



Largest U.S. Catholic Vietnamese Church Dedication Set in Arlington

Vietnamese Martyrs Catholic Church in Arlington will become the largest Vietnamese Catholic Church in the United States on Saturday, December 10 when Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann dedicates and consecrates the new facility.

Rev. Polycarp Duc Thuan, CMC, the pastor of the parish, said the new church at the corners of Collins Street and Mayfield Road will seat 2,000 persons, making the church the largest Vietnamese Catholic Church in the United States.

Bishop Vann, Father Polycarp and parishioners of Vietnamese Martyrs Catholic Church will gather at the new church at 10 a.m. Saturday, December 10 for a dedication Mass and consecration of the church. A reception will follow Mass to celebrate the opening of the new worship center. The church is located at 801 East Mayfield Road.

“With heartfelt expression, we appreciate and are grateful for all of the hard work and generous donations of the parishioners and benefactors, whether it was through physical matters or spiritual prayers,” said Father Polycarp, a member of the Congregation of Mother Co-Redemptrix, an order of Vietnamese priests based in Carthage, Missouri who have staffed the parish since its creation.

The 29,000-square-foot church, which includes a small chapel and offices, has a distinctive architectural design that includes a bell tower visible from Interstate 20. The church is accented by more than 750,000 pounds of Vietnamese marble and granite on both the exterior and interior of the facility.

In addition to the marble and granite used for the church structure, the Main Altar and Chapel Altar are made of marble from Vietnam. The oak pews in the new church are American oak that was shipped to Vietnam where it was made into pews and returned to Arlington. Ten statues of various saints including Mary, Joseph and Apostles Peter and Paul which adorn the church also are made of marble from Vietnam.

The new \$6.8 million church replaces an old Food Lion supermarket building which has served as the parish’s church since the establishment of Vietnamese Martyrs Catholic Parish in 2000 by the late Bishop Joseph Delaney. The new church is on the parish’s 12-acre campus.

Planning for the new church began in 2008 because the Vietnamese community had outgrown its converted supermarket church.

More than 3,500 persons, on average, attend the four weekend Masses at Vietnamese Martyrs Catholic Church. All Masses are in Vietnamese, with a portion of the 12:30 p.m. Sunday Mass in English.

Father Polycarp explains that after the fall of Saigon in April 1975, more than half-a-million Vietnamese escaped the communist regime. With the help of Catholic relief agencies, Vietnamese refugees began resettling into the Arlington area where fellow countrymen helped each other to overcome difficulties with language and the new culture while maintaining their strong Catholic faith.

Initially, the Arlington Vietnamese Catholic community consisted of a dozen families who attended St. Matthew Catholic Church in southeast Arlington. By 1997, the Vietnamese Catholic community had grown to more than 500 families.

The rapid growth of the community spurred a request to the Diocese to establish a Vietnamese parish. Bishop Delaney announced in May 1997 the creation of the Vietnamese parish.

In July 2008, Bishop Vann approved construction of the new and larger church.

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