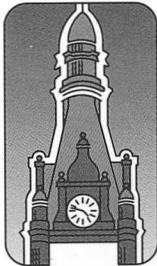
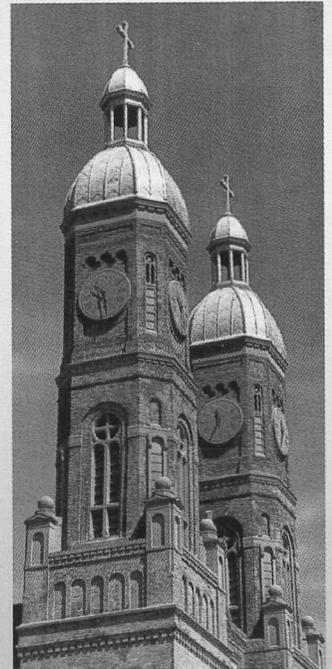

Milwaukee

Ethnic Church Tour

*The rich
heritage of
immigrant
architecture*



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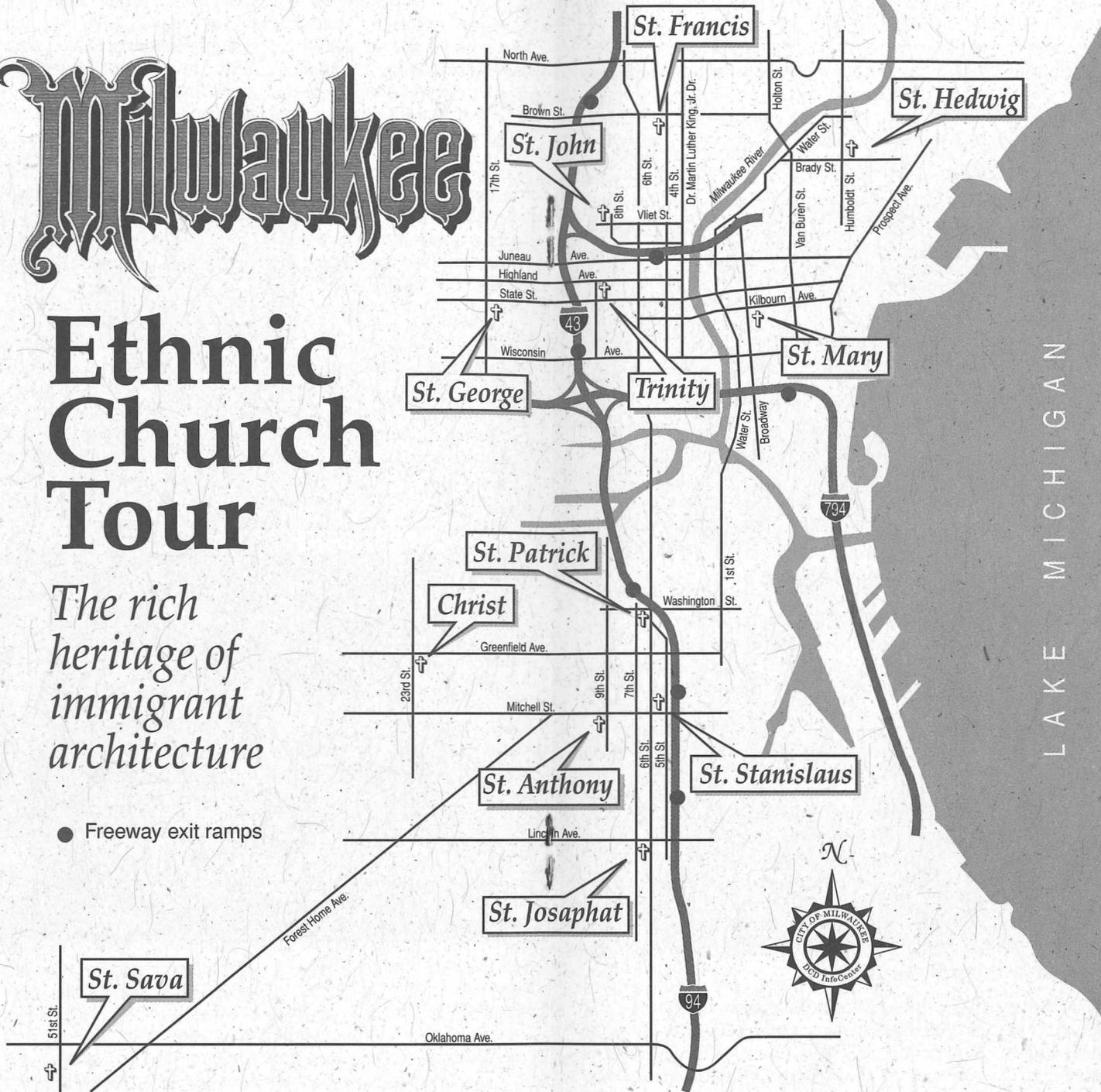
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Milwaukee

Ethnic Church Tour

The rich heritage of immigrant architecture

● Freeway exit ramps



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The examples of ethnic architecture presented in this pamphlet were chosen for their outstanding architectural character and craftsmanship and were meant to give a general overview of Milwaukee's distinctive ethnic building stock. In addition to these, many other fine examples can be found throughout the city.

Visitors to Milwaukee will find this guide a good introduction to some of Milwaukee's most interesting buildings, while local residents might be prompted to take a fresh look at some of the city's familiar and not so familiar landmarks. A brief word of caution is in order. Like all cities, Milwaukee has some neighborhoods that are in a state of social and economic transition. When viewing buildings in these areas, the tour goer is advised to exercise the same caution regarding personal safety that one should observe when entering any unfamiliar surroundings.

Unless otherwise indicated, the buildings featured are privately owned and not open to the public, and we would ask that the user of this pamphlet respect the privacy of the property owner.

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of immigrant
architecture*

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ETHNIC CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

The American "melting pot" brimmed with the tides of immigrants who poured into the country during the late nineteenth century. In fact, there has never been a greater migration of people from one continent to another in recorded history. Milwaukee's ethnic religious architecture is an important product of this unique chapter in American history.

The buildings included in these pages are outstanding examples of the city's architectural "melting pot." They are considered to be ethnic because of the way they combine "Old World" architecture with American design traditions and building materials. Broadly speaking, the ethnic character of a building is a specific style or prominent detail that is strongly associated with the homeland of an ethnic group. A church tower, for example, was often embellished with architectural features from the "old country" that personalized it for the immigrant community it was built to serve.

You will find that Milwaukee's ethnic churches reflect the creativity and proud architectural traditions of their immigrant builders. From the ethereal splendor of Renaissance style domes to the solemn grandeur of soaring Gothic style vaulting, the city's ethnic church architecture is a valuable and inspiring reminder that this nation was built upon cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.

This booklet is only a sampling of the many fine churches that reflect Milwaukee's ethnic heritage in their architecture. It is our hope that by pointing out the ethnic features of these churches, you will be able to appreciate the unique ethnic architectural features of the city's other fine historic churches. Exploring Milwaukee's wonderful collection of old churches is an enjoyable experience that will lend deeper insights into the motives of the people who built them and a greater appreciation of why these buildings are still important to us today.

GERMANS

The waves of immigrants who came to Milwaukee during the second half of the nineteenth century included German-born architects, carpenters and masons who were skilled in the building traditions of their native land. They had a profound influence on the city's architecture and particularly on church design. Today, many of the city's most admired churches reflect both the influence of German architectural traditions and the fact that by the 1890s Milwaukee's population had a larger share of German-born immigrants than any other big city in America.

The city's first major tide of German settlers began arriving in the late 1840s. Many of them came seeking relief from the economic hardship that had gripped Germany after a mysterious blight wiped out the potato crop which was a mainstay of the German diet and economy. Others were seeking religious freedom. They left their homeland in protest over the "Prussian Union," an involuntary merger imposed by the German monarch on the Lutheran, Reformed and other Protestant churches in Northeastern Germany. About half of Milwaukee's German population was Roman Catholic while the other half was divided among several different Protestant groups, the majority of which were Lutherans. The Germans' religious diversity accounts for much of the variety in the architecture of their church buildings.

Most of the city's churches that were influenced by German architectural traditions were built during a 55-year period between about 1845 and 1900 which were the peak years of German immigration to this country.

One of the hallmarks of traditional German church design is the use of a single, soaring steeple that is centered on the front of building, although in Milwaukee there are several, fine twin-towered German churches reflecting the architectural experimentation which took place in Milwaukee and Germany during the free-wheeling Victorian era. Because the Germans had a particular affinity for fine woodwork, the church interiors they built often feature richly carved wooden altar furnishings and other elaborate millwork.

Take some time to explore Milwaukee's exceptional collection of German church architecture. It is an adventure that will be surprising, culturally enriching and always rewarding. The decorative hallmark of the city's German churches is their strong reliance on pointed features such tall, slender, tapering spires, pointed turrets and finials, multi-staged towers and tall, narrow Gothic pointed windows which act like a series of upward pointing arrows to draw the viewer's eye toward the heavens and accentuate the loftiness of the building.

POLES

The city's remarkable collection of Polish church buildings strongly reflects their immigrant builders' enthusiasm for America's cultural and religious freedom. Architecturally, the churches reflect a variety of styles that the Poles used in their homeland over a 1000-year period. Polish immigrants poured into Milwaukee during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and by 1900 ranked as the city's second largest ethnic group after the Germans.

Poles came to America in three principal waves of immigration. The first immigration, which lasted roughly from 1608 to 1776, was the period of "gentlemen adventurers." The second wave, which lasted from 1776 to 1865 was the period of "political immigrants" and included Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who fought against the British in America's Revolutionary War. Most Poles came to Milwaukee, however, during the third wave, called the period of "economic immigrants," which began about 1865 and lasted into the 1920s.

Although at least one Polish family was living in Milwaukee by the mid 1840s, Poles first began arriving in significant numbers during the late 1860s. The economic immigrants arrived partly because of the failed Polish revolt against the Prussians, Austrians and Russians who jointly occupied Poland at that time. Most of Milwaukee's early Polish settlers came from the Prussian sector of northwestern Poland where living conditions were the poorest.

Milwaukee's Polish neighborhoods grew very rapidly between about 1880 and 1910 prompting the founding of numerous Polish-speaking Roman Catholic parishes in the city. Religion was central to the lives of the Polish immigrants and they generously supported their churches out of their meager incomes. The splendor the Polish churches contrasts with the modest character of the cottage neighborhoods that surround them and serve as a testament to the religious devotion of the Poles. Most of the city's Polish immigrants were south siders, although a sizable group, mainly from the Baltic sea coast of Poland, settled on the banks of the Milwaukee River north of East Brady Street on the city's lower east side. These two old Polish neighborhoods contain most of the city's finest Polish churches.

Touring the city's Polish churches is an excellent opportunity to experience some of the architectural character of central Europe that was brought to this country through the determined efforts of the city's early Polish settlers and their architects. The principle architectural difference between the Polish churches and the German churches is the preferred use of more curvilinear forms in the Polish churches with their arched windows and domical towers and roofs. The German churches tend to be more angular with needle-like spires and lots of pointed windows and spiky decoration.

Church Architecture in Poland

The dome is one of the most distinctive elements of Polish church architecture. The large, central dome that spans the interior of St. Casimir's in Warsaw is a building tradition that is jubilantly reflected in Milwaukee's St. Josaphat's Basilica (see p.30). The twin domes that top the towers of St. Adalbert Cathedral in Gniezno are very similar in character to the dome-topped towers of Milwaukee's St. Stanislaus church (see p. 20).



Above: St. Casimir, Warsaw.

Left: St. Adalbert Cathedral, Gniezno.



ST. FRANCIS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND MONASTERY

Ethnic Origin: German

Architect: William Schickel

1927 North Fourth Street

Built: 1876



Romanesque architecture flourished in Germany more than nine hundred years ago and the St. Francis Roman Catholic Church and Monastery complex is a fine example of the style as it was revived during the nineteenth century. The parish priest had asked the architect to design the church in a manner that was "architecturally true to its style," and when the building was dedicated in 1877 it was immediately hailed by observers as "a gem." The monastery was founded by a German-speaking order of Capuchin monks who later built the church to serve the order and the surrounding

predominately German neighborhood. The church and monastery complex is a rare, surviving reminder that religious orders were a prominent part of community life years ago.

In broad terms, the hallmarks of a Romanesque style church building are its massive walls, tall, narrow, round-arched windows and bold but sparse exterior decoration. The front entry portals, however, are often the most decorative part of the exterior and often feature profuse carving. The Romanesque style was generally simpler and less fussy than most other historic church styles and so it appealed to the tastes of the Capuchin clergy who were devoted to a lifestyle of simplicity and moderation.

The exterior ethnic character of the church is chiefly manifested in its square, pyramidal-roofed bell tower which recalls the bold, angular lines of the medieval German Romanesque style. The front entry vestibule was added to the building in 1900, and the unusual, zig-zag decoration that trims the arches is a traditional Romanesque design called shark's tooth or dog's tooth ornament.

When the church opened in 1877, it was reported that the interior, "awakened in the beholder the impression that the walls must have stood for centuries." That same architectural character awaits the visitor today. The interior is particularly remarkable because of its exceptionally tall, narrow nave and groin-vaulted ceiling which captures the essence of true Romanesque architecture. All of the fine wall paintings are original to the building including the large panel at the front of the church, done by German-American artist William Lamprecht, which depicts the "triumph of Christianity." A fascinating remnant of the monastery days is the "choir" which is a large room with a Gothic style vaulted ceiling that is located behind the main altar. It was here that the monks, friars and other clergy attached to the order gathered daily for prayer, instruction and discussion. The original wooden bench seats that are built-in to the wall, are a continuation of an old European monastic tradition. The choir was actually built in 1869 as part of the old monastery seven years before the church was constructed.

The large, brick building attached to the south side of the church was the monastery containing the monks' dormitories and work shops. Originally the building was U-shaped and it formed a courtyard, more correctly called a cloister, on the south side of the church. The building is a well-preserved example of the straightforward, no frills approach to architecture that was favored for monastic buildings. The decorative brickwork at the top of the walls is called a corbel table frieze and was a very common feature on German Romanesque religious buildings.

The Capuchin friars left the monastery some years ago and the building now houses various social service agencies. ❖



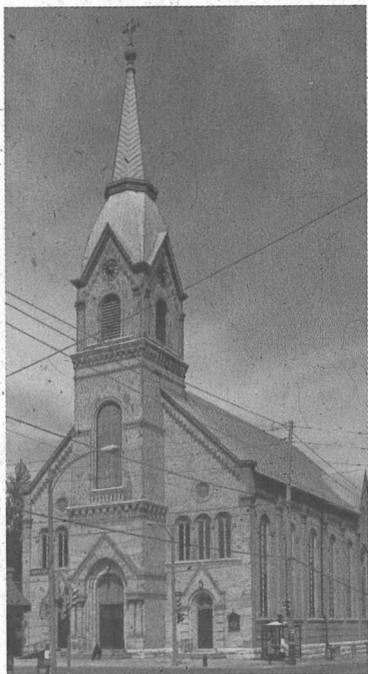
ST. HEDWIG'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ethnic Origin: Polish

Architect: H.A. Messmer

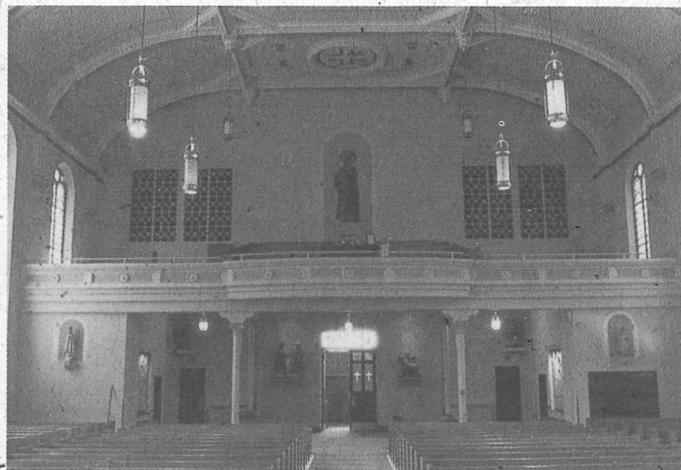
1700 North Humboldt Avenue

Built 1886



Towering over the Brady Street neighborhood, St. Hedwig's fine, Polish Baroque style steeple was the architectural focal point of the city's East Side Polish community for many years. To better understand the ethnic origins of the design, look closely at the composition of the square, central tower that rises to a copper-clad domical roof, which, in turn is topped with a thin, faceted spire. Variations of the dome and spire-topped towers were common in Poland and St. Hedwig's is a good manifestation of this building tradition.

The louvers beneath the clock faces conceal three large bronze bells of exceptional tonal quality. Before the bells were installed in 1887, they were blessed, in keeping with a Polish custom, and named Maria, Klemens and Jadwiga.



Overall, the design of the church is a tasteful combination of both Polish and American architectural styles of the late nineteenth century. The interior retains much of its original character including an ornamental plaster ceiling that is flat in the center and deeply coved or rounded into the side walls. This is a feature that is common among many Polish-American churches of nineteenth century vintage. The modern-style altars are 1950s replacements for the originals.

St. Hedwig's was Milwaukee's second Polish ethnic parish. It was founded in 1871 by a group of about 40 east side Polish families who reportedly came from the Baltic sea coast of Northern Poland where fishing and skipping were the primary occupations. The city's south side Poles, by comparison, tended to come from the inland, farming regions of Poland. ♦



ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ethnic origin: German

Architect: Victor Schulte

844 North Broadway

Built: 1847, 1866-67



Milwaukee was a bustling young city near the American frontier when construction began on St. Mary's church. The church is designed in the Zopfstil style which was popular with the early waves of German settlers who began pouring into the city in the 1840s. The style originated in Germany during the early nineteenth century as a streamlined alternative to the highly ornamental Baroque and Rococo church architecture of the eighteenth century. The German word "Zopfstil" refers to an orderly, symmetrical architectural style that incorporates the careful proportions and chaste detailing of the early nineteenth century neo-classical style.

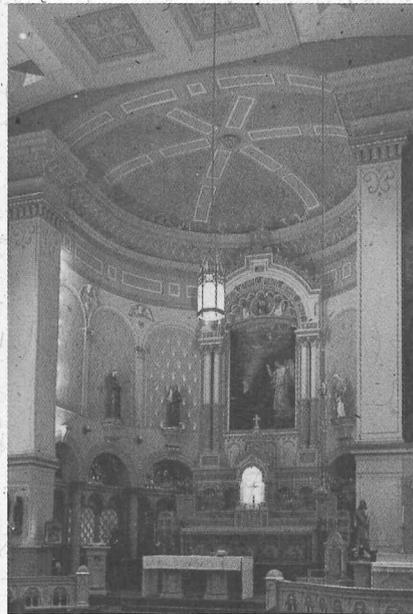
Zopfstil architecture, the German counterpart of the

American Federal style of architecture, was popular from about 1800 to 1850 in Germany and influenced the designs of ethnic churches in America as late as 1870. The style is characterized by a low-pitched hip roof, round-arched windows, and a soaring tower centered at the front of the building. The understated elegance of St. Mary's church reflects the symmetry and classical architectural ideals of the early Renaissance and contrasts with the more picturesque and ornamental Gothic Revival style that became fashionable with the city's ethnic Germans in the decades after St. Mary's was completed.

Founded in 1847 to serve the city's German-speaking population, St. Mary's is the oldest Roman Catholic parish in the city. The building was designed by the German-born master carpenter and architect Victor Schulte, who also designed the city's other Zopfstil church, Holy Trinity, which is located at 605 South Fourth Street. The north and south walls of St. Mary's are all that remains of the 1847 building designed by Schulte. In its original state, the church had grade school classrooms on the first story and a church auditorium on the second floor.

In 1866 the building was extensively remodeled according to Schulte's designs to reflect the round-arched style of architecture then in vogue both in America and in Germany. The main goal of the project was to eliminate the schoolroom level so the building could be used exclusively as a church. The original first floor classrooms were completely eliminated and the floor of the church auditorium was lowered to its present level. One year later, a large addition was made to the rear of the church and the present brick bell tower was completed. A date stone located on the front of the tower just below the belfry, commemorates the completion of the renovation in 1867.

The interior was remodeled in 1893 following a serious fire, although many fine earlier features still survive. The splendid carved wooden altar was installed in 1878 and the painting behind the main altar which depicts the Annunciation was executed in Germany by Franz Xavier Glink and donated to the parish by Bavaria's King Ludwig I. The leaded art glass windows, imported from Austria, blaze with rich red and blue hues which, incidentally, were the most costly and difficult colors to produce in stained glass at that time. The half-round ceiling, called a barrel vault, is covered with ornamental pressed tin which is a very unusual feature among Milwaukee's older churches, and was installed during the 1893 renovation. The church is both a local and national landmark. ❖



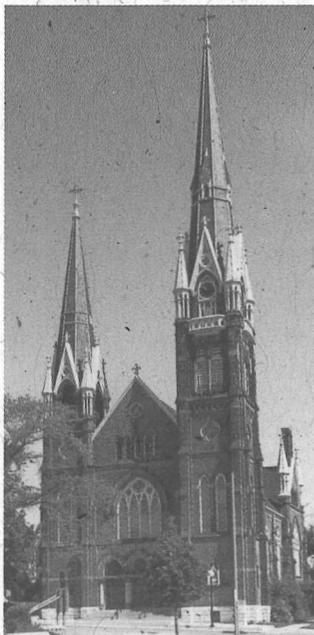
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Ethnic Origin: German

Architect: Herman Paul Schnetzky

804 West Vliet Street

Built: 1889



St. John's Lutheran church is perhaps the city's best example of German Gothic Revival-influenced architecture. Built for a prosperous, German-American congregation that had close social ties with the old country, it illustrates the strong influence that nineteenth century German architecture had on the work of Milwaukee's architects. In terms of its size, St. John's has seating for more than 1000 making it one of the largest Lutheran churches built in America during the nineteenth century.

It is believed that the design of St. John's was derived from that of St. Peter's

Church in Leipzig, Germany, which was completed in 1886 and extensively documented in architectural publications of its day. St. John's and St. Peter's share similar designs for their tall, highly ornamental steeples. The German-style details of St. John's larger steeple include an upper stage trimmed with sheet metal corner "turrets," and projecting balconies beneath each clock face.

Compared with other Protestant churches of its day, the nearly intact interior of St. John's is exceptionally elaborate. The church's vaulted plaster ceiling is composed of a series of pointed domes that are identical in style to the vaulting of St. Peter's in Leipzig. Domical Gothic vaulting of this type is known as "Angevin style," because it was developed in the Angers region of southwestern France during the twelfth century. The Germans adopted the style in the thirteenth century and revived it again during the late nineteenth century.

The white, wooden, Gothic style altarpiece, which is the focal point of the interior, is an outstanding combination of

craftsmanship and design. A wooden pulpit of matching style which measures thirty feet tall to its highest point, is suspended from a wall near the altar and features a wooden sounding board topped with a statue of Christ. The lacy, delicate character of the altar and pulpit carving is called "openwork" which is a design tradition that is strongly associated with the Germans. Perhaps the most unusual and theatrical feature of the church is the sight of its,800 bare electric light bulbs, installed in 1909, that outline the major arches in the ceiling.

Founded in 1848 and affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, St. John's is one of the oldest Lutheran congregations in the city. Its membership peaked at the turn of the century when it was probably the largest Lutheran church in the midwest. The church has been designated both a local and national landmark. ♦



Above: Built in 1886 in Leipzig, Germany, St. Peter's Church is believed to have influenced the design of St. John's Lutheran Church in Milwaukee.



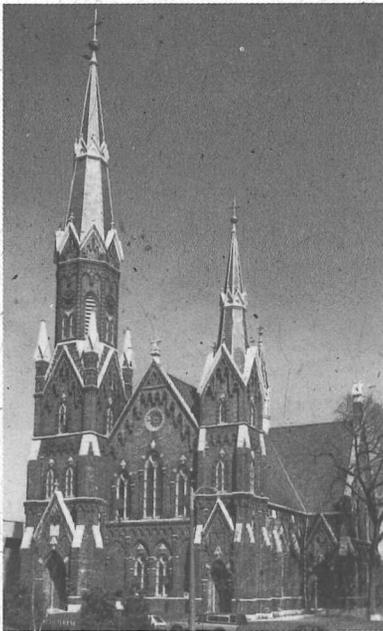
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Ethnic origin: German

Architect: Frederick Velguth

1046 North Ninth Street

Built: 1878



Trinity is one of the most remarkable Lutheran churches built in America during the 1870s. Its design blazed new ground with its superlative combination of the American High Victorian Gothic features and traditional German Gothic forms. Built of Milwaukee cream brick and trimmed with Illinois sandstone and extensive ornamental sheet metal, it was justly called the "finest Lutheran church edifice within the Missouri Synod," when it opened.

The highly ornamental brick work found on the exterior walls of the church is characteristic of late medieval church architecture found in Northern Germany where many of Trinity's members had been born. Where the side walls meet the roof, for example, the brick is laid in a repeated pattern of small, pointed arches, called a corbel table frieze, which was common among German Gothic and Romanesque style brick religious buildings. The crown-like gables that encircle the tops of the towers are also part of a building tradition strongly associated with the Germans.

A visit to the interior is essential in order to fully appreciate the remarkable craftsmanship of this structure which contains some of the most outstanding church woodwork of its era. At the base of the staircase in the large tower, for example, the huge newel post is a flamboyant example of the American High Victorian Gothic style exuberantly executed in the bold style preferred by Trinity's German-born architect and patrons. The focal points of the church auditorium are its magnificent natural wood altar and the raised, goblet-shaped pulpit.

The pulpit, which is topped with a carved wooden sounding board, was described in the 1880s as a "monument to the woodworkers' art," and its design is believed to be based on a similar pulpit in Germany's famous Wartburg chapel where Martin Luther, the founder of Lutheranism, took refuge in the sixteenth century. The pulpit is reached by a splendid curved staircase that ranks among the finest wooden features in American church architecture.

Trinity church marked the high-point in the design career of its German-born architect, Frederick Velguth. He first established himself as a master carpenter and contractor before moving on to become an architect who designed many fine buildings in the city, including Christ Church at 2235 West Greenfield Avenue.

Trinity is the second oldest Lutheran congregation in the city. It was founded in 1847 by a group of Germans from Pomerania, now part of northeastern Germany and western Poland. The early congregation included some of the most prominent German-American business and professional figures in the city, including Captain Frederick Pabst whose Pabst Brewing Co. complex is located across the street from the church. Today, the socially and ethnically diverse congregation takes great pride in their church building which is both a local and national landmark. ❖



ST. GEORGE MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ethnic origin: Syrian

Architect: Erhard Breilmeier

1617 West State Street

Built: 1917



The church architecture of the Middle East was introduced to Milwaukee when Arabic-speaking Christians from Syria built St. George's church. It is a striking example of the association between ethnicity and architectural design and remains the city's only Middle-Eastern variation of the Byzantine style.

The ancient city of Byzantium, which as

Constantinople became the capitol of the eastern Roman Empire and is today known as Istanbul, was the birthplace of Byzantine architecture around the sixth century. Regional variations of the style spread throughout Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Asia Minor. Hallmarks of the style include round-arched windows and the use of domed roofs. These domes eventually began to assume a variety of complex ornamental shapes that often reflected the ethnic origin of their builders.

The ethnic architectural character of St. George's is embodied primarily in its three unusual domical metal roofs and the eye-catching scrolled curves of the front gable. The off-white brick walls are reminiscent of the light-colored stucco, dried brick, and stone structures that are common in the sunny, Asia Minor climate. The interior is finished with a segmental-arched plaster ceiling. The focal point of the interior is a splendid eastern style church fitting at the front of the church call an "iconostas" which is a half wall decorated with religious pictures called icons and it separates the worshippers from the altar area of the church.

Although it is a Roman Catholic parish, St. George's is unusual in that it maintains the ancient Syrian tradition of following the Melkite Rite, which is a form of worship that is similar to the one used by the Eastern Orthodox church. The

parish was founded in 1911 by a group of Syrian and Syrian-Lebanese immigrants who began meeting in a rented hall at the southeast corner of North Seventh and West State Streets. The first Syrian immigrants began arriving in Milwaukee in the mid-1890s and by 1910 their numbers had grown to about 800. Most settled around West State Street between North Seventh and North Twentieth Streets. The parish is still Wisconsin's only Middle Eastern Melkite Rite Catholic Church. ❖



ST. STANISLAUS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ethnic Origin: Polish

Architect: Leonard Schmidtner

1681 South Fifth Street

Built: 1872, 1884-1894

St. Stanislaus, the city's first Polish Roman Catholic Church, is one of Milwaukee's best-known architectural celebrities. Its spectacular, glimmering domes have been popular landmarks since they were gilded with 23 carat gold leaf in the early 1960s. Milwaukeeans have nicknamed St. Stanislaus the "church of the golden domes."

During the Baroque era of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dome-topped churches were very popular in Poland. Milwaukee's Polish immigrants chose to reflect this very creative period in the design of St. Stanislaus. With its rounded window tops and domed towers St. Stanislaus is

very different in style from the pointy, Gothic Revival style churches historically preferred by the city's nineteenth century German-Americans.

The cornerstone was laid in July, 1872 and a portion of the church was dedicated the following year. Much of the major construction, however, was apparently done between the years of 1884 and 1894. The architect, Leonard Schmidtner, came to America in 1840 from Poland where he was a member of the nobility and known as Baron von Kowalski.

Several exterior remodeling projects have been completed since 1895, but the most extensive alterations were done in the early 1960s. This included gilding the copper domes, removing some wooden trim from the towers, completely remodeling the main entrance and installing a large mosaic of St. Mary of Czestochowa in the entry portal facing West Mitchell Street. The gold that covers the domes is actually thinner than a human hair and an ounce can cover a surface area of more than sixty square feet. After almost 30 years of

exposure to the elements and acid rain, however, the domes need to be gilded again.

The interior has been altered several times over the years, most recently in a major remodeling begun in 1963, but it retains its original half-round arched ceiling, called a barrel vault, which is a typical feature of Polish Baroque church architecture. Ornamental plaster work of exceptional quality and detail can be seen throughout the interior. The beautifully crafted marble and bronze trimmed altar is an outstanding example of the Poles' preference for church fittings made of finely worked stone. The stained glass windows were added in 1963.

St. Stanislaus was Milwaukee's first Polish-speaking parish founded in 1866 and only the third Polish parish established in the United States. It also has the distinction of being the first Polish Catholic church established within a major American city. Until the present church was completed, the parishioners worshipped in a small building on the northwest corner of South Fifth and West Mineral Streets that had previously belonged to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. Today, many different ethnic backgrounds are represented in the diverse congregation which takes great pride in its landmark church building. ♦



ST. ANTHONY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ethnic origin: German

Architect: Fridolin Heer

1711 South Ninth Street

Built: 1877-1886



It took almost nine years to complete St. Anthony's church but the results were well worth the wait. The meticulously crafted German Gothic Revival church commands as much attention today as it did more than a century ago when Milwaukeeans praised it as a "magnificent" structure.

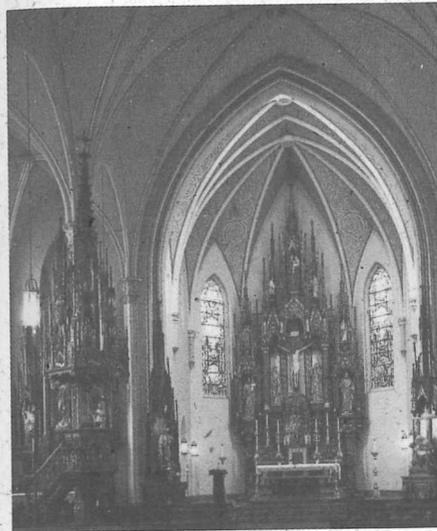
The impressive limestone walls of the church are a reminder of an old regional tradition in German church building. In the southern, predominantly Catholic area of Germany where many of St. Anthony's original parishioners had their roots, stone was the preferred building material for churches because it was readily available. Churches in the northern, predominantly Protestant regions of Germany, however, were usually built of brick because good quality, local

building stone was scarce and imported stone too expensive. Building St. Anthony's in stone proved to be much more costly and labor-intensive than the parishioners had anticipated, however, so construction had to be stretched out over nearly a decade.

In the German tradition, St. Anthony's large bell tower is centered at the front of the church and it ranks as one of the south side's most important visual landmarks. The stepped gable that trims the front roof line is an early Renaissance style detail that appeared at the very end of the Gothic period in Germany. The stone belfry and slate-clad spire above the clock faces have the almost transparent look of filigree decoration, which is characteristic of German style "openwork." They were added to the church in 1903 according to designs furnished by the original architects.

Entering the church is like taking a trip back to old Germany. The designs of the spectacular wooden altars and pulpit reflect the flamboyant ornamentation and architectural extravagance that is closely identified with their nineteenth century German builders. The interior is especially noteworthy because it features dramatic arched plaster vaults in the ceiling that are divided by projecting bands called "ribs." Rib vaulting is one of the most significant stylistic refinements of the Gothic period and a visit to St. Anthony's is one of the rare opportunities in this country to experience this type of church architecture.

St. Anthony's was the second German-speaking Catholic parish on the south side of the city. It was founded in 1872 by an overflow of 150 families from Holy Trinity church at South Fourth and West Bruce Streets. Before the present church was built, services were held in a nearby school building. Today, St. Anthony's is a multi-cultural parish that caters to the diverse needs of its surrounding neighborhood. ❖



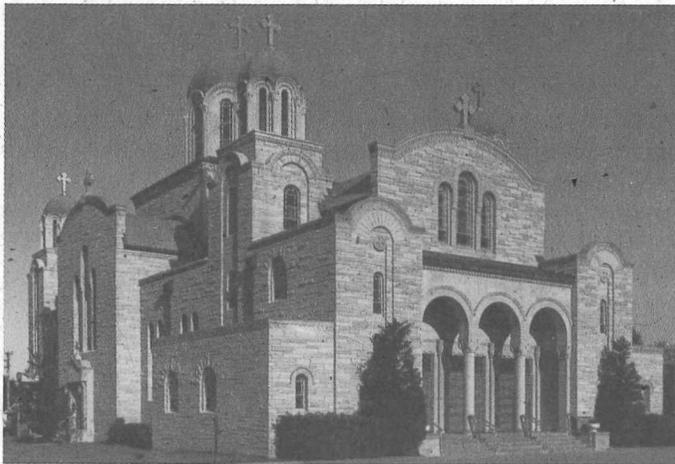
ST. SAVA SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Ethnic Origin: Serbian

Architects: Lefebvre & Wiggins,
Camburas & Theodore

3201 South Fifty-First Street

Built: 1956



Representing a 1500-year-old architectural tradition, St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral is a remarkable, modern, Byzantine style stone church that is widely known for its spectacular interior mosaics. Byzantine architecture developed in the eastern part of the Holy Roman Empire in the sixth century and eventually regional variations of the style spread to present-day Serbia, Russia, and other areas of eastern Europe.

While western churches usually feature tall pointy steeples and towers, a dome is often the architectural focal point of a Byzantine style church. St. Sava's roof is topped with five copper-clad domes on tall windowed drums. Domes of this unusual type are among the most definitive elements of Serbian ethnic architecture.

The repetition of tall, thin arched or curving elements on the exterior, such as the narrow windows and the attenuated entrance portico are especially characteristic of this eastern architectural tradition. Since three-dimensional, carved statues are not part of the Orthodox Christian tradition, a special painting or mosaic called an "icon" is the principal means used to depict a religious figure or scene in a church. The interior of St. Sava's is adorned with stunning mosaics made in Ravenna, Italy that are some of the finest of their kind installed in any

American church during the last half of this century. Mosaic art is made of tiny chunks of glass tile and marble that are set in wet plaster to form a picture. Because the pieces are set individually at slightly different angles, the surface has extraordinary light-reflective qualities that no other flat art form can match.

The Milwaukee area has one of the nation's largest populations of Serbian-Americans. Large numbers of Serbians began arriving in America after 1880 and particularly between 1903 and 1909. Like other Eastern European immigrants, many Serbians initially found work in heavy manufacturing, but over the years they have moved into all types of occupations. Serbian immigration still continues today, although at a rate that is much slower than at the turn of the century.

St. Sava's is one of the newest additions to Milwaukee's fine stock of ethnic churches, but its traditional design and fine craftsmanship have already earned it a place of distinction among the city's other, older historic churches. ♦



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Ethnic Origin: German

Architect: Frederick Velguth

2235 West Greenfield Avenue

Built: 1901



Christ Church bears a strong resemblance to several well-known nineteenth century churches in Germany such as St. John's in Altona built in 1873 and Christ Church in Eimsbuettle-Hamburg built in 1885. It is impossible to know for sure if these churches were the actual models for Milwaukee's Christ Church, but they did appear prominently in architectural portfolio books that were known to be circulating in Milwaukee at the turn of the century.

In the German Gothic tradition, the church has a very tall central tower flanked by two smaller, corner towers that are topped with faceted roofs.

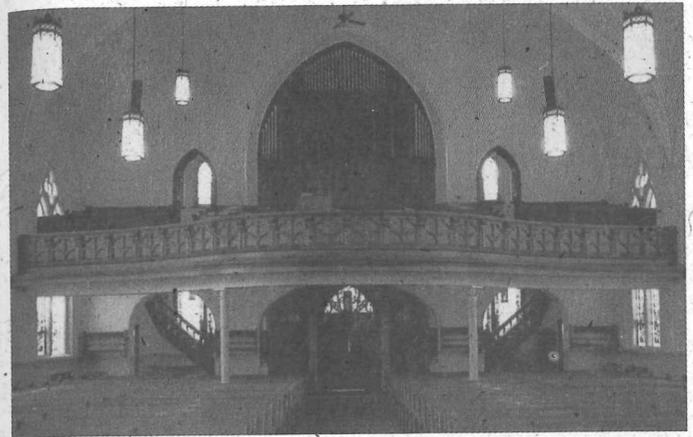
The massive tower dwarfs

the relatively short, main body of the church, called the nave, giving the building a bold, upswept, distinctively German character that is unseen in other Milwaukee churches.

The interior of the church retains much of its original character including some very unusual ornamental plaster cherubs that trim the tops of the pilasters on the side walls. The natural oak woodwork seen throughout the church is designed with great attention to detail and craftsmanship. This is not surprising since the architect, Frederick Velguth, started his career as a carpenter. Velguth came to Milwaukee from Magdeburg, Germany, at the age of 20 and probably had many memories of the architectural traditions of his homeland.



The congregation was founded in 1884 to serve the growing German population on the city's near south side. Until the present church was completed, parishioners worshipped in a frame school building that stood on the site of the present church school. ♦



An illustration in an 1889 portfolio book shows St. Johannis Church in Altona, Germany.

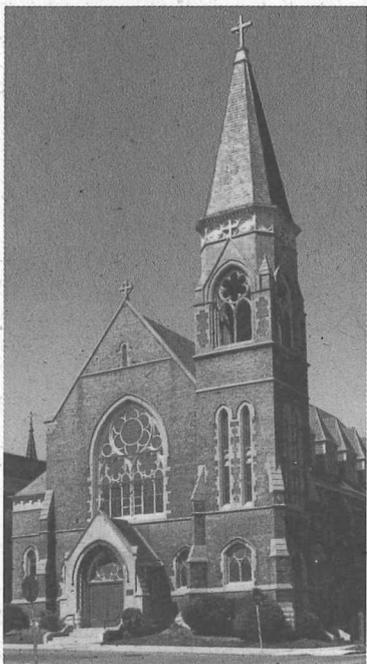
ST. PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ethnic origin: Irish

Architect: James J. Eagan, Chicago

723 West Washington Street

Built: 1893



From a distance, the distinctive Irish Gothic revival silhouette of St. Patrick's stands out among the forest of church steeples on the city's near south side skyline. The seven dormers that project from each side of the steeply pitched main roof convey a strong sense of the Irish ethnic origin of the church, which contrasts with the architecture of other nearby churches that were built for different ethnic groups.

The massive buttressed corner tower is a hallmark of Anglo/Irish design. Its square, simple lines and groundhugging

character should be compared with the city's German Gothic revival style steeples which are exceptionally tall and spiky and often feature an octagonal drum stage immediately beneath their slender, tapered spires. The body of the church is broad and low with heavily buttressed walls which stands in contrast to the German churches which are usually tall and narrow. Visiting St. Patrick's nearly-intact interior is a must in order to experience the beauty of its outstanding collection of European-made art glass windows. The interior, with its fine marble altars, natural woodwork, and a pitched ceiling, is reminiscent of English and Irish parish church design.

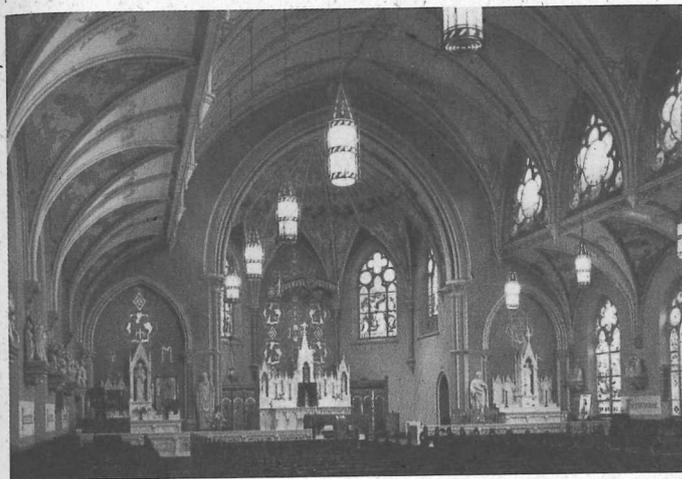
Founded in 1876, the congregation first built the fine Milwaukee cream brick school building which is still standing at 1115 South Seventh Street. The school included a church auditorium on the second floor which was in use until the present church was formally dedicated on May 19, 1895.

The Irish were among the earliest ethnic groups to settle in Milwaukee and comprised almost one-fifth of the total

population of the city by 1847. Many left their native Ireland because of the famine and economic hardship brought about by the failure of the potato crops and agricultural reforms during the 1840s.

The Irish lived in neighborhoods near the city's waterfront industries and maritime commerce. The largest Irish settlement was on the south side of the central business district near the port and a smaller group clustered in the Walker's Point area. It was the Walker's Point Irish community that established St. Patrick's and named it for Ireland's patron saint.

Today the diverse congregation is drawn primarily from the near south side's melting pot population of various ethnic groups. St. Patrick's however, is still a source of pride for the city's Irish-American community which has recently rallied behind the congregation's effort to restore the church's magnificent windows. ♦



ST. JOSAPHAT'S BASILICA

Ethnic Origin: Polish

Architect: Erhard Breilmaier

601 West Lincoln Avenue

Built: 1897-1902



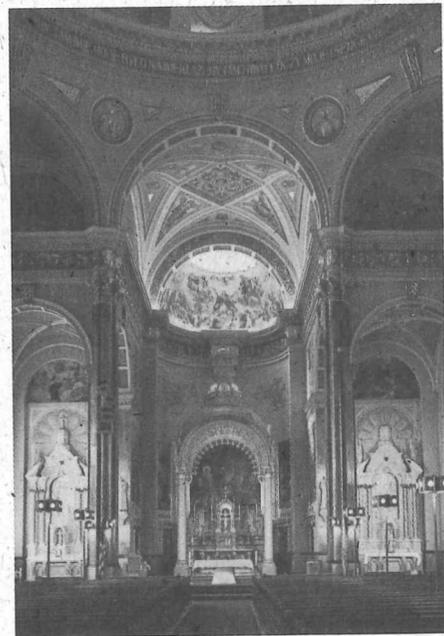
St. Josaphat's Basilica is a jubilant proclamation of religious devotion and ethnic pride. The massive, domed, stone church is one of the finest examples of Renaissance Revival style architecture in America, and it reflects the remarkable determination of the city's working-class, Polish-Americans, many of whom literally gave every penny they could spare in order to build it.

Few churches in America approach the scale and grandeur of St. Josaphat's. It made headlines at the time it was built as a "marvel of its kind." When the church was dedicated in 1902, its magnificent copper dome was the nation's largest and the fifth-largest in the world. Many visitors to the basilica today can compare the splendor of the interior only to churches they have visited in Europe.

The architecture of the church recalls the proud period in Polish history during the Renaissance when a tradition of building domed churches began in Poland, which was then at its political and economic zenith. The construction of St. Josaphat's reflected the tremendous ethnic pride of Milwaukee's immigrant Poles.

St. Josaphat's parish, founded by Polish immigrants in 1888, had outgrown its two earlier church buildings by the late 1890s when it numbered about 12,000 members and included a 1,400-pupil grade school and a boys' high school. Nearly all the members were working-class and many lived on the edge of poverty. The sheer numbers and determination of the parishioners, however, compensated for their lack of wealth when it came to building the Basilica.

The original design for the church called for a brick structure trimmed with terra cotta. Almost miraculously, the



plan changed when Fr. Grutza, the parish priest, went on a brick-buying trip to Chicago and instead found a low-cost source of fine cut limestone from the old Chicago post office/U.S. customs building which was then being demolished. He purchased all the salvage rights to the vacant, 16-year-old building and had it carefully disassembled and shipped back to Milwaukee on 500 railroad flatcars.

The total cost of the salvaged stone was less than half that of new brick. The materials were reassembled according to architect Erhard Breilmaier's plans so that the church bears no resemblance to the old Chicago post office. The front doors, however are still fitted with salvaged bronze door knobs that bear the seal of the U.S. Treasury.

Parishioners donated much of the labor to build the church and Fr. Grutza served as mason superintendent. Cost over-

runs brought financial hardship to the parish and many families went so far as to mortgage their small homes in order to lend or donate money to the project. Fr. Grutza, exhausted by the dual role of leading the city's largest parish and building the church, died five months after its dedication.

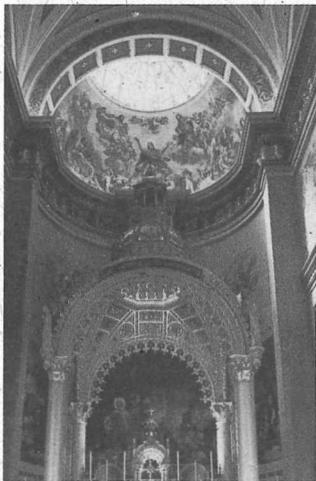
After the church opened, it took almost another 30 years to complete the interior decoration. In 1904 the mural of St. Josaphat's martyrdom, done by the Polish artist Zukotynski, was installed behind the main altar. Art glass windows of the

highest quality, imported from a studio in Innsbruck, Austria, were gradually installed throughout the church. Finally, in 1926 Italian artist Gonippo Raggi was commissioned to ornament the interior with the beautiful murals and decorative painting seen today.

In 1929, a year after Raggi finished his work, Pope Pius XI conferred "Basilica" status on St. Josaphat's in order to recognize its outstanding contribution to American church art and architecture and to underscore the

importance of the parish as an unusually strong center of religious faith. Only the finest church buildings could receive this status, and at the time of its elevation, St. Josaphat's was one of only three basilicas among thousands of Roman Catholic churches in America.

Today, the basilica is an architectural marvel that still serves the needs of its community. The structure is superbly maintained by a culturally diverse parish that still includes many Polish-American members. In 1984 a roof leak that caused some damage to murals in the dome prompted a complete interior restoration, and in 1993 an ambitious restoration of the exterior began with the installation of new copper cladding on the dome. A visit to the basilica, one of the greatest architectural monuments to the industriousness of the Polish people in America, is sure to captivate your imagination. ♦



Brochures in this series include:

- *Ethnic Houses Tour*
- *Ethnic Commercial and Public Buildings Tour*
- *Ethnic Church Tour*

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