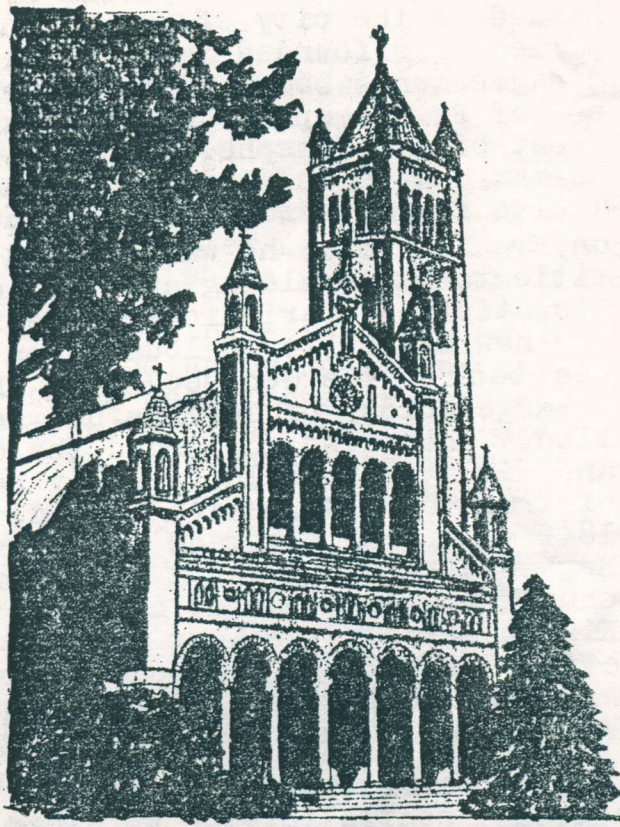


0/26/ 1974



## SS. PETER AND PAUL CHURCH

720 MAIN ST. W.

ROCHESTER, N.Y. 14611

↔ WE ARE CALLED AND SENT ↔

The Father draws all to Himself  
in Christ-to work together in the  
mission of the Church to the world.

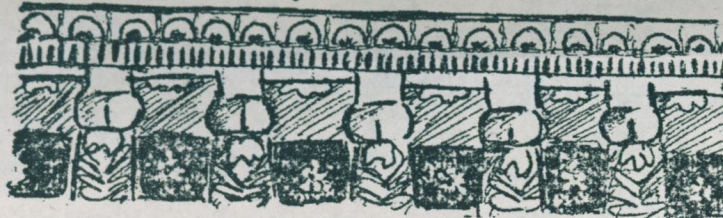


Saints Peter and Paul Church is the fourth Catholic parish established in the city of Rochester. The parish was founded as a result of disagreements between the parishioners of St. Joseph's Church. Father Prost of St. Joseph's, then the only German church in the city, purchased a site for a new and larger church on Franklin St.; he was to hold the title to the building and the land. Dissatisfied parishioners desired the new church to be located on the west bank of the Genesee River, where a large colony of Germans had settled. They also demanded the deed and title to be held by a lay board of trustees. Opposition peaked, in 1842 an appeal was made to Bishop Hughes of New York and a wood framed church was constructed on Maple and King Streets, on the west side of the city. Saint Peter, the Apostle Church was dedicated on June 29, 1843 with Fr. Ivo Levitz as its first pastor.

The idea of trusteeism, the laity's extreme control of the workings of the church, plagued many churches in mid-nineteenth century America often resulting in church closings, interdictions and excommunications. Saint Peter's bout with trusteeism raged stormiest between the dissident trustees and the church's fifth pastor, Father Francis X. Krautbauer, until 1859 when the power of the trustees dwindled. At that time the triumphant pastor and the loyal parishioners re-incorporated the church with a new brick structure and a new title, Saints Peter and Paul Church.

An essential part of the early German Churches was its Catholic education system. Lay teachers educated the youth of St. Peter's from its origin in 1843. In 1855, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, a ~~German~~ German teaching community, was invited to take over this responsibility. Sister M. Cajetana, first principal, Mary Alphonsa and postulate Mary Huber were the pioneers in a long line of dedicated religious who served St. Peter and Paul's community. The school remained in existence until 1972.

The parish continued to develop in the later half of the nineteenth century. With Fr. Francis Sinclair 1865-1907, the parish facilities were expanded to include a brick school and convent. Many decorative embellishments in the church date from this period. The present complex was constructed in 1910-11 when Pastor J. Emil Gefell sold the old structures at Maple and King Sts. to the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburg Railway. After the death of Father Robert Fox in 1967, the Parish which for many years was under the jurisdiction of the Diocesan priests, was given over to the charge of the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.



The present complex, by the firm of Gordan and Madden of Rochester forms "one of the most harmonious designs of their type in New York State". It is styled in a Lombard-Romanesque Renaissance manner, of tapestry brick with a Red Spanish tile roof, and marble and stone inlay ornaments. The 145 foot bell tower is a replica of the one at the Cathedral of Lucca, in Northern Italy. Along the east side, 3 cornerstones designate the 3 church structures of the parish. Because of the great expense of the construction, the interior decoration was postponed until 1929. Prior to that time the major elements of interior design were those transferred from the old structure of 1859. The High Altar and its 2 flanking altars, the All Souls Chapel, with its Pieta, dedicated to Father Sinclair, the old communion railings, the ten statues around the apse, the statues of Peter and Paul, and some eleven windows can be seen today.

The task of decorating the interior was assigned to Prof. Gonippo Raggi a distinguished European church decorator, and his workshop. The layout of the church is in the grand basilican form with a transept which extends the nave slightly. The huge barrel-vaulted nave is held aloft by an elaborately scrolled cornice and a series of nine elegantly capitated corinthian columns. The affect of height and lightness is accentuated by the unique ivory and gold embossed ceiling which reflects light from a



clereestory of gold windows and by the nine great light blue ribs which camouflage steel construction hoops.

The focal point is on the apse. The great semi-dome which rests upon the gallery of saints has some 21 shades of blue which grow lighter and paler as the plaster squares diminish to a climax in the sunburst at the apex.

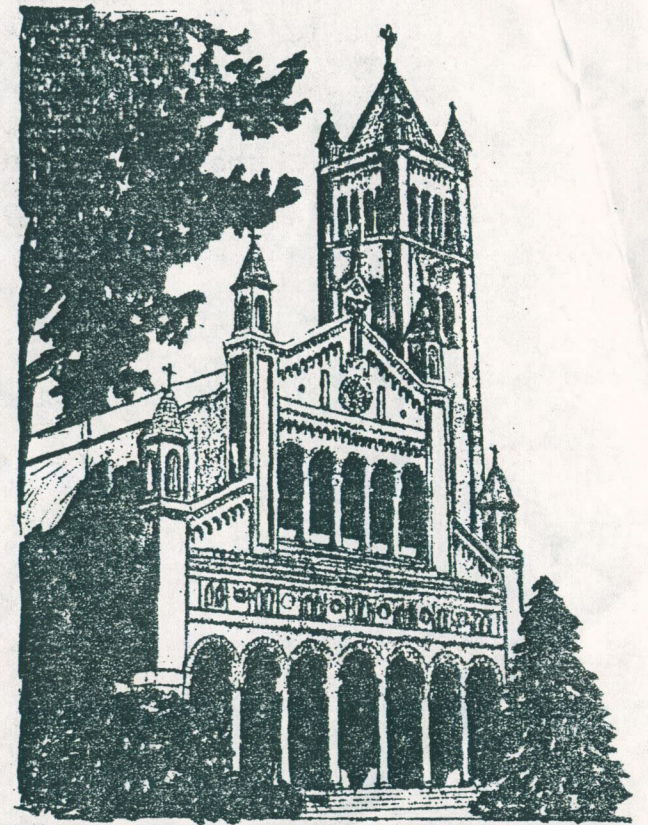
The paintings around the church are also by Raggi and his workshop. The medallions of the main archway before the sanctuary are copies of the 4 Evangelists by Pintruchio, and the center Christ is after a Raphael. The portraits in the spandrels are of prophets, petrarchs and apostles, all copies of paintings found in famous Roman galleries. The Last Supper behind the altar is a replica of a Titian with the modification of a standing Christ holding the chalice. Above the confessionals are Saint Paul before Herod Agrippa and Saint Peter liberated from Prison. In the lunettes above the side chapels are The Resurrection, the Blessed Virgin appearing to St. Theresa, The Annunciation and the Coronation of the Virgin.

Opposite the High Altar is the casework of the 38 stop organ, crafted by the Steere Organ Co. and transferred from the old church. Behind this is a new Baldwin organ purchased in 1958. It has a percussion section, echo organ, a set of Deagan chimes and is equipped with 11 speakers and 20 amplifiers.

Throughout the color scheme of ivory, tan, pink, gold and blue harmonize with the calming horizontality of the architectural elements. The entirety is bathed in golden light by sun which pours through the gold glass windows imported from England. Combined, these elements transform the interior into the fully classic grandure of an ancient Roman church.



SS. Peter and Paul's has witnessed many changes throughout its history. Today with the break-up of the old neighborhood, the suburban exodus and the urban plight the church has recommitted itself to serve the needs of the new neighborhood community. The recent influx of a black and a strong Hispanic populace has transformed the parish into a multicultural congregation. The staff and the fellowship of the dedicated, closely knit parish has become a truly caring and active community, with a place for the individual to share and develop in the mission of Christ. SS. Peter and Paul's is committed to FREEDOM OF THE SPIRIT (giving a sense of community within the parish) to ENLARGING THE VISION (an idea of what it really means to be Church) and CALLING TO MISSION (for the parishioners to take upon themselves the responsibility of the mission of the Church).



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