

Souvenir and Program

St-Benedict's
Church

RICHMOND, VA.

DEDICATION
CEREMONIES

WITH

HISTORY OF PARISH

August Twenty-eighth

Nineteen Twenty-nine





ST. BENEDICT'S CHURCH, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

SOUVENIR
AND
PROGRAM



Dedication Ceremonies
with
History of Parish



St. Benedict's Church
Richmond, Virginia
August 28, 1929

Synopsis



1. Description of the Building and the Liturgical and Symbolic Meaning of Various Parts.
2. The Architect: Rev. Fr. Michael, O. S. B.
3. History of the Parish.
4. Explanation of Dedication Ceremonies.
5. Program of Services, Officers, and Particulars.



St. Benedict's Church

THE CHURCH completes a group of buildings begun in the spring of 1911, when the college building was laid out in the presence of Right Reverend Leo Haid, D. D., O. S. B., Abbot of Belmont, N. C.; Very Reverend Edward Meyer, O. S. B., prior and pastor of St. Mary's Church, Richmond, Virginia. The first building was in the Italian Romanesque style of architecture, and it determined the style of all future buildings—the Priory as well as the Church. With the school was built the bell tower or campanile, which now balances the group, and incidentally eliminated a large item of expense on the present Church building proposition.

Basilica Style

Romanesque was the style of art in which the Church expressed its ideals previous to the development of that great Christian art known as "Gothic," which, in its pure form, more exactly expresses the ideals and inspiration of the Catholic Church than any other art. This building is of the basilica type, embellished by Byzantine carving, color, and ornamentation. Originally the basilica was the adaptation of the home of the noble Roman to the needs of the early Christian communities. Its atrium was used as a place of meeting and a temple of sacrifice. Later, certain accommodations were provided: the transept, the narthex and the baptistry. Its proportions were increased,





RT. REV. BISHOP A. VAN DE VYVER, D. D.,
Inaugurator of St. Benedict's Parish



and symbolic ornamentation was added, until it developed into the admirable ecclesiastical edifice, finding its perfection in the tenth to the twelfth century, and remaining to this day as inspiring and lasting works of art. Solidity, strength, and a sense of permanence characterize all of these structures.

Original Design

St. Benedict's Church is not a copy or reproduction of any particular old world structure, but it is of the type and in the spirit of the early Christian ages, augmented by the refinements of the Byzantine and supplied with some of the inspiring arts of the early Gothic.

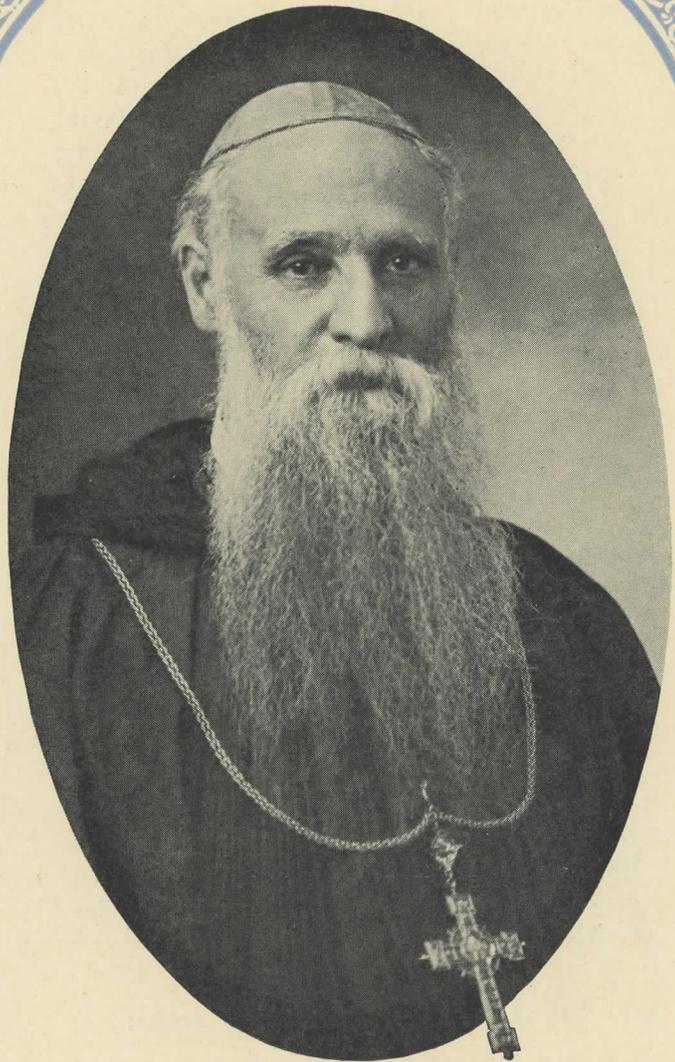
Plan

The floor plan layout of this Church is in the form of a Latin cross. The auditorium is the shaft of the cross; the faithful are the body of Christ; the transepts form the two arms of the Savior, extending out to draw all men unto Himself; the sanctuary is the upright rising from between the arms of the cross, where rested the head of Christ. From there the Church is directed by the inspiration which comes to the faithful from the holy sacrifice and from the inspired word of God.

Saints Benedict, Marus and Placidus

Above the entry on the outside is carved the figure of St. Benedict, the patron of this Church, and his two disciples, St. Marus and





RT. REV. BISHOP LEO HAID, D. D., O. S. B., *Abbot,*
Inspirer of St. Benedict's Parish



St. Placidus, who were of the first missionaries sent by him to the work of converting nations to the faith. This sculpture symbolizes to the faithful the great work of the Benedictine Order, to which history accredits the conversion of Western Europe. The monks went forth from their monasteries in great numbers, populating the nations with missionaries; directing the faithful as Bishops, and many times ruling the entire Church as Popes. On the lintel just over the door is the motto of the Benedictine Order, "Ut in Omnibus Glorificetur Deus," "That in all things God may be glorified."

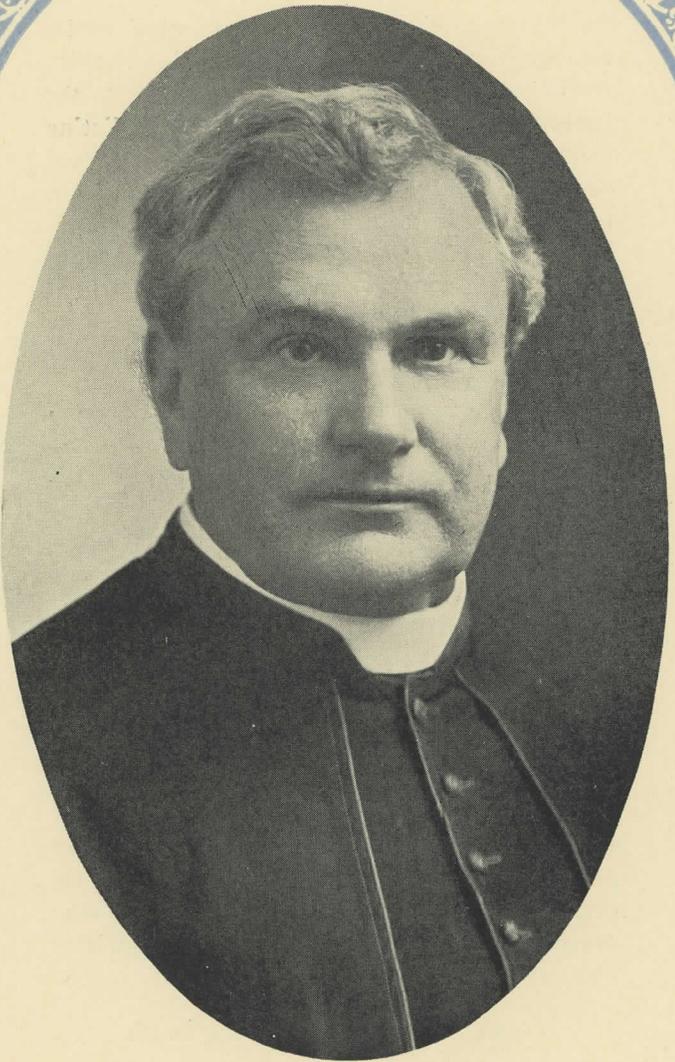
Radiation of Love and Religion

In the great stone wheel window above these figures in the inner circle is Christ the Infinite; the radiating spokes of the wheel are the twelve apostles, sent forth by Him into the whole world to teach all nations—"Going therefore teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew, chapter XXIII, vs. 19). Father Charles Rettger and Father Mark Cassidy, the sons of St. Benedict, former pastors of this congregation, will long be remembered in this particular parish as ones who radiated from the soul of Christ the spirit of love and religion.

Genuine Materials Express Truth

Interiorly the Church is designed with but one thought, namely: that all attention may be directed to the Altar of Sacrifice and to Christ





RT. REV. BISHOP D. J. O'CONNELL, D. D.,
Promotor of St. Benedict's Parish

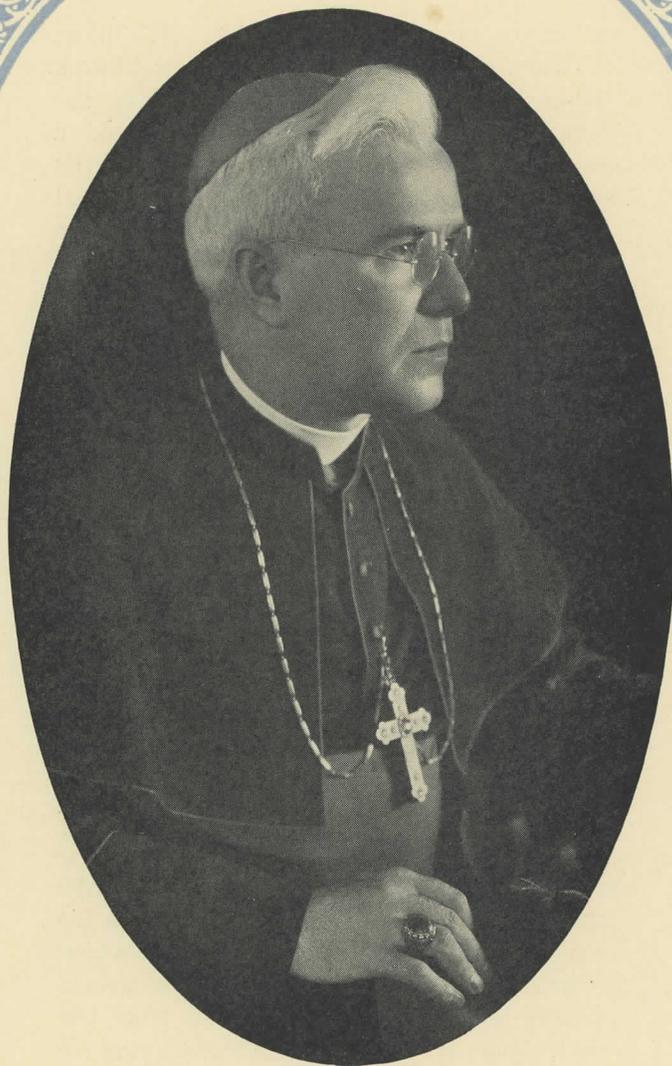


resting in His Holy Tabernacle. We have, therefore, endeavored to create in this Church building a religious atmosphere befitting the Temple of God wherein all things may aid in developing devotion to Our Lord in His Tabernacle. It is not a museum of art. All materials used have, by the aid of the arts and crafts, been so shaped and arranged that, as a whole, they serve the purpose of arousing the spirit of devotion to the Creator. There is, therefore, no artificial materials used in this building; there is no imitation or covering up; everything is natural as God created it; so be it wood, or stone, or marble, or granite, or clay; it appears exactly what it is, and as nothing else. The structure itself teaches openness, candor and integrity, the same doctrine as is taught by word-of-mouth from the pulpit.

Inspiring Interior

Interiorly the Church has the poetic qualities of height and depth, might and strength, and is pervaded by a soft, religious light, qualities which should characterize a temple of the Almighty, producing in weak men a spirit of respect and reverence. Distance, and long drawn out aisles, remind the faithful of the necessity of wending their way carefully in the long pathway to salvation, the end of which is Christ; height inspires them to look upward to their heavenly home and away from the sordid things of earth; might and strength give to them a sense of the permanent truths of God's Church and confidence to rest their faith in them.





RT. REV. BISHOP A. J. BRENNAN, D. D.,
*Present Bishop of Richmond; Devoted Friend and Chief Spiritual
Shepherd of St. Benedict's Parish*



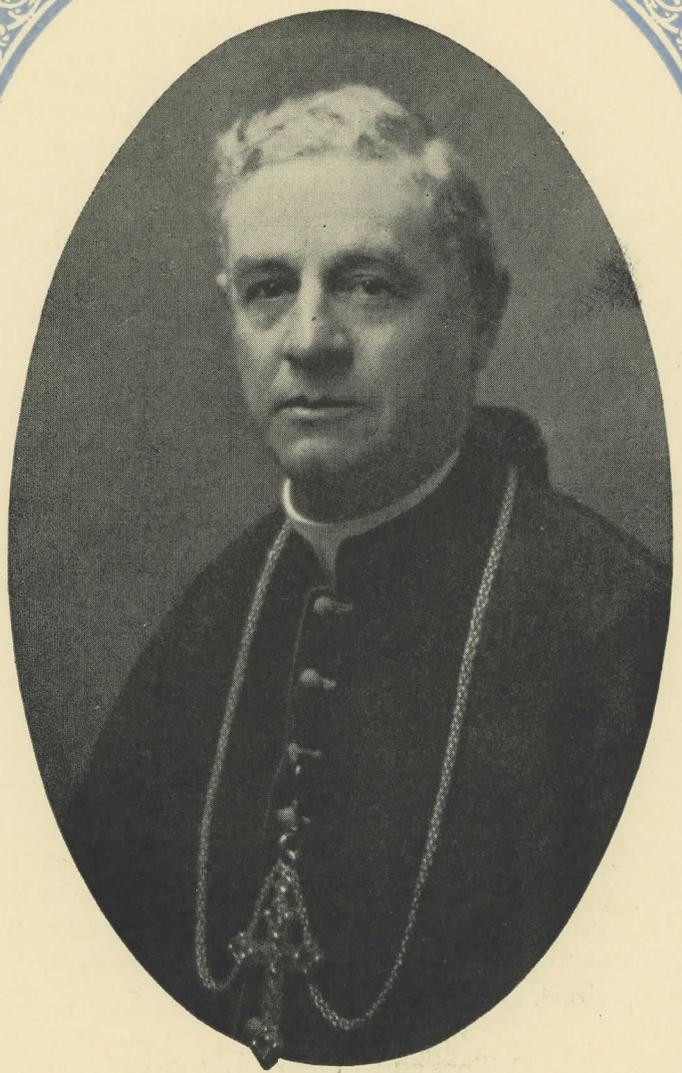
Art Glass Bespeaks Glory

The art glass creates that subdued light which calms the turbulence of mankind, shuts out the glamor of the world, leaving the soul at rest, free to commune with its Maker. The antique glass paints the atmosphere, as the glory of God's sunlight trickles through, sending darts of many rich colors, scintillating and dancing prismatically through the building; decorating the wall, the floor, the pulpit, or the clothing of the kneelers; ever changing, ever varying, as the sun moves with the time of day; an artist ever present, transforming the scenes, the colors, the lights and shadows, from morning until noon and into the dusk of evening, always speaking of the glory of God, and bringing to life at all hours of day dead materials which have been constructed into form. The glass here installed has been fabricated from the highest grade of English pot metal, leaded into form after the fashion of the window works of the middle ages; archaic and sparkling they are, possibly, the richest antique windows installed in any church of the South. The seven windows in the sanctuary above the altar, symbolize the Seven Sacraments, and are placed as a memorial to the Reverend Hugh J. McKeefry, beloved deceased pastor of Saint Patrick's Church, Richmond.

Ceilings and Walls Aid Acoustics

The ceilings display rugged strength, being timbered and having panels filled with Cello-





RT. REV. VINCENT TAYLOR, D. D., O. S. B.,
*Abbot of Belmont, N. C.; Counsellor and Guiding Spirit of
St. Benedict's Parish*



tex, giving acoustic qualities which eliminate the auditorium reverberation, so that the voice of the speaker may be heard distinctly and the notes of the organ contain their true value.

The rough texture of brick wainscoting, as also the roughened finish of the plaster, are also a help to the fine acoustic qualities of the building. The floors throughout, except under pews, are burnt clay tile, variegated in color, antique, as in the churches of old.

Oak and Granite

The pews and chairs in the sanctuary are all white oak and the only wood used anywhere in the building. The five altars, the pulpit, the communion rail, the baptismal fount, are made of granite, the king of stones, which is superior in beauty, strength and endurance to all other stones. This particular granite is a delicate shade of pink, and was quarried at Salisbury, North Carolina. The twenty columns and pedestals, and their carved caps, are of the same granite. St. Benedict's Church will be unique in this regard, having all of the above items uniformly of granite of special design for this particular Church, simple but eloquent, and impressive in character.

Dignity of Altar and Equipment

The main altar and its Tabernacle, the center of all activities in the Catholic Church, is constructed to conform with the rubrics. It has no elaboration, but is a solemn and dignified table of sacrifice, spacious in size, and





VERY REV. EDWARD MEYER, O. S. B.,
Beginner of St. Benedict's Parish



elegant in form. On it rests, free and unobstructed, the Tabernacle as a new Ark of the Covenant. Above this, resting upon four columns and made of the same granite, is the canopy. The door of the Tabernacle is of gold. The altar has a screen round about forming an ambulatory, and on this screen is a rich drapery of ecclesiastical design. The candle sticks and crucifixes are all of solid bronze, designed especially for this altar and made to age and grow antique with the Church.

Exteriorly as well as interiorly, the Church has no ornament which has not its ecclesiastical symbolism; the carvings, the altars, the ornamental caps on the columns, the designs of the art glass, the hand-wrought Baptistry grill, everything is to a purpose, having a symbolical form or color.

Indirect Lighting

The lighting of the Church is what is known as the indirect system. The lighting fixture being practically eliminated, and all lights being reflected indirectly, adds mystery and spirit to the Church, and eliminates the distracting feature of the ornamental lighting fixture. In and around the altar, or sanctuary, no lighting fixture or bulb is visible, only candle light, or the living light of faith of Christ, the Light of the world.

The sanctuary lamp, which is pendant from the great arch leading into the sanctuary, is of special design for this Church. It is made of burnished brass, and has the same character of





VERY REV. CHARLES RETTGER, O. S. B.,
First Pastor of St. Benedict's Parish



strength and durability, as all other fitments throughout.

Church Almost Fully Complete

There are lacking for the completion of the Church the eleven side aisle art glass windows, the fourteen stations of the cross, and some of the statuary. When these are supplied, the Church will attain the full spirit which has been sought after, and there will then be no further need for ornamentation for many years to come. It has been specially so designed and so desired that this Church be noted for its simplicity, which naturally excludes a great number of devotional articles and ornamentations.

Edifice Expresses Spirit of Religion

The Church has been designed by the Reverend Father Michael McInerney, O. S. B., who has endeavored to express the spirit of religion as it is lived in the Catholic Church, and to symbolize, as far as possible, by the use of material things, the truths of the Catholic Church, increase devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and arouse hope in a future life. The structure is of such character that it will improve with age and become more venerable as the years go by. It is hoped that, in this spirit, perhaps in the many years to come, as men are inspired to love and devotion through the instrumentality of this building, as when they come here to pray, their thoughts will revert to those who have done this work; to those





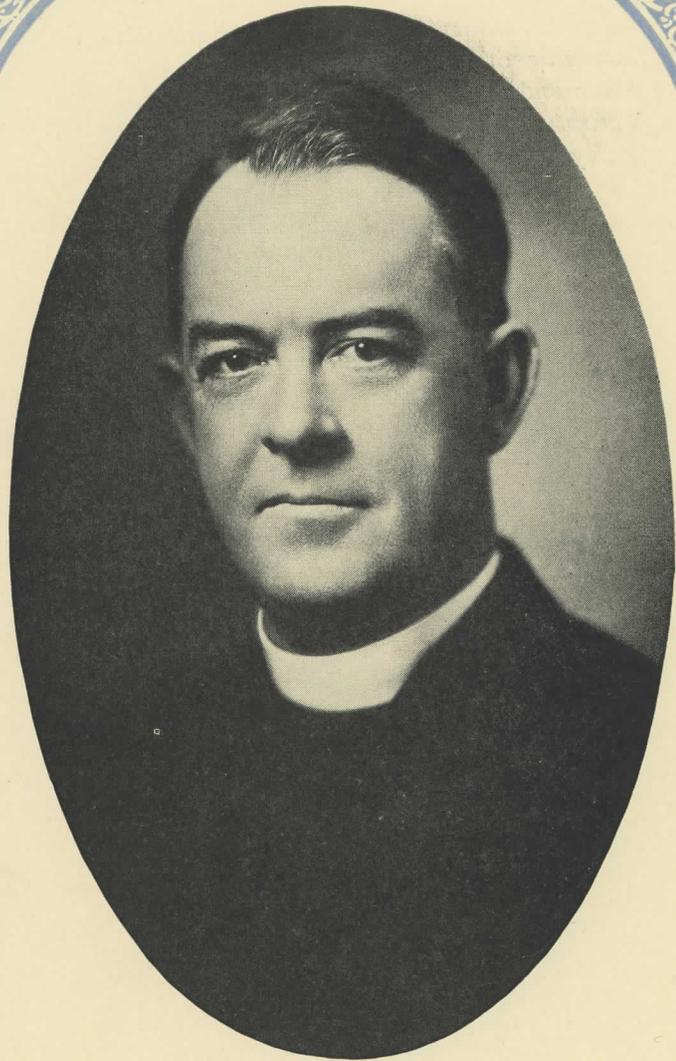
VERY REV. MARK CASSIDY, O. S. B.,
Second Pastor of St. Benedict's Parish



who have made sacrifices for it and who, by their devotion and loyalty, have made it possible; and that, in remembering them, they will offer up a prayer for their departed souls. It may be that we who have wrought in these days will at that time reap a reward for the good work we have done.

The craftsmen and artists employed on this building have entered into the spirit of the work, and each one has given satisfactory service. The artistic work was done by men of faith and devotion, who were able to put inspiration of the kind desired into the materials which they handled.





VERY REV. CORNELIUS DIEHL, O. S. B.,
Present Efficient and Beloved Pastor of St. Benedict's Parish



The Architect

The Very Rev. Michael McInerney, O. S. B., the architect and prime mover of St. Benedict's Church, deserves all possible praise that can be lavished upon him. His humility and unassuming disposition prevent his proper recognition by those who have not had contact with him, but his ability arouses the admiration of all who know him and his singular record.

For more than twenty-five years, while living the monastic life in Belmont Abbey, Father Michael has planned and directed the construction of many churches, convents, educational institutions, orphan asylums, hospitals and recreation buildings throughout the South Atlantic States and also in the Pittsburgh Diocese.

As the monks of the Middle Ages have left their enduring impress upon the heritage of modern literature, so has Father Michael bequeathed to the present and future Church of the South the fruits of his piety, knowledge and self-sacrifice. His motto has always been: "In all things may God be glorified!"





REV. BONIFACE BAUER, O. S. B.,
*Assistant Pastor St. Benedict's Parish, with Father Mark
and Father Cornelius*



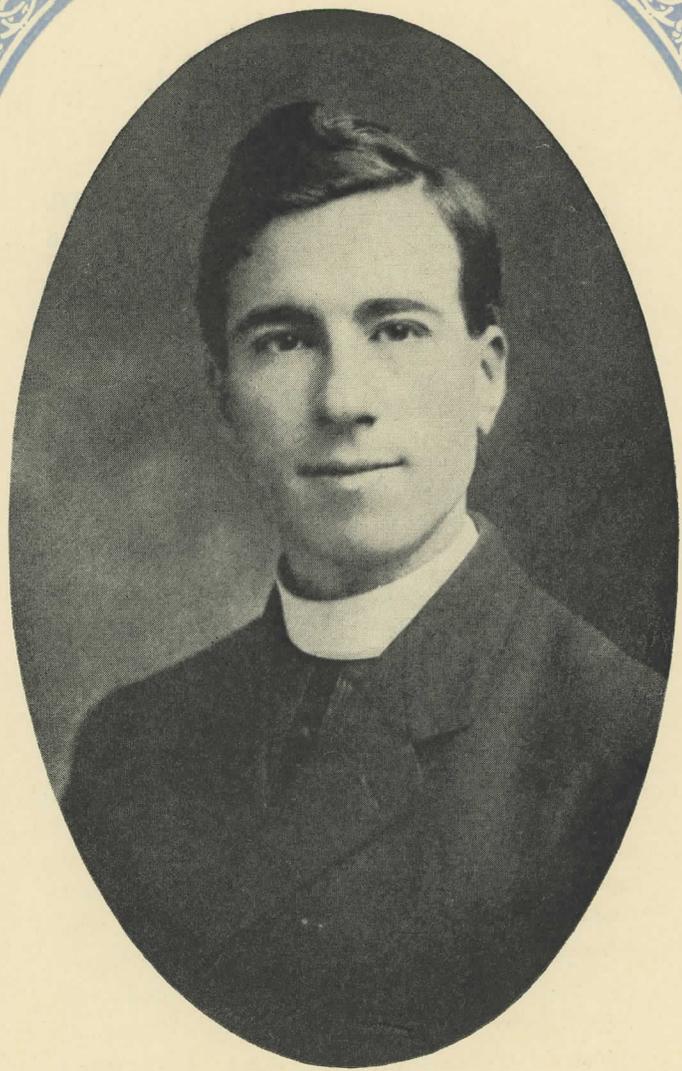
History of the Parish

Benedictine Boys' High School

The Benedictines came to Richmond in 1860, at the invitation of Bishop McGill, to open a high school and do parish work. In 1911 Bishop Van De Vyver insisted that the Benedictine Fathers build a suitable high school, adequate to accommodate the Catholic boys of Richmond and suburbs for many years to come. Bishop Leo Haid, O. S. B., Abbot of Belmont, North Carolina, complied with his request, only on the condition that a parish be attached. Out of this agreement arose St. Benedict's Church and the fine group of buildings adjoining, devoted to the education of Catholic youth of the city.

St. Gertrude's Convent and High School

Nor was the matter of the higher education of the young women of the parish overlooked. In June, 1912, work was begun on St. Gertrude's Convent and High School, 3201 Stuart Avenue. In February, 1913, the convent was occupied by a group of Sisters under Sister Gertrude; and, on February 25, 1913, the building was blessed by Bishop O'Connell. Here in a beautiful little park, embowered amid flowers and vines, trees and shrubs, the Benedictine Sisters are carrying on their life work, educating our young women.



VERY REV. MICHAEL MCINERNEY, O. S. B.,
Designer and Architect of the Buildings of St. Benedict's Parish



Parochial School

In 1923, when Father Mark Cassidy, O. S. B., was pastor, St. Benedict's Parochial School, at Grove and Belmont Avenues, began its work with the Benedictine Sisters in charge. Today it is a flourishing school of 350 pupils. The convent home for the parochial Sisters stands next to the school.

Complete Group of Church Buildings

The Church, the priory, the Benedictine High School, the parochial school and convent and St. Gertrude's Convent and High School constitute a complete group of buildings, attesting the progressive work accomplished by the Benedictine Order in West End of Richmond.

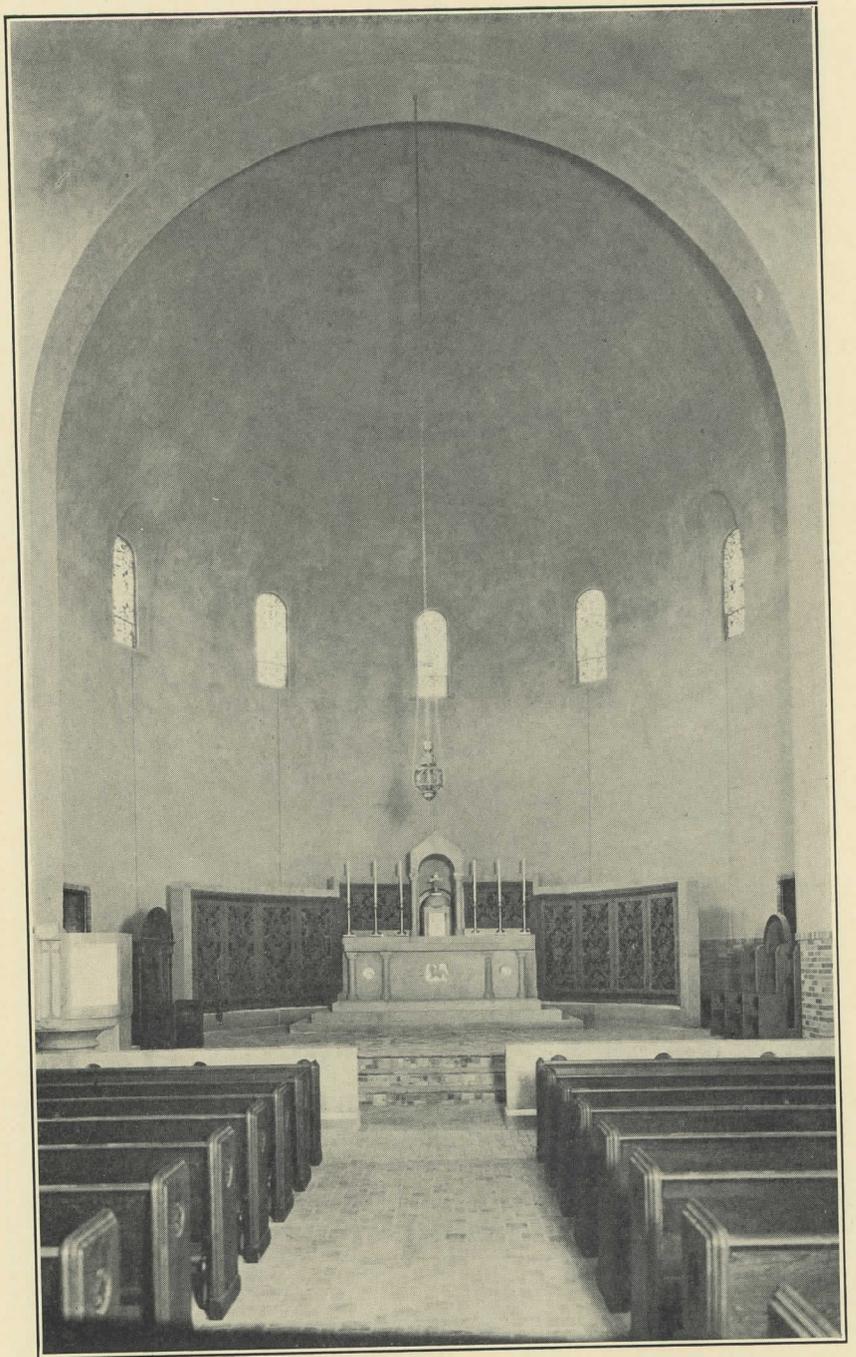
Father Edward Meyer, O. S. B.

The Benedictine foundation in West End was actually begun by Father Edward Meyer, O. S. B., at that time pastor of St. Mary's Church of Richmond. He labored admirably and indefatigably to raise funds for the erection of the building, best known as Benedictine College, which for years served as Church, school and priory.

Father Charles Rettger, O. S. B.

Father Charles Rettger, O. S. B., was the first pastor of the new parish, which at its beginning consisted of less than a dozen families. Realizing, as he did, the importance of solidly





MAIN ALTAR AND SANCTUARY



founding and firmly and progressively developing his parish along spiritual lines, and also along those material lines which are closely connected with the spiritual, Father Charles, with the zeal of the true apostle that he was, threw himself heart and soul into the great work at hand. He lived to see St. Benedict's parish not only take shape, but also in a state of continual development, which, owing to the firm foundation he so efficiently laid, has in the present attained a maximum degree of progress and completeness. Father Charles wore himself out in the arduous labors of starting and developing a new congregation, and literally died "in harness" October 14, 1916. His religion was one of optimism, of joy, of brightness. He was loved by all.

Father Mark Cassidy, O. S. B.

The successor of Father Charles was Father Mark Cassidy, O. S. B., a most zealous priest, who, big in body, was also like his predecessor, big in mind and heart. His whole object was to continue the wise policies inaugurated by Father Charles and to add to them any further means of success to meet the new and changing conditions of his time. Amongst other fruits of his endeavors may be specially mentioned the building of the parochial school and of the convent. Father Mark became practically a living martyr to duty. With such earnestness and devotion did he labor that his health gave way in December, 1924, and he was forced to retire. He died venerated by hosts of friends December 28, 1929.





REAR VIEW SHOWING ORGAN AND CHOIR BALCONY



**Father Cornelius Diehl, O. S. B., Present
Pastor**

In August, 1925, Father Mark was succeeded by the present pastor of St. Benedict's Church, the well-known, honored and beloved, Very Reverend Cornelius Diehl, O. S. B. His slogan from the beginning of his pastorate was "Build the Church so long needed by the Benedictine Parish!" How he has succeeded is well known to all of us. He has awakened us from our lethargy, harnessed our energy and imbued us with the spirit of enthusiasm and daring until we have coined our hopes into reality.

Parish Boundaries

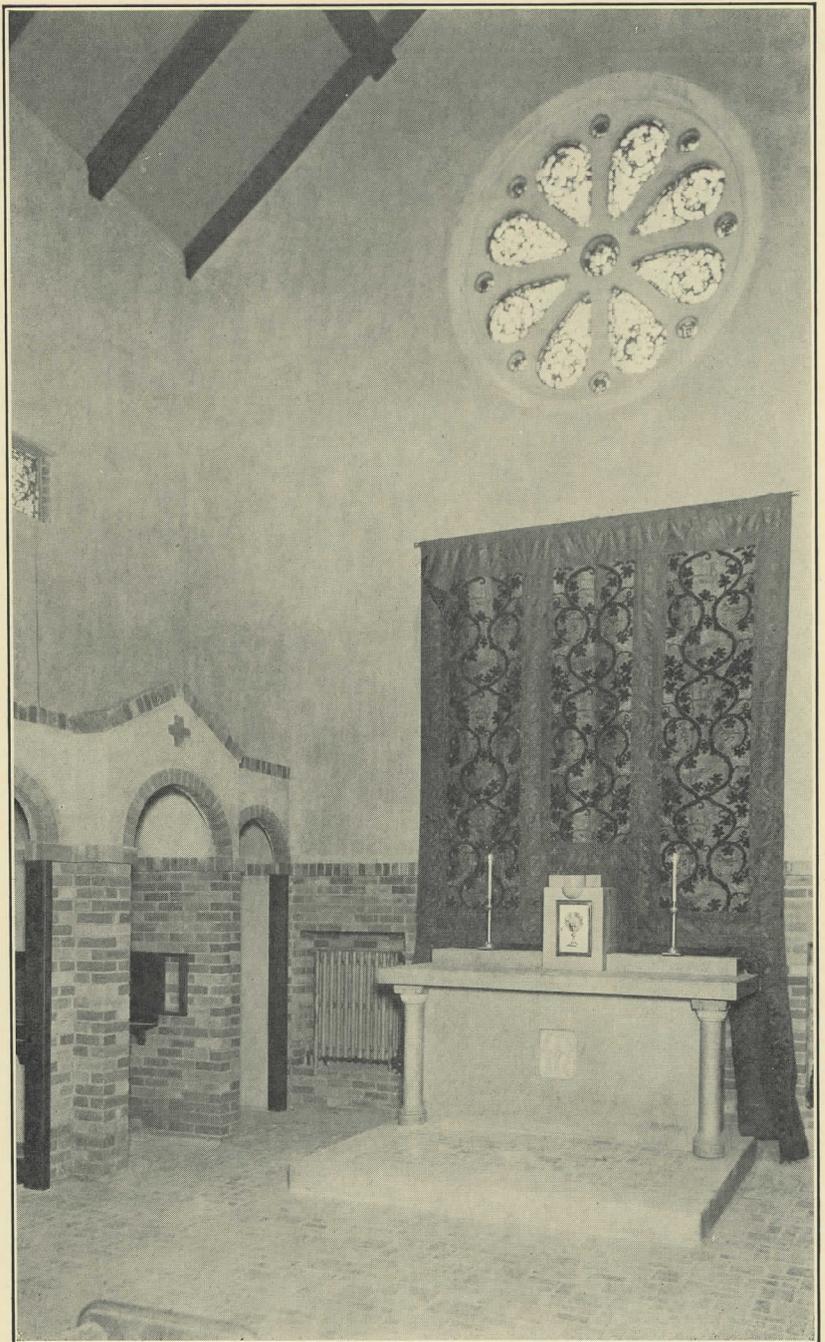
The boundaries of the new parish of St. Benedict's were established as follows: On the east, Robinson Street; on the west, the Belt Line Railroad; on the south, James River, and on the north, Acca Station.

Parochial Societies

The following societies are functioning with vigor: Holy Name Society, St. Benedict's Association for Men, Mothers' Club (for the support of the school), Sacred Heart League, Altar Boys' Society, Altar and Sanctuary Society.

Parishioners

The parish at this time consists of about 500 families, or about 1,700 souls.



ONE OF THE SIDE ALTARS INCLUDING SECTION OF CONFESSIONALS



Ceremonies

The Blessing of a Church

By a "Church" is here understood a large building, designed and adapted to the general use of the faithful for divine worship in perpetuity.

The Church is stripped of all its ornaments; the altars are bare.

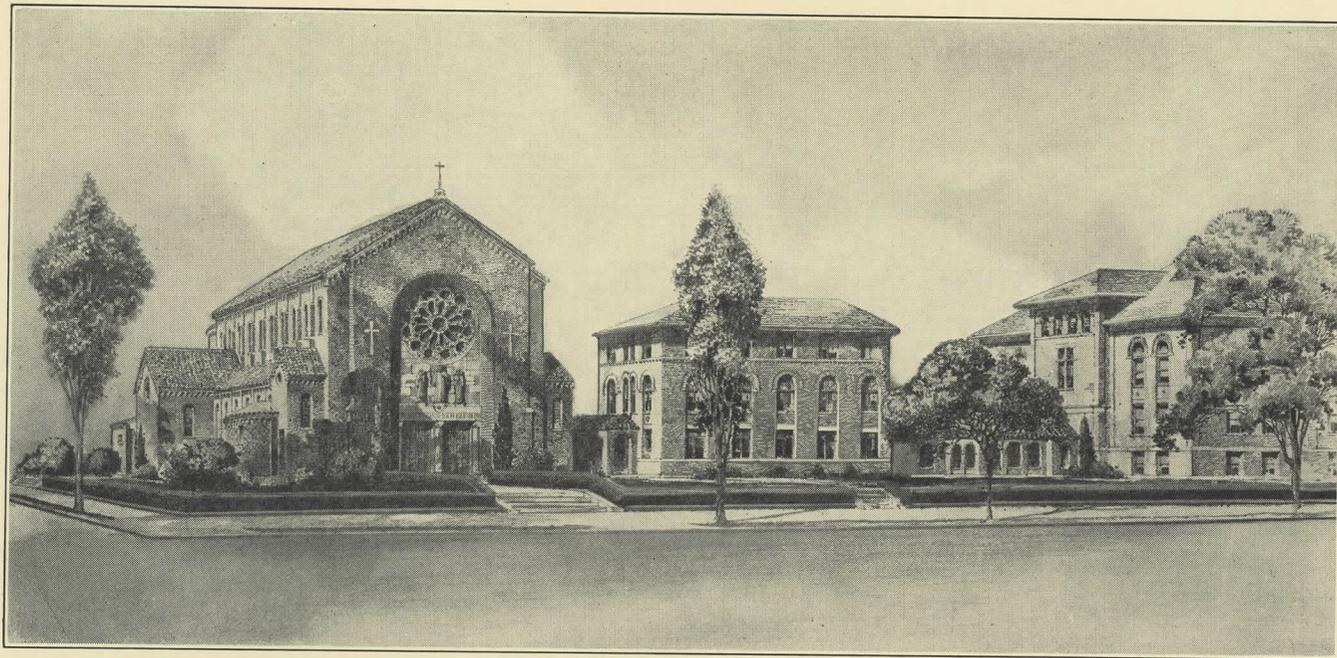
Having arrived at the main entrance of the Church, the bishop and his assistants stand on the outside facing the entrance and recite the prescribed liturgical prayers and psalms. During the recital of these, the bishop, or other prelate or priest officiating in his stead, goes around the outside of the Church, sprinkles with holy water the walls at the height of his head and near the foundation, and returns to the main entrance. A few more prayers from the ceremonial having been recited by the bishop, the procession enters the Church, and the Litany of All Saints is chanted. Then, during the recital of specified psalms, the celebrant sprinkles the inner walls of the Church, and thus concludes the blessing of the building.

Consecration of the Altars

The blessing of the Church is followed by a much longer and strikingly impressive ceremony, the consecration of the altars.

The "fixed" altar is a permanent structure of stone, consisting of the table, which must be a slab firmly joined by cement to the support,





THE COMPLETED GROUP—THE CHURCH, THE PRIORY AND THE HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS



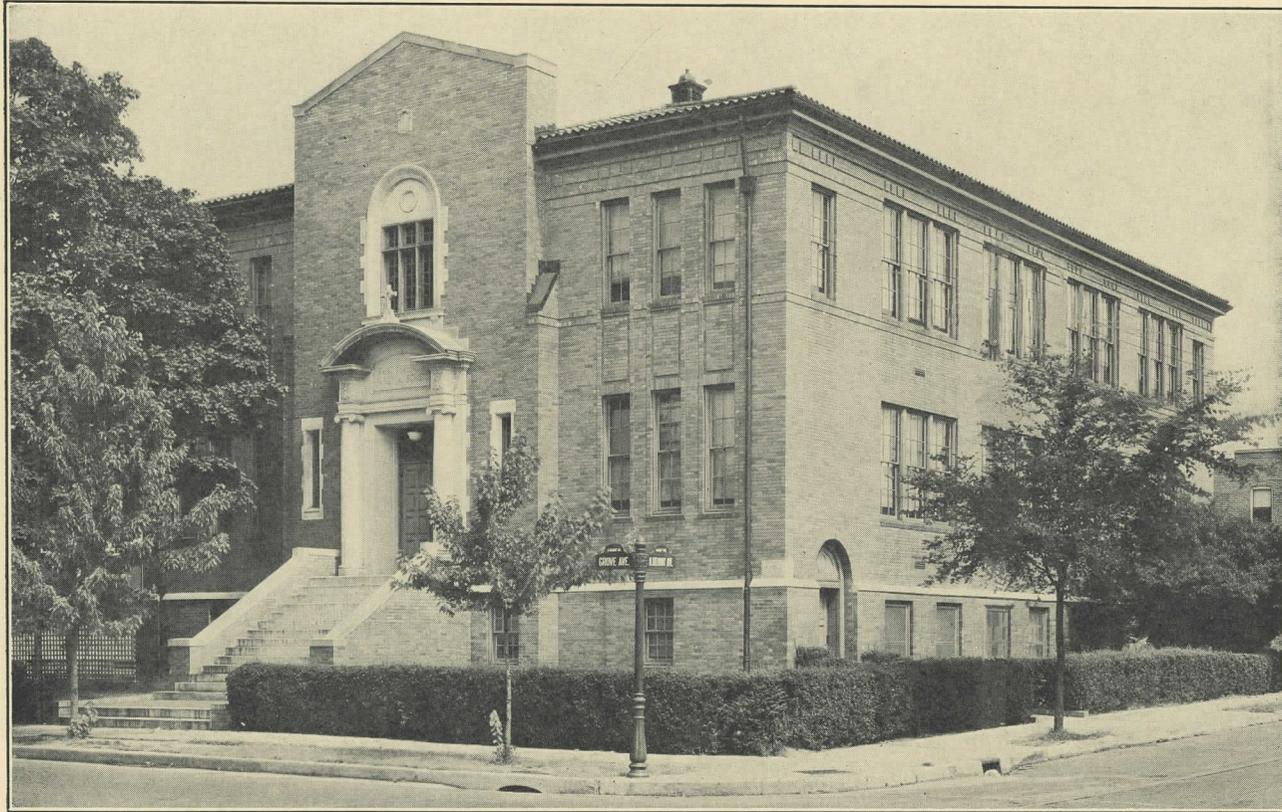
so that table and support together make one piece. The five altars of St. Benedict's Church are fixed altars.

The "sepulcher" is a small square opening made in the table of the altar, in which are placed the relics of two canonized martyrs. The relics must be actual portions of the saints' bodies. These are placed in a case which contain, besides the relics, three grains of incense and a small piece of parchment, on which is written an attest of the consecration.

In the course of many prayers and psalms, with incensation of altar and the burning thereon of small crosses made of waxen tapers, the bishop makes with his thumb, dipped in water, especially blessed for the occasion, the sign of the cross on the four corners and the center of the table. He also anoints with Holy Chrism the four corners of the sepulcher of the altar in which the relics of the two martyrs are placed, fastening with cement the lid of the sepulcher, and anointing the upper sides and remainder of the altar.

An identical ceremony is performed at each altar.





ST. BENEDICT'S PAROCHIAL SCHOOL, GROVE AND BELMONT AVENUES



Program of Dedication

Wednesday, August 28, 1929

Beginning at Eight o'Clock A. M.

Blessing of the Church, with Consecration of the Altars, followed by Pontifical High Mass. (Mass about 10 o'clock.)

Officiating Prelate:

RT. REV. A. J. BRENNAN, D. D.

Bishop of Richmond

Co-Consecrators:

RT. REV. WM. J. HAFEY, D. D.

Bishop of Raleigh

RT. REV. JOHN J. SWENT, D. D.

Bishop of Wheeling

RT. REV. EMMET M. WALSH, D. D.

Bishop of Charleston

Celebrant of Mass:

RT. REV. VINCENT TAYLOR, D. D., O. S. B.

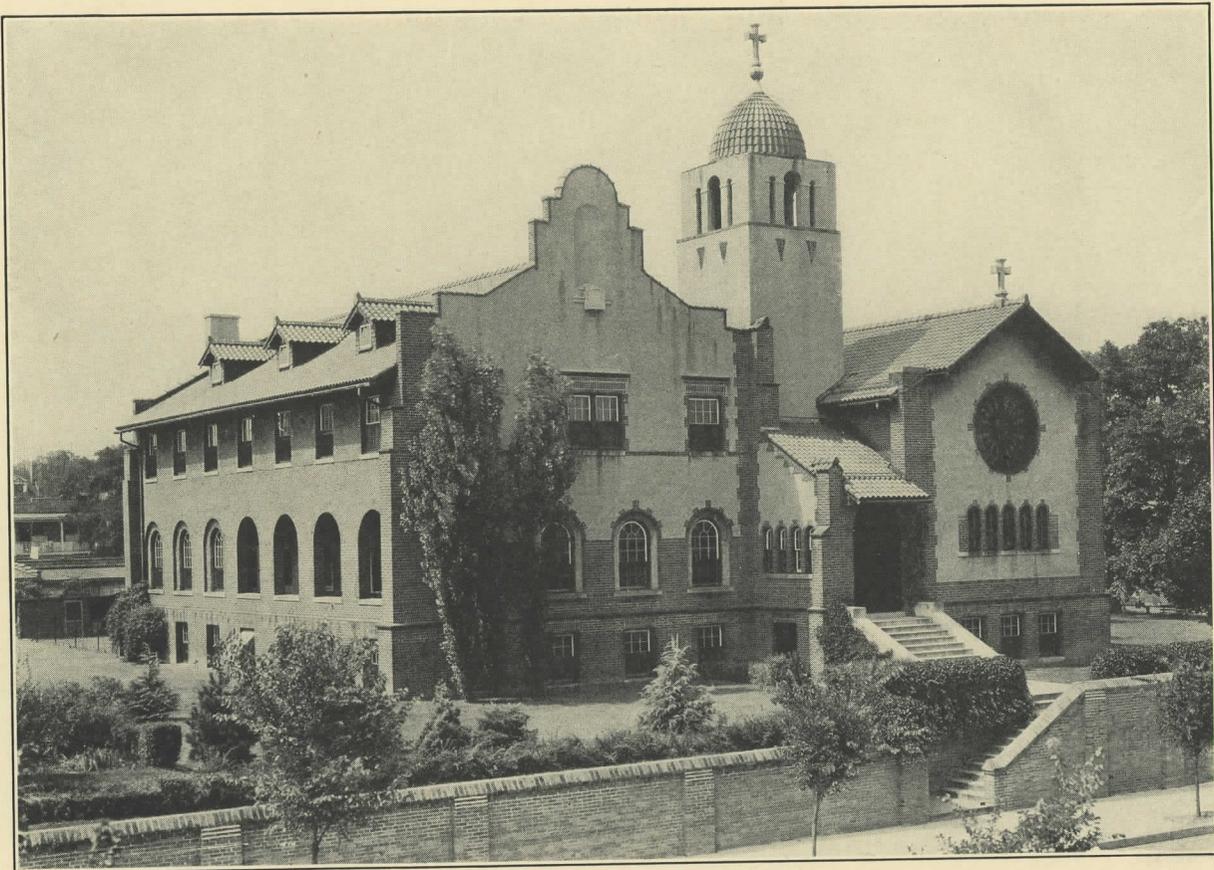
Abbot of Belmont, N. C.

Sermon by REV. WM. A. WACHTER,

Pottstown, Pa.

The five altars are to be consecrated in honor of St. Benedict, St. Scholastica, Sacred Heart, St. Joseph and Blessed Virgin Mary.





ST. GERTRUDE'S CONVENT AND HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS ON STUART AVENUE



Artistic Genius in the Church

The carvings in the Church were done by Mr. Frank Aretz, one of the most distinguished ecclesiastical sculptors in America. The art glass was done by Mr. Leo Pitassi, who has produced the glass for some of the finest cathedrals in this country. The granite altars, altar railing, pulpit and pillars were made by Mr. Alex Molinarola, who has been more anxious to perfect his work in a spirit of devotion to the faith than to accumulate gain.

The pipe organ was furnished by Estey Company.

The sanctuary lamp and ecclesiastical bronze work was executed by the Wright Manufacturing Company of Philadelphia.

The interior woodwork was done by Mr. Joseph Heppert, and the soft stone work by Mr. John Helfert. The windows were installed by Mr. John Woody. The inside brick were furnished by the Southside Brick Company. The pews and sanctuary furniture were made by the American Seating Company. The heating was done by The Carle-Boehling Company; the tile floors by Mr. Walter Mahoney; the electric light fixtures by Mr. S. B. Cardo; the electric wiring by W. H. Jenks; the plastering by J. W. Gilman & Son; the excavating by John J. Curley; the brick work by Lynn Thomas & Son; the brick by Glonager & Co., of Pittsburgh; painting by S. F. Rhoads & Co. The general contractor, whose work was most efficient, was the John T. Wilson Company.

The draperies and altar linens were made by devotional women of the parish.



DESIGNED AND PRINTED BY
LEWIS PRINTING COMPANY, INC.
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA