

## ARCHDIOCESE

# Life-sized casting of Michelangelo's Pieta blessed at St. Ann Church in Washington

By Richard Szczepanowski  
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A life-sized marble casting of Michelangelo's famous Pieta sculpture has been installed at St. Ann Church in Washington, and was unveiled and blessed during a June 17 Mass there. The statue is the 45th of 100 that will be created from a Vatican-authorized mold of the original marble sculpture.

Msgr. James Watkins, pastor of St. Ann Church, called the blessing and installation of the statue "a beautiful moment of re-evangelization and revitalization."

"The parish community and the Archdiocese of Washington are so very

blessed to have this iconic image of our Christian faith placed here at St. Ann," Msgr. Watkins said. "For our youth, the Pieta serves to focus the hearts and minds of our students toward God, and keeps Him ever present in their daily lives. For our sick and elderly, the Pieta serves to inspire healing, hope, peace and compassion to each person and their loved ones."

Washington Auxiliary Bishop Roy Campbell Jr., who blessed the sculpture, told parishioners who gathered for the unveiling that the placement of the statue is "a great honor and privilege for your parish and the archdiocese."

The Pieta – considered one of the greatest works of art ever created – was



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GAILLARD TEAGUE

At left, Washington Auxiliary Bishop Roy Campbell Jr. blesses a life-sized marble casting of Michelangelo's Pieta at St. Ann Church in Washington during a June 17 Mass. Below, Bishop Campbell and Msgr. James Watkins, pastor of St. Ann Church, pose in front of the statue after it was blessed. After the blessing, the faithful came to admire and pray before the Pieta, the 45th of only 100 such statues that will be created and installed around the world.



Unveiling the Pieta for the Blessing Ceremony is Pat Kerivan and David Newren President of Arte Divine.

sculpted by Michelangelo Buonarroti in 1499, and is the only piece of work he ever signed. It depicts a sorrowful Mary holding the dead body of her crucified son.

Bishop Campbell said the masterpiece not only "honors Our Lord and His Blessed Mother ... (but) shows us what love with faith can do in our lives."

The sculpture at St. Ann is made of Carrara marble and created from an exact casting of the authorized mold of the original marble sculpture, which is displayed in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

It was presented to St. Ann Church by Arte Divine, a West Coast company that distributes exact castings of Michelangelo's sculptures such as the Pieta, David, the Bruges Madonna with Child and others works of art.

David Newren, founder of Art Divine, said the Pieta statues will be placed in "cathedrals, churches, hospitals and academic settings" in an effort to "elevate the hearts and minds of the faithful who do not have the opportunity to



travel to St. Peter's and personally experience the beauty and inspiration of this iconic masterpiece."

Pat Kerivan, a spokesman for Arte Divine, said the 100 Pietas created from the original mold are "a precise one-to-one casting that is faithful in every detail to Michelangelo's original." He said the castings are "acquired by generous corporate and private benefactors," and then donated around the world.

Newren said the placement in Washington

"will make for an easy pilgrimage to see a beautiful image of our faith." He added that it would be "a legacy that will inspire our faith, our hearts and our minds."

Msgr. Watkins said that the unveiling and blessing of the statue was a "kick-off" to the parish's 150th anniversary, which will be celebrated beginning next year. He added that the church would be open during the day so that the faithful "can come and pray for the intercession of Mary."