

The U.S. bishops designated the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., as a special pilgrimage site for the 2025 Jubilee Year.

A jubilee is a special holy year of grace and pilgrimage that happens at least once every 25 years. The pope can call for extraordinary jubilee years, such as the 2016 Year of Mercy, more often. During the jubilee, Catholics are encouraged to make a pilgrimage to Rome. For pilgrims who can't travel to Rome, the bishops are expected to designate important local shrines and pilgrimage sites as special sites for the jubilee, according to the USCCB.

“Visiting the basilica is a powerful way to take advantage of the grace of the jubilee and to be filled with the hope that flows from the embrace of our Mother,” Archbishop Timothy Broglio, archbishop of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, and president of the USCCB, said in a statement.

One grace that “pilgrims of hope” on the jubilee may obtain is the “jubilee indulgence.” This grace is granted by the Holy Father to anyone who travels to any sacred jubilee site, whether in Rome, the Holy Land, or a locally designated sacred site.

Monsignor Walter Rossi, rector of the National Shrine, shared his gratitude “for the privilege of designating Mary’s shrine as a special place of pilgrimage for the holy year.”

“This honor will provide a moment of grace for all ‘pilgrims of hope’ during the jubilee year and will be especially beneficial to those who are unable to travel to Rome to pass through the Holy Doors and obtain the jubilee indulgence,” Rossi said.

The National Shrine is the largest Roman Catholic church in North America and is dedicated to the patroness of the United States — the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title Immaculate Conception.

A spokesperson for the U.S. bishops said that the National Shrine is the only special place of pilgrimage designated by the U.S. bishops — but diocesan bishops may designate their own cathedrals and basilicas.

“While the USCCB hasn’t given this distinction to other sites in the United States, you will see in the guidance published by the Holy See that various sacred places such as diocesan cathedrals and minor basilicas may be given the special designation by the local bishop to allow the faithful to obtain the jubilee indulgence,” Chieko Noguchi, executive director of public affairs for the USCCB, said.

Bishops around the U.S. are beginning to designate special places of pilgrimage within their dioceses.