

# Media Release

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## **Religious Shrine to Draw Faithful Travelers**

ST. JOHN, INDIANA- Northwest Indiana will soon welcome an attraction of spiritual significance expected to draw people of all religious faiths from around the country. After seven years of development, The Shrine of Christ's Passion, an interactive half-mile winding pathway of 40 life-size bronze statues depicting the Stations of the Cross, is scheduled to open in June of 2008. Renowned Texas artist, Mickey Wells, designed and cast the life size sculptures that will grace the Prayer Trail. The Visitors Center and Gift Shop, where patrons may purchase a wide variety of unique religious and inspirational gifts and books, opened in December 2007.

The Shrine provides an intimate environment for spiritual renewal. The fifteen acre site was designed to reflect the period of time when Jesus was alive as well as the geographic landscape, typical of an arid climate. Pilgrims will experience as never before the Passion of Christ beginning with a Last Supper scene, The Garden of Gethsemane and then journey through the Passion as depicted in the Stations of the Cross. There will be background music along the entire trail and each setting will provide a listening station where visitors can listen to a description of the scene and a short meditation recorded by Chicago broadcast journalist Bill Kurtis.

The religious tourism market is steadily growing; according to a Travel Industry Association study, 25 percent of travelers surveyed expressed interest in taking a

spiritual vacation such as a religious retreat or pilgrimage. “I anticipate that the shrine will do well enough that you will see new hotels nearby,” said Michael Chaseley, Partnership Development Manager for the Lake County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Shrine of Christ’s Passion is funded by a private not-for-profit foundation and all proceeds from the Gift Shop and donations will be used for maintenance of the Prayer Trail. The Shrine’s campus includes parking space for 10 tour buses and 75 cars. Volunteers will also be on hand to provide rides on power carts for the handicapped.

The Shrine of Christ’s Passion is located at 10630 Wicker Ave. (U.S. 41) just north of U.S. 231 and is approximately 35 miles southeast of downtown Chicago. For more information, contact (219) 365-6010 or visit the website at [www.shrineofchristspassion.org](http://www.shrineofchristspassion.org). To see artist Mickey Wells’ work, visit [www.mickeywellsartist.com/Shrine-of-Christ-Passion-Project](http://www.mickeywellsartist.com/Shrine-of-Christ-Passion-Project).

## “Come Take The Journey”

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