

Our Beautiful Church

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

PART TEN: THE FINISHING TOUCHES; CONCLUSION

THE FINISHING TOUCHES

The finishing touches around the church often escape notice but are worth a mention, most particularly the woodwork. All cabinetwork, including the paneling, pews, wagon vaulted roof (a medieval detail) and confessionals are crafted of oak. It is nearly impossible today to obtain oak planks in the lengths used in Our Lady Queen of Martyrs pews. The seat backs are stile and rail construction, with floating panels that permit seasonal expansion and contraction. Three carved flower motifs (*PHOTO 1*) alternate regularly down the rows of pews. Care was taken that all other ornamental edging, such as that around the *reredos* at the back of the sanctuary, along the confessionals and around the statues of Mary and Joseph were designed to reflect the stone tracery of the rose windows and echo their gothic flavor.



PHOTO 1: A pew carving



PHOTO 2: A rail carving

Photos by Pepa Tanoutis

The two medallions with trefoil centers carved in an alternating pattern along the marble Communion rail (*PHOTO 2*) reflect a similar attention to detail.

The brass gates in front of the Blessed Virgin Mary altar (*PHOTO 3*) depicts a pelican as the main motif, whereas the one by St. Joseph's altar (*PHOTO 4*) has loaves and fishes at its center. Since medieval times the pelican feeding its young has been used as a symbol of Christ, who feeds us all from His Body. The fish and bread at the center of St. Joseph's gate is appropriate since the Host is housed at this location.



PHOTO 3: The pelican gate

CONCLUSION

Our Lady Queen of Martyrs is a large, even grand church. But there is one place from which it seems a bit smaller, even intimate: the pulpit. From that vantage point the congregation seems to draw closer to the celebrant during Mass. Once again, the designers worked out spatial relationships to help celebrants and lectors feel at ease before fellow worshipers.

We conclude here our booklet on **Our Beautiful Church**. Obviously, we could not cover all details, but may have provided sufficient background information to encourage a wider interest in the treasures of our church. We hope that this publication will provide a useful foundation for those interested in further research, as well as a source of joy and inspiration to all parishioners who appreciate the magnificence of our place of worship.



PHOTO 4: The bread and fish gate