

Saint Mary's Church – Auburn, New York

HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

The twelve county Diocese of Rochester, which includes Cayuga County, was established by the Vatican on January 24, 1868 with the appointment of the Rev. Bernard J. McQuaid of Newark, New Jersey as its first bishop. One of the first acts of the new bishop was the division of Holy Family parish in Auburn and the announcement of a new parish, which was to lie west of State Street and the Owasco River. The new parish was organized on August 15, 1868 and called ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION, in honor of the feast of the day.

The current church building was designed by P. C. Kiely of Brooklyn, an architect skilled in the styling of gothic churches. (He was also the architect of St. Mary's Church in Cortland, St. Joseph Cathedral in Buffalo, and the old St. Patrick's Cathedral in Rochester, which was razed in 1939 to make room for Kodak Office building.) The cornerstone was laid on September 18, 1870 and the building was dedicated on April 29, 1877 by Bishop Bernard McQuaid. The cost of the building was \$79,350.40.

The work on the church tower began on May 10, 1925. William Reilly was the builder. The bells were blessed by Bishop Thomas Hickey, the second bishop of Rochester, on September 21, 1926 and they rang out for the first time on October 3, 1926. The three bells constitute the chord of the major scale of E flat. The largest bell has the name of Jesus-Joseph; the second bell is called Mary; the third bell is called John. Over the course of the years, the Interior of the church underwent a number of renovations. The latest renovation and restoration of the church interior was done in 1997 for over a million dollars.

St. Mary's Church building is an excellent example of modified Gothic architecture, a style characterized by great point and height, with delicacy and precision in design. Gothic architecture encourages the eye to lift up to the heavens, with its lofty ceilings and enormous windows that allow light to pass through stained glass. St. Mary's edifice is built entirely of gray limestone. It is 135 feet long and the ceiling is 65 feet high. The interior, with its clustered columns, its molded arches and finely vaulted ceiling, is consistent and perfectly planned. The unusual center decoration - a star-shaped formation between the transepts - is formed by ribs in the vaulted ceiling. The leaf and flower arrangements at the cornices, on the windows and around the arches are intricate and delicately sculptured. The triple arch is symbolic of the Trinity as are the triangular windows over the main altar and in each of the transepts. All proclaim the beauty and symmetry of this magnificent edifice.

Historic Church Tours - Saint Mary's Church

STAINED GLASS

The stained glass windows come from The Franz Mayer Co. of Munich, founded in 1847. The firm still exists today under the name of The Franz Mayer Co. of Munich & New York. The company's most outstanding ecclesiastical order was the Holy Spirit window above the main altar of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. They have installed windows in over 100 cathedrals worldwide and thousands of churches. The windows in St. Mary of the Lake Church in Skaneateles also were done by this firm.

First to note here at St. Mary's are the triangular windows, (one over the main altar with the Lamb of God in the center tracery, one in each of the transepts with the dove and a pelican in the center tracteries.

Next, the beautiful stained glass windows in the nave with their jewel-like hues and leaf & flower drawings; these are characteristic of Gothic churches. Notice the symbolic emblems (the keys, harp, nails, pulpit, crown, cross and chalice) in the tracteries at the top of the windows. These details proclaim the beauty and symmetry of this magnificent edifice.

In 1936, Msgr. Cowen, the 6th pastor, put in eight grisaille (lace-like painting on glass) windows from St. Patrick's Cathedral in Rochester. St. Patrick's Cathedral was torn down to make room for Eastman Kodak headquarters in Rochester. P. C. Kiely of Brooklyn was the same architect for St. Patrick's Cathedral in Rochester and St. Mary's in Auburn. Five of these windows are in the altar area and the other three are in the front vestibule.

STATUARY & STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross were brought from Munich, Germany by the third pastor, Fr. Mulheron. The Stations were formally blessed in 1888 by Bishop Bernard McQuade, the first bishop of Rochester. These Stations of the Cross originally were colored and had a wooden frame around them. The current format dates from the renovation in the 1960's.

Most likely the statue of Saint Anne in the right transept and the statue of the Sacred Heart in the left transept date from the same time as the Stations. Two other statues (Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary), similar to the ones in the transepts, were discarded in the 1960's renovation. The current statue of the BVM was in St. Mary's School on Clymer Street. When the Clymer Street School closed in 2002, the statue was stored in the basement of the rectory. On the occasion of the 2004 alumni reunion of students from the old St. Mary's School (the Gray school next door to the church), the statue was placed where it is now.

The wood carved statues of Mary and Joseph on either side of the main exit come from Italy and were installed in the 1960's renovation, originally on with side of the mural. In 1997, they were placed where they are currently.

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THE SANCTUARY (where the altar is) and THE NAVE (where the pews are)

The Mural

The current mural on the back wall (the apse) is the seventh rendition

1888 Mural (#1) Christ's Ascension with the four evangelists (Fr. Mulheron, 3rd pastor)

1915 Mural (#2) of the Assumption of the BVM (Fr. Payne, 4th pastor)

1929 Mural (#3) removed and wooden reredos installed (Fr. McGrath, 5th pastor)

1936 Mural (#4) of Assumption, by Lee Woodward Zeigler of Newburgh, NY
(Msgr. Cowen, 6th pastor)

1964 Mural (#5) of Christ Enthroned (Msgr. Cuffney, 7th pastor)

1997 Mural (# 6) - unknown subject, by Everett Molinari (lasted four months)

Mural (#7) of Assumption of BVM by Ken Verosko (Fr. Schrader, 9th pastor)

FURNISHINGS

The altar, the pulpit, the presider's chair, baptismal font, and the tabernacle & canopy were all created by Bartolotta Brothers Furniture Company here in Auburn as part of the 1997 restoration and renovation.

The **altar**, where the Eucharist is celebrated, is the main focus of any Catholic Church. At the time of the dedication of the church, relics of saints are placed in the altar, reminiscent of the time when Mass was celebrated in the catacombs on the tombs of early Christian martyrs. When Saint Mary's was re-dedicated in 1997 after the renovation, the relics of St. Steven, protomartyr, St. Agnes of Rome, virgin & martyr and St. Camillus de Lellis, priest, were cemented in the altar. During the Celebration of the Eucharist (or the Celebration of Mass), Catholics believe that the bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of Christ. Catholics take literally Jesus' command at the Last Supper to do as he did.

Consecrated hosts left over from Mass are reserved in the **Tabernacle**. Holy Communion can then be brought to the sick. People also come into church during the day to spend time before the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. The presence of the Lord is shown by the lighted sanctuary or tabernacle candle.

The **pulpit** is the next important object in the Catholic Church. This, of course, is where the scriptures are proclaimed and the Word preached. Catholics sometimes speak of the table of the Word (pulpit) and the table of the Eucharist (altar) from both of which we are fed.

The **Chair** of the presiding priest is the third most important object. From him the priest presides over the assembly as Christ presides over the church.

The **Baptismal Font** is foundational, because it symbolizes the entrance into God's life and into the life of the church. Next to the Font is the **Paschal Candle** representing the light of the Risen Lord. From that candle are lighted the individual candles of those who had just been baptized. Close to the Baptism Font is the **Ambry** in which are kept the holy oils that are used for the various Sacraments of the church.

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GALLERY ORGAN

Few churches can boast of housing two historic organs the caliber of those at St. Mary's. The contract for the **gallery organ** was signed with the **Carl Barckhoff Organ Company of Salem, Ohio** in 1885. The organ was delivered to the church in 1890 and installation was completed on November 29, 1890. The cost was around \$6,000. The new organ was dedicated a week later by Professor Isaac V. Flagler, the organist of First Presbyterian Church in Auburn. A similar Barckhoff Pipe Organ was installed around the same time at Saint Joseph Church in Lancaster, PA. St. Mary's façade pipes lost its colorful Victorian stenciling years ago. In the 1950's the façade pipes were bronze color and, after a fire in the church, the pipes were painted their present beige when the church interior was updated in the 1960's. Around 1957, the whole organ at St. Mary's underwent cleaning and repairs. In 1979, A. R. Strauss from Ithaca was contracted to maintain the organ. Restoration included mechanical work, tonal restoration and regulation. In preparation for the 120th anniversary of the installation of the organ, the façade pipes were re-stenciled by The Hickey Organ Company of Rochester, New York. On 7 November 2010, an anniversary organ concert was performed by former parishioner and Auburn native, David E. Fedor.

When A. Richard Strauss of Ithaca began to maintain the Barckhoff Organ in 1979, the **first Garret House Chancel Organ** was moved to St. Mary's. This 1884 Garrett House organ was built for the first Masonic Temple building in Ithaca. A concert of music performed by George E. Damp and David Jackson on the 1890 Carl Barckhoff Organ and the 1884 Garrett House Organ is available on CD. *Organa Dupla* can be purchased at the parish office. The 1884 Garret House organ, installed in 1979. remained until 2006.

THE CHANCEL ORGAN

The **current chancel organ** at Saint Mary's was built in **1872 by Garrett House** of Buffalo, New York and was first installed in Holy Family Church, Auburn, NY. When Holy Family installed a Tellers Organ in 1923, the Garrett House Organ eventually ended up at St. Patrick Church, Aurora, NY. Having fallen into a state of considerable physical neglect during the Aurora years, the organ was moved to Community Wesleyan Church, Horseheads, NY in 1977. For the next three years, the organ was lovingly restored by David Fedor, David Jackson and his father Alford Jackson. When a new church sanctuary was being considered for Community Wesleyan Church of Horseheads, the organ was moved by Richard Strauss, with the help of his colleague David Talbot, to First Presbyterian Church, Ithaca, NY in 2003. There it was refurbished (a new blower) and slightly expanded (the previously incomplete ranks of the 4' flute and the Pedal '16 had been extended to be full compass stops). The organ served as the temporary chancel organ, while the main 1969 Austin organ was being reconstituted. The Garrett House organ then became the chapel organ until 2006 when it was determined to reuse the chapel space for other purposes.

In 2006, through the efforts of David Correll, St. Mary's Choir Director at that time, the 1872 Garrett House organ was moved from First Presbyterian Church, Ithaca, to St. Mary's Church, Auburn, NY where it replaced St. Mary's 1884 Garrett House chancel organ, which had been installed in 1979. This 1884 Garrett House Organ is currently in storage at Tyburn Academy of Mary Immaculate, Auburn, NY.

STOP LIST of the **1890 Carl Barckhoff Gallery Organ** of Two Manuals and Pedal of 29 ranks

Great:	Swell	Pedal
16' Open Diapason	16' Bourdon	16' Open Diapason
8' Open Diapason	8' Open Diapason	16' Bourdon
8' Doppelflute	8' Geigen Principal	8' Flute
8' Gamba	8' Salicional	8' Viola Cello
8' Dulciana	8' Stopped Diapason	
4' Principal	4' Fugara	Couplers
4' Flute Traversal	4' Flute Harmonic	Swell to Great
3' Twelfth	2' Piccolo	Swell to Pedal
2' Fifteenth	III Cornet	Great to Pedal
III Mixture	8' Oboe/Bassoon	
8' Trumpet	Tremolo	

STOP LIST of the **1872 Garrett House Chancel Organ** of One Manual and Pedal of 8 ranks

Manual (four octaves + 5: C to g3)		Pedal (flat board – two Octaves: C to c))
8' Open Diapason	4' Principal	16' Bourdon
8' Melodia (only to tenor C)	4' Flute	Pedal coupler
8' Viola D'Amour	2 2/3' Twelfth	
	2' Fifteenth	Entire organ is under expression.
	Tremolo	

Milestone dates in the history of the parish

- 1868 Auburn population is 12,576 including 1,600 children with 32 teachers (50 pupils per class)
- 07/12/1868 Bp. McQuaid consecrated first bishop of new Diocese of Rochester
- 08/15/1868 Fr. Thomas Maher (#1) rented home at 34 State St. for Mass: 1 man and 2 women
later celebrated Mass at: Tallman Hall at State & Dill; Brown's Commercial College
Button property at Clark & Green where was built a wooden structure 50'x70',
\$800 "Chanty Church" blessed 10/11/1868
McQuade's 1st visit on 10/18/1868, confirmation on 12/20/1868
- 09/18/1870 Cornerstone of present stone church laid at 3:00 pm
Dr. Miles Loughlin (#2) had hired P. C Kiley of Brooklyn
worshipped in the Academy of Music 'til the basement was finished,
then wroshiped in the basement for 5 years.
- 04/29/1877 church dedicated, 135' long and 65' high ceiling: cost was \$79,350.40
- 10/29/1888 Bp. McQuade blessed new Stations brought from Munich by Fr. Wm Mulheron (#3)
who also had 1st mural put up of Christ's Ascension with the Four Evangelists
2 statues also installed
- 11/29/1890 organ by the Carl Barckhoff Co of Salem, OH installed; first played on 12/08/1890
- 07/30/1905 St. Edward Church on Thornton Ave dedicated by Bp. Thomas F. Hickey (1st Auburn visit)
- 1915 Fr. Wm Payne (#4) had 2nd mural put up: Assumption of BVM
126 parishioners in WWI; Fr. Payne also founded Mercy Hospital
- 09/21/1926 Bp. Hickey blessed the bells installed by Fr. John McGrath (#5)
In new tower whichh he had begun to build on 05/120/26
- 10/03/1926 bells rang for 1st time: E-major chord: Jesus-Joseph (largest) by Holy Name
Mary by Rosary/Scapular Society
John in mem of John Stack
- 1929 mural removed and wooden rerdos installed
- 1936 Dr. Wm. E. Cowen (#6) put in 8 grissaile windows from St. Patrick's Cathedral in Roch
St. Mary of the Assumption mural by Lee Woodward Zeigler of Newburgh, NY
Ceiling painted blue, Green Street door added
- 03/20/1938 first visit of Bp. James E. Kearney; 409 parishioners in WW2, 13 died
- 10/20/1964 fire; Msgr Jas. Cuffney (#7): 4th mural of Christ enthroned, 2 Italian lindenwood statues,
Jos J. Hickey altar and furnishings
- 11/28/1965 1st Mass In renovated church; 11/30 1st concl. Mass In Auburn: Cuffney, Walsh, Sundholm
- 04/17/1966 Bp. Casey blessed new altar; last official act In Cayuga County: 05/12 Paterson, NJ
- 03/09/1967 Bp. Sheen Mass, 1st episcopal visit to Auburn (1942, E.H.S.: Lyceum Players)
- 06/03/1979 dedication of 1882 Garrett House Organ for 20 yrs. of Cuffney's ministry
- 08/15/1979 Cuff retired; Fr. Edw. A. Zimmer (#8) +MHC's 1st appt.: repairs to tower and walls
- 08/15/1993 Quasquicentennial: 42 priests, 94 sisters, 16,000 baptisms, 5000 weddings, 7,700 funerals
+MHC dedicated church w/ 6th mural by Ken Verosko after 5th by Everett Molinari
- 09/21/1997 parish Is 130 yrs old with Fr. Robert Schrader (#9)
- 06/27/2004 Fr. Frank Lioi becomes pastor (#10)
- 08/15/2004 Alumni of Gray School (1921-1960) hold alumni reunion
- 12/16/2005 Property to the west of the church donated to St. Mary's and building razed summer 2006
- 06/05/2007 Clymer Street School sold to Tyburn Academy of Mary Immaculate
- 06/03/2007 40th anniversary of ordination of Fr. Lioi (#10)
- sum 2008 new boiler and air-conditioning installed in church
- 08/15/2008 140th anniversary of parish; Flower Festival held in church
- sum 2009 exterior window frames of church painted gray; moveable walls installed in parish hall
- sum 2010 parking lot west of the church was completed and opened
- 11/07/2010 120th anniversary of the Carl Barckhoff Pipe Organ