

# Cathedral Restoration 2000

A Newsletter of Past, Present and Future Parish Renewal

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## Five Titles of Mary Centers Prayer On New Start

In 1989 when Bishop Beuchlein said we needed a Cathedral Restoration Prayer the people could use, I began to put this prayer together. We wanted to print a prayer card with a picture on one side and I thought we needed a good symbol of the Cathedral.



I asked the parish secretary at the time who was a pretty good photographer to go out and take a picture of this stained glass window from the outside before the sun moved off the window. (Two days out of the year the sun shines from

the east through the nave onto this window on the west side of the church. The photograph could not be taken now since the stair gallery has been built.)

The church is accustomed to praying to Mary and The Cathedral Prayer for Restoration begins in a devotional tone by addressing Mary with five titles. "Mother of God" comes from the Council of Ephesus in 431 and is thus one of the oldest of Mary's titles. The next two are the Marian dogmas. The fourth is the most recent official title. Pope Paul VI and Vatican II were first to call Mary "Mother of the Church." The fifth title alludes to "Queen of Peace" that Mary calls herself at Medjugorje.

This Cathedral restoration project is liturgical in nature and is meant to meet one of the aims of Vatican II, the renewal of Catholic worship. As a result of the restoration our love for the liturgy should grow. So should the love among us and the love this community extends to others.

Bishop Daniel said this whole effort was for the "glory" of God. The prayer closes with a Trinitarian focus since the phrase "generosity and goodwill" implies the Holy Spirit, who gives gifts to the faithful to accomplish the project. All things come from the Son, and through the Son are returned to the Father, Who is Love. How essential is prayer!

– Fr. Tom Kirk



### Prayer for Restoration

O Holy Mother of God, Immaculate Conception, and Queen assumed into Heaven, Mother of the Church, and our Lady of Peace in the World, we pray for the restoration of this Cathedral in your honor. May this project lead your church to a renewal of Catholic worship and greater love of Sacred Liturgy, and one another. May works of generosity and goodwill come forth from the people of God to give glory to your Son Jesus Christ and God our loving Father.

Amen.

## Church Roof Repairs To Begin Next Month

*Note: In preparation for the interior restoration of the Cathedral, work will be done on the roof of the church, starting in September. The following explanation was written by Bill Hecht, president of the Hecht Construction Company:*

"On December 9th of last year, Hecht Construction Company and Bruce Burr of Burr and Cole Engineers inspected the gypsum roof deck panels from the attic side to determine their condition. The gypsum panels support the roof shingles and the shingles are nailed to these panels. There is visible sag in some of the panels and there was concern that the gypsum panels may have been falling due to moisture problems from roof leaks through the years.

"In addition, we inspected the plaster supports which carry the ceiling above the cathedral. The plaster ceiling is supported by nine-gauge wire from the roof structure. Twelve-gauge wire has been added at numerous locations for additional support. The plaster itself is supported by wire lath, which it is adhered to.

"We cut holes in the gypsum panels in two locations. We found the panels to be sound and not to be showing any signs of deterioration. The sags that are visible likely occurred during the time of the original construction when the panels were poured.

"We also found the plaster ceiling system to be sound with adequate support.

"Our plan of work based on the findings is to install chicken wire to the bottom of the gypsum deck. This will catch any gypsum pieces that may fall off in the future and prevent these pieces from striking the plaster ceiling below and causing damage.

"Oriented strand board will be installed over the existing roof shingles. ... The OSB board will be screwed to the bulb tees which support the existing roof deck. The OSB board is being installed to give the new roof shingles a much better nailing surface. ...

"After the OSB board is installed, a three-tab asphalt shingle will be installed on the roof. The shingle will be similar in appearance to that which is now on the roof."

*The roof repair is expected to take 60-90 days and will not have an effect on week-end celebrations in the church.*

## History:

### *Beyond the Frontier ...*

The first permanent Catholic resident in what is now West Tennessee was Pierre St. Martin Nichol. He was born in France and baptized Roman Catholic in 1737 but eventually decided to settle north of the Mississippi bluffs in Obion as a trapper and fur trader after a series of unhappy events, which included losing his wife and child in a hostile Indian attack. During his long life of 94 years, he witnessed many changes in the religious, social and physical life of the region including the 1811 New Madrid earthquake and creation of Reelfoot Lake from which he rescued and adopted a 4-year-old girl whose parents had been killed. Nichol soon gained many Catholic neighbors as Irish immigrants, building the government post roads westward, settled between the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers and started families.

Tennessee was part of North Carolina until 1785 when its residents formed the free territory of Franklin, but Tennessee became the 16th state of the growing United States in 1796. In those frontier days, it was rare to see even a missionary priest this far west.

Regional Catholics practiced their faith in their homes, mirroring the early Christian home churches. Whenever they could they would travel to the New Madrid Missouri area with its Poor Clare Monastery. But after the defeat of the British in the Revolutionary War, America's first diocese was established in Baltimore with Bishop John Carroll as its head.

Within ten years, four more American dioceses had been established and expansion became a major goal of the Church. In 1838 Pius Miles, a French Dominican priest, was named the first Bishop of the new Diocese of Nashville to care for the scattered Catholics of Tennessee. A year later he turned his attention toward West Tennessee.

(Next: Into West Tennessee)

– Source: *Between the Rivers*

## I Remember ...

... having fun watching building work on the cornices for the columns that stand throughout the church. (Cornices are the scrolled sections that sit on top of columns.)

I was very, very young then – just a kid of about nine or ten. I went to Immaculate Conception Grammar School. You know, the first floor of the school building was once the church and they said Mass there.

Then the church was moved to the Crypt and Mass was said there where Marian Hall is today. The ceilings of the Crypt were sealed with black top to prevent them from leaking.

I used to go and watch plaster work done by the Whalen subcontractors. They were a family in the church. The workmen cast the cornices in plaster molds, then cut them with a saw and took them to place on top of the columns. I was fascinated!

– Lewis McDonnell, husband of Kathleen

## I Remember, too ...

What cherished memories of Immaculate Conception Parish would you like to share? Contact Mary Baltz with your "I Remember ..."



## Renewal Team Players In Abundance at I.C.

In recent years, there has been a burst of construction for new, state-of-the-art ballparks and arenas for professional sports teams around the country. This summer, a much-heralded facility has opened in Seattle for the major-league baseball team there, while new parks in Milwaukee, Detroit and Houston were not far behind. Memphians awaited the completion of AutoZone Park next spring for the minor-league Redbirds. In many cases, one hears the team owners talking about their need to have the proper management and players in place for the new facility. (It is curious why owners wouldn't always want to have the proper management and players in place, new park or not.) More foreign, to Catholic ears at least, is the idea of having the people fit the building. For Catholics – especially in light of the upcoming Cathedral renovation – it is important to emphasize that it is always the building that needs to fit the people, and not the other way around.

When we look at our "management" and "players" at Immaculate Conception, Cathedral parishioners can be very confident that the right "team" is already in place for renewed Cathedral. In fact, from this perspective, the Cathedral has been "renewed" and will continue to be "renewed."

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein of Memphis has been gone from Memphis for seven years now, which is longer than his five years of service as Memphis' third bishop. However, his appointments of Fr. Thomas Kirk as Cathedral rector, in 1988, and Sr. Maureen Griner as music director for the diocese and the Cathedral, in 1992, were made with the view that the Cathedral would be completely renovated under Buechlein's years in the Bluff City. They give a glimpse of how Buechlein envisioned the "management" of a renewed Cathedral.

In selecting a pastor such as Fr. Kirk, with vast inner-city, midtown and ecumenical experience, Buechlein sent a strong signal that the Cathedral would be a force in the civic arena. To this day, in many cathedral cities, rector appointments are given as honorary positions without much weight, or to priests who specialize in the ceremonial aspect of church life. Sr. Maureen, in coming from outside West Tennessee, gave the Cathedral the opportunity to symbolize the wider church in its liturgical celebrations, and her job breakdown into diocesan and parish components embodied the delicate balance that the community itself lives with daily. Their numerous accomplishments speak volumes about Buechlein's insight.

Who are our "players" and what do they tell us? There's Alan Schwartz, indefatigable volunteer and RCIA coordinator par excellence. Mary Lyne and Erica Thomas, eager to embrace Vatican II's vision of evangelization. Bevan Canale, who opens the doors at 5:30 in the morning and makes plenty of other openings for activity at the parish during the year. Meghan and Jeremy Harper, who stand for a host of young married couples who may worship at I.C. for only a few years before moving on, but throw themselves into the life of the parish in the interim. Frank and Helen Byrd and Deacon Dick Powelson, who were renewing parish life before there even was a Vatican II. Maria Isabella Ayerdis, just three months old and one of the most recent Cathedral baptisms, who is just starting to sort out her world, but already points hopefully to the church's future.

Have I missed anybody? You bet I have. There are several hundred more "players" who show us daily what a renewed Cathedral REALLY looks like. Pick up a mirror and look into it; that way one more parishioner will be recognized.



– Fr. Joe Kerrigan