

# Cathedral Restoration 2000

A Newsletter of Past, Present and Future Parish Renewal



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More Than a Building ...



Fr. Joe Kerrigan

## People Define ‘Church’

### Reasons To Build Cathedral Community Will Outlive This Time of Renovation

When I began religious life in 1984, I was thrown together with 13 other young men from all around the United States who had the same basic desire to become a missionary priest. After a few months of sharing such an intense experience, the group naturally bonded, and so it was a shock when five classmates left us within several weeks of each other.

“You didn’t join because of these guys in your class, so don’t leave because of them either,” was one of the helpful lines I heard during that period of transition. The axiom can be applied all the more during this time of Cathedral restoration.

Except for the occasional “rental couple” who chooses to be married at the Cathedral strictly because of the church’s aesthetic appeal, it is rare to find someone who chooses to join a church because of the facility’s appearance. And if someone does indeed join for those reasons, they eventually remain at the church for much deeper, enduring reasons.

**One of those deeper reasons** is community. Simply said, the church is people. That’s how Jesus formed it, with a community centered around himself in word and sacrament. Our faith is ultimately communitarian, and for Catholics, concrete participation in a parish community is the normal way to express that faith. There ought to be no more of a “pick-and-choose” attitude to parish membership than

there should be about Catholic teaching. Once someone has seriously opted to throw one’s self together with others at the Cathedral or any other parish, there is probably a sense of God’s calling in that decision to join a parish. As such, one is now tied up with the sin, pettiness, breakdowns, grace, sanctity and health of the others in the community. Superficial likes and annoyances ought to subside in light of the bigger picture. “You didn’t join because of (name any one thing), so don’t leave because of (name any one thing).” God’s call is bigger and deeper than that.

**Ironically, a transition** with a parish’s physical structure can be a great catalyst for building community. My sister Susan had a tremendous experience in this regard at their central New Jersey parish. Along with her husband Tom and 800 other families, she worshiped in temporary

facilities for four (!) years in the late

1980s while their new church was

built from the ground up. “We

loved it,” she said. “We literally

had to make our own church each

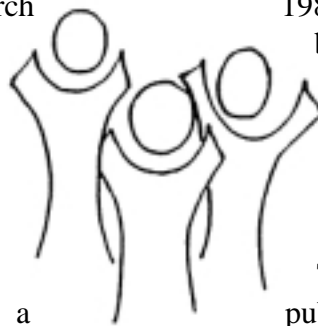
and every day, and we proved that the

building itself didn’t mean much.”

The parish held services at a

public elementary school, but the

community participation grew so much



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## Keeping a Dream Alive!

The recent publicity about the installation of a new Casavant pipe organ in St. Louis Church has caused a number of Cathedral parishioners to ask if Cathedral restoration plans include a pipe organ. The current Capital Campaign does not include funds for the installation of a new organ at this time, but we want to keep the dream alive, in hopes that a donor or donors can be found in the very near future. Coming issues of our Restoration newsletter will include the recommendation which we have recently received from Dr. Douglas Reed, an organ consultant who visited the Cathedral in May of 1999. We think you will find his recommendations regarding a new organ both interesting and exciting!



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that they had to move to a middle school. “Just think of some of the logistic difficulties, like working out a holy day schedule when the public schools are still in session,” she said. “But people would do some amazing things like get off work early, even from New York City (50 miles away), and set up the school gym for a holy day mass.”

“**Over the four years**, it seemed like everybody knew everybody else, and we had so much imagination, creativity and participation. Things like home bible studies just happened naturally.”

So there is life, vibrant parish life, during a church relocation. My sister’s experience is far from isolated. Here in Memphis, the Church of the Holy Spirit is another good example. Twenty-five years old and going strong, the parish has forged a deep and sustained community life which has its source in worship at a movie theater, the old Balmoral Cinema. Even though Holy Spirit enjoys a wonderful, wooded setting and a very comfortable facility today, you can still hear the parishioners who speak with nostalgia of the theater days.

**Incredible as it may seem**, there will be some parishioners who will feel a bit nostalgic about the months in Marian Hall after the restored Cathedral finally reopens. And they will feel nostalgic because Marian Hall was where the community was restored while the building was restored upstairs.

– Fr. Joe Kerrigan



## Environment:

### *The Nave Walls ...*

Perhaps the most elaborate and complex of the painted decorations of our Cathedral church are located below the upper story windows on the walls of the nave.

The entirety of the design tells a story tracing the people of God from Moses through David and the prophets, and finally the life of Jesus through His death and resurrection. This frieze is held together throughout its length by a vine filled with ripe grapes – a symbol of God’s chosen people of Israel. The story begins on the west wall at the transept, continuing back toward the choir loft, then crosses to the east wall and moves forward to the east transept.

Each half of the frieze is divided into fifteen sections, with each section containing a pictorial medallion or symbol at the top, and words of scripture below. The west side of the nave represents the Old Testament with quotations and identifying symbols from Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekial, Daniel and Habakkuk.

The story is continued on the east wall of the nave with fifteen symbols from the New Testament taken from the Gospels and the Book of Revelation. It begins with a quotation from John’s Gospel, “In the beginning was the Word” The symbol above the quotation, the letters V, D, M, A, represent the Latin words “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” The remaining symbols and scriptural quotations refer to familiar passages of the New Testament or events in the life of Christ. The next to last image is that of the Crucifixion, “...so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” The final image is of Jonah coming out of the belly of the whale, a symbol of Jesus’ resurrection with the quotation below, “I am the resurrection and the light.”