

SMbulletin

Friday, 24 April 2026

Happy Feast of Saint Peter Chanel!

PASTORAL VISIT OF POPE LEO XIV IN CAMEROUN



Fr Martin Simna, District Superior of Africa, reports: “the Church in Cameroon welcomed Pope Leo XIV on his recent apostolic visit with joy and prayer. Confreres of the African District took part in the activities and Eucharistic celebrations organised for the occasion. The Pope’s message focused on peace, especially the peace that Christ gives us and shares with each of us, which calms the storms of life. This was an invitation to each one of us to continue promoting peace and to put an end to conflicts. Reiterating his closeness to the local Church in Cameroon, the Pope expressed his joy saying, “the Cameroonian Church is alive, young, rich in gifts and enthusiasm, vibrant in its diversity and marvelous in its harmony”.

< Frs Yvan Carré, Martin Simna and Charles Mbara Apéké attending the Papal Mass.

THE BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND FR JOHN E. GUNN

In 1897, the Bishop of Savannah asked the Society of Mary to help in the diocese's mission in Atlanta and north Georgia. The Marists started serving in the Church of Saints Peter and Paul which was in poor condition, and soon they started building a new Church, which was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1898. The Society appointed a young talented Irish confrere, Fr John E. Gunn to minister in the new Parish. Under his guidance the Church grew rapidly and he guided the parish community with an amazing dedication. He founded a Parish school and also Marist School Atlanta. Originally the “Marist College” was located next to the church (see picture), but in 1962 the school was relocated to its current space, outside the town. In 1911 Fr John Gunn was appointed as a bishop in Mississippi, and his fame remained much alive among the parishioners. In 1965 the Church returned to the Archdiocese of Atlanta, where Bp Joel Konzen sm serves as an auxiliary bishop.



DEDICATION OF THE MARIST CHAPEL OF ST PETER CHANEL



On 25 March 2026, the Feast of the Annunciation, Bishop Joel Konzen, SM, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, blessed the Marist Chapel of Saint Peter Chanel at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The newly renovated adoration chapel honors the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Mary for building Sacred Heart Church and serving there for nearly 70 years, from 1897 until 1965. The decoration of the Marist Chapel pays homage to the Society’s history with a portrait of St. Peter Chanel, stained glass featuring the coats of arms of both Bishop Joel Konzen and Bishop John Gunn, SM, and prayer kneelers that date from the earliest years of the church. The Marist Chapel is completed with a painting of Sr Teresa of Calcutta, in remembrance of her visiting and praying in the basilica in 1995.