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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Replica of Michelangelo's *Pietà* to remain at the Cathedral permanently

(St. Paul, MN) The replica of Michelangelo's *Pietà* will remain at the Cathedral of Saint Paul, National Shrine of the Apostle Paul permanently, thanks to a generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

“This unexpected gift is breathtaking both for its beauty and the generosity of its donor. With all of the practical needs of the Cathedral we were not in a position to even think about adding an artistic piece of such high caliber,” said the Very Reverend Joseph R. Johnson, Rector of the Cathedral of Saint Paul. “The genius of Michelangelo will now bless all of our visitors—both those who come to pray and those whose pilgrimage is of a more artistic and historic nature.”

The life size sculpture depicts the Virgin Mary holding the body of her son Jesus Christ after his death. The marble casting of the original sculpture in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, has been available for public viewing beginning Ash Wednesday, February 17, in the Sacred Heart Chapel. The exhibit has already been viewed by thousands of visitors to the Cathedral. (for video, go to www.cathedralsaintpaul.org and click on News & Events) A permanent place will be prepared for it with probable dedication in September.

The replica of Michelangelo's *Pietà* is created by two sister companies: Vescovo Renaissance Art, LLC (VRA) and Vescovo Buonarroti Art, LLC (Vescovo). Vescovo (“www.LaPietà.com”) produces the official replica of Michelangelo's *Pietà* under the exclusive license with the Vatican Observatory Foundation. As part of the licensing agreement, royalties from Vescovo's sales will go to the Vatican Observatory Foundation (VOF). The VOF is the scientific branch of the Vatican which supports astronomy and scientific research. One of the oldest astronomical

research institutions in the world, the observatory is headquartered at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, Italy with a second location in Tucson, Arizona.

“From the beginning, we wanted to bring Michelangelo’s sculpture closer to the public for both their viewing pleasure as well as for them to have a more personal and intimate experience,” said Steven Bishop, owner of VRA and Vescovo, a Nevada limited liability company. “We couldn’t be more pleased that this replica will reside permanently at the Cathedral where the doors are open to everyone to make a visit and contemplate this masterpiece.”

Widely recognized as one of the greatest artists who ever lived, Michelangelo created many works for the Vatican, including breathtaking frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, but *La Pietà* remains his most famous work and the only piece he ever signed.

Visitors, guests and parishioners are welcome to the Cathedral of Saint Paul, National Shrine of the Apostle Paul, every day of the week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Saturdays, doors are open until 9 p.m. Guided tours are offered Monday through Friday at 1 p.m. or by appointment.

The Cathedral Heritage Foundation is a non-profit, non-sectarian, historic preservation, cultural and arts organization established to meet the objectives of restoring and preserving the national and historic treasure of the cathedral of Saint Paul for generations to come. CHF also provides leadership in developing educational programs to showcase the cultural, historic and artistic influences of the Cathedral on people throughout the world.