

Our Beautiful Church

— A SERIES OF ARTICLES DEPICTING THE MAGNIFICENCE OF OUR CHURCH —

PART FOUR: THE MAIN ALTAR

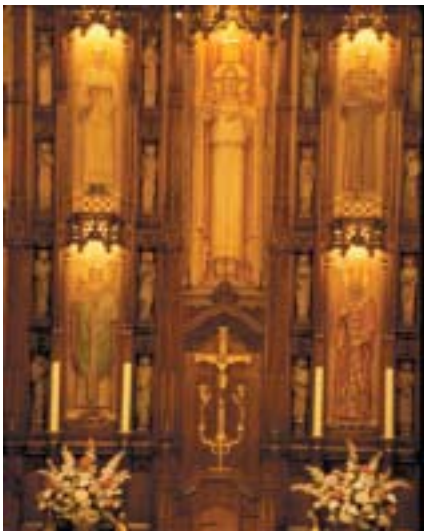
The bulletin editors had the opportunity to read the text of one of the then monthly bulletins written – we think – in 1941 (the bulletin is not dated), at a time when work in our church was nearing completion. It is of great interest and fits perfectly in this series of articles. Here it is, in its entirety, enhanced by photos taken by Pepa Tanousis:

THE ARTIST

Just before Christmas the five painted panels were installed in the reredos of the main altar. These are the work of Mr. Frederick de Henwood, a man of great artistic ability who has an established reputation in the art world for many excellent works of painting and sculpture. Mr. de Henwood did the Stations of the Cross for our church, as well as the main altar panels. The beauty of design and color and the spiritual quality of Mr. de Henwood's work has received the highest praise from those who visit our church.

THE GENERAL THEME

For the information of our people, we wish to explain the general theme of the main altar reredos. The central panel is, of course, Christ, showing His compassionate Heart in pictorial interpretation of His words: *Come to Me all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you.* The four major panels represent St. Patrick and St. Boniface, to the left and to the right of the the central panel, respectively. In the upper panels are represented St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi.



Photos by Pepa Tanousis

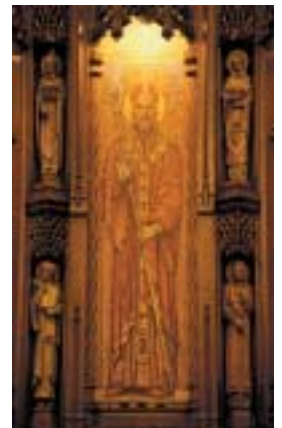
THE GENERAL THEME (cont.)

The general theme expressed is that of the relation of religion to the social order, with special reference to the United States of America. St. Patrick and St. Boniface represent the patron saints of the Irish and the German immigrants, who formed the great masses of Catholics throughout the country and especially in New York. St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi represent the protest of religion against the evils of the social order and the solution of the problems of the present day offered by the Catholic philosophy of life.

Associated with St. Patrick are the saints of parish priests. Four have been chosen with this special point in mind: St. John Vianney, the humble Curé d'Ars, who, by his simple priestly ministrations transformed his parish from one of the worst in France to a veritable heaven on earth; St. John Nepomucene, the martyr of the seal of the confessional, who gave his life rather than reveal what he heard in confession; St. Charles Borromeo and St. Philip Neri, both of whom are beloved for their pastoral ministrations.

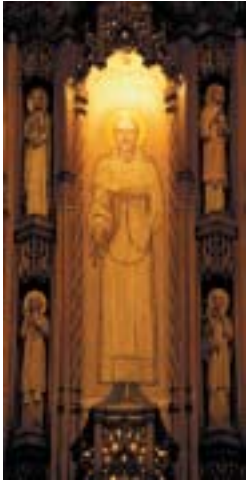


Around St. Boniface are grouped four in recognition of their apostolic work in New York State – St. Isaac Jogues, one of the Jesuit martyrs, who gave his life for the conversion of Indians; Kateri Tekakwitha, the saintly Indian girl; and two pioneers in Catholic education and charity: St. Frances Xavier Cabrini and Saint Elizabeth Seton, both of whom began their work in New York City and whose influence extended throughout the entire country.



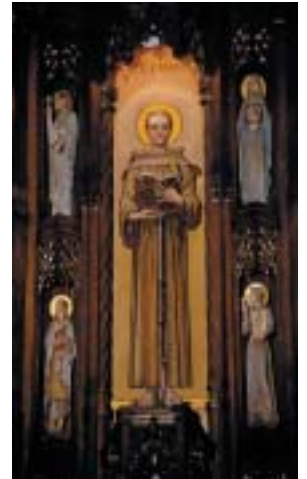
EDITOR'S NOTE: St. Isaac Jogues and Kateri Tekakwitha have shrines in Auriesville and Fonda, N.Y. respectively. They were the subject of the third article in our series "Summer Getaways with a Spiritual Focus" (July 21, 2002 bulletin).

THE GENERAL THEME (cont.)



Associated with St. Dominic, whose Order of Preachers numbers among its illustrious sons the great master of philosophy, St. Thomas Aquinas, are those who testified to the point of martyrdom on behalf of the Catholic philosophy of life in opposition to the philosophy of entrenched power and force. They are represented by the Pope Gregory VII, and the English martyrs: St. Thomas à Becket, St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher, who gave their lives in defense of the spiritual supremacy of the Pope over the usurpation of political tyranny.

In keeping with the spirit of Christian poverty and its protest against entrenched wealth, symbolized by the Poor Man of Assisi, are associated the apostles of Christian charity: St. Vincent de Paul, St. Camillus of Lellis – the patron of Catholic hospitals – the beggar saint, St. Benedict Joseph Labré and the modern apostle of the poor and underprivileged youth, St. John Bosco.



HEROES OF CATHOLICISM

The evils against which these heroes of religion fought and in protest against which they gave their lives are still the evils of our present social order. The disastrous effects of entrenched wealth and entrenched power can be rooted out only by a return to the Catholic philosophy of political, social and economic life. As the Holy Father expressed it, peace, harmony and order can be reestablished only by man's acceptance of God – God known, respected and obeyed.

Here in our church, the representation of the heroes of religion and the way of life in which they believed is not only for devotional inspiration but for instruction as well. Everything in the church is intended to teach in some way or another and to express in a fitting manner the great truths of our Holy Faith. In the years to come, each succeeding generation will find in our church an undying fount of inspiration and instruction for the enrichment of their spiritual lives.