

Cincinnati Catholic cathedral given new honor

The Roman Catholic cathedral in downtown Cincinnati, St. Peter in Chains, has been given a designation as a minor basilica by Pope Francis in Rome, Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr announced Saturday.

"The title is given to churches around the world in recognition of their historical or cultural importance, artistic beauty and significance in the life of the Church," the Archdiocese said in the announcement Saturday.

The cathedral is one of the oldest churches in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, which serves thousands of Catholic church members from the Ohio River north to Mercer, Auglaize and Logan counties.

The designation means the facility, at 325 W. 8th St., Cincinnati, will now be referred to as the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains. It becomes the 89th basilica in the United States.

The Rev. Jan Kevin Schmidt, Rector of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains since 2017, petitioned the church in Rome for the cathedral to be given the designation. "It's the quality of the cathedral's structure, the absolute beauty of its architecture, the biblical symbolism throughout, the quality and prayerfulness of its liturgy and ecclesiastical significance as a cathedral that make it very important and very special for the archdiocese and in the American Catholic scene," he said in a release.

The cathedral will celebrate its 175th anniversary this November. It was designed by Henry Walter, architect of the Ohio capitol building in Columbus. Construction began 1841 and the church was dedicated on Nov. 2, 1845. A significant renovation of the structure, overseen by Cincinnati

architect Edward Schulte, was completed in 1957, according to the Archdiocese.

Gov. Mike DeWine issued a statement praising the announcement.

"The Cathedral is one of the oldest operating Roman Catholic cathedrals in the United States, and it is a historic place special to Cincinnati and to Ohio," DeWine's statement said. "I congratulate Archbishop Schnurr, Fr. Schmidt, and the entire Archdiocese. Having St. Peter in Chains Cathedral named as a Basilica by the Pope is an honor that the Catholic faithful across Ohio should celebrate!"