

# THE INTERIOR OF SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH: AN OUTLINE OF ITS HISTORY

Compiled by Daniel DeGreve

(Draft Version)

- 1892 Church was dedicated with great ceremonial pomp amid a thronging crowd of county citizenry by the Right Reverend Ignatius F. Horstmann, Bishop of Cleveland, upon the furnishing of the church's white oak altars, altarpieces, communion rail, and ambo, as well as its stained-glass windows (existing today) and stenciled interior. Several shrines appear in circa 1911 photographs, including Saint Anthony of Padua with the Child Jesus on the BVM side and Saint Ann with the Child Mary on the SJ side. Two smaller statues appear to set on pedestals near the communion rail, but are hard to identify – perhaps Our Lady, Queen of Heaven and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. All of the statues in the church, in fact, set on wood pedestals and were not wall-mounted. The Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph statues of today would seem to be the originals, judging by these photographs.
- 1904 Pipe organ was installed (mechanical tracker-type).
- 1915 Decoration was undertaken (extent unknown) and new light fixtures were installed.
- 1933-35 Renovation was undertaken. Likely, the Gothic-style lantern and the ceiling-mounted baffle-type light fixtures were installed at this time (existing today).
- 1940 New stile-and-rail wood doors were installed at church entrances. This accompanied the Perma-stone work on the exterior and the construction of the North and South Vestibules that link the Sacristies to the Transepts.
- 1943 Acoustic wood-fiber tile (*Zenitherm*™) was applied to the walls and ceiling, along with the pressed walnut wainscot. New pews and clergy seating in the Sanctuary were installed (existing today). The wood *sedile*, or priests' bench, is currently situated in the Choir Loft and the current celebrant's chair likely dates from this time as well; it originally served as the *faldstool* for the bishop during his visits to the parish.
- 1944-45 White oak altars, altarpieces, and communion rail were replaced with Botticino marble appointments. New high altar tabernacle (existing today) and Eucharistic Reposition tabernacle were acquired, and the red velvet curtain (*dossal*), altar canopy (*tester*), and suspended crucifix (existing today on sunburst) were installed, which all closely matched the prototypical altar furnishings depicted in a contemporary issue of *Liturgical Arts* magazine. Marble slab flooring was installed in the Sanctuary and terrazzo flooring poured in the Nave and Narthex (existing today beneath carpet). New statues were likely set up at this time, including the lamp-bearing angels under the Sanctuary arch, Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Saint Therese of Lisieux. The wall-mounted corbels supporting the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph statues were also acquired at this time.

- 1951 A Connsonata electric organ was installed.
- 1952 Heating system for the church was changed over from coal-fuelled to gas-fuelled.
- 1961 Votive candle rack in front of the Blessed Virgin side altar was acquired through memorial contribution. (Small candle rack existing today)
- 1968-69 Renovation was undertaken to remove the communion rail, dossal, tester, Reposition tabernacle, and most of the statues, as well as the Baptismal font and the holy water stoup in the Narthex. The high altar was moved forward to allow for the *versus populum* posture of the celebrant at Mass. The high altar tabernacle was relocated to the BVM altar, a new font by James and William Klopfenstein was situated on the SJ altar, and the statues of the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph were moved to the side walls while the altar alcoves were fitted with illuminated panels made by the Klopfensteins. An ambo, lectern, and two new credence tables also were made by the brothers (existing today). Communion rail gates were re-erected as makeshift prayer desks in front of the side altars. The tiled walls and ceiling, as well as the ornamental plaster elements, were uniformly whitewashed. Dark brown painting of the solid oak interior doors and casings may have occurred at this time. The wall passages in the Sanctuary that provided the acolytes and sacristan with discreet access to the Sacristies were blocked and masked with tile and wainscot. Carpet was installed in the Nave, Narthex, side vestibules, and Choir Loft (existing today).
- c. 1970 Pipe organ console from the Schantz Co. of Orrville, Ohio was installed.
- 1971 New Stations of the Cross in the form of mobiles were made by James Klopfenstein to replace the original plaster, tableau-type cycle.
- 1976 A contemporary Reconciliation room was constructed by James Horning in the South Transept to replace one of the two traditional confessionals. It featured two penitent cubicles, one for screen and the other for face-to-face confessions.
- 1983 Interior was repainted with a two-color palette consisting of a tan-yellow for the walls and ceiling, and a dark gray for the ornamental plaster pendant bosses of the ceiling (existing today). The two pendant bosses above the Choir Loft rail apparently were removed at this time. The church was also insulated and rewired.
- 1984 Four ceiling fans were installed in the Nave.
- 1985 James and William Klopfenstein crafted and installed a back-lit 60" x 96" wood sunburst tableau for the Sanctuary crucifix, which had remained suspended from above after the removal of the dossal in the '60's. During the 1970's and early '80's, the Klopfensteins also made the hymn directory stand in the Sanctuary and pipe organ screen in the Choir Loft (existing today), as well as a banner standard.
- 1986 The Vocation Plaque was installed on the north wall of the Narthex.

- 1987           Spiral-type votive candle rack in front of the Blessed Virgin altar was acquired through memorial contribution (existing today).
- 1988           The wood stile-and-rail entrance doors (1940) were replaced with faux-paneled, faux-wood-grained metal doors.
- 1993/94       New wall-mounted track-light fixtures replaced earlier chromatic spotlight fixtures in the Sanctuary. A matching lantern light with attached spotlight for illuminating the Sanctuary oculus was installed directly over the high altar. Artificial trees were set up behind the altar in the Sanctuary following the relocation of the American and Papal flags to the Narthex.
- 1993/94       The mobile-sculpture Stations of the Cross (1971) were replaced with tableau-type Stations from Saint Joseph Church in Marblehead, Ohio. Acquisition of two-tier votive candle rack was made through memorial contribution (existing today).
- 1994           A new electronic sound amplification system was installed. A motorized driver for the bell in the tower was also installed. Both were memorial contribution gifts.
- 1994/95       An extensive amount of wall, ceiling, and ornamental plaster collapsed in the Choir Loft. Repairs to the exterior Perma-stone on the bell tower followed in 1995.
- c. 1995        New Baptismal font was acquired (existing today). The Reconciliation room in the South Transept (1976) was dismantled and replaced by the pre-existing traditional confessional, which was transferred from its location in the North Transept and subsequently modified to allow for one face-to-face penitent cubicle. The use of the North Transept was converted to chair seating for those in need of it following the provision of the accessibility ramp outside the North Vestibule.
- c. 1997        The metal faux-paneled entrance doors facing Thoman Street (1988) were replaced with dark ribbed-metal doors (existing today) after showing signs of rust.
- c. 1999        New Stations of the Cross cycle was acquired and installed (existing today) to replace the one from Marblehead (1993/94), which now hangs in the new Parish Office.
- 2001           Artificial trees (1993/94) were removed from the Sanctuary.
- 2010           New Sacred Heart of Jesus statue commissioned in the winter by an anonymous donor and blessed on Divine Mercy Sunday, 11 April.

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#### SOURCES

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