

A History of the Cathedral Church

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Parish is the oldest worshipping congregation of Kansas City.

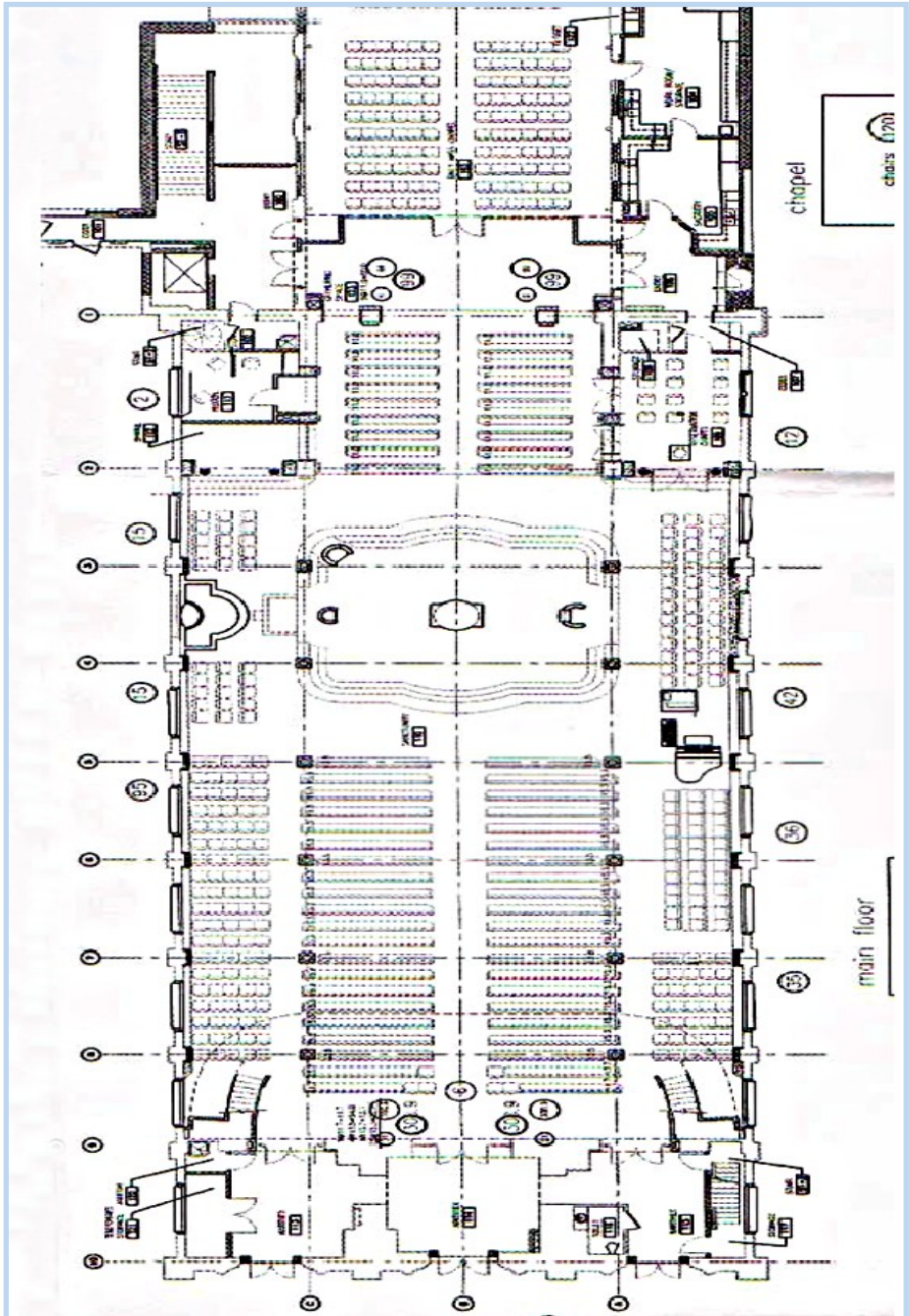
Its history has its informal beginnings with the French men and women who began to settle here about 1820. Various missionaries came to the area establishing a Catholic presence. These missionaries built both a log cabin church at 11th and Pennsylvania in 1834. In 1857, a brick structure was built at the Cathedral's current location to replace the previous log church. This structure was built from bricks made at Fr. Bernard Donnelly's brickyard which was located at 11th and Pennsylvania (near the original log cabin church).



In 1845, Father Bernard Donnelly, a pioneer priest, came to the area and soon became a legend among the settlers and native tribes for his pastoral leadership, his Irish charm and his ability to negotiate. In 1880, the area was officially designated a diocese and Bishop John Hogan was named the first bishop. Beginning in 1843, the parish was called "St. Francis Regis" and was named as such until 1856. From 1856 to 1876, it was called "St. John Francis Regis." 1877 marks the first use of "Immaculate Conception." Fr. Donnelly insisted that it was named Immaculate

Conception in 1856 but the Official Catholic Directory doesn't begin calling the parish "Immaculate Conception" until 1877. As for the official naming of the church to "Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception," the cornerstone was laid for the Cathedral on May 11, 1882. The cornerstone celebration was a grand affair and attended by more than 10,000 people from around the city and state.

Floor Plan



Legend - Points of Interest

1. Stained Glass Windows
2. Interior Arches
3. Rose Window
4. Sanctuary
5. Baptismal Font
6. Mother of the Universe Sculpture
7. Blessed Sacrament Chapel
8. St. Pius Chapel [Daily Mass Chapel]
9. Choir loft
10. Cathedral Icon
11. The Ruffatti Pipe Organ
12. Consecration candles
13. The Stations of the Cross
14. The Gold Dome



1. Stained Glass Windows

These original stained glass windows on east and west sides were installed in 1912, and created by one of the last of the German Master-craftsmen, who immigrated to Kansas City and set up his own shop. All the windows on the east side are chronological, left-to-right scenes of Jesus' early life, from the Annunciation to his Baptism. Because he began his public ministry after his baptism, all the scenes on the west side are from his public ministry, including the two parables of Good Shepherd and Prodigal Son. The columns of the room repeat the columns in the side- borders of the windows. They are fluted Corinthian columns in the windows, but fluted Neo-Corinthian column in the room, because the style of the room is Modern Neo-Classical.

2, Interior Arches

The arches also repeat, the arch over the main picture, as well as the arch of the window frame at the top. Arches are also stronger than flat support beams, and they give a graceful uplift to the whole sacred space of the nave. Note that there are no hanging lights; all the lighting is recessed into the ceiling. This is to make visual room for the great uplift of "empty" space of the nave, to remind us of God's presence.



3. The Rose Window

There is a new Rose Window titled “Mystical Rose” which is an abstract of the idea of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (Sun, moon, crown of 12 stars). [from Rev. 12:1] The rose window was fabricated by Michael Pilla of Minneapolis.



4. The Sanctuary

Although the Cathedral is in a rectangular shape, the new sanctuary was designed to resemble a church in the round. The altar floor (predella) was raised so all can see, and the steps were curved and corners were rounded. Two concentric granite circles around the foot of the altar, and made the lectern, bishop’s chair (cathedra), and presider’s chair round.

The altar is the first of six altar pieces, all made of the same two stone combination of Kasota Stone and a high grade of sandstone. Kasota stone is from Minnesota, and looks like a golden marble. The altar is placed in the center of the faith community, like a family around the Divine Table. Other altar pieces are: the baptismal font, the two tables holding the sacramental oils and the Tabernacle, the Cathedral, and lectern.



Altar Design:

The altar repeats the shape of the altar floor, or predella. The cathedral has several relics of saints suitable for veneration, but none in the altar. The base of the altar is a round carving of wheat shocks tied together with grapevines, symbolizing the Eucharist. The two granite circles around the altar emphasize roundness.

Cathedra, Bishop's Chair:

The cathedra is round, as described above. It also has the diocesan coat of arms carved into the back. It symbolizes the teaching and guidance authority of the bishop, who is to model the chief Good Shepherd, Christ.

The Presider's Chair, is the wooden chair next to the cathedra. It is also round and is made of the same wood as the people's pews, oak stained red. It is for the priest presider. The re-design of the Sanctuary is basically two-fold: to make it a Modern Neo-Classical style, and to make it as much of a church-in-the-round as it can be in a square space, moved from rectangle to circle shape. The visual roundness of the altar floor, the altar-pieces, and the placement in the center of the congregation, all contribute to the sense of roundness.

The circle in the gates before the tabernacle also symbolizes this, and gives a focal point, almost an invitation to come into Christ's presence.

5. The Baptismal Font

The full-immersion baptismal font is in the shape of a womb, to symbolize our new birth in Christ at Baptism. Full immersion is not required in the Catholic Church, but it is an important option to offer people. The font is placed below the Baptism window, and the font's sand- stone backdrop repeats the water plants in the window above.



6. Mother of the Universe Sculpture



In the Marian Sculpture, “Mother of the Universe,” - Mary is portrayed not as the young, blonde virgin of European art, but as a mature, multi-racial woman, a universal mother figure with strong hands that reach out to help and point to the Christ. The spiral in her womb symbolizes Christ the Incarnate Word of God, “through whom the universe was made,” as stated in St. John’s Gospel Prologue. (We also know from modern physics that the spiral is a basic energy pattern of the universe, from the great spiral nebulae, down to our own DNA.) “Mother of the Universe” is a 3- dimensional piece with 3 panels: the split back panels portray the mandala, or glory rays

around her, reminiscent of the Guadalupe mandala; her image is then laser-etched on the back of the front panel. The stars painted on the walls and ceiling and in her cloak represent the constellations of our universe as we see them in December, when we celebrate the Incarnation of the Word at Christmas. The artist is Claire M. Wing, nationally known liturgical glass artist.

7. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel

The west side chapel is the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Tabernacle as a sacramental Presence in the church. The new window, created by the same artist who did the Rose Window (Michael Pilla of St. Paul, MN), portrays a sunset over the hill where Jesus multiplied the 5 loaves and 2 fishes and fed over 5000 people.



The brass gates in front of the Tabernacle symbolize the new “Veil of the Temple” to the Holy of Holies. The silhouettes portray the Seraphim, which in Catholic tradition is the highest order of angels who guard the Gates of Heaven with the Holy Fire of God’s love. The open circle welcomes us into the presence.

8. The Pius X Chapel

The south-end chapel is the St. Pius X Chapel, where Mass is celebrated Monday through Friday at 12:15 pm. The ceiling is the rustic “inverted fishing boat hull” style found in many Christian denominations. The boat symbolizes the church in Christian iconography.



9. The Choir Loft

During the renovation, the loft had to be lowered 10- 12 feet to accommodate the Organ Pipe Chambers. The renovated loft has a graceful open metal fence, which is repeated on the catwalk under the Rose Window – to balance the room. Prior to the renovation, people did not really feel part of the service due to the rectangular shape of the building, with altar in front, and with the choir loft 10-12 feet higher with a solid fence around it.



10. The Descent into Hell—A Cathedral Icon

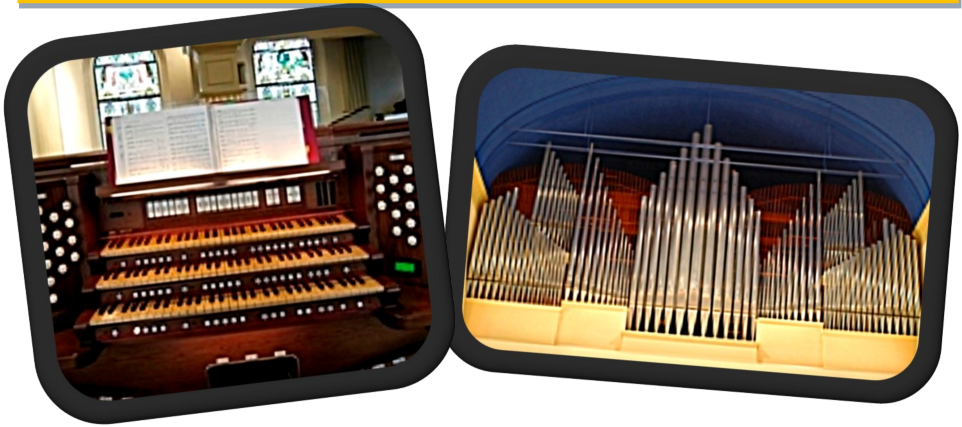
Through the generosity of an anonymous benefactor, our Cathedral has been presented with a beautiful icon depicting The Descent into Hell / The Harrowing of Hell. It hangs in the Reconciliation Room located immediately behind the Blessed Virgin's shrine. It is our hope that this icon will become a favorite of yours when you come to pray for your beloved dead, the souls in Purgatory or seek the intercession of the saints in times of need. For this reason, the book holding your special intentions is located next to this icon.

The icon carries us into that “crack in time” between Christ's death and resurrection.

Christ is standing on the shattered doors of hell, a kingdom that has been ruled by Satan, the Prince of Darkness. Christ's first action is to raise our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, from their tombs. He holds them by the arm and is pulling them from their tombs. It was their sin (Original Sin) that unleashed a tidal wave of suffering and death upon mankind. Beyond Adam (on your left) is Moses, Solomon, David and Joseph. On the right is Eve and beyond her are Daniel, John the Baptist and Zechariah. Beneath the gates of hell is a blizzard of broken locks, hinges and useless keys, all remnants of the gates of hell that only the Risen Christ could conquer and destroy.



11. The Ruffatti Pipe Organ



The Cathedral is home to the Ruffatti Organ with a Rodgers Trillium 957 hybrid console and a MX-200 Tone Module. As part of the renovation project of 2003, a pipe organ was selected, built, & installed in the Cathedral. It is a 50 rank instrument, built in Padua, Italy, by Piero & Francesco Ruffatti. They have created a fine instrument for our worship space which is enhanced by the buoyant acoustics of the Cathedral.

The organ features many fine stops, including a specialty stop called the Tromba Pontificale or Pontifical Trumpets, which can be seen as well as heard as they flank the rose window on the south wall. The Ruffatti organ in addition to the 50 ranks of pipes is able to expand to more than 400 ranks through digital and midi capabilities described below:

- ◆ Digital alternative voices behind the pipe draw knobs
- ◆ Orchestral voices used in combination with digital and/or pipes
- ◆ Digital voices sampled from Notre Dame Cathedral and St. Sulpice cathedrals.

The latter is made possible through the generosity of internationally renowned Maestro Hector Olivera, who donated this new bank of his personal digital samples to the Cathedral. You can hear digitally sampled voices of the pipes of Notre Dame and St. Sulpice Cathedral organs right here in Kansas City! You can hear the sounds Franck, Vierne and Widor heard when they composed their masterpieces!

The Cathedral's Ruffatti is truly a one of a kind instrument that continues to amaze and impress those who hear it and play it.

12. Stations of the Cross



The new Stations of the Cross are early twentieth century paintings and frames from a now-demolished church in eastern Pennsylvania. They were acquired through The Jubilee Museum at Holy Family in Columbus, Ohio- a private collection of Catholic Church artifacts and historical items including liturgical objects from around the world. Most of the items found in this collection are from historic churches that have been redesigned, destroyed or closed for alternate uses.

The original station paintings were oil on now-deteriorated masonite boards and in very poor condition although the artistry was exceptional. The pleasing style is common to American Victorian churches of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Evergreene Paintings Studios in New York, in order to preserve the quality of the paintings and bring them back to life, replicated the originals on new canvas, eliminating old tears, holes, and chips. The result is stunning for its revival of brilliant paint colors celebrating the artistry of the originals.

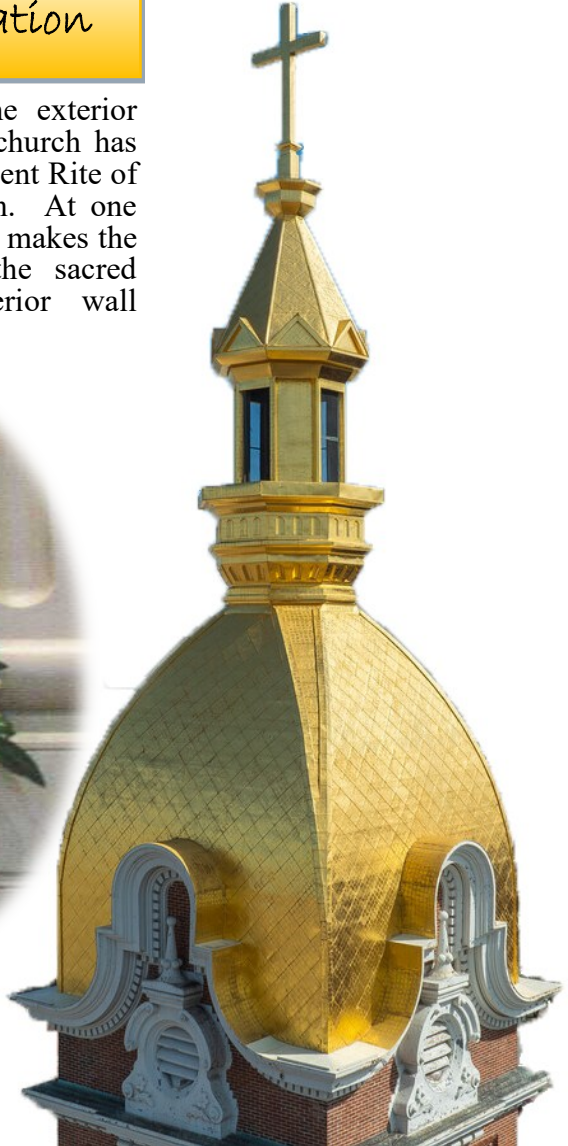
The elaborate frames were faux wood-grained originally and the paint was showing wear after a century of use. Evergreene stripped the frames and reapplied a faux wood-graining to match the original. Certain highlights, patens, and the beautiful heart-shaped medallions were gilded in gold leaf to enhance the stations and help them naturally fit with the cathedral's interior design. These Stations of the Cross were installed in August 2007.

13. The Gold Dome

The dome is copper, but in 1961, it was gold-leafed. During the last renovation, the hail damage was patched and polished, and night-lighting was added. It can be seen from a distance at night, as well as during the day.

14. The Consecration

The candle sconces on the exterior wall columns indicate the church has been consecrated in the ancient Rite of the Dedication of a Church. At one point in the Rite, the bishop makes the sign of the cross with the sacred chrism on all the exterior wall columns.



Cathedral Historical Facts

- ◆ When the Cathedral opened it was the tallest building in Kansas City, Missouri. Tickets were sold to persons wishing to ascend the staircase to see the view.
- ◆ In 1912, stained glass windows were installed. The windows were made by local artists at the Kansas City Stained Glass Works Company.
- ◆ During the 1920's and 1930's the Cathedral Choir reached a level of excellence. It wasn't unusual for their special concerts at the Grand Theatre to have a standing room only crowd.
- ◆ From 1903 until 1945, the Cathedral ran St. Christopher's Inn at 534-536 Main Street. St. Christopher's Inn was a S.R.O. (Single Room Occupancy) for home- less men.
- ◆ In 1960, the dome (cupola) and cross were covered with 23-carat gold leaf.
- ◆ On December 8, 1895, one of the most unique carillons in Kansas City was installed in the Cathedral tower. The bells are named after saints: St. Anna, St. Bernard, St. Catherine, St. Cecilia, St. Edward, St Elizabeth, St. Helen, St. John, St. Mary and St. Thomas. The largest and most often rung bell is St. Thomas.



Giving to the Cathedral

The Cathedral represents something different to each person. In a changing world that continues to challenge our faith and our feelings, the Cathedral stands as a guiding light, a symbol of inspiration and hope to all who visit. Some come to reflect, others to worship, some to celebrate and some to mourn. All come to pray in their own way.

Many are attracted to the Cathedral for the beauty of its architecture and impressive art works or for the historical importance of it as a Kansas City landmark. In the same way, giving to the Cathedral is also a deeply personal choice. Some wish to help preserve the Cathedral for future generations while others support the Cathedral through their financial offerings in having masses offered for loved ones.

Regardless of the reason for making a contribution, your financial support of the Cathedral is very important. We rely upon the generosity of friends like you for its preservation and for support of the many activities and events that are scheduled daily throughout the year. The Cathedral is a place where everyone is welcome. It is not only a cherished Kansas City landmark but more importantly it is truly a spiritual sanctuary for all. Gifts can be made directly by dropping off your gift offering when visiting the Cathedral, online, or by mailing your gift to:

THE CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

416 West Twelfth Street Kansas City, Missouri, 64105

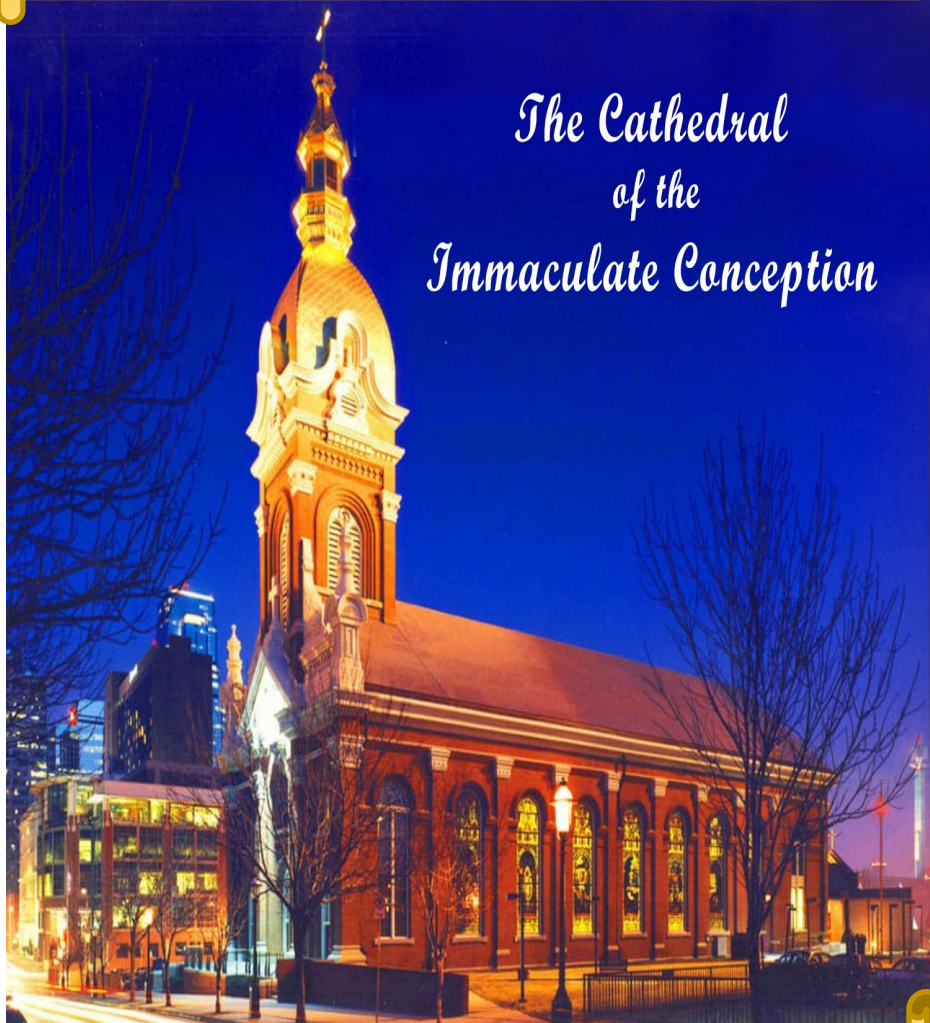
Phone: 816.842.0416 Fax: 816.842.3849

Website: www.kcgolddome.org



**Live tours of the Cathedral are also available for groups.
Please contact the Cathedral office for information
816.842.0416 x110**

*The Cathedral
of the
Immaculate Conception*



Pictures used in this tour guide are from the Cathedral archives and with permission and courtesy of photographer Jeremy Ruzich and Fr. Joseph Powers. Brochure Design by Mario Pearson

Pope Francis Prayer



**Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.
May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within
both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.
May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen**