

## *Award Winning*

The Mother of Divine Providence Chapel was highlighted in an exhibit at the American Institute of Architects (AIA) national convention in 2001. The AIA and its affiliate, the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture and *Faith & Form* magazine, granted a design award to the Sisters of Divine Providence, JDBA Architects, and general contractor, Church Restoration Group for the renovation, recognizing that the project successfully retained the original architecture while dramatically improving how the space is used for worship.

In February 2001, the Church Restoration Group received a highly revered Eagle Award for historical renovation from the Western Pennsylvania Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors.

Artisan Jim Barnhill received the 2003 Design Award for a Devotional Piece from *Ministry & Liturgy* magazine for his sculpture of Mary at Cana.

## *In Praise of Providence*

Originally built in 1927, the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel was renovated in 2000-01 in order to make much needed repairs and to bring the space into compliance with the documents of the Second Vatican Council. On September 14, 2001, the chapel was formally blessed, with Bishop William Winter presiding. This brochure is devoted to the Mother of Divine Providence Chapel and the theology of Providence that is so clearly evident in the renovated worship space.

A guiding principle throughout the renovation was that the design, materials and construction details be deliberately woven together as a backdrop to the sacred purpose of the space. The restoration of the original exterior and interior architectural elements included the installation of a clay tile roof similar to the original, and the installation of a new copper roof at the apse. The original chapel, built in the mid 1920's, was designed in the architectural style of Romanesque Revival. Most of the original liturgical furnishings were constructed of marble and onyx.

The restoration and refurbishing of fundamental architectural elements included the vaulted plaster ceilings, walls and cornice, the granite columns and stone capitals, the gray Tennessee marble floor at the apse area, ornamental wood screens, stations of the cross, and the two angels that flanked the altar in the former sanctuary.

Architectural modifications to the space include:

- New air conditioning system
- Wheelchair accessibility to the Eucharistic Chapel and Reconciliation Chapel
- State-of-the-art lighting system with controls to create a variety of lighting effects to highlight the liturgical furnishings and other key elements of the Chapel. (*Lighting was designed and executed by Maguire Hilbish.*)
- Acoustical treatments and a new audio/visual system to allow better understanding of the spoken word, and to permit remote viewing of the chapel by Sisters residing in the Annex.

## *The Renovation*

Existing architectural elements were reused in new locations. These include the balcony railing, which was part of the original choir loft; some elements of the communion railing were retained and others were incorporated into the tabernacle pedestal. The ceiling lights from the former sanctuary were retained in the Eucharistic Chapel.

Blue, a traditional Marian color, was selected for all of the interior painted surfaces of the worship space. There are nine different shades of blue throughout the space. The gradation in the apse offers a particularly striking visual effect, changing with the natural light of the encircling skylight.

The granite columns remain an outstanding feature of the chapel. Colwell Granite Company of Pittsburgh made the original pillars. Harry C. McCabe, a Pittsburgh architectural stone carver and modeler carved the column and pilaster capitals (*twenty column capitals, six pilaster capitals, and two columns on the exterior*). The capitals are intricately carved with the symbols of bee hive and bees, wheat and wine representing the Eucharist, cross, bird with olive branch, ship representing the church, pelican and nest of young pelicans, air, fire, water earth, etc.

As in the original chapel, the floor is terrazzo. The field color is Georgian white; the accent colors are raven black, and a custom mix of gray, green, and blue. The patterns on the floor replicate design elements found throughout the space.

The circle, the eight pointed star, and the arches are repeated throughout the design of the chapel. The circle is traditionally associated with the concept of unity, completion, and inclusiveness. It is found in the windows, the floor, in the upper cornices, in the balcony railing, and in the new liturgical furnishings.

The arches, typical of Romanesque architecture are found throughout the architectural space and, also, in the communion rail and the new liturgical furnishings.

The eight-pointed star is a traditional Marian symbol, highlighting Mary's role in salvation. It signifies fullness and regeneration. The symbol has been incorporated into the new terrazzo floor and it can be found on the floor of the sanctuary, in each of the nave windows, and in the decorative screen.

## *Groundbreaking & Dedication*

November 11, 1924	Groundbreaking
September 13, 1925	Laying of the Cornerstone
May 30, 1926	Blessing of Chapel Bells
July 3, 1927	Dedication of the Chapel under the special patronage of the Mother of Divine Providence by Bishop Hugh C. Boyle

## *Original Architects & Contractors*

Architects:	Kauzor Brothers, John and Anthony, Pittsburgh
Excavation:	John Battenfield & Sons Company
Surveyors:	Morris Knowles, Engineer
Structural Steel:	W.N. Kratzer Company of Pittsburgh
Contractor:	Sommerville Company of Pittsburgh
Brick Supplier:	Kittanning Brick & Fire Clay Company
Brick Contractors:	C.B. Lovatt Company, North Side, Pittsburgh
Stone Contractor:	Samuel Holmes

## *Of Interest . . .*

The beautiful **stained glass windows** mounted on either side of the entry hall outside the chapel are the former chapel windows from the first Motherhouse at Larimer Avenue. (*The Divine Providence Academy Alumni Association facilitated the restoration and mounting of the windows in 1989.*)

The three **Provincial House bells** were blessed on May 30, 1926 and lifted to the bell tower to proclaim the Angelus three times each day. The bells were automated in 1999 as part of the building restoration. They ring at 6 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. daily. The bells also ring for Sisters' funerals, jubilees and other Community celebrations. In 2001, the Sisters of Divine Providence, who believe that all life is sacred, from the unborn throughout life, began participating in For Whom the Bells Toll. This is an initiative that encourages religious organizations throughout the country to toll their bells to mark the occasion of each execution in the United States. The practice will continue until there is a moratorium on the death penalty, or until it is abolished in this country.

In order of size, largest to smallest, the bells were christened:

Providentia, with the inscription, *We exalt Thy Providence, O Lord, and we submit to all its decrees.*

Laudate, inscribed, *Praise the Lord all ye nations, praise Him all ye peoples.*

Ave Maria, proclaiming, *Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*

## *Liturgical Furnishings*

Father Richard Vosko, a priest of the Diocese of Albany, New York, and a noted liturgical consultant, served as consultant to the renovation project. Father Vosko designed the liturgical furnishings including, the altar, ambo, ambry, the cantor's stand, the credence and gift tables. (*Allegheny Millworks crafted the liturgical furnishings.*)

Five distinctive woods were chosen for these particular furnishings.

**Purple heart**, found in Central and Latin America, is one of the most distinctive woods in the world. It is a dense hardwood, valued for its strength and durability, as well as its unusual color and beauty.

**Curly maple** is sapwood that is white with a reddish tinge. The wood is fine and even textured and is especially beautiful when book matched.

**Bird's eye maple** is similar to the curly in color and texture, but is distinct in the evident bird's eye figure. Flecks caused by insects may also be present in the wood.

**American cherry** is a strong and stable hardwood, which is prized for its natural luster, attractive grain patterns and rich warm glow.

**Red oak**, a popular hardwood, reveals dramatic grain patterns with occasional mineral streaks.

The finish on each piece is clear and dull rubbed to showcase the color and grain of the wood. The assembly chairs are made of oak; the fabric is maharam petunia.

The altar, a symbol of Christ, is the focal point of the celebration of the liturgy. The size and circular shape of the altar reflect the table around which the community gathers. The altar is visible from all parts of the church. The tabletop is book matched curly maple with a purple heart accent band and solid cherry edge. The apron of the table is bird's eye maple with a purple heart veneer. The legs of the table are cherry, bird's eye maple and purple heart.

The ambo is the reading desk from which we proclaim and preach the Word of God. Comparable in significance to the altar, it is crafted of the same woods and related in design. The top of the ambo is covered in leather, the color of chestnut—

recalling the 300-year-old chestnut tree that still grows on the grounds of the Congregation's Foundation House in Finthen, Germany.

The credence table and the gift table are located near the altar. They are related to the altar in design and material.

The **Providence Memorial Book** and the **Providence Book of Life** reside in a special place in the chapel. Those whose names are entered in either book are included in the community prayer of the Sisters and in a special liturgy celebrated on the second Sunday of each month in the chapel.

The ambry houses the oils used during our life cycle events. Holy Oils are among the most highly revered sacramentals of the Church. The ambry is located in the western niche of the chapel, providing a highly visible place of honor for the three vessels of oil. The crystal vessels hold the Oil of the Catechumens, the Oil of the Sick, and Sacred Chrism.

### *Font of Living Water*

In the center of the Gathering Area is the font of living water, reminiscent of our baptism. The font marks a literal and symbolic portal of our entry into the assembly of the People of God. The location of the font reflects our journey *through* the waters of baptism *to* the altar. This font, with its three glass bowls on wooden pedestals, recalls the mutual, dynamic relatedness of the Triune God we call Providence. (*Jude Cleary of JDBA Architects designed the font; Allegheny Millworks fabricated the base; Mark Gulsrud of Seattle, Washington designed and fabricated the bowls.*)

Divine Providence, Stephanie Fredericke Amalie la Roche von Starckenfels (1812-1857), Mother Marie. Her life was marked by a deep spirituality and dedicated service. It was also characterized by much suffering and rejection, which she bore with great patience and generosity. In the window, Mother Marie is depicted nursing a sick child. This scene recalls her ministry at the orphanage in Neustadt. After nursing children and Sisters through an epidemic of typhoid fever, she fell ill and died, succumbing perhaps to both typhus and cancer. Finthen, seen in the background, was the first convent for the fledging Community, purchased with Mother Marie's dowry. The tree recalls the 300-year-old chestnut tree, which still grows on the grounds of the Foundation House of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence in Finthen, Germany. The light above Mother Marie's head recalls her words to her Sisters at a time when they were experiencing disappointment and discouragement, "the darkest paths lead to light through love." The La Roche Starckenfels-Vulte coat of arms is replicated in the lower portion of the window. The middle shield recalls the military background of the family; the golden fleur de lis on blue background represents a French lineage, while the oxen heads indicate the linkage to the Prussian government.

### *Transom Window*

Pittsburgh Stained Glass redesigned the window in the transom at the entrance to the chapel. Using sections of the original window, the refurbished centerpiece incorporates a silhouette of the new image of the Mother of Providence and illustrates the dates of the original chapel and the renovated chapel.

The refurbished windows on the northern wall include:

- Martha and Mary, close friends and followers of Jesus (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-44; 12:1-8 )
- Presentation of Mary in the Temple (no biblical reference—but a long apocryphal tradition)
- “*Suscipe*” recalling the profession of vows
- The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15)
- Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Co-Founder, Sisters of Divine Providence

The refurbished windows on the southern wall include:

- The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
- Healing of the Sick (numerous references throughout the Gospels)
- Jesus, Friend of Children (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10: 13-16; Luke 18:15-17)
- Story of the Rich Young Man (Matthew 19: 16-30; Mark 10: 17-31; Luke 18: 18-30)
- Mother Marie de la Roche, Co-Founder, Sisters of Divine Providence

Nick Parrendo, Hunt Studios in Pittsburgh, designed two new windows. The first window on the northern wall depicts Wilhelm Emmanuel Joseph Hubert Maria Baron von Ketteler-Alt-Assen Harkotten (1811-1877), Bishop of Mainz, and founder of the Sisters of Divine Providence. Wilhelm followed his father into the legal profession, practicing law as a government minister. In 1844, he was ordained a priest. He became known as a champion of the poor – living and working with the peasants. The central panel of the window depicts Ketteler’s concerns for justice and his advocacy and service to those in need. The cathedral of Mainz is in the background. The upper portion of the window illustrates the missioning of the six Sisters of Divine Providence to the United States in 1876. The lower section of the window replicates Ketteler’s coat of arms. The red ground and silver wheels are symbols of the city of Mainz. Originally the name Ketteler may have been Kessel. The Kesselhagen is a hook on which hangs a cooking pot over an outside fire. The ratchets show that it can be changed according to the size of the pot.

The first window on the southern wall depicts the foundress of the Sisters of

## *Pipe Organ*

The original pipe organ served the Sisters well for 70 years. The new pipe organ was constructed using the best of the ranks and useable parts from the original organ, blending them with new ranks to give more breadth and versatility. Everything from the wind chest to the magnetic valves for the pipes, to the swell box has been updated. To add brilliance, several new ranks of pipes have been added including the Oboe and the Trumpet. The new Principal 8 Rank is exposed in front of the organ screen and showcases the organ restoration. (*H.J. Ebert performed the restoration.*)

## *Risen Lord*

The Risen Lord sculpture was designed by Nick Parrendo of Hunt Stained Glass. The Christ figure, located in the left niche of the chapel, beautifully complements, in placement and size, the statue of Mary in the right niche. Backing the translucent figure of the resurrected Jesus is the Easter Sun. Central to the piece is the heart of Christ, which takes the shape of a cross, reminiscent of all of those throughout the world who still suffer the pains of crucifixion through poverty, famine and war. The risen Jesus holds all of them in His heart with the promise of resurrection. This cross also serves as the processional cross.

## *Processional Cross*

The processional cross was a gift to the Sisters of Divine Providence from HHH Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, Prince of Ethiopia, in recognition of the Community’s contribution to the *Pacem in Terris* program at La Roche College. As Sister Mary Ellen Rufft, then Provincial of St. Peter Province, stated upon receiving the gift on March 30, 2001, “We cherish this cross as a reminder that much of the world suffers hunger, poverty and oppression in ways most of us in the United States have never experienced. It helps us remember that the mission of our Congregation, to make God’s Providence more visible in our world, has yet to be fulfilled.”

## *Reconciliation Chapel*

Conversion has been described as “bending the knees of the heart.” Our celebration of the Sacrament of Penance calls us to a conversion of the heart, which shows itself in acts of love. The etched glass window of the reconciliation area recalls Jesus’ ultimate example of love—washing the feet of His disciples. *(The reconciliation area is located directly off the reservation area and is wheelchair accessible. The window was designed and fabricated by A.J. Bellamo of Black Forest in Roseville, Michigan.)*

## *Eucharistic Chapel*

The etched glass triptych which frames the tabernacle in the Eucharistic Chapel recalls the bread and wine of the Eucharist and our call to become Word made flesh, bread broken, cup shared...food for all the world. The cast bronze tabernacle is reminiscent of the earth as seen from space. In our Eucharistic devotion, we remember and intercede for all peoples of the earth.

As a people who name our God the God of Providence, we recognize that our overwhelming giftedness, our abundance, comes from the bounty of Providence. It is not ours by merit or entitlement. Such plenty imposes obligations on us. As we recall the gospel stories of the feeding of the multitudes, we remember that the reign of God begins with just a few offering their gifts, their sustenance, perhaps even offering it halfheartedly, until finally all are fed, all are satisfied, and there is even a surplus! The mandate that we feed the multitudes from our own sustenance has tremendous implications for theology and for life.

Our prayer in this new worship space is that we will learn to provide from our sustenance so that the multitudes may be fed and know a God of Providence. *(Both the triptych and the tabernacle were designed and fabricated by A.J. Bellamo of Black Forest in Roseville, Michigan.)*

## *Mary at Cana*

A cast bronze statue of Mary at Cana is a breathtaking addition to the chapel. Standing one-and-one-half times life size, Mary is depicted at the Wedding in Cana among the empty water vessels. She is gesturing to the servants, having just spoken the words “Do whatever he tells you.” She speaks the same words to us, inviting us to come and participate in alleviating the poverties of our own time. The gesture of Mary’s hand pointing to the water vessels is borrowed from Michelangelo’s depiction of God creating Adam. Her other hand is sculpted in like manner, only turned up in a gesture of invitation.

Artist, Jim Barnhill of Greensboro, North Carolina, sculpted the statue. “In commissioning a statue of Mary, our intent was to find a contemporary image of the Mother of Providence,” according to Sister Michele Bisbey, director of mission effectiveness for the Community. “The needs and issues of our time require that Mary be seen as an adult woman who actively participates in mission. The evolving theology of Providence compels us to focus on actively partnering with God to make Providence visible in our world.”

In the Cana story, Mary clearly demonstrates how a Woman of Providence makes God’s Providence visible – she gives voice to the needs of her times; she satisfies those needs in accord with God’s word. The statue is a powerful image of the mission of the Sisters of Divine Providence.

## *Stained Glass Windows*

The thirty-two clerestory windows, eight stained glass windows in the transepts *(recalling the four major prophets and the four evangelists)*, four beneath the former choir, and four above, were originally designed and installed by Petgen Stained and Leaded Glass Company in Pittsburgh. The ten nave windows were originally executed by the Emil Frei Art Glass Company in Munich, Germany, and installed by the American Branch in St. Louis. *(Pittsburgh Stained Glass restored eight of the original nave windows.)*

Six of the windows depict familiar gospel scenes; two recall themes traditionally associated with the devotional life of women religious.