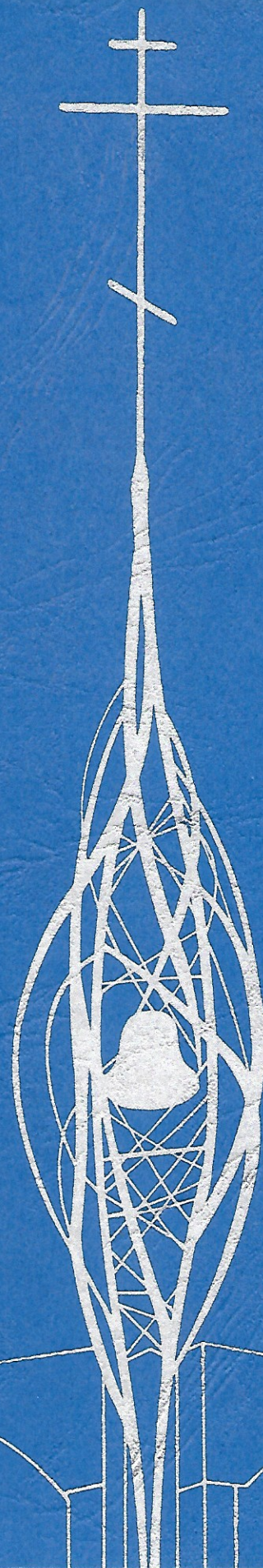


St. Mary's

**Catholic Church
of the
Byzantine Rite**

New York City





ST. MARY'S CHURCH AT NIGHT

A breathtaking sight in New York City. Shimmering walls of color pierce the night, bathing a city corner in their glow.

The Art and Architecture of St. Mary's Church

As they read these words, the established parishioners of an old parish—St. Mary's Catholic Church of the Byzantine Rite—are forming a relationship with a new and remarkable building.

This, their new spiritual home, is not only distinctive in its congregation and in its priests, but is also notable for its design and designer, its location, its construction and its uses.

A church is a building with a definite purpose, a purpose discernible in its lines and shape, its ornamentation and the materials of which it is built. But it is also, in the purely technical sense, a structure, subject to limitations imposed by its site, its surroundings and legal requirements.

This interplay between the ideas of a church as a true House of God, and a church as simply a distinctive kind of physical building, is perpetually fascinating. Great challenges face the designer of a church. If he is only technically proficient, the building will be only technically a church. But if the hand with which he draws is guided by faith, his design will take on a spiritual character and express the aspirations, hopes and faith of many.

In the pages that follow, there will be some references to technical details—details of foundation work, details of modern stained glass construction. The combination of these details is St. Mary's Church; study of them, study of how they interact and contribute to the whole church will heighten the appreciation of not only a technical but also a truly creative achievement.

With the selection of Brother Cajetan J. B. Baumann, O.F.M., as the architect for the new St. Mary's Church, the plans and hopes of many years began to bear fruit. The work of any architect is, of course, a reflection of the architect's own concepts as well as his understanding of the needs and desires of those for whom he creates his building. In order to fully appreciate the architectural achieve-



Brother Cajetan J. B. Baumann, O.F.M.



ST. MARY OUR PROTECTOR

The exquisite facade mosaic shows St. Mary, to whom the church is dedicated, in an interpretation traditional to the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite. It was designed by Felix Senger of the Conrad Schmitt Studios.

ment of St. Mary's Church itself, it is important to know something of the architect.

Brother Cajetan is a slight, silver-haired man with the face and hands of an artist. He is 63 years old, but his vision is perpetually young and fresh. For nearly a quarter-century he has studied and practiced the art of building.

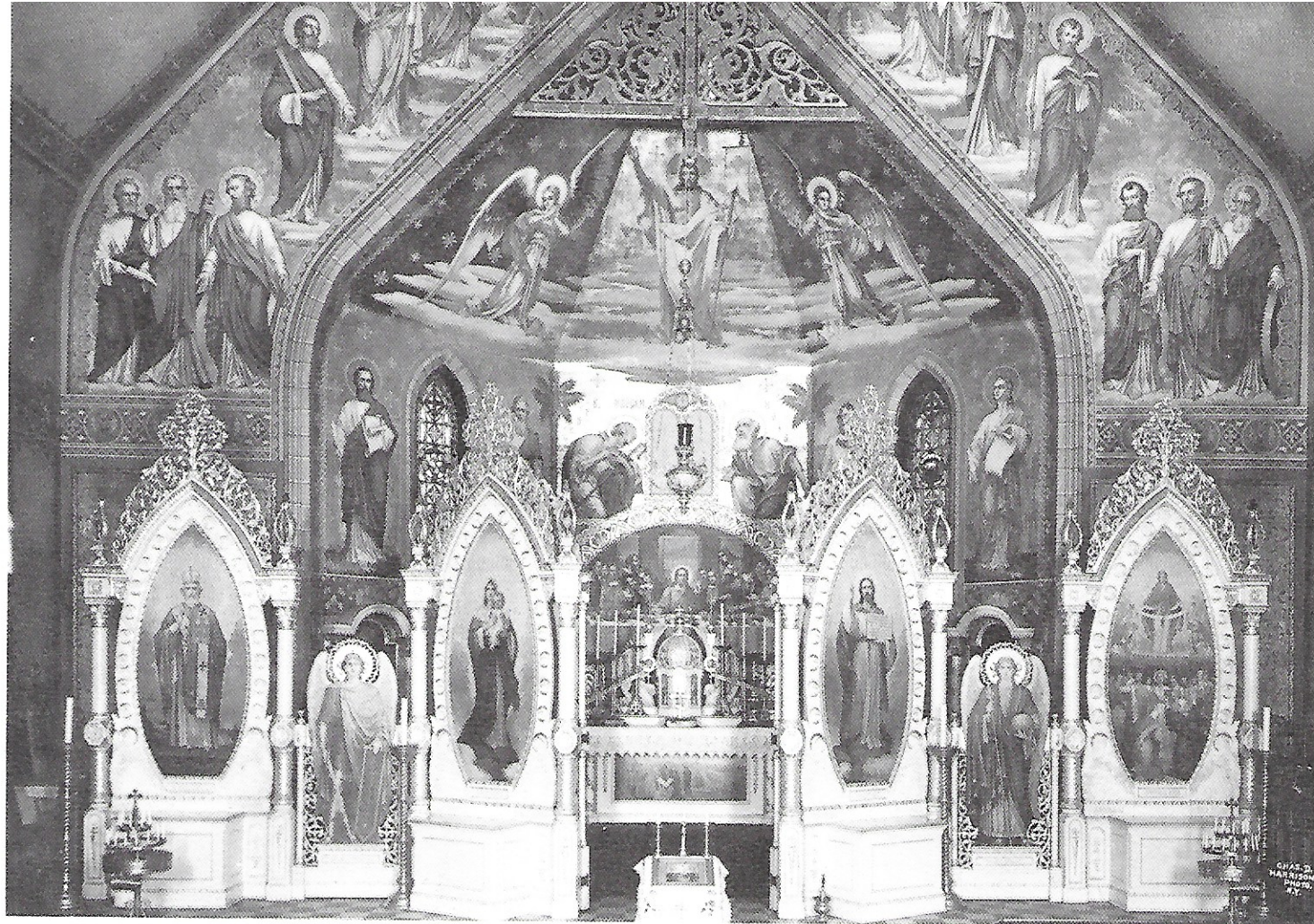
A member of a prominent construction family in Germany, he was born at Ravensburg, near the Lake of Constance, in 1899. Among his tutors was a well-known architect, and during World War I, he served in the Kaiser's forces as an engineer. His future as an architect and builder was assured, had he so chosen. He brought to the profession of building not only technical, but artistic skill. As a boy he had learned the arts of wood-carving and cabinet-making, and he is still known as a wood sculptor of repute.

But he was wearied by the war. A year after the Armistice he entered the Franciscan Order in Gorheim. And in 1925, he was sent to the United States. In Paterson, New Jersey, he taught the art of wood-carving and cabinet-making at St. Bonaventure's School. It is a happy coincidence, of particular interest to parishioners of St. Mary's, that in 1928, Brother Cajetan founded the first Confraternity of Mary, Queen of All Hearts, in this country, at the church of St. Francis of Assisi in New York.

For more than a decade, until 1936, Brother Cajetan continued to teach at St. Bonaventure's. But as his interest in and talent for architecture became known to his superiors, it was decided that he should be helped to realize these talents and at last, at the advanced age, for a student, of 37 years, he was enrolled at Columbia University. Four years later, he was graduated with second highest honors in the profession and quickly earned a master's degree.

During his career, for most of which he has been head of the Office of Franciscan Art and Architecture with offices in New York's Whitehall Building, this humble man has been repeatedly honored by both his religious and lay colleagues for a vast number of beautiful designs. His churches, shrines, monasteries, rectories, schools, seminaries, hospitals and retreat houses can be found throughout the East and the Midwest United States, in South America, in Canada and in the Holy Land itself.

Continued



The Old Church as it appeared in the 1930's

The Site of the New Church at 2nd Avenue and 15th Street as it appeared for more than 50 years.





THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE AND THE PANTOCRATOR MOSAIC

The beautiful mosaic reredos for the altar is a modern version of Christ the Judge, traditional to Eastern Rite churches. Felix Senger of Conrad Schmitt Studios designed the mosaics as well as the faceted glass window walls. The altar's twelve columns, symbolizing the Apostles, support the Mensa denoting Christ. The Tabernacle is a replica of St. Mary's Church.

He is considered, in his fresh use of new materials and employment of new concepts in decoration, to have almost single-handedly revolutionized ecclesiastical architecture in this century. The apex of his religious rewards is surely a warm personal commendation from Pope John XXIII, while the nation's architects have conferred upon him the unique honor, for a religious, of membership in the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architecture.

This, then, is the man who designed St. Mary's. Asked to set forth some of the principles which guided him in its design, Brother Cajetan responded with admirable succinctness and inspiration. Here is his response in full:

"The problem: A church, a rectory and an auditorium to be erected in a very limited and restricted area of New York City.

The solution: therefore called for three buildings placed into one structure. The first thought was to place the rectory on top of the church and the auditorium below. However, in studying the problem more closely, it was found that it would be much more expensive to add the additional weight of the rectory on top of the church than to build it separately. Studies were made to that effect, but the site restriction was such that too much of the valuable space for the church was lost. Therefore, the final solution was to locate the rectory at about street level, the auditorium below the rectory and the church above the rectory. This unique solution proved to be a sensible and economical one. Easy access to the rectory, as well as to the other elements, was important, and thereby achieved.

The church: This edifice was to be dedicated to Mary, Mother of God. Sacred Scripture applies the words of the Psalmist to Our Lady: 'All the beauty of the King's daughter is from within.' Taking this text as the basis of the design for this church, we tried to focus all the glory and beauty of this edifice within this sacred enclosure.

Continued



THE NEW ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Dominated by its jewel-like faceted glass window-walls and the Pantocrator mosaic, the church is aglow with rich color. Restraint in the use of other decoration creates a quiet atmosphere for worship. The suspended ceiling of separate fiberglass domes is a modern interpretation of the typical Byzantine dome.

Of course, a great deal of thought was also given the exterior. Nevertheless, the interior was to sparkle, like so many diamonds set into Our Lady's crown. In all Her beauty, she embraces Her Divine Son, who is to be offered up daily upon the Altar of Sacrifice. Beauty and sacrifice, Calvary and glory, are mysteriously united in the triumph of Resurrection. This theme is expressed in the jewel-like windows and the heroic mosaics surrounding the Altar of Sacrifice.

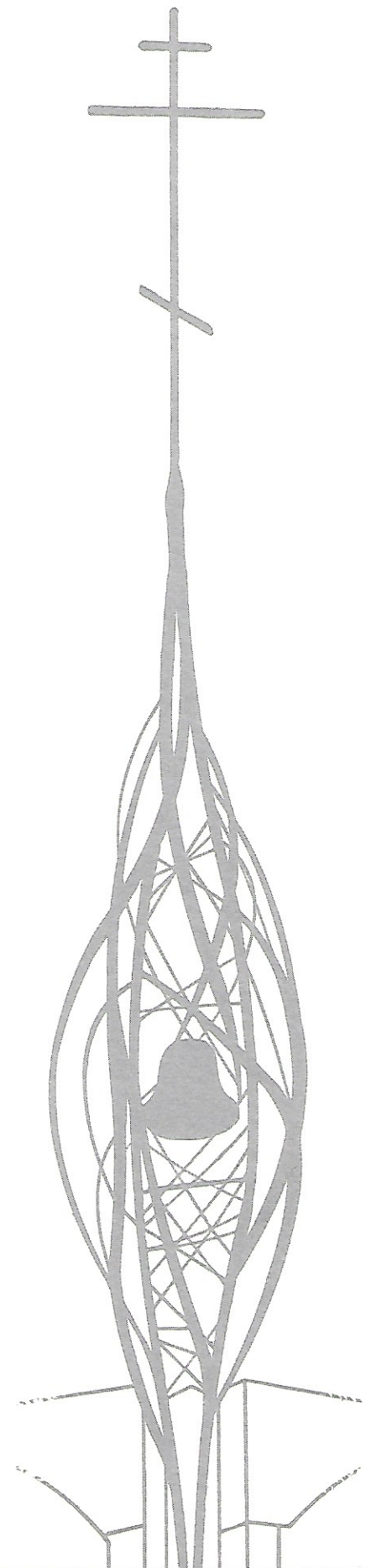
This Altar is supported by twelve columns, the mensa symbolizing Christ Himself, the columns the Apostles, upon which the early Christian church was built.

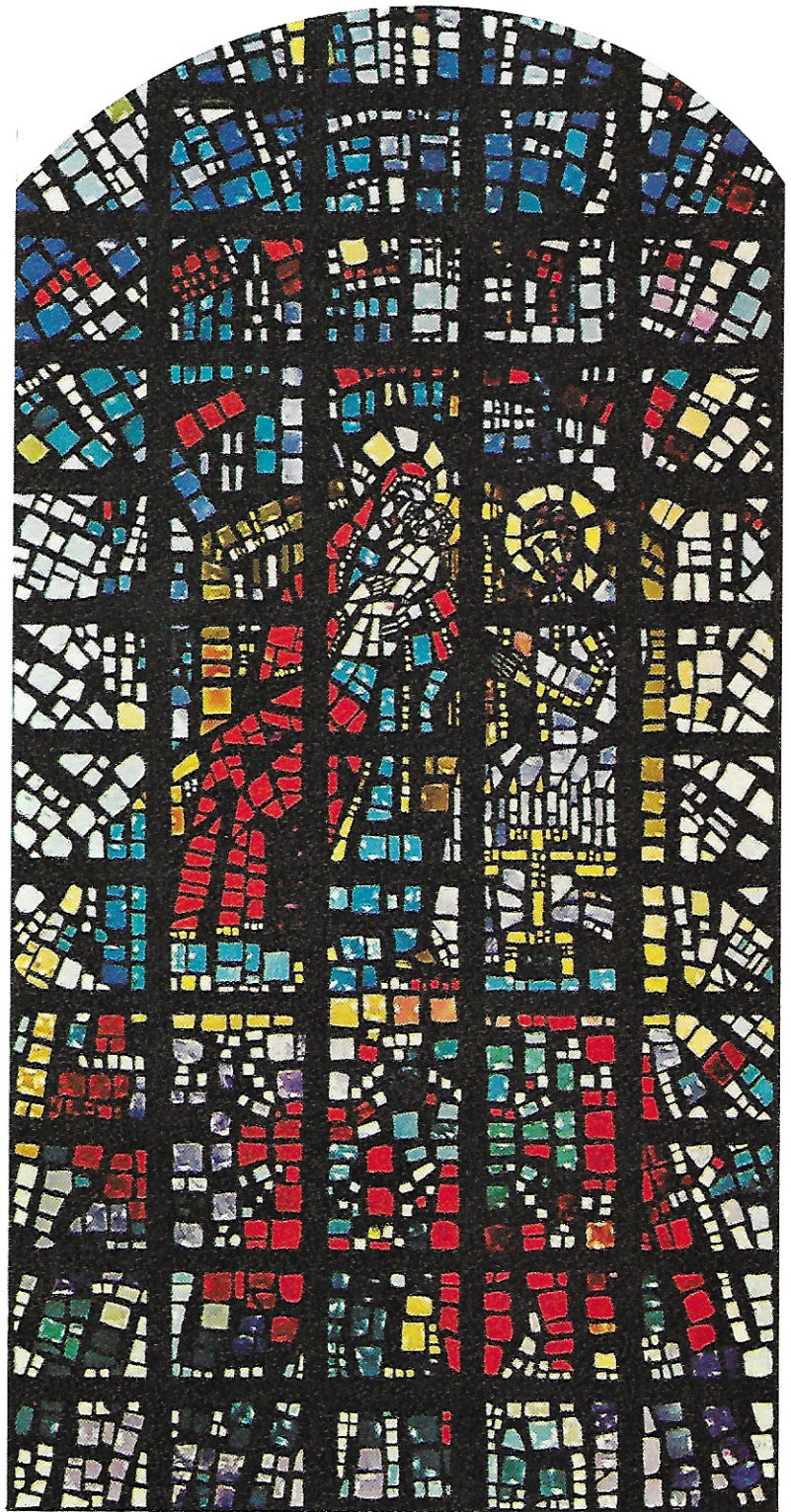
A secondary altar, called the Altar of Preparation or Prothesis, is located on the left side of the Sanctuary. It is here that the bread and wine for the Sacrifice of the Mass is prepared. A similar altar, called the Deacon's Altar, is on the other side of the Sanctuary. Both of these altars, while considerably smaller than the Altar of Sacrifice, have a similar design motif to the latter.

The Tabernacle on the Altar of Sacrifice follows tradition in that it is a reproduction in miniature of the Church itself. The door of the Tabernacle is finished in multi-colored enamels with the depiction of Mary the Protectress, which is the mosaic over the main entrance to the Church.

In the near future, a Baldachin will surmount the Altar of Sacrifice and an Iconostasis will define the Sanctuary area. The Baldachin will be in bronze and will have a canopy of the same jewel-like glass used in the windows. The Icon Screen will also be in bronze, designed in a very open manner so that the altars will not be totally hidden from view. The Icons in the screen will again be in the thick colored glass, thus visually relating this screen with the Baldachin and the stained glass windows.

The entire north wall of the Church is dedicated to Our Lady. As mentioned above, the exterior mosaic over the main entrance depicts Mary the Protectress. Flanking this mosaic are the stained glass windows showing the Immaculate Conception and the Maternity of Our Blessed Lady.





NATIVITY OF MARY

St. Anne and Joachim are seated upon a throne-chair, Anne holding the infant Mary. The seven-branched candelabra in the lower section serves to remind us that they were living under the law of the Old Testament. In the background there is an indication of the village in which they lived.

The east wall is entirely in stained glass with the northernmost panel showing the Baptism of Christ. The windows are: Christ preaching the Sermon on the Mount, the Crucifixion, the Ascension of Our Lord and the Descent of the Holy Ghost. The artist has chosen colors complementing the tenor of each scene.

There is a large mosaic of Christ the Judge (the Pantocrator) which forms the reredos for the Altar of Sacrifice. This, too, is in keeping with the rich tradition of the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite.

The fleche on the northeast corner of the Church is a modern free interpretation of a time honored form associated with the Eastern Church, the onion dome. The bell in the fleche is the original bell from the old St. Mary's Church.

Since the liturgical ceremonies at St. Mary's are of the Byzantine Rite, the general character is Byzantine. No statuary of any kind is permitted. All decorative elements are expressed simply, and symbolically, in materials of mosaic, glass and color.

St. Mary's Church represents an attempt to interpret, in contemporary terms, the traditions of the art and architecture of this most beautiful Rite of the Catholic Church."

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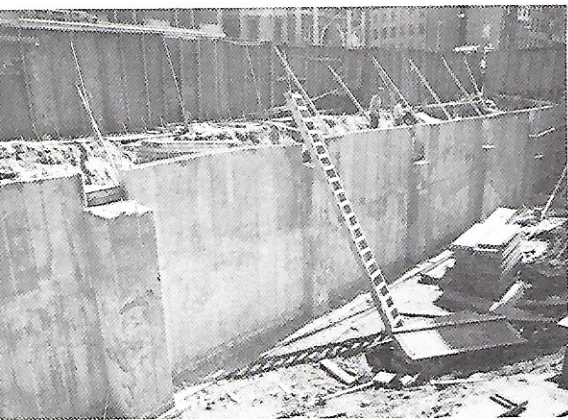
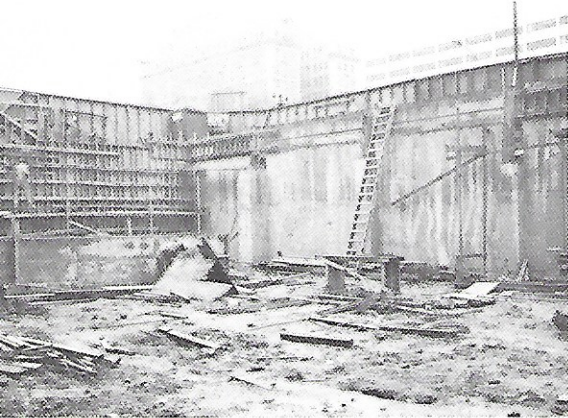
ST. MARY'S BELL TOWER, "Mast-Sculpture" by Jan Peter Stern, gradually took shape in Mr. Stern's Hastings-on-Hudson studio. Almost two tons of stainless steel were welded into a continuous 50 foot structure. The sculpture's central area which houses the old bronze bell from the former church, is built to move with the wind. Its spiraling bands of polished spring stainless steel entwine the duller surface of the rigid structure. The contrast between these elements will become more noticeable as time passes.

In Mr. Stern's words: "The spire represents a fusion of the two styles most characteristic of my work—rigid symmetric structure and lyric flexible form. Rising 80 feet above the sidewalk, it is the architectural element most strongly relating the exterior of the church to its Byzantine heritage."



THE CHURCH AND ITS BELL TOWER

By day, the church's window-walls form a striking pattern, with the dominant motif of each window clearly visible, though the faceted glass is unlighted. The soaring, distinctive bell tower, designed by the sculptor, Jan Peter Stern, is a modern adaption of the familiar Eastern Church onion dome. This most modern church of one of the oldest religious Rites presents a stunning contrast in its city setting.



Demolition of the parish center to make way for the new church began in 1960, and in June, 1961, groundbreaking took place. Considerable difficulty in laying the foundation was immediately encountered. Although the island of Manhattan has a strong backbone of rock, into which many of the city's skyscrapers are firmly rooted, there are a number of semi-marshy areas where this backbone bends far below the surface of the ground. For example, the present Canal Street once traversed a marshy meadow and, indeed, there was once a canal between the East and North Rivers along its route. The waters surrounding Manhattan have been held in check by extensive landfill work, but there are still places where, at high tides in windy weather, they lap over into riverside streets and in many locations, builders have become used to striking unwanted water and mud instead of firm bedrock.

This was the case in excavation for the new St. Mary's church. A soupy mixture of mud and water that would hardly have supported a stone for very long, much less a church, began to rise through the bottom of the new excavation, much as sea water fills a hole dug in the sand near the seashore. The bedrock was far below, some 30 feet beneath the planned floor of the new church basement.

Contractors have long since solved this problem, because space on Manhattan Island is too precious to spare. The solution is to drive piles — long wooden timbers shaped like telephone poles or, in some cases, steel beams — down to bedrock and build upon them.

The new church now stands upon these sturdy legs, much as a man stands upon his own. But driving piles is an additional expense, and it was further required that underpinnings be put beneath buildings adjacent to the church. These unanticipated costs added \$65,000 to the cost of the new church and required certain changes in the plans. Happily, the problems were eventually solved and construction was resumed.

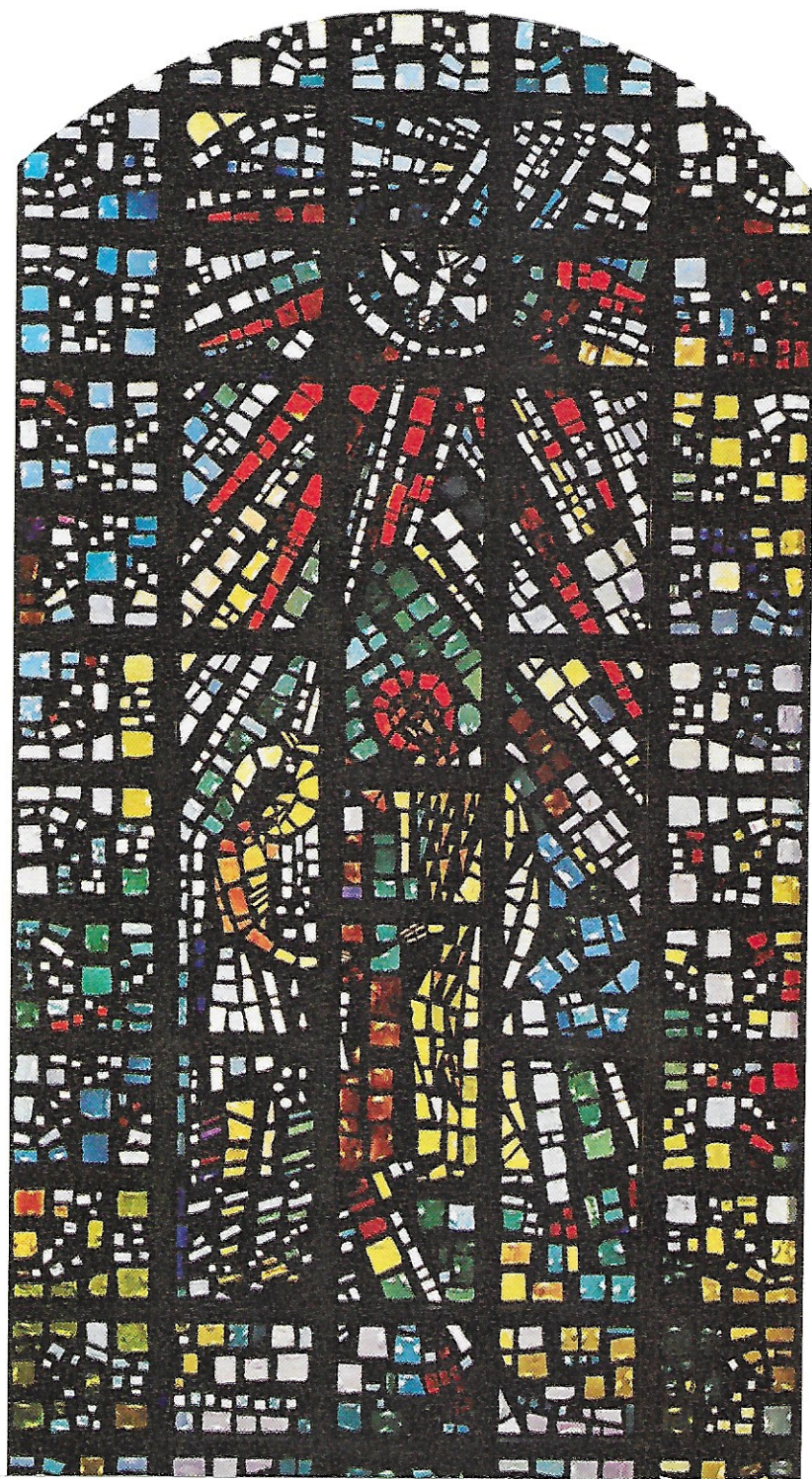
As it stands today, already in regular use by worshippers, the new St. Mary's is one of the artistic achievements of New York, already famed as a world cultural center.

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To the passerby, of course, the most immediately-striking features of the new church are the towering walls of

BAPTISM OF JESUS

Jesus is shown standing in the River Jordan, in an attitude of humility and obedience, as John the Baptist, wearing an animal pelt, pours water on His head. At the same time, rays from the symbol of the Holy Spirit—as expressed by the dove—descend upon the head of Christ as the heavens open and the voice of God proclaims: "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

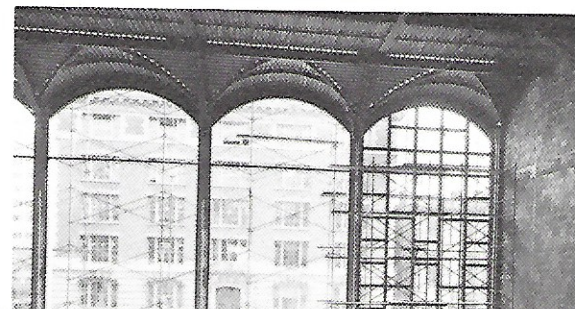


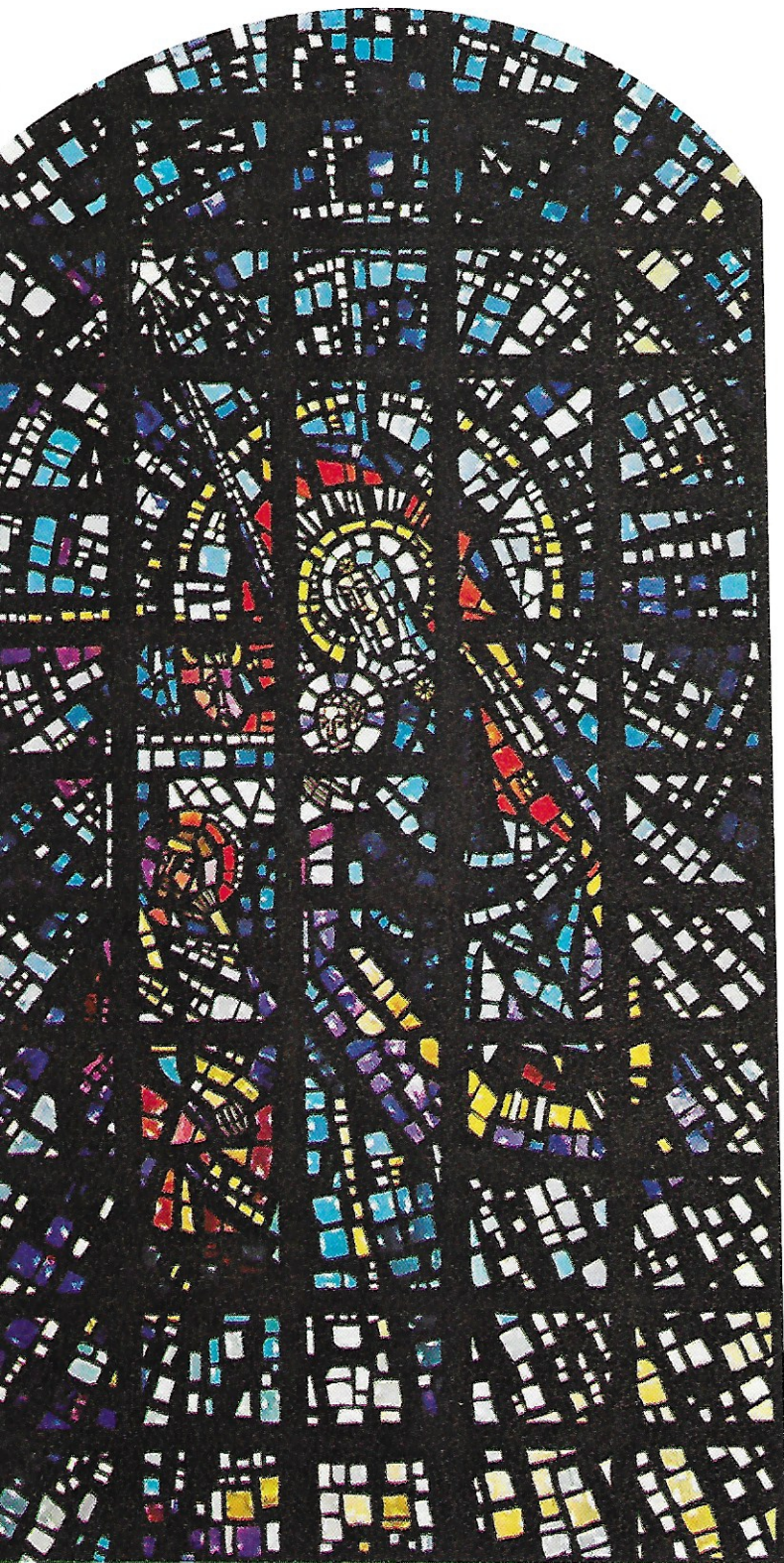
stained glass which dominate its two street sides. They are the most impressive, even overwhelming elements in the church, and, like the church itself, are the result of conferences between thoughtful men, who never forgot this was to be a house of worship used by living people with an old tradition.

The composition of all the windows, and the interior and exterior mosaics, was basically developed after the Byzantine-Slavonic tradition, which is closely bound with the style of the icons. The subjects depicted were selected by Father Dano. It was the important thought of the architect, Brother Cajetan, to have the glass designed as a single unit, a wall. Brother Cajetan, always the artistic innovator, has recently introduced to this country the use of "chunk" stained glass, in which huge, irregular pieces of colored glass are imbedded in concrete, forming breathtaking designs under the play of light. The St. Mary's windows are not of this unusual, abstract nature, but neither are they of the traditional, delicate, ornate style. By agreement of Brother Cajetan, Father Dano, and with helpful consultation with His Excellency, Bishop Elko, they are windows of "faceted glass".

Made by the Conrad Schmitt Studios of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the windows incorporate special techniques developed by them to adapt the ancient art to modern church construction. The artist, Felix Senger, is a designer with more than a quarter-century of experience. In association with the Conrad Schmitt Studios, he has executed windows in outstanding churches throughout the United States, and previously created more than 120 windows in various churches in Europe. To achieve St. Mary's window-walls, Mr. Senger has intermingled colors with neutral grays, and they seemingly flow from one window to the next, though each window has its own subject and color accent, reaching the climax in the rich purple of the central window, that depicting the suffering Christ.

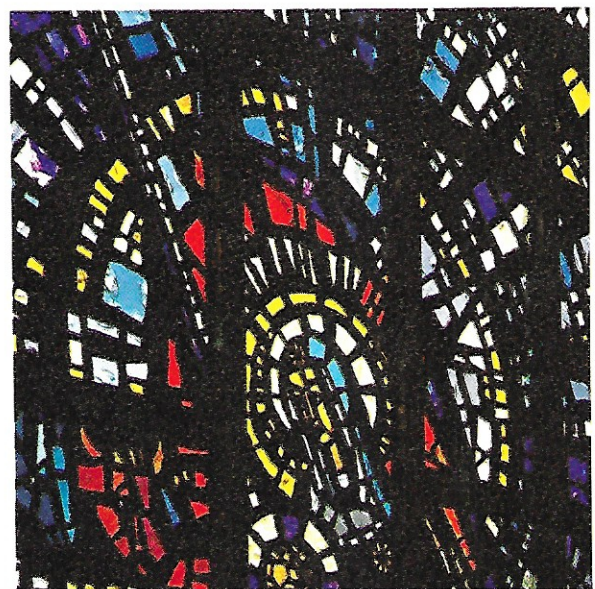
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NATIVITY OF JESUS

This is composed so that the heads of Mary and Jesus form the focal point of the window. At the Nativity of Christ, the light of Christianity came into the world, and the haloes of Mary and Jesus are elaborated and drawn out into concentric circles to express this thought of the expanding light of the world. Light from the Star of David falls upon the head of the Child in the manger. The golden star at Mary's head and on her shoulders are related only to her, and distinguish her clearly from St. Anne in the first window. Mary is seated in the stable, with straw at her feet, after the style of the icons. There are the two animals, the traditional ox and ass, and the seated figure of St. Joseph.



*Detail
Faceting*

Appropriately, thick colored glass, as contrasted with the thinner glass held together by lead framing used in the most familiar stained glass windows, dates back to artists of ancient Byzantium.

These artists, skilled makers of mosaics, discovered the beauty of designs made by cutting through walls and emplacing glass as window lights. But it was not until the widespread use in America of concrete, concrete block and glass for major structural construction that this ancient technique was revived here on a broad scale. The development of newer materials of even greater strength than concrete added a strong impetus. Such a material is epoxy resin. The great strength of epoxy resin, in particular, makes it possible to unite it as a binder material with glass in such a way that what would ordinarily be a monumental wall becomes a rippling, luminescent curtain of color that almost seems to move in the slightest breath.

The magical effect is the result of careful work and planning, careful placement of the glass, sculpturing or "faceting" its inner surface to disperse the light.

To achieve the faceted glass window-wall in St. Mary's Church, the designer first prepared color sketches of the proposed windows from which full size patterns, called "cartoons", were made to visualize the overall effect as well as to serve as guides for the placing of the glass.

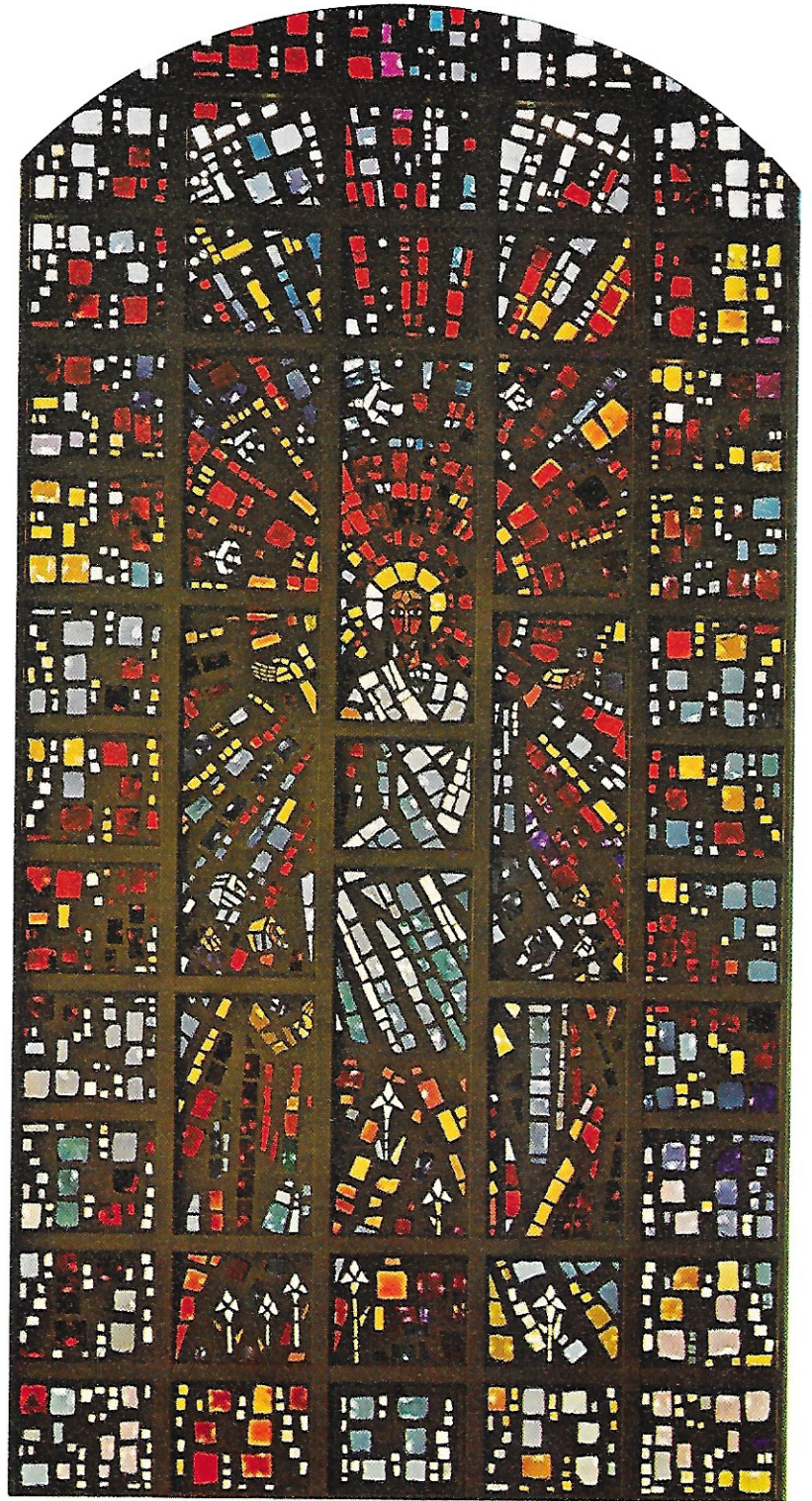
It is interesting to note that, because of the unusually encompassing area of St. Mary's window-walls, it was necessary to obtain use of the largest gymnasium in Milwaukee to inspect the cartoons in proper relative position. With the cartoons arranged on the gymnasium floor, the artist and craftsmen surveyed the total effect, for the first time, perched high in the bleachers!

With the cartoons completed, the actual work on the windows began with the choice of glass. Much of the beauty of faceted glass windows depends not only upon the color and shade of the glass, but also upon the thickness of the binding area. In the most traditional stained glass, complicated designs — facial features for example — are drawn into the surface of a "matted" piece of glass, a piece covered with some material which is scraped away with a sharp-pointed instrument. Here, the degree of shading is relatively easy to control.

Continued

THE TEACHING CHRIST

The theme is taken from the Sermon on the Mount, depicting the seated Christ, His hands extended. Below His figure and at either side are groups of people, listening to the Sermon. Incidents in the Sermon which are stressed symbolically are: "Love your enemies and do good to them that hate you. . .that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust", depicted by the sun, with drops of rain; "No man can serve God and Mamon . . .behold the birds of the air. . .are you not of much more value than they?", depicted by birds flying into rays of the sun; "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. . .how much more O ye of little faith.?", lilies shown in the lower section of the window; and "You are the light of the world . . .let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven", rays emanate from the sun.





*The Rectory Living Room
and Dining Room
The Social Hall*



On faceted glass, there is no matting material. Shading is accomplished by increasing the width of the binding areas. Some areas of St. Mary's windows actually contain nearly an equal proportion of glass and binding, and yet appear nearly entirely glass, so dazzling is the total effect. To control this dazzling effect is a continual challenge to the designer of a faceted glass window.

The glass for the windows was cast in slabs, up to an inch or more thick, far thicker than that in leaded windows. The slabs are known as dalles, from the French word meaning a flagstone or a slab of marble. The dalles were then cut to the shapes drawn by the artist. Next began the delicate job of chipping, or "faceting" one side, that side which makes up part of the inner walls of the church in which the windows are set.

This work is obviously not as delicate an operation as the cutting of a diamond, but the shaping of both a diamond and the faceted glass has the same purpose—to scatter the entering light and disperse it in different directions, to create the effect of a jewel.

The completed sections of glass were then carefully placed within steel frames and reinforcing rods were bent to fit between the sections to support the binding, in the same way that reinforcing rods are carefully wired into place before the pouring of concrete for buildings—St. Mary's Church, for example.

The binder material is epoxy resin in the St. Mary's windows. The resulting walls of glass and binder sections are strong, weatherproof and exquisitely beautiful. They will stand for as long as the church.

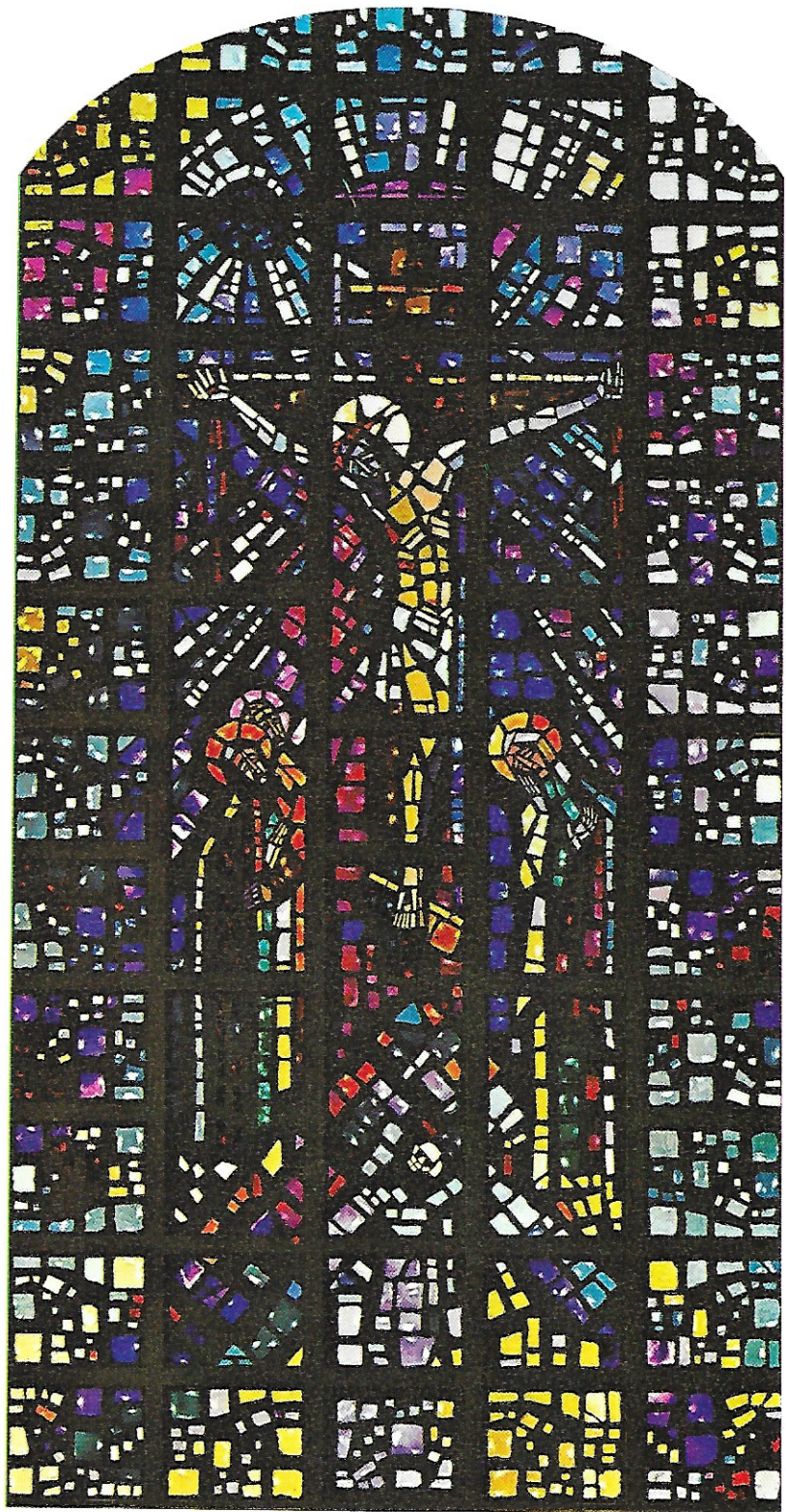
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The art of St. Mary's Church, as expressed in its glorious windows and mosaics, is rich in symbolism. In the words of Felix Senger: "An artist always finds great inspiration in working with the symbolism of an Eastern Rite church such as St. Mary's. It has such a rich cultural

Continued

THE SUFFERING CHRIST

Here the violet color, the liturgical color related to the Passion, is used. Jesus is shown upon a cross with three bars—that of the Greek Ruthenian tradition—the Eastern Cross. Drops of blood fall from His sacred hands. Mary, John and Mary Magdalen are at the foot of the cross. At the base there is a skull, reminding us that this is Golgotha. There is also the tradition that the skull of Adam was transported under the cross of Christ.



tradition in addition to the basic liturgical symbolism of the Catholic Church that there is endless stimulation to an artist's mind. For instance, the Byzantine-Slavonic interpretation of the Resurrection differs from the Roman concept, and readily lends itself to an entirely new experience for the artist."

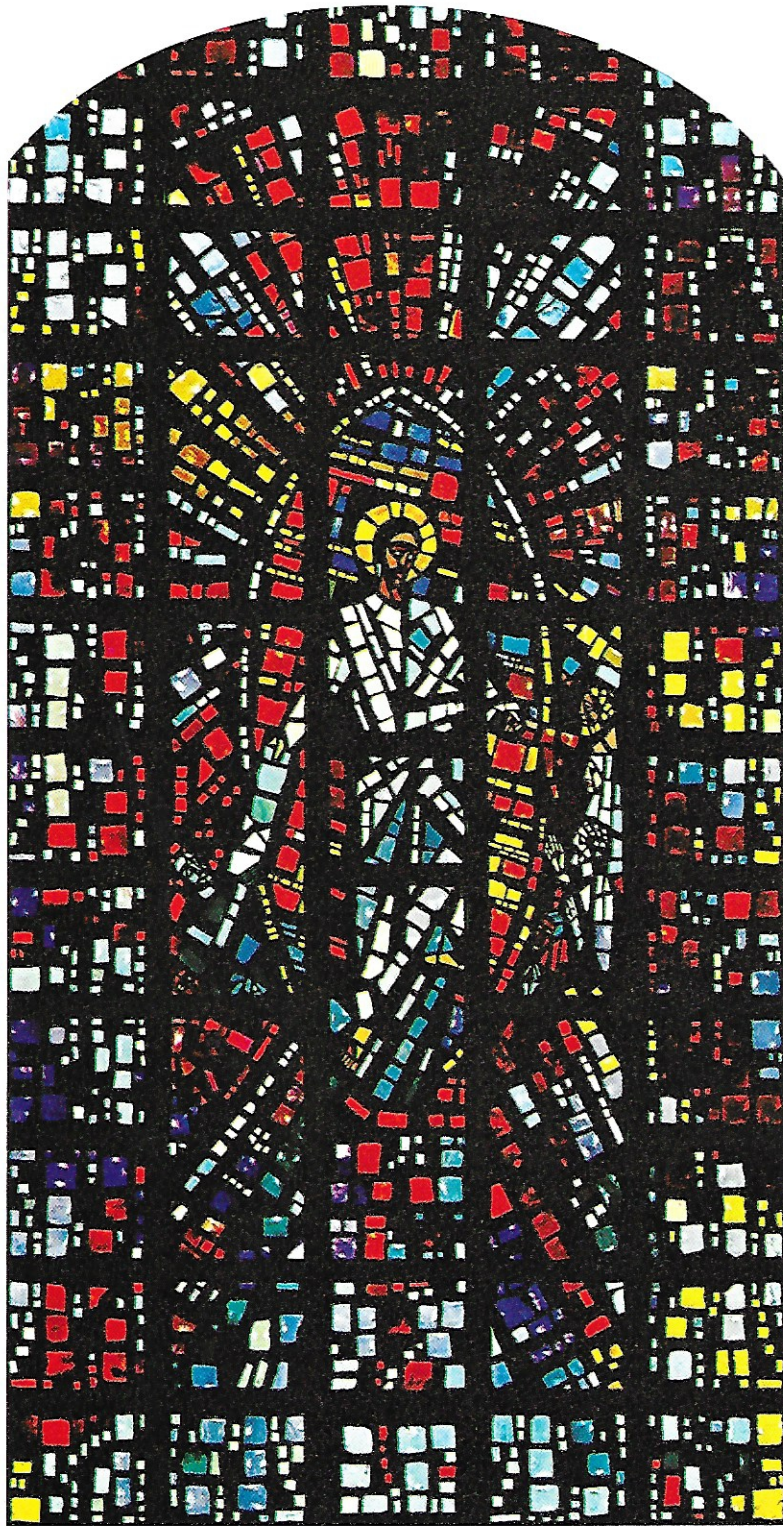
Drawing upon these significant differences gleaned through consultation with Father Dano, the artist has incorporated them in the symbolism to achieve windows as truly distinctive as they are beautiful.

The first two windows depict the Nativities, that of Mary and that of Jesus. Since the Nativity of Jesus is related to the night of His birth and the Star of Bethlehem, the color accent is blue, the color of truth and of faith, while that in the Nativity of Mary is — for contrast — red, the color of love and of sacrifice.

The color accent of each of the other five windows varies with the subject depicted. An explanation of the symbolism of the color and detail of each of the seven windows accompanies the full-color window illustrations in this book.

St. Mary's faceted glass windows being executed by craftsmen of Conrad Schmitt Studios.





JESUS'S DESCENT INTO HELL

The Resurrection in the Ruthenian Church is principally related to the descent of Jesus into Hell and His liberation of the souls in purgatory. Therefore, the colors here are mainly those of flame. On the right side, Our Lord is releasing Adam and Eve, and on the left side, He holds in His hand a scroll upon which the sins of the man who is reaching for it are written. Alas—his sins are so great that the scroll tears and he must fall back into Hades. The figure of Christ is placed within a mandorla, an elongated nimbus which may be used only for the persons of the Blessed Trinity and for Mary.

The subjects of the church's two mosaics relate particularly to the Byzantine-Slavonic tradition. The choice of mosaic as a medium for these magnificent modern "paintings" is in keeping with mosaic's well-known prominence in the art of ancient Byzantium.

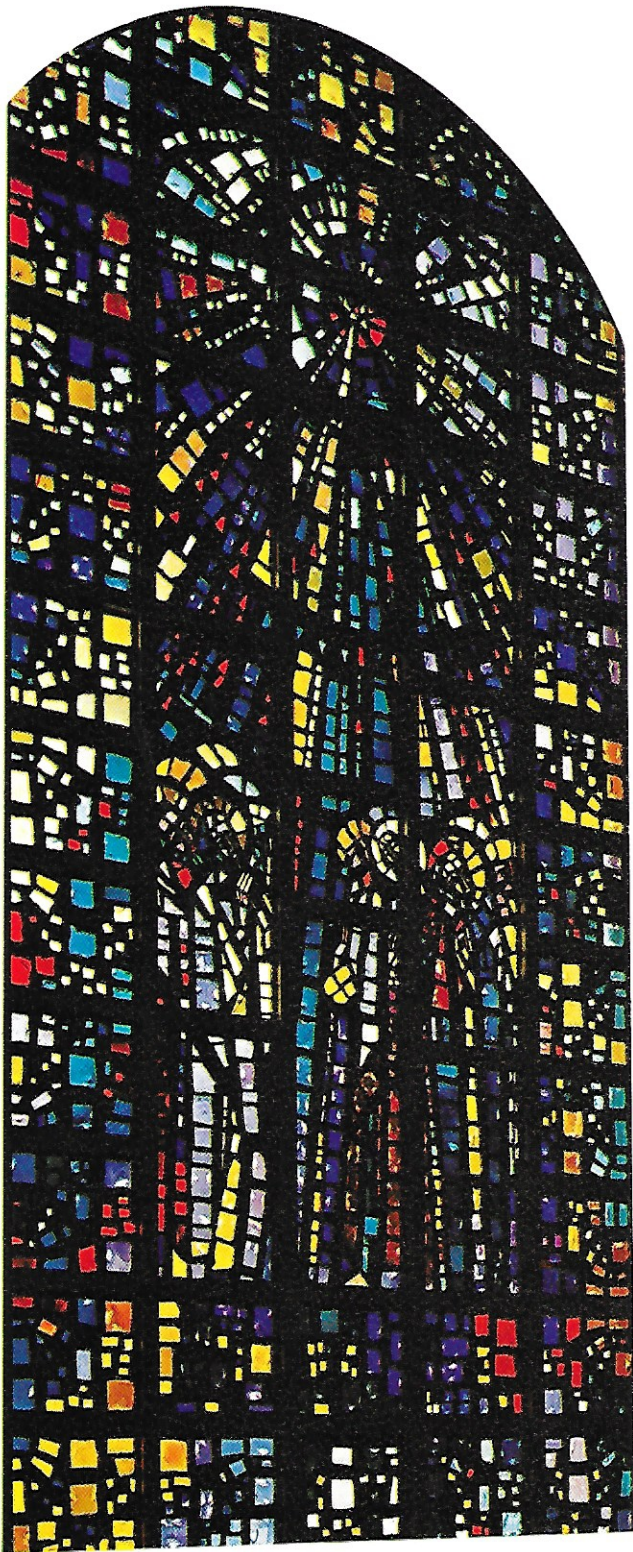
MOSAIC – INTERIOR: THE PANTOCRATOR is shown holding in His right hand a sceptre, and in His left a Bible, with the inscription "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The letters "ω, O, N" in the tri-radiant halo signify "I am Who am", the words of God to Moses from the Burning Bush.

MOSAIC – EXTERIOR: Mosaic on the facade shows ST. MARY OUR PROTECTOR, to whom the church is dedicated. Mary is shown, her outspread cloak encompassing St. Andrew and St. Epiphanius, and some imploring Christians. In the 10th century, during the Black Plague which caused so many deaths in the Middle East and, principally, in the City of Constantine, Constantinople (known also as Byzantium, and now known as Istanbul), the Christians gathered in Haga Sophia Church, the Church of the Holy Wisdom. There they begged Mary to intercede for them, to take them under the shelter of her mantle, that this Black Terror might be stopped. Mary wears the traditional golden stars – one at her head and one on each shoulder – her beautiful distinguishing marks, which have been her own sign of honor since early Christian times. There are two churches in the background, both Catholic, one with the Latin or Roman Cross on its dome; the other on the right, carries the cross of the Eastern Church.

The total effect of the mosaics and windows of St. Mary's Church is of inspiring beauty of color and design. The Sanctuary is bathed in rich and ever-changing light, creating a reverent atmosphere conducive to sincere worship.

* * *

This, then, is St. Mary's Church. Not just concrete and glass, steel and mortar, but a true House of God, an inspired architectural achievement, and a lasting tribute to the dedicated artisans and devoted parishioners and priests whose vision and faith made it possible.



In the last window, near the sanctuary, is seen the SENDING OF THE HOLY GHOST UPON THE APOSTLES—the spreading out of the Holy Spirit, depicted by parted tongues of flame, descending upon the Apostles and imparting to them the gift of tongues and the power to teach and to spread the Christian Belief throughout the whole world.