

CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO

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(CNS PHOTO/PHILIPPE NUSSETTE, CATHOLIC PRESS PHOTO)

Pope Benedict XVI prays at the Grotto of the Apparitions at the Marian sanctuaries of Lourdes, France, Sept. 13. The pope traveled to Lourdes to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Mary's appearances to St. Bernadette Soubirous. See stories on pages 10 and 11.

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CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO
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Plenary indulgence announced for Porziuncola Shrine pilgrims

By Dan Morris-Young

Not only will the visual impact and prayerful atmosphere of the famed Porziuncola church of St. Francis of Assisi in Italy be mirrored by an exacting replica at San Francisco's National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi, but an indulgence nearly identical to the "Pardon of Assisi" has been authorized by the Church for the new San Francisco landmark.

Announced by the Archdiocese of San Francisco and Archbishop George H. Niederauer, a plenary indulgence for pilgrims who visit the new archdiocesan shrine will be available to faithful who visit the site following its Sept. 27 dedication through the end of the year and who fulfill the customary requirements. (For a full explanation of the indulgence, see Pages 6 and 7 of the special section inside.)

Cardinal William Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome and Archbishop Emeritus of San Francisco, will officially proclaim the indulgence during the dedication rite.

The indulgence will continue to be available at the local site indefinitely one day per year at a pilgrim's choosing or on Aug. 2 or Oct. 4. Aug. 2 is the anniversary of the dedication of the original Porziuncola. Oct. 4 is the solemnity of St. Francis. The chapel

and shrine church are located on the 600 block of Vallejo Street.

According to Church teaching, a plenary indulgence can remove temporal punishment due to forgiven sin. It may be applied to persons receiving it or by them to a faithful departed. An indulgence does not apply to the actual forgiveness of sin, which is sought through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Porziuncola Indulgence or "Pardon of Assisi" refers to the well-known indulgence attached to the small church near Assisi, Italy where St. Francis is said to have received his vocation on Feb. 24, 1208 and which largely served as his headquarters for the balance of his life.

The San Francisco Porziuncola, also referred to in Vatican documents as the *Porziuncola Nuova*, is a 78 percent scale, near duplicate of the original, said Angela Alioto, vice chair of the Renaissance Project.

The Porziuncola is the first phase in the Renaissance Project which will also entail creation of a piazza on Vallejo Street, significant upgrades to the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi Church which houses the Porziuncola in an adjacent building, and a wide range of programs.

Those who visit the Porziuncola Shrine as part of an organized pilgrimage may also obtain a plenary indulgence.

| Special section inside:

'Stone-for-stone' Porziuncola reproduction to be dedicated

By Dan Morris-Young

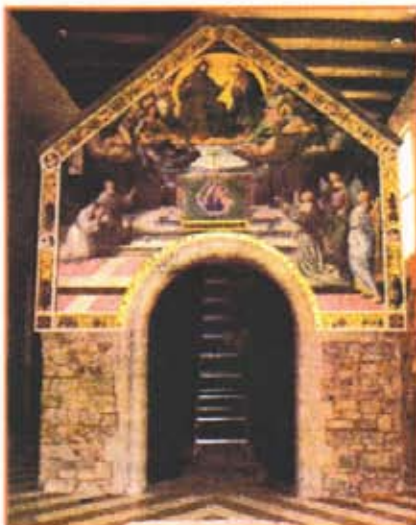
The rock-for-rock, stone-for-stone, fresco-for-fresco replica of St. Francis of Assisi's tiny Porziuncola church near Assisi, Italy will be dedicated Sept. 27 in a building adjoining the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood.

Cardinal William Levada, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and former Archbishop of San Francisco, will preside and Archbishop George H. Niederauer will be principal celebrant at the morning dedication rite.

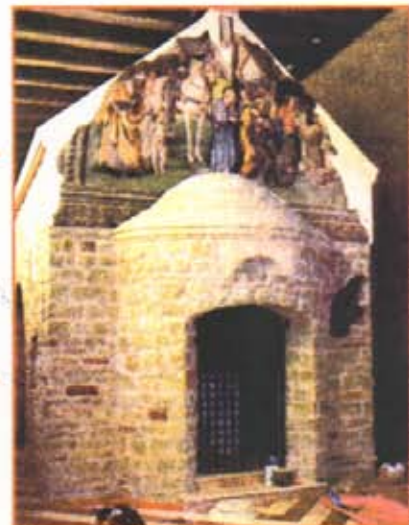
Housed within what was formerly the gymnasium of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 610 Vallejo St., the Porziuncola Chapel itself will also be designated an archdiocesan shrine in its own right.

Built on a 78 percent scale to accommodate available space, the structure features remarkable duplications of a 14th century fresco, of original doors and windows, and

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The Porziuncola Shrine entrance, left, and exit grate behind the altar, pictured Sept. 11.



PHOTOS BY DAN MORRIS-YOUNG/CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO

Stone-for-stone . . .

■ *Continued from cover*

of other details of its Italian forerunner.

The dedication will cap a nearly 15-month construction effort that has pulled together the efforts of a team of international artists, stone masons, metalsmiths, muralists, tile experts and others – including master of fine arts students from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

The original Porziuncola was restored in the 13th century by St. Francis and his followers, and today draws thousands of pilgrims annually. It is contained in a nave of the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli near Assisi.

A featured aspect of the local Porziuncola will be the encased display of a stone used more than eight centuries ago in the repair of the original Porziuncola, perhaps by St. Francis himself. The 72 Franciscan friars of the Assisi community met in 2006 and agreed to donate the relic to the San Francisco shrine. Members of that community delivered the rock in late April and representatives will be present for the dedication Mass.

A San Francisco attorney and former president of the Board of Supervisors, Angelo Alioto has spearheaded the \$2.9 million Porziuncola undertaking which is part of the larger Renaissance Project of which she is director and vice chair. She and others see the Porziuncola Chapel as a major step toward generating local, national and global interest in the National Shrine of St. Francis.

"Our goal is to transform this beautiful but sadly underutilized facility into an international spiritual center where people of all faiths – or even no faith – can come and feel the power of St. Francis' message of universal love," said Alioto, a native of San Francisco and daughter of the late former Mayor Joseph Alioto. (See Alioto's personal reflection on Page S4.)

"This will change San Francisco," said Father Robert Cipriano, rector of the National Shrine of St. Francis. "We'll

have a depth of spirituality not yet experienced here. It will open pathways to ecumenical dialogue, a welcoming of all people."

"The opening will be a well-accepted media event," he added. "After that, people will start to come, perhaps slowly at first. First it will be the poor of San Francisco, then the people of California, then the people of the West Coast, then the people of the United States, and then it will become world-known. It's absolutely magnificent that we have this holy place now. Francis is so loved by people, even non-Christians."

In a reflection on the Porziuncola replica (see Page S3), Cardinal Levada also called attention to the ecumenical and interreligious appeal of St. Francis, saying he hoped it will be "a place where Catholics and all people of good will would feel spiritually at home."

It was Cardinal Levada as Archbishop of San Francisco who oversaw the re-opening of St. Francis Church in 1998 as the St. Francis Shrine Church. A year later, the U.S. bishops' conference recognized the church as the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi.

Having two official Church shrines – one national, one archdiocesan – sharing the same location is perhaps unique in the Church, archdiocesan officials said.

The Porziuncola Chapel's frescos, doors and marble floors have all been created by artisans in Assisi and in Citta del Castello, Umbria, Italy, according to a Renaissance Project fact sheet.

An original mural in the Medieval Giotto-esque style adorns the entrance to the building which houses the Porziuncola Chapel. It was created by master of fine arts students under direction of master muralist Angela Tirrell and the director of the School of Fine Art, Mark Tennant.

Nibbi Brothers Construction is the Porziuncola project's general contractor. Engineer is Murphy Burr Curry, Inc. Architect is Taylor Lombardo, Inc.

(For further information, visit www.shrinerenewal.org or www.shrinesf.org.)