

Basilica to offer 40 hours of adoration in new chapel

Downtown workers, parishioners and others who want to take some time to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament will soon have their chance every workday at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore.

Beginning Aug. 15, the basilica's patronal feast day, the historic church will open a new adoration chapel in the undercroft, near the Chapel of Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"The basilica is known for its historical significance to the church in the United States and it's known for its architectural importance as the greatest example of neoclassical architecture in the country," said Monsignor Arthur Valenzano, rector, "but it's important that the basilica also be known as a house of prayer and that people can come here in the middle of a busy city and pray in front of the presence of the Blessed Sacrament."

The adoration chapel will be located in a room that houses images honoring all the religious communities that have served in the Archdiocese of Baltimore - a fitting setting for prayers for vocations, Monsignor Valenzano said.

A podium to hold the monstrance will be constructed out of mahogany pews that were removed from the basilica during the church's 2006 restoration. A mosaic that had long been kept in storage will also adorn the new chapel.

The chapel will have up to six seats with kneelers and there will be at least two

adorers signed up for every hour of adoration. About 50 people have already signed up, Monsignor Valenzano said, and at least another 30 are needed.

“We have a beautiful church, but it can be difficult at times to pray because of all the tourists who go by,” he explained. “The (adoration) chapel will be an out-of-the way place where people can come for quiet prayer and worship. I’m very pleased to say there is an excitement about what we are doing.”

Call 410-727-3564 to sign up for an adoration time slot.