

ST. MONICA'S CHURCH (831 Genesee Street, Rochester, NY, 14619)

1. Background. This parish, cut off from Immaculate Conception parish, was established by Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid on ~~January~~ <sup>July 23</sup> ~~January~~ <sup>1</sup>, 1898, and incorporated on ~~July 23, 1898~~ <sup>July 23, 1898</sup>, with the following trustees: Bishop McQuaid, ~~James F. O'Hare, V.G.~~ <sup>James F. O'Hare, V.G.</sup>, Rev. John P. Brophy, pastor/treasurer, with J.P. Henry, and M. J. Toomey as lay trustees.

2. First Church. W. Foster Kelly was architect of this brick building, which had four schoolrooms on the first floor and a church on the second, and a basement. It was formally opened for worship on December 8, 1898. Bishop McQuaid dedicated it on January 1, 1899. The school opened on January 3, 1899. (McQuaid had laid the cornerstone on September 18, 1898.) .Father Brophy was pastor 1898 to his death 1939

3. Second and Present Church. More space being needed for church and school use, the parishioners voted on 10/22/1913, to build a new church, at an estimated \$75,000. Father Brophy engaged as architect the Pittsburgh architect, JOHN THEODORE COMES (1873-1922), a native of Luxembourg, who was recognized as one of the ablest American church architects. Although he worked in a day when medieval Gothic revivalism was strongest among U.S. church architects, Comes often departed from the Gothic and won comment for his use of the Roman basilican style and the Romanesque.

The budget of St. Monica's was restricted, so the architect chose a basilican format for Rochester's seventeenth parish. The cornerstone was laid on 10-4-1914; Mass was first celebrated in the building on 1-30-1915. Bishop Thomas F. Hickey of Rochester dedicated the church on 1-31-1915. The cost of the building was handily within budget. Structure and facilities came to \$65,020.10; architect's fee, pews, organ, decorations, high altar, windows, and stations of the cross came

to \$10, 181.16. At 4-1-1915, the total cost had been \$75,261. 26.

3. Artistic Comments. The architect had originally designed a bell-tower, but this was never constructed. The church itself is knowledgeably designed. Basilican in format, it has a distinguished round apse. The red tapestry brick, with white stone trim, is laid in rich patterns on the facade. The porch, crowned by a <sup>round</sup> limestone arch of delicate tracery, fits into a soaring slot topped by another rounded arch of brick and trim, and pierced by a wheel window. Over the massive paneled double doors of this single main entrance is a tympanum of limestone carved with the figures of Jesus with arms extended, worshipped by two kneeling angels. It is quite likely that these figures are the work of the Pittsburgh sculptor Frank Aretz, whom Comes and his associates often commissioned to do work on their churches.

The layout of the interior is memorably basilican, with its open-beamed ceiling, its image of Christ the Pantocrator, and ivory(wooden) over the high altar. As in basilican churches, the clerestory wall is supported by arcades of <sup>whitish</sup> marble pillars. Father Brophy was able to secure these monolithic pillars for less than \$275 apiece.

Father Brophy had the church decorated(or redecorated) 1924, under direction of designer Herman Butler. Stencils, plus tondo paintings of: SS. Monica, Augustine, Ambrise, Peter & Paul, Patrick, Boniface, Stephen Lawrence, Catherine, Barbara, Cecilia; plus four evangelists in sanctuary. Nimbus placed behind statue of St. Monica crowning the ivory and shrines to St. Ann and St. Monica (statues) placed over the side entrances.

Whether in 1924 or later, two attractive paintings of Our Lady and Angels(altar of BVM) and Death of St. Joseph (St. Joseph altar) were installed in the altar niches, both in Botticellian style.