

Archbishop O'Brien to Lay Wreath at Statue of Pope John Paul II on Thursday, April 2, the 4th Anniversary of Pope's Death

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore, will place a wreath at the statue of Pope John Paul II in the prayer garden named in his honor on Thursday April 2 at 10 a.m., in recognition of the fourth anniversary of the late pontiff's death.

Elected to the papacy in 1978, Pope John Paul II died on April 2, 2005. He visited Baltimore in 1995 and in 1976, as Archbishop of Krakow.

The Pope John Paul II Prayer Garden, located at Charles and Franklin Streets, was constructed in six months and dedicated in October 2008. It celebrates Baltimore and Maryland's rich religious history and features plants, shrubs, and trees specifically chosen for their relation to the Bible, Pope John Paul II, or the local area.

The centerpiece of the garden is a seven-foot-tall, 850-pound bronze statue perched atop a polished granite base, patterned after a photograph of Pope John Paul II's 1995 arrival at BWI Airport. The sculpture, in which the Pope is greeting two children, was created by Baltimore native and internationally-renowned sculptor, Joseph Sheppard, who cast it at his studio in Pietrasanta, Italy.