



PRESS RELEASE

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PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Diocese of Tucson celebrates completion of the Conference and Educational Center at Cathedral Square

Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger and Bishop Emeritus Gerald F. Kicanas will offer a Mass of Celebration, followed by a ribbon cutting and blessing of the diocese's new Conference and Pastoral Center complex.

The celebration will take place Sunday, April 28, beginning with noon Mass at St. Augustine Cathedral, 192 S. Stone Ave. The ribbon cutting and blessing of the new building, immediately north of the Cathedral, takes place after Mass. Speakers will include Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild, Fletcher McCusker, chairman of the board for Rio Nuevo, and both Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger and Bishop Emeritus Gerald F. Kicanas.

The four-story building houses the parish offices for St. Augustine Cathedral Parish on the first floor. This floor also includes several meeting rooms with big screen technology to host educational or other meetings for parishes, ministries and other groups. The second floor of the building has a large, dividable conference center room, capable of hosting groups from 50 people to 500 people and also is equipped with a warming kitchen to use for banquets. The third and fourth floors of the building are the new home for the Pastoral Center offices that serve the parishes and ministries of the Diocese of Tucson. The offices are energy efficient, boast sound reducing mechanisms and the offices are filled with natural light.

The building cost was more than \$21.2 million, most of which came generously from private donors. The remainder, under \$2 million, has been financed by the diocese.

The 55,000 -square foot building, that stands in the place of a former parish hall, is the last of several buildings that comprise a block of historic and new construction surrounding St. Augustine that now is called Cathedral Square.

The Cathedral Square project began in 2007 with the creation of a placita in honor of Msgr. Arsenio Carrillo, a long time Cathedral pastor, at the north of the Cathedral. That was followed by extensive redesign of the Cathedral's interior.

Background:

During the last three years, construction of the Conference and Educational Center has been ongoing. The building is the last of five buildings around St. Augustine Cathedral restored or constructed and completes the project known as Cathedral Square. In all, buildings on the Cathedral Square campus include:

-The interior redesign of St. Augustine Cathedral.

- The now restored Cathedral Rectory, the oldest building on the Cathedral Square campus dating back to the 1890s.

-The fully restored Marist College building, which started as a boy's school in 1916 and housed Tucson's first desegregated elementary school. Eventually it became diocesan offices but was vacated in 2001 when the offices were moved to the 111 S. Church Ave. location. The restoration of Marist was done by the Foundation for Senior Living, FSL, which holds a multi-year lease on the building. The Marist project repurposed the building as eight senior living apartments and a Community Center. The former Manuel D. Moreno Pastoral Center at 111 S. Church Ave. was sold to FSL, which demolished the building to construct a companion apartment structure to the one at Marist College. That second building is seven stories tall and has 75 apartments.

- Our Lady's Chapel. The chapel also was built in 1916 but was abandoned within just a few years of its construction. It later became the Marian Data Center. Following the closure of those offices, the chapel building was relegated to use as a storage area until its restoration as a worship space was completed in 2016. The chapel had been closed for most use during the construction of the new building next door. As it reopens, the Chapel will once again be available as a worship site for meditation and for Catholic religious events.