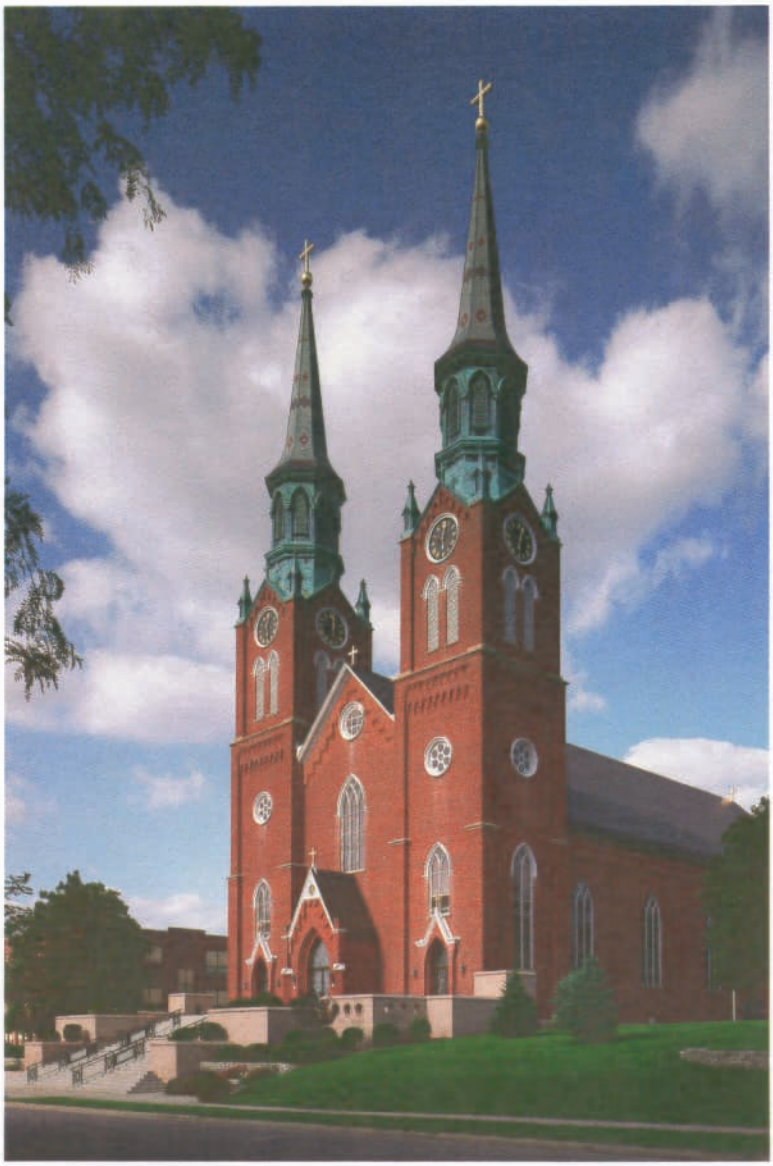


saint augustine

minster, ohio



Like watchmen so silent

Do the twin towers stand

Through quiet and turmoil

O'er St. Augustine land

May they ever rise tall

Before times ebbing sand

Their crosses the pathway

Unto His loving hand.

Louis A. Hoying

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"How good it is to go up to the House of the Lord!" In 1991 St. Augustine Parish replaced its ninety year-old slate roof. In gratitude to God whose Son has redeemed us with His Blood, we are issuing this commemorative booklet which provides a pictorial guide to the interior of our church.

The nave of our brick church was built in 1848, and the twin Gothic style towers, which are reminiscent of the cathedral in Münster, Germany, were erected in 1874. A new sanctuary was added to the east end in 1901 in the Romanesque revival style. Side vestibules were built in 1947. The years 1957-63 saw the last major renovation in the interior.

The windows in the north side vestibule depict the German heritage of the settlers of Stallostown, founded in 1832. The Stallostown Mission, established in 1834, was named St. Augustine Parish in 1836. Our ancestors have maintained St. Augustine Church and we are honored that we can continue that tradition. We hope this booklet helps you appreciate the power of the Catholic faith that has guided our ancestors and us.







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WINDOWS

As you walk into the church down the center aisle, the stately Gothic windows suggest a mood of quiet dignity and prayer and remind the viewer that this church was once filled with huge white wooden altars and other Gothic artifacts. In the first full window on the left as you walk down the center aisle, St. Rose holds a rose in her arms as a sign of her purity and wears a crown of thorns around her head as a sign of her mortification.

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St. Gaspar is next on the left and stands proudly as a memento of the Society of the Precious Blood which has served St. Augustine for most of its history. Gaspar's halo indicates that the window was a later addition. St. Gaspar del Bufalo and St. John Bosco were purchased in 1954, while the other handpainted windows were purchased in 1878 from a firm in Pittsburgh.



The next window of St. John the Evangelist might easily be mistaken for a figure of Jesus since there is no title on it. One quickly notices the figure is heavier than those in other windows. St. John holds the chalice in one hand, the other is raised in blessing. The believer recalls how the gospel of John often speaks of the Eucharist in such realistic terms as, "He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:54).

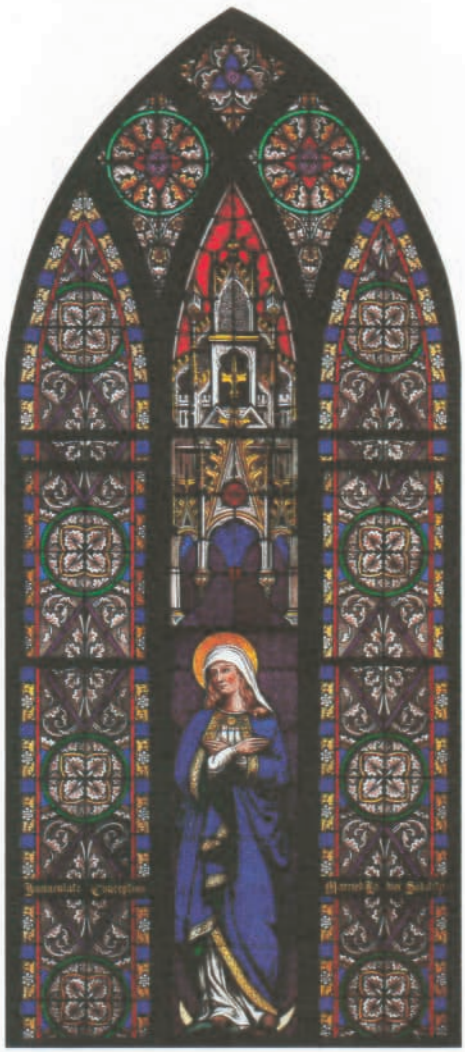
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The Good Shepherd window has the only figure in a side profile. Jesus looks down on the sheep with an obvious concern. His royal blue cloak has crosses on it, which is a reminder that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Blue often signifies royalty and is one of the more costly colors used in painting.



Across the aisle on the north side of the church is the window of the Holy Childhood. The innocent childhood of Jesus contrasts strongly with the cross of suffering which he holds in his hand. The pastoral setting of nature with its lilies and other flowers recalls the sinlessness of Jesus, who shed his blood that we might be saved and share once again the innocence of God's life.



As one turns to walk down the aisle, the window dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary comes next. In Catholic tradition God gave Mary a special grace by which she was preserved from sin. Here she is pictured as standing on a pair of white horns which represent the power of God. Her goodness overcomes the power of evil in this world.



St. Augustine is pictured in his bishop's mitre and holding the staff, a sign of his office as a teacher. Augustine, the patron saint of our church, was an eminent Doctor of the Church. His autobiography, **The Confessions**, is a rich source of religious teachings and a marvelous portrayal of the search for God.



The window dedicated to St. John Bosco, as that of Gaspar, was added in 1954 when the other church windows were renovated. Its modern characteristics are obvious in the realism of the veins in the hand and the detailed frontal view of the face. St. John stands in the clouds surrounded by angels with cherubic faces.

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STATIONS

In churches across the United States few mosaic stations of the cross exist. Ordinarily one sees painted statues, stylized pictures, or carvings of wood. St. Augustine's fourteen stations are notable exceptions not just because they are mosaic but also from the view of the quality of their design.

Professor Rudolf Scheffler, who designed the stations specifically for our church, chose blue belge marble to frame the stations. The colors of the mosaics are largely shades of gold, blue and brown. While he clearly was aware of the Byzantine tradition of mosaic art with its reliance on elongated figures, Prof. Scheffler designed each station to capture a moment of tension for the twentieth century viewer.

In the first station Pilate washes his hands as a ritual gesture to absolve himself of all responsibility for the death of Jesus. He looks at Jesus and appears almost dazed. The young boy holds the dish for Pilate but focuses on Jesus who is the center of attention. Although Pilate and the young boy seem to be fixed on Jesus, he appears isolated, looking downward as if transfixed by the death that is coming. The movement of the mosaic is toward Jesus and his journey toward death.

The only other place a child appears in the stations is at the eighth station in which Jesus meets two women of Jerusalem who cry over his painful suffering. Jesus lifts his finger to attempt to comfort the women and seems, for a moment, to be free of his own pain. Notice that the cross appears suspended in midair. The child stares at Jesus and grabs for his mother's hand as if afraid of what he is seeing.

The stations of the cross were executed by Wagner Brothers in Berlin, Germany,

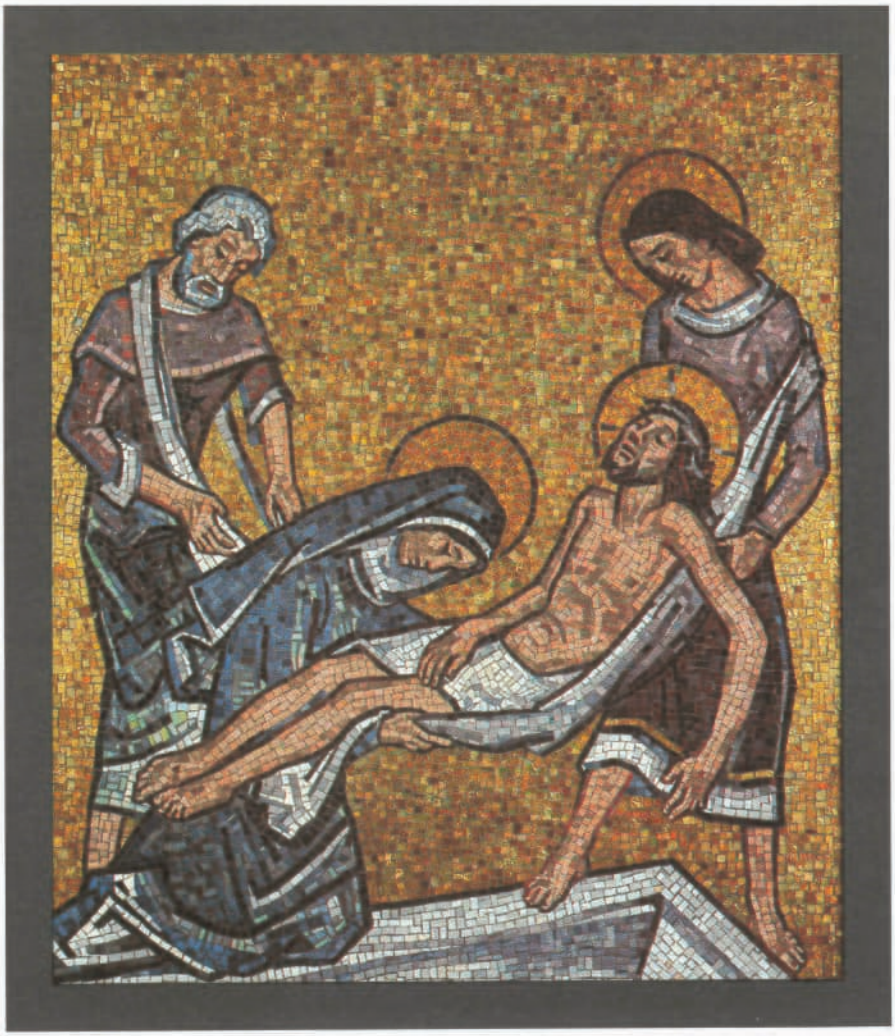
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in the late 1950's at a cost of $1,000 each. After the stations were crafted, there was some apprehension that they would not be delivered. Although the company was in the Allied Zone of West Germany, it stood on the border between the divided Berlin. In fact the building later became part of the Berlin Wall which was recently demolished.

The designer, Rudolf Scheffler, began his art studies at the age of 15 when he received a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy in Dresden, Germany. Later he became a professor there. He won the **Prix de Rome** and a special grant to study the medieval art of painting frescoes. He came to the United States as the head designer of Ravenna Mosaic Company of St. Louis. Among his works in the United States, the best known are his apse of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury, Connecticut, and his murals in the state office building in Columbus, Ohio.

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CEILING PAINTINGS

The first impression of the visitor, upon entering the nave of the church, is awe. The 48 foot barrel vaulted ceiling has no supporting pillars. In this cathedral setting one waits only for the sound of the organ to announce the presence of God.

Above the choir loft is a painting of **The Annunciation**, in which Mary's face radiates a calm spirit as she accepts her calling.

All the ceiling paintings are on canvas. J. Vittur painted them in 1901, when he was employed by the DeCurtins Bros. Co. in Lima, Ohio. He was a "copyist painter" in that he was a part of a tradition of painters who composed new paintings by copying sections of masterpieces and blending various artistic styles.

The ceiling is divided into five panels by five girders resting on elaborate pilasters. **Christ Being Borne to His Tomb** and **The Crucifixion** are on the west side of the center painting.

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The central panel depicts the **Glorification of the Holy Trinity** and is twenty by fifteen feet. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are visible in the distance in all their glory. St. Augustine can easily be seen kneeling below.

Notable are the Renaissant influences of distorting perspective to create a monolithic scale and Raphael's technique of layering thin coats of paint over colors of full value.







The Resurrection and **Christ in His Agonies on the Mount of Olives** are on the east side of the central panel. The lighting technique of such Dutch Masters as Rembrandt and Van Dyck is evident in the light arising from behind the resurrected Jesus, who is the only source of light in the painting. As Jesus kneels at the Mount of Olives, there is a strong sense of atmospheric haze. The viewer is drawn into a landscape which extends infinitely, a technique so common in the middle Renaissance. Leonardo Da Vinci used the haze effect so effectively in his "Madonna of the Rocks."

The final panel at the front of the church is **The Nativity**. The lighting of the painting is from the Dutch tradition; the figures are definitely Renaissance; and the linear halos are common to early Christian paintings.

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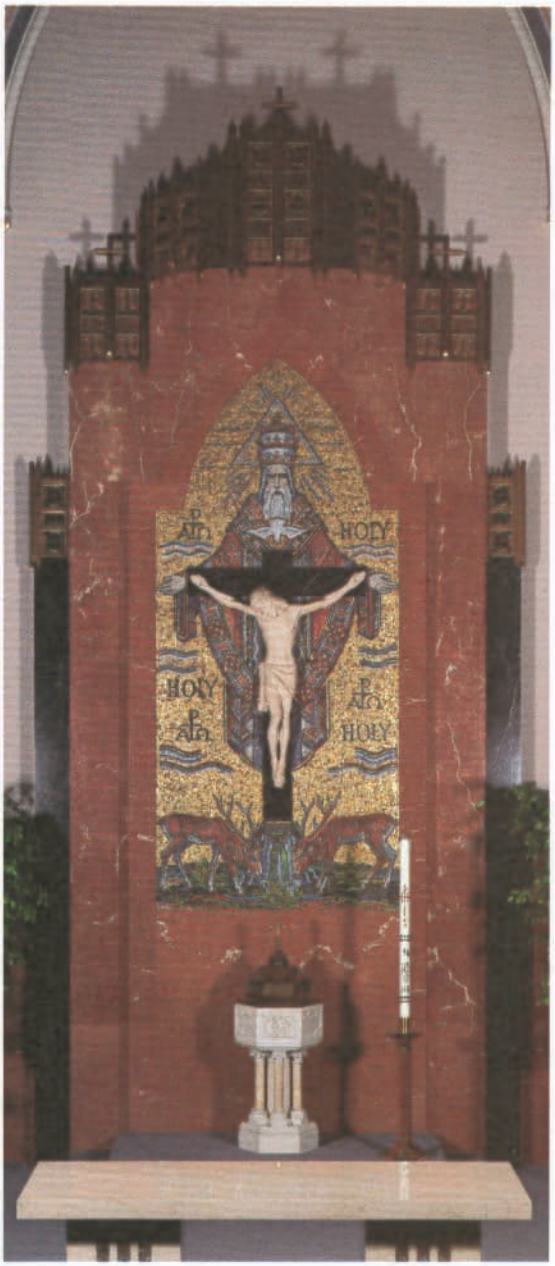
THE MAIN ALTAR

The central mosaic is based upon a painting **The Blessed Trinity** by Albrecht Dürer, who died in the early 16th century. The mosaic and superimposed crucifix depict God the Father giving Himself through his Son, Jesus Christ. It is with Christ through the life of the Holy Spirit (the dove) that we return to the Father. The Father wears a three tiered crown which represents God's rule over the three classical divisions of the Church: militant, suffering and triumphant.

Behind the crown is a triangle symbolizing the Holy Trinity. Below the cross the deer, which represent all Christians, drink from the fountain of life, the sacramental life of the church. The Greek letters of Alpha and Omega refer to Christ as the beginning and ending of life. They are located beside the Chi-Rho, which are the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ (cf. detail).



Rudolf Scheffler designed the altars and chose colors which recall the constellation of aurora borealis and allude to Christ, the Eternal Flame. The inspiration for the design came from Italian **Fiume** on palace tapestries so admired by Victor Emmanuel, who had commissioned a number of paintings from Scheffler.



The large crucifix on the rear wall is of blue belge marble. The corpus, body of Christ, and the two statues of Mary and Joseph on the side shrines are made of Italian botticino marble and were sculptured by the Mioczi Studio in Pietrasanta, Italy.

There are two statues on either side of the central mosaic. On the left there are

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the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Gaspar del Bufalo, the founder of the Society of the Precious Blood. On the right are St. Augustine, the patron of the parish, and his mother St. Monica. These four statues were carved of linden wood by Leopold Moroder, of Oberammergau, Germany.

Witold Liskowiak coordinated the decorating scheme of the church. He had his own studio, which he began in 1941 after having attended art schools in Poland and Milwaukee. He set the mosaic in a marble reredos of rich red Spanish altico of exceptionally fine quality and framed it with slender columns of blue belge. Then he extended a bronze baldacchino over the mosaic to provide an elegance suited to prayer and awe.

The height of the sanctuary and mosaic called for a sizable altar. Liskowiak designed an 8'6" by 3'6" altar of creamy Italian botticino marble embellished with mosaic inlays. He placed the bronze tabernacle, made by Arnold Hedler of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on the south side shrine.

At the time of the church's remodeling, communion rails were still being used. So, Liskowiak used red Spanish altico marble and wrought bronze to bring a sense of unity to the sanctuary. Thus he achieved an overall unity in the sanctuary and in the church which continues to inspire everyone to say, "How good it is to go up to the House of the Lord."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

St. Augustine Parish would like to thank Ted Monnin for designing the booklet and for guiding this project through the printing process. His original of the painting on the rear cover is done on a piece of slate from the old roof to recall the occasion of this commemorative booklet. Robert Valentine photographed the interior and exterior of the church. Father Larry Wyen, C.PP.S., wrote the commentary from information taken largely from **Pilgrim's All** by Louis, Rita, and David Hoying. The Staff of St. Augustine has been very supportive in their efforts to produce this booklet.

Many generous contributions enabled the parish to print this booklet to introduce the beauty of the interior of St. Augustine Church to those who have loved this church. Particularly the parish is grateful to:

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