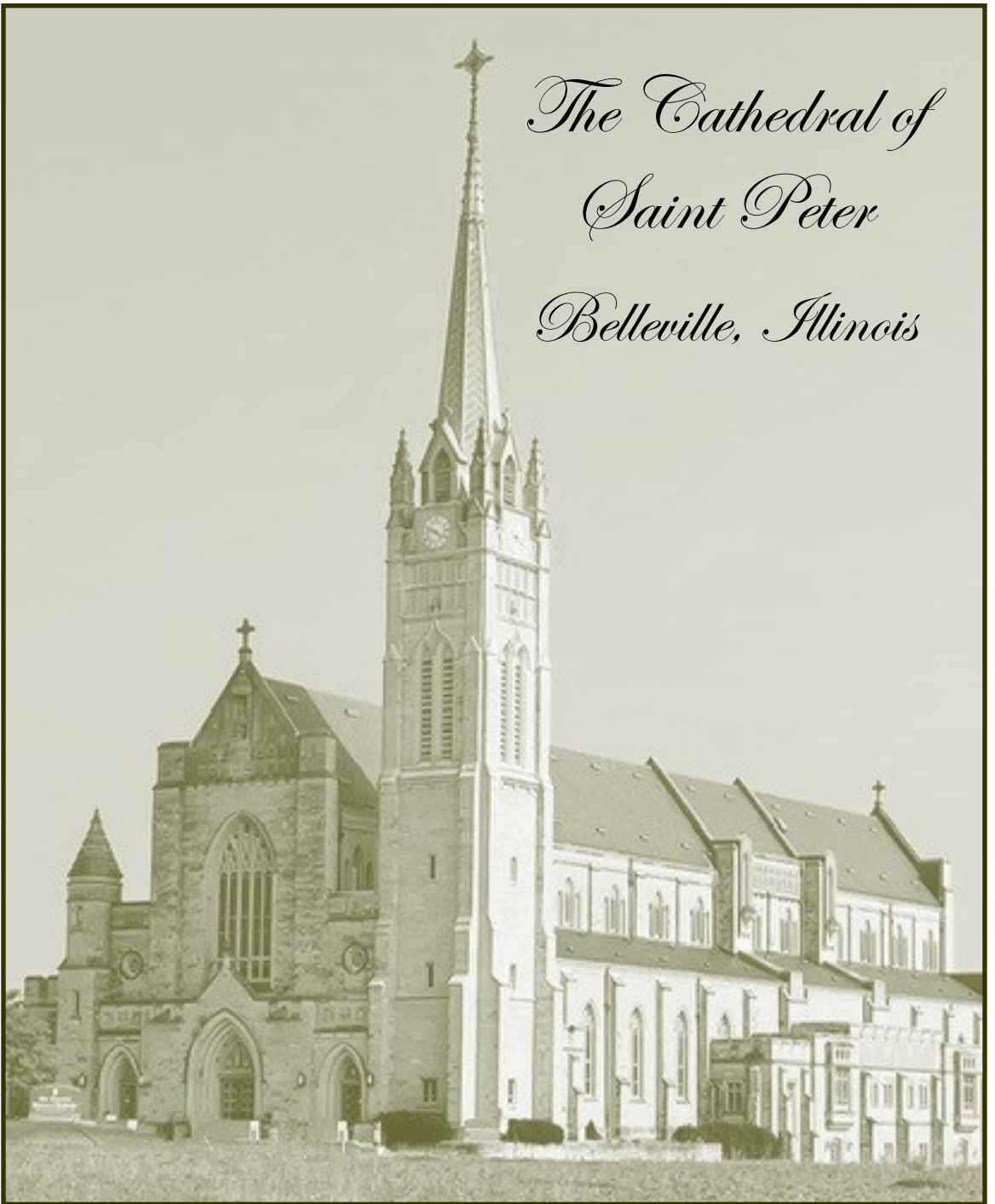
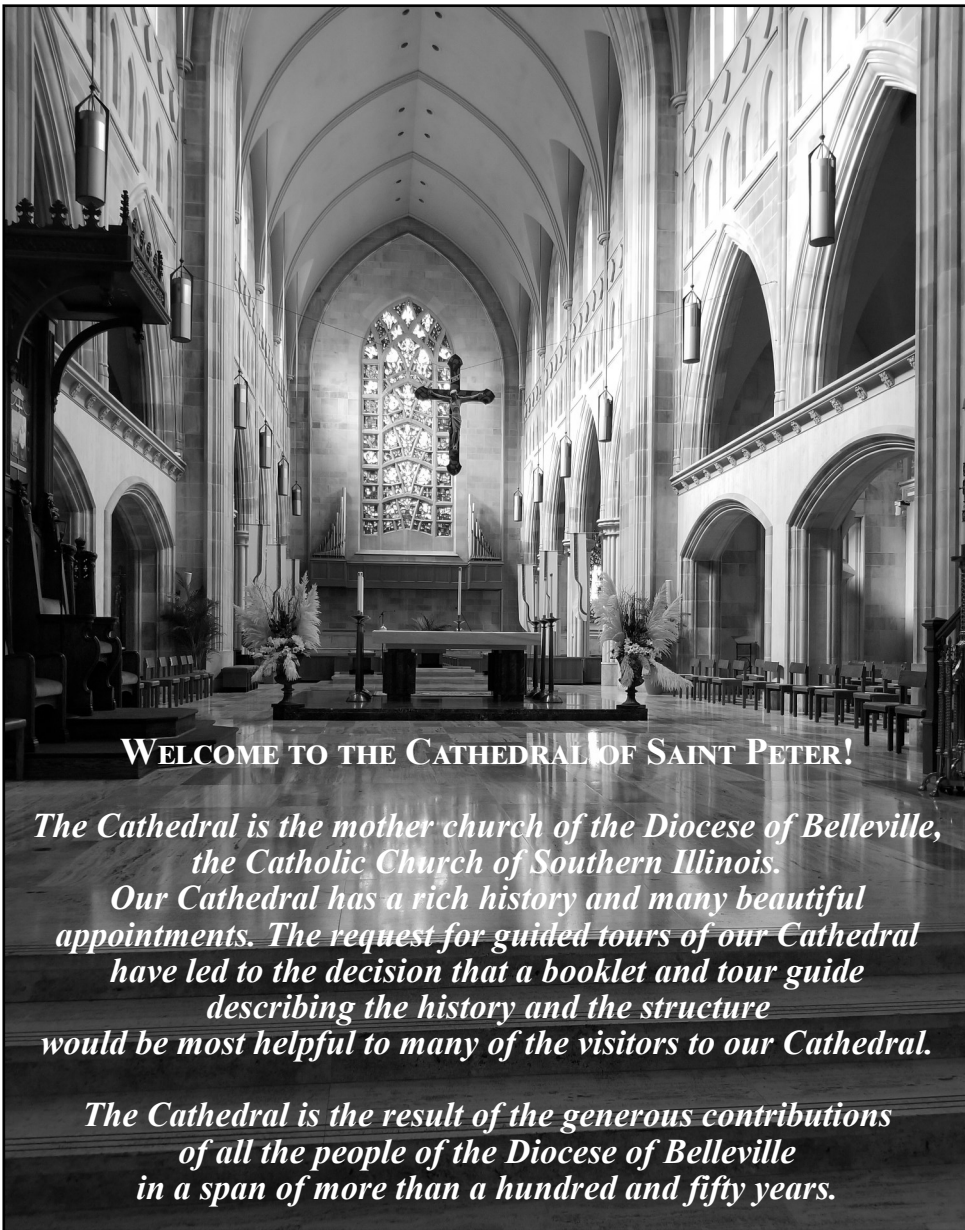


*The Cathedral of  
Saint Peter  
Belleville, Illinois*



TU ES PETRUS ET  
SUPER HANC PETRAM  
AEDIFICABO ECCLESIAM  
MEAM ✠ ✠ ✠  
ANNO MDCCLXVI · ERECTA  
MCMXVI · REPONATA



**WELCOME TO THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PETER!**

*The Cathedral is the mother church of the Diocese of Belleville, the Catholic Church of Southern Illinois. Our Cathedral has a rich history and many beautiful appointments. The request for guided tours of our Cathedral have led to the decision that a booklet and tour guide describing the history and the structure would be most helpful to many of the visitors to our Cathedral.*

*The Cathedral is the result of the generous contributions of all the people of the Diocese of Belleville in a span of more than a hundred and fifty years.*

**GOD'S BLESSING ON YOU AND MAY YOU HAVE A PLEASANT AND SPIRITUALLY REWARDING VISIT.**

# HISTORY OF ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL PARISH

## EARLY HISTORY

Saint Peter's Parish had its humble beginnings at the Stauder farm near Shiloh, Illinois, where Masses were first being offered in 1836. The parish was established in 1842. In the spring of 1843, six months after the first pastor arrived in Belleville, ground was broken for the original wooden frame church which was located just east of the present Cathedral. Originally, the parish was called Saint Barnabas the Apostle; however, it was changed to Saint Peter's in 1847 and was dedicated by Bishop William Quarter of Chicago. Twenty years later, during the Civil War, when this church proved inadequate for the growing congregation, the cornerstone was laid for a new church in June of 1863. As the church neared completion, one of the main pillars crumbled and the *clerestory* (top story) fell. It was rebuilt and dedicated on November 6, 1866.

On January 7, 1887, the Diocese of Alton was divided. The southern part of Illinois became the Diocese of Belleville and the St. Peter's Church became St. Peter's Cathedral. Most Reverend John Janssen was consecrated the first Bishop of Belleville on April 25, 1888.

## CATHEDRAL FIRE AND RECONSTRUCTION

On January 4, 1912, fire destroyed the Cathedral. A cause of the fire was never determined. Because the exterior walls were salvageable, a new Cathedral was built on the same spot using the same basic design as the old and modeled after the interior of the Cathedral of Exeter, England, in the English Gothic style. Typical of this style is the use of *tracery* or



St. Peter's Cathedral in Belleville one day after the 1912 fire.  
Photo Credit: Reime Photography. Belleville News Democrat Archives

decoration on the walls, windows and ceilings. The crypt below the sanctuary was added during the reconstruction. This was put to early use. Before the Cathedral had been completed, Bishop Janssen died on July 2, 1913. The Cathedral was changed into a suitable temporary setting for his funeral services. He was the first bishop to be buried in the new crypt. Construction resumed and the members of the parish were worshipping in the Cathedral by Christmas.

The first great event celebrated in the new Cathedral was the consecration of the Most Reverend Henry Althoff, a native son of the diocese, the second bishop of Belleville. His consecration took place on February 24, 1914.

On Ascension Thursday, May 6, 1937, a fire again threatened the Cathedral. Fortunately, it was discovered while in its early stages and was soon brought under control.

## **RENOVATION AND EXPANSION**

By the early 1950s, the red brick outer walls, which were laid in 1866 and had survived the great fire, began to show symptoms of age and weathering. An architectural study determined that the walls were still sound and that they would accept the added weight of the new outer covering. A new stone facing of Winona splitface dolomite with Indiana limestone trim was added between 1956 and 1957. Also, at this time, the Baptistry was reconstructed, the terrace was added in front of the Cathedral, and the new east staircase to the balcony was constructed. This project was known as the Phase I renovation.

Phase II of the project was more complicated. It involved extending the length of the Cathedral and adding new sacristies, shrines and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Before work could begin, additional property had to be acquired and a new rectory to be built, for the former one stood in the place where the south nave is now located. The project began in January of 1966 and the work was completed by December of 1968. The main altar was consecrated by Bishop Albert R. Zuroweste on Saturday, December 21, 1968.



The renovation coincided with the liturgical changes of Vatican II, so there was no need for later modification.

## **RECENT BISHOPS**

Bishop Albert R. Zuroweste retired on September 3, 1976 and passed to his eternal reward on March 28, 1987. The Most Reverend William M. Cosgrove, auxiliary bishop of the diocese of Cleveland, Ohio was appointed to replace him on the day of Bishop Zuroweste's retirement and was installed on October 28, 1976. In 1979 Bishop Cosgrove requested an auxiliary bishop. Stanley G. Schlarman, a priest of the Diocese was appointed titular Bishop of Capri and auxiliary Bishop of Belleville March 13, 1979. He was ordained a bishop on May 14, 1979. He remained an auxiliary until March 1, 1983, when he was appointed Bishop of Dodge City, Kansas. Because of ill health, Bishop Cosgrove retired on May 19, 1981.

The Most Reverend John N. Wurm, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, was appointed as our Bishop on September 19, 1981 and installed as Fifth Bishop of Belleville

on November 4, 1981. He did not serve as Bishop for long, for he died of cancer on April 17, 1984. The Most Reverend James Patrick Keleher was appointed the Sixth Bishop of Belleville on October 23, 1984 and ordained a bishop on December 11, 1984. He was installed as Archbishop of Kansas City, Kansas on September 18, 1993. The seventh Bishop of Belleville, Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory was ordained an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago on December 13, 1983. Bishop Gregory was appointed Bishop of Belleville in 1993, and was installed the Seventh Bishop of Belleville on February 10, 1994. Bishop Gregory later served as Archbishop of Atlanta and Cardinal-Archbishop of Washington, D.C.

Most Reverend Bishop Edward K. Braxton, was ordained an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Louis on May 17, 1995. Bishop Braxton was appointed Eighth Bishop of Belleville on March 15, 2005. He was installed on June 22, 2005. When he retired in 2020, he was named Bishop-emeritus of the diocese.

Reverend Michael G. McGovern, a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, was appointed Ninth Bishop of Belleville on April 3, 2020. He was ordained and installed as Bishop of Belleville on July 11, 2020.

## **PASTORS, RECTORS, AND PASTORAL STAFF OF SAINT PETER'S**

Many priests have served at the Cathedral. The first resident priest was Reverend Joseph Kuenster, who served from November 1842 until September, 1845. He was succeeded by Reverend G. H. Oslangenberger who served until November 1855.

Reverend P. J. Baltes was pastor from November, 1855 to January 1870, when he was named Bishop of Alton. He was followed by Reverend Louis Hinssen. In 1882, the Benedictine Fathers began service at St. Peter's. Those who served were Fathers Lucas, Alphonse, Chrysostomus and Beno. The Benedictines remained until the church was given the status of *Mother Church of the Diocese*. The first rector of Saint Peter's Cathedral was Reverend C. J. Zwiesler. He had been the former rector of the Cathedral in Alton. He began his service in April, 1888, but resigned his position in October, 1889 because of ill health.

He was succeeded by the Reverend F.J. Budde. In 1896, Reverend Henry J. Hagen, who was Chancellor of the Diocese and assistant at the Cathedral, was appointed rector to succeed Father Budde. Father Hagen died March 14, 1908, after a lingering illness. Reverend Joseph H. Schlarman, who had been assistant at the Cathedral, was appointed administrator of the parish upon the death of Father Hagen. On January 25, 1921, he became Chancellor of the Diocese and Rector of the Cathedral and was given the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

On June 17, 1930, George Cardinal Mundelein consecrated Bishop-elect Schlarman as Bishop of Peoria. Reverend Joseph M. Mueller was appointed rector on August 28, 1930. Monsignor Mueller was named Bishop of Sioux City, Iowa, and was consecrated a Bishop in the Cathedral on October 6, 1947. On April 28, 1948, Reverend Raymond Harbaugh was appointed rector of the Cathedral. Monsignor Harbaugh continued in this capacity until he passed away in his sleep on February 5, 1955. Father Gregory J. Holtgrave was appointed rector of the Cathedral the same day. Monsignor Holtgrave served as rector until December, 1971. He was succeeded by Reverend James R. McCormick. Father McCormick was named a Monsignor in 1976. Monsignor McCormick remained in his position until July, 1988, when he retired. Monsignor Joseph R. Schwaegel was appointed rector in July of 1988. Reverend Eugene Wojcik was named rector of the Cathedral by Bishop Keleher on June 1, 1993. In November of 1997,

Reverend James A. Buerster was appointed rector. Father Buerster was named a Monsignor in the summer of 2000. Reverend John T. Myler was named rector of the Cathedral in July, 2007. He was named became Monsignor in January 2012. by Pope Benedict XVI.

Over the years numerous priests have served as parochial vicars of the Cathedral Parish. Many deacons, religious and lay people have ministered, worked and volunteered to make St. Peter's Cathedral a vibrant, active parish. For over a hundred and fifty years the School Sisters of Notre Dame have been a constant presence at the Cathedral, educating children and guiding many facets of parish life.

## TOUR

### EXTERIOR SCULPTURES

The exterior of the building contains many symbolic sculptures. Throughout the whole Cathedral one will see images of lilies, wheat, fleur-de-lis, and crowns. These symbolize the resurrection; the Eucharist (local agriculture); Our Mother Mary (and Belleville's French heritage); and the kingdom of Jesus Christ. These images can be seen all around the outside of the Cathedral.

On the front entrance, you will see over the right door the Coat of Arms of Pope Pius XII with Bishop Janssen's Coat of Arms high above on the North face of the Church. Over the main entrance is a sculpture depicting the Holy Family. Mary is represented by the Fleur-de-lis and Joseph is represented by the saw and square. An image of Christ the King is in the center. Over the left door is the Coat of Arms of Leo XIII; high above it is Bishop Althoff's Coat of Arms. High above, in the niche of the north face, is a statue of Saint Peter, the patron of the Cathedral. High up on the north face of the steeple is the Paraclete - the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove. Other sculptures, on the other sides of the steeple, are three fish, a triangle, and the fleur-de-lis.



Inside the bell tower are three brass bells of 36, 43, and 54 cast in Troy, NY in 1856. At the base of the steeple one will see the cornerstone with the Latin inscription that reads, "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church 1866 — erected, 1956 — renovated." There are two pedestals on the terrace which were built to hold statues as well as conceal the floodlighting. On the east face of the east stair tower is the Coat of Arms of Bishop Zuroweste and below it over the door is the Coat of Arms of the Diocese of Belleville.

Continuing around to the Garfield Street (south) entrances, there are more Coats of Arms of the Popes. Represented over the right door is John XXIII; over the center door is Pius X, and over the left door is Paul VI. On the west side, Second Street, over the oriel bay windows are sculptured symbols of Mary and the saints. The dove over the crown symbolizes Mary, Queen of Martyrs; and the Chi-Rho (P with an X through it) combined with the letter "M" symbolizes Mary, Mother of Christ. Over the other window is a representation of Saint Paul as a sword and scroll; Saint Andrew, the brother of Peter, with a cross in the shape of an "X" with an overlaid branch; and Saint Peter, as an inverted cross with overlaid crossed keys. On both the

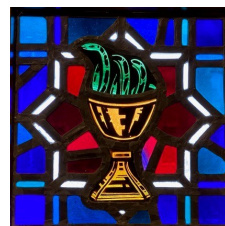
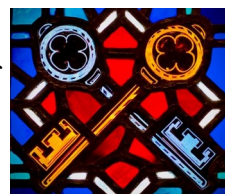


east and west sides near the top of the Cathedral you will notice two empty niches which were built to hold statues of the four evangelists. At this time no statues have been commissioned.

## MAIN ENTRANCE STAINED GLASS

Upon entering the Cathedral through the main entrance, you will see several stained glass panels in the main entrance doorway. These windows contain the symbols of the apostles. From the inside:

- Beginning in the upper left hand corner, are three bags, a symbol for Matthew, who before becoming an apostle, worked as a tax collector.
- The cross and two loaves represent Philip who brought to Christ the lad with the loaves and fishes which fed the multitude.
- A knife and the Scriptures symbolize Bartholomew who was flayed alive and then crucified.
- Thomas was depicted as a carpenter's square and spear because he built a church with his own hands, and a spear was the instrument of his martyrdom.
- The three shells represent James the Greater, in memory of his missionary journeys to Samaria, Judea, and Spain.
- The keys symbolize Peter for he was given the responsibility of keeper of the kingdom.
- The x-shaped cross represents the type of cross on which Andrew was crucified.
- The chalice and snake stand for John, who was offered a poisoned chalice in an attempt on his life.
- The fish and the Scriptures symbolize Simon, a fisher of humanity, who accompanied Jude on many missionary journeys.
- The saw represents James the Less who was thrown from a pinnacle, stoned and then sawed in half by the enemies of the early church.
- Jude's missionary activities are symbolized by a ship.
- An axe superimposed on the open Scriptures refers to Matthias because he was stoned to death and then beheaded.



## NORTH NAVE AND ORIGINAL BAPTISTRY

Leaving the *narthex* (vestibule) and entering the nave, the true splendor of the Cathedral is seen. The old and new blend harmoniously. Even though the interior of the north nave is more highly decorated with plasterwork, it blends well with the simplified stone of the sanctuary and south nave. Immediately to the right is the small Original Baptistry. The Baptistry, prior to Second Vatican Council, was traditionally located in a separate room signifying entrance into the church, but also the journey ahead to the Eucharist and other sacraments.

Under the balcony area you will notice several grotesque figures,





*gargoyles*, holding up the balcony. These are typical of Gothic architecture and trace their origins to a time when there were still non-Christian people who worshipped pagan spirits. These *gargoyles* were believed to scare away evil spirits.

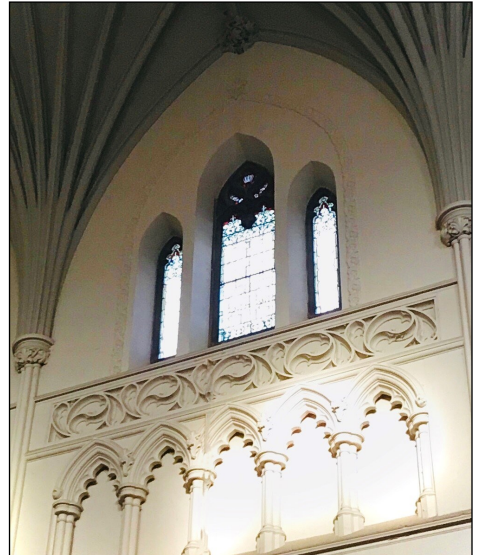
Gothic architecture is a forerunner of the modern day skyscraper. The pointed arch allowed people to build a higher structure aiming heavenward, while allowing the weight to be distributed on buttresses and pillars, opening the wall areas for great panels of glass. In a day when people could not read, the Biblical stories were depicted in these windows of stained glass. So the tradition continues in St. Peter's Cathedral. In the north nave, the lives of Jesus and Mary are presented to us, as is common in many

Cathedrals in the world. Starting on the west side, is the presentation of Mary in the temple by her parents, Saints Anne and Joachim; the wedding of Mary and Joseph; the Annunciation; and the Visitation. Depicted on the east side of the Nave are the events of the Nativity, the Finding in the Temple, and the Miracle at Cana. (Several windows were lost in the north nave with the addition of the east and west vestibules. Those lost were of Adam and Eve being driven from Paradise, the Risen Lord appearing to Mary, the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in heaven, the archangel Raphael leading Tobias, and the Guardian Angel windows.)

The large window on the north wall is of Saint Cecilia, the patroness of musicians, and along side her are King David playing his harp and Pope Gregory the Great, the composer of Gregorian Chant. Two angels flank David and Gregory. The bottom part depicts Saint Cecilia lying uncorrupted in her martyrdom. Prior to the last renovation, a second children's balcony separated the two sections of the window.

All gothic churches have three distinct levels that distinguish them from other architecture. The lowest level is the *Arcade* with its tall columns, capitals and pointed arches. The *Triforium* is the middle level with its carved arches that hold up the upper level of the Cathedral. The *Clerestory*, at the top, is noted for its vaulted ceilings and its window *tracery*.

The windows in the north nave *clerestory* contain a great deal of symbolism. Around the upper windows is a pomegranate frieze, symbolic of the power of our Lord bursting from the tomb in His resurrection. This frieze connects the three lone sectors into one unit, signifying three in one, the symbol of the Trinity. The inside of these windows carries a *palmete* design (design like an open hand) in red, a symbol of Christ's death in sacrificial love, thus connecting death and resurrection. The background, stars in two shades of olive green, reflect the fact that heaven and earth were united by the death and resurrection of our Lord. Crowning the tip of the unit is a sculptured radiant cross, the symbol of the church triumphant.





## MARIAN SHRINE

Just west of the sanctuary is the Marian Shrine - Our Lady's Chapel. After the closing of the Notre Dame Academy for girls in 1972, the stained glass window of the Immaculate Conception, the shrine's altar, and a marble statue of Mary from the Academy chapel were donated by alumnae to the Cathedral. The statues of the Sacred Heart, of Saint Joseph and of the Infant Prague are more recent donations to the Cathedral. Votive candles - signs of constant prayer for special intentions - are available in the chapel.

## SANCTUARY

The Cathedral possesses a spacious sanctuary area, which allows for the concelebration of all the priests of the diocese at large Sacred Liturgies. The sanctuary is part of the addition of 1966, as can be seen in slight changes in architecture.

As you enter the sanctuary, you will see the large Baptismal font - providing for the immersion or pouring of water during the rite of Baptism, for adults (at the Easter Vigil) and for infants. Near the font is brought the Easter (or Paschal) candle - representing the light of Christ, and the flame of faith.

On the same east side of the sanctuary is the wood and glass cabinet called the Ambry, that holds the three silver urns of blessed oils: the Oil of Catechumens - used on candidates for Baptism; the Sacred Chrism - the beautifully perfumed oil used in a baptism, Confirmation, Ordinations, and the dedication of altars; and the Oil of the Sick - for the anointing of those who are ill or very elderly. The oils are blessed each



year by the Bishop at the Mass of Chrism during Holy Week.

On the west side of the Cathedral sanctuary is the large "ambo" or "pulpit" from which the readings from Sacred Scripture are proclaimed during Cathedral liturgies. Only the Scripture, the homily and the universal prayer (petitions) are read from the ambo - to emphasize the sublime importance of the Word of the Lord. Included are antique







carvings of the four evangelists - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - and the central image of the Holy Spirit.

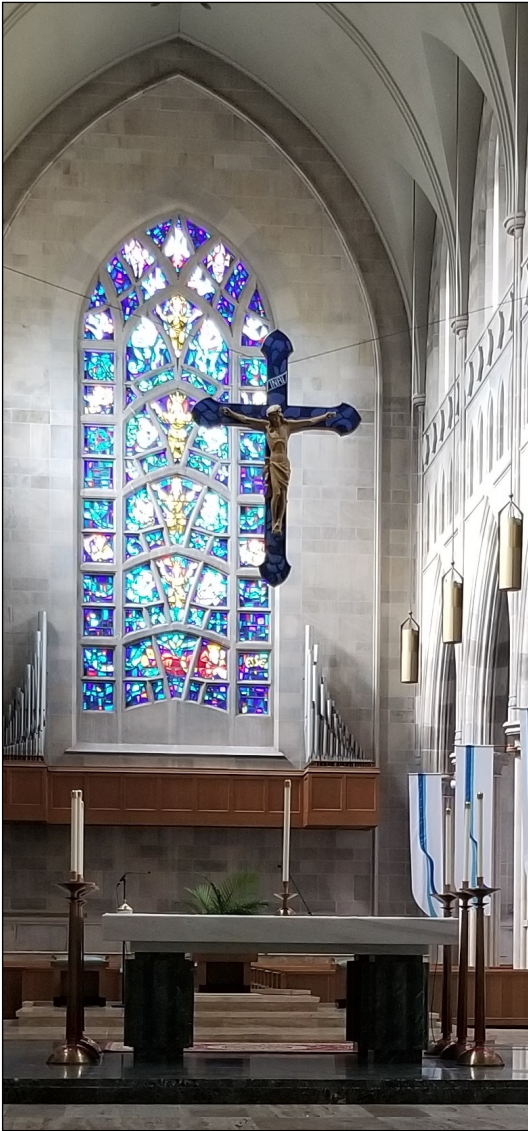
At the center of the sanctuary is the main altar - a primary sign of Christ the Priest and Victim. It is not simply a “table”; it is the place of both Sacrifice and Banquet. The four dark green marble *stripes* or legs of the main altar - weight about one ton each. The base “platform” on which the altar stands is called the “*predella*”. (The word “altar” itself comes from the ancient word for “high place”.) The white marble *mensa* or top of the altar weighs three tons, measures a full six feet by eight feet, and is a solid twelve inches thick. It is one of the largest, most perfect pieces of Carrara marble in the United States.



Beneath the altar *mensa* are relics of the early Christian martyrs Saints Laurentius, Redemptus and Vincentius. Into the top of the altar are carved five crosses - recalling the five wounds of Christ.

On the east wall of the sanctuary is the *cathedra* or Bishop’s chair. It is from the Latin word *cathedra* that this Mother Church takes its name. Only the Bishop of the diocese uses this chair (the seats on either side are for assisting deacons) because the Bishop is, in Christ’s name, the principal Priest, Teacher and Servant/Leader of this Diocese.

The Bishop’s “coat of arms” hangs above his chair. The coats of arms of previous Belleville bishops hang on the East wall. In 2012, to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Diocese and to observe the 100th anniversary of the Cathedral fire of 1913, the ornate ambo/pulpit and the magnificent *cathedra* were restored.



Also at that time, the lovely crucifix - with layers of artistic blue enamel, which match a dominant color in the Cathedral's windows - was suspended above the main altar in accord with the liturgical directives that an image of Christ Crucified on or near the altar as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice for us.

## **ORGAN**

There are two Moller pipe organs in the Cathedral, both playable from either of two consoles. The principal organ in the loft of the north nave has three keyboards and 63 ranks of pipes. In 2021-22, the organs were completed and rebuilt by Christopher Soer Pipe Organs, LLC — thanks to the generosity of Cathedral parishioners.

## **JESSE TREE WINDOW AND SOUTH NAVE STAINED GLASS**

The great window in the south nave, executed and designed by Viggo Bech Rambusch, an internationally renowned church designer, is called the Tree of Jesse Window. It is based on an illuminated text found in a medieval Dutch book of Psalms. The ancestry of Christ in the form of a family tree is its subject. This recalls the gradual unfolding of God's plan of redemption. The subjects executed in stained glass in magnificent colors are: At the bottom Jesse sleeping; then his son, King David; King Solomon; the Blessed Virgin Mary; and at the very top is Jesus Christ. The seven doves in the window represent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Also pictured are the four evangelists: Saints Mark, Matthew, Luke and John and the six

great prophets: Moses, Eliazah, Jeremiah, Ezeiel, Isaiah, and John the Baptist. This window is the glory of the new south nave of the Cathedral.

To the west of the sanctuary is the "mothers' room" that provides a glass walled room for families with small children during the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

The window to the left of the Tree of Jesse Window depicts Christ giving the keys to Saint Peter, the patron saint of the Cathedral. The window on the right features the images of Saints John XXIII and Paul VI, who were the leaders of the Second Vatican Council; it

commemorates Saint Paul VI's trip to the United Nations and Saint John XXIII's great encyclical *Mater et Magistra*. The other two windows depict the early history of the Church in Illinois and the United States with such figures as Pere Marquette, the Kickapoo and Flathead Indian Tribes, Chief Chicago, and early Franciscan missionaries; the first parishes in the Diocese: Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia, and Holy Family Parish in Cahokia, the first American saints, Mother Cabrini and Elizabeth Ann Seton; and other important events. On the walls of the South Nave are also found the Stations of the Cross, by Raffo Fifli, an Italian artist, who also designed all the marble altars. Bishop Zuroweste worked closely with him in choosing the design while he was in Rome attending the sessions of Vatican II (1962-1965).

### **BLESSED SACRAMENT CHAPEL**

The Blessed Sacrament Chapel is located to the east of the Sanctuary. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel was added not only as a place for smaller weekday Masses and for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in four Confessionals, but especially for reservation of the Holy Eucharist. Five sanctuary lamps - perhaps representing Christ's five wounds - encircle the bronze tabernacle. Inside the tabernacle is reserved the Blessed Sacrament, which we believe is truly the Body and Blood of Christ. The Body of Christ is reserved for the distribution of communion to the sick and homebound, and also for private adoration. The stained glass window in the Chapel reminds us of Jesus' appearance at Emmaus on first Easter day, appearing to His disciples in the breaking of the bread. In the chapel two altars can be found for the daily celebration of Mass, and to hold the tabernacle. The altars are designed in a similar fashion to the main altar. The reproduction of daVinci's Last Supper originally graced the dining room of the Bishop's residence which is the present day Chancery. It was restored before being brought to its present location. Kneelers and chairs were used instead of pews to facilitate reversing the chapel seating in the event of a large congregation at a Mass in the main body of the Cathedral.



In the chapel, a crowned image of the ancient icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help is venerated during weekly novena prayers.

### **PROCESSIONAL FOYER, MUSEUM AND BISHOP'S CHAPEL**

To the east of the South Nave is a bronze statue of Saint Peter, commissioned especially for the Cathedral and cast in Italy. It was placed in the Cathedral on the first anniversary of Bishop Zuroweste's death. Opposite the statue of Saint Peter is a quilt with the history of the Cathedral.





The long hallway is called the Processional Foyer used for lining up processions for the many large liturgies that take place in the Cathedral.

A museum preserving the rich history of the Diocese of Belleville is located in the atrium area outside of the Bishop's Chapel. The beautiful oak altar - hand carved - was originally used in the Bishop's residence by Bishop Janssen in the late 1800s. The marble table in the Bishop's Chapel was built for the pontifical vestments to be placed on in preparation for the Sacred Liturgy. The old *cathedra* may also be found in the chapel. Also in this room is the final resting place for the Most Reverend Albert R. Zuroweste, third bishop of Belleville. Bishop Zuroweste was entombed in this chapel at his request. The other deceased bishops are buried in the crypt.

The southern part of the Cathedral also contains numerous sacristies for the bishop, priests and other ministers. Additionally, it contains a first aid room, restrooms and numerous storage areas.

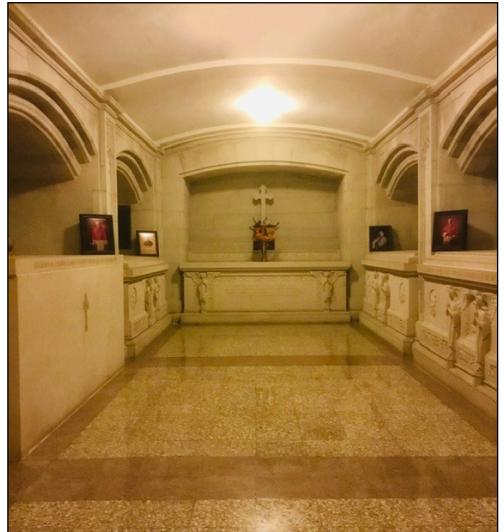
## CRYPT

The crypt was added after the fire of 1912. It is located off the ramp entrance on the east side of the Church. Contained in it are the remains of the first, second, fourth and fifth Bishops of Belleville. Respectively, they are the Most Reverend John Janssen, the Most Reverend Henry Althoff, the Most Reverend William Cosgrove and the Most Reverend John Wurm. Also located in the crypt is an altar to be used for Mass on All Souls Day. In the event more spaces are needed for the burial of bishops, the wall can be removed and excavation can continue to the north.

## STATISTICS

Just a few statistics about the Cathedral:

- The average seating in the pews is 1,270 persons. The auxiliary seating potential is 200 persons. Thus the total seating is 1,470.
- The exterior width of the Cathedral is 152 feet 8 inches.
- The interior length of the Cathedral is 244 feet.
- The interior height of the Cathedral is 67 feet.
- The height of the west bell tower is 200 feet.
- The total floor area in the Cathedral is 55,279 square feet. With all the stone and marble, a sound will echo for 7 seconds!





## IN CONCLUSION

While at times there is value in small groups of people gathering together for a simple celebration of the Eucharist, there are other times when the human soul wants to pour itself out in magnificent and exultant praise to God. A worthy cathedral fulfills both of these human needs.

We are humbly proud of our Cathedral. It is not the greatest, nor the finest, nor the largest cathedral in the world, or in our country. But thanks to the foresight and vision of bishops of our diocese, it is a truly worthy cathedral for our beloved Diocese of Belleville.

The Cathedral is a monument to the faith of the good people who made it possible. As you visit our Cathedral, please pray for all of the people of the Diocese of Belleville, past and present, and our mission of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to the world.



During the Christmas season, a historical creche or manger scene is placed in the sanctuary - to the delight of both young and old. The two dozen figures were fashioned by the Bavarian sculptor Sebastian Osterrieder (1864-1932) who spent years in the Holy Land studying the terrain and the humble people of the place of Christ's birth. The nativity set was brought to the Cathedral by Monsignor (later Archbishop) Joseph Schlarman in the 1920's.

This booklet was compiled from the archived materials of the Diocese of Belleville. Pictures courtesy of Reime Photography, Msgr. John Myler, Robert Bushway and Sue Huett Asbeck.



The coat of arms of the Diocese of Belleville features a blue field with a green mount at its base. This mount represents Compton Hill, the name of Belleville until 1814. The castle recalls the name of the city, Belleville, which means “beautiful city” in French. The “fleury” cross honors the diocese’s early French missionaries, who established the first mission among the Cahokia Indians in 1699. Dividing the shield is a silver bar, taken from the arms of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, who established the diocese in 1887. The two gold keys are symbolic of St. Peter, patron of the Belleville Cathedral.