



AUGUST 8, 2006

MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,

It gives me great joy to tell you that our beautiful St. Anthony Cathedral has been granted the status of Minor Basilica by Pope Benedict XVI. This is an honor and a blessing not only for us as Catholics but for all the people of Southeast Texas.

Our Cathedral has been a place of devotion and comfort for many Southeast Texans who have come to the cathedral for services and to worship especially in times of crisis like Hurricane Rita and 9/11.

In conferring this special status, the Vatican has recognized the artistic and historical significance of St. Anthony as well as the importance it plays in the liturgical and pastoral ministry of the Catholic Diocese of Beaumont.

This special designation links us even more closely to the Chair of Peter. Basilica comes from a Greek word meaning hall of the king. This is the perfect title for a place where our King and Savior, Christ, is worshiped.

As you probably know, the diocese requested in September 2005 that the Vatican consider the designation. I asked Reverend Monsignor Jeremiah McGrath, rector of the cathedral, and Msgr. Michael Jamail, vicar general of the diocese, to prepare documentation presenting St. Anthony Cathedral as a center of special

devotion and historic significance characterized by its iconography and architecture. I submitted that documentation to Rome along with my request.

The new status will give the cathedral the responsibility of celebrating with greater solemnity than other churches certain feast days, such as the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, and important days relating to the life of the current pope. We will also be able to display the papal coat of arms over the cathedral doorway.

We are beginning plans for a special celebration of this new status probably next month though no firm date has been set. We will have a great deal to celebrate in the next months as the church building will be 100 years old in 2007.

This is a great honor for the diocese. The cathedral will be only the fourth Catholic basilica in Texas.

However, no greater honor could be given to this building than housing the Real Presence of our Lord and Savior. And, though I am very grateful to the Holy Father and to Rome for this designation, I am also grateful to all of you for your spiritual and financial support of the Cathedral and your dedication to carrying on the mission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

SINCERELY IN CHRIST,

MOST REVEREND CURTIS J. GUILLORY, SVD, DD
BISHOP OF BEAUMONT