

**Sacred and Religious Sites of San Francisco**

**American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting**

**November 21, 2011**

## Sacred and Religious Sites of San Francisco Tour

Jeanne Halgren Kilde, University of Minnesota

David Bains, Samford University

Jonathan H.X. Lee, San Francisco State University

Quincy Newell, University of Wyoming

1:00 Depart Moscone Center West, Howard Street Exit

1:30 Arrive First Chinese Baptist Church

2:00 Depart First Chinese Baptist Church

Walk to Tien Hau Temple and Ma-tsue Temple U.S.A.

3:00 Depart Ma-tsue Temple U.S.A.

3:30 Arrive Mission Dolores

Misión San Francisco de Asís

Mission Dolores Basilica

4:40 Depart Mission Dolores

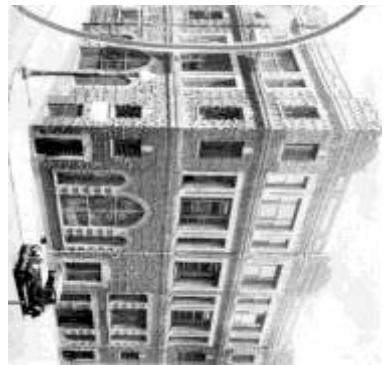
5:00 Return Moscone Center

## First Chinese Baptist Church

15 Waverly Place

San Francisco, CA 94108-2118

<http://www.fcbc-sf.org/>



### History – Christian Evangelizing among the Chinese in California:

The discovery of gold in California in 1849 resulted in the growth of a diverse population in the region. Along with the various forty-niners from the eastern U.S., by 1850 some 500 Chinese immigrants resided in California. By the mid-1860s the number of

Chinese had grown to over 48,000. Mostly young men, these immigrants sought work as laborers, hoping to return to China, but, in many cases never accumulating the required funds to do so. By 1865, the Chinese were prohibited from working in the mines and a growing nativism fueled the anti-Chinese sentiment that succeeded in 1882 in passing the Chinese Exclusion Act, prohibiting Chinese immigration.

Protestant denominations, intent upon missionizing in the region made slow progress among the Chinese. Beginning in 1851 Albert Williams, pastor of San Francisco's First Presbyterian Church, organized Bible classes for Chinese immigrants, and a year later, his co-religionist, William Speer, organized a free clinic and English classes. The two erected the first Chinese Christian chapel in the city, Chinese Presbyterian Church, in 1853.

The Baptists, relying on street preaching in Chinese, attracted crowds but found that establishing a mission would not come easily. An abortive attempt was made in 1854, but it wasn't until 1870 that the Baptists became fully involved, when they joined other denominations in the Chinese Sunday School Movement. As historian Lawrence Jay claims, some 150 Chinese attended First Baptist's Sunday School in 1870. Yet despite the work of several missionaries, including John Francis, Fung Seung Nam, and Lee Kee, as well as a number of Chinese converts, including Dong Gong and Lee Wing Tai, these American Baptists were not successful in planting a permanent mission.

With the assignment of J.B. Hartwell by the Southern Baptist Domestic Board to missionize the Chinese in San Francisco, the Baptists succeeded in organizing the First Chinese Baptist Church of San Francisco in October 1880. Lee Win Tai was listed among the nine charter members of the congregation. Growth was slow, however, and by 1882, Jay reports, the church had only sixteen members. This slow growth prompted the Southern Baptists to terminate their support. At the request of the congregation, the American Baptists and the Women's Baptist Home Missions Society took over. In 1886, Hartwell was granted his long-term request for

a "good Chinese minister" when Tong Kit Ring, who had previously worked in Portland, OR, was assigned to the congregation.

The church's relationship with the Chinese people extended beyond the realm of the religious. The chapel offered a children's day school, with language classes in English and Chinese, and a night school for adults. Although the congregation remained small, the need for space for the school grew, and by 1888, a lot was purchased on the corner of Sacramento and Waverly for \$10,000. The new building, completed at a cost of \$9,600, was dedicated on August 19 of the same year.



**Architecture:** The original First Chinese Baptist Church was a modest one-and-one-half story brick building, with Romanesque, round-arch windows and a pyramid or hip roof. G.H. Moore is listed in several sources as the architect. This building served the congregation until it was destroyed in the earthquake and fire of April 1906. The church was rebuilt in 1908 under the supervision of architect G. E. Burlingame and remains extant. The three-story building alludes to the original with its tripartite Gothic windows on the lower floor, but the upper two stories feature banks or rows of heavily bordered, rectangular Prairie Style or Arts and Crafts windows. The heavily textured walls are created with the use of *clinker* bricks, that is, bricks that have been abnormally fired (usually too close to the heat source) and are thus deformed and darkened in color. Although the use of clinker bricks was quite popular in California during the Arts and Crafts period due to the variety of textures that could be achieved with them, at least one source indicates that damaged bricks were salvaged after the 1906 fire and reused in buildings such as First Chinese Baptist Church.

The original 1908 building featured only two floors, with a sanctuary and reading room on the first floor and classrooms on the second. The third floor, added in 1930, houses offices and a fellowship hall. In 2000, according to the church website, "the church underwent a major seismic retrofit and renovation project with the total redesigning of the vestibule, the second, third and fourth floors. The project included the addition of an elevator and modular classrooms on the third and fourth floors." The main floor sanctuary has been more recently remodeled as a centralized, "in the round," space.

### Sources and Further Reading:

Jay, Lawrence G. "Baptist Work Among the Chinese in San Francisco," *American Baptist Quarterly* 21:3 (S 2002): 322-336.

## The Tien Hau Temple

125 Waverly Place  
San Francisco, CA 94108



**Community History:** It is easy to miss the temples on Waverly Place unless one looks upward towards the heavens. The street level is occupied with restaurants, salons, florists, bakeries, and cafes. But on the upper level, there are several Chinese associations and temples housing the gods and goddesses of Chinese popular religions. The Tien Hau Temple in San Francisco Chinatown is considered to be the oldest running Chinese temple in the U. S. Its present address at 125

Waverly Place is considered to be its original location since it opened in 1852. The Sanyi District Association may have been the original owner of the temple when it was first established. Then sometime later (before 1906) the ownership of the temple switched over to the Sue Hong Benevolent Association (肇慶會館). The original wooden shack housing Tianhou was destroyed during the 1906 earthquake and fire, and soon after the Sue Hong Benevolent Association built a new multistory building on the original site and placed the temple on the fourth floor.

For reasons associated with the decreased number of new incoming Chinese immigrants due to the Chinese Exclusion Law of 1882, the temple was closed in 1955, but it reopened twenty years later on May 4, 1975 (23rd of the third moon, Tianhou's birthday) ten years after Chinese immigration was re-established with the passage of the 1965 Immigration Law. As a result, the temple has continued to serve a small Cantonese speaking Chinese American population, in addition to serving as a tourist attraction for site-seers visiting San Francisco Chinatown.

**Architecture:** During the early period of Chinese immigration, the Chinese expended little money and energy on architecture. After the 1906 earthquake and fire, more investment in architecture was seen throughout Chinatown. The City used this opportunity to attempt to move Chinatown to Hunter's Point, an effort the local residents resented. As a result, the Chinese were quick to rebuild Chinatown while the City was busy rebuilding the civic center. In fact, within a year, almost all of Chinatown was rebuilt.

The "oriental" design of Chinatown's buildings were created by architects who knew nothing about Chinese architecture save images of pagodas and temples with turned-up eaves and massive curved roofs. Waverly Place has a large concentration of tenement-style buildings that abut each other. This Chinese-inspired architectural style is unique because it is neither East nor West: it is San Franciscan.

## Tianhou: The Empress of Heaven (Tianhou), Goddess of the Sea, also known as

Mazu, is the highest-ranking female deity in the vast, patriarchal celestial Chinese pantheon. She is worshipped throughout China's coastal provinces, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and within the global Chinese diaspora, especially among Chinese-Southeast Asian communities. According to the lore that has been passed down, she was born to a fisher-family in the first year of the Song Dynasty, became a deity in her twenties, but toward the end of her mortal life demonstrated exceptional powers: She was able to help fishermen, imperial envoys, and her father and brothers, to survive storms at sea. Over the course of several centuries her fame grew so much that she was given official titles by the imperial government, culminating under the Qing Dynasty in her present exalted title, Holy Mother in Heaven [Transheng Shengmu].



Although the original Tien Hau Temple was destroyed in the earthquake and fire, the image of Tianhou and part of the altar were saved. The temple bell was buried in the ruins, but was later discovered during the construction project, and reinstalled in the new temple. All other furnishings in the temple were imported from China in 1910.

**Neighborhood History:** Ever since the original Tien Hau Temple was established, Waverly Place has been popularly called "Tien Hau Mui Gai" (天后廟街) or "Tianhou Temple Street" by local Chinese Americans. Waverly Place used to be called Pike Street up until the 1860s and was known for its brothels with imported Chinese prostitutes, the location was nicknamed "homes of ill repute." The first recorded regular Chinese resident in Chinatown was a prostitute named Ah Toy, who emigrated from Hong Kong in 1849. She first settled in the shanty alley off Clay Street and then moved to Pike Street and established a brothel for imported Chinese prostitutes. It was said that Chinese miners from Sacramento Valley would travel by boat over to the city just to get a glance at the strangely alluring beauty of Ah Toy. Later on, when the Tien Hau Temple was established, the reputation of the street changed, and a new nickname circulated among the Chinese citizenry—"Tien Hau Mui Gai."

**Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A.**  
30 Beckett St.  
San Francisco, CA 94133

**Temple History and Mission :** On March 12, 1986, two immigrant Taiwanese Americans, Mr. Gao and Mr. Zhen, founded the Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A.



On this day, a divination and blessing ceremony was performed at the Chaotain Temple in Beigang, Taiwan, inviting an image of Mazu (a.k.a. Tienhou – see above) to move to America. Mazu arrived on March 14, and her temple was established as a branch and/or daughter temple in San Francisco. Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A. officially opened its doors on September 13, 1986. It has its beginnings in a small rented apartment located at 554 Vienna Street, near the predominantly Latin@ Mission District of San Francisco. The group relocated on November 22 of that same year to a larger site on 562 Grant Avenue, a thoroughfare of San Francisco's touristy Chinatown. Then on January 12, 1996 the temple relocated once again, when the new immigrant community purchased property at 30 Beckett Street, on a small alley between Jackson Street and Pacifica Avenue. The community was able to finance this endeavor with donations from not only the Taiwanese American community, but from other patrons of different ethnic Chinese American backgrounds (e.g., Indo-Chinese immigrant-Americans).

The temple's stated mission is to advocate the virtues of Mazu (a.k.a. Tienhou) and Guanyin, (the Buddhist Bodhisattva of Compassion), who teach benevolence, upholding the Buddhist Dharma, and the principles of human kindness, and who promote personal and social morality viz. harmony. As such, they regularly sponsor Buddhist dharma lessons, seminars on Mazu and Guanyin, qigong, and Chinese medicine. They also offer social services such as health care referrals, legal aid, and immigration assistance. Additionally, the temple conducts services and ceremonies for all major and minor Chinese religious holidays (e.g., Guanyin's birthday, Guandi's birthday, Mid-Autumn festival, among others). The temple also participates in several civic events in the San Francisco area (e.g., Taiwan Cultural Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Chinese New Year Parade, Sunset District's Autumn Moon Festival).

**Membership:** Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A. does not keep detailed demographic data. However, Mr. Zhang, a board member estimates that, as of 2010, there are approximately 2000 fee-paying lifetime members and perhaps 800-1000 non-fee paying registered members. About 60% are multilingual Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese speakers, roughly 30% speak only Mandarin Chinese, and 10% are Cantonese-speaking ethnic Chinese. Nevertheless, the majority have limited, if any,

English-speaking skills. Asian patrons of other ethnicities and languages often visit the temple as well (e.g., Vietnamese). The distribution of age range is about 60% older than 50, 35% between 30 and 49, and 5% age 29 or younger.

Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A. reflects the changing geography and demographics of Chinese-America in the wake of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 while heralding something new: the appearance of a transnational identity with ties to both Taiwan and the U.S. and both the mortal and divine. For instance, during the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections in Taiwan, many Taiwanese Americans traveled back to the island to vote because absentee voting is not allowed. While approximately 2,000 Taiwanese-New Yorkers returned to vote in 2004, nearly 10,000 Taiwanese Americans from California returned to Taiwan in 2008 to vote.

**Mazu Figure:** The Mazu enshrined at Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A. is referred to as Meiguo Mazu in all religious rituals. Her official Chinese name is Fuzhenma [福鎮媽]. In the Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A., Beigang Mazu's honorary shrine is placed in front of Meiguo Mazu's main shrine, indicating Meiguo Mazu's origins and connection to Taiwan, the source of its power, as well as its implicit subordination to Beigang. As daughter temple to the original Beigang Mazu temple in Taiwan, all images of Mazu housed in Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A. are from the Beigang Temple, including the ones donated by Taiwanese American devotees. This, however, was not planned, but rather serendipitous, and was understood by many as Mazu's will. Mrs. A-Hua, a widow and a pious Mazu devotee, and the Wangs invited Mazu to immigrate with them when they relocated to America in the late 1970s early 1980s respectively. Consequently, the goddess lived in their homes, until the founding of Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A. in 1986.

**Sources and Further Reading:**

Lee, Jonathan H.X. "Contemporary Chinese-American Religious Life," in *Chinese Religions in Contemporary Societies*, edited by James Miller. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.

..... "Creating a Transnational Religious Community: The Empress of Heaven, and Goddess of the Sea Tienhou/Mazu, from Beigang, Taiwan to San Francisco U.S.A.," in *Religion at the Corner of Bliss and Nirvana: Politics, Identity, and Faith in New Migrant Communities*, edited by Lois Ann Lorentzen, Joaquin Jay Gonzalez III, Kevin M. Chun, and Hien Duc Do. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009

## Chinese Temples in San Francisco

### American Buddhist Cultural Society

1750 Van Ness Ave  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
415-776-6538

### Buddha's Universal Church

720 Washington St.  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415-982-6116

### Buddhist Association of America

109 Waverly Pl. 3rd Fl.  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415-362-1993

### Chi Sin Buddhist and Taoist Association

1051 Powell St.  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415-982-8175

### Ching Chung Taoist Association of America

615 Grant Ave. 4th Fl.  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415-433-2623

### Gold Mountain Sagely Monastery

800 Sacramento Street,  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
(415) 421-6117

### Kong Chow Temple

855 Stockton 4th Fl.  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415-788-1339

### Ma-tsu Temple U.S.A

30 Beckett St.  
San Francisco, CA 94133  
415-986-8818

### Purple Lotus Society of U.S.A

636 San Matteo Ave  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
415-952-9513

### Quong Ming Buddho-Taoist Society

1104 Powell St. 3rd Fl.  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415-392-5087

### Quong Ming Jade Emperor Palace

1123 Powell St.  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415-421-8060

**What to look for in Chinese temples:** Spatially, temple layouts emphasize a strong focal point on the revered figure: there's always a main shrine for the main deity. In most of these temples, unless it is specifically Buddhist, there will be additional shrines to other deities (mostly Buddhist).

Temples will also contain a designated area for religious leaders, usually a desk to the side near the entrance. This is where the religious specialists sit to give readings and consult on religious matters.



**Misión San Francisco de Asís**  
**Mission Dolores Parish**  
**3321 16<sup>th</sup> St.**  
**San Francisco, CA**  
**[www.missiondolores.org](http://www.missiondolores.org)**

**Introduction:** The building now known as the “Old Mission” was constructed in 1791, about fifteen years after the founding of Mission San Francisco in 1776. It is the oldest intact building in the city of San Francisco. The sixth mission founded in the California mission system, San Francisco de Asís was the first mission founded in the San Francisco Bay Area. Along with the San Francisco Presidio, it was the kernel of what became the city of San Francisco.

At the time of the mission’s founding, the Bay Area was densely populated by Indians with a wide variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Known to the Spanish colonists as *costeños*, or coastal dwellers, these people are now known as Ohlone Indians. (Research suggests that the term “Ohlone” is the misspelling of a term that originally referred to one small group in the Bay Area. Nevertheless, in modern times it has been widely adopted to refer more broadly to Bay Area Indians in general.) The mission population also eventually included Miwok and Patwin Indians from further away.

**Construction and Architecture:** When it was founded, Misión San Francisco de Asís was a temporary shelter constructed of tree branches in which a missionary priest could celebrate Mass while a more permanent structure of palisade was built. That first permanent church was completed in early October 1776, about three months after the priests, soldiers, and settlers had arrived in the area. It was located beside the Laguna de los Dolores, a lake that covered approximately nine blocks of the present-day city. This lake is the source of the mission’s nickname, “Mission Dolores.” A new, larger church, also built of palisade, was constructed in 1782 on the same site. The following year, though, the mission complex was torn down and rebuilt about a fifth of a mile to the west in order to free up the land for agriculture. This third church building, like the previous two, was constructed of palisade. Between 1788 and 1791, a fourth church was constructed, this time of adobe. That church still stands. Throughout this construction process, the priests relied on the labor of Indians – both converts and “gentiles,” as the priests referred to those who had not accepted baptism.

It is important to note that the mission church was only one building in a much larger complex that included dormitories for single men and single women, adobe apartments for Indian families, housing for the mission priests and servants, a kitchen, workshops, and storage facilities. The church was among the first of these

buildings to be built, indicating its importance to the priests, who directed the construction.

The Franciscan priests designed the California mission churches themselves, often referring to a book that illustrated various facades for ideas about exterior ornamentation. Thus, the building designs were driven by European ideas about construction techniques, materials, and results. However, innovations on European (and Euro-American) ideas were sometimes necessary. For example, roof beams were secured to one another using leather ties and wooden pegs. This technique, likely introduced by Benito Cambón, a priest who had spent some time in the Philippines, proved to be an effective means of making the building earthquake-resistant.

**Interior Decoration and Iconography:** The Church was extensively decorated with both imported images and paintings by indigenous artists. The ceiling beams and the side walls of the church were painted with geometric patterns that bear a striking resemblance to traditional basketry patterns. Basketry was the highest aesthetic expression in traditional Bay Area Indian cultures, and it was reserved almost exclusively for women. Women prepared for basket weaving by fasting and seeking propitious dreams, in which they sometimes received basketry designs. Thus, unbeknownst to the priests, the walls of the Church at Mission San Francisco may have borne the imprint of the traditional Bay Area spirit world in the geometric designs that Indians painted on the walls and ceiling. The original altarpiece in the 1791 church was also painted by baptized Indians. However, this altarpiece was covered up by a sculpted wooden reredos imported from Mexico in 1796. Portions of the original altarpiece have recently been photographed. Some images from this project can be seen at [www.missiondoloresmural.com](http://www.missiondoloresmural.com).



Like the reredos, much of the decoration of the church was imported from Mexico and followed the baroque style then in vogue in Spain and Latin America. Paintings and sculptures placed throughout the church represented key figures (such as St. Francis of Assisi), narratives (such as the stations of the cross), and concepts (such as the Patronage of St. Joseph). These images reinforced Roman Catholic theological and cosmological ideas, but also reiterated European and Euro-American concepts regarding gender, family relations, and a host of other topics.

The Church’s bells were donated by the King of Spain when the mission was founded. Before that time, bells were probably literally unheard of – or from – in the Bay Area. Following European custom, the mission priests demarcated the

boundaries of the mission by the reach of the bells' tolling: the outer reaches of the bells' sound also constituted the limits of their priestly authority. The church still has its original bells, which are visible from the front of the building.

During the Spanish colonial period, the church had a dirt floor and no pews. For Mass, baptized Indians and occasionally some Hispanic colonists stood in the church. Men stood on the "Gospel" side (i.e. the left when facing the altar); women on the "epistle" (right) side. On both sides, churchgoers stood with the youngest in front, ranging to the oldest in back.

**People:** The priests who staffed Mission San Francisco during the mission period (1776 through the 1830s) were Franciscans. Almost all of them were from Spain. Recruited on the Iberian peninsula, they traveled first to the Colegio de San Fernando, in Mexico City, where they received additional training, and then were assigned to one of the missions in the *Alta California* (Upper California) mission system, which was run by the Franciscan order. Some priests assigned to Mission San Francisco remained only a few months; others stayed for fifteen or twenty years. Each Alta California mission was supposed to be staffed by two Franciscan missionaries, but at Mission San Francisco, the number ranged from one to four.

The priests were accompanied by a small detachment of soldiers and a few servants. Unlike the priests, these people were usually born and raised in Mexico, and often had significant indigenous heritage. Nevertheless, all of these people referred to themselves as *gente de razón* (people of reason), or even *españoles*, just like the priests. This category distinguished them from the Indians, who were known as *gente sin razón* (people without reason), *gentiles* (gentiles, that is, unbaptized people), or *indios* (Indians). The *de razón/sin razón* distinction had been created in order to protect indigenous Mexicans from prosecution by the Inquisition, but in California it became a racialized category, distinguishing those who aspired to high-status racial categories (such as *español*) from those assigned to low-status categories like *indio*.

As noted above, priests at Mission San Francisco baptized Ohlone, Miwok, and Patwin Indians. During the Spanish colonial period, the Indian population of the mission reached its highest point – just over 1800 – in the year 1821. However, the death rate always exceeded the birth rate at the mission, so the Indian population never became self-sustaining. Instead, the priests relied on recruitment of Indians from further and further away in order to maintain a viable mission population.

**Later History:** The Alta California mission system was secularized in the early 1830s. As a result of this process, many California Indians became landless laborers, dispossessed of the mission lands that had, technically, belonged to them during the mission period. A period of extreme persecution, in which Indians became the targets of horrifying racial violence, followed the acquisition of

California by the United States. This violence died down as Americans solidified their control over the area, governmental policies regarding Indians changed, and social and cultural attitudes regarding the Spanish and Mexican past, as well as the Indians who persisted in the present, evolved.

The 1791 church remained a working parish, and is now part of the Mission Dolores Basilica. Mass is celebrated regularly throughout the week in the Old Mission church.

#### Sources and Further Reading:

California Missions Resource Center, <http://www.missionscalifornia.com/>  
Geiger, Maynard J. "New Data on the Buildings of Mission San Francisco." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (1967): 195-205.  
Milliken, Randall. *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1769-1810* (Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press, 1995).  
Mission Dolores Mural website, <http://www.missiondoloresmural.com/>  
Neuerburg, Norman. *The Decoration of the California Missions*. Santa Barbara, CA: Bellophon Books, 1987.  
Newell, Quincy D., *Constructing Lives at Mission San Francisco: Native Californians and Hispanic Colonists, 1776-1821*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009.



**Mission Dolores Basilica**  
3321 16<sup>th</sup> St.  
San Francisco, CA  
[www.missiondolores.org](http://www.missiondolores.org)

**Introduction:** As the population of San Francisco grew following the California Gold Rush, the old mission church was pressed into use to serve an expanding population. In 1851, one year after California became a state, four acres of the original mission's immense land were confirmed by the government as church property. Soon the old church was deemed in adequate to serve the neighborhood's growing population of Irish, French, and German Roman Catholics. To mark the centennial of the mission and city, a new brick Gothic Revival building was completed in 1875. Steeply roofed, it towered over the historic mission, but its erection allowed it to survive as a relic of the city's colonial past.

On April 18, 1906 a severe earthquake struck San Francisco followed by an extensive fire. The Gothic church was structurally compromised and torn down, one of the many victims of the devastating quake. A temporary church, erected along Sixteenth Street served until the present building was erected.



**Construction and Architecture:** Whereas the 1875 church had sought to connect San Francisco to immigrants' European heritage, the new building by architects Frank T. Shea and John O. Lofquist paid tribute to the city's colonial past represented in the newly restored historic mission church. Begun in 1913, it was designed in the Spanish Churrigueresque Revival style which features profuse ornament on the facade reviving an early eighteenth-century phase of Spanish architecture. All of the entrances and towers feature elaborate designs and the towers are capped by religious emblems on a blue tile background.



The church is arranged in a traditional cruciform pattern, though the transepts here are shallow. The crossing of the church is marked by a low dome which is lit both by windows around its base and from its center by windows in the cupola. As with many of churches of this style the dome and barrel vaulted nave would support elaborate decoration, but at present the decoration of the church is focused on the altars. As worshipers leave the church, they are greeted by a stained glass window of St. Francis of Assisi, patron of the mission and namesake of the city.

Churrigueresque was the signature style of the buildings designed by Bentham G. Goodhue for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. It was widely used for important public buildings in regions that sought to emphasize their Spanish colonial history. With its plain walls, the style worked well with the concrete and steel construction utilized in the new church to help it resist future earthquakes. The first mass in the church was held at Christmas 1918, although the towers were not completed until 1926. Decoration of the church also continued until 1926 (San Francisco's sesquicentennial) under the supervision of architect Henry Minton.

After World War II, the neighborhood began to change as Americans of Irish ancestry moved out and those of Latin American ancestry moved in. The Catholic Church's commitment to this site of the historic mission was emphasized when on February 8, 1952, Pope Pius XII raised the 1918 church to the status of minor basilica, a title awarded to select churches in order to recognize their antiquity, dignity, historical importance, or significance as a center of worship and devotion. The 1918 church carries the basilica title because of its association with the colonial mission church. It was the first church to be raised to basilica status west of the Mississippi and only the seventh in the United States. The *umbraculum*, also known as a pavilion, a small conical red and yellow canopy displayed in the church marks the church as a basilica.

**Interior Decoration and Iconography:** In addition to having the status of a basilica the church is also built and decorated in the style derived from early Christian basilicas. This makes it typical of many early-twentieth century Catholic churches erected in a variety of styles derived from classical and renaissance models. Lower side aisles are separated from the taller nave by columns. Clerestory windows light the nave from above. The nave is also lined with images of saints, here realized as small medallions between the arches. The stations of the cross are also represented by paintings affixed to the columns of the nave.

**Sources and Further Reading:**  
Cleary, Guire. "Mission Dolores," *Encyclopedia of San Francisco*  
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Wiley, Peter Booth. *National Trust Guide--San Francisco: America's Guide for Architecture and History Travelers*: John Wiley & Sons, 2000.  
Woodbridge, Sally Byrne, John M. Woodbridge, and Chuck Byrne. *San Francisco Architecture*. Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press, 2005.