. Altar of Sacrifice
6. Ambo (Pulpit)
7. Original Altar / Tabernacle
8. East Transept and World War I Memorial Entrance
9. Torsion Columns
10. St. Joseph Chapel (Pietà)
11. St. Mary / Bros. André Chapel
12. Reliquary Chapel
13. The Lady Chapel / Baroque Altar
14. Holy Angels / Guadalupe Chapel
15. St. Mary / Bro. André Chapel
16. Our Lady of Victory / Basil Moreau Chapel
17. Ombrellino
19. Sacristy
20. Basilica Museum

The Holtkamp organ, installed in 1978, has four divisions, three manuals, 54 ranks of pipes, 40 stops and 2,929 pipes.

The Ombrellino, or umbrella, is a mark of honor for the church in which it is displayed.

A "minor basilica" is a special designation given by the Pope to certain churches because of their antiquity, dignity, historical importance or significance as places of worship and devotion. They are typically honored with these two symbols (see nos. 9 and 17), in addition to the Papal Coat of Arms, located over the outside main entrance. The Torsion Columns, or left, is adorned with the insignia of the Roman Pontiff and the coat of arms of the Basilica. The Ombrellino, or umbrella, is a mark of honor for the church in which it is displayed.

The Pietà window, designed by the Carmelite Sisters of Le Mans, France, and painted by Eugène Hucher and associates.

The Bishops’ Museum, located in the Basilica’s basement, contains pontificalia of various American bishops, dating from the 19th century.


Saint André Bessette, C.S.C., priest (1799-1873), founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI September 15, 2007. Sculpted by Robert Graham, the statue is of St. Severa, a third-century martyr. The altar on the Altar of Sacrifice, made from 18th-century marble, imitated the apparition of the new Jerusalem. The Torsion Columns, or left, is adorned with the insignia of the Roman Pontiff and the coat of arms of the Basilica. The Ombrellino, or umbrella, is a mark of honor for the church in which it is displayed.

The Our Lady of Victory Chapel contains a statue of Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C., priest (1799-1873), founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI September 15, 2007. Sculpted by Robert Graham, the statue contains a relic of Blessed Basil Moreau.

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The Our Lady of Victory Chapel contains a statue of Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C., priest (1799-1873), founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI September 15, 2007. Sculpted by Robert Graham, the statue contains a relic of Blessed Basil Moreau.

The Replicatio Chapel contains relics of each of the martyrs of the same period. The altar of sacrifice, made from pews and choir stalls of the Lady Chapel, was designed in light of the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

The original Gothic Revival altar, designed by Free-Boh-Ren and Some of Paris, was displayed at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 where it won a first premium for design. The tabernacle tower, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, was inspired by Residenz 21-6-14, the writer of the new Jerusalem. Beneath the altar are the relics of St. Marcellus, a third-century martyr; in the altar are the relics of St. Stephen and St. Sebastian, martyrs of the same period.

The famed Ivan Mestrovic Pietà (1942), made of Carara marble, first shown in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was then loaned to Notre Dame by the former Croatian artist-novaculitis. A replica of this Pietà is located in the Vatican Art Museum.

This mural (left), one of 36 such murals in the Basillica painted by Luigi Campi, depicts the apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes to St. Bernadette in 1858. Be sure to visit the Grotto, just northwest of the Basilica. It is a one-seventh-size replica of the famed French shrine.

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The Reliquary Chapel contains relics of most of the saints in the calendar of the Liturgical Year. The large wooden cross contains a relic of the True Cross, and is venerated every Good Friday. The wax figure is of St. Serenus, a third-century martyr. The cloth covered boxes at her head and feet contain her relics. Above the relic case is a copy of Raphael’s fresco, Disputa.
Cardinal O’Hara, C.S.C. (1888-1960), twelfth President of The University of Notre Dame, was the longest serving president of the university. He is remembered for his commitment to Catholic education and the growth of the university’s academic programs. The Stations of the Cross Chapel contains the body of John Cardinal O’Hara, C.S.C., and many of Fr. Sorin’s memorabilia. It is open to the public.

Located just west of the sacristy, it is the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. The Basilica’s history goes back to 1871. Built in the style of Gothic Revival, the Basilica is in the form of a Latin cross, 275 feet long and 114 feet wide. The first Mass was celebrated here in 1875. The Basilica was consecrated by Bishop Joseph Dwenger of Fort Wayne, Indiana, on August 15, 1888. In addition to its sanctuary and seven apsidal chapels, the Basilica has forty-four large stained glass windows, including 114 life-sized pictures of saints, and 106 smaller scenes, produced in the 1870s and 1880s at the Carmelite Monastery in Dublin, Ireland. The Basilica also contains fifty-six murals and Stations of the Cross were painted during the 1870s by Luigi Gregori, artist of the Papal Household of Blessed Pius IX and Professor of Art History. The seal of the Congregation of Holy Cross: it is here that Holy Cross religious profess their perpetual vows and are ordained priests.

The original baptismal font, built in 1871, has been restored and moved to the entrance of the Basilica. The nearby ambry contains the Oil of Catechumens used in the baptism of children and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; the Oil of the Sick used in the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick; and the Sacred Chrism used in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, as well as in the consecration of churches.

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The Holy Angels Chapel contains a beautifully framed picture of Mary, painted by Maria Tomasula, Professor of Art History. Our Lady of Guadalupe, painted by Pope Pius XII (1946), is well known as the Patroness of the Americas by the Catholic Church. The Exaltation of the Holy Cross, depicted in the ceiling painted by Luigi Gregori) and Sacred Heart Chapel, was added on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of St. Peter’s ordination in 1888. The baroque altar was believed to have been built by the studio/workshops of Bernini (+1680). The tabernacle doors contain a fragment of wood believed to be from a table on which St. Peter celebrated Mass in Rome.

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Welcome to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart

The Basilica of the Sacred Heart of the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Indiana, is Open to the Public.

Welcome!

For over 125 years this Basilica has been the center of worship and prayer for students, faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as for our regular worshipers, pilgrims, and countless visitors. This “splendid monument to God’s glory” (Rev. Edward Sorin, C.S.C., Founder of Notre Dame) stands as a fitting sign of what is central to the life and mission of Notre Dame. May your visit to this magnificent Basilica, restored, preserved, and renewed, remind you of the splendor of God’s glory and fill you with his compassion and love.

St. Jean Baptiste DC The Stations of the Cross Chapel contains the body of John Cardinal O’Hara, C.S.C. (1888-1960), twelfth President of The University of Notre Dame. Located just west of the sacristy, it contains many of Fr. Sorin’s memorabilia. It is open to the public.