

# Workers Discover 140-Year-Old Paintings During Basilica Restoration Project

Four paintings of the Gospel evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were recently uncovered by workers at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The distempered water-based paintings were discovered while the architect of the Basilica's restoration project was performing a routine tapping check of the panels above the four arches that support the great dome of the Basilica. The paintings date back to 1865 and bear two pencil-written names, one of whom is reported to be the artist. It is believed that they were covered with wood during a re-decoration of the Basilica's interior in the 1870s.

Media will be escorted up scaffolding stairs inside the Basilica on *Wednesday, September 28 at 10 a.m.* to view the paintings. The architect who discovered them will be among those on hand to discuss their significance, as well as provide an update on the status of the Basilica's restoration.

The Basilica, America's first cathedral, was closed in November 2004 and is scheduled to reopen in November 2006 in time for its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**MEDIA NOTE: VIDEOGRAPHERS/PHOTOGRAPHERS AND REPORTERS WILL BE ESCORTED 21 FEET UP INTERIOR SCAFFOLDING STAIRS TO VIEW THE PAINTINGS.** Participating members of the media will be asked to sign a release, indemnity and hold harmless agreement and will be issued hard hats, which are to be worn at all times while on the property. As the Basilica is an active construction site, appropriate foot wear is required.

News coverage about the paintings:

WBAL

- WJZ