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Rite of Dedication at Sacred Heart University

Tom Gallagher | Sep. 28, 2009 NCR Today

Yesterday, Sunday, I attended the two and 1/2 hour Rite of Dedication of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Sacred Heart University, located in Fairfield, Conn. Peter Steinfels of The New York Times wrote [1]about the event on Sept. 25th.

Bishop Bill Lori, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and as the local bishop, presided. The official program noted that the university was founded in 1963 during the Vatican Council II, and therefore, the chapel's being named for the Holy Spirit echoes the spirit of Vatican II. The university takes its "inspiration and energy" from that ecumenical council.

Dr. Anthony Cernera, the university's president, was singled out several times for his vision and leadership in making this "university dream" a reality. The $17 million facility was designed by Sasaki Associates of Boston and the mosaics by Jesuit Father Marko Ivan Rupnik. Much has been written about Rupnik. His mosaics combine what one person said, "the modern and the ancient." The chapel holds some 500 people and the smaller, daily chapel seats 50. Without question, the chapel is beautiful and worth the visit if you're in the area.

Notable among the priests in attendance was Parisian Monsignor Guy-Real Thiveirge, the Secretary General of International Federation of Catholic Universities [2], which Dr. Cernera leads as president.

Also in attendance was Ukranian bishop, Basil Losten, emeritus bishop of the Eparchy of Stamford, Conn.

Dr. Cernera pointed out that the university is the first in the United States to be led and managed by lay people. Its roots as a college outlet for inner-city poor of Bridgeport has evolved into an approx. $40,000 a year institution with a NCAA Division I sports program in just 46 years.

Quick Facts [3]about Sacred Heart University

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[1] http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/26/us/26beliefs.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1254143002-hmLX1L5qZnkWm2gXZfgyJA
[2] http://www.fiuc.org/cms/index.php?page=homeENG
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