

finial, gargoyle, angel, pineapple, and grotesque—the work of stabilization will have to continue. Where current stonework can be salvaged, Mason Foreman Joe Alonso has indicated that Cathedral stonemasons will do everything in their power to continue using the original artisans’ work. But where new stonework must be created, the process for doing so will be time-consuming and complex.

Molds must be shaped, patterns cut—and stones ordered, quarried, and transported—all before carving can even begin.

RESTORATION BEGINS HERE

Standing on the capital’s most awe-inspiring height, with its unique take on the time-tested perpendicular Gothic style, the National Cathedral has long proven itself to be one of America’s best-loved and most meaningful buildings. Views of and from its towers, the changing beauty of its grounds, and the history chronicled in its quiet chapels and nave make it a place that restores the soul. Now this national treasure needs your help.

The Cathedral has long served as a place of renewal in spiritual and public life. From diplomacy to donation, restoration begins here, so restoration of the building that makes them possible must begin today. The first phase of the effort, including stabilization, is projected to cost at least \$25 million. This work includes at least \$2 million for stabilization, another \$12 million for early restoration efforts, and at least \$10 million more to replenish and maintain necessary program and operating expenses through the end of the fiscal year (June 30). Meeting this preliminary goal will enable the Cathedral to focus on other identified short-term and long-range preservation needs of at least \$100 million more.

Just as the Cathedral was built stone by stone, paid for by supporters across the country over many decades, so it must be rebuilt. Just as all its parts rely on each other to move rainwater and carry weight, so the Cathedral’s communities of support will need to work in concert to make this effort succeed. Few friends have the talent or training to re-carve gargoyles and to return angels to the tops of the towers from which they fell—but everyone can give.

Collectively, all this work will restore the spiritual home for the nation. *CA*



A Passion for Stone and the Sacred

Mason Foreman Joe Alonso has been in charge of the stone mason team since 1990, and has worked as a mason at the Cathedral since 1985. Since the earthquake, he has been in demand both on-site and nationally as an expert in his little-known field.

“It’s heartbreaking to me, because I know what went into building this building. I look at a piece of stone, I can tell you what that stone went through, from design through carving and being laid in place by the stonemason,” Alonso says. “This is a handmade building.

“The day of the earthquake, I was working with my colleague Andy Uhl on the granite steps of the center portal of the west front. We were planning to move up to a scaffold on the north side of the nave, but I wanted to finish the work on the steps first.

“Had we been on the scaffold that day, we would have been seriously injured or worse. The top deck of that scaffold was littered with fist-sized chunks of limestone that had fallen nearly 200 feet from the central tower’s pinnacles.”

Perhaps very few people alive today—if any—are as intimately familiar with the Cathedral’s architecture and details as Alonso. He and his team face a challenging restoration process but will work with strength and a committed passion for the Cathedral and all it stands for as a sacred setting.