

Chapel Solemnly Blessed at Christ Cathedral in Honor of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Orange

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Garden Grove, Calif., (July 20, 2015) – On Sunday July 19, 2015, the newly minted Chapel of Unity and Reconciliation within the Cathedral Cultural Center on the Christ Cathedral campus was formally blessed by the Most Reverend Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange, in honor of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange. The construction of the chapel, a serene sanctuary for prayer and meditation within the magnificent edifice of the Richard Meier-designed Cathedral Cultural Center, was made possible by a gracious contribution from St. Joseph Health, founded by the Sisters in 1920. “I am truly delighted to have blessed this chapel today at the physical and spiritual center of our Diocese. This chapel is more than a place of reflection and meditation, it stands as a tribute to and as a thank you for the many gifts the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange have shared with our community over the past 100 years. This beautiful space will serve as a fitting reminder to all who visit the Christ Cathedral of the profound love of God shared with millions through the ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange,” said Bishop Vann. The Sisters have a long and varied history of identifying the needs of their dear neighbors and meeting those needs with compassion and love. Soon after their move from Eureka to Orange County in 1922, the Sisters opened the 90-bed St. Joseph Hospital to meet the health care needs of their new community. In 1931, they purchased Fullerton General Hospital for \$23,000. Knowing the aging facility would be unable to deliver high quality care, the Sisters closed the facility and turned to the community for help building a new hospital. St. Jude Medical Center opened in 1957 and Sisters could be found on every floor. In 1994, the Sisters saw a need to have a presence in South Orange County and became the official sponsors of Mission Hospital. Since arriving in Orange County the Sisters have spread hope and love – teaching the deaf, assisting those in prison and visiting the sick in their homes. They have established countless ministries, including: the Pilgrimage Psychotherapy Center, Casita de San Jose to care for foster children and St. Joseph Ballet (now called the Wooden Floor) for the children of Santa Ana. The Sisters have always humbly worked spreading the love of Christ among the most vulnerable. In 1995, four Sisters moved into a gang-ridden neighborhood in central Santa Ana in an effort to better understand the issues and challenges facing the marginalized within this community. From this humble beginning, Taller San Jose, an educational and job-training center in downtown Santa Ana, was born. Taller San Jose has provided thousands of young people with new opportunities and new outlooks. In 1997, the Sisters opened up their own home to provide transitional housing and support services for homeless and abused women. This was the beginning of Bethany, a safe and supportive respite guiding, challenging and empowering women in transition to achieve independent living and self-sufficiency. “From the beginning, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange embraced their calling to serve their dear neighbor and meet the needs of the community, carrying out their charism of unity and reconciliation. From establishing an elementary school in Eureka more than a century ago to serving in the fields of El Salvador and the villages of Papau, New Guinea, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange have devoted their lives to working in partnership with others. Their compassionate presence has touched the lives of millions. St. Joseph Health is pleased to be a part of making this testament to their inspiring history possible,” said Deborah A. Proctor, President and CEO, St. Joseph Health. The intimate Chapel of Unity and Reconciliation is on the third floor of the 53,056-sq-ft. Cathedral Cultural Center. Originally known as the “Welcome Center,” the Cultural Center was completed in 2002 and was designed by world renowned architect Richard Meier, also known for his commission of the Getty Center in Los Angeles. This five-floor building is the capstone of the iconic Christ Cathedral campus

and is a post-modern expression of Richard Neutra’s original design concepts. It was built in an ovalinear design to geometrically complement the existing rectilinear architecture of the Arboretum and Tower of Hope and the triangular layout of the Christ Cathedral. Several dynamic artists were commissioned to create art and the liturgical furnishings for the chapel space. The artistic fixtures chosen are inspired by the elements envisioned for eventual installation within the Christ Cathedral itself. Famed artist Alexander Tylevich designed and fabricated the crucifix for the space and has also been commissioned to create the crucifix to hang above the altar within the Christ Cathedral. Tylevich’s crucifix within the chapel conveys the Paschal Mystery, the death and resurrection of Christ, in beautiful detail. The body of Christ is “on” the cross but not affixed. The body looks to be rising off the cross slightly as if taking a breath of new life. Additionally Tylevich designed a bronze sculpture of Joseph, patron of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, for the space. The image of St. Joseph is as a young workman, leaning forward in welcome – nonjudgmental and in embracing hospitality. Oil and watercolor painter John August Swanson donated a wall mural within the chapel titled *The Washing of the Feet II*. The theme of this artwork encourages us to show true humility of spirit and love for all. The beautiful altar furnishings in the chapel were designed and fabricated by Joel McCoy. The furnishings are titled *Grace* and are constructed of Madrone, wood native to Humboldt County where the Sisters first arrived in 1912. The furnishings seek to harmonize with the curved architectural elements of Richard Meier’s design. [About the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange](#) The roots of the Sisters of St. Joseph date back to 17th century France and the unique vision of a Jesuit priest named Jean-Pierre Medaille. He sought to organize an order of religious women who, rather than remaining safely cloistered in a convent, would venture out into the community, seek out “the dear neighbor” and minister to their needs. The congregation managed to survive the turbulence of the French Revolution and eventually expanded, not only throughout France, but throughout the world. In 1912, a small contingent of the Sisters of St. Joseph went to Eureka, Calif., at the invitation of the local bishop, to establish a school. A few years later, the great influenza epidemic of 1918 caused the sisters to temporarily pause their education efforts to care for the sick in their homes. They realized immediately that the small community desperately needed a hospital. In 1920, the sisters opened 28-bed St. Joseph Hospital of Eureka, and their new health care ministry was born. ### Pastoral Center: Communications Department 13280 Chapman Avenue, Garden Grove, CA 92840 **office:** 714-282-3075 **fax:** 714-282-302
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