

A Visitor's Guide to St. Joseph Church

St. Joseph Parishioners welcome you as you visit this beautiful church. It is one of the older and more traditional churches in Dayton. This guide has been compiled to give you some information regarding the history of St. Joseph Church and to help you identify some of the interesting devotional items. We hope your visit will be an uplifting experience and that you will leave this church with a sense that you have been made more aware of God's presence not only in this church but in your life as well.

The Original Church

By 1846, the number of English-speaking Catholics (primarily Irish) in Dayton, Ohio made it necessary to form a new parish separate from the city's only Catholic Church, Emmanuel. Therefore, Bishop John Baptist Purcell appointed newly ordained Father Patrick O'Mealy, native of Limerick, Ireland to begin this new parish in Dayton. Father O'Mealy held a meeting on November 1, 1846 and plans for the new parish in Dayton were underway. Most of the English-speaking parishioners present at the meeting were Irish living on the East Side and were anxious for a new church. Before the month was out they had purchased two lots, one hundred by one hundred and fifty feet, for the sum of \$2,000. They hired a contractor who immediately stockpiled materials at the location of the new church.

Since the English-speaking parishioners had worshipped on the right side of Emmanuel where the statue of St. Joseph was located, the name "St. Joseph" was chosen for the new parish. The brick church, dedicated in October 1847, was in the Grecian style of the central steeple type. However, the steeple was not completed due to a lack of funds.

Over the next decade several pastors, mostly of Irish descent, led St. Joseph Church. Then in 1859 Father David J. Kelly, also a native of Ireland, took another step toward finishing the church. He completed the building of the steeple following the original plan of the church. He also had a town clock installed in the tower. The largest bell in town hung in the tower. It weighed 3,600 pounds and was made in Cincinnati. It was christened "Patrick". This is the same bell we have in our church today.

The Stations of the Cross

Father William D. Hickey (pastor from 1891-1917) approached the parish in February of 1896 with the idea of renovating the church. Among the renovations was the replacement of the Stations of the Cross, which were deteriorating. With the donations from parishioners, the new stations (at a

cost of \$35 each) arrived from Paris, France in February of 1897. They were five feet high and two and a half feet wide. These are the same beautiful stations we have in the church today. In 1969, while trying to clean the stations, it was discovered that the original paint was crumbling so they were repainted, using the time and talent of rectory personnel.

The Stations of the Cross or Way of the Cross, from Pilate's Court in Jerusalem to Mount Calvary, commemorate the events in the Passion of Jesus.

- I. Jesus is condemned to death.
- II. Jesus is made to carry the cross.
- III. Jesus falls the first time.
- IV. Jesus meets his afflicted mother.
- V. The Cyrenean helps Jesus to carry his cross.
- VI. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
- VII. Jesus falls for the second time.
- VIII. Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.
- IX. Jesus falls for the third time.
- X. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
- XI. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
- XII. Jesus dies on the cross.
- XIII. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
- XV. Jesus is laid in the Sepulcher.

By 1905, the old church had served the parishioners well for sixty years. It was time for a new larger church - a church more expressive of the piety and generosity of the people. And so a proposition was unanimously passed to begin building a new church for the parish on April 30. By early summer of 1908, \$30,000 had been secured through donations. Enough funds to award the firm McGinnis and Walsh of Boston, the job of designing the new church. However, a temporary church would have to be found while the new church was under construction. A gentleman of the parish donated the use of a lot on Sears Street on which a temporary structure could be erected. On Easter Sunday in 1909, the last Mass was celebrated in the old church. In one week's time, the temporary structure was ready. The workers had moved and set in place the windows, pews, doors, and altars from the old church. These familiar items made the transition easier for the people of St. Joseph.

The New Church

In May, the old church was torn down and construction began. Archbishop H. K. Moeller laid the original cornerstone of St. Joseph Church.

It was placed at the northwest angle at the far side of the bell tower. The dates of both the old and new church (1847 and 1909) are carved in the stone.

Our current church was built in the architectural style of Italian Byzantine. The artistic virtues of this ecclesiastical type reside in its stateliness, simplicity and detail, which the pre-Christian architects lacked. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the new church is the position of the tower, which instead of being placed at the front, is set back towards the sanctuary. The steel pillars are finished in plaster then coated in scagliola resembling marble columns. St. Joseph Church without memorials cost \$95,700.

In June of 1910, Father William Hickey approached the parishioners with the idea of donating articles for the new church as a perpetual memorial. He reserved the three Archangel windows above the altar as his gift at a cost of \$400 each. The center Archangel Michael, was in memory of this mother and father. The Archangel Gabriel, to the left of Michael, was in memory of Rev. Wm. M Carey, former pastor of St. Gabriel's Church in Glendale, who was the first to encourage Father Hickey to study for the priesthood. Father Carey later became pastor of St. Joseph, was buried from here and is interred in Calvary Cemetery. The Archangel Raphael, to the right of Michael, was in memory of Rev. D. J. Kelly, pastor of St. Joseph from 1857 to his death in 1867.

Mrs. Catherine Pflaum donated the window over the confessional on the west side in memory of her husband George, who was founder of the Young Catholic Messenger. Mr. Timothy Harnett and family donated the window of the confessional on the east side of church. The 14 clerestory windows, which are the smaller upper windows rising to the roof, cost \$150 each. Dr. D. G. Reilly, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. H. Kemper and the Thomas B. Murphy family donated three of these beautiful windows. All of the stained glass for the windows of the church was designed by Nicolo d'Ascenzo of Philadelphia, a prominent designer. Over the doors leading to the tower is a small singing balcony which was used on occasion as a children's choir.

A semi-circular or barrel vault spans the nave of the church, which is 43 feet wide and stands 45 feet from the floor. The eight large windows in the nave of the church, at a cost of \$700 each, represent scenes from the life of Christ, notable his infancy. These windows were made possible through donations from: Mr. Maurice Costello and family, Mr. John A. Murphy, Mr. Edward Flaherty, Mrs. Mary P. F. Collier of New York City (in memory of her husband), and in memory of James Hartnett, the parish representative on the Calvary Cemetery Board.

The church, near completion, was consecrated on the Feast of St. Joseph on March 19, 1911 by Archbishop Henry K. Moeller. The only items that would not be installed at the consecration would be the altars and the other imported items.

The remaining months of the year record the giving of memorials and the gradual finishing of the interior of the church. In November the frescoing was completed and the old bell "Patrick" was placed in its frame in the tower. Architects McGinnis and Walsh of Boston donated the windows in the entrance to the bell tower. An interesting feature that could be easily overlooked in the subject of two small windows placed in the tower entrance. One depicts St. Peter in Chains Cathedral in Cincinnati, the other, the original St. Joseph Church.

In memory of his daughter Mary, Mr. M. W. Chambers donated the Sorrowful Mother shrine sculpted in marble by Mr. Joseph Sibbel in New York City. The pedestal, three stained glass windows in the shrine and the scagliola cost \$1350 in 1911. This "Pieta", representing the Mother of Sorrows holding the dead body of Christ, is a facsimile of Michelangelo's.

The Altars

The three altars arrived and were consecrated on December 23, 1911 by Archbishop Moeller. Every altar must contain a relic, thus recalling the days of persecution when Mass was offered in the Catacombs in Rome over the tombs of the martyrs. The Archbishop carefully procures and seals the relic from Rome. The authority of the Congregation of Rites guarantees their authenticity. As a special favor to our church, Archbishop Moeller placed in the high altar the relics of the Apostles, Saints Peter and Paul.

Mr. E. T. Hanley donated the right side altar of St. Joseph in memory of his father, Mr. Joseph Hanley, one of the pioneer members of St. Joseph Church. The altar contains the relics of Saints Aurelia and Julius, martyrs. The statue of St. Joseph was donated by John O'Neil, treasurer of the church, at a cost of \$350. The donation came in February of 1911.

The Young Ladies Sodality of St. Joseph Church donated the corresponding left side altar of the Blessed Virgin. This altar contains the relics of Saints, Probas and Julius, martyrs. Mrs. Maurice Costello donated the marble statue of our Blessed Mother on the left hand side altar of the church. It was made in Italy at a cost of \$300.

All three altars are made of Italian Carrara marble. The front panels are inlaid with delicately tinted Sienna marble, which are outlined and

enclosed in gold mosaic at a cost of \$1000 each. The two large columns on both sides of the tabernacle are adorned with large crosses, exquisitely wrought in gold. Above the tabernacle and on each columns are pelicans. The pelican, a symbol of Christ the Redeemer, is widely used in baroque art, the pelican is found frequently as an ornament on altars, pyxes, chalices, tabernacle doors, antependia and humeral veils. The angels on either side of the tabernacle are carved from solid blocks of pure Carrara marble. The steps of the sanctuary, as well as the bordering walls and the altar predella are of Italian marble.

The Memorials

In 1911, the Costello children, in honor of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Costello, donated the marble statue of the Sacred Heart, which is a symbol of God's love for us. The Baptismal Font arrived from Italy in June of 1911. It was originally installed in the rear of the church, but was relocated to the sanctuary. Mrs. Margaret Cain generously donated \$100 out of her life savings and an anonymous couple planning to wed in the church donated another \$50 for the statue of St. Patrick. St. Patrick is the beloved and patron saint of the Irish who founded St. Joseph Church.

At the time of the canonization of St. Teresa the Little Flower in 1925, the beautiful marble statue of her was installed in the niche in the vestibule of the church. At that time, the statue of St. Patrick was moved into the sanctuary where it is today.

In June of 1927, the original organ at St. Joseph played its last note. It was replaced with a fine two manual Kilgan organ at a cost of \$3600. This same organ is in the church today. In 1983 the organ was updated and refurbished. The window in the choir gallery and over the front entrance is the largest in the church and was a gift of the Altar Society in 1911.

In 1943, the Irish Archbishop McNicholas put the parish in the care of the predominantly German, Fathers of the Precious Blood. Father John Kraus assumed the pastorate, assisted by Father Victor Kreinbrink. This order has served St. Joseph Parish ever since.

In July of 1990, the statue of St. Gaspar Del Bufalo, founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood (C.P.P.S.), was presented to the parish as a memorial to Father Joseph Zimerle C.P.P.S. who died in July of 1990 and pastored the Church from June 1974 to January of 1988. The small statue is located near the confessional on the west side of the church.

The Renovation

In July of 1996 Father Louis Osterhage, C.P.P.S. became the pastor of St. Joseph Church. He immediately began to make preparations for the much needed restoration of the church. First, air conditioning was installed in June of 1997. Then on July 16, 1997 the Department of Financial services of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati under the directions of Howard P. Pecquet gave approval to contract with Conrad Schmitt Studios, Inc. of Wisconsin for painting the interior of the church and the restoration of the stained glass windows. The work of restoration began in early January of 1998. The entire ceiling was covered with fiberglass before painting which accounts for the smooth looking finish. The stained glass windows were removed and taken to Conrad Schmitt Studios in Wisconsin for the repair of broken glass and then were reloaded. A special clear storm window was installed on the outside of the windows enhancing the beauty of the nativity scenes featured in the stained glass windows on the sides or nave of the church. A sizeable amount of gold leaf was applied to the angels, the capital of the pillars, and the arches along the side aisle in order to highlight their significance. The statues were cleaned using a special type of gel which seeps into the various cracks of the statues removing all the dirt. This cleaning process restores the statues to their natural beauty. The restoration was completed in July of 1999.

In early 2000 six statues of white Carrara marble were ordered from Italy. Following the original design of the church, Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John filled the waiting outside platforms of St. Joseph Church. At 5 feet 8 inches, the four outside statues weigh about 900 pounds each and were designed to fit into the small platforms on the exterior walls. Using an extended forklift, the statues were nudged into place. Saints Peter and Paul, each at 4 feet and 7 inches tall, were designed to look down to the altar. Each weighing between 400-500 pounds, they were a bit easier to maneuver into the interior spaces. Each of the statues were purchased through donations. The installation of these statues in late July completed the original architectural vision of St. Joseph Church.

The beautiful and unique shrine to our patron saint, St. Joseph the Worker, is predominately placed outside the church. The statue was donated in April of 1965. The only cost to the parish was to provide the pedestal.

Also located outside the church to the left of the front entrance, is a memorial to Mary, Mother of the Unborn. Dedicated on May 20, 2001, this monument was a gift from the Greater Dayton Chapter of the Knights of Columbus.

Thank you for taking time to learn more about the historic and beautiful St. Joseph Church. We hope you have enjoyed your visit and we welcome your return. May God bless you, keep you and hold you in the hollow of his hand.