

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

New Designation

Amendment of a previous designation   X  

Please summarize any amendment(s) This nomination adds documentation for Shrine of the Sacred Heart (first designated by the Joint Committee on Landmarks in 1964), and expands the designation to include the interior sanctuary (upper-sanctuary level only).

Property Name Shrine of the Sacred Heart (Church of the Sacred Heart)

*If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address 3211 Pine Street NW (3211 Sacred Heart Way)

Square and lot number(s) Square: 2675 Lot: 826

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A

Date of Construction 1922 Date of major alteration(s) N/A

Architect(s) Murphy & Olmsted (architects); Maginnis & Walsh (associate architects)  
Architectural style(s) OTHER: Northern Italian Romanesque Revival; Byzantine-Romanesque

Original use RELIGION: religious facility Present use RELIGION: religious facility

Property owner Roman Catholic Archbishop of Washington

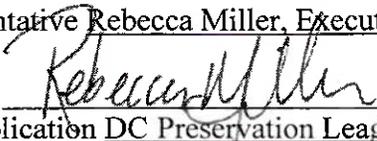
Legal address of property owner 3211 Pine Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) DC Preservation League

*If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) 1328 Florida Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009;  
(202) 783-5144

Name and title of authorized representative Rebecca Miller, Executive Director

Signature of applicant representative  Date 12/15/2025

Name and telephone of author of application DC Preservation League, (202) 783-5144

Date received 12/16/25  
H.P.O. staff KPW

**United States Department of the Interior**  
 National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Shrine of the Sacred Heart

Other names/site number: Church of the Sacred Heart

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 3211 Pine Street NW (3211 Sacred Heart Way)

City or town: Washington State: DC County: \_\_\_\_\_

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ statewide      \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A      \_\_\_ B      \_\_\_ C      \_\_\_ D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p> <p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	_____
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	_____
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Northern Italian Romanesque Revival

OTHER: Byzantine-Romanesque

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: limestone, granite, terracotta tile

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart is a robust, white limestone-clad, Latin cross plan church executed in a style referred to historically and alternately as Northern Italian Romanesque Revival and as Byzantine-Romanesque. Influences from both regions and periods are readily apparent in the church's massing, architectural elements and details. Designed by the architectural firm of Murphy & Olmsted in 1920 and completed in 1922, the building is characterized by complex massing capped by a central dome, and an arcaded portico with ornately carved, Byzantine-inspired capitals, and remarkable interiors with stained glass windows, concrete mosaics, murals and other highly decorative features. The principal façade of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart faces northwest on Pine Street NW, a narrow, one-block-long thoroughfare that angles off 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW and intersects with Park Road NW. The church property abuts Park Road on the north. The façade facing Pine Street is approximately 80 feet wide and features a raised, arcaded porch with columns of polished Milford granite surmounted by a rose window and gabled roof. A large central dome, covered in banded, colored tile is a striking feature of the building and raises it higher than any surrounding structure. The building has a high degree of historic integrity; no significant alterations have been made to the exterior since the building was completed in 1922.

A rectory building is located southwest of the church, but immediately adjacent to it with just a narrow passage between the buildings. The rectory is in line with Pine Street, like the church, and is set back from the church with a small yard in front. It is a stately, three-story, three-bay wide and seven-bay-deep stucco-clad and stone trimmed structure designed by the same architect

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and constructed at the same time as the church. The rectory shares the same principal material (Kentucky limestone) of the church and draws on some of its features, such as an arcade of tall and narrow windows on the first story but is greatly deferential to the church in terms of size and level of architectural treatment. A non-contributing three-bay garage is located at the rear of the rectory in a small parking lot accessed from the east by an alley leading off Hiatt Street.

Towards the west across Pine Street and beyond the boundaries of the church property, is a small “parklet” administered by the National Park Service (Reservation 309-G) containing a memorial statue of James Cardinal Gibbons, erected in 1932, and listed independently in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sacred Heart Church is a DC landmark, added to the DC Inventory of Historic Places on November 8, 1964 with little documentation.<sup>1</sup> Although the intention at that time was to prepare a National Register nomination on the property and forward it to the National Register, no such action was taken. This nomination fulfills that long-intended goal and contains thorough documentation of the building’s architecture and history, including the significant role that the church played in the history of the Latino community in Washington, D.C.

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## **Narrative Description**

### Architectural Description—Sacred Heart Church

The principal façade of Sacred Heart Church is approximately 80 feet wide, is clad with a Kentucky limestone ashlar stone, and features a two-part (lower and upper) composition (Photos 1-3). The lower part consists of a projecting, but shallow, two-story arcaded porch. Eight columns of polished pink Milford, Massachusetts granite support the rounded arches, buttressed at the ends by rectangular corner limestone piers. The columns are capped by intricately carved Ravenna capitals in four different designs—mirrored on either side of the central arch. A stone cross bas relief is centered over the central arch, while blank circular medallions are positioned above each of the columns (Photo 4) of the porch’s otherwise smooth entablature. The porch is capped project cornice with modillions which in turn supports the red clay tile roof above it.



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<sup>1</sup> DC Historic Preservation Review Board, *District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites* (2009), 136.

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Figure 1: 1920s postcard view of the church's main façade.

The main floor of the church is raised to provide high-ceilinged basement space for social gatherings. As a result, the façade is raised above grade, reached by a flight of twelve concrete steps that lead from the sidewalk to the front porch. The porch ceiling is crossed by embossed limestone arches with domed spaces formed of Guastavino tiles between them (Photo 5).<sup>2</sup>

The main entrance, on-center of the façade wall, includes a pair of large wooden doors framed by a tall, round-headed arch. Three small arched windows fill the tympanum space above the door's bracketed lintel (Photos 2 and 4). A large statue of Jesus Christ who stands with his hands to his chest, indicating his heart, occupies a niche above the arched entryway, currently sealed behind a protective acrylic panel. Two side doorways of approximately the same size as the main entrance but with less elaborate arched surrounds are located at either end of the porch. These side doors lead through the narthex to the side aisles, while the center door leads through the narthex to the center aisle of the nave. Two simple Romanesque-style windows are positioned between the main entrance and the side entrances.

The upper part of the two-part composition of the façade consists of an approximately 50-foot-wide gabled section above the front porch (Photo 4). This gabled section corresponds to the central nave of the main church and thus is narrower than the porched section below it, which extends to the full width of the nave and side aisles. The largely blank face has three main features: a rose limestone window opening with 16 Romanesque spokes that mimic in miniature the style of the porch colonnade (the stained-glass window is mounted behind this limestone feature), and two statues (Mary at left and Joseph at right) in niches to either side of the rose window. The gable-topped niches feature miniature columns that also echo the style of the colonnade. The gable is surmounted by a limestone cross mounted on a pedestal. A chi-ro Christological monogram is carved in relief on the pedestal.

The north elevation extends approximately 160 feet along Park Road NW. From this side of the building, the church's Latin cross plan can be readily discerned with the central nave, side aisle, and transept clearly distinguishing themselves (Photo 6). Projecting from the west (front) end of this elevation is a two-story, five-sided stair tower. Two narrow windows admit light to the interior staircase, which leads up to the choir loft. The tower is topped with a red clay Mediterranean tile roof matching the building's other roof elements. Rising behind the tower is the gabled end of a projecting structural element that spans the width of the building. Behind that element a shallow gabled bay with a blank limestone surface abuts the large gabled structure of the church's front portal, described above. Like the stair tower, this feature is mirrored on the south side of the building.

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<sup>2</sup> Devised from traditional vault-building methods by architect-engineer Rafael Guastavino, the Guastavino tile arch system permitted the construction of self-supporting vaults, arches, and domes with interlocking tiles, typically set in herringbone-patterned courses between thin layers of cement. Guastavino arches were structurally robust and fireproof, while offering aesthetic qualities such as colorful glazing. See Santiago Huerta, *Guastavino Tile Vaults: The Long Migration of a Building Technique* (De Gruyter EBooks, 2019) and John Ochsendorf, *Guastavino vaulting: the art of structural tile* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010).

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Figure 2: 1920s postcard view of the church's north elevation.

Along this north elevation, the nave of the building stretches approximately 60 feet between the front portal and the north transept arm. This section continues the bipartite structure of the main façade with the upper nave set behind the lower side aisle section. The aisle section features seven elongated round arched window openings, separated alternately by smooth-faced pilasters and projecting piers. Each opening is filled with stained glass windows with those in the lower part of the window set within a stone screen, or surround composed of a pair of round arches surmounted by an arcade of four smaller round arches, all filled with stained glass. Above these stone screens, taller round-arched openings are similarly filled with stained-glass windows. This relationship repeats itself in the transept apse (Photo 7). Above the side aisle, the north nave wall has four windows separated by buttresses corresponding to the piers below. They alternate with shallow relief pilasters that separate the window compositions within each pair.

A limestone water table runs approximately five feet from the ground and corresponds to porch level at the front of the building. Below the water table, the building's stone facing is lightly rusticated, differentiating it from the smooth ashlar above. A low stone wall protects a deep lightwell that runs along the length of the building. Stairways at either end of the lightwell provide direct access from ground level to basement space through doorways located along the lightwell.

The upper part of the central section includes four paired sets of Romanesque windows, separated by three gable-topped limestone buttresses that curve to follow the tiled roof of the lower part of the section. The paired window sets consist of a rounded arch surround enclosing two round-arched stained-glass windows separated by column with a stylized capital. A dentil cornice runs along the roofline; the red clay Mediterranean tile roof above is the largest expanse of this type of roof on the building.

The transept wing extends approximately 20 feet beyond the main north elevation. Attached to the wing is a rounded apsidal chapel that stands approximately 35 feet tall (Photo 7). Three rounded window compositions (as seen on the central section of this elevation) are evenly spaced around the curve of the apsidal chapel. The chapel is crowned with a partial domed roof of the

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same style and materials as the church's main dome and the partial domes over the two other apsidal chapels (at the rear and on the south elevation). Above the chapel, a gabled section rises above the dentil corniced roofline to mimic the gabled arch surmounting the main façade. At the center of this blank wall is a rounded statuary niche, which remains empty.

Attached to the west side of the transept wing is a side entrance to the church, reached via a short staircase. Polished limestone columns that match the style of the front porch's granite columns flank the entrance, topped with Ravenna capitals. A rounded archway over the columns creates a portico in front of the doorway. The wooden door, topped by a simple stone lintel and rounded arch, matches the two side entrances on the front porch.

At roof level and centered upon the intersection of the nave and transept wings is a central pavilion supporting a large polychrome dome (Photo 8). Two tall limestone chimneys stand at the northeast and southeast corners of this platform, rising to about half the height of the dome. The dome is covered in multicolored slate tiles. Red tiles are used to create highlights on a more neutral yellow/gray background. The highlights include colored bands, individual tiles that appear from a distance as colored spots, and four Latin crosses, positioned at north, south, east, and west axes. The dome decorations have been said to give the church an "Italian ambiance."<sup>3</sup> The dome is mounted on a drum that serves as a lantern. Round-arched windows ring the drum, separated by gabled piers that echo the design of the buttresses along the nave.

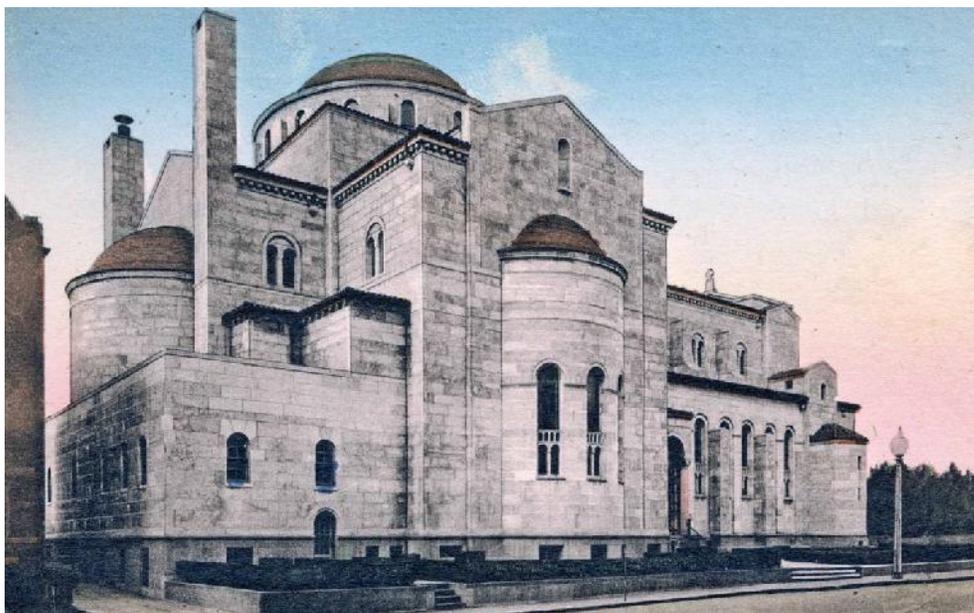


Figure 3: 1920s postcard view of the north and east (rear) elevations.

The church's south elevation (Photo 8) mirrors the north elevation in most respects. It features a long, two-level, central section, corresponding to the nave and side aisle, that matches the north elevation in design and features. At the western end stands a two-story, five-sided engaged tower corresponding to the similar tower on the opposite side of the building. Whereas the tower on the

<sup>3</sup> Pamela Scott and Antoinette J. Lee, *Buildings of the District of Columbia* (Oxford University Press, 1993), 316.

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opposite encloses a stair well, this tower originally enclosed an office. Attached to it on the right is one-story pavilion, originally part of the office. Beneath it is a stair leading down to the lightwell and a public entrance for the large basement communal hall now known as the Gavan Center. At the eastern end of the central section there is no public entrance pavilion matching the one on the north elevation. This is because the church's rectory (parish house) stands close to the church building. Public access is not intended at rear of this side of the building. In all other respects, this section of the south elevation matches the north elevation.

Towards the rear of the church, the design of the south transept wing mirrors the north transept wing. The apsidal chapel is slightly larger than the corresponding one on the north elevation but in other respects matches its counterpart.

The rear (east) elevation of the church, including the short sections of the north and south elevations that stand behind the transept wing, is an irregular composition not intended to be directly observed by the public. The rear face of the building stands flush with a narrow, one-lane private alley that separates the building from a series of row houses that extend to the east along Park Road. A single-story, flat-roofed extension runs flush with the alley and is approximately 98 feet long. This is the only section of the building that does not have a tiled roof or dome, and it is not centered symmetrically with the rest of the building. Instead, a large rectangular volume extends farther south than south apsidal chapel. This part of the building contains the main church sacristy. Because this far south corner of the building is not generally seen by the public, the extension is not noticeable. On the more visible north side of the church, along Park Road NW, the extension conforms to the expected building line east of the north apsidal chapel and contains secondary sacristy space (Photo 7). The single-story rear extension is faced in plain limestone ashlar pierced by 9 regularly spaced, round-arched windows. The building's water table continues from the north and south elevations across the rear. The lightly rusticated facing below the water table also continues on the rear elevation. Below the water table, rectangular windows are aligned with the arched windows above. The grade of the alley requires some of these to be smaller than others.

Above the first-floor extension, a gable-roofed section enclosing the church's apse extends about 15 feet from the square central pavilion that serves as a platform for the church's main dome. The gable-roofed apse section corresponds in design to the larger nave and transept extensions on the other sides of the domed pavilion and is roofed in the same Mediterranean tile. Two tall, engaged chimney piers flank the apse section. A rounded apsidal chapel extends in front of this section, crowned by a semi-domed roof that matches but is slightly larger than the apsidal chapels on the north and south transept wings.

### Interior

Sacred Heart Church is a Latin cross plan church with entry narthex, a central nave with arcaded side aisles, a transept, a principal and secondary apses as its principal features. The interiors are highly ornate and striking in their religious symbolism, high-level craftsmanship and their vibrant colors. The interiors are the product of collaboration between building architect Murphy & Olmsted and mosaic designer, J. J. Earley. Of the interior, architect Frederick V. Murphy

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wrote: "The altars are marble; the baldachin, walls, arches, cornice of dome and all decorative details are concrete, the ceilings are Guastavino tile."<sup>4</sup>

The church's lower story, which is partially below ground, includes meeting and auditorium space as well as functional and mechanical systems. The church's upper (primary) level holds the sanctuary, structurally formed by a cruciform alignment of four vaults each perhaps five stories in height, although the crown of the dome is ninety feet above the crossing's floor level.<sup>5</sup> At the east end of the nave, the altar faces west down the nave toward the screen wall that separates the nave from narthex (Photo 10). The narthex spans the width of the church, with a staircase to the choir and organ loft at its north end. The three arched exterior doorways in the narthex's west wall are the church's main entrances. The center doorway, which aligns with the central aisle of the church, is topped by a triptych of small arched stained-glass windows.

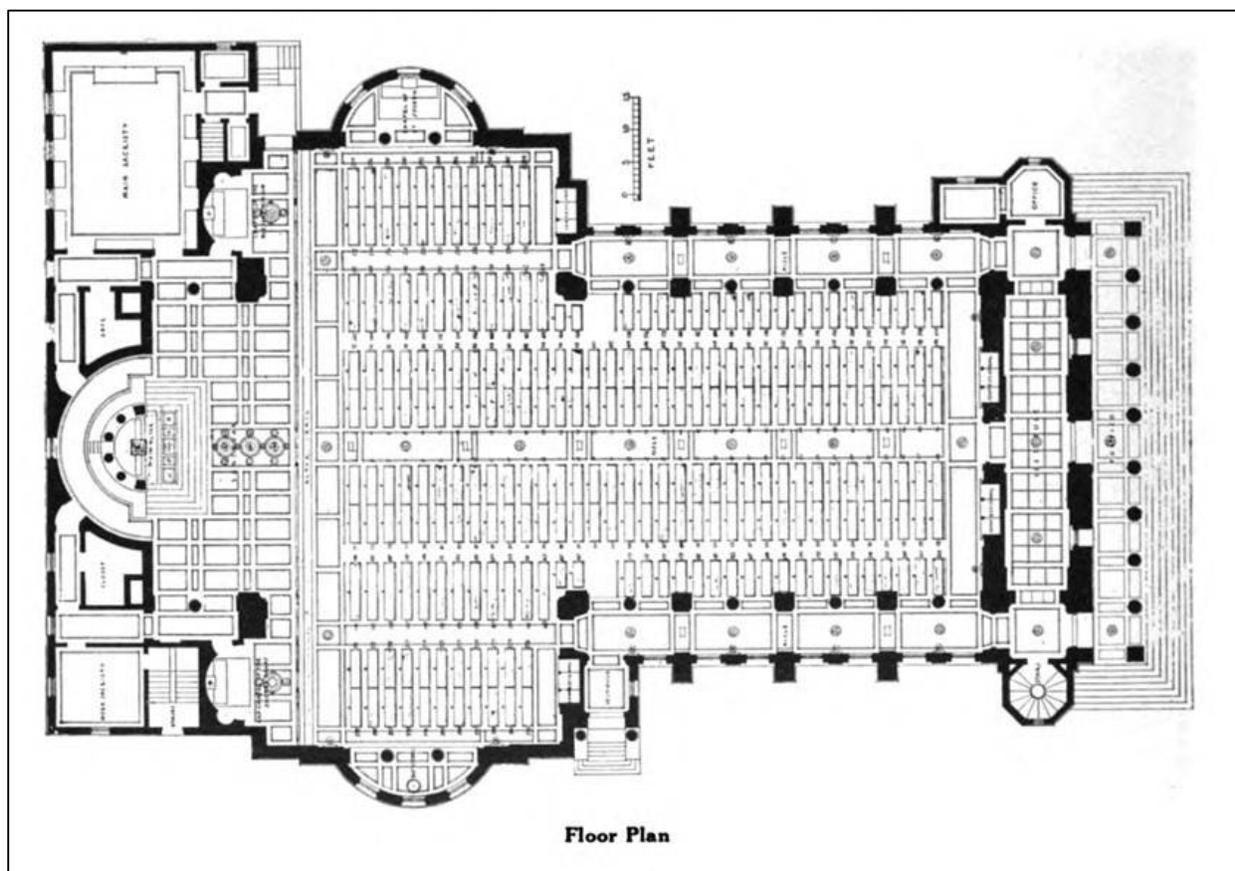


Figure 4: Plan of the main floor of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart (Source: "Church of the Sacred Heart, Washington, D.C.," *The American Architect/The Architectural Review*, Vol. CXXIII, No. 2421, Jun. 6, 1923, 500.).

<sup>4</sup> "Church of the Sacred Heart, Washington, DC," in *The American Architect -The Architectural Review* (Vol . CXXIII, No. 2421), June 6, 1923, 499.

<sup>5</sup> "Church of the Sacred Heart, Washington, DC," 501.

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Murphy has stated that the church's ornament is as much a feature of its character as its architectural forms:

*It will be noted that the ornament is of a character little seen in contemporary work; On the interior perhaps more than on the exterior the architects have worked out a scheme of motifs which show the many traditions and ideals of the church.*

*Thus it may be truthfully said that the decorative theme briefly recapitulates the history of the church as well as its dogmas. It is believed that the symbolic decoration gives the church a much greater interest than the usual method of ornamentation without this historic or symbolic meaning.<sup>6</sup>*



Figure 5: Screen Wall Passage to Narthex from Nave to Narthex Flanked by Confessional Alcove  
(Concrete in Architecture).

From the east portico, a central and two side doors lead through the entry narthex into the nave where the center door leads to the central aisle and the two side doors lead into the arcaded side aisles. On the sanctuary side of the narthex, a screen wall features three arched openings with the center door flanked by alcoves holding arched confession booths (Photo 10). A loft rises above the screen wall with alcoves to either side housing the Shrine's original mahogany-cased Casavant Frères organ where its more than 3,200 pipes are exposed. A waist-high balustrade pierced with small square openings extends across the front of the loft opening. The loft's floor forms the ceiling of the narthex and the confessional alcoves. The loft level spans to the west exterior wall of the church exposing the rose window with 16 petal-like stained-glass panes surrounding a circular center pane (Photo 13).

The lower section of the screen wall is textured concrete cast in block-like shapes that recall John Joseph Earley's retaining walls at Meridian Hill Park. The screen wall exemplifies how the church's walls are enhanced with aggregate concrete mosaic patterns and religiously symbolic images. The patterns and images incorporate plant motifs such as the palm, which represents victory and martyrdom; birds like the peacock, symbolizing resurrection; and animals like a stag drinking the water of eternal life. They also depict saints, apostles, and biblical figures,

<sup>6</sup> "Church of the Sacred Heart, Washington, DC." 500.

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frequently depicted in roundels. Each alcove's confessional entrances are framed by a triptych surround whose upper border is a pattern of crosses and outlined geometric shapes. The face of this surround bears mosaic patterns of stylized green-leaved stalks topped by geometric red-brown blossoms. The cornices beside each confessional entrance frame a symbol of a red cross superimposed on a yellow circle that is repeated at numerous points around the interior. Higher on the screen wall is a continuous strip of interlaced looping red swirls which presumably symbolize the sacred heart. Another colorful patterned band of geometric shapes containing crosses runs across the lower walls and a similar pattern of looping green geometric shapes surrounds the arched opening of the narthex passageway.

An arcade formed by columns and piers and set within wider blind arches divides the nave from the side aisles. The blind arches spring from rectangular piers with a smooth-finished rose granite central column supporting the lower arched openings. Each of these arches is highly decorated with polychromatic architectural concrete with religious symbolism (Photo 12). The smaller arches are in-line with and frame the stained-glass windows on the outer walls of the side aisles. The stained-glass windows are divided into upper and lower sections with the glass either tinted white or bearing colorful religious symbols. The Van Gerichten Studios of Munich created these and the church's other stained-glass windows. Each ensemble's uppermost section is a large arch-topped pane in a frame of small panes bearing religious symbols. Its upper section is white-tinted plain glass, while its lower is a colorful biblical scene.

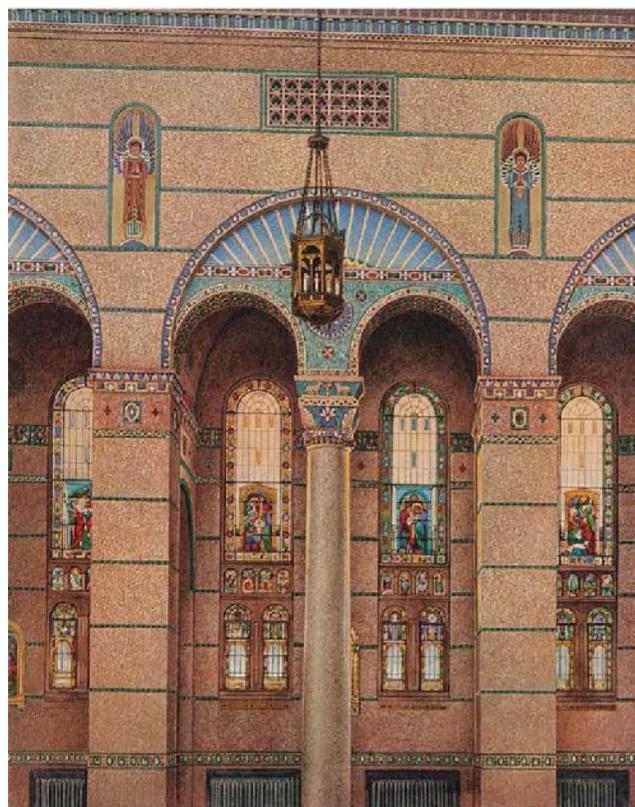


Figure 6: Arcade from Nave (*Concrete in Architecture*).

The nave (Photos 9-10) is furnished with rows of dark-tinted wooden pews divided by a center aisle and two side aisles. Its floor is terrazzo with tiles at intervals depicting bird symbols and spheres inset at regular intervals. The intersection of the nave, sanctuary, and north and south transept arches at the crossing creates the pendentive that supports the shrine's circular central dome (Photo 15). The dome rests atop a drum with sixteen arched stained-glass windows. Like the arches that form the pendentive, the drum and dome are Guastavino tile, whose prevailing brownish tints are speckled with tiles of vivid shades like blue. At the crown of the dome is a tile mural depicting a brownish six bar cross within a series of concentric red circles against a blue background.

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The transepts run north and south from the center dome and terminate in apses with triple arched stained glass window ensembles having the same pattern as those in the nave arcades. Both apses are separated from the transept arms by a three-arched arcaded balcony set beneath half-dome murals. The south transept half-dome is decorated with a blue-robed Mary on a shield-shaped field that resembles a religious medallion. The medallion is flanked by two male angels against a turquoise background. The lower section of the apse—the Shrine of St. Joseph—holds a small altar.



The apse in the north transept contains a highly decorated baptismal font with colorful, finely wrought mosaic decorations. The front of the font includes a mosaic image of Jesus Christ being baptized by St. John the Baptist. The unique, hand-crafted font was a gift of B. F. Saul, the noted DC banker, who was a Sacred Heart parishioner and staunch supporter of the effort to build the 1922 Shrine.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 7: Baptismal font in north transept.

The east walls of the north and south transepts terminate with small chapels occupying half-domed alcoves. These chapels flank the main altar and central apse, and feature the most intricate mosaic designs in the church. The chapel in the north transept holds the Altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and that in the south holds the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin. Like the altar, these chapels are elevated and are reached by marble steps. The Altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus holds a white marble altar which bears a white statue of Jesus Christ with one hand upon his heart within a white baldachin whose gilded Latin inscription can be translated as “heart of Jesus, burning with love.”<sup>8</sup> The pillars which support the canopy and the statue’s backdrop are of highly polished white marble shot through with swirling dark veins. The curved wall that surrounds the canopy is covered by a flood of patterned vegetal designs and angels. The half-dome’s crown is a blue field bearing a Latin cross within a circle whose base is ringed by a circle

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Michael F. Healy, Sep. 16, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> The Altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus baldachin is shown in an advertisement in the *American Architect* of June 6, 1923, for the work of the McBride Studio in Manhattan. The advertisement depicts marble work recently completed in the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Washington, DC, which strongly suggests that despite references to the shrine’s intensive use of concrete for artistic elements, marble was likely used for statuary.

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of haloed saints in stone niches. Immediately to the left, along the wall of the north transept, a large wooden crucifix with a plaster figure of Jesus is mounted above the white altar rail. The crucifix is from the original Sacred Heart church on Fourteenth Street.

The Chapel of the Blessed Virgin that faces the south transept has a half-dome bearing a mural of Mary seated upon a throne holding a haloed infant Jesus and flanked by child-angels (Photo 14). The blue backdrop encircled by a brown ring of geometric designs also suggests a religious medallion placed above concentric rings of small religious symbols and interlaced looping swirls that evoke the sacred heart. The onyx statue of Mary is surrounded by a baldachin atop an onyx altar.

The high altar is set in front of the central nave apse, east of the center crossing, and features a half-dome with an intricate tile mural and baldachin (Photo 11). The mural, which for financial reasons was not completed until 1936, is decorated by a series of concentric rings of geometric figures and religious symbols that include medallions depicting the various forms of Christian crosses. As is common in the shrine's mural program, the central image is presented on a blue background in medallion form. It depicts a crowned and haloed Christ surrounded by a nimbus while holding a scepter and an orb. Christ is flanked by figures of Abraham and David as well as such symbolic images as open books, representing the Old and New Testaments. The baldachin is an intricately decorated domed pantheon topped by a half-dome whose crown is encircled by a ring of stylized sunrays radiating outward against a sky-blue backdrop. The dome is supported by three rounded columns with rectangular pillars at its end points.

Murphy has described the high altar's setting in the sanctuary as "where ensconced under the blue dome of the baldachin or ciborium is the marble altar of Botticino marble and Venetian mosaics in rich tones of blue gold and green."<sup>9</sup>



Figure 8: Movable altar.

In front of the baldachin is a carved wooden movable altar that is not original. The altar features a wooden table adorned on its sides with carved and painted figures of children depicted as angelic figures. The woodwork was done by a cloistered Dominican nun, Sister Mary Grace, of the former St. Dominic's Monastery at 4901 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW (now demolished). The altar was installed in the early 2000s.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Church of the Sacred Heart, Washington, DC," 501.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Michael F. Healy, Sep. 16, 2025.

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Architectural Description—The Rectory

The rectory is a three-story, three-bay-wide and six-bay deep stucco-clad building with stone trimming around the windows and stone quoining at the corners. It is rectangular in plan, is set upon a slightly raised foundation and is covered with a low hipped roof sheathed with terra cotta tiles. Stylistically, the building reflects an Italian Renaissance Revival style like the associated church, but is more vernacular in detailing and much less exuberant in its massing than the church building. The rectory, like the church, faces westerly and is in line with Pine Street. It is set back from the church and has a small lawn in front. A public playground and recreation center abuts the property line to the south.

The west (front) elevation is divided into three bays with a center entry bay flanked by pairs of window openings. The entry, raised above grade, is reached by a set of steps at the end of a lead walk which extends from the public sidewalk to the entry way. The entry is recessed into the plane of the building wall and is further protected by a projecting stone portico. The portico is arched and vaulted with a wide arch on the front and narrower arches on the sides and is capped by a pediment. The stone is smooth-cut and dressed and features certain details like projecting caps and plain arch molds, but lacks any other stone carving or ornate treatment. A pair of exterior wooden doors are set within the barrel vault with a fanlight above and open into a small vestibule with another pair of doors providing access to the interior. Paired and arched window openings flank the central entry door and are framed by engaged stone surrounds. A center column and end pilasters, all of smooth stone, serve as spring boards for the round-arched windows framed by voussoirs. The center column features a cut and carved stone capital, but it is otherwise unornamented.

On the second story, a wide arched opening sits above the entry door. The archway is framed by narrow and engaged columns supporting impost blocks from which the arch then springs. Recessed into this opening is a single door that gives access to a balcony on the roof of the entry portico. The balcony has a metal railing and is filled with potted plants. The windows to either side have pairs of 1/1 windows capped by a flat stone lintel with cornice cap and supported at the center by a pier with a capital and by impost blocks on the ends. The impost blocks and the capital of the center pier are shaped like those of the entry porch.

The third story is separated from the second by a stone belt course and a sill course., giving it the appearance of an attic level. It consists of a pair of small windows on-center and a set of three, small 1/1 windows to either side. As on the second story, these windows have stone lintels spanning the group and two piers dividing the windows. Unlike below, however, the lintel is not supported at its ends by impost blocks. In addition, this attic story lacks the stone corner quoins found on the first and second stories.

A projecting cornice with modillions rises above this third story and continues around the sides of the building before terminating. The north and south sides of the building extend seven bays deep with a regular arrangement of single and paired window openings, set upon stone sills and capped by stone lintels. The first few bays of these elevations, from the façade, feature arched window openings on the first floor, but otherwise all of the other openings are rectangular with 1/1 sash.

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The east (rear) elevation is less organized and largely lacks the stone window surrounds, but there are three round-arched windows on the first story, next to a two-story enclosed and projecting bay which originally was a one-story open porch. The rear of the building opens onto a small parking lot with a single-story, three-bay, out of period garage on it.

Integrity

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart is remarkably intact and retains a high degree of integrity. It is in its original location, retains a historic setting and it preserves the original features of design, workmanship and materials that establish its architectural and historical significance. No significant architectural alterations have been made to either the exterior or to the major interior worship spaces, including the sanctuary, nave, transepts, and chapels. The church is still in service as a church and continues to serve the Latino community that has historically been associated with it. For these reasons and for the building's obvious ecclesiastical design, the property retains a degree of integrity of feeling and association.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

ETHNIC HERITAGE: HISPANIC

SOCIAL HISTORY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

Architecture: 1922

Ethnic Heritage and Social History: 1948-1976

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1922

1948

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Murphy & Olmsted (architects)

Maginnis & Walsh (associate architects)

Charles J. Cassidy (builder)

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart is significant under District of Columbia designation Criteria D through F and National Register Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of

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a type, period, style, and method of construction and is a notable work of creative masters. The Shrine of the Sacred Heart is an exceptional example of North Italian Romanesque Revival architecture, a distinctive style important to the identity of the Roman Catholic church in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The church's architectural quality and significance to the development of ecclesiastical design is affirmed by its listing by the DC Joint Committee on Landmarks in 1964 and subsequent inclusion as a charter member of the DC Inventory of Historic Sites.

Frederick V. Murphy is a master architect under the National Register definition of "a figure of generally recognized greatness" in his field. Murphy made enduring contributions to his profession as the founding chair of the Catholic University School of Architecture, a school that steadily grew in stature under his tenure. Murphy was also founding partner of Murphy & Olmsted, the District's most prolific designer of Catholic churches and an important influence on ecclesiastical and academic building architecture in Washington and across the country. His status as a master architect is reflected in listings in the *National Register*, which include nearly a dozen churches, monasteries, schools, and government buildings for which he was the primary or contributing architect. Likewise, the church is a stunning example of the work of John J. Earley, an "architectural sculptor" who made lasting and historic contributions to the use of concrete as a sculptural element of architecture and who pioneered the use of mosaic concrete as an aesthetic element in architecture. Earley invented, or was a primary developer of, processes for formulating aggregate-based concrete in a full palette of colors, and the Shrine of the Sacred heart is one of his greatest achievements in this medium. Moreover, the Shrine is significant as Earley's first documented interior in what he called "polychrome architectural concrete," his first major collaboration with Murphy & Olmsted, and the initial work in an impressive series of church interiors across the United States. Earley's house and studio are both listed on the National Register and the DC Inventory.

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart also achieves significance under District of Columbia Criterion B and similar National Register Criterion A for its "association with historical periods, social movements and patterns of growth that contributed to the heritage and development of the District." The Shrine of the Sacred Heart was a pathfinder in integrating African American parishioners into its congregation beginning in 1948. It was also instrumental in supporting the formation and cohesion of Washington's Latino community in the Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights neighborhoods and enabled these residents to retain their Latin American identity through shared cultural practices and through the retention and use of their language. Innumerable baptisms, confirmations, and weddings for Spanish-speaking émigrés were held at the church over successive decades, and the church's priests and staff provided innumerable social services that were critical to the well-being of its Latino parishioners. The Shrine's site also contains the parish rectory, a three-story stone building to the church's southern side which was part of the original plan.<sup>11</sup> This building, designed by the church's architects in a harmonious Italianate style, has played an integral role in the life of the parish. In addition to

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<sup>11</sup> "Church for Parish Here to Be Unique," *Evening Star*, May 16, 1920, 21

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being the residence of the pastor and clerical staff, it has provided meeting, office, and social space and been the location of many weddings.<sup>12</sup>

The building's period of architectural significance corresponds to its construction in 1922. The period of significance for ethnic heritage and social history begins in 1948, when African American parishioners were integrated into the congregation, and ends with the appointment of the church's first Latino pastor, Father Joaquin Bazan, in 1976—a milestone that reflected the church's full integration with the local Latino community.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Historical Background – The Roman Catholic Church in Washington, DC**

Washington's earliest Catholic houses of worship predated the founding of the District of Columbia. In colonial times mass was often celebrated in Catholic landowners converted outbuildings or chapels in private homes. Holy Trinity parish, organized in Georgetown in 1787, built the first Catholic church in the territory that became the District of Columbia in 1790.<sup>13</sup> It is likely that St. Patrick's parish built the earliest Catholic church within Washington City at 10<sup>th</sup> and F Streets NW in 1806, although James Barry is credited with erecting a stone chapel at Half and O Streets SW at nearly the same time.<sup>14</sup>

By 1870, at least one of Washington's ten parish churches was situated in each quadrant. Although an individual parish might more strongly represent a particular ethnicity, the city's Catholic congregations accommodated a demographically diverse population of worshippers. However, despite parish differences, virtually all these early churches were plain, single-story structures, often of frame construction and produced by otherwise obscure designer-builders. The exception to this general principle of architectural simplicity is still-serving St. Aloysius Church, built between 1857 and 1859 to the design of Father Benedict Sestini (1816-1890), a Jesuit priest and mathematician at Georgetown University. Renaissance Revival St. Aloysius was unusual in an era when Catholic churches were prevalingly constructed in the Gothic style.<sup>15</sup>

During the third quarter of the nineteenth century, approximately fifteen new Catholic churches were built in Washington. While some were plain structures, others quickly expanded the overall

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<sup>12</sup> Founding Pastor Msgr. Patrick Gavan died at his home in the rectory on January 5, 1937. "Msgr. Gavan is Dead at 65," *Washington Times*, Nov 5, 1937, 1. "Society (McSowley-Lockwood)" *Evening Star*, Oct 1, 1924, 8; "Society (Emerson-Madigan)," *Star*, Sept 11, 1925, 8; "To Wed Today in Rect" <sup>12</sup> "Church for Parish Here To Be Unique," *Star*, May 16, 1920, 21ory," *Washington Times*, Aug 23, 1934, 14 are among examples of rectory weddings.

<sup>13</sup> Altered and enlarged, the Georgetown building stands today <https://web.archive.org/web/20141104172430/http://www.trinity.org/chapel-ignatius>. Beginning in the 1790s, Queens Chapel occupied a rebuilt smokehouse in what was originally the village of Langton. See Margaret Brent Downing. "The Development of the Catholic Church in the District of Columbia," in *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* (vol 15) (Washington, DC: Columbia Historical Society, 1912), 39-40.

<sup>14</sup> Downing, 48-49.

<sup>15</sup> T. Robins Brown. *National Register Nomination: St. Aloysius Catholic Church* (unpublished), 1973, 2-4.

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architecture scope of Washington's Catholic churches in form, style and sophistication. Often their more complex designs were rendered by highly accomplished architects who did not maintain practices in the capital. One exception was the stylistically distinctive "Byzantine" St. Stephen the Martyr Church on Pennsylvania Avenue at 25<sup>th</sup> Street NW, designed in 1866 by the Washington firm of Adolf Cluss and Josef Kammerhueber.<sup>16</sup>

St. Dominic's Church, whose construction began in 1865, was an imposing Gothic Revival structure designed by perhaps the most prominent and prolific American Catholic ecclesiastical architect of his era. New York City architect Patrick Keely (1816-1896) designed as many as seven hundred Catholic churches during a fifty-year career capped by receiving the Laetare medal, the church's highest honor for laymen, in 1884.<sup>17</sup> Lawrence J. O'Connor, who had studied with the renowned British father of the Gothic Revival AWG Pugin and practiced architecture in Washington before becoming a leading ecclesiastical architect in New York City, designed twin-spired, Gothic Revival St. Patrick's Church in 1873.

During Washington's long era of segregation, Catholic churches were not racially exclusive in principle. However, in many parishes Black worshippers routinely experienced discriminatory treatment in seating, reception of sacraments, and membership in church organizations. For a more than a decade St. Martin de Porres parish, founded in reaction against such discrimination, endeavored to raise funds for building a church, including holding a "strawberry festival" attended by Abraham and Mary Lincoln on the White House lawn.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately the parish, which soon renamed itself for St. Augustine, commissioned Baltimorean E.F. Baldwin (1837-1916), the chief architect of the B&O Railroad and distinguished designer of more than 500 buildings across the East Coast, to design a church beside their small brick chapel on Fifteenth Street between K and L Streets NW.<sup>19</sup> As completion approached, newspapers complimented its design, the quality of its masonry work, and its overall beauty.<sup>20</sup> In Rome, Pope Pius IX specially blessed the church's Carrera marble cornerstone, which was escorted over the last miles of its journey by a lengthy parade of parishioners, delegations from other parishes, fraternal and ethnic societies, and a troop of U.S. Marines.<sup>21</sup> Baldwin's high-Gothic church was described as "elegant," and "one of the handsomest churches in the city."<sup>22</sup> Baldwin became one of the

<sup>16</sup> Cluss' and Kammerhueber's church was replaced by a modernist church in 1959.

<sup>17</sup> Although Keely lacked formal architectural training, a friendship with a priest led to his designing a newly formed parish's church, which became known as his "resume in brick."

<http://thewandererpress.com/catholic/news/featured-today/churches-galore-patrick-keely>.

<sup>18</sup> Raymond Kemp. "Lift Every Voice and Sing," published online by Holy Trinity Catholic Church, <https://trinity.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Article-15-Ray-Kemp.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://boundarystones.weta.org/2021/02/11/razing-mother-church-sale-and-destruction-saint-augustine-catholic-church> <https://www.curavirtualis.org/post/the-development-of-black-catholic-parishes-in-the-washington-area>

<sup>20</sup> At its dedication, banker W.W. Corcoran, a southern sympathizer who had sat out the Civil War in Europe, contributed an "old master" from his painting collection that depicted the scourging of Jesus Christ. "A Valuable Present," *National Republican*, Oct 6, 1873, np.

<sup>21</sup> "Cornerstone of St. Augustine's Church Laid," *Star*, June 15, 1874. "Meeting of Catholic Societies," *National Republican*, June 1, 1874, 8.

<sup>22</sup> "The Pulpit," *National Republican*, Dec 8, 1873, np; "Public Improvements," *National Republican*, Jan. 1, 1874, np

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District's most significant designers of ecclesiastical buildings that included major Catholic University academic buildings and two other outstanding Gothic Revival churches.<sup>23</sup>

In 1893, a New York architect designed a domed Renaissance Revival church of lasting architectural significance. C. Grant LaFarge (1862-1938), eldest son of painter and stained-glass designer John LaFarge and a one-time H.H. Richardson apprentice, was prime designer for New York's Cathedral of St John the Divine when the Heins & LaFarge firm was commissioned to replace St. Matthew's 1840 original church. St. Matthew's National Register nomination notes that LaFarge's "eclectic design" shows "North Italian influence" with a mixture of Byzantine, Romanesque, and Renaissance features. Geometric massing gives the church the form of a Latin cross. Much in the Byzantine form of Hagia Sofia, four large masonry piers and arches above the crossing support an octagonal drum, which is topped by a ribbed green copper dome beneath a brass lantern, whose own dome raises a Latin cross 200 feet above the sidewalk.<sup>24</sup>

In 1899 Roman architect Aristides Leonori (1856-1928) designed Washington's second domed Catholic church. The *Evening Star* described Leonori's Church of the Holy Sepulcher within the Franciscan Monastery complex in Brookland as a "reproduction of a style of ecclesiastical architecture which is not common in this country."<sup>25</sup> The two-story buff brick building's five-fold cross form is said to symbolize the five wounds of Christ.<sup>26</sup> The saucer-like central dome sits directly upon the junction of the wooden-framed, gabled roofs of the cross' beams; the roofs and dome are slate-clad. At the central dome's crown is a Byzantine-style lantern, whose small metallic dome is topped by a Latin cross. The church's original Renaissance style interior included numerous shrines whose dimensions were based upon those Leonori had recorded in the Holy Land.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the focus of Washington's Catholic ecclesiastic building was primarily Catholic University and the campuses of associated religious orders, as well as school buildings, rectories, convents, and other parochial structures. Only four churches were built between 1900 and 1921, years which included the establishment of the Catholic University School of Architecture under the chairmanship of Frederick V. Murphy and the founding of the highly influential firm of Murphy & Olmsted, architects of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart.

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<sup>23</sup> Baldwin designed St. Theresa of Avila at 1244 V Street SE (1879) and St. Mary Mother of God parish's second church at 5<sup>th</sup> and H Streets NW (1890). John Stack, the Baltimore contractor who erected many of Baldwin's buildings, is credited with designing St. Cyprian's Church (1893) at 13<sup>th</sup> and C Streets SE, an edifice of Potomac bluestone that strongly resembled Baldwin's work.

<sup>24</sup> T. Robins Brown. *National Register Nomination: St. Matthew's Cathedral and Rectory* (unpublished), 1974.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Jo Lamp and Judith Helm Robinson. *National Register Nomination: "Franciscan Monastery and Memorial Church of the Holy Land,"* (unpublished), 1991, 8-4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 7-6.

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### Historical Background - The Parish of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart

In 1894, a brief article in the *Washington Post* announced that a new Roman Catholic parish was to be established in the growing suburb of Mount Pleasant in northwest Washington. "A permanent location for a church will be chosen in the central part of Mount Pleasant, and a chapel will be erected," the article announced. Further, two parish schools would be organized, "one for the white and one for the colored children."<sup>27</sup> Nothing immediately came of these promises, but two years later, more specific plans were revealed. Archbishop James Cardinal Gibbons announced that Father Joseph F. McGee would be pastor of the new parish and that Father McGee had decided to name it the "Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus."<sup>28</sup>

Born in Baltimore in 1861, McGee was the son of Irish immigrants. He was ordained in 1886 and appointed assistant pastor of St. Patrick's Church at 615 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW, the oldest Catholic parish in Washington. Here the charismatic McGee quickly came into his own as the leader of a devotional group known as the League of the Sacred Heart, which was founded at St. Patrick's in 1888. The league enrolled hundreds of new members within months of its formation, and by 1895 had 2,000 associates.<sup>29</sup> The Roman Catholic tradition of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus first developed in the Middle Ages, when the heart of Jesus was seen as a symbol of His love of humanity and compassion for human suffering. Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, numerous Catholic groups worldwide committed themselves to devotion to the Sacred Heart; the group at St. Patrick's was one of these.<sup>30</sup>

Father McGee's plan was to build on the success of the St. Patrick's group to build an entire new parish and church devoted to the Sacred Heart. He envisioned this new church becoming for Washington a shrine like the Sacré Cœur de Montmartre Basilica in Paris.<sup>31</sup> The *Evening Star* reported:

*With the approval of the cardinal, Father McGee has decided to place the new parish under the patronage of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He wishes to give it the character of a national shrine to the Sacred Heart. The site which has been selected is similar to the one in Paris upon which has been erected the famous National Shrine to the Sacred Heart. The Parisian shrine is situated upon an elevation overlooking Paris, called Montmartre. The plans of the building have not been determined upon, but it is the intention to erect a large and handsome edifice.*<sup>32</sup>

More time would go by before any church construction could begin. The 1896 announcement stated that property had been purchased for the new church on the southeast corner of what is

<sup>27</sup> "A New Catholic Parish," *Post*, Oct. 14, 1894, 8.

<sup>28</sup> "Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus," *Post*, Nov. 1, 1896, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Morris J. MacGregor, *A Parish for the Federal City: St. Patrick's in Washington, 1794-1994* (Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 230.

<sup>30</sup> "The Sacred Heart," *Star*, Jun. 3, 1905, part 2, 9.

<sup>31</sup> Construction began on the Sacré Cœur de Montmartre in 1875, but the church was not completed until 1914, the same year that Fr. McGee died.

<sup>32</sup> "Secured a Site," *Evening Star*, Oct. 31, 1896, 3.

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now Park Road and 13<sup>th</sup> Street NW. However, when it was finally built six years later, the first Sacred Heart church was at a different location—on 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW just north of Park Road.

In October 1899, the parish began renting and meeting temporarily at Union Hall, a frame building owned by the Mount Pleasant Congregational Church. Sunday School classes were held there as well. Union Hall was located at present-day 1514 Newton Street NW, now the site of an apartment building.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, efforts began to raise money to build a larger church for the parish.<sup>34</sup> Many promises were made that an impressive new building would be constructed. According to an 1898 newspaper article, “it is said that, situated on Columbia Heights, it will soon be one of the leading attractions of the city.”<sup>35</sup>

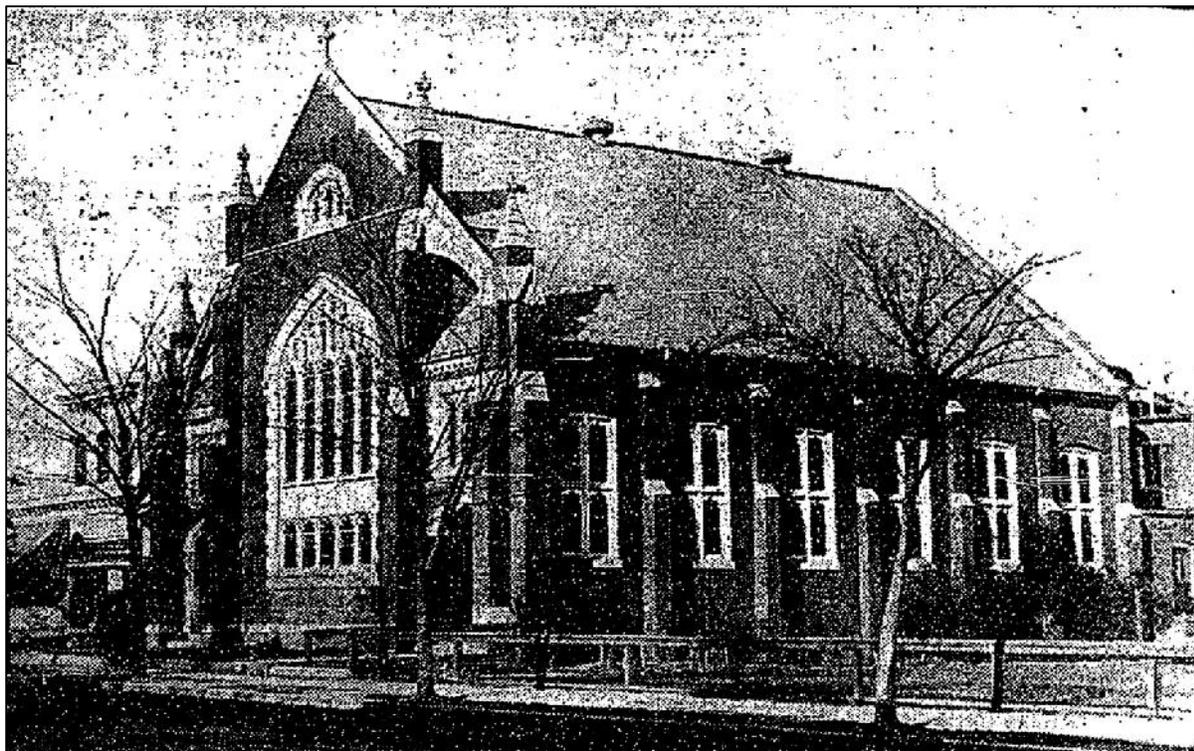


Figure 9: Church of the Sacred Heart Chapel at 14<sup>th</sup> and Park Road NW (Source: *The Washington Post*, Feb. 2, 1932).

After several years of successful fundraising, the cornerstone laying ceremony for a Gothic Revival parish hall was held on the east side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW just north of Park Road in June 1901. Designed by architect Henry Simpson and completed a year later, the building was intended to serve temporarily as the parish church. The red brick building with limestone trim featured an ornamental flying buttress on either side of the main entrance, with the main portion of the gabled roof canted back from the façade to accommodate the buttresses. A large window

<sup>33</sup> “They Will Be Given Away,” *Post*, Feb. 28, 1890, 6; see Baist Real Estate Atlas of Washington, DC, 1903 edition, Vol. III, plate 13 for the location of Union Hall.

<sup>34</sup> “Dolls to Aid Church Funds,” *Post*, Dec. 17, 1897, 12.

<sup>35</sup> “Shrine of Sacred Heart,” *Star*, Feb. 7, 1898, 10.

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with flamboyant Gothic limestone tracery was the main feature of the façade (Figure 9). The parish had purchased the entire lot extending south to the intersection with Park Road, intending to build a much larger Gothic Revival church directly on the corner once additional funds for that project could be raised. At a special service in November, Archbishop John J. Keane invoked McGee’s vision of a creating a national shrine to the Sacred Heart like the one in Paris and implored parishioners to “spend even their [street]car fare in the interest of the cause.” The church’s name was changed from “Church of the Sacred Heart” to “Shrine of the Sacred Heart” in 1903.<sup>36</sup>

Father McGee had many supporters at St. Patrick’s and across the city. Among his followers at St. Patrick’s was an African American woman named Julia Hanson. Hanson had been born enslaved in 1804 on a plantation at Benedict, Charles County, Maryland. She was freed upon her owner’s death in 1823 and came to Washington with the small sum of money that he had willed to her. As a light-skinned African American, she was able to gain success catering to wealthy and influential customers as a nursemaid, seamstress, and laundress. During the Civil War, she rented a house at 1219 F Street NW, which she converted into a successful boardinghouse. She later purchased the house, which over the years became quite valuable as F Street grew as an important commercial center of Washington. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “Aunt Julia” Hansen, a devout Catholic and parishioner of St. Patrick’s, was a wealthy woman. She gladly donated \$10,000 to her friend, Father McGee, for his new church project—a fact widely noted in the press. She died shortly thereafter, in 1902, at age 98.<sup>37</sup>

### **Planning and fundraising for the new church**

Father McGee died in 1914, before his plans for a new church could be realized.<sup>38</sup> His successor, Father Patrick C. Gavan, focused on catering to the needs of the parish as much as looking to build a larger, permanent church building. The primary objective of creating a national shrine to the Sacred Heart was subordinated to parish needs, although the desire for a monumental building that would attract a wide range of national and international visitors remained.

Efforts to raise funds for the new church continued in the late 1910s. For example, in 1917 the Sacred Heart Dramatic Association put on a musical comedy at the Casino Theater at 632 F Street NW as a benefit for the project.<sup>39</sup> By 1920, the effort gained much greater momentum. In May, the church announced a new 10-day drive to raise funds for the church, which by that time had already been designed by the local firm of Murphy and Olmsted (See below) with assistance from the Boston firm of Maginnis & Walsh, the top architects of Roman Catholic churches at the time. The new location at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Road had already been chosen. According to the *Evening Star*, it was to be “one of the most beautiful churches in the United States, which will crown the hill on 16<sup>th</sup> street... It will be a notable addition to the many beautiful edifices along

<sup>36</sup> “Church To be Built,” *Star*, Jun. 8, 1901, 28; “Dedicated to Christ,” *Post*, Jun. 9, 1902; “By Archbishop Keane,” *Post*, Nov. 10, 1902, 9; “National Shrine of the Sacred Heart,” *Post*, May 3, 1903, 12.

<sup>37</sup> “Death of Aunt Julia,” *Star*, Sep. 16, 1902, 12; “Aged Negress Burned,” *Post*, Jan. 25, 1902, 12.

<sup>38</sup> “Many Honor Memory of Rev. Joseph F. M’Gee,” *Star*, Jan. 23, 1914, 12.

<sup>39</sup> “Sacred Heart Talent On Stage At Casino,” *Star*, Feb. 21, 1917, 10.

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16<sup>th</sup> street, starting with the White House and including embassies, Henderson Castle, the Scottish Rite Temple and other buildings which attract the attention of tourists.”<sup>40</sup>

The ten-day fundraising drive in 1920 was very successful. Like an old-fashioned camp meeting, the drive was centered in a large tent at the busy corner of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Road. Each day's returns were announced that evening, and contributors' names were inscribed on a giant, 20-foot by 70-foot honor roll board. A team of 140 trained and credentialed volunteers went door-to-door, canvassing the entire parish. The drive's initial goal of \$100,000 was raised to \$200,000. By the end of the campaign, \$231,180 had been raised. The estimated cost to build the church was \$500,000.<sup>41</sup>

Movie theater magnate Harry Crandall was a parishioner at Sacred Heart and donated at least \$1,000 to the fundraising drive. Starting with the small Casino Theater on Capitol Hill in 1907 (not the same theater where the Sacred Heart benefit was held in 1917), Crandall acquired theaters and steadily expanded his business. His comfortable, well-ventilated theaters with elegant trappings drew capacity crowds. By the late 1910s, he was the largest movie theater operator in the city. He was undoubtedly involved in the planning for the new church building and was a member of the fundraising committee. He also may have been involved in selecting and acquiring the site for the new church. In 1921, Crandall purchased the old Sacred Heart church and its site at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Road for \$200,000, contributing substantially to the fund raising efforts. Crandall would soon thereafter raze the brick church building and construct the highly ornate Tivoli Theater on the site.<sup>42</sup> The still-standing Tivoli Theater building is listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.

## **AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE**

### **Site history**

The new church site was at the corner of Park Road and Pine Street NW just east of 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The one-block-long Pine Street had been laid out as part of the Mount Pleasant subdivision long before 16<sup>th</sup> Street was extended on a north-south axis through the subdivision, shearing off the southern end of Pine Street. Scattered frame houses were built in this new subdivision, including one at the southeast corner of Pine Street and Park Street (Park Road) that was in place by 1887 and remained until at least 1907 (see Maps 3 and 4). By 1911, the house had been demolished, and the site was vacant (see Map 5).

No documentation has been found regarding the rationale for the selection of the new site. However, it is a logical choice. The site lies at approximately the highest point of land in this area, making it a desirable location for a shrine. Moving the church from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Street also makes sense. With the extension of the streetcar line along 14<sup>th</sup> Street to Decatur Street in 1907, 14<sup>th</sup> Street had become increasingly commercial, with many shops and a commercial arcade in the vicinity of the church. Sixteenth Street, in contrast, was entirely residential and a more

<sup>40</sup> “Sacred Heart to Drive for New Church Fund,” *Star*, May 13, 1920, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.; “Sacred Heart Drive Far Past Its Quota,” *Herald*, May 29, 1920, 7; “Plans Completed and Finances Now Assured For Building Beautiful Sacred Heart Edifice,” *Herald*, Sep. 25, 1920, 5.

<sup>42</sup> “Crandall to Build \$500,000 Theater,” *Post*, Aug. 21, 1921, 37.

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dignified location for an important church—a reason many congregations chose to move there in the 1920s. The available site at Pine Street was large enough for a substantial new church as well as a rectory and was only a block from the old location.

There is no factual basis for the oft-repeated myth that the specific location of Sacred Heart was a result of objections from Protestant ministers not wanting a Catholic Church directly on 16<sup>th</sup> Street. It is worth noting that many of the Protestant churches in this section of 16<sup>th</sup> Street weren't even built until after Sacred Heart was completed. One of the earliest Protestant churches, the Central Presbyterian Church, was, like Sacred Heart, positioned just off 16<sup>th</sup> Street. It was built on the southeast corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and Irving Streets NW from 1913 to 1914.<sup>43</sup> The Sacred Heart project was said to be carefully tailored to its locale. According to a 1920 *Washington Post* article, "Special study has been made to fit the new church into the surroundings and have it harmonize with the width of 16<sup>th</sup> street, the other important buildings in the neighborhood and the vista along the Avenue of the Presidents."<sup>44</sup> In fact, setting the church slightly away from the main line of buildings on the street may have been seen as a positive symbol of the church's separation from everyday worldly things. The location and design of the building were "skillfully differentiated from the many public and semi-public buildings that adorn, and will in the future be erected, to compare with it."<sup>45</sup>

### **Design, Construction, and Critical Acclaim**

The church's style was called "the rare north Italian Romanesque style of architecture" when plans were announced in 1920. An article in the *Evening Star*, asserted that it "will be the only structure of that kind of architecture in this country" due to the demolition of the Parkhurst (Madison Avenue) Presbyterian Church in New York City designed by Stanford White. The design of Sacred Heart was said to represent "several years' work" by Murphy & Olmsted in consultation with Maginnis & Walsh. "The Romanesque style, Mr. Murphy explains, gives the necessary dignity and ecclesiastical character with an avoidance of heaviness. It combines some elements of the classical with certain other elements of the medieval style." The style also evoked the period before the Reformation, when all Christians were Catholics, and helped to visually distinguish Catholic churches from Protestant churches, many of which adopted the Gothic Revival style.

The *Evening Star* article further elaborated:

*The windows will be of stained glass, and the picture scheme is now being given close study by Rev. P.J. Gavan, the pastor. It is intended to have these windows unmatched in any church in this country and of such artistic design and coloring that they will attract art lovers from all over the world....*

<sup>43</sup> Matthew Palkowski, "I Place All My Trust in Thee: A History of the Sacred Heart Parish, Washington, D.C.," (unpublished manuscript, Aug. 1998), 1.

<sup>44</sup> "Church for Parish Here to be Unique," *Star*, May 16, 1920, 21.

<sup>45</sup> "Church of the Sacred Heart, Washington, D.C.," *The American Architect/The Architectural Review*, Vol. CXXIII, No. 2421, Jun. 6, 1923, 499.

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*Old world travelers from the embassies along 16<sup>th</sup> street will be especially well pleased with the structure, because they will be reminded of the best types of the Romanesque style of architecture. Special studies have been made of such churches as St. Zeno, in Verona, Italy, and St. Ambrose, in Milan. The style prevailed from the ninth to the twelfth century and from it the Gothic was developed.*<sup>46</sup>

A building permit for the new church was secured in March 1921, and the cornerstone was laid in June.<sup>47</sup> By the time it was completed more than a year later, the church's construction costs had risen from \$450,000 to \$600,000. The overall costs of the project, including interior fixtures, stained glass windows, and the new rectory building next door, approached \$1 million. The building was called "one of the costliest and most artistic of the Catholic churches in the city."<sup>48</sup>

Construction took almost two years. In December 1922, although some interior features were not yet installed, the church held a dedication ceremony. The *Washington Post* took the opportunity to highlight the features of the new church:

*Presenting an impression of general spaciousness, majestic and agreeable proportions and carefully considered detail, the edifice fits in distinctly with the embassies, legations and beautiful residences that front on upper Sixteenth street. The church properly parallels the "Avenue of the Presidents" and fronts the public park across the street.*

*The complete harmony between the warm hues of the pink Milford granite monoliths supporting the arches of the portico, and the rich white Kentucky limestone of which the exterior walls and dome are built is striking and conveys a sense of harmony in the use of structural materials that is especially noteworthy....*

*The symbolism of the ground plan is further carried out in the interior decorative scheme.... On entering the nave, through the main vestibule, the simplicity of the theme used is striking, the colors, ornament, columns and capitals, are varied in such a naïve way as to hold one's attention indefinitely. The general impression of the walls seems a warm rose color, with the complementary pale green in columns and ornament. The ceiling has a pale golden aspect with a complementary blue in the background of stars and panels....*<sup>49</sup>

The interior decorative scheme consisted of brilliantly colored murals which resemble Byzantine mosaics in grooved plaster molds made of architectural concrete by renowned designer John Joseph Earley. Early applied separate bands of aggregate with thickness, size, color, and texture controlled to give particular effects at various distances. From its dedication, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart was praised as an architectural and artistic masterpiece. Viktor Flambeau of the *Washington Herald* devoted more than a full-page appreciation to the Shrine, pronouncing it "a modern monument of medieval form" and declaring:

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> "Building Permits in Week Aggregate Over \$675,000," *Star*, Mar. 26, 1921, part 2, 1; "Sacred Heart Church Corner Stone is Laid," *Star*, Jun. 13, 1921, 9.

<sup>48</sup> "Catholic Church Dedication Today," *Herald*, Dec. 10, 1922, 3.

<sup>49</sup> "New Sacred Heart Church Open Today," *Post*, Dec. 10, 1922, 29.

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*The opening of a new renaissance in American art, centering in our National Capital, is marked not only in the erection of this, one of the most beautiful churches in the entire United States, but of the many temples now building here whose adherents cannot fail to be inspired by this example of perfect architecture.*<sup>50</sup>

International acclaim came from the architectural critic of the *London Mercury*, who commented that the Shrine “is one of those which will give inspiration to architects. It will take its place among the works which influence future development.”<sup>51</sup>

A subsequent article in *The American Architect/The Architectural Review* described the new church as a combination of ancient and modern elements, noting it represented “at once a faithful interpretation of the highest architectural standards characterizing the early portion of the Middle Ages, and the culmination of ideals governing the design of modern church buildings.”<sup>52</sup>

One noteworthy feature of the new church was its magnificent organ, built by Casavant Frères of Canada. At its initial public performance at the Shrine’s dedication in December 1922, the *Evening Star* observed that it “possesses all the essentials that...produce a superb instrument – power, brilliancy, sweetness, responsive action, variety of tonal effects and up-to-date mechanism” and noted that its mahogany case complemented the church’s “artistic interior” and “unsurpassed” acoustics.<sup>53</sup> It was reportedly the largest organ in the city until an organ at the Kennedy Center was installed. Today this organ remains in its original location, unmodified and never restored, and is among the most significant historical organs in the region.

Murphey & Olmsted’s 1920 plan situated a rectory across the walkway from the south side of the church, placing its front door close to the church’s sanctuary area entrance. The *Star* reported that this structure followed “general design of the church” and was of “the most modern plan of such proportions as are best suited to the demands of such a structure and as a supplement to the church edifice.”<sup>54</sup> This stone, three-story Italianate building has been a residence for pastor and clerical staff, and provided a location for many weddings, and provided office, meeting and social space at least since the day in December 1922 when Msgr. Avan hosted Diocese Archbishop Michael Curley and other distinguished guests at a dedication luncheon.<sup>55</sup>

### **Architect Frederick V. Murphy**

Frederick Vernon Murphy became an adopted Washingtonian through his architectural career. He was born in 1879 in Fond-du-Lac, Wisconsin, the son of New Yorkers John Vernon Murphy, a tinsmith, and his wife Alice. In 1883, John Murphy died at age 32 while traveling on a train

<sup>50</sup> Viktor Flambeau, “Impressive Midnight Mass at Sacred Heart,” *Washington Herald*, Dec. 23, 1923, 27.

<sup>51</sup> John C. Murphy. “Frederick V. Murphy: The Catholic Architect as Eclectic Designer and University Professor.” *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Winter, 1997, Vol. 15, No. 1, 99.

<sup>52</sup> “Church of the Sacred Heart, Washington, D.C.,” *The American Architect/The Architectural Review*, Vol. CXXIII, No. 2421, Jun. 6, 1923, 499.

<sup>53</sup> “Musical Mention,” *Star*, Dec 10, 1922, 41.

<sup>54</sup> “Church for Parish Here to Be Unique,” *Star*, May 16, 1920, 21

<sup>55</sup> “Church Dedication Rich in Ceremonial,” *Washington Herald*, Dec 11, 1922, 5.

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through Kansas in search of relief from chronic illness.<sup>56</sup> By 1892, the Murphys had moved to Chicago, where Alice Murphy supported the family with a boarding house so that Frederick and his sister could attend the city's excellent public schools. By some accounts, Fredrick was first attracted to architecture through visits to the "White City" at the 1893 Columbian Exposition.<sup>57</sup> At North Division High School, which offered four-years' instruction in drawing, his work was often included in student shows.<sup>58</sup> After graduating in 1897, he continued his studies at the Chicago Athenaeum and Institute of Art, taught drawing in the Chicago public schools, and worked as an architectural draftsman. In 1903, the Murphy family moved to Washington when Frederick qualified through a civil service examination to become a draftsman at the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury.

The Supervising Architect's Office oversaw the design, construction, and modification of civilian federal buildings. Given the scope of its nationwide workload, it is impossible to identify Murphy's specific projects. However, his simultaneous involvement with the Washington Architectural Club is well documented. Founded in the 1890s, the club held monthly meetings with speakers drawn from its members, conducted an atelier to critique work, and sponsored an annual exhibit at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. From his early days in Washington, Murphy was an active member and entrant in the club's competitions.<sup>59</sup> In late 1903, the club announced a competition much in the spirit of the student concourse of the École des Beaux Arts. First prize, a traveling scholarship through Europe, was to be awarded by a panel that included Nathan Wyeth, the only École graduate currently practicing in Washington. The winner would have the highest aggregate score from a series of ten-hour sketches of a neoclassical bank, a palace entrance, an orangerie, and the grand staircase in an art museum. In 1903, Murphy's bank drawing took a third-place honorable mention. In 1904, he took second place, with a special \$100 prize for the overall quality of his work and a point score almost equivalent to the winner's. In 1905 he was awarded the club's second scholarship.<sup>60</sup> That June, to the cheers of a contingent of Washington friends, Murphy sailed from New York aboard the Cunard liner Caronia for a summer's tour of Britain's lakes, Holland, Belgium, France, and Italy with a particular emphasis on "the great cathedrals." It was already planned that he would enter the École des Beaux Arts at his tour's conclusion in autumn.<sup>61</sup>

After receiving the highest entrance examination score any "foreign student" had ever received and the acceptance of his drawing of "A shelter room in a public garden," Murphy was admitted to the preparatory workshop of Eugène Chiffot in December 1905, the École's 2nd class on January 3, 1906, and its first class as a member of the ateliers of Louis Bernier, Gustave

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<sup>56</sup> Murphy, 91.

<sup>57</sup> Baltimore City Planning Commission, *Staff Report: Baltimore City Landmark Designation/ St. Peter the Apostle Church Complex* (2011),5; Murphy, 91.

<sup>58</sup> "Bid Study Good-Bye," *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, June 24, 1897, 10. "Work of High School Artists," *Chicago Chronicle*, June 16, 1896, 7. "North Division High School Commencement," *Chicago Eagle*, June 26, 1897, 7

<sup>59</sup> "Competition for the Traveling Scholarship," *Washington Times*, Nov 30, 1903, 1, "Art Topics," *Post*, Dec 6, 1903, 8.

<sup>60</sup> "Annual Exhibition," *Star*, Mar 26, 1904, 3; "Orangerie Competition Award Is Announced," *Washington Times*, Jan 12, 1904, 10; "Architectural Club," *Washington Times*, June 12, 1904, 4; "Art Notes," *Star*, June 17, 1905, 10

<sup>61</sup> "World of Society," *Star*, June 12, 1905, 5.

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Umbdenstock, and Paul Tournon in 1908.<sup>62</sup> He formed lifelong friendships with roommates Chrysler Building designer William Van Alen, garden cities planner Clarence Stein, and future Philadelphia city architect William Ellis Groben. Throughout his enrollment, he periodically returned to the United States to replenish his finances by working with the Supervising Architect. He also periodically submitted drawings to Washington Architectural Club exhibits.

After fulfilling the Ecole's requirements for graduation, Murphy returned to Washington in 1909 and resumed full-time work for the Office of the Supervising Architect on such projects as the Renaissance Revival Barge Office on the future site of Manhattan's Battery Park and Dayton, Ohio's Neoclassical Main City Post Office.<sup>63</sup> Murphy also befriended Catholic University rector Rev. Thomas J. Shahan, who in September 1911 announced his appointment as the sole professor in the school's new Department of Architecture. Initially Murphy taught freehand drawing and "The Study of Historic Ornament," which supplemented theory with outdoor sketching, in repurposed attic space in E.F. Baldwin's McMahon Hall.<sup>64</sup>

The university could afford only small faculty salaries, so in 1912 Murphy formed a partnership with Walter Olmsted, a colleague from the Office of the Supervising Architect. Murphy & Olmsted's first commission followed Murphy's and Professor William Turner's purchase of three lots in the 1300 block of Quincy Street NE in May 1912.<sup>65</sup> That summer the architects designed a commodious brick house for Father Turner, a professor of philosophy, historian, librarian, and author who was later consecrated Bishop of Buffalo. The following spring, Murphy built his own house next door.<sup>66</sup>

These early projects illustrate the developing links between Murphy's professional life and personal relationships in Brookland's Catholic educational community. Father Turner and Murphy purchased their lots from the Catholic Educational Press at 1326 Quincy Street, whose founder and director was Father Thomas E. Shields. Father Shields came to Catholic University in 1902 as a lecturer in biology and physiology and was soon also teaching at nearby Trinity College, a school for Catholic lay women. In 1908 he became the first professor in Catholic University Department of Education. A prolific author whose press frequently published his own writings, Father Shields, a progressive in the manner of John Dewey, advocated women's technical and scientific education. He helped found Sisters College, a school for women in Catholic religious orders, which commissioned a half-dozen Murphy & Olmsted buildings for its Brookland campus.<sup>67</sup> Murphy & Olmsted designed a house for Father Shields on Sisters College's campus as well as a Quincy Street studio for his collaborator Justine Ward, a Trinity College professor noted for instructing children in the singing of Gregorian chants.<sup>68</sup> Murphy &

<sup>62</sup> Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte. "Student Record: Frederick V. Murphy," "Ecole des Beaux Arts." <https://francearchives.gouv.fr/findingaid/054925209a1526feb8b89db610c6b664b176b9bd>.

<sup>63</sup> "Many Changes in Faculty Staff at Catholic School." *Washington Times*, Sept 25, 1911, 2. Frederick V. Murphy, Biographical Sketch." AIA Membership Application (Unpublished)

<sup>64</sup> *Catholic University Bulletin* XVIII (June 1912), (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 565.

<sup>65</sup> "Real Estate Transactions," *Star*. May 14, 1912. 2.

<sup>66</sup> DC Building Permit #3700, Feb 13/1913

<sup>67</sup> DC Building Permit Database, Permits 431 (July 25, 1914), 5190 (June 10, 1915), 1149 (Sept 8, 1915), 1116 (Aug 7, 1928).

<sup>68</sup> DC Building Permit Database, Permit 3822, Jan. 4, 1921

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Olmsted also designed a house at 1201 Perry Street NE for Elsie Kernan, a Trinity college English professor, who soon afterwards took on a thousand-mile sightseeing drive with the architect, his mother, and his sister.<sup>69</sup>

In December 1912, Murphy & Olmsted received its first major non-residential commission. This was to design the Nation Capital Press Building, a brick seven-story Italian Renaissance structure at 511 11<sup>th</sup> Street NW that housed offices and industrial-scale printing operations.<sup>70</sup> Throughout this decade the architects continued to receive residential commissions, many from the builders who routinely erected their other buildings.<sup>71</sup> However, their focus became academic, ecclesiastical, and functional buildings for Catholic University and associated religious orders. These projects were as varied as a crypt and grotto at the Franciscan Monastery, a student dining hall, gymnasium, and chemical laboratory on the Catholic university campus, and dormitories, convents, classroom buildings and utilitarian buildings like garages on neighboring campuses. One such project was St. Paul's College, a three-story Gothic Revival seminary constructed on Taylor Street NE for the Paulist Fathers in 1913.<sup>72</sup>

Murphy and Olmsted's careers as master church architects began in Maryland. The red tile-roofed dome of their 1913 Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels is the focal point of the former St. Charles College seminary campus in Catonsville. "Reminiscent of the brick churches of Bologna," this stone basilica-plan chapel has been termed "Early Renaissance" or "Romanesque" with Beaux-Arts and Byzantine influences. Its marble interior is "a virtual collection of allied arts" with mosaics by Bancel LaFarge, brother of the architect of Washington's St. Mathew the Apostle Church, and an altar designed by John Earley, the Washington architectural sculptor's first collaboration with Murphy & Olmsted.<sup>73</sup>

Murphy & Olmsted's next church projects in 1914 were for smaller edifices in urban neighborhoods. Georgetown Evangelical Lutheran Church, a rare commission from a non-Catholic congregation, was the fourth Lutheran church on its site at 1556 Wisconsin Avenue. Murphy & Olmsted's Gothic Revival church in Potomac bluestone has a hardwood interior and open ceiling trusses.<sup>74</sup>

St. Joseph Church in Alexandria is a brick Gothic Revival structure constructed through the efforts of Thomas Blair, longtime sexton of nearby St Mary's Church, the oldest Catholic parish in Virginia. St Mary's Black parishioners had long endured discriminatory treatment in their house of worship as well as on the streets of their segregated state. Blair organized a committee of Black fellow congregants to petition the bishop of the Richmond diocese to form a new parish. Mother Katharine Drexel, founder of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, benefactor of African American and Native American charitable causes, and eventually the second American-

<sup>69</sup> "Back from Long Auto Trip," *Star*, Aug 30. 1914. 8. DC Building Permit Database, Permit 4794, April 9. 1913

<sup>70</sup> Betty Bird. *National Capital Press Building*, (HABS DC-804) Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service; Department of the Interior (1987)

<sup>71</sup> DC Building Permit Database. Permit 4933, (May 21, 1914). 2935 (Jan. 23, 1915)..

<sup>72</sup> Hayden Wetzel. *National Register Nomination: St. Paul 's College*. (unpublished), 2017)

<sup>73</sup> Robert A Erlandson. "Chapel 'Unrivaled,'" *Baltimore Sun*; Dec 26, 1994;2B1

<sup>74</sup> "New Georgetown Lutheran Church is Fourth on Site Since 1766," *Post*, Sept 27, 1914, 7.

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born saint, helped fund the construction of Murphy & Olmsted's design, and St. Joseph Church was dedicated on May 14, 1916.<sup>75</sup>

Plans to construct the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception predate both Murphy's appointment to the Catholic University faculty and Murphy & Olmsted's founding. Nevertheless, although Maginnis & Walsh of Boston were the shrine's architects of record, Murphy was involved in every stage of construction as "Associate Architect."<sup>76</sup> Beginning in 1919, he supervised construction work, acted as Maginnis & Walsh's local representative, and "according to contemporary documents, assisted in the design."<sup>77</sup> However, little construction on the main building took place until the 1950s, with only the crypt church and basement built in the 1920s.

The choice of style for the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is indicative of trends in Catholic ecclesiastical architecture. Bishop Shahan had been contemplating a National Shrine in Washington since his arrival as a Catholic University faculty member shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. For several years after he enlisted Pope Pius X's support in 1913, the National Shrine was visualized as a Gothic cathedral.<sup>78</sup> However, by 1918, Bishop Shahan and other planners had substituted "a composite Byzantine-Romanesque plan." Although Catholic ecclesiastical architecture conveys symbolic and traditional elements, Shrine historian Thomas Tweed suggests that this stylistic decision also involved non-theological considerations beyond the expense of Gothic structures and the preference of the Archbishop of St. Louis, an influential CUA trustee, for a Romanesque exterior and Byzantine interior for that city's new cathedral. Tweed finds it particularly significant that "the Byzantine-Romanesque plan also blended best with Washington's built environment."<sup>79</sup> He quotes a 1922 fundraising brochure's statement that "the architects ... concluded that a domical style of architecture would best convey the national character of the project" and cites illustrations that associate the domed Capitol and Shrine as monumental national buildings.<sup>80</sup>

At approximately the same time as the National Shrine, Murphy designed the Shrine of the Sacred Heart with Maginnis & Walsh as associate architects. While as a parish church Sacred Heart was not intended to have the same scope as the National Shrine, the shrines' Byzantine-Romanesque architectural form suggests overlapping influences. The National Shrine's hilltop location makes its colorful Byzantine dome visible across the city, while the Shrine of the Sacred Heart similarly stands at the crest of a hill in northwest Washington. Constructed during transition from Gothic Revival church architectural conventions, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart was inspired by European Byzantine-Romanesque churches, which Murphy & Olmsted's work would help establish as a standard for Catholic churches in Washington and beyond.

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<sup>75</sup> "New Catholic Church," *Alexandria Gazette*, Nov 11, 1915, np; "Church is Dedicated," *Alexandria Gazette*, May 15, 1916, 2.

<sup>76</sup> Murphy was Maginnis's associate for the AIA gold medal winning chapel at Trinity College and the Gothic revival Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament in Chevy Chase. Murphy, 94-95.

<sup>77</sup> Murphy, 94.

<sup>78</sup> Tweed, Thomas. *America's Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation's Capital*. Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition, 183

<sup>79</sup> Tweed, 184

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

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Speaking specifically of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Frederick Murphy cited the architectural influence of San Vitale Church in Ravenna, which he described as a highpoint of the early Romanesque style of Northeastern Italy. He noted the practical as well as traditional and aesthetic strengths of the Byzantine-Romanesque style for a parish church as well as for a basilica:

*Advantage has been taken of this early historic style, so closely associated with the story of the church itself, to develop an edifice suited to the needs of a parish church and to give it dignity, beauty, and the interest that attaches to traditional forms correctly expressed. The Romanesque permits of the use of nave, aisles, and transept of such proportions that satisfy the demands of size and stateliness and without the soaring height demanded by the Gothic...The nave, with its graceful balancing of semicircular vault over walls pierced by openings of similar silhouettes... will ensure good seating accommodations and view of the altar from every point.<sup>81</sup>*

As Murphy's son and biographer John C. Murphy has written,

*[My father's] favorite project was the Shrine of the Sacred Heart. It was... not a cathedral, but large in scale and exposed, away from the sheltering environment afforded by the CUA campus... this opportunity allowed him to combine his Beaux-Arts training with his maturity as professor and practitioner and to exhibit his understanding of relationship between structure and ecclesial Catholic liturgy.<sup>82</sup>*

After the Shrine of the Sacred Heart was dedicated in 1923, Murphy & Olmsted focused on other Catholic ecclesiastical projects. During the dozen-odd years preceding Olmsted's death in 1936, the firm's projects were typically schools, rectories, smaller churches, academic buildings, and functional structures in the District and elsewhere in the Baltimore and Washington areas.

However, as the Shrine of the Sacred Heart attracted attention across the country, Murphy & Olmsted were commissioned to build similar monumental churches in three other cities.<sup>83</sup> While these edifices share Sacred Heart's commanding presence and exquisite aggregate mosaic interior treatment, they are far from identical. The 1926 Church of the Holy Family in Dayton, Ohio has a Romanesque Revival exterior and a John Earley Studio aggregate mosaic interior similar to Sacred Heart's. While the 1927 St. Mary's Church in Mobile, Alabama is often described as "Spanish Colonial Revival" in style, it is plainly a Romanesque Revival building with a white adobe-like surface. Like Holy Family, St. Mary's has a John Earley Studio aggregate mosaic interior and a tall campanile rather than a Byzantine dome. Dedicated in 1928, St. Francis de Sales Church in Buffalo, New York is perhaps most similar to the Shrine of the

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<sup>81</sup> Murphy, 99-102.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Murphy, 95.

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Sacred Heart. Murphy & Olmsted received its commission through the intercession of Murphy's friend, colleague, client, and former Quincy Street neighbor Buffalo Bishop William Turner.<sup>84</sup>

While designing the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Murphy & Olmsted also were working on other Washington projects. Of the academic buildings the firm designed, perhaps the most notable is the 1925 Mullen Library at the Catholic University of America. Upon its completion, the *Denver Post* called the Romanesque Revival limestone library with aggregate mosaics by Earley "magnificent" and "one of the finest buildings in Washington."<sup>85</sup>

Although the Great Depression curtailed building of all types, Murphy & Olmsted continued to design rectories, convents, and schools in Brookland and parishes across the city, including the 1930 Sacred Heart School at 1621 Park Road NW. In the late 1920s, Murphy had joined a firm of prominent architects organized by Nathan Wyeth to pursue large government commissions. As the depression worsened, this led to his participation in such projects as the construction of Woodrow Wilson High School in 1935.<sup>86</sup> Murphy & Olmsted had just received the permit for a single-story structure at St. Anthony's Church in Brookland when Olmsted died on December 9, 1937.

For the next five years, Murphy practiced on his own, designing a half-dozen parish churches in Washington. The 1941 International Style headquarters of the National Catholic Welfare Conference at 1312 Massachusetts Avenue NW was narrowly preceded by William Lescaze's Longfellow Building as Washington's first modernist office building. Another intriguing commission was the Church of St. Dismas the Good Thief, a Gothic Revival edifice built of fieldstones salvaged from a demolished cellblock by inmates at the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York between 1939 and 1941.<sup>87</sup>

In 1943, Murphy formed a new partnership with his former student and longtime associate Thomas Locraft. Although he retired as chair of the School of Architecture in 1949, he worked with Locraft until 1957, designing parish churches as far away as Iowa.

### **Mosaic Decoration by Designer John Joseph Earley**

On December 12, 1881, roughly a month after his parents immigrated from Ireland, John Joseph Earley was born in Manhattan. His father, James Farrington Earley, had trained at Dublin's Royal Hibernian Academy and worked in the family firm of Earley & Powells, one of Ireland's most prominent church decorators. Earley & Powells sometimes worked with leading Irish

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<sup>84</sup> Martin Ederer. *Buffalo's Catholic Churches*. (Buffalo: Bates-Jackson Ltd., 2003), 94.; The National Register-listed 1928-1930 Sacred Heart Chapel at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Brentwood, Long Island is the Murphy & Olmsted monumental church least directly related to Washington's Shrine of the Sacred Heart. The church interior is richly decorated in onyx and marble with Byzantine-influenced metallic elements and Alabaster windows designed by future partner Paul Goettelmann. However, it lacks John Earley Studio aggregate mosaics and a Byzantine central dome. S. Clara and Virginia Dowd. *National Register Nomination: Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, Brentwood*, (Unpublished), 2018.

<sup>85</sup> "Mullen Library in Washington is Ready for Opening." *Denver Post*, July 12, 1928, 23.

<sup>86</sup> Murphy & Olmsted also designed two post offices. See Erica Kachmarsky & Christopher Hetzel, "National Register Registration: United States Post Office and Court House (Greensboro, NC)" unpublished, 2009

<sup>87</sup> Nancy Todd. *National Register Registration: Church of St. Dismas, the Good Thief* (unpublished), 1991.

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ecclesiastical architects like James Joseph McCarthy (1817-1882) to create full furnishings and decor for distinguished churches like Thurles Cathedral (constructed 1863-1879). The Earley family settled in Boston about 10 years before relocating to Washington where James began his own stone carving and architectural modeling firm. John J. Earley attended parochial school before entering St. John Collegiate High School, where he won medals for oratory, fenced, and played football and tennis.<sup>88</sup>

James Earley's business grew quickly, and he came to employ numerous artisans in the stone yard and studio behind the family home at 1752 S Street NW. Shortly after John graduated from St. John's, he became his father's apprentice, which would have involved him in a wide variety of projects. James Earley's artistic specialty was sculpture and stone-carving, and many of his studio's projects were ecclesiastical. In 1898, he sculpted dome rosettes and side altars for Washington's new Franciscan Monastery. His studio also fulfilled such secular commissions as creating the lobby of the new Willard Hotel, providing plaster, stucco cladding, and ornamentation for McKim, Mead, and White's refurbishment of the White House, ornamenting such federal buildings as Hornblower & Marshall's 1901 Customs House in Baltimore, and preparing structures and sculpture for national expositions like Omaha's 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition. Sadly, during the peak of his career, James Earley fell ill while working on a monument at the United States Military Academy. He returned to Washington, where he died of typhoid fever complicated by pneumonia on February 16, 1906, aged 49. On his deathbed, he bequeathed his business to his son. His talented assistant Basil Taylor promised to remain with the firm to help with technical matters as well as run the business. This collaboration would endure until John J. Earley died in 1945.<sup>89</sup>

Soon after taking over the business, John Earley designed his firm's new offices and studio at 2131 G Street NW, listed in the National Register. Although the firm continued to work in stone, Earley and Taylor changed its focus to plaster and stucco work. Although the Romans had used stucco, it was now reestablishing itself as a construction material in its modern formulation as a mixture of Portland cement, lime, and gypsum. The Earleys had been using stucco in such projects as the statuary and silver and bronze-covered reliefs at the Franciscan Monastery's Shrine of the Holy Sepulcher in 1899 and the White House renovation of 1904.<sup>90</sup>

By 1911, John Earley was constructing his own house, designed by the firm of Wood, Donn, and Deming, at 1710 Lamont Street NW. This National Register-listed dwelling introduced a novel plan and use of architectural concrete in the Washington rowhouse, but Earley also employed an architectural concrete process that he patented. Robert Armbruster, engineer, historian and expert on this "Earley Process" concrete, notes that by 1911 John Earley was constructing the Franciscan Monastery's Grotto, a cave-like space formed of sculpted Portland cement plaster on wire lath suspended on a steel framework. Armbruster concurs with Earley biographer Frederick

<sup>88</sup> Frederick W. Cron. *The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful*. (Centennial Publications: Fort Collins, Colorado, 1977), 5.

<sup>89</sup> Cunniff, Patricia. *The Contributions of John J. Earley to the Franciscan Monastery, Washington DC* (Washington, DC: Franciscan Monastery Garden Guild, 2015), 14; "James F. Earley Dead," *g Star*, Feb 17, 1906, 16.

<sup>90</sup> Cunniff, 14-15.

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Cron that this complex project demanded technical expertise and establishes that he had acquired experience with using Portland Cement as a binder even prior to 1911.

One critical limitation with stucco and other Portland cement-based claddings was that they were commonly applied over metal lath, which was seriously corroded by embedded moisture. In 1911, the Bureau of Standards began a two-year durability test by siding a structure with numerous manufacturers' panels. Given his experience, Cron concluded "it seems likely that the Earley Studio was engaged to make at least some of the test panels."<sup>91</sup>

When the results of the 1911 test were deemed insufficient, the Bureau of Standards selected Earley's firm to be the sole provider of panels for an expanded 1914 test and appointed Earley to its advisory committee. While preparing panels, Earley found that substituting slight dampening for the customary heavy soaking of the undercoat facilitated adhesion while minimizing "map cracking."

Although in the early nineteen-teens Congress had appropriated funds to develop the southern slopes of Meridian Hill as a public park, legislators balked at the cost of building paths, walls, and other features in stone. The Office of Public Buildings and Grounds then hired Earley to build such features clad in stucco. In 1915, after the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) pronounced his first two wall mock-ups deficient in color, texture, or both, Earley improved the product's aesthetics by applying "a finish coat that itself is a concrete with miniature aggregate... of cement and fine sand." Gentle wire brushing and washing with dilute acid removed this coating, leaving a surface "whose color... is determined by the color ... and... texture by the size and shape of the [carefully selected and graded embedded] aggregate."<sup>92</sup> CFA chair Cass Gilbert had suggested that the finish resemble the pebble mosaics of Italian garden walls. Earley adopted a two-stage system, where larger aggregate providing the color was revealed by removing concrete and smaller aggregate served as infill between the larger aggregate pebbles. He also developed a process for keeping concrete moist enough to be workable by blotting it with sheets of newspaper. Earley's wall-building began in 1915. After his involvement with construction at Meridian Hill Park ended in 1923-24, the remaining work was performed by other contractors trained in the use of the Earley processes.<sup>93</sup>

While work at Meridian Hill Park continued, Earley pursued other projects including the construction of the Potomac Park Field House in colorfast exposed aggregate stucco in 1919 and casting the March of Time, a one-piece 120-foot-long wave of one hundred contorted and entwined figures for a Chicago park in 1921. Precisely how he began collaborating with Murphy & Olmsted before the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in 1920 is unknown. However, Earley and Murphy were both active in the Washington Architecture Club and each had worked on projects at the Franciscan Monastery. Earley's first documented project with the architects was the 1913

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<sup>91</sup> Cron, 7.

<sup>92</sup> Earley, quoted in Jenna Cellini, *The Development Of Precast Exposed Aggregate Concrete Cladding: The Legacy of John J. Earley and the Implications for Preservation Philosophy* (Master's Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 2008), 48-49.

<sup>93</sup> Lori Aument, *Experimentation in Concrete: John J. Earley at Meridian Hill Park, Washington, DC* (Master's Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 1999), 50-51.

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chapel at St. Charles College, for which he provided an altar rather than aggregate concrete mosaics. The Potomac Park Field House no longer exists, so it is possible that the Shrine of the Sacred Heart is Earley's earliest extant large-scale project utilizing colored aggregate mosaic concrete. A booklet Earley authored in 1926 expressed the shrine's importance to the project which had already consumed a dozen years of his career, and which would become his life's work.

*When the interior decorations of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart at Washington were submitted to me by Murphy and Olmsted... for execution in concrete, it was a test of the fitness of concrete to be an architectural medium, a test of great severity which required of one material-concrete-with its own peculiar technique what had hitherto been required of many materials with as many techniques. But in addition, this appeal to concrete by the architects was again the protest of the architect against the restraining influence on his art of excessive labor, of excessive cost and of unkind materials.<sup>94</sup>*

For Earley, the project's fundamental questions were not about concrete's structure strength and permanence. Rather, they involved its fitness as a medium for transmitting symbols, aesthetic effects, and the complex emotions they enhance:

*This is what [the architects] asked: "Can walls as rich in color be produced with concrete as with the rarest marble? Can decorations wrought with the symbol of a mystic faith be done as well with concrete as with mosaics? And if so, can they be done with a reasonable amount of labor? Can a modern congregation building a temple in which to worship God write its faith upon the walls with all that splendor in which the same faith was written on the walls of San Vitale and San Marco?"<sup>95</sup>*

This aesthetic challenge was echoed by Frederick Murphy, who noted that the "rare marbles and mosaics, rich in color and interest" which had been the medium for Renaissance master church builders were no longer practical. Instead:

*For the interpretation of the interior decorations this principle was established, namely: that no imitation would be permitted. Every effort was made to avoid invading the province of one material with another, because it was desired that the result finally obtained should be judged upon its own merit, and not on merit obtained through reminiscence of historic examples executed in totally different materials.<sup>96</sup>*

To meet these needs, as well as the requirement "that walls should be covered with an enduring material of such character as to express the element of design - piers, columns and arches," yet so "versatile [as to] yield all the intricate detail and variety of color necessary to ... fully carry out the design," Earley process aggregate concrete proved the material of choice. Earley cast the brilliantly colored murals which resemble Byzantine mosaics in grooved plaster molds to apply

<sup>94</sup> Lorado Taft and John Earley. *The Concrete of the Architect and Sculptor*. (Chicago: Portland Cement Association, 1926), 9.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Taft and Earley, 10.

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separate bands of aggregate with thickness, size, color, and texture controlled to give particular effects at various distances.<sup>97</sup>

After the Shrine was completed, Earley continued to experimentally improve what he called “mosaic architectural concrete” while executing new projects posing special design challenges. In addition to his monumental church collaborations with Murphy & Olmsted in Mobile, Dayton, and Buffalo, Earley created notable interiors for churches designed by other architects in Houston, Baltimore, and New Jersey. The aggregate mosaic concrete in the Shrine of the Sacred Heart is significant as a pathfinding project in the evolution of Earley’s art and technique. From 1922 to 1925, he constructed the columns and exterior shell of a Parthenon replica in Nashville. In 1925, Earley enclosed the Franciscan Monastery grounds with a colonnaded ambulatory in concrete mosaic and exposed aggregate that connected a Romanesque gateway and fourteen small chapels. The Earley Studio also installed colorful patterned ornaments in Catholic University’s Mullen Library in 1925. In the early 1930s, Earley took on his studio’s most challenging projects, the domed tower-like national worship center of the American Baha’i on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan in Wilmette, Illinois.

Despite the Depression, the Earley Studio remained busy into World War II with such major projects as enormous cast ceilings for the new Department of Justice Building, a development of polychrome concrete aggregate houses in Silver Spring, and the Thomas Alva Edison Memorial Tower in Menlo Park, New Jersey. The Earley Studio also carried on a full load of residential and commercial jobs, some of which, like the Scottish Rite Masonic Temple at 2800 16th Street NW, featured beautiful multi-colored mosaic concrete panels. John J. Earley also served in executive positions with the American Concrete Institute, including Director and President.

World War II restricted material supplies and caused the Earley Studio to embrace such projects as fabricating precast concrete panels for utilitarian structures. While inspecting a parking garage at the Washington Statler Hotel in early November 1945, Earley suffered a stroke, which proved fatal on November 25, 1945.<sup>98</sup>

As *Washington Post* architecture critic Benjamin Forgey wrote, “[John] Earley is difficult to categorize. He was at once an artisan, artist, manufacturer, salesman and sometime architect.” Earley often referred to himself as an “architectural sculptor” or simply as a “craftsman.”<sup>99</sup>

If Earley’s goal was artistic results, his technical and artisanal skills were essential to realizing them. He executed his immensely varied projects for clients, sometimes relying upon their designs, sometimes utilizing the skills of sculptors and other artists within his studio, and at other times designing aspects of them himself. Overall, Earley functioned as a visionary and director of a highly skilled team of artists and artisans, developing cement and concrete mixes that were aesthetically pleasing and translating designs into physical objects that brought their originator’s visions to life. Even when Earley did not originate a particular design, translating it into physical

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<sup>97</sup> Robert Armbruster. “John J. Earley’s Mosaic Concrete Art” (paper at American Concrete Institute 2014 Fall Convention at Washington, D.C.), 30.

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<sup>99</sup> Benjamin Forgey, “Concrete Proof of One Man’s Legacy to Washington,” *Post*. Mar 11, 2001, C1.

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reality shaped it. However, he is titled, his manifold contributions were essential to establishing mosaic concrete as an aesthetic element in architecture.

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart was vital to Earley's career as well as a masterpiece significant to the development of ecclesiastical architecture. Extolling Earley's mosaic concrete interior, *Washington Post* art critic Ada Rainey called the Shrine:

*a romance of absorbing interest and of great importance to the future of architecture and decorative arts... This modern edition of "The Stones of Venice," which might aptly be called the "Stones of Washington," is truly a wondrous story in stone of Christianity told in fitting symbolism. It is glowing with warm color within, the walls are of a roseate hue enriched with a wealth of decorative detail, yet there is no ornateness or overelaboration.*<sup>100</sup>

### **Builder Charles J. Cassidy**

Charles Joseph Cassidy was born in Washington, DC, in 1870. He attended parochial schools in the District and learned drafting at night as a young man. He settled in Brookland and became known principally as a builder of Catholic institutional buildings, including churches and buildings for Catholic University and Trinity College, establishing the Charles J. Cassidy Company with H. Clinton Smith in 1906. Early commissions included private residences as well as the Notre Dame Convent at North Capitol and K Streets NE and the St. Mary's School on Fifth Street SW (both now demolished).<sup>101</sup> In addition to the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Cassidy built the Mullen Library at Catholic University and the Chapel and Refectory buildings at Trinity College (now Trinity Washington University).

Cassidy had a long and close working relationship with architect Frederick V. Murphy. His own home, a two-story house faced in Potomac bluestone that he built at the southeast corner of Quincy Street and Michigan Avenue NE in 1915, was designed by Murphy.<sup>102</sup> Murphy lived just two blocks to the east on Quincy Street. Cassidy died in 1940 at age 70.

### **SOCIAL HISTORY AND ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK**

The December 1922 dedication of the church was a lavish event, full of elaborate religious ceremony, with spectators overflowing into the street outside.<sup>103</sup> While endorsing some conservative religious viewpoints, such as a disdain for the study of physical and social sciences, the speakers at the dedication also emphasized tolerance and inclusiveness. *The Washington Herald* reported that "While no attack was made on the Ku Klux Klan as an organization, each of the speakers flayed it in their appeals for a larger charity of thought and liberality of ideas on the part of the American people."<sup>104</sup> The politically powerful KKK of the early 1920s was avowedly anti-Catholic, and church leaders looked to institutions like Sacred Heart to serve as a

<sup>100</sup> Ada Rainey, "Decorative Art Splendid in Concrete," *Post*, July 11, 1926, F4.

<sup>101</sup> "Cassidy Company Popular Builders," *Washington Times*, Dec. 30, 1906, 4.

<sup>102</sup> "Quaint Home of Stone Built by C.J. Cassidy," *Star*, May 1, 1915, part 2, 3.

<sup>103</sup> "\$1,000,000 Catholic Shrine Dedicated," *Post*, Dec. 11, 1922, 2.

<sup>104</sup> "Church Dedication Rich in Ceremonial," *Herald*, Dec. 11, 1922.

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counterweight in the struggle for a more tolerant society. “There is a tendency toward bigotry, which is a real menace to America,” said Archbishop Michael Joseph Curley of Baltimore. “These are troublesome times for America—all is not well with our country.”<sup>105</sup>

From its founding in 1899, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart’s congregation was predominantly white, reflecting the demographics of the neighborhoods within the parish bounds.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the church congregation was generally associated with Irish Catholics, perhaps because the first two pastors—Father Joseph F. McGee and Father Patrick C. Gavan—were of Irish heritage.<sup>107</sup> More to the point, James Cardinal Gibbons, who enabled Father McGee to form the Sacred Heart parish, was concerned with serving the city’s *working-class* Roman Catholics, who, at the turn of the twentieth century, were often Irish or German immigrants or the first- and second-generation children thereof. Anecdotally, the Sacred Heart parish’s relationship to both members of the laboring class and to persons of Irish extraction was signaled in the 1913 obituary of one congregant, Mary Connor, who resided in Pleasant Plains. In her funeral announcement in *The Washington Times*, Mary was “the mother of the late William Connor, at one time a labor leader of this city.”<sup>108</sup> In reality, however, the new parish was formed to serve all Catholics moving into the near northwest suburbs who found themselves dwelling at a troublesome distance from St. Patrick’s Church, and the congregation was never ethnically monolithic.<sup>109</sup> A broad sample of newspaper announcements for weddings and funerals in the *Evening Star* from 1920 through 1923 illustrates that some congregants’ heritages were indeed Irish—such as the 1921 obituary for John F. Purcell, born in Ireland—but others whose surnames derived from countries across the British Isles and continental Europe.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> The Sacred Heart parish originally encompassed the northern part of Lanier Heights, Mount Pleasant, Crestwood, Petworth, Columbia Heights, and Park View/Pleasant Plains. The establishment of St. Gabriel’s parish in 1920 took the eastern half of Petworth, halving the number of Sacred Heart parishioners. See Albert Sidney Foley, S.J., *The Catholic Church and the Washington Negro*. Ph.D. Dissertation (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1950) Figure 3, p. 119-120. Repository: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Archives, Paul Phillips Cooke Papers [ID 180], Box 2. Per census records, the residents of Mount Pleasant (census tract 27) consistently remained 98% white from 1930 through 1950. Similarly, the Columbia Heights census tract (28), which includes the Shrine of the Sacred Heart location, was 95% white in 1950. Open Data DC, “Census Tracts in 1940” [GIS Data Set] (Washington, DC: DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer, 2018); accessed 11/15/24: <https://opendata.dc.gov/datasets/DCGIS::census-tracts-in-1940/about>. Open Data DC, “Census Tracts in 1950” [GIS Data Set] (Washington, DC: DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer, 2018); accessed 11/15/24: <https://opendata.dc.gov/datasets/DCGIS::census-tracts-in-1950/about>.

<sup>107</sup> A *Washington Post* article from 1987 claimed that, “Sacred Heart began as the place of worship for successive waves of immigrant Irish, American blacks, and most recently, Haitians and Hispanics.” Laura Sessions Stepp, “Reaching Out to Hispanics Growth and Challenges,” *Washington Post*, 6 September 1987; accessed 7/1/25: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1987/09/07/reaching-out-to-hispanics-growth-and-challenges/6ace7f46-4eed-4136-99c5-1d4177813066/>. See also Foley 1950: 119.

<sup>108</sup> “Mrs. Mary Connor,” [Obituary] *The Washington Times*, 23 February 1913: 2. Library of Congress, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*; accessed 7/1/25: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1913-02-23/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>109</sup> “Sacred Heart Shrine: High Honor Is in Store for a Washington Church,” *Evening Star*, 3 September 1902. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Public Library, People’s Archive, VF: Churches—Catholic—Sacred Heart. See also Foley 1950: 118-119.

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Despite congregants' somewhat diverse Euro-American heritages, the racial composition of the parish remained almost exclusively white through the first half of the twentieth century. The only exception to this was the northern half of Pleasant Plains, a neighborhood adjacent to Howard University, which began to transition in the 1920s and was a majority Black American enclave by the mid-1930s. In 1920, the northern color line had been Columbia Road, but by 1934, approximately 20 squares at the southeastern edge of Sacred Heart's parish—roughly bounded by Harvard Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Park Road, and Georgia Avenue NW—were over 50% Black-occupied. By 1940, Black occupancy had spread north to Rock Creek Church Road, and Park View, the residential subdivision north of the McMillan Reservoir, was in transition. At that time, 13<sup>th</sup> Street served as a hard and fast color line on the west, and African Americans living within this southeastern corner of the Sacred Heart parish typically attended Mass at St. Augustine's, a historically Black Catholic church within St. Paul's parish to the immediate south.<sup>110</sup>

Sacred Heart parish's racial homogeneity quickly began to change in the post-World War II era, in tandem with demographic shifts. Following the 1948 U.S. Supreme Court rulings on *Shelley v. Kraemer* and *Hurd v. Hodge*, which found racially restrictive covenants in deeds of title unenforceable, African Americans gained access to exclusively white residential subdivisions. By 1950, Black occupancy within the Sacred Heart parish had spread west to the eastern edge of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, east to the Soldier's Home, and north to Taylor Street NW, while one-quarter of Sacred Heart parishioners were Black Americans. Albert Sidney Foley, a priest and sociologist who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the subject of Black Catholics in D.C. in 1949-1950, noted that Sacred Heart parish was in the midst of a racial transition at that precise moment. At the Shrine on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, what segregation there had been in terms of seating arrangements—African Americans relegated to the rear—had been eliminated. Although Black attendance to Sunday services rose at the church, no wedding or funeral rites were held for Black Catholics in this transitional period; for these seminal life events, Black communicants still went to St. Augustine's.<sup>111</sup>

This demographic shift within the parish coincided with the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, at which the Archdiocese of Washington was at the forefront. After Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle became Washington's first resident archbishop in January 1948, he campaigned to desegregate the parishes within the newly formed archdiocese.<sup>112</sup> In September 1949, the Washington reporter for the *Interracial Review*, John J. O'Connor, wrote about his "unique privilege recently of witnessing the reception into the Church and baptism of a colored woman and her two daughters. Baptized at the same time was a Spanish baby named Victor. This unusual interracial event took place in a predominantly white parish, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart." As O'Connor explained, although the African American family lived within the bounds of the Sacred Heart parish, previously they would have been forced to attend a "Negro" parish,

<sup>110</sup> Foley 1950: Figure 4, p. 120-121.

<sup>111</sup> Foley 1950: Figure 5, p. 117, 121, 160.

<sup>112</sup> Stephanie A.T. Jacobe, "The Secretariats for Spanish Speaking and Black Catholics," *Catholic Standard*, 1 April 2021; accessed 8/13/24: <https://www.cathstan.org/the-secretariats-for-spanish-speaking-and-black-catholics>.

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but that Archbishop O'Boyle's leadership was erasing the color lines and "returning to the basic Catholic principle that there are only Catholic parishes."<sup>113</sup>

Although the thaw resulted in a more inclusive congregation at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, the vast majority of congregants were native whites in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and prejudice was still rampant. During Mass, some white congregants refused to sit next to African Americans, who were relegated to the side pews in front of the North or South transepts and who were expected to relinquish their seats and stand if the sanctuary was crowded. Other indignities prevailed. As a 1999 history of the parish relates, "Black boys could not become altar servers. Rebuffs and rejections characterized the atmosphere of the church community.



One of the earliest families to attend Sacred Heart in [1949] was the Deacon James Quander family. Families like the Quanders faced a wall of opposition."<sup>114</sup> Black American and foreign-born Catholics were in a small minority at Sacred Heart, as is visually apparent in the photograph of Rohulamin Quander's first communion at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in May 1951 (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Rohulamin Quander (center) at his Holy First Communion, Shrine of the Sacred Heart, May 1951. Courtesy of Rohulamin Quander.

<sup>113</sup> "Washington Reporter," *Interracial Review*, Vol. 22, No. 9, September 1949: 140. Repository: Catholic University of America, Behind the Scenes of the Civil Rights Movements, Reveal Digital. *JSTOR*, accessed 7/1/25: <https://jstor.org/stable/community.39585615>.

<sup>114</sup> DeLois Mae Flemons, "A Brief History of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart," in *Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Santuario del Sagrado Corazon, 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 100 Años, Gala Celebration, October 16, 1999, Capital Hilton* [booklet] (Washington, D.C.: 1999) n.p. Repository: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Archives, Paul Phillips Cooke Papers [ID 180], Box 6. Note that this publication's history of the Shrine was taken from notes compiled by a congregant, which state that James Quander and his family began to attend services at the Shrine in 1949, "the year that Archbishop O'Boyle announced that the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese would be desegregated the following school year." (See Matthew Palkowski, "I Place All My Trust in Thee: A History of the Sacred Heart Parish, Washington, D.C.," (August 1998): 9. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Preservation League files.)

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At the same time that Archbishop O’Boyle was opening white parish churches to people of color, he was also desegregating Washington’s parochial schools. In 1948, at the express encouragement of O’Boyle, Peter Mercer Quander integrated Gonzaga High School, and St. Paul’s Academy at 1412 V Street NW enrolled an African American student, Roy Davenport, Jr. In 1949, the first application for a colored student at the Sacred Heart School on Park Road NW, an elementary school, was approved but then withdrawn; parental backlash forced the new pastor of Sacred Heart to defer the application, who asserted that he did not believe the parishioners were ready for integration. The following year, however, the first four students of color were admitted to the kindergarten, first, and second grades. Among these pioneering youths were two native Washingtonians, Rohulamin Quander and Richard Washington.<sup>115</sup>

The 1950s and 1960s witnessed more radical integration within the parish as well as across Washington and the nation, as the Civil Rights Movement reached its stride. Sacred Heart parish’s demographics transitioned rapidly in this period, and “according to church officials, black worshippers in the parish began to outnumber whites in the 1950s and 1960s, and were a strong majority through most of the 1970s.”<sup>116</sup> In 1950, census tract 28 (or, Columbia Heights, bounded by 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, Harvard streets and Spring Road NW) contained residents who were 95% white, 99% of whom were native-born. The desegregation of D.C. public schools in 1954 fostered African American migration out of the city center and into the northwest suburbs from which they previously had been barred by restrictive covenants, while the area’s diverse housing stock—including apartments, rowhouses, and detached houses that had been marketed to the lower-middle and working classes for decades—provided affordability. Columbia Heights transitioned quickly: by 1960, census tract 28 was 57.9% white, 40.5% Black, and 1.6% “other races.”<sup>117</sup> By 1963, Sacred Heart School was featured in a *Washington Post* article as a beacon of integration, in which the student body was 52% colored and 48% white. The article also noted that, “The integrated experiences the children have in school are reinforced in the church where the children sing and pray together and serve side by side at the altar,” and it praised the pastor, the Rev. Msgr. John S. Spence, for advocating integration from the pulpit.<sup>118</sup>

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart’s clergy in the 1960s were in lockstep with Archbishop O’Boyle’s expressed dedication to racial equality. In March of 1965, when the Rev. Martin

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<sup>115</sup> Mara Cherkasky and Jane Freundel Levey, *Village in the City: Mount Pleasant Heritage Trail* [Brochure] (Washington, D.C.: Cultural Tourism DC, 2006). Daniel F. Curtain, “Forming the Hearts of Young People: Saint Paul’s Academy/Mackin High School, Washington, D.C. 1887-1989” (Washington, D.C.: Holy Cross History Conference, June 15-19, 2002) 6. Foley 1950: 121, 161, 219. Beatriz Otero, interview with Heather McMahan (Washington, D.C.: 21 February 2024). Rohulamin Quander and Carmen Torruella-Quander, interview with Heather McMahan (Washington, D.C.: 12 July 2024). Rohulamin Quander, “Application for landmark status—The Shrine of the Sacred Heart,” email communication to Heather McMahan, 2 August 2025.

<sup>116</sup> Ruben Castaneda, “A Santuario For the Body And the Soul: NW Church Is a Beacon For Area’s Hispanics,” *Washington Post*, 13 April 1992: B1, B3. Repository: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Archives, Paul Phillips Cooke Papers [ID 180], Box 6, Folder 3.

<sup>117</sup> Open Data DC, “Census Tracts in 1960” [GIS Data Set] (Washington, DC: DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer, 2018); accessed 11/15/24: <https://opendata.dc.gov/datasets/DCGIS::census-tracts-in-1960/about>.

<sup>118</sup> Gerald Grant, “A Child’s A Child For a’ That: It’s What Is Inside That Counts at Sacred Heart Where Pupils Form a Happy ‘Mosaic’,” *Washington Post*, 24 November 1963: E2.

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Luther King, Jr. called on Catholic clergy across the nation to go to Selma, Alabama, to join the peaceful march to the state capitol in Montgomery, five priests from D.C. answered the call, including Father Joseph T. Haslinger, a curate at Sacred Heart. Haslinger was also instrumental in establishing a neighborhood advisory service within the Sacred Heart parish that offered similar services to but predated the United Planning Organization (UPO); in the summer of 1966, Haslinger offered “a sort of Head Start [program] for mothers” at the Shrine that was equally attended by African American women as Latinas. Also in 1965, pastor Spence served as a chairperson on the Interreligious Committee on Race Relations and appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee of the U.S. Congress to demand changes to welfare programs that served D.C.’s more vulnerable communities, including Black Americans as well as immigrants. When devastating riots erupted in D.C. following the assassination of King in April 1968, Sacred Heart’s clergy kept the church open for three days as a food distribution center and refuge for victims of the violence.<sup>119</sup>

By the 1970s, Black Catholics in Washington were making significant inroads into positions of leadership within the Catholic Church. In 1971, James Quander was one of eight African American men in an inaugural class of 24 who were ordained permanent deacons. Although he was a longtime member of Sacred Heart’s congregation, he initially served in this capacity at St. Benedict the Moor parish, a historically Black parish. This was in part because Msgr. Martin W. Christopher did not support the permanent deacon program and did not accept the services of Quander at Sacred Heart. In October 1973, Sacred Heart’s new pastor, Father Joseph A. Ranieri, asked Quander to return to the parish as their first permanent deacon. During his storied 33-year career in the diaconate, Quander assisted Pope Paul VI at a Mass in Rome in 1975 and Pope John Paul II at a Mass held on the National Mall, in Washington, in 1979.<sup>120</sup> Quander’s exalted position, however, was reflective of a larger transition of parish leadership within Sacred Heart that had begun in the 1950s and reached an apex by 1980. In 1978, the pastor of Sacred Heart, Father Joaquin A. Bazan, noted in an interview that “the parish leaders are middle-aged, middle-class black Americans,” which was a stark reversal of the church’s white hegemony for its first five decades or more. But Bazan also noted that more than half of the parishioners at that time were foreign-born, signaling the parish’s next transition.<sup>121</sup>

## **SOCIAL HISTORY AND ETHNIC HERITAGE: HISPANIC**

When the Shrine opened in its present location on 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1922, it joined “Embassy Row,” which by 1931 “was home to the French, Spanish, Polish, Lithuanian, Swiss, Dutch, Mexican

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<sup>119</sup> “5 Priests Go From Archdiocese,” *Catholic Standard*, 12 March 1965: 1, 11. William Raspberry, “Charwoman at Leisure Turns to Arts,” *Washington Post*, 22 August 1966. Flemons 1999: n.p.

<sup>120</sup> “Catholic Deacon James Quander,” [Obituary] *Washington Post*, 20 October 2004. Flemons 1999: n.p. Tim Tilghman, “Remembering the first African-American Catholic permanent deacons,” *Black Catholic Messenger*, 29 February 2024. Mark Zimmerman, “‘One blessing upon another’ for trailblazing couple who were among first students to integrate Sacred Heart School in 1950,” *Catholic Standard*, 1 July 2022. Patrick McDonough, “6<sup>th</sup> Pastor, 1970-1973: Msgr. Martin W. Christopher,” [Unpublished white paper] n.d.: 1. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Preservation League files. Patrick McDonough, “7<sup>th</sup> Pastor, 1973-1976: Father (later Msgr.) Joseph A. Ranieri,” [Unpublished white paper] n.d.: 1. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Preservation League files.

<sup>121</sup> Norman McCarthy, “At Sacred Heart There Are No Strangers,” *Catholic Standard*, 14 December 1978.

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and Italian embassies.”<sup>122</sup> Its proximity to several embassies ensured that the new sanctuary drew a more international crowd than it had previously, at least on special occasions. From the late 1920s, the church developed a relationship with the Spanish Embassy, which had a presence on the 1500 block of Harvard Street NW since 1915 but relocated to a 1921 Beaux Arts mansion at 2801 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1927.<sup>123</sup> In February 1929, diplomats held a memorial Mass for Maria Christina, Queen Mother of Spain, at the Shrine, and on July 18, 1956, the Spanish National Holiday, which marked the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, was observed with a Mass at the church followed by a reception at the embassy.<sup>124</sup> The Shrine also hosted high-profile weddings for diplomats, such as the 1947 “nuptial services according to the Toledan Rite” for Jaime Fonesca Mora, the Vice-Consul of Cota Rica, and Hortensia Vaglio Zamora, also from Costa Rica.<sup>125</sup> In the 1940s, most of the regularly-attending, Spanish-speaking members of the congregation, were affiliated with the diplomatic corps of various Latin American, European, and Caribbean embassies and consulates.<sup>126</sup>

But the Shrine of the Sacred Heart’s deep association with Washington, D.C.’s Latino community is a postwar phenomenon that dovetails with the parish’s transition into a majority Black American congregation as well as with the church’s postwar clergy’s dedication to racial integration. This is largely explained by the fact that many of D.C.’s Spanish-speaking immigrants in the postwar era came from the Caribbean and are Afro-Latinos, who are considered persons of color within North America’s strictly binary racial paradigm. Washington, through the 1950s, was a segregated city in which Jim Crow laws shaped the urban environment. When Juana Amparo Campos arrived in October 1940, she was “perplexed by the vast social distance between African Americans and whites in the United States,” and “neither in New York City, where her boat from the Dominican Republic had docked, nor in her hometown of Pelmar [Arriva] had she experienced the kind of visibly entrenched Jim Crow segregation that characterized the U.S. Capital.”<sup>127</sup> It is understandable, then, that immigrants of color would face some of the same societal obstacles as native Black Americans in regards to intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination, even within D.C.’s Catholic churches.

Archbishop O’Boyle’s commitment to integrating Catholic churches in the Archdiocese of Washington had direct bearing on Afro-Latinos living in the metropolitan region. Specifically,

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<sup>122</sup> Kim Williams [D.C. Office of Planning, Historic Preservation Office], “Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House,” Washington, D.C. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 2012) 11.

<sup>123</sup> “Spanish Embassy Building is Opened,” *Evening Star*, 8 October 1927: 20. Library of Congress, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers; accessed 7/1/25: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1927-10-08/ed-1/seq-20>.

<sup>124</sup> “Diplomats at Memorial Service for Spanish Queen Mother Today,” *The Washington Times*, 14 February 1929: 6. Library of Congress, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers; accessed 7/1/25: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1929-02-14/ed-1/seq-6/>. “Spaniards Mark National Holiday,” *Evening Star*, 20 July 1956: B-5. Library of Congress, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers; accessed 7/1/25: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1956-07-20/ed-1/seq-34/>.

<sup>125</sup> “Newsfeeds,” *Catholic News Service*, 24 February 1947: 9. *JSTOR*, accessed 7/1/25: <https://jstor.org/stable/community.32139177>.

<sup>126</sup> Palkowski 1998: 10.

<sup>127</sup> Ginetta E.B. Candelario, “‘Black Behind the Ears’ – And Up Front Too? Dominicans in the Black Mosaic.” Northampton, MA: Smith College, Faculty Publications, Sociology, 2001) 55.

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1950 may be considered the year in which Sacred Heart's clergy made a decisive act to welcome Afro-Latinos into its fold (Figure 11). As Sacred Heart School enrolled Rohulamin Quander and Richard Washington, native Black Washingtonians, it also admitted Carmen and Ramberto Torruella, the children of Campos and Juan Torruella, a Puerto Rican.<sup>128</sup>



Figure 11: Carmen Torruella (left) at her Holy First Communion with Msgr. Jerome Winter, May 1953. Courtesy of Carmen Torruella-Quander.

Furthermore, Campos became an advocate and leader in the Afro-Latino community of northwest Washington, specifically in relation to supporting Spanish-speaking expatriates' religious needs. Also in 1950, she initiated an informal gathering to honor the Virgin of Altagracia, the patron saint of the Dominican Republic. At first, a small group of devoted Dominican women met in each other's homes to pray to the saint, but within the year Campos convinced the presiding priest at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart to hold novenas (nine days of prayers) in honor of the Virgin of Altagracia, which became an annual tradition thereafter. In 1954, Campos wrote a letter to Pastor Jerome Winter, insisting that the Sacred Heart parish needed a Spanish-speaking priest to serve the rapidly growing Latino community in Ward 1. At that time, no Catholic parish had regular Masses in Spanish or bilingual clergy. In response to Campos' petition, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart retained the services of the Reverend Augustín R. Martínez in 1956. Born and ordained in Spain, Martínez had come to Washington from his

<sup>128</sup> Mara Cherkasky and Jane Freundel Levey, *Village in the City: Mount Pleasant Heritage Trail* [Brochure] (Washington, D.C.: Cultural Tourism DC, 2006). Daniel F. Curtain, "Forming the Hearts of Young People: Saint Paul's Academy/Mackin High School, Washington, D.C. 1887-1989" (Washington, D.C.: Holy Cross History Conference, June 15-19, 2002) 6. Beatriz Otero, interview with Heather McMahon (Washington, D.C.: 21 February 2024). Rohulamin Quander and Carmen Torruella-Quander, interview with Heather McMahon (Washington, D.C.: 12 July 2024).

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mission in Argentina for a short stay (he delivered the July 18 Spanish National Holiday Mass at the Shrine), only to remain in D.C. until his death in 1980. In those intervening decades, Father Martínez continued to serve the Spanish-speaking congregants of the Shrine, where he was made associate pastor.<sup>129</sup>

The growth of Black American and Spanish-speaking communicants at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in the 1950s mirrored Archbishop O'Boyle's commitment not only to civil rights and social justice, but his *raison d'être*: to support the working class. Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania to working-class, Irish immigrants, and having performed charitable ministry in New York as a young priest, O'Boyle believed the Church should focus its service on its poorest and neediest.<sup>130</sup> The Shrine of the Sacred Heart had been founded as an offshoot of St. Patrick's parish in order to serve laboring Washingtonians, who at the turn of the twentieth century had been predominantly Irish. But as generations of Irish Americans assimilated and rose in economic standing, they were replaced in the labor market by Black Americans and more recent immigrants. In D.C. in the 1950s and 1960s, a large portion of laboring immigrants came from Latin America.

During this period, women were actively recruited from Latin American countries to support diplomatic and other upper-middle-class families stationed or settled in Washington. Terry Repak, in her 1995 work *Waiting on Washington: Central American Workers in the Nation's Capital*, emphasizes the importance of gendered (i.e., female) domestic labor recruitment (specifically from Central America) in the formation of the Latino community in post-World War II D.C. Repak provides personal stories of women who sought economic opportunities in the United States, working as live-in maids, cooks, and nannies. Although fewer Latin American men emigrated to D.C. in these decades, those that came often found positions as chauffeurs or gardeners; later, men filled the ranks of Washington's construction, janitorial, and restaurant (service) industries while women worked as maids and laundresses in D.C.'s largest hotels.<sup>131</sup>

Churches were particularly central to the experiences of Latina domestic workers who could only leave their residences and places of employment on Sundays. In a 2024 interview, Beatriz Otero recalled that some of the single women who worked as live-in domestics for diplomats or other elite families in this era would stay in a dormitory at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart on weekends or on their days off. As Spanish-speakers from Latin America and the Caribbean settled in the northwestern neighborhoods of Adams Morgan, Mount Pleasant, Columbia Heights, and Petworth, the Shrine became central to the burgeoning Latino population in D.C., and grew to play a significant role in providing space and programming for immigrants. A Dominican

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<sup>129</sup> Olivia Cadaval, *Creating a Latino Identity in the Nation's Capital: The Latino Festival* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1998) 217. Shrine of the Sacred Heart, "The Rite of Christian Burial for: Juana Amparo Campos (May 28, 1905 – January 15, 2004), Wednesday, January 21, 2004, 6:45 p.m., Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church." Unpublished program, courtesy of Carmen Torruella-Quander. Jacobe 2021. "Msgr. A.R. Martinez Dies, Worked with D.C. Spanish," [obituary] *Washington Post*, 16 July 1980; accessed 6/30/25: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1980/07/17/msgr-a-r-martinez-dies-worked-with-dc-spanish/d7945547-e1c9-4b4d-a92b-7077e7da2adf/>. "Spaniards Mark National Holiday."

<sup>130</sup> Matthew Daniels and Roxanne King, *Catholic Heroes of Civil and Human Rights: 1800s to the Present* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2024) 37-39.

<sup>131</sup> Terry A. Repak, *Waiting on Washington: Central American Workers in the Nation's Capital* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995) 73-74. Scallen 2019: 122.

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woman who arrived in Washington in 1960 recalled that she would encounter other Spanish speakers at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, where Father Martínez helped them learn English. By 1963, some 15,000 Spanish-speakers had settled within the Sacred Heart parish, resulting in the school offering summer classes to teach children English and monthly Spanish-language Masses at the Shrine.<sup>132</sup>

The billeting of domestic laborers and the growth of bilingual programming at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart harkened back to Archbishop O'Boyle's commitment to lower-income workers. The Shrine, among all of the Catholic churches in Washington, recognized the American labor movement in a distinct way: in September 1953, Archbishop O'Boyle instituted the first Labor Day Mass at the Shrine, which would become an annual event held there until 1994, when the services were moved to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>133</sup> That first Mass was attended by the U.S. Secretary of Labor, Martin Durkin, while subsequent events drew union organizers and leaders from across America. After the Mass, "Secretary Durkin placed a wreath at the statue of James Cardinal Gibbons in recognition of the Cardinal's contribution to the cause of good labor-relations in the United States."<sup>134</sup> The bronze statue of Cardinal Gibbons by sculptor Leo Lentelli was erected in the small park fronting the Shrine of the Sacred Heart and dedicated in 1932.<sup>135</sup> Although Cardinal Gibbons is perhaps best known as the first chancellor of Catholic University in Washington, he was noted for advocating for the protection of workers' rights, especially the right to organize labor unions. The placement of his likeness in front of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart was a public testament to the church's stance on workers' issues.

The intersection of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart's dedication to the American labor movement and support of Latino/a workers is best exemplified by Archbishop O'Boyle's appeal made from that pulpit on September 4, 1972, when he asked the congregation (and Catholics at large) to support the boycott on iceberg lettuce. Cesar Chavez, a leader in the United Farm Workers union, initiated the boycott to help migrant workers—many from Mexico and points south—to,

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<sup>132</sup> Olivia Cadaval "The Latino Community: Creating an Identity in the Nation's Capital," in *Urban Odyssey: A Multicultural History of Washington, D.C.* ed., Francine Curro Cary (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996) 235. Ginetta E.B. Candelario *Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007) 151. Grant 1963: E2. Otero 2024. Michael W. Foley and Dean R. Hoge, *Religion and the New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 78. There are conflicting dates from various sources about when the Shrine actually began holding regular Masses in Spanish. Notes for the Shrine's centennial celebration assert that the first Spanish Mass was celebrated as early as 1941, "at the instigation of Juana Campos." (See Palkowski 1998: 10.) Patrick Scallen, however, asserts in his dissertation that Masses in Spanish began at the Shrine in 1967. (See Patrick Scallen, "The Bombs that Drop in El Salvador Explode in Mount Pleasant." *From Cold War Conflagration to Immigrant Struggles in Washington, D.C., 1970-1995*. Dissertation, Georgetown University, in partial fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy in History (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 2019) 128.) Others suggest that Masses in Spanish were available from 1956, when Father Martínez joined the clergy at Sacred Heart, while still others profess regular Masses in Spanish did not begin until Father Joaquin A. Bazan's tenure from 1976-1984.

<sup>133</sup> Flemons 1999: n.p.

<sup>134</sup> "Newsfeeds," *Catholic News Service*, 9 September 1953: 1. *JSTOR*, accessed 7/1/25: <https://jstor.org/stable/community.32139807>.

<sup>135</sup> National Park Service, "James Cardinal Gibbons Memorial," *National Park Service: Rock Creek Park* [website]; last updated 8 June 2023; accessed 7/1/25: <https://www.nps.gov/places/000/james-cardinal-gibbons.htm>.

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in Archbishop O’Boyle’s own words, “achieve their basic human rights and take their rightful place in the mainstream of American economic life.” In his appeal, O’Boyle praised Chavez as “one of the most dedicated labor leaders in the history of the United States, a man fully committed, as a matter of religious conviction, to the philosophy of non-violence and the principle of labor-management cooperation.”<sup>136</sup> At the Labor Day Mass in 1974, Father Sean O’Malley beseeched union representatives and labor leaders to lobby for the amnesty of what he called “economic refugees,” so that undocumented immigrants—many of whom resided in the Sacred Heart parish at that time—could seek employment as legal residents.<sup>137</sup>

The politicization of Catholicism at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart extended beyond the church’s support of the American labor movement to a strong opposition to communism, two positions that were not considered ideologically paradoxical. The reportage of the first Labor Day Mass at Sacred Heart published in the National Catholic Welfare Conference’s (NCWC) *News Service* ended with a statement that although Labor Day celebrations in Europe were founded by Marxists, who were “motivated by a rather violent hatred of God and religion,” the American labor movement rejected communism for their own ideology “that would dramatically symbolize the God-given dignity of labor to a status of partnership with management in the conduct of the American economy.”<sup>138</sup> Communism’s association with atheism was a direct threat to the global Catholic Church, and during the long Cold War era, countless sermons were delivered against its evils. In Washington, a special Mass held at Sacred Heart in February 1962 once again touched upon the intersection of the city’s growing Latino community and political ideals: Bishop Eduardo Boza Masvidal, the exiled Auxiliary Bishop of Havana, Cuba, held a service “in the Shrine of the Sacred Heart for the congregation of Cuban refugees settled in this area,” in which he admonished congregants to forge a spiritual path between “selfish, individualistic capitalism on the one hand, and Marxist socialism which violates the rights of the individual, the dignity of the human person...”<sup>139</sup>

Latino immigration to D.C. continued to increase so that by 1972, the Archdiocese of Washington offered Spanish-language services in ten parishes.<sup>140</sup> The Archdiocese of Washington formerly recognized the growth of the District’s Latino community in 1974 when it formed the Secretariat for Spanish-speaking Catholics at the same time that it established the

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<sup>136</sup> Richard P. McBrien, “Twists and Turns in Catholic Attitudes,” *The Catholic Transcript*, Vol. 65, No. 23, 29 September 1972: 5. *JSTOR*, accessed 7/1/25: <https://jstor.org/stable/community.32149332>. See also Daniels and King (2024) 40.

<sup>137</sup> McDonough, “7<sup>th</sup> Pastor, 1973-1976: Father (later Msgr.) Joseph A. Ranieri”: 1.

<sup>138</sup> “Newsfeeds,” *Catholic News Service*, 9 September 1953: 1.

<sup>139</sup> “Newsfeeds,” *Catholic News Service*, 5 February 1962: 9-10. *JSTOR*, accessed 7/1/25: <https://jstor.org/stable/community.32140422>.

<sup>140</sup> Michael W. Foley and Dean R. Hoge, *Religion and the New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 78. There are conflicting dates from various sources about when the Shrine actually began holding regular Masses in Spanish; Patrick Scallen, for example, asserts in his dissertation that Masses in Spanish began at the Shrine in 1967. See Patrick Scallen, “*The Bombs that Drop in El Salvador Explode in Mount Pleasant: From Cold War Conflagration to Immigrant Struggles in Washington, D.C., 1970-1995*.” Dissertation, Georgetown University, in partial fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy in History (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 2019) 128.

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Secretariat for Black Catholics.<sup>141</sup> A signal that the Sacred Heart parish was transitioning demographically was the institution of its first Latino pastor, Father Joaquin A. Bazan, in 1976. Bazan was born in Washington to Chicano parents from New Mexico. His father had moved his large family to D.C. when he attained work at the U.S. Department of Labor. Before being named pastor at the Shrine, Bazan served as the coordinator of Spanish-language services for the archdiocese and advocated for more Masses in Spanish as well as religious processions. It was under Bazan's pastoral tenure in the late 1970s that the Shrine began an annual tradition of celebrating Good Friday with a Drama of the Passion performed in Spanish. Afterward, congregants proceeded with candles from the church down Park Road, Mount Pleasant Street, Harvard Street, and then back to the church via 16<sup>th</sup> Street, led by clergy carrying Christ on the cross and singing hymns. The Easter tradition continues to this day.<sup>142</sup> Sacred Heart was also the first parish to hold a "Walk with Mary," in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which has become an annual event held in December since 1973.<sup>143</sup>

An influx of asylum-seekers from Central America (particularly El Salvador) starting in the late 1970s through the 1980s greatly impacted the demographics of Ward 1 neighborhoods as well as the congregation of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart. By 1980, census tract 28 was the top fourth neighborhood for residents with Spanish origins, or 12% of the area's total population, and by 1990, census tract 28.1 (the northern half of the older tract, between Park and Spring roads) had the third highest concentration of Latino residents across the entire District, accounting for 30% of the reduced tract's total population.<sup>144</sup> By 1987, the number of Catholic churches in northern Virginia and D.C. that offered services in Spanish had risen to 23. At least 1,000 first- and second-generation Latinos were counted among the Shrine's 6,900-member congregation, while Latinos accounted for 45% of the Sacred Heart parish's constituency. This influx of new arrivals was not without its growing pains. In a 1987 article in the *Washington Post*, the Reverend Stephen Carter, based in the Sacred Heart parish, claimed that the congregation was aware of a "huge gap in culture widened by language and fear," and that every Sunday for the past three years, immigrants sponsored a special Mass and luncheon to introduce themselves and their native cultures to the regular parishioners. But as Rosa Maria Eubanks, a Chicana and Shrine congregant, told the same reporter, she overheard several white parishioners complain about the demographic shifts and threaten to leave the parish altogether.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Jacobe 2021.

<sup>142</sup> Mara Cherkasky, *Mount Pleasant* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2007) 109. Lori Kaplan, interview with Heather McMahon (Washington, D.C.: 20 February 2024). Mark Zimmerman, "Pastor's example of visiting people's homes has guided Msgr. Bazan's six decades of priesthood," *Catholic Standard*, 21 October 2022; accessed 7/2/25: <https://www.cathstan.org/faith/pastor-s-example-of-visiting-people-s-homes-has-guided-msgr-bazan-s-six-decades-of-priesthood#:~:text=has%20guided%20Msgr.-,Bazan's%20six%20decades%20of%20priesthood,decades%20since%20his%20retirement%2C%20Msgr.>

<sup>143</sup> Shrine of the Sacred Heart, "About: History/Historia," *Shrine of the Sacred Heart* [website]; accessed 7/2/25: <https://sacredheartdc.org/history>. Rev. Emilio Biosca, OFMCAP, Pastor of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, email communication to Zachary Burt, DC Preservation League, 15 October 2025.

<sup>144</sup> Open Data DC, "Census Tracts in 1980" [GIS Data Set] (Washington, DC: DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer, 2018); accessed 11/15/24: <https://opendata.dc.gov/datasets/DCGIS::census-tracts-in-1980/about>. Open Data DC, "Census Tracts in 1990" [GIS Data Set] (Washington, DC: DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer, 2018); accessed 11/15/24: <https://opendata.dc.gov/datasets/DCGIS::census-tracts-in-1990/about>.

<sup>145</sup> Stepp 1987.

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By the late 1980s, Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights had the highest concentrations of Latino residents across the District, and Spanish-speakers formed a majority within the Sacred Heart parish.<sup>146</sup> The Shrine was a pivotal site of connection for the community. As a local, José “Chico” Diaz, recollected in a 2017 interview,

*Mount Pleasant and Columbia Road were the corridors to walk. A lot of folks would come out. We used to think it was la plaza. In our countries, you used to go, especially on Sundays because there is a Mass... And that’s what I remember happening, also. It used to be kind of the same feeling because on Sundays, Sacred Heart Church, it would get packed. After Sacred Heart Church, people would walk through Mount Pleasant, through Columbia Road. That’s how I remember it: that feeling of you are among folks from your countries.*<sup>147</sup>

This demographic shift in the neighborhood, as within the Shrine’s congregation, was met with some resistance. Racial tensions mounted as longtime residents, white and Black, increasingly voiced their concerns over issues of loitering, public drunkenness, and noise on Mount Pleasant Street, which were aimed at immigrant Latinos.<sup>148</sup> Answering the complaints of Mount Pleasant residents, the Washington Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) began to patrol the area more vigorously, leading to increased confrontations between Latino residents and police officers. Relationships between the MPD and members of the Latino community in Ward 1 continued to devolve until, on the night of May 5, 1991, young Latinos took to the streets in protest of an act of police brutality in an event that would later be called the Mount Pleasant Riots.

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart played a central role during the three nights of violence in early May 1991, just as it had during the riots of April 1968, when the sanctuary remained open past an imposed curfew in order to provide refuge and food to displaced persons in the neighborhood. Leaders of the Latino community met in the basement of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart on Monday, May 6, to discuss the previous night’s events and to confer with government officials. In an attempt to soothe tempers and redirect protest to non-violent, civil disobedience, they scheduled a march for that evening to be led by community and church members, including Father Mark Poletunow and Father Donald Lippert, curates at the Shrine. “Joined by laypeople, Lippert and Poletunow waded into a forming mob and attempted to prevent a violent confrontation with police. Both got tear-gassed, and Poletunow was hit in the face by what he believes was a tear gas canister.”<sup>149</sup> To prevent a repeat of Sunday night’s events, Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly declared a state of emergency and set a curfew in Ward 1 neighborhoods. Through

<sup>146</sup> Castaneda 1992: B3.

<sup>147</sup> José “Chico” Diaz, interview with Patrick Scallen (Washington, D.C.: 15 December 2017), *Mount Pleasant Riot Oral History Project*. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Public Library, The People’s Archive; accessed: <https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A42739>.

<sup>148</sup> Elinor Hart, interview with Patrick Scallen (Washington, D.C.: 10 November 2017), *Mount Pleasant Riot Oral History Project*. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Public Library, The People’s Archive; accessed <https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A42738>. Charlene Howard, interview with Patrick Scallen (Washington, D.C.: 31 October 2017), *Mount Pleasant Riot Oral History Project*. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Public Library, The People’s Archive; accessed: <https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A42422>. Kaplan 2024.

<sup>149</sup> Castaneda 1992: B3.

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Wednesday, May 8, the Shrine was used as a police staging ground as well as a refuge for members of the community frightened by the violence.<sup>150</sup>

In the aftermath of the uprising and riots, the Latino community and the entire city were shaken. During the violence, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the National Council of La Raza (now UnidosUS) came to the Shrine of the Sacred Heart to confer with Latino community leaders and assist in diffusing the situation. With the input of these national organizations, city officials established a multicultural committee to understand the precipitating causes of the uprising: The Latino Civil Rights Task Force, first chaired by Latino community leader Pedro Avilés and later by Beatriz Otero. With time and distance, the Mount Pleasant Riots have been called the most significant event in the history of Washington's Latino community, and at the center of that event, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart remained a fundamental site of support. As Otero stated in a 2024 interview, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart "played a very significant role in providing a space for the [Latino] community [to gather]."<sup>151</sup>

Churches like the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, which catered to a growing Latino congregation, "enabled a retention of Latin American identity for the second generation through shared cultural practices...and through the retention and use of Spanish."<sup>152</sup> Because as much as 95% percent of emigrating Latinos in this post-World War II era were Catholics, the Archdiocese of Washington and parish churches were central to the formation and cohesion of Washington's Latino community. Innumerable baptisms, confirmations, and weddings for Spanish-speaking émigrés were held at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart over successive decades, whose congregation transitioned with every passing year. The Shrine of the Sacred Heart continues to support the Latino community in Washington, D.C. and celebrate its dedication to multiculturalism and diversity.

### Parish Social History and other nationalities

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart's commitment to all Catholics regardless of their race, language, or nationality has long extended beyond its association with the two core communities named above, Washington's Black Americans and Latinos. As early as 1978, when Father Bazan was interviewed for an article in the *Catholic Standard*, he spoke of the parish's wider diversity:

*...Sacred Heart parish lists as members families from nearby every African and Asian nation, Latin Americans and American blacks. On a given day, the priests of the parish may be called upon to officiate a wedding in the Ibo language of Nigeria, pray in Spanish*

<sup>150</sup> Gabe Bullard, "Listen: The Mt. Pleasant Riots, 30 Years Later." Local News [Audio Recording] on *WAMU 88.5* [Website], 6 May 2021; accessed: <https://wamu.org/story/21/05/06/listen-the-mt-pleasant-riots-30-years-later/>. Mark Poletunow, interview with Patrick Scallen (Washington, D.C.: 18 November 2017), *Mount Pleasant Riot Oral History Project*. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Public Library, The People's Archive; accessed: <https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A42741>. Otero 2024. Ana Patricia Rodríguez, "Becoming 'Wachintonians': Salvadorans in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area," *Washington History*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Fall 2016): 5.

<sup>151</sup> Otero 2024.

<sup>152</sup> Candelario 2001: 66.

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*that a Filipino woman pass her nursing test, bless a Latin American home in the evening or take part in a procession honoring the patron saints of various nations.*<sup>153</sup>

By 1979, Father Peter Long was offering a Sunday Mass in Vietnamese at the Shrine for the roughly 75 Vietnamese families in the Archdiocese, while Father O'Malley had instituted French Creole Masses for the Haitians living in the parish as well as surrounding areas. In 1992, the 1,683 registered households within the Sacred Heart parish were estimated to be 70% Latino, 20% Black American, 5% white Euro-American, 4% Haitian, and 1% Asian, according to a survey conducted by the Archdiocese.<sup>154</sup> The church's recognition of and commitment to its parish's diversity continues to this day, as the Shrine currently offers regular Sunday Masses and other services in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese. For this reason, the Sacred Heart parish has been called "one of the most culturally diverse congregations in the Archdiocese of Washington."<sup>155</sup>

Many of these Haitian, Vietnamese, and African immigrants—including Father Long—were refugees in the United States, having fled war or political turmoil in their home countries. However, the largest concentration of asylum-seekers that settled in northwest D.C. in the last quarter of the twentieth century were Salvadorans. Their numbers swelled the congregation at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart so that, by 2001, as much as 80% of Sacred Heart's parishioners hailed from Latin America. This connection was further reflected in the fact, perhaps, that a refugee from El Salvador—Moisés Villalta—became the first Salvadoran Capuchin and was ordained a priest, assigned to Sacred Heart as an associate pastor, in 1995.<sup>156</sup>

Ministering to immigrants and particularly to refugees, who were often impoverished and lacked English language skills and literacy, honed the Shrine's mission at the turn of the twenty-first century. The Archdiocese began offering English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Education Development (GED) programs through the Sacred Heart Adult Center, which first opened in 1969. In 1993, the Sacred Heart School became the first Catholic grade school in the city to offer ESL. Clergy and laity offer counsel and services on issues ranging from employment through immigration status from the church rectory.<sup>157</sup> Food and shelter have consistently been offered through the church, which became a beacon for the area's unhoused population. One article about the Shrine asserted that,

*Homeless men leave their meager belongings in the rectory because it is the only place they believe their worldly goods will be safe. Anxious men and women who are not*

<sup>153</sup> McCarthy 1978.

<sup>154</sup> Castaneda 1992: B1. Palkowski 1998: 10. Flemons 1999: n.p.

<sup>155</sup> Ellen Sorokin, "Immigrants' true 'Mother Church' in NW: Parish is font of help, hope," *The Washington Times*, 1 September 2001: B1. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Public Library, People's Archive, VF: Churches—Catholic—Sacred Heart.

<sup>156</sup> Patrick McDonough, "10<sup>th</sup> Pastor, 1990-1995: Father Robert E. McCreary, OFM Cap.," [Unpublished white paper] n.d.: 1. Repository: Washington, D.C.: D.C. Preservation League files. Sorokin 2001: B1. Mark Zimmerman, "Heart of the city: Sacred Heart School serves changing neighborhood," *Catholic Standard*, 8 April 1993: 5. Repository: Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Archives, Paul Phillips Cooke Papers [ID 180], Box 6.

<sup>157</sup> Sorokin 2001: B2. Zimmerman 1993: 4.

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*proficient in English come in to get translations of documents crucial in their lives: job applications, school notices, medical forms, letters from employers.*<sup>158</sup>

Father Carter said of the Shrine that, “In so many ways, this is the first place the immigrants experience a new way of life, before they move out to the mainline of society.”<sup>159</sup> Perhaps the most touching anecdote expressing the compassionate service the Shrine of the Sacred Heart clergy has and continues to extend dates to 1978, when Father Bazan related an account of a non-Catholic woman coming to the church one Sunday during Mass seeking help for her sick child. Members of the church choir took her and her child to the hospital and stayed with her throughout the day. At the end of her ordeal, Father Bazan asked the woman why she had turned to Sacred Heart for help when other churches would have been open that Sunday morning, to which the woman replied, “Though I’m not a Catholic and did not know what you would do, I knew you would do something... For a person with problems this is the only church in this area.”<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Castaneda 1992: B1.

<sup>159</sup> Sorokin 2001: B2.

<sup>160</sup> McCarthy 1978.

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**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart correspond to those of Lot 826 in Square 2675.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are the same boundaries upon which the Shrine of the Sacred Heart was built in 1922.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: John DeFerrari and D. Peter Sefton, DCPL trustees; Heather McMahon,  
consultant; and Zachary Burt, DCPL staff

organization: DC Preservation League

street & number: 1328 Florida Avenue NW

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e-mail: info@dcpreservation.org

telephone: (202) 783-5144

date: December 15, 2025

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

	DESCRIPTION	FACING	PHOTOGRAPHER	DATE
1	Shrine of the Sacred Heart main façade/west elevation	E	Underwood & Underwood	12/1922
2	Shrine of the Sacred Heart main façade/west elevation	E	J. DeFerrari	08/2025
3	West and south elevations seen from the southwest	NE	J. DeFerrari	12/2016
4	Upper portion of west elevation showing rose window	E	J. DeFerrari	12/2016
5	Detail of columned arcade showing embossed arches and Guastavino tiles	E	J. DeFerrari	08/2025
6	North and west elevations	SE	J. DeFerrari	08/2025
7	North elevation	S	J. DeFerrari	08/2025
8	South elevation, partially obscured	N	J. DeFerrari	08/2025
9	Nave Looking East To Sanctuary	E	J. DeFerrari	09/2025
10	Nave Looking West Toward Narthex Wall	W	J. DeFerrari	09/2025
11	Detail of baldachin and apse ceiling over main altar	E	D.P. Sefton	04/2025
12	Detail of an arcade arch along a side aisle	S	D.P. Sefton	04/2025

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13	Detail of rose window and choir space over narthex	W	D.P. Sefton	04/2025
14	Chapel of the Blessed Virgin	E	D.P. Sefton	04/2025
15	Detail of central dome	N	D.P. Sefton	04/2025
16	Detail of transept alcove	W	D.P. Sefton	04/2025
17	Detail of decorative wall band	N	D.P. Sefton	04/2025

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

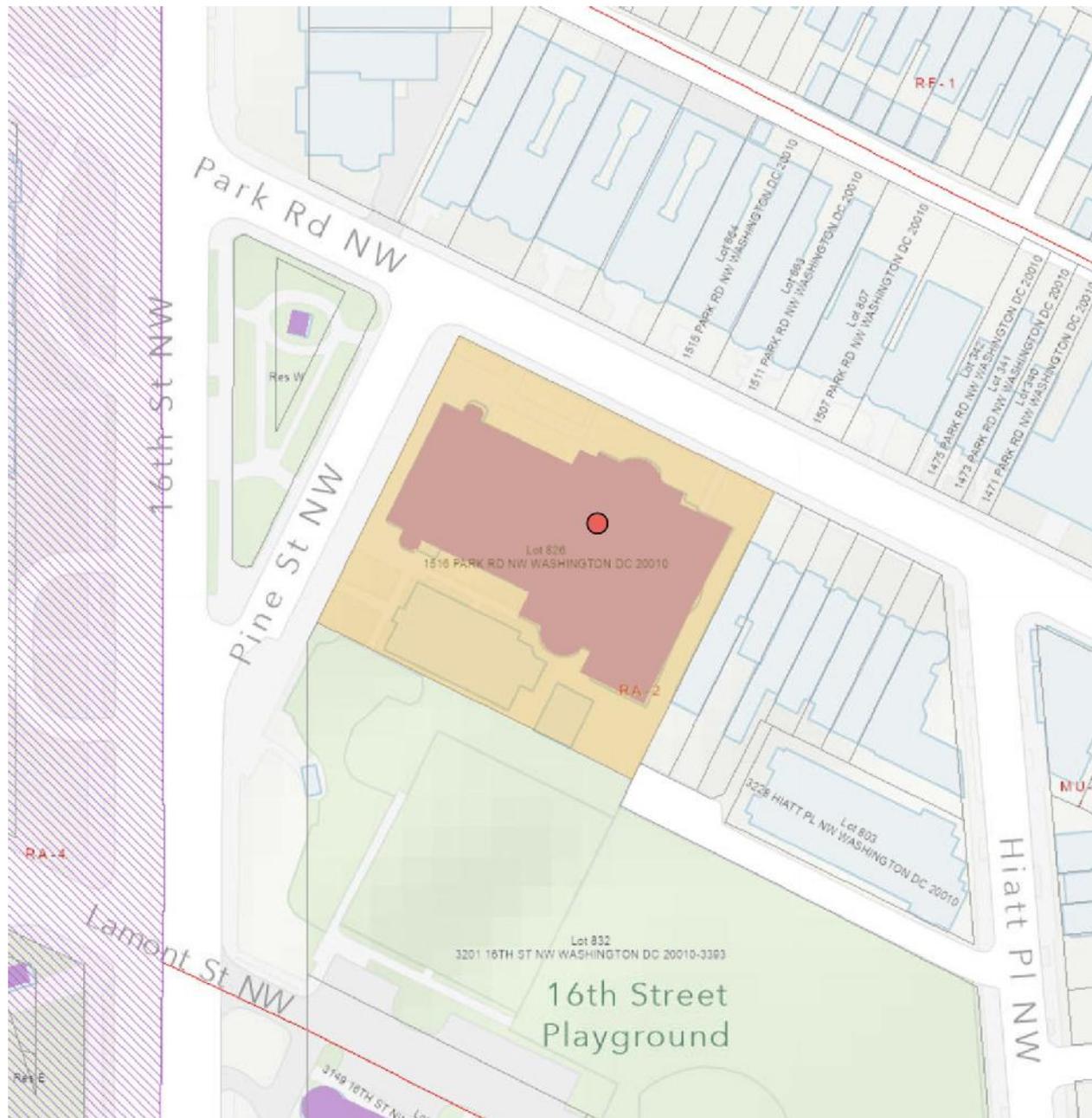
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 1



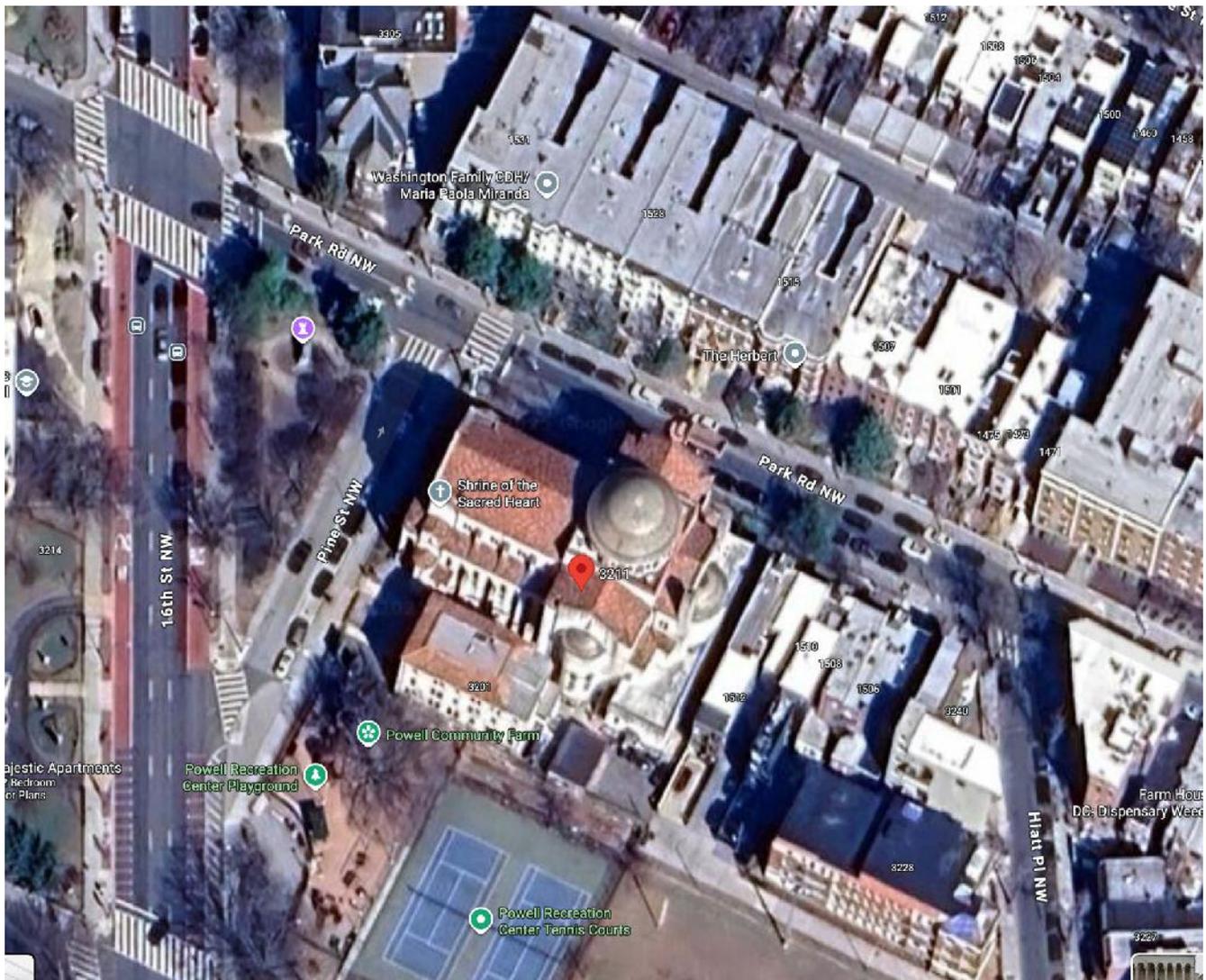
Map 1: Shrine of the Sacred Heart boundaries (DC PropertyQuest).

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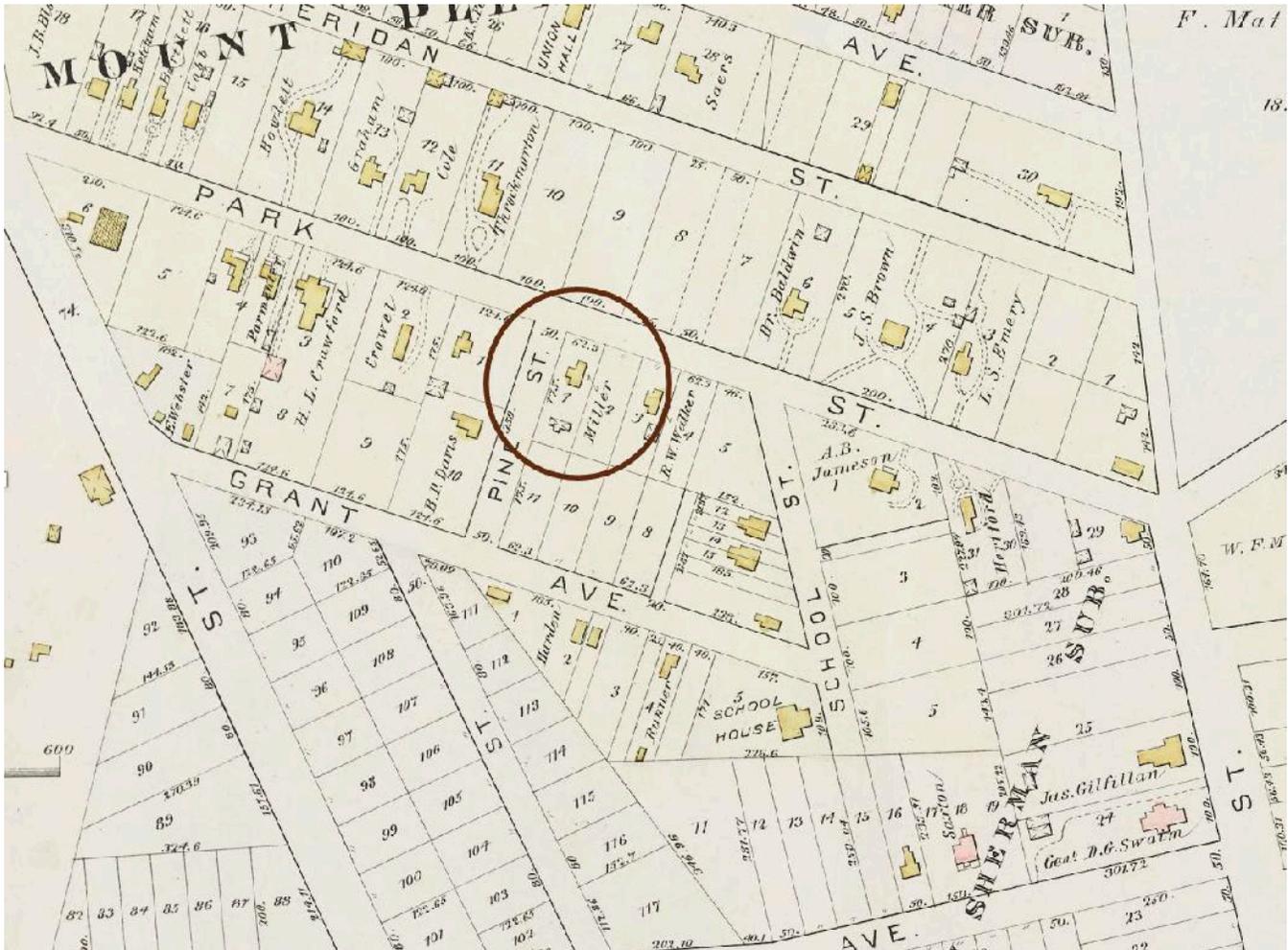
Map 2: Sacred Heart Church overhead view (Google Maps).

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National Park Service

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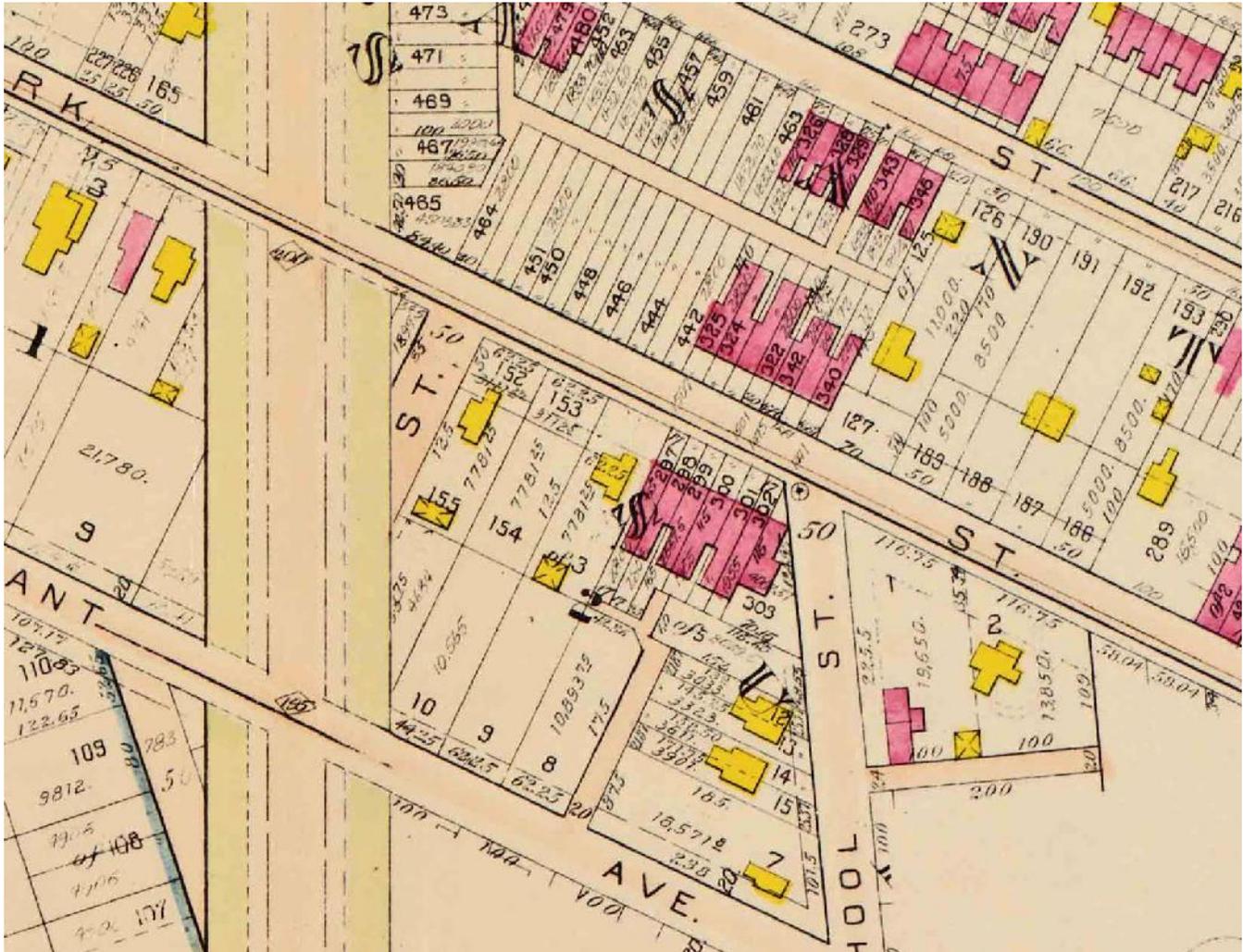
Map 3: Excerpt from Griffith M. Hopkins, *A Complete Set of Surveys and Plats of Properties in the City of Washington, District of Columbia*, (1887), Plate 42, showing the lot at Pine Street and Park Street where the Shrine of the Sacred Heart would be built. Note that 16<sup>th</sup> Street has not yet been cut through. (Library of Congress).

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National Park Service

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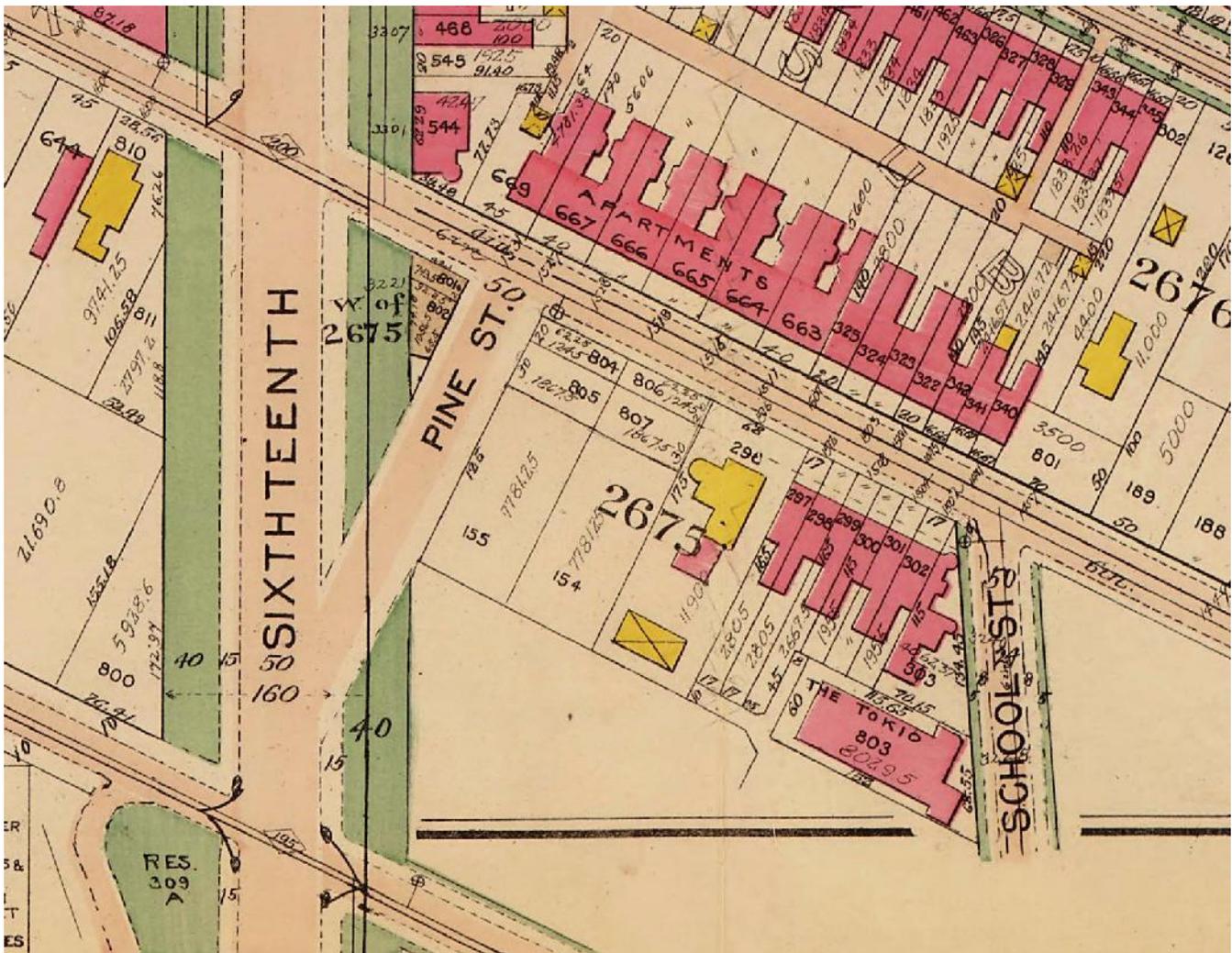
Map 4: Excerpt from G.W. Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Washington, District of Columbia* (1903), Vol. III, Plate 13, showing the addition of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, reducing Pine Street to a small stub (marked "St."). The old frame building still stands on the future Sacred heart site. (Library of Congress).

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National Park Service

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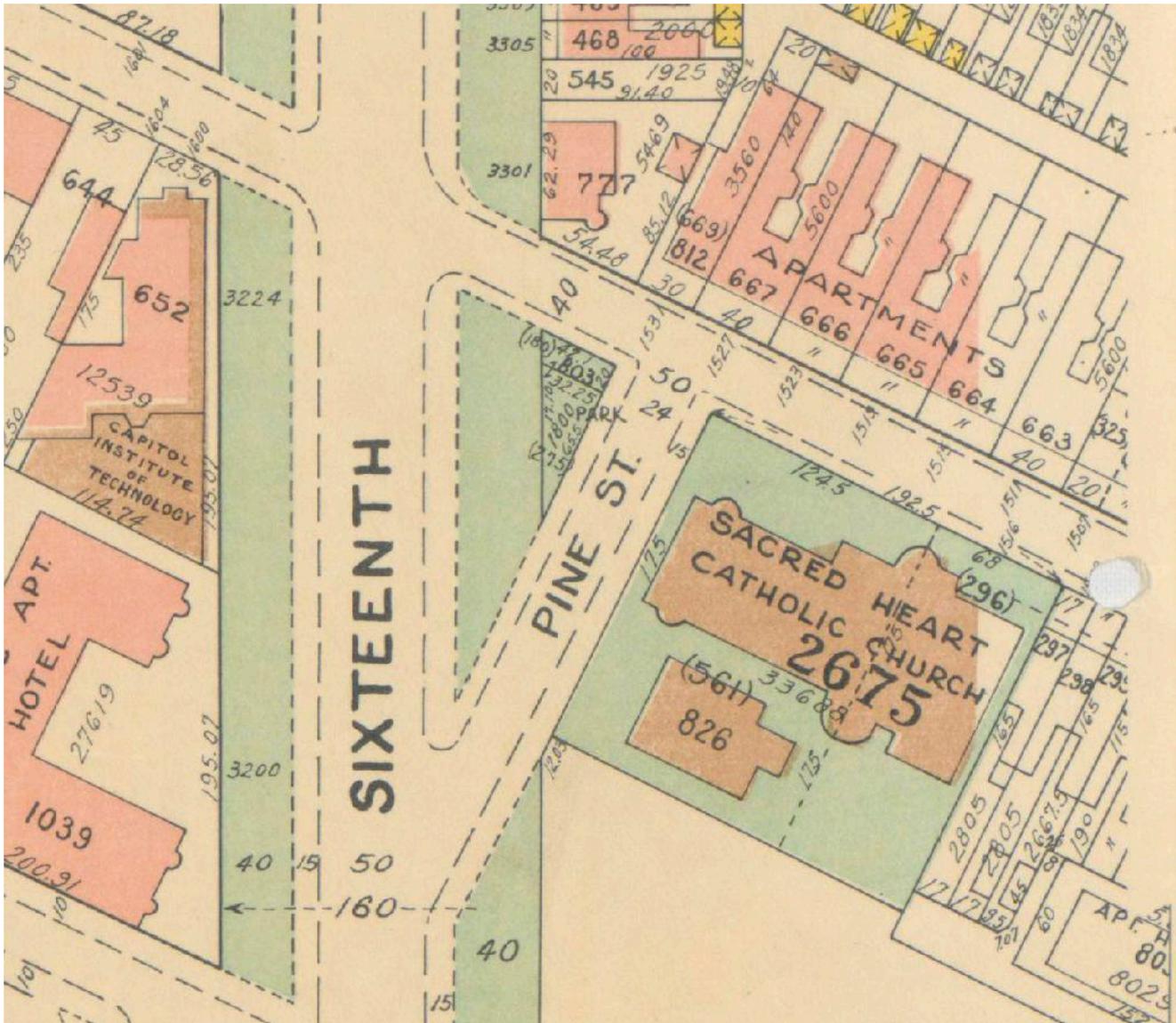
Map 5: Excerpt from G.W. Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Washington, District of Columbia* (1913), Vol. III, Plate 11, showing the future Sacred heart site as empty lots. (Library of Congress).

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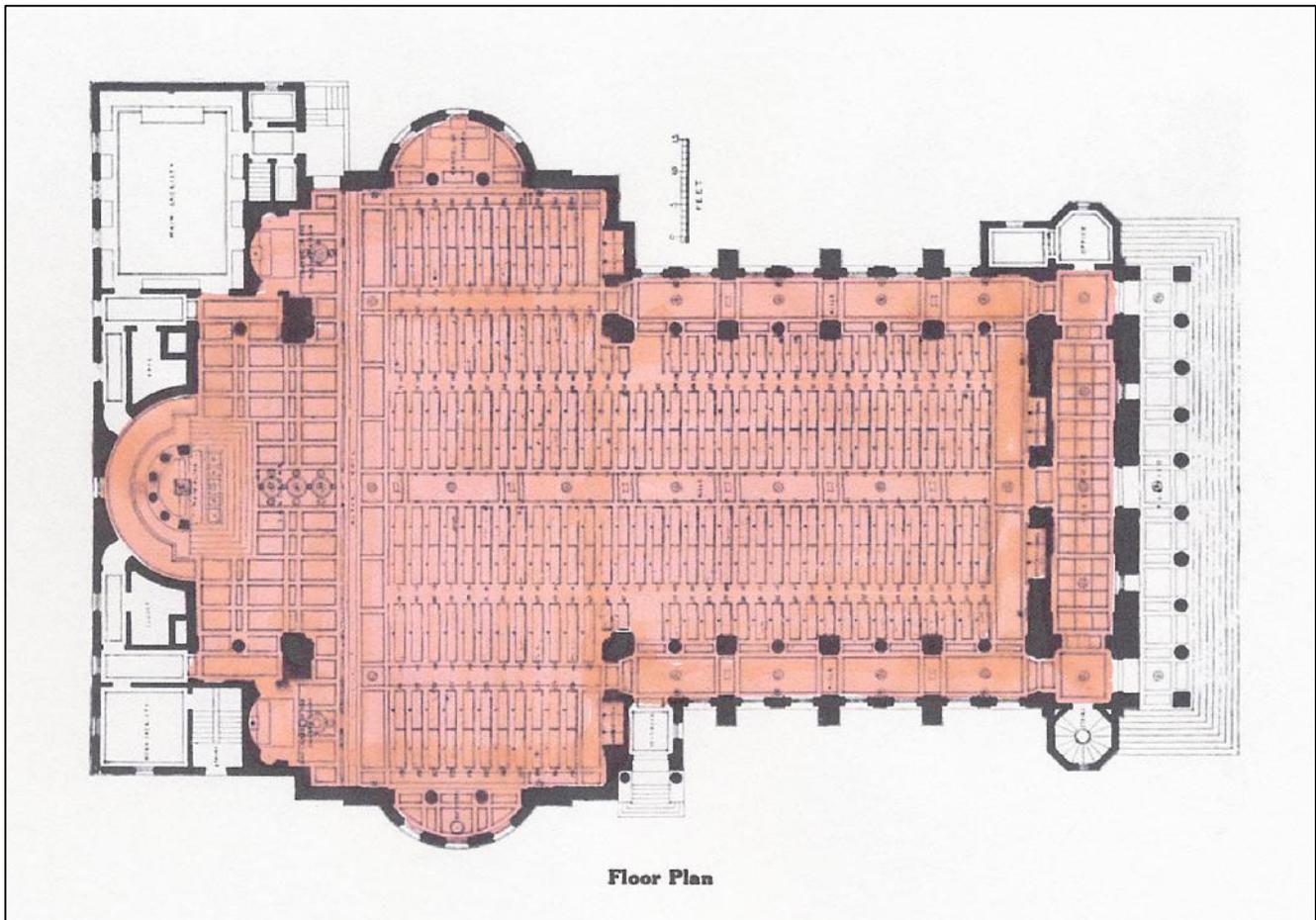
Map 6: Excerpt from G.W. Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Washington, District of Columbia*, 1968, Vol. III, Plan 11, showing Sacred Heart Church. (DC Office of the Surveyor).

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Map 7: Proposed interior worship spaces for historic designation are shown in pink.

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Photo 1: Shrine of the Sacred Heart main façade/west elevation in December 1922. Note statue niches have not yet been filled (Underwood & Underwood).

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Photo 2: Shrine of the Sacred Heart main façade/west elevation (J. DeFerrari).

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Photo 3: West and south elevations seen from the southwest (J. DeFerrari).

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Photo 4: Upper portion of west elevation showing rose window (J. DeFerrari).

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Photo 5: Detail of columned arcade showing embossed arches and Guastavino tiles (J. DeFerrari).

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Photo 6: North and west elevations, facing southeast (J. DeFerrari).

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Photo 7: North elevation (J. DeFerrari).

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Photo 8: South elevation, partially obscured by rectory building on the left (J. DeFerrari).

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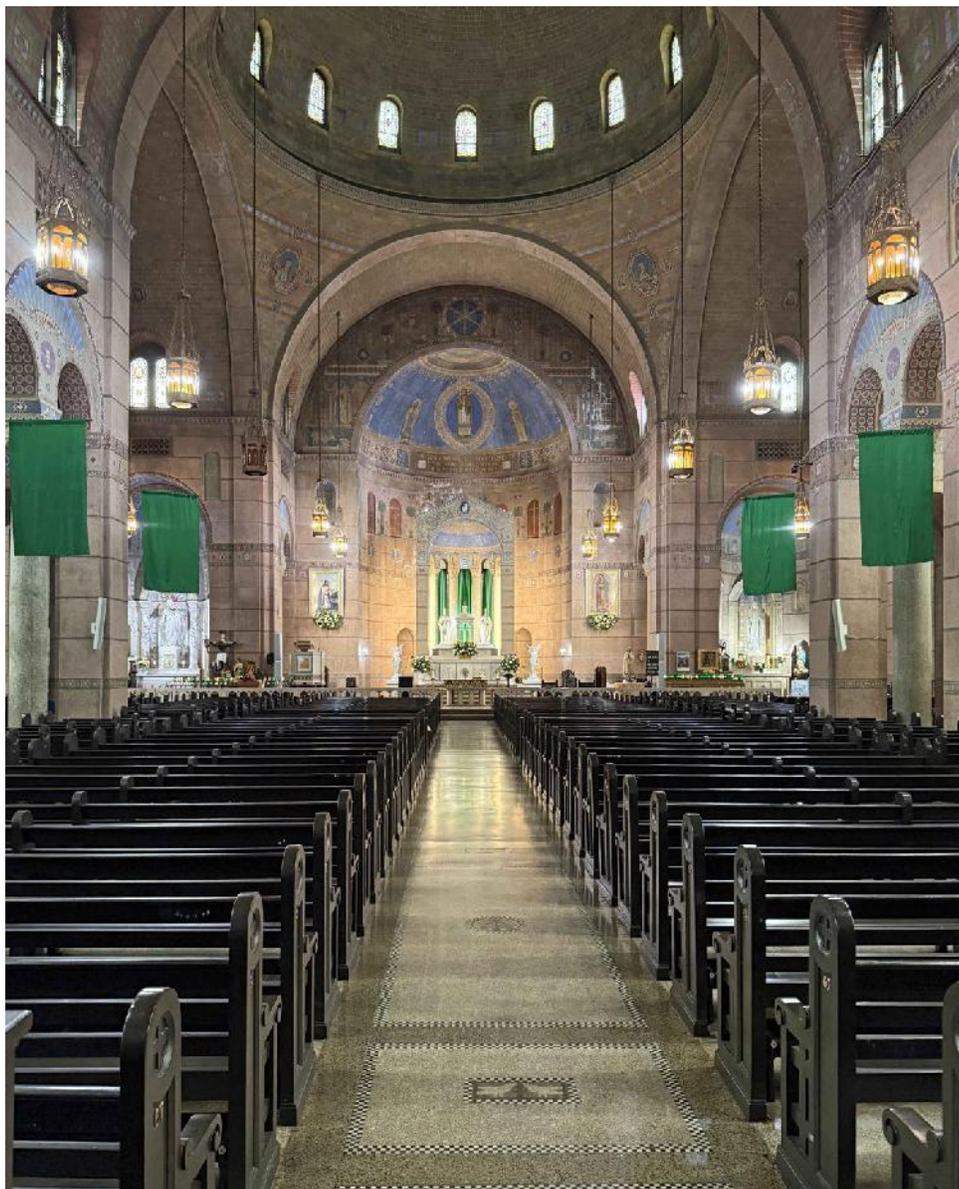


Photo 9: Sacred Heart Nave Looking East To Sanctuary (J. DeFerrari).

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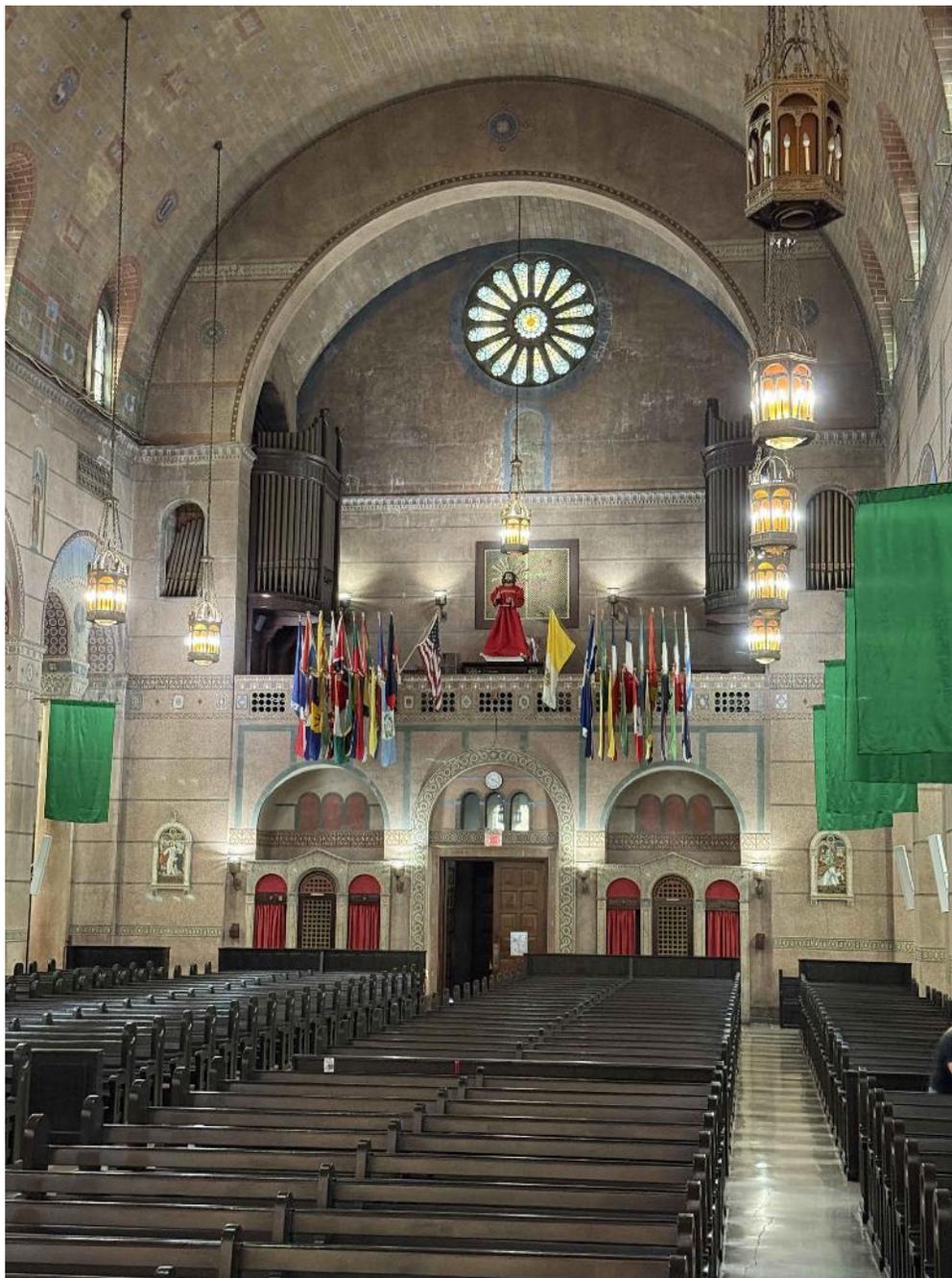


Photo 10: Sacred Heart Nave Looking West Toward Narthex Wall (J. DeFerrari).

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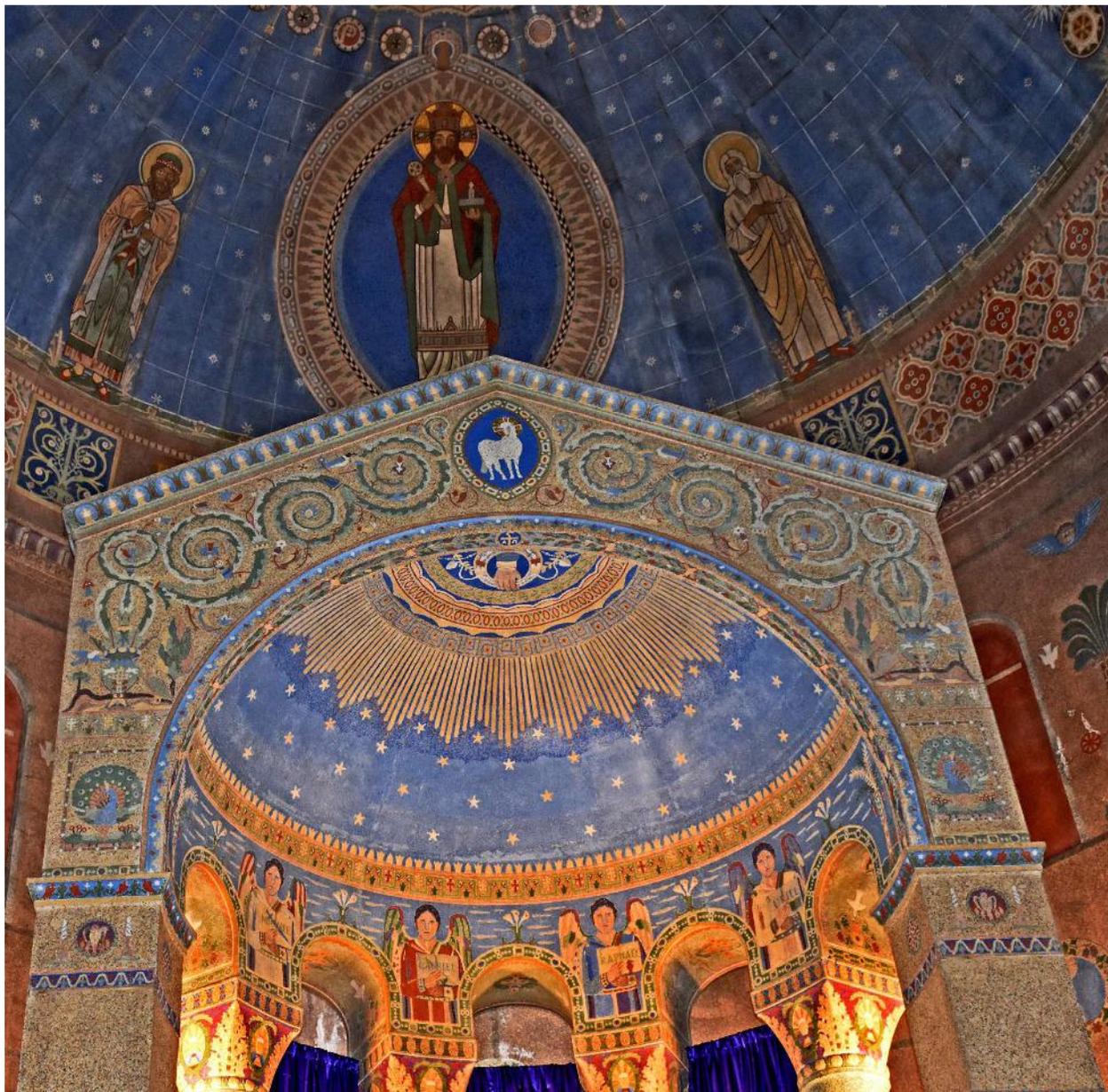


Photo 11: Detail of baldachin and apse ceiling over main altar (D.P. Sefton).

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Photo 12: Detail of an arcade arch along a side aisle (D.P. Sefton).

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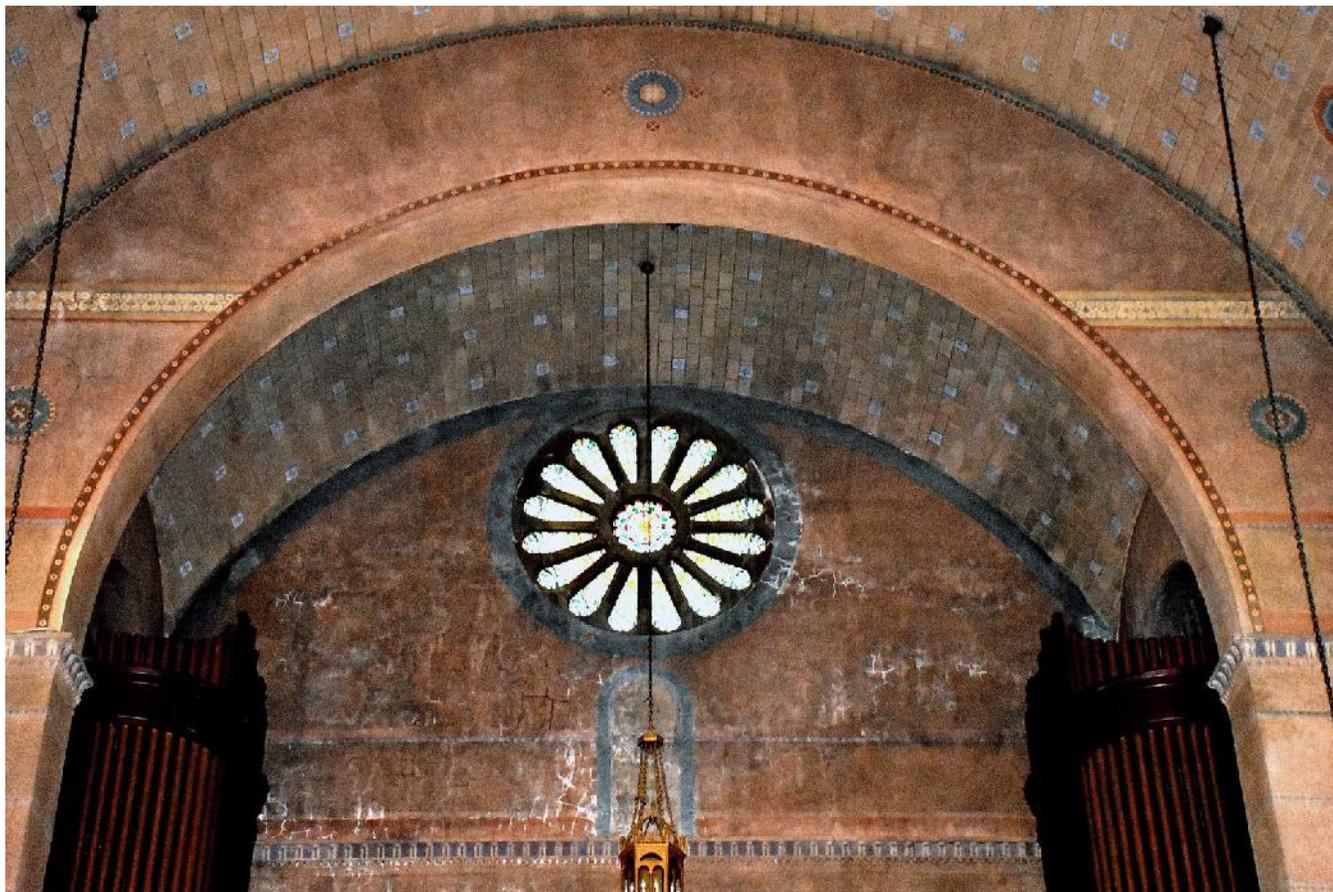


Photo 13: Detail of rose window and choir space over narthex (D.P. Sefton).

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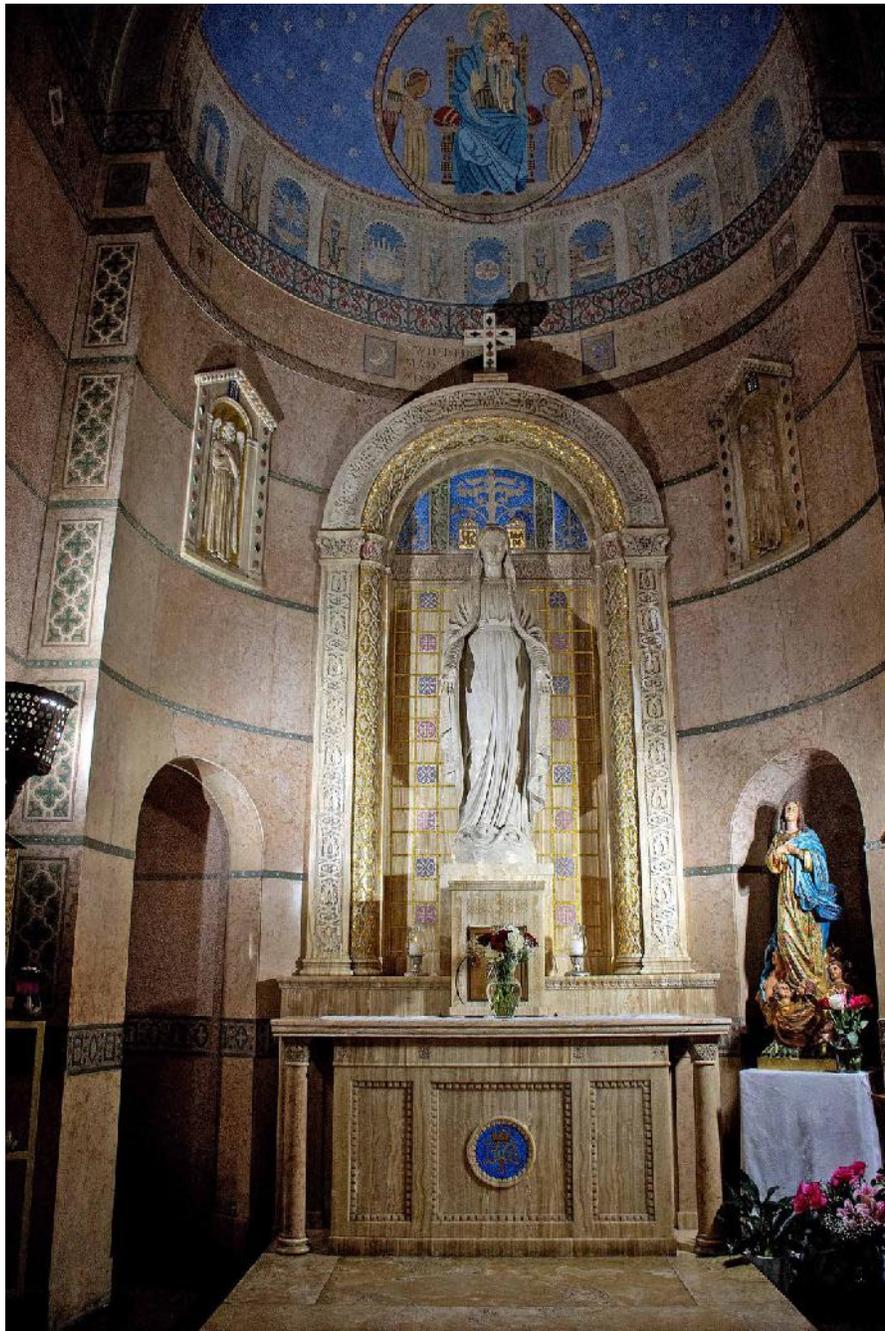


Photo 14: Chapel of the Blessed Virgin (D.P. Sefton).

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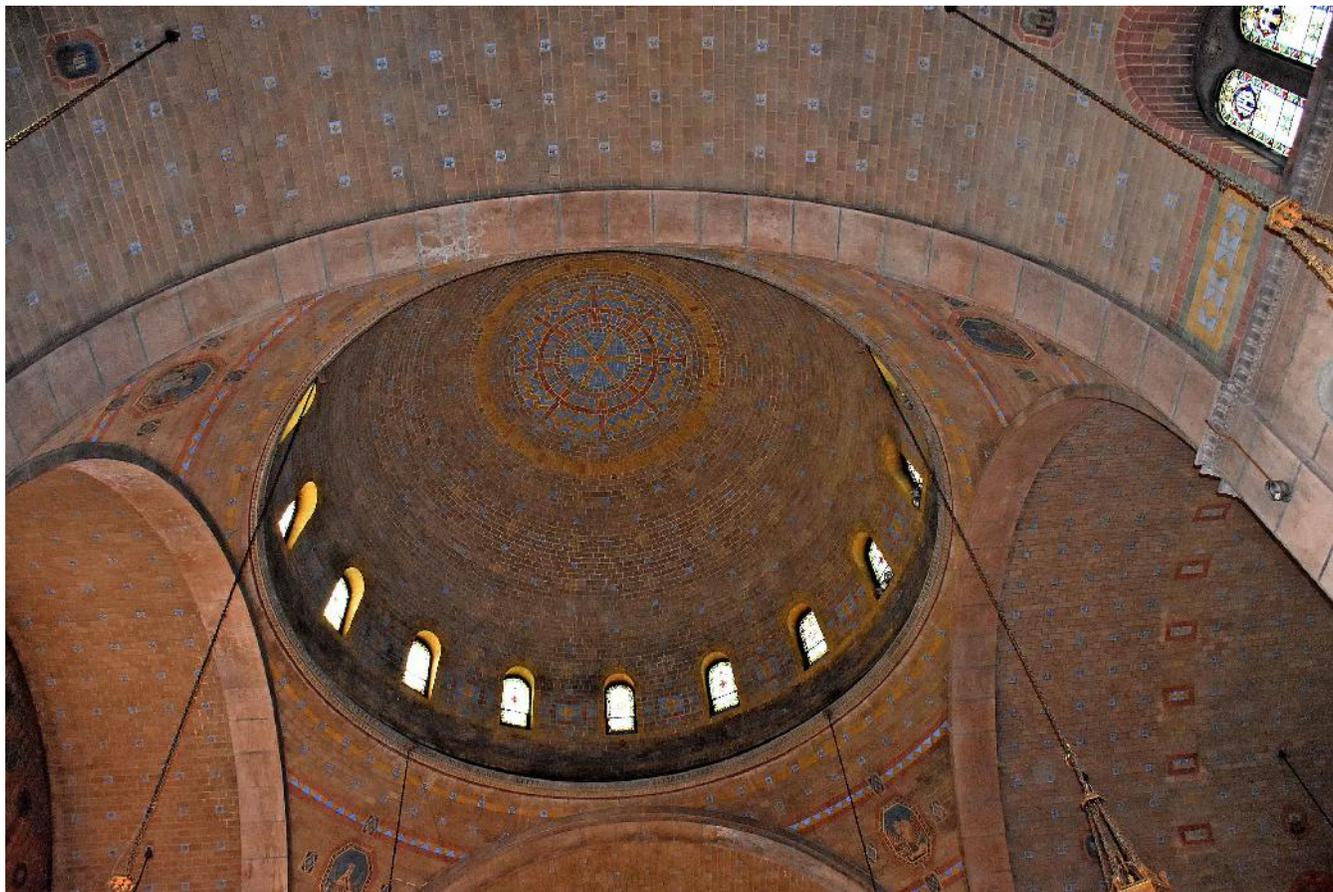


Photo 15: Detail of central dome (D.P. Sefton).

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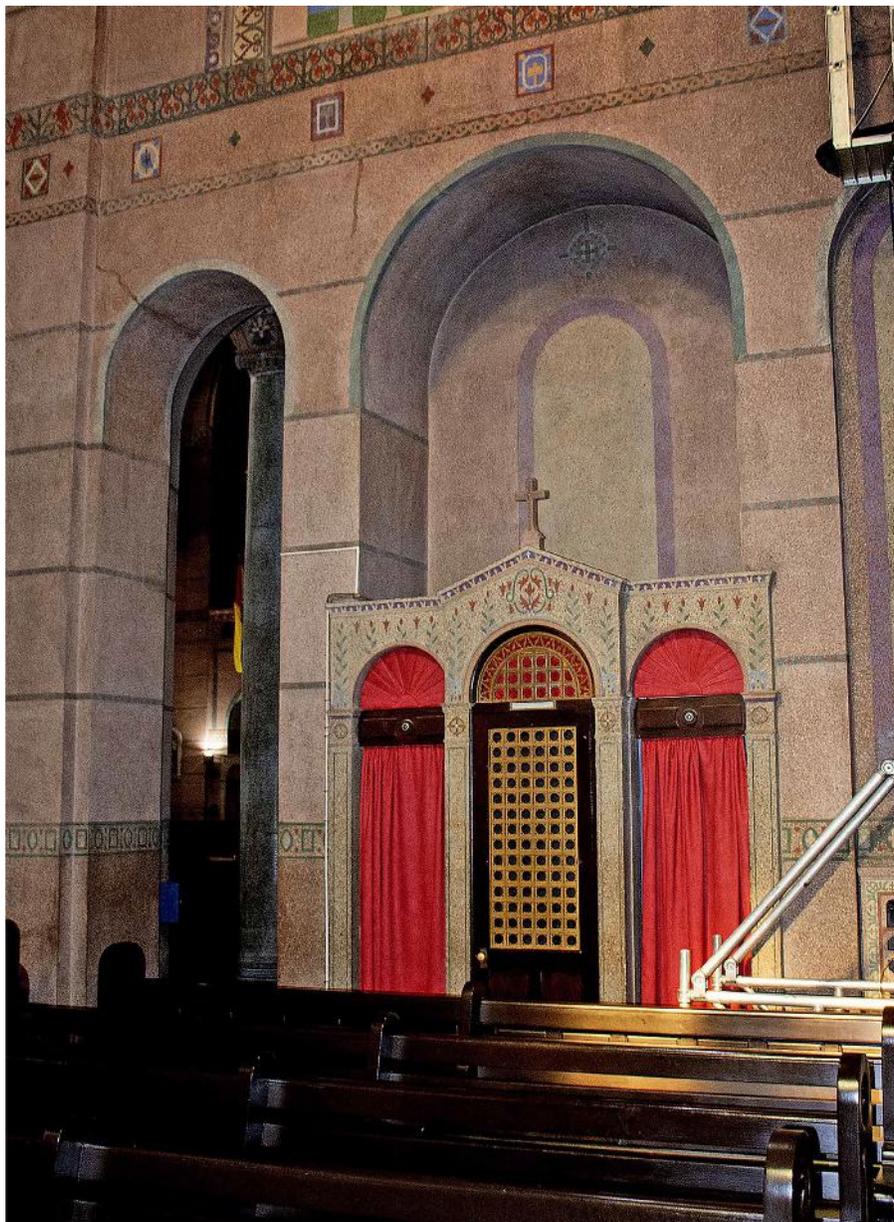


Photo 16: Detail of transept alcove (D.P. Sefton).

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Photo 17: Detail of decorative wall band featuring the work of John J. Earley Studio (D.P. Sefton).