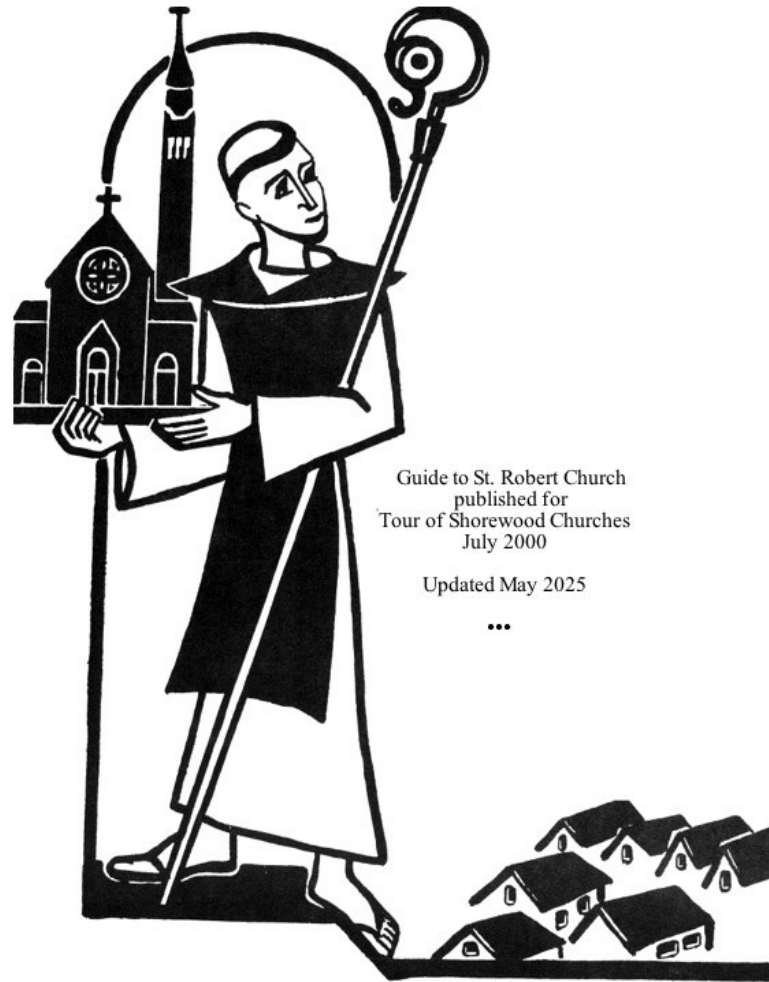




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Thank you for your generosity!

Welcome to St. Robert of Newminster Parish - Est. 1912 - and St. Robert of Newminster Church - 1937 -

St. Robert Parish is a vibrant, active community. About 1,379 "units" (a term of measurement that could represent a single person or a family) are served. Therefore, the actual number of people served by St. Robert is significantly larger than 1,379.

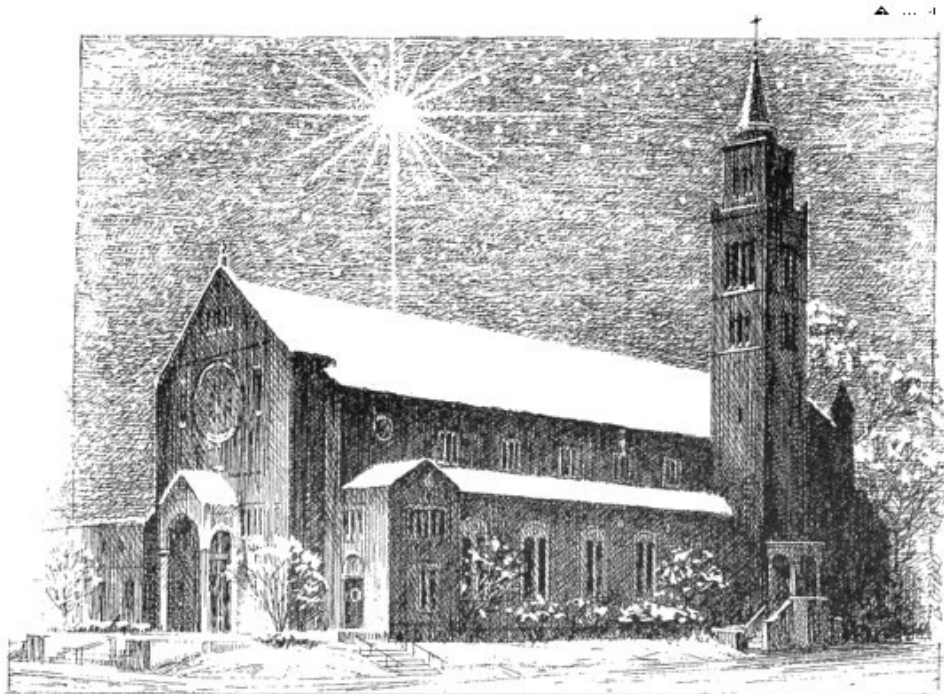
Very Rev. Enrique Hernandez is the pastor, the eighth pastor in the 113-year history of the Parish. Rev. Charles Luke is the associate pastor.



The Parish supports a school of over 275 children and a religious education program for nearly 100 children. Teenage, young adult, adult and older retired adult groups form active organizations within the Parish. The community is as diverse as the needs it serves. The Parish actively pursues its mission to "Love God, Love Others, Make Disciples".

...

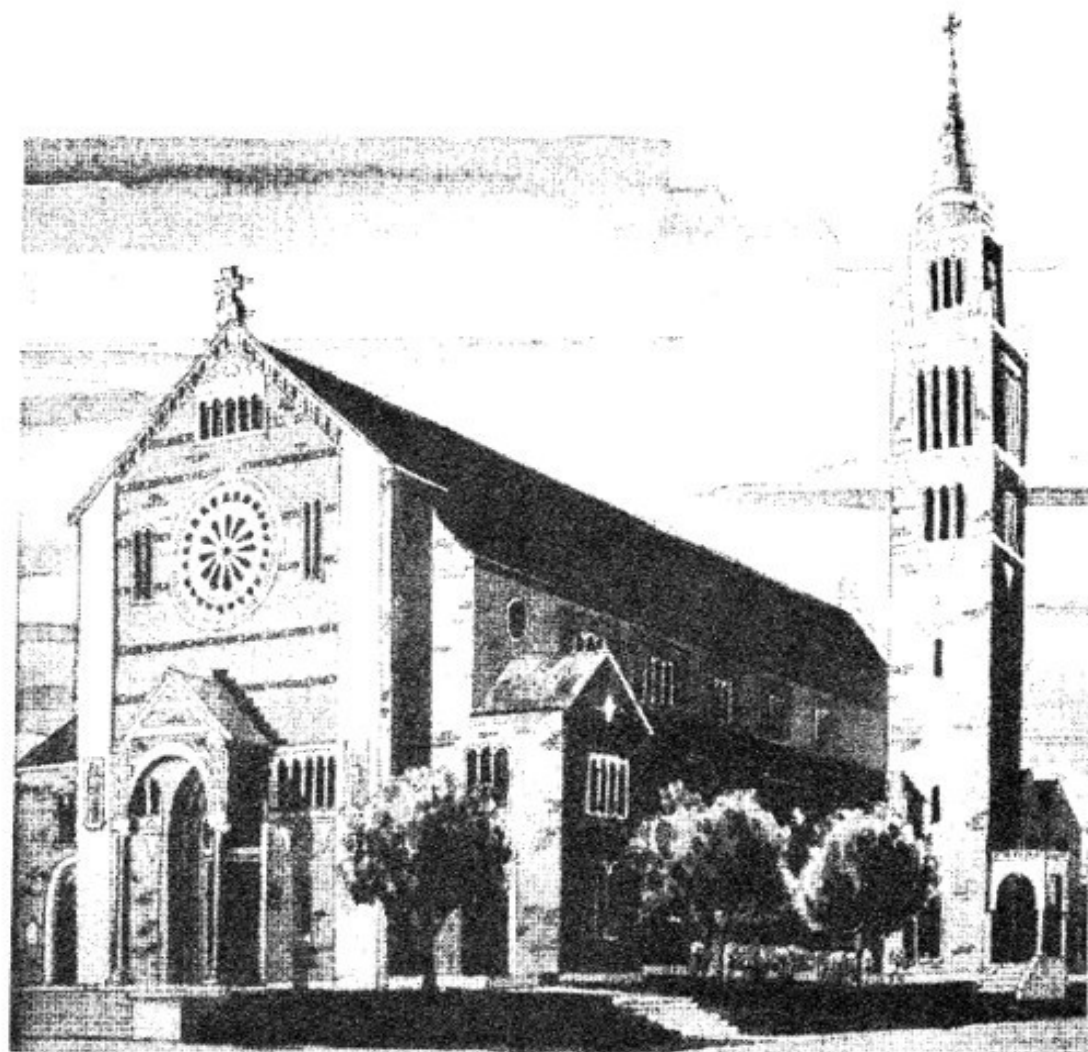
Thank you for visiting St. Robert of Newminster Church. This booklet, prepared in July 2000, for the Village of Shorewood Centennial Tour of Churches, and revised in May 2025, is the Parish's way of welcoming you. You may keep this booklet as a souvenir of your visit.



Ben Otero, Parishioner • Pen and Ink Sketch • 75th Anniversary, 1987

St. Robert of Newminster Church was erected in 1936-37 and first used Christmas morning, 1937. This magnificent edifice replaced the church, used from 1913 until 1937, that was located on the first floor of what is now the school building. In 1992, St. Robert Church was designated a County Landmark by the Milwaukee County Historical Society, noting it as an outstanding rendition of Lombardy Romanesque architectural style.

The name St. Robert of Newminster was chosen for the parish by a vote of the congregation in 1912. St. Robert, an ordained priest, joined Benedictine monks at St. Mary Abbey, York, England, in 1132. In 1137, Robert of York was sent to be abbot of a new monastery at Morpeth, Northumberland - Newminster Abbey - and he became known as Robert of Newminster. He served for 21 years until his death June 7,



James Jankowski, Artist, Shorewood Community Calendar, 1996

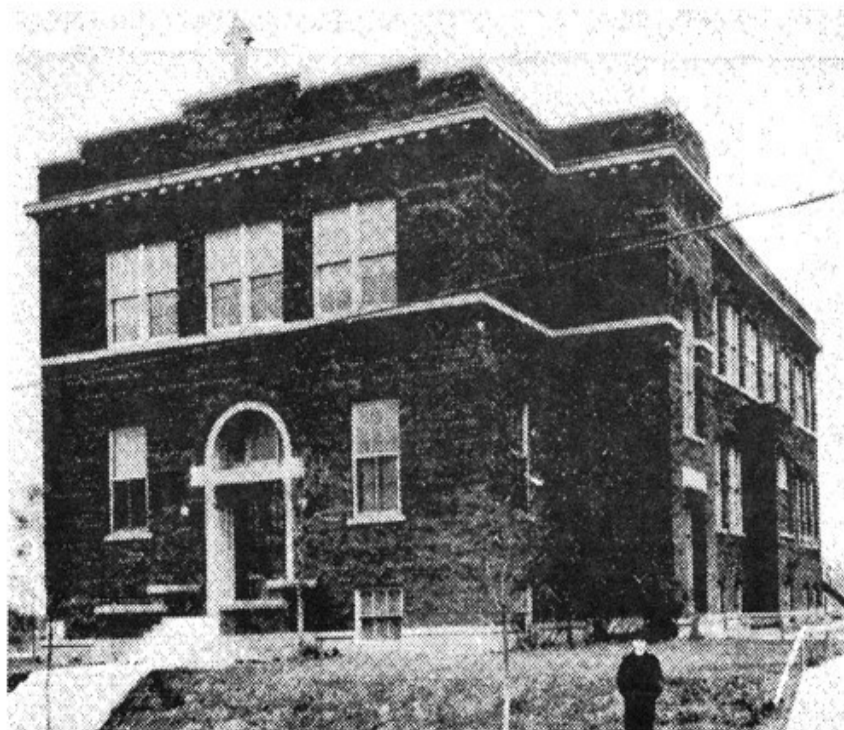
St. Robert of Newminster Church

Erected 1936-37

First Mass - Dawn - December 25, 1937

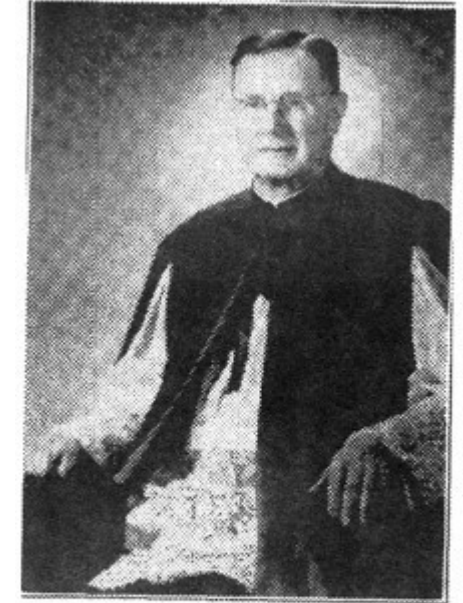


First Church - July 5 – October 1913 (above)
Second Church - 1913- Dec. 24, 1937 (below)



1159. He was buried at the Abbey and a shrine was erected in his honor. During the Reformation, the Abbey was abandoned and now lies in ruins.

When the pastor, Rev. Farrel Patrick Reilly (raised to the position of a domestic prelate - Monsignor, 1944), arrived in East Milwaukee (now Shorewood) in 1913 to worship with members of the new parish (incorporated in 1912), he arranged to have a small wooden structure constructed in one day on land next to the abandoned "Dummy Line" railway on the southeast corner of what is now Capitol Dr. and Maryland Ave. - south of Mineral Springs Rd. across from the parish property. The first Mass was said in this Church July 6, 1913. Shortly thereafter, ground was broken on the north side of the road for the Church/ School building that was finished during the summer and fall months and first used in October 1913. That building, with two additions, continues to serve the Parish as an elementary school.



*Msgr. Farrel P. Reilly
Founding Pastor 1912-1958*

From the beginning, parishioners desired a building for the sole purpose of worship, and they worked toward that goal, raising money with bazaars and other fundraising activities. Their plans were put on hold in 1927 by the need for more school space, and in the 1930's by the Great Depression.

But in 1936, there was sufficient confidence and funds to warrant the building of the new Church. Fr. Reilly had visited Churches in the Lombardy district of northern Italy when he traveled that country at

the time of his 25th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. He wanted to have St. Robert's new Church modeled after those he had visited.

Architects • General Contractor • Artisans

Architects L.A. Brielmeier and Sons, Milwaukee, and Maginnis and Walsh, Boston, designed and supervised the construction, and H. Schmitt and Son, Builders, Milwaukee, was the General Contractor. Francis H. Schmitt, parishioner and volunteer organist and choir director for 54 years, directed the project.

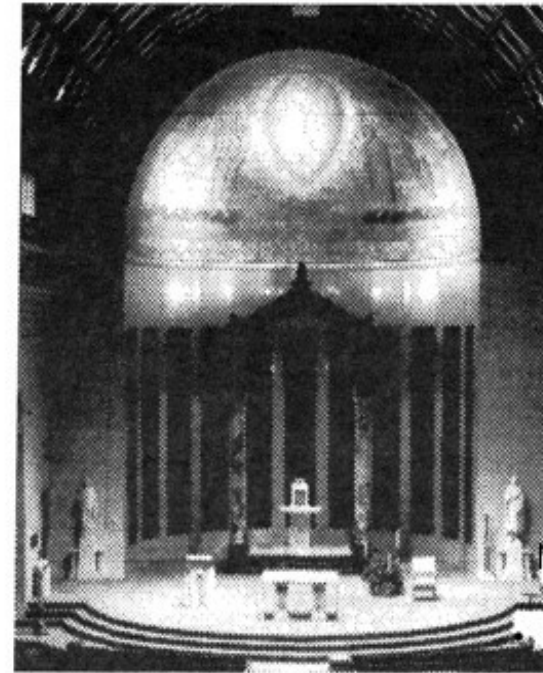
The art glass windows and the Stations of the Cross are the work of Rambusch Decorating Company, New York. Deprato Studios of Chicago executed the altars and other decorations. The Kilgen organ was designed by William A. Rohlfing in collaboration with Francis H. Schmitt.

St. Robert of Newminster Church

The Church was first used for services on Christmas morning, 1937 and was dedicated May 8, 1938. The Benedictine pastor of St. Robert Parish, Morpeth, Northumberland, England - near Newminster Abbey - sent an ancient and treasured piece of statuary - the head of a saint from his rectory garden. That statuary fragment is mounted near the doors on the east portico on Farwell Ave.

St. Robert of Newminster Church, located on the northwest corner of Capitol Dr. and Farwell Ave., Shorewood, Wis., was designed in the Lombardy Romanesque tradition, characterized by round arch and vault construction; thick, massive walls, and interior bays.

The front of the Church, facing Capitol Dr., is centered with high oak doors under a granite pillared portico that rises toward a magnificent rose window. Statues of Saints Peter and Paul are on the facade and over each of the three portals are tympanums representing scenes from the life of St. Robert.



Sanctuary June 1990

- The ambo was rebuilt on a smaller scale in coordination with the size of the mensa.

- The Sanctuary was extended several feet in a circular design to reflect the curves of the Lombardy Romanesque style.

- The Sanctuary was carpeted. The original surface - white marble - remains under the carpeting.

- The communion railing was removed. Extensive sections of the railing were placed at the rear of the nave seating sections to preserve part of St. Robert Church's tradition and to restore to

the railing a function. The railing had not been used for communion distribution for many years.

- The sections of straight pews forward of the side entrances were replaced with curved pews built to closely resemble the original white oak pews found in the remainder of the nave. The seats were curved to focus attention on the pulpit and to the altar where the Eucharistic action takes place.

- The pews in the chapels and several pews at the rear were removed.

- The entire Church was cleaned and polished, and plaster walls and decorative embellishments were painted and highlighted to restore some of the original lightness to the Church and to balance the richness of the terra cottas, grays, and parchments of the marble and stone.

Throughout the Church - over doorways, on arches, above the altars, arched above the ceiling mural - are carved designs and inscriptions.

Interesting Statistics

- **Seating Capacity:** In 1937 the Church seated 1,050 to accommodate the more than 800 families registered in the parish. In the 1980's two pews on each side at the side entrances were removed to allow easier transgress. During the 1990 renovation several pews were removed at the rear of the nave to allow a Gathering Space, and the pews in the chapels were removed. The church now has a seating capacity of 700. There is space for overflow seating, should it be needed, in the chapels and gathering space.
- The structure is 200 feet long, from 70 to 100 feet wide, and rises to a height of 50 feet.
- 1,075,000 bricks were used to complete the building.
- The cost of the Church (including architects' fees, bonds, insurance, organ, pews, furniture, fixtures, altars, communion railing, stations, remodeling of previous Church location, landscaping and miscellaneous) was \$382,707 - a bit less than the cost of the 1990 renovation.

Major changes made during the 1990 renovation

The Renovation was undertaken for two reasons: The Church had not been thoroughly cleaned and redecorated since 1962 and was in need of refurbishing. It was necessary to make some changes, especially in the Sanctuary, to bring the space up-to-date liturgically.

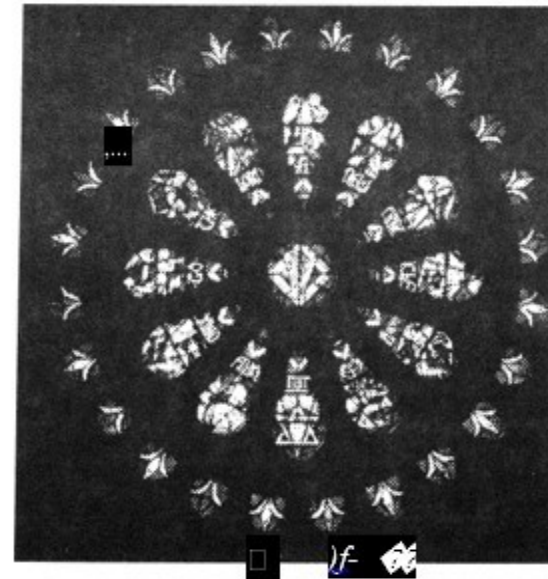
- The main altar was rebuilt into a mensa - a table - and moved forward in the Sanctuary so that the priest is closer to the people in the congregation.

Campanile

The east entrance to the Church is under a portico and is part of the campanile tower. The campanile (bell tower and spire) rises to a height of 231 feet at the center of the bronze Celtic cross. The spire, 18 feet in height, was faced with ceramic tile (replaced, because of damage to the tile, in 1999 with a sheathing of galvanized steel with a copper penny finish.) An electronic carillon was installed in the bell tower in 1987.

The Celtic cross motif can be found in the Church in several places - in exterior stone tracery, in the gold cross on the Spire, in the stone cross on the front peak of the building and in the carved walnut Stations of the Cross, the marble cross on the medallion on the Tabernacle table, and the round windows above the confessionals on the east and west walls. The use of the Celtic cross reflects Msgr. Reilly's Irish heritage.

Windows



The rose or wheel window in the choir gallery is 16 feet in diameter. It is lit from the interior of the Church at night.

The leaded art glass windows of the Church complex are thematic - the windows of the narthex screen celebrate (east side) the arts of drafting, painting, literature, sculpture, and music, and (west side) the sciences of mathematics, geography, chemistry, physics, astronomy, and biology.

Rose Window in Choir Gallery

In the priests' sacristy to the left of the Sanctuary, the windows depict

symbols - each on a cross - referring to the priesthood: Bible, stole, chalice and crucifix.

In the servers' sacristy the window scenes are of Saints John Berchmans, Aloysius, and John the Baptist, and the Child Jesus.

The windows in the stairwell leading from the right side of the Sanctuary to the lower Farwell Ave. entrance are images of Boy, Girl, Cub, and Brownie Scouts (the lower level of the Church has been used during the years as a gathering place for scouts).

The leaded stained-glass windows in the nave relate to Sacrifice: east side reading from the entrance to the nave forward - Sacrifice in the Old Testament. The small round windows (roundels) at the top and the ventilators at the bottom have figures of prophets and Old Testament figures; west side from the entrance forward - stories from the New Testament; the roundels and the ventilators have figures of saints. Windows in the St. Joseph Chapel on the east side depict scenes from the life of Joseph, and the windows in Our Lady's Chapel on the west side are scenes from the life of the Blessed Mother.

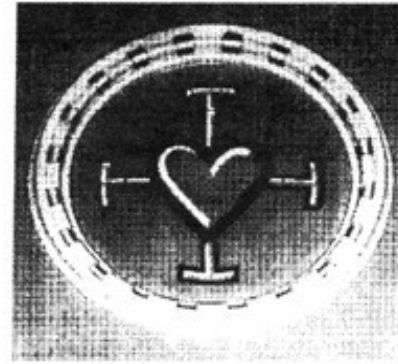
Narthex

In the narthex (main vestibule) is the baptistry, located in a rounded alcove on the west side. The font is exquisitely wrought of three varieties of marble - Botticino, Swiss Chippolin and Traverelle Fleuri. The cover is hand-chased bronze. The windows carry out the theme of the Sacrament of Baptism.



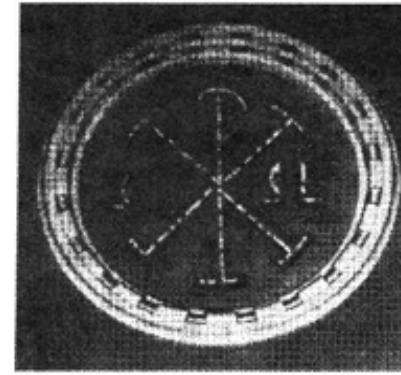
The narthex is the site of a Veterans Memorial. On it are the names of St. Robert parishioners who served in World War II.

Over the main door of the narthex is a marble cartouche with the gilded monogram scroll SR



Charity

means of decoration but also as a method of teaching. The original symbols were replaced during a 1962 redecoration, and again in the 1990 renovation. On the east, proceeding from the entrance to the sanctuary are the three theological virtues - Faith, Hope, and Charity, followed by the four cardinal virtues - Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude - concluding with an image of St. Robert Church as representative of Church, teacher of virtue.



Chi Rho, Alpha and Omega

On the west, in the same order, are the seven sacraments - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders, ending with the Greek symbol for Christ - *chi (X) rho (P)* superimposed on each other - and the Greek letters *alpha (A)* and *omega (Q)* - the beginning and the end, the main sacrament.

Choir Gallery and Kilgen Organ

The choir loft at the rear of the nave is the site of the four-manual Kilgen organ that is placed in a specially constructed expression chamber. It has full choruses of diapasons, reeds, strings, flutes, with harp and chimes. Not only is there a complete gallery organ, but a complete sanctuary instrument placed in a tone chamber in the ceiling above the Sanctuary. It is controlled from the gallery console. The organ was totally rebuilt in 2000. It was installed and dedicated in 1938 and is considered one of the finest organs in the region. St. Robert Church has been the site of several organ concerts over the years.

In Our Lady's Chapel (west) is Mary, Mother of Jesus, and in St. Joseph Chapel is Joseph the Foster Father of Jesus. In the 1962 renovation, tympanum murals to the front of and over the chapel altars were painted over and were not able to be restored in the 1990 renovation. A scene from the marriage feast of Cana was depicted in Our Lady's chapel. The Holy Family was pictured in the St. Joseph Chapel.

West of the Sanctuary, in a narrow passage to Our Lady's Chapel, is the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In a similar niche on the east side, in a passage to St. Joseph's Chapel, is a mosaic of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. St. Robert parishioners have had a strong devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. St. Robert Parish was incorporated on the Feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in 1912.

In 2009, a statue of Saint Robert of Newminster was commissioned and was dedicated on the First Sunday of Advent 2012, in the parish's centennial year. It stands in an alcove on the east side of the narthex.

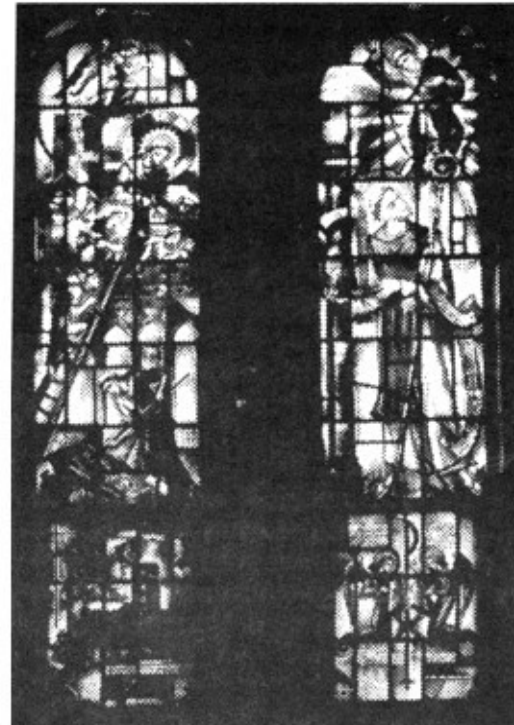
The ambo (pulpit) on the west side of the Sanctuary, from which scripture readings are proclaimed, is fashioned of marble from the original main altar. A bas-relief panel from the original altar was used in constructing the ambo. The original pulpit was of carved oak, and the book rest was held by an eagle standing on a globe. It symbolized St. John in his capacity as an Evangelist.

Until 1990, the Sanctuary was separated from the body of the Church by a marble, balustered Communion railing, gated in the

center. Extensive sections of this railing have been relocated to the rear of the nave where they define the Gathering Space.

The ceiling of the nave is vaulted and coffered (recessed panels). The oak beams and purlins (horizontal pieces) are decorated. The panels were decorated with liturgical symbols until the redecoration in 1962.

Large medallions above the pillars between the arches are not only



*St. Robert of Newminster
Windows in Narthex*

On the east side of the narthex is a window dedicated to St. Robert of Newminster. The scenes depict events from Robert's life as a Benedictine Abbot.

The Nave

The extremely long middle aisle (150 feet prior to the 1990 renovation and the extension of the Sanctuary platform) leads to the main altar in the Sanctuary.

Main Altar

The original main altar was set farther back in the Sanctuary - almost to the semi-circular wall (reredos) paneled in red African Numidian marble. It was of golden onyx marble with bas-relief panels - its solid front was centered with a medallion with a Celtic Cross and carved Greek letters meaning "Jesus Christ Conquers." The Tabernacle rested on the altar.

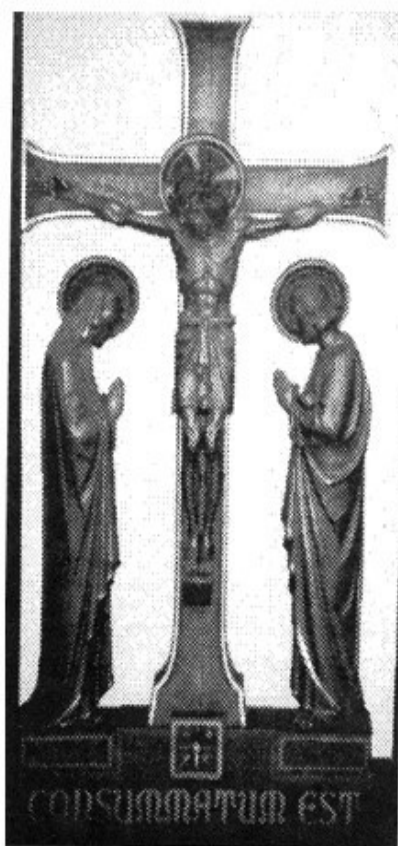
The altar has been remodeled and moved forward twice. In the 1970's it was downsized and removed from the stepped green Alpi marble platform under the carved oak baldachin (canopy) and located several feet forward.

In a 1990 extensive renovation, the altar was transformed into a mensa (table), and the medallion was placed on a Tabernacle table, constructed

of some of the main altar marble, located under the baldachin. The legs of the new altar are made of bas-relief panels from the original altar.

Baldachin

The baldachin is carved oak supported by monoliths of Breccia Violetta marble. In the rounded arches are inscribed Latin words appropriate for the sanctuary: *"O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received; the memory of His passion is renewed; the mind is filled with grace; and a pledge of future glory is given us. Alleluia."*

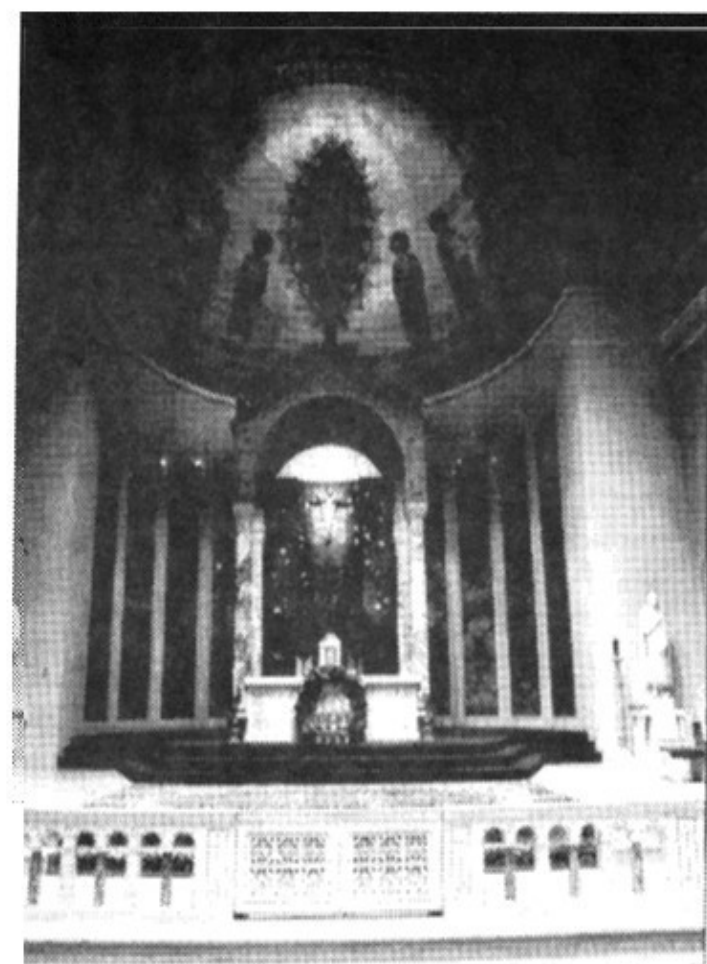


The Rood

Originally a rood (a crucifix on a beam) extended between the rear pillars of the baldachin. The scene showed the Blessed Virgin and St. John with the crucified Christ. It has been located in Our Lady's Chapel for many years. In 1999 it was part of the Cross exhibit at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

In Spring, 1995, a 10-foot birch cross and a six-foot linden wood corpus was placed over the main altar. The crucifix is the creation of woodcarver Dan Grunst, a parishioner. The measurements for the corpus were taken from materials prepared by scientists who had studied the Shroud of Turin.

In 2023 a crucifix acquired from the now-closed St. Mary of Czestochowa Church was installed in the sanctuary, and the Grunst crucifix was moved to O'Reilly Hall on the lower level of the school.



Sanctuary, December 1989

Statues

There are five original statues in the Church, carved from unpolished Carrara marble. In the Sanctuary are (west) St. John Vianney, the Cure d'Ars, patron saint of parish priests, and (east) St. Thomas More, representative of the Catholic layman.

The mural on the apse ceiling over the high altar is the Risen Christ flanked by (west to east) Evangelists Matthew and Mark, Apostle Paul, Apostle Peter, and Evangelists John and Luke. The mosaic-like background pattern was created by Conrad Schmitt Studios of New Berlin during the 1990 renovation in keeping with the architectural style of Romanesque churches. The figures of the saints are on canvas, not painted on the ceiling.