

Restoration of St. Mary's Church

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The present stone church was completed November 20, 1895. Since then it has undergone many phases of renovations and restorations. The latest changes took



place in 1965 with the liturgical changes of the Second Vatican Council. A new altar was put in front of the reredos (the present main back altar) so that the presider would face the

worshipping assembly. The wooden floor in the sanctuary was covered with green shag carpet. The rest of the church floor was covered with green and white vinyl tile. The Ambo (pulpit) was removed and replaced with a simple wooden structure. The walls of the church were painted an off white color. Ceiling fans with light kits replaced the old light fixtures installed in the 1930s with the advent of electricity.

The Work Done

The present Renovation/Restoration Project began in 2011 with the replacement of the leaking shingle roof with a copper roof by Tejas Roofing, Fredericksburg. A new drainage system on the west side of the church was installed to divert the rain water from flooding the basement of the church as it had done for years.

In January 2015, the church was closed to worshippers and the interior restoration work began. A part of the St. Mary's School was converted into a worshipping space for the Sunday liturgy.

The Church Bells

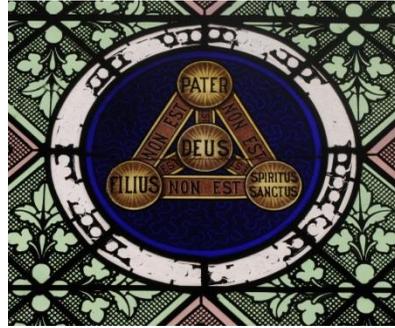
The three rope pulled bells which had not rung in years because the air handlers were installed next to them in the bell tower are now digitally



controlled. They ring automatically at 6 a.m., noon, 6 p.m. and after Sunday Mass to the glory of God. They can be heard miles away.

The Stained Glass Windows

In the past multiple repair works were undertaken on the windows to address the bowing of the windows.



The failed paint work, the broken and mismatched replacement glass pieces were all indicators that the stained glass windows were in decline. The work done by Foster Stained Glass, Bryan includes the removal of the metal frames around the windows. Wooden window frames have been installed as originally designed. The original pieces of stained glass that were in good shape were conserved. The broken ones were replaced with new pieces of glass. The stained glass windows are now re-leaded and repainted. The process has restored the stained glass windows to their original configuration.



The Reredos, The Ambo and The Communion Rail

The three reredos (altars), the Ambo and the communion rails were stripped and repainted with oil base white enamel paint and patinaed. These original pieces of the Church are gilded in twenty-four Karat gold leaf. The canopy of the Ambo is a replica of the original. It was designed and rebuilt by Ernest Chaloupka, Jr. and George Kalisek of Moulton.



The Altar of Sacrifice

A new altar of sacrifice has been built to replace the makeshift formica altar of the 1960s. The arches in the new altar make it possible to see the Last Supper scene of the reredos. The altar was built by Ron Grandee Custom Wood, Victoria.

The Air Conditioning/Heating System

A new air condition/heat system has been installed with the air vents in the floor instead of in the ceiling. The old vent holes cut in the ceiling for air flow have now been filled in with paintings of flowers to compliment the painting in the original ceiling.

The Hanging Lights

Art deco style light fixtures of the 1930s now replace the ceiling fans with light kits.

The Church Doors

The original church doors have been stripped of the many layers of paint. The doors which are being worked on will be installed at a later date.



The Chandeliers

The antique chandelier hanging in the nave of the Church dates back to the 1800s. It was made in the former

Czechoslovakia. In the 1930s it was wired and the original wax candles were replaced with electrical bulbs. The chandelier has been refurbished. Each of the approximately

three thousand individual crystals were cleaned and rewired by Brady's Distinctive Lighting, Austin. The chandelier now features forty candle lights. They light up the beautiful ceiling of the church. The other chandelier at the main entrance of the church is of the same era and quality. It beautifully compliments the original chandelier of the church.

The Walls And Columns

With time the plaster on the walls of the church had deteriorated and was falling apart. The walls have now been re-mortared and re-plastered. The walls have been painted the original warm green color of the church by De Los Santos Painting, Moulton.

The Church Ceiling

The beautifully hand painted ceiling of the church was left intact. The ceiling was painted by Godfrey Flury (1864-1936) of Oensingen, Switzerland.

The Paintings

There are six paintings in the church. Two of them are attributed to Fr. Netardus a pastor at St. Mary's and one to Gene Mikulik, a parishioner. The three paintings of museum quality were painted by Johann Ignaz Berger (1882-1901) from Moravia, Europe. The pieces have been authenticated and certified by Dr. Antonio Loro of Houston for their historical value. The paintings now hang in the Sanctuary.

The Glass Doors

The glass doors that were installed in the narthex to help with air conditioning of the church have been removed. An archway now ushers worshippers into the church.



The Pews

The deteriorating original handcrafted oak pews have been repaired and refinished by Southern Church Furniture, Elm Mott. The kneelers



have been reupholstered.

The Floor of the Church

With the green and white vinyl floor tiles removed, the floor now showcases the original quarter-sawn long leaf pine wooded floor. The wood has been sanded and refurbished to its original beauty by R. B. Construction, Moulton and Bobby Klatt of Victoria Floor Surfacing.



Other Interior Works

- The Romex wires and Pacific Breaker Boxes have all been removed. The whole church has been rewired by South Central Electric, Flatonia.
- A new Public Address System has been installed by Carlos Orosco, Jr.



Exterior Works



- The exterior rock of the church has been tuckpointed, washed and resealed by Olmos Masonry.
- The front steps and the handicap ramp have been redesigned. To the east of the church is the *Zdravas* Maria fountain designed by Holik Associates, Needville and built by Dan Morrison, Moulton. To the west side are the monuments marking different occasions in the history of the church. A grand entrance now leads worshippers into the house of God.

Acknowledgments

An extensive amount of work has been undertaken to make the original stone church what it is today.

We are grateful to the Contactors, the Artisans, the Artists and all who worked diligently to produce this piece of work to the honor and glory of God.

Special thanks to the generous donors who financially made the Restoration Project possible.

To help maintain and preserve this spiritual heritage for the future consider making a donation to the St. Mary's Church Restoration Endowment Fund.

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