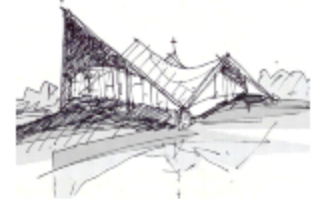


WELCOME TO SAINT ALOYSIUS CHURCH

JACKSON, NEW JERSEY
DEDICATED ON MARCH 14, 2009



Pastor: Reverend John Bambrick
Parochial Vicar: Reverend Sheldon Amasa

Music Director: Naomi Capasso

HISTORY AND WALKING TOUR

Background:

Our new church building started taking shape early in 2002 as people of the church gathered with Father Scott and architects, Scott Erdy and Dave McHenry to discuss the history of church architecture and identify what we thought was important to our parish community. In response to some of our ideas, combined with images contained within a work called “Re-Pitching the Tent” by Richard Giles, the architects’ vision resulted in a roofline that evokes the image of a tent. Throughout the scriptures there are many references to tents as dwelling places. In salvation history, God dwelt with his pilgrim people in the desert in the Ark of the Covenant which was housed in a tent. Today, we remain a pilgrim people with whom God still chooses to make His dwelling place. In the Gospel of John “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (*John 1:14*) literally translates to “*he pitched his tent among us.*” Additionally, the word “*tabernacle*” translates from the Latin word for “*tent.*”

Viewing the church from outside, the soaring, swooping expanse of the roof reaches three peaks of equal height, reminding us of the Holy Trinity – three persons in one God. The metal-clad, tent-like roof is secured firmly to the ground on six massive piers, ensuring that it will not blow away easily in the turbulent times and challenges presented by the world over time.

While some parishioners had perhaps hoped for a more classical, grandiose, old-style church building, upon entering this modern architectural structure, which is now our new worship space, it soon becomes apparent that this unique design incorporates so many basic components of our Catholic faith. Upon your first footsteps into the nave of the church, it is difficult to ignore the enveloping embrace of the warm wooden ceiling as it reaches from the peaks down to its supporting foundations.

Gathering Space:

Passing through the beautiful ebonized oak doors at the entrance, the large, well-lit gathering space welcomes congregants and enables them to greet and visit with one another before entering the nave of the church. The gathering space provides access to rest rooms, a ministries room and our school and former church. There is no “cry room” *per se*, however parents and overly exuberant children can find refuge in this gathering area while still listening to and watching the liturgy through the large windows into the nave.

Patron Saint:

Passage through the six glass doors brings you into an antechamber where the bronze statue of our patron, Saint Aloysius, greets all. Here, you find the renovated and expanded *Verde* marble baptismal font which resided in our original church. The beautiful tower has been reshaped and placed on a newly formed pool. This circulating font also provides holy water for normal entry ablutions i.e. blessing yourself upon entering the worship space.

Our patron, Saint Aloysius had four major devotions in his young life:

- The Passion and Resurrection of Our Lord;
- The Holy Eucharist;
- The Blessed Mother; and
- The heavenly choirs of Angels and Saints.

These four special devotions are represented within design elements of the church on a cross axis. The *Baptismal Font* and the *15th Station of the Cross* call to mind our dying with Christ in the waters of baptism and rising with Him to new life. Looking straight ahead down the center aisle, the Eucharist devotion is represented with the main altar (*Verde* marble from our original church) and the Tabernacle of reposition just behind it. A newly commissioned statue of the Blessed Mother – *Mother of the Word*, is displayed in a quiet prayer area to your right, located just behind the sacristy. Looking to the left, the heavenly choirs of Angels and Saints are represented in the elevated music ministry area.

Lighting:

As you stand at the baptismal font, we encourage you to look up and around. During the day, the sanctuary is flooded with natural ambient light through the generously proportioned windows. This transparency allows for the worshippers to be connected to the beauty of God's creation outside. The approximately 170 lamps that are swagged throughout the church call to mind the sanctuary lamps of old. When illuminated in the evening, they remind us of stars. Much like the numerous descendants promised to Abraham for his faithfulness, these glowing pendants remind us that we, though many, are called to be one in Christ. The sparkling reflections in the windows seem to multiply endlessly, extending their presence outside the walls and beyond.

Crucifix:

The gently sloped floor and the radius pews coordinate to accentuate focus on the altar area. Direct your vision above the altar and see the massive, ten-foot crucifix depicting our Lord's sacrifice for us all. The cross was fabricated by Mark Piznik, a parishioner at St. Monica's of Jackson, New Jersey. The magnificent corpus was sculpted and cast by local artist, Brian Hanlon, whose works, sacred and secular, can be seen throughout the country. One can almost feel our Lord's agony as we gaze upon this striking image.

Ambo:

The Ambo is a newly designed structure within our worship space. It was created using *Verde* marble and polished composite materials which complement the elements of the altar and baptismal font. The design validates the presence and importance assigned to the place from which God's word is proclaimed to God's people. The cantor stand, candlesticks, sanctuary lamp stand and tabernacle stand are all fabricated from simple milled steel. Their simple straightforward lines harmonize well with the design themes of the church.

Tabernacle:

The Tabernacle is situated so as to encourage reflection upon the "Holy of Holies" – an area designed to contain the reserved Eucharist. The visual contrast from the gray/black slate to the soft white glow of this room focuses one's attention upon the mystery contained within. As the Hebrews wandered through the desert, God's presence guided them as a pillar of smoke by day, and a pillar of fire by night. When the Temple was built, God's presence remained with the people by residing in that special place in the Tabernacle known as the "Holiest of Holies." In the Temple in Jerusalem, only the high priest was permitted access to the Tabernacle in order to offer incense to God. God's presence was seated there, represented by smoke.

In our Church, the Tabernacle still remains as the seat of God, in the Eucharistic Presence of Christ. No longer appearing through pillars of smoke or fire, God is present to us in the Word made Flesh —Christ’s Eucharistic Presence available to all who will come to the Table. Our Tabernacle area is set up for all people to come and spend time with God’s Presence in quiet prayer. One can gain access to the tabernacle area for quiet prayer and adoration by approaching from the walkway located to the left of the altar. The tabernacle door design incorporates an ancient symbol of Christ depicted by a pelican impaling itself to feed its young.

Icon of Mary:

While still facing toward the altar, look to the right and see an icon of Mary and the Christ Child, known as *Theotokos Eleusa*. This can be translated as Mother of Tenderness, and for good reason. *Eleusa* icons of the Virgin Mary are very ancient in their first appearing. These icons strike a deep resonance in our hearts because the closeness of the Virgin to her Divine Son is, by extension, an icon and example of the closeness that we, as Christians, should desire to develop with Our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Lord, as he is depicted here, shows great loving kindness to us through His mother. Emory Gonzales, an iconographer from Sitka, Alaska, was commissioned to craft this icon especially for our parish. The Virgin’s expression is pensively sorrowful, insightful, and yet detached from this world’s perspective. It seems as though the *Theotokos* (from the Greek for “Birth-Giver of God”) is looking not only at us, but beyond us and onward into eternity. Although based on a number of different prototypes, the artist’s design and color scheme in this icon are somewhat unique. The three stars on Mary’s robe (*the third in this icon is hidden behind Christ*) represent her virginity before, during and after the birth of Jesus. The scroll in Christ’s left hand has been interpreted as representing either the Old Testament prophecies of His coming, His teachings, or perhaps a list of those who will be appointed as saints in heaven. The lettering on the left of the panel is Greek shorthand for *Maria Theotokos* (God). Finally, the IC XC indicates the child is Jesus Christ (*as does the cross in the halo*).

Stations of The Cross:

Located to the right of the main entrance is the first of the fifteen Stations of the Cross. These bronze stations from Italy circle the interior of the church and are beautifully displayed and accented. Their verdigris patina composition and elegant design provides a literal, yet modern style. You will also find that there are four dedication crosses mounted on the wall which were created using wood from four different types of trees found on our parish site: cedar, oak, cherry and maple.

Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

If you continue past the 15th Station, you will arrive at the prayer area and the compelling statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, shown obviously carrying the unborn Christ child. The statue, sculpted by Gregory Emore and Paul Whittle of Geronimo Co. in Philadelphia, is a brilliant work illustrating the dignity of motherhood and her openness to God’s will as Mary accepted the angel’s invitation to bring salvation to the world through our Lord, Jesus Christ. She is the Ark of the New Covenant and Mother of the Word Incarnate.

Sacred Heart Statue:

The Sacred Heart statue, located to the left of the Baptismal font, is a bronze artifact from the early 1900s which we were fortunate to obtain from the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in Trenton, New Jersey. The statue stands peacefully and quietly, just outside the Reconciliation Room, calling all people to be embraced by the compassionate and forgiving Sacred Heart of Jesus and to share that love with others.

It is truly our hope that the concerted efforts of the architects, artisans, committee members, priests and builders have realized the vision of “*a house worthy of God’s presence*” and that “*the walls [indeed] surround us with God’s love.*”