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All scripture passages are taken from The New American Bible, Saint Joseph Edition. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 1992.

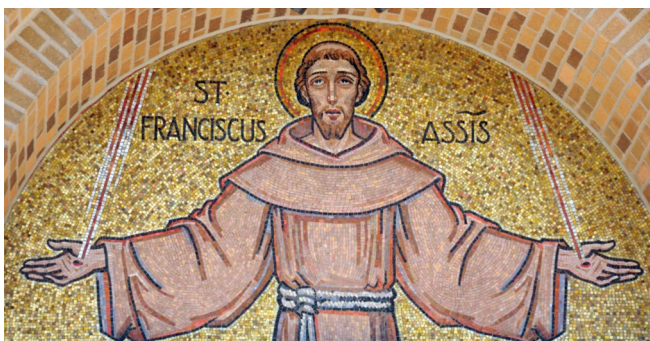
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## **St. Francis of Assisi Church**

Hospital Sisters of St. Francis  
Springfield, Illinois



(St. Francis of Assisi Church east facade)

## Introduction

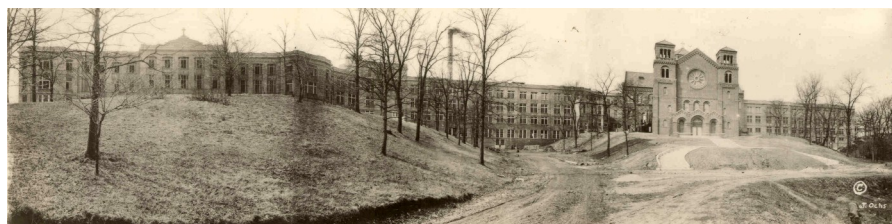
St. Francis was born in Assisi, Italy in 1182 and died October 3, 1226. The son of a fabric merchant, he enjoyed status and wealth, but he gave up every material thing he owned to follow the path of God. St. Francis devoted himself to solitude, prayer, and service to the poor, and his commitment to poverty was the keynote of his spirit and way of life. His life showed how to have compassion for the poor, the outcast, and the oppressed and inspired a journey toward peace, nonviolence, and reconciliation. His message is a light for the present and the future.

The decision to construct St. Francis of Assisi Church came from the realization that this property would become the Motherhouse of the American Province of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis: the place where women would be prepared for religious life, the place where the Sisters would return for Community gatherings, and a place the Sisters could call home. From 1875-1930, the Motherhouse was at St. John's Hospital, 800 East Carpenter Street, Springfield, IL.

In 1920, after several years of planning, construction began on this church under the direction of Monsignor Joseph C. Straub, Priest Director of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, and Mother Marciana Willebrand, Provincial Superior of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis. On April 27, 1924, at 9:30 a.m., Bishop James A. Griffin, Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, officiated in the solemn Dedication Mass, consecration of the altar, and pontifical benediction. An article in the *Illinois State Journal* on April 25, 1924, stated that the church "is one of the most beautiful churches in central Illinois...all of the details are carefully worked out in accordance with the ancient tradition. The interior is reminiscent of the Cathedral of Abbaye aux Hommes, Caen (Normandy), France."

## History

The church was not the first building constructed on this property. Since their arrival in Springfield on November 11, 1875, the Sisters resided and worked in the downtown area—primarily at St. John's Hospital. A survey of Springfield from 1909-13 found that one of the principal causes of death was from tuberculosis. Because there were no institutions in the city to care for those afflicted with the disease, the Sisters determined to expand St. John's Hospital's services to include the care of tuberculosis patients. On July 18, 1919, some of the Sisters began living and working in St. John's Tuberculosis Sanitarium on this property. A 500 acre site, six miles northeast of Springfield, offered the needed fresh air and sunshine, the recommended treatment for tuberculosis patients at that time. Services were provided from 1919 until 1973. (Photo: circa 1927)



## Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

The Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is an international, multi-cultural congregation of Franciscan Sisters founded in Telgte, Germany in 1844, with Provinces in Germany, Poland, USA, Japan, and a Region in India. The American Province, based in Springfield, IL, was founded in November 1875 when 20 Sisters from Germany arrived and began providing healthcare services in various communities. Currently, the American Province continues its healthcare ministry as a significant provider of Catholic healthcare services in Illinois and Wisconsin through sponsorship of Hospital Sisters Health System, a mission in Tanzania, Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach, and Chiara Center. To learn more, please visit [hospitalsisters.org](http://hospitalsisters.org).



## ***St. Felicitas Shrine***

Upon descending the staircase from the church is a Shrine to St. Felicitas (left). In 1947, Mother Magdalene Wiedlocher, Provincial Superior of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, made a request to Pope Pius XII and Cardinal Lavitrano for a relic of a virgin and martyr. In 1949, an official reply arrived that a relic of St. Felicitas had been procured and would be sent to the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis with documentation in a paper dated July 15, 1901, by Peter Cardinal Respighi. "We attest and declare that the sacred body of St. Felicitas, virgin and martyr, age 27, was exhumed from a cemetery named in honor of St. Callistus and bequeathed by the Reverend Mother Matilda Reginalda Leva in the year 1660 to the monastery of the Canons Regular of the Lateran." This Shrine includes a wax body representing the saint with a small relic encased within. The figure and relic had been displayed in St. Francis of Assisi Church since September 10, 1950. In 2007, it was relocated to this Relic Chapel. The Latin phrase reads "St. Felicitas, Virgin and Martyr, 27 A.D. - By this sign (Christ), I will conquer."

***Please carefully proceed down the steps.***

The tiny relics of hundreds of holy men and women are enclosed in 12 reliquaries of travertine marble on both sides of this Chapel. Murals along the ceiling depict saints who lived a life of holiness. The murals along the outer wall are of: Saints Pancratius (martyred c. 304), Fabiola (martyred c. 399) and Tharsicius (martyred c. 250). Murals along the inner wall are of: Saints Agnes (martyred c. 304), John (died c. 100), and Cecilia (martyred c.117).

***Please carefully proceed up the steps.***

On the left is a Shrine to the Infant Jesus which is a replica of a Shrine in the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. The central image of the Christ Child was created by Franciscans in Bethlehem (c. 1907).

***Please carefully proceed up the steps.***

On the wall, right, is a crucifix that illustrates the brutal suffering Christ endured.

***Please carefully proceed up and through the doors (right) into the church.***

## ***Conclusion***

Thank you for becoming a pilgrim on this journey through St. Francis of Assisi Church. The Hospital Sisters of St. Francis pray that this journey has brought a new dimension of self-discovery and awareness of God's presence. In the spirit of St. Francis, may you find "peace and all good" in your life.

*(Immediately inside the door, please locate the electric light switch pad. Please press A to turn on the lights and please press B to turn off the lights. Please begin the tour at the back of the church.)*

## ***Overview***

Welcome to St. Francis of Assisi Church—a sacred place in the lives of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis. Each visitor is invited to become a pilgrim who journeys out of a known environment and into another while encountering a new dimension of self-discovery.

St. Francis was humbled by how God chose poverty through the crib, the cross, and the crown:

- God chose poverty by being born in Bethlehem
- God chose poverty by embracing death
- God chose poverty by leaving his presence under the humble sign of bread



***We ask you to please respect the sanctity of this church by speaking softly and refraining from entering the sanctuary.***

## ***Architecture and Decor***

Similar to other Romanesque buildings, this church is shaped like a cross with thick walls, round arches, large columns, and a barrel vault ceiling. The interior is mainly terra cotta with a neo-Gothic artistic influence. The capitals of the columns and arches on the main level feature carvings including griffins, grotesques, and gargoyles—symbols of the struggles of earthly life (all which were believed to have the ability to scare away evil spirits). The carvings in the balconies feature angels and elaborate designs as the desire for holiness leads from the earthly life to the everlasting reward in heaven.



The church is 133 feet long, 115 feet wide, and 84 feet high. The floors throughout the main level are Italian terrazzo marble. In true Romanesque style, the repetition of arches brings a sense of comfort and familiarity. The architects were Helmle and Helmle of Springfield and construction was under the direction of Frank Fitzsimmons, also of Springfield. The church, excluding the balcony, accommodates approximately 250 people.



Paul Helmle, Professor Emeritus of Architecture at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, stated in 2008 that “One of the undiscovered treasures of Springfield is St. Francis of Assisi Church lying in the pastoral landscape near the Sangamon River.” (Paul Helmle’s great grandfather and the Helmle architects’ grandfather were brothers.) “Although the architects built almost 400 buildings and were a major player in the 20<sup>th</sup> century physical image of Springfield, this church is certainly one of their finest works. Its exterior brings to mind images of German Romanesque architecture of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with its eastern towers sitting confidently against the immense nave recalling medieval monasteries. Inside the terra cotta-clad nave there is harmony between the architectural elements. The astonishing scarlet dome hovering over the baldacchino with columns of richly patterned marble and the elaborate golden tabernacle recreate a past world of overwhelming splendor,” he added.

### ***Byzantine Angels***

The 12 Byzantine-style angels (the number of tribes of Israel and the number of Apostles) are displayed along the balcony arches. As messengers of God, they wear elaborate liturgical robes and carry various symbols.

Beginning at the back of the church, (starting on the left side and moving clockwise), are six angels:

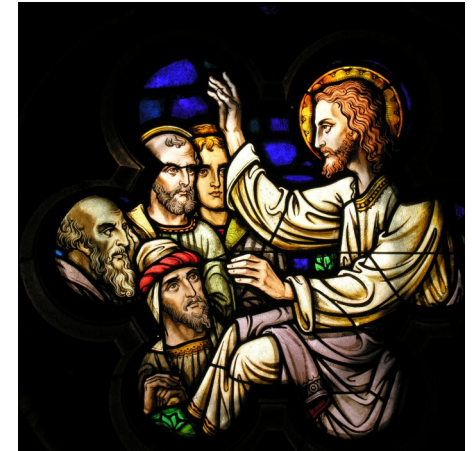
- Angel of Salvation—holding a cross and book with the first and last letters of the Greek name for Jesus (IC) and the first and last letters for the Greek word for Christ (XC)
- Angel of Power—holding a cross and chair, a reference to Jesus
- Angel of Glory—holding a scepter and orb, symbols of the final triumph and reign of Christ over the world
- Angel of Judgment—holding a cross and a flaming sword that guarded the entrance to Paradise after Adam and Eve were expelled
- Angel of Honor—holding a cross and a tabernacle, as God spoke from between the cherubim of the Ark of the Covenant, so God now reveals Himself to us in Christ Jesus.
- Angel of Redemption—holding a cross and the Lamb of God seated on the

***Please follow the aisle to your left and view the stained glass windows:***

- Ecce Homo (“Behold the Man”, John 19:5)
- Mater Dolorosa (Our Sorrowful Mother)
- St. Nicholas of Myra, Patron of children—in the United States, he has become identified with Santa Claus who distributes gifts to children at Christmas (c. 346)
- St. Isidor, Patron of rain and farmers (1070-1130)
- St. Charles Borromeus, Patron of spiritual directors (1538-84)
- St. John of God, Patron of hospitals, nurses, and the sick (1495-1550)
- St. Vincent de Paul, Patron of charitable societies (1581-1660)
- St. Rochus, Patron of surgeons and pilgrims (1295-1327)
- St. Louis IX, King of France, Patron of Third Order of St. Francis (1214-70)
- St. Camillus de Lellis, Patron of the sick and nurses (1550-1614)
- St. Bonaventure, Cardinal and Bishop of Albano, Doctor of the Church (1221-74)
- St. Aloysius Gonzaga, Jesuit Priest (1568-91)

***Please proceed through the door and to your left.***

The rose window in the center rear balcony is 14 feet in diameter and illustrates Jesus, God the Son, delivering the Sermon on the Mount, the eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5), and the four Evangelists. (Beginning at one o’clock and moving clockwise, the petals are: Poor in Spirit, St. Mark, Meek, They That Mourn, St. Luke, Hunger and Thirst after Justice, the Merciful, St. John, Clean of Heart, Peacemakers, St. Matthew, and Suffer Persecution for Justice.)



***While facing this rose window, please proceed to the door on your left to exit the balcony. Please carefully take the stairwell down one flight to the main level of the church (EXIT) or carefully continue down another flight of stairs to the lower level (Relic Chapel).***

### ***Relic Chapel***

The lives of many holy men and women who followed Christ, despite great adversity, are honored in this space. Established in 1944, this sacred Relic Chapel contains relics (bone fragments, clothing fiber, hair follicles, etc.) of saints from all ages of the Church.



## Balcony

*To view the stained glass windows in the balcony, please take the stairs on the left in the back of the church. Proceed through the door directly in front of you.*

Catholic saints are ordinary people who lived extraordinary lives. Each saint the Church honors responded to God's invitation to use his or her unique gifts for the good of others.

### Right aisle - balcony

- St. Catherine of Alexandria, Patroness of nurses (martyred c. 310)
- St. Agatha, Patroness of nurses (martyred c. 250)
- St. Agnes of Rome, Patroness of virgins and gardeners (martyred c. 300)
- St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Patroness of hospitals (1207-31)
- St. Anna, mother of Mary, Patroness of grandmothers and the poor
- St. Cecilia, Patroness of musicians (martyred c. 117)
- St. Barbara, Patroness of engineers (martyred c. 235)
- St. Theresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church and Reformer of the Carmelites (1515-82)
- St. Rita of Cascia, Patroness of impossible causes (1386-1457)
- St. Rose of Lima, Patroness of America (1586-1617)
- St. Joseph, father of Jesus
- St. John, Evangelist and Patron of the sick (died c. 100)

The rose window in the right balcony is 12 feet in diameter and illustrates God the Holy Spirit, the gifts, and the four doctors of the Church. (Beginning at one o'clock and moving clockwise, the petals are: Wisdom, St. Augustine, Understanding, Counsel, St. Gregory, Fortitude, Knowledge, St. Jerome, Eucharist, Fear of the Lord, St. Ambrose, and the Holy Trinity.)

*Please follow the aisle through the wooden doors, past the blue windows of the pipe organ chamber, and continue through the next two doors into the left balcony.*

The rose window in the left balcony is 12 feet in diameter and illustrates God the Father, the attributes, and the four Prophets of the Old Testament. (Beginning at one o'clock and moving clockwise the petals are: Omnipotence, Isaiah, Omniscience, Justice, Jeremiah, Wisdom, Goodness, Ezekiel, Truth, Eternity, Daniel, and Holiness.)



book with seven seals, a symbol of the final judgment when Christ returns in glory.

The left balcony features:

- Angel of Justice—holding a cross and banner with scales of justice and a sword, a symbol of the final judgment
- Angel of Wisdom—holding a cross and banner with a lantern and the gospel, a symbol of enlightenment
- Angel of Hope—holding a cross and banner with an anchor and chalice, a symbol that the Eucharist gives hope of everlasting life



The right balcony features:

- Angel of Victory—holding a cross and banner with a lamb, a symbol of the final judgment when Christ returns
- Angel of Strength—holding a cross and banner with a tower, a symbol of God, the refuge of all
- Angel of Blessing—holding a cross and banner with a tower, horn, and a sunflower, symbols that God is our refuge, adored, and in our presence

## Mosaics

Displayed on the back wall of the church are two mosaics. On the left is Mary, our Sorrowful Mother, a work of art previously displayed in the sewing room at the Hospital Sisters' General Motherhouse, Muenster, Germany.



The Sisters have a devotion to the Sorrowful Mother in part because their congregation was founded in Our Lady of Grace Chapel, Telgte, Germany, on July 2, 1844. In this pilgrim shrine of the Sorrowful Mother, Father Christopher Bernsmeyer, a Franciscan priest, witnessed the religious commitment of women as a religious community of Catholic women dedicated to the service of the sick. On the right wall is a mosaic of Mary Magdalene, a gift in 1951 from Mrs. Mary Case, mother of Sister Joan Case. Mary Magdalene holds a vessel that is symbolic of the spices she brought to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body, as she was the first witness of the empty tomb on Easter.

## Stained Glass

All the windows are designed by Emil Frei Art Glass Company, St. Louis, MO. Founded in 1898, they specialize in the Munich antique glass-figured style windows. These windows are filled with symbolism including oak leaves, a pagan symbol adopted by Christians to represent endurance in face of persecution. The windows at the rear of the church are (left to right):

- St. Francis of Assisi renounces the world—an event that occurred in 1205 before the Bishop of Assisi, Italy, beginning St. Francis' life of charity and penance
- "I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus" (Ecc. 24:17)—Joachim and Anna, parents of Mary, present her in the Temple
- St. Francis of Assisi invests St. Clare of Assisi, II Order—an event that occurred on March 18, 1212 (Palm Sunday) at St. Mary of the Angels Church, outside of Assisi, Italy

### *Confessionals*

These two wooden structures are used for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (the confessing of one's sins to a priest).



### *Stations of the Cross*

Between the windows, along the left and right aisles, are 14 bronze Stations of the Cross which depict the Passion of Jesus. The tradition as a chapel devotion began with the Franciscans in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and expanded throughout the Catholic Church in the medieval period. The purpose is to help worshippers make a spiritual pilgrimage through meditating upon Christ's sufferings and death. These Stations were a gift from the family of Sister Martha Vierhaus.

Beginning on the right wall, near the side door, are:

- I Jesus is condemned to death
- II Jesus carries his cross
- III Jesus falls the first time
- IV Jesus meets his mother
- V Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross
- VI Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
- VII Jesus falls the second time

Continuing on the left wall, near the back and moving forward, are:

- VIII Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
- IX Jesus falls a third time
- X Jesus is stripped of his garments
- XI Jesus is nailed to the cross
- XII Jesus dies on the cross
- XIII Jesus' body is taken down from the cross
- XIV Jesus is laid in the tomb



The stained glass windows on the left side of the church are (beginning in the rear):

- "And when it was day, he called his disciples" (Luke 6:13)
- "They that hear shall live" (John 5:25)

The second panel illustrates Joseph, Mary, and Jesus on their flight to Egypt. "The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.' He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi." (Matthew 2:13-16)

In the third panel, Mary and Joseph are searching for Jesus, their 12 year old son who is lost in Jerusalem. "After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, 'Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.' And he said to them, 'Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'" (Luke 2:46-49)

The fourth panel illustrates Jesus meeting his mother on the road to Calvary.

The fifth panel illustrates the death of Jesus as his mother stands with St. John. "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.'" (John 19:26-27)



In the sixth panel, St. John comforts Mary as she is led from the tomb where Jesus was buried.

The stained glass windows along the right aisle are:

- "Mary has chosen the better part" (Luke 10:42)—Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus
- "Well done my good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21)—the death of St. Joseph, father of Jesus
- "Go and do thou in like manner" (Luke 10:37)—the Good Samaritan
- "Go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor" (Matthew 19:21)—Jesus with the rich, young man



have written.” (John 19:19-22)

The artist used a technique in the facial expression that invites the worshipper to gaze into Jesus’ eyes and sense that he is gazing back. This crucifix was a gift from Reverend Anthony Zurbonsen, brother of Sister Regulata Zurbonsen and uncle of Sister Regula Zurbonsen.



The stained glass windows, to the right of the crucifix are:

- St. Agnes (meaning “lamb”) and her vision of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare of Assisi
- St. Clare of Assisi protecting her Sisters and the people of Assisi from the Saracens
- Christ revealing his Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque
- St. John ministering to Mary

### ***Shrine of Our Sorrowful Mother***

The Shrine of Our Sorrowful Mother was added in 1944, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the international congregation of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis. (See historical information of the congregation on page five amid the information about the Sorrowful Mother mosaic.)

The center image depicts Mary as she holds her son, while the symbols of the crucifixion (nails, crown of thorns, and cloth) are displayed on the cross. Below this image are two carved symbols: left, the seven sword-pierced heart of Mary entwined with the crown of thorns; and right, a flower (Jesus) that “shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom” (Isaiah: 11:1). In the base is a carving of Our Lady of Grace Chapel, Telgte, Germany. The carvings along the walls and frame include the Greek cross (arms of equal length), the Latin “M” and “R” for Maria (Blessed Virgin Mary) and a banding of fleur-de-lis (representation of the lily, a symbol of purity).



In this Shrine are illustrated the seven events which brought great sorrow to Mary. Beginning left, Mary and Joseph present Jesus to Simeon who “blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted, (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’” (Luke 2:34-35)

- “Not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39)—Jesus’ agony in the Garden of Gethsemane
- “And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom” (Luke 2:47)

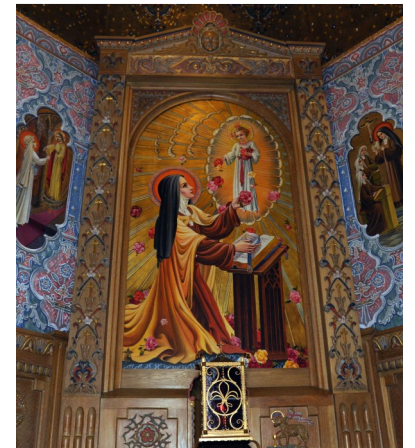
### ***Holy Water Fonts***

In the Catholic tradition, it is customary for worshippers to bless themselves with holy water as they enter and leave a church. This gesture is a reminder of baptism – the beginning of sacramental life as a child of God.

### ***Shrine of St. Therese of Lisieux***

This Shrine of St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower of Jesus, was added in 1944, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the international congregation of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis. The iron-work encloses the Shrine as a place of private prayer.

In the central image, St. Therese is kneeling before the Infant Jesus, who showers her with roses. Below this and carved in the wood, left, is a thorn-encircled rose, a symbol of suffering; and on the right is the Lamb of God, a symbol of the risen Christ who triumphs over death while the chalice at his feet is being filled with blood streaming from his pierced heart. In the base of this altar is a ship – which St. Therese often referred to as her soul – and the symbol IHS (Jesus); all of which denote “Therese of Jesus.” The carvings along the walls and frame include the Greek cross, roses (love), and a decorative banding of fleur-de-lis (stylized representation of the lily, a symbol of purity).



In the first panel, St. Therese prays to the Blessed Virgin Mary, standing on a garland of roses, who heals her of tuberculosis. In the second panel, St. Therese is presented to Pope Leo XIII on November 20, 1887, as she requests his permission to enter religious life. In the third panel, she is a bride with her bridegroom, Jesus, as she enters religious life on April 9, 1888. The remaining three panels depict St. Therese after she entered the Carmelite Order. First, she is teaching other Sisters. Second, she is preparing the sacred vessels for Holy Mass. Third, she contemplates Christ during her final illness and death at the age of 23 on September 30, 1897. (The Hospital Sisters operated St. John’s Tuberculosis Sanitarium on this property from 1919 to 1973. Patients visited this church in the balcony directly above this Shrine. The Shrine was the gift from Sister Grace O’Laughlin who, prior to her entrance as a Hospital Sister, made a donation with the request for a vocation shrine. She died April 17, 1945.)

### ***Please proceed left***

The stained glass windows beyond the Shrine of St. Therese of Lisieux are:

- St. Anthony of Padua preaching to the fish
- St. Anthony of Padua preaching conversion to different levels of society
- The Last Supper
- Jesus with St. John
- St. Francis of Assisi with all creatures
- St. Francis of Assisi at Greccio, Italy, and the first Nativity scene in 1223
- St. Francis of Assisi with Luchesio and Buonadonna, husband and wife – the first members of the Order of Penance (later known as the Third Order, and now known as the Order of Franciscans Secular)
- St. Francis of Assisi offering food to the poor

### ***Nativity Scene***

In 1223, St. Francis of Assisi wanted to create a living image of the birth of Jesus as a way to bring the message of Christmas to the people in Greccio, Italy. He gathered people and animals in a cave on the outskirts of Greccio before an infant Jesus statue. On Christmas Eve, families witnessed this event and began to understand the meaning of the celebration.

This church's Nativity Scene was reproduced from original designs of Helmut Bourger (1929-1989) and created in Germany in the Ceramic Studio of Gregor Lerchen. The figurines are made of clay, and the colors are burned on the surface; the faces and hands intentionally left unpainted in their natural color to communicate the universal nature of humanity "...the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground..." (Gen. 2:7). The figure of St. Francis of Assisi was made exclusively for this church. The artist traveled to Assisi, Italy, to form an image of St. Francis and took photos of St. Francis' garment. The artist made a mesh of sackcloth over the clay to give the garment the appearance of a traditional habit. This Nativity Scene was added to this church in 2007.



### ***Our Lady of Perpetual Help Altar***

The altar is composed of rare Italian and Greek marble. The statue (1932), among the first colored marble statues imported in United States, consists of a collection of marble. The flesh is first quality statuary marble from the Apuan Alps, Italy. The mantle is Campan Vert marble from the Espradet Quarries of Hautes-Pyrenees,

Antico marble from Greece. Possibly the rarest of the marbles from Brazil used is that which appears to show the grain of the wood in the carpenter's square. This statue was given in memory of Sister Asteria by her mother, Maria (Sycora) Borofka, Bloomer, WI.



Above this altar are paintings by Henrich Nuettgens. St. Francis of Assisi's love for Jesus' birth that revealed the great love, poverty, and humility of God is in the lower mural. In the center panel is the Child Jesus in the arms of his mother, Mary. Kneeling before them is St. Francis, who had chosen poverty as his way of life (represented by the left figure, Lady Poverty). The figures, from left to right, are the Three Wise Men bringing gifts to the Christ Child, shepherds and St. Joseph in adoration, St. Clare, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Dominic, and St. Francis (kneeling) - all saints who cared for the least of their brothers and sisters.

The upper mural, also by Heinrich Nuettgens, is the representation of St. Francis of Assisi's final and complete embrace of poverty. In September 1224, while on a retreat on Mount La Verna, Italy, he so completely embraced the poor Jesus Christ that he received the wounds of Jesus in his feet, hands, and side – known as stigmata. The angels on the right display a banner with "Mein Gott u mein Alles" ("My God and My all"), a life-long prayer of St. Francis.

The stained glass windows in this Chapel are:

- St. Francis of Assisi imploring Jesus and Mary to be guardians of his Rule of Life
- St. Francis of Assisi's conversion from a knight to a follower of Christ

### ***Tyrolean Crucifix***

The design of this crucifix was executed by Gottfried Moroder, Tyrol, Switzerland. The cross bears the symbols of the four Evangelists: St. John is depicted as an eagle for he wrote as a visionary; St. Luke is depicted as a steer because he described the sacrificial offerings at the end of the Old Testament; St. Matthew is depicted as a human face for having mainly written on Christ's humanity; and St. Mark is depicted as a lion because of his vivid description of the sermons of the great preacher in the desert, St. John the Baptist. Below Jesus' feet is a serpent coiled through a skull depicting "Golgotha" (the Place of the Skull where Jesus was crucified). This represents the skull of Adam "For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall be brought to life." (1 Corinthians 15:22) The letters "INRI" are initials in Latin, the official language of the Roman Empire, for the title "Iesvs Nazarenvs Rex Ivdæorvm" (Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews). "Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross...it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write *The King of the Jews*'; but that he said, *I am the King of the Jews*.' Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I



## Pipe Organ

The pipe organ, manufactured by the Casavant Freres Limitee, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada, was installed in June 1951. The instrument consists of 1,128 pipes, stored in two chambers in the balcony behind the sanctuary, that are voiced in the French Romantic style. The organ has three manuals and 17 ranks.

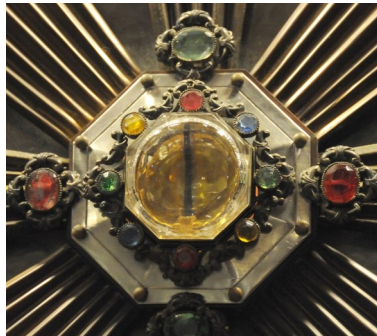
## Relic of the True Cross

A relic is an object of religious significance, carefully preserved with an air of veneration as a tangible memorial. Since 1945, a relic of the True Cross, the Cross upon which Christ was crucified, has been displayed in this church.

This precious relic of the True Cross belonged to Pope Pius IX (1846-78), who displayed it in his private quarters in the Apostolic Palace, Vatican City. He bequeathed it to Cardinal Josephi Stella, his secretary, upon whose death it was bequeathed to Nicolo Lucarelli, who was the sacristan of Santa Maria Church, Gualdo Tadino, Italy, where Monsignor Josephi Angeletti was the chaplain. In this church, the relic was exposed for veneration on special occasions. At Mr. Lucarelli's death, it was bequeathed to Monsignor Angeletti, who bequeathed it to Professor August Zolen, Sheboygan, WI, a composer of sacred music.

In 1944 while Mother Magdalene Wiedlocher, Provincial Superior of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, was in Sheboygan for visitation with Sisters serving at St. Nicholas Hospital, she learned of this relic from Mr. Zolen. He presented it to her on May 22, 1945, and on December 18, 1945, it was displayed in this church. The authenticity of this Holy Relic is established by a 1901 document signed by His Excellency, Nicolaus Cola, Bishop of Perugia, Italy; also by the sealed wax applied on it with the stamp of Monsignor Josephi Stella, used when he was the secretary of Pope Pius IX.

The relic of the True Cross is contained within a reliquary fashioned from a combination of bronze and Swedish iron, hand-forged and set in a base of Botticino marble imported from Italy. The relic rests vertically within a natural crystal obtained from European riverbeds and is surrounded by silver filigree and semi-precious stones from Florence, Italy.



## St. Joseph Altar

The altar is made from rare Italian and Greek marble. The statue (1932), among the first colored marble statues imported to the United States, consists of several marbles. The mantle is Rouge Royal marble from the Vodelee quarries of Belgium, the tunic is of Breccia Dorato marble from Seravezza, Italy, and the base is Verde

France. The tunic is made of Perzichino marble from Piemonte, Italy. The Child's robe is composed of Gris Des Ardennes marble from Hamault, Belgium, and the base is of Verde Antico marble from Greece. The crowns are of Giallo Siena marble from Italy that is inlaid with Venetian mosaic from Italy. The statue depicts the Christ Child as he envisions his suffering and death. He runs to his mother who lifts him into her arms and in doing so, his sandal slips from his foot. This statue was given in memory of Sister Asteria by her mother, Maria (Sycora) Borofka (Bloomer, WI).



Above this altar are paintings by Heinrich Nuettgens of the Christ Child in the workshop of his father, St. Joseph. Christ takes two pieces of wood to form a cross – the foreshadowing of his Passion and death. In the area above is a painting by Nuettgens of Christ revealing his Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. The angels, left, hold a banner with the words “S.S. Cor Jesu” (Sacred Heart of Jesus—a devotion that became popular after St. Margaret Mary's death in 1690).

## Reliquary

The gold-colored reliquary (a shrine for relics) contains a first class relic (bone fragment) of St. Francis of Assisi.

## Sanctuary, Altars, and Tabernacle

*(Please proceed to the nave and be seated or stand facing the altar.)*

A sanctuary is the most sacred place of a church or temple, and the red sanctuary lamp, which burns continuously, is a reminder that God is present in the tabernacle through the form of bread and wine. This sanctuary is enclosed with an ornately-carved terra cotta and marble communion railing along with bronze gates and a marble tile floor. The consecrated Altar of Sacrifice (lower altar where Mass is celebrated) is a symbol of the Risen Christ and the top of this altar contains a stone with relics of Saints.

The consecrated Altar of Repose (higher altar) is made of rare marble from Greece and Italy. The gold covered tabernacle (Place of Divine Dwelling) was designed in Belgium after images of the Ark of the Covenant. In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant was to be a portable place of worship for the Hebrews when they left Egypt following the Exodus through the time of the Book of Judges when they were engaged in conquering the land. Guarded by two angels in adoration, it contained the Tablets of the 10 Commandments, manna, and the rod of Aaron, all of which were symbols of God's covenant with



his people. In the New Testament, the new covenant of God's relationship with his people is Jesus, the living Bread. This tabernacle, too, is the place of Divine Dwelling, for here is the presence of God in the form of bread.



The door features the four evangelists (writers of the Gospels from the New Testament) amid lapis lazuli – a semi-precious stone known for its intense blue color. Clockwise, beginning top right, St. John, St. Luke, St. Mark, and St. Matthew. Christian tradition has associated the evangelists with the four living creatures that surround God's throne (Ezekiel and Revelation). John is depicted as an eagle (Christians should strive toward eternity); Luke is depicted as an ox (Christians should be prepared to sacrifice themselves in following Christ); Mark is depicted as a lion (Christians should be courageous on the path of salvation); and Matthew is depicted as a human (Christians must use their reasoning skills for salvation).

The walls of the sanctuary and those of the left and right altars are painted to simulate red (symbolic of love) tapestries with wavy lines rising upward to heaven as a symbol of incense and prayers. The stars represent all who serve in the healing ministry of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis.

### ***Crucifix and Canopy***



The highly ornamented crucifix was made in Belgium by a master artisan and is the only one of its kind in existence. The letters Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) refer to "I am Alpha and Omega, says the Lord God, the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty." (Rev. 1:8) Surrounding the Altar of Repose are four Broeche violet marble Corinthian columns supporting a bronze and gold-covered canopy (baldacchino). At the corners are angels with trumpets, symbolizing the call to judgment and announcing the second coming of Christ. Within the sunburst are the letters IHS, an abbreviation for the Greek title, Jesus Hominum Salvator (Jesus Savior of Humankind). The canopy is modeled after the tent under which the Ark of the Covenant was carried.

### ***Mural and Dome***



In the area above the sanctuary is the mural "Christ the Pantocrator" (Almighty). It was painted in 1924 by Heinrich Nuettgens. On either side are the figures of earthly kings removing their crowns in homage. In addition, Melchizedek is making his offering to God (far left) and Abraham is preparing his son Isaac for sacrifice (far right). In the corners of the dome are the four evangelists: (clockwise) John, Matthew, Luke, and Mark. Illustrated between them are paintings of Popes: (clockwise) Paul VI (1963-78), Pius XII (1939-58), St. Peter (32-67), and St. John XXIII (1958-63). Rising 120 feet from the floor, the dome contains 24 windows of angels and 750 stars that symbolize the members present (circa 1964) in the American Province of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis.



***Please proceed to the right around the sanctuary.***