

## Bishop Kevin Vann to Bless Site of Future Our Lady of Lavang Shrine on Christ Cathedral Campus

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*In an elaborate ceremony accented by traditional Vietnamese dancers and a large outdoor Mass –the Vietnamese Catholic community will celebrate the progress made in realizing their dream of a shrine dedicated to Our Lady of LaVang in the heart of “little Saigon”, the largest Vietnamese community outside Vietnam.* **Garden Grove, Calif., (Oct. 16, 2017)** – On Saturday, October 21, 2017 at 4 p.m. the Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange, will join with thousands of Vietnamese Catholics and clergy for a ceremonial blessing of the future site of a shrine dedicated to Our Lady of LaVang on the Christ Cathedral campus (13280 Chapman Ave., Garden Grove 92840). This seminal project was announced by Bishop Vann and a core group of Vietnamese community and business leaders in December of 2016. Since this announcement the future shrine design process has been completed and significant fundraising has taken place and continues to fully fund construction of the shrine and needed site work. “The energy and excitement within the Vietnamese Catholic community to build a shrine to the patroness of the Vietnamese people has been a blessing to our ministry at Christ Cathedral. I am pleased that the diligent efforts of the volunteers supporting this effort have reached this important milestone, the completion of the design phase for the shrine and the ceremonial blessing of the future site,” said Bishop Vann. The Vietnamese people suffered centuries of brutal persecution in their homeland and many faced an arduous journey fleeing Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975. The Blessed Mother has provided spiritual care and protection to Vietnamese Catholics throughout these many struggles and hardships and they carry a deep and lasting connection to Our Lady of LaVang. It is appropriate that such a significant shrine be built at the center of the communities that are home to the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam. A committee of prominent Vietnamese-American community and business leaders has partnered with a dedicated team of architects to develop a contemporary expression of the Our Lady of LaVang that is true to the cultural traditions of Vietnamese Catholics while seamlessly integrating into the architecturally modern Christ Cathedral campus. “Over the past year our teams of architects and designers has visited the shrine to our Lady in LaVang, Vietnam twice and have studied in great depth this apparition of Mary and the sacrificial story of the Vietnamese Catholic people. We feel that we have successfully married a contemporary design ethic with the tradition and solemnity of Our Lady of LaVang and the journey of faith for Vietnamese Catholics, said Aaron Torrence, AIA, Torrence Architects. **About Our Lady of LaVang** Fearing the spread of the Catholicism, the C?nh Th?nh Emperor restricted the practice of Catholicism in Vietnam in 1798. Soon after, the emperor issued an anti-Catholic edict and a brutal persecution began. Many people sought refuge in the rainforest of LaVang in Qu?ng Tr? Province, Vietnam, and many became very ill. While hiding in the jungle, the community gathered every night at the foot of a tree to pray the rosary. One night, an apparition of the Blessed Mother dressed in the traditional Vietnamese áo dài, holding the infant Jesus in her arms, and flanked by two Angels of the Lord appeared to them in the branches of the tree. Our Lady comforted them and told them to boil leaves from the trees for medicine to cure their illnesses. In 1802 the Christians returned to their villages, passing on the story of the apparition in LaVang and its message. As the story of the apparition spreads, many came to pray at this site and to offer incense. In 1820, a chapel was built. Pastoral Center: Communications Department 13280 Chapman Avenue, Garden Grove, CA 92840 **office:** 714-282-3075 **fax:** 714-282-302  
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