

# Myeongdong Cathedral

Construction of Myeongdong Cathedral, the first parish of Korea, began in 1887. The cornerstone was laid on May 8, 1892. Buried with the cornerstone was a list of missionaries in Korea and about 1,000 Korean Catholics who made special offerings for the construction, including labor. The church was dedicated to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception on May 29, 1898.

Built on a 14,421 m<sup>2</sup> site, the total floor area of the church is 1,498 m<sup>2</sup>, and its dimensions are 69 m in length, 28 m in width, and 23 m in height. The height of the bell tower is 36.7 m.

The church designed by Father Eugene J.G. Coste (1842-1896) became a model for all gothic-style churches in Korea. Not only that, the church represents the 19<sup>th</sup> century modern architecture in Korea. Since the church was built on a hill, it could be seen from everywhere within Seoul in earlier days.

Myeongdong Cathedral marked a new beginning of the history of the Korean Catholic Church which had been under severe persecution for about 100 years. As such, the Cathedral of the Seoul Archdiocese symbolizes the Catholic Church of Korea.

Formerly known as Jonghyeon Church, the church was renamed as Myeongdong Church after the liberation from the Japanese colonial rule in 1945. The church was designated as the 258<sup>th</sup> Historic Site of the nation on November 22, 1977.