

NEWS

Bishop of Orange blesses future Lady of La Vang shrine site



Parishioners carry the Blessed Lady of La Vang during a ceremony to dedicate the future site of the shrine dedicated to the Lady of La Vang on the Christ Cathedral campus in Garden Grove on Saturday, October 21, 2017. (Photo by Paul Rodriguez, Orange County Register/SCNG)

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GARDEN GROVE — Hundreds of Vietnamese Catholics visited the campus of Christ Cathedral Saturday, Oct. 21, to participate in a Mass and witness the Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange, bless the site that will house a shrine for the Lady of La Vang.

A Marian apparition that graced and blessed persecuted Catholics in 1798 in Central Vietnam, the Lady of La Vang is viewed as a symbol of strength and resilience by the local Vietnamese community, said Elysabeth Nguyen, a member of the committee that oversees this \$25 million project.

Orange County is home to about 100,000 Catholics of Vietnamese descent and 15 Vietnamese-speaking parishes.

The shrine will be completed in two phases. The first phase, expected to cost \$10 million to be raised by the community, will include the 18-foot statue while the second phase, a \$15 million endeavor, will consist of a library, welcome center and activity area and will be a collaborative effort between the community and the diocese.

Construction on the shrine is expected to begin in April 2018. Nguyen hopes the shrine will be open to the public in early 2019 when the Christ Cathedral sanctuary is also expected to be fully renovated.

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Deepa Bharath

Deepa Bharath covers religion for The Orange County Register and the Southern California Newspaper Group. Her work is focused on how religion, race and ethnicity shape our understanding of what it is to be American and how religion in particular helps influence public policies, laws and a region's culture. Deepa also writes about race, cultures and social justice issues. She has covered a number of other beats ranging from city government to breaking news for the Register since May 2006. She has received fellowships from the International Women's Media Foundation and the International Center for Journalists to report stories about reconciliation, counter-extremism and peace-building efforts around the world. When she is not working, she loves listening to Indian classical music and traveling with her husband and son.

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