

Ave Maria Catholic Church

Our Church Building

Building Design

- **Architect** – Thomas Monahan
- **Principal** ○ Harry Warren.
- **Design Firm** ○ Cannon Design.
 - Original design was 3 times bigger (seating 3300 people).
- **Frank Lloyd Wright principles used everywhere.**
 - Holy Water fonts.
 - Steel design came from two chapels in Arkansas; both designed by E. Faye Jones
 - Mildred B. Cooper (Bella Vista). Bowed-wood.
 - Thorncrown (Eureka Springs). Straight steel.
 - Mr. Monaghan chose to combine the two: bow the steel.
 - Because “I-beams” had never been bent like this before, Cannon Design (the firm who helped with the construction) was forced to invent a tool that could bend the beams into the shapes we wanted. Because they couldn’t just put the beams in a furnace and let them melt, the tool is a series of electronic leads that would attach to the beams. They would then run an electronic current through the beams which would speed up the molecules inside, making the beams malleable. It is because of that invention that we were given the award of the most beautiful steel structure in the country.
 - 3,500,000 lbs. steel = 1750 tons.
 - “Cives Steel,” Georgia.
 - Building is hurricane-resistant up to a Category 5.
 - 150 cement trucks were used to set the foundation. It was a 17 hour pour which marked the longest concrete pour in southwest Florida’s history. 3,000 yards of concrete, 3 feet thick.
 - The Lanterns
 - Frank Lloyd Wright concept.
 - Lights are a replica of a dining room chandelier that was used in Sam Walton’s house (the guy who founded Wal-Mart).
 - Each light is 11 feet tall; weighs 800 lbs; and took over 500 hours to assemble.



Dimensions.

- 27,000 square feet.
- 206 feet long. iii. Capacity: 1,100 people.
- From the bottom step outside to the top of the Celtic cross is 118 feet.
- From the floor inside to the skyline above is 104 feet.
- The large white panels in the ceiling are “gypsum” – designed to dampen sound-waves so that they’re not just bouncing off the steel.

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Why the shape of the building?

- There are several interpretations. ii. Bishop's miter. iii. Silhouette of Mary.
- iv. The intent was weather-resistance.

Façade

- The colorful stone on the façade was brought in from 4 different quarries in New Mexico, "Travertine stone."
- The 12 apostles are 18 inches tall, and are actually a *gilt or gilded-bronze*, which means they are a gold-leaf cover over bronze.
- They were ordered from Baker Liturgical here in the states, but they were made in Italy.
- The day we opened the Perpetual Adoration Chapel, a gentleman came out and went inside the chapel. He then looked up and saw that we only had 8 of the 12 apostles at that time. He offered to pay for the remaining 4 apostles as well as a number of the statutes that have yet to be installed on the altar area. He attributed his generosity to the devout catholic faith of his mother-in-law. Donor remains anonymous.
- The front doors have several little square spaces in them. These are supposed to be filled with the same type of bas-relief carving as The Annunciation Sculpture, but will probably not be made using Carrara marble. They're supposed to be individual scenes from Mary's life.
- The two square nooks on the façade
- Ghibli granite; 5.5 feet tall.
- Infant of Prague (stage left)
- Discovered by a Spanish monk; received a vision from the Christ child.
- Infant was brought to Prague in 1628. After many battles, found in the ruins of a church.
- Patron of universities, vocations, family life and travelers.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe (stage right) in them.
- The image of our lady appeared on the cloak of Juan Diego (Tepeyac, Mexico City – Dec. 12, 1531).
- The Virgin of Guadalupe is Mexico's most popular religious and cultural image.
- In our image she appears pregnant.



Sanctuary area is the only area not yet completed.

- Dome wall: steel frame & solid wall with plaster.
- Only four features are permanent: crucifix, tabernacle, statues of Mary and Joseph (which are made of linden wood).
- Linden wood: aka **Tilia**, **basswood**, or **lime**. Very little grain, small density. Other uses: electric guitars, bass bodies, and wind instruments.
- We are currently hosting an international contest to try and find someone to design the area.

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- Tabernacle was donated, made in Spain, and is one of the largest in the country. The big blue areas are simple enamel; there are 13 small tanzanite gems located on the façade (each is valued greater than diamonds; 3.5 carats).

Crucifix

- The *red oak cross* is 23.8 feet tall and weighs 2,600 lbs.
- The *cast-bronze corpus* is 12.7 feet tall and weighs 1,600 lbs. It was made in Bangkok, Thailand. It was sculpted by the Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz; it took him 10 months to complete.
- The combination weighs 4,200 lbs. and was installed Feb. 15, 2009.
- “Crucifix Story.”
 - In order to bring it inside, the corpus had to be detached from the cross and the two were brought in separately. The corpus cleared the doorway by only 1/16th of an inch. The interesting thing is that they reattached the corpus to the cross while it was lying on the altar; then they raised the cross up into place.



Interior Statues (altar area)

- “Linden Wood” comes from Czechoslovakia.
- Wood gets laminated, glued and the kiln-dried.
- Need a wood block that is almost double the statue size to carve.
- Ordered from “Baker Liturgical” (Southington, CT) and was made in Italy.
- Weight range: 218 – 289 lbs. Average approximate height of 6 feet.
- St. Peter (218.3lbs), St. Andrew (253.5lbs), St. Matthew (288.8lbs), St. James the Greater (247lbs), St. Jude (244.7lbs), St. Matthias (253.5lbs).
- Pedestals are temporary.

Stations of the cross

- Found in the basement of a church outside the Detroit area (was St. Agnes, is now The Martyrs of Uganda). A lady found them in the basement of St. Agnes the day before the building was scheduled to be demolished. She was able to get them out in time and eventually donated them to our Oratory.
- Each one is over 90 years old, sculpted in a bas-relief format (3-dimensional sculpture). They used a “Scagliola” mean, which is basically just a mixture of plaster and marble.
- The interesting thing is their frames were built before we received them – and still they fit perfectly.

Confessionals

- 8 total, each with one room for the priest (center) and two for the people (either side). ii. Remind people that there are no locks on the doors and they are not to open them.

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Names on the walls.

- Along the walls throughout the Oratory are several named stones, these are part of a scholarship program where the proceeds go towards student scholarships. Same as the brick pavers outside the Oratory.
- The stone used for the Facing Stones is called “cast” stone. It is supposed to resemble “natural stone” using cements, natural sands, crushed stone, natural gravels, and color pigments to give a natural color whilst maintaining durability. It came from “Ruck Brothers” company (Ft. Myers). It’s a good replacement for limestone, brownstone, sandstone, etc. and resembles sedimentary stone. A creation process known as **Vibrant-Dry-Tamped (VDT)** involves a vibration method against the outside of the mould which acts to consolidate the concrete.



Pew ends

- 54 pieces of wood each.
- Mr. Monaghan designed the patterns themselves. He actually came out over budget, but a group of volunteers from Domino Farms came down (on their own dime) and offered to finish the ends for free. He referred to them as “The Pew Crew.”

Floor

- The floors were made using Brazilian slate tile called, “**ardósia.**” Part of the creation process includes a natural oxidation which results in each piece developing its own unique color and pattern.
- Foundation = 16,200,000 lbs or 8,100 tons.

Choir Loft.

- 80 people capacity.
- We have an electronic organ. We had the choice between a pipe organ and an electronic organ.
 - Half the price
 - Easier to maintain
 - We have been able to download all of the best tones in the world into it.
- Story: about two years ago, the former director of music for the San Diego music department (now the director of music for Mexico City) flew up to Ave Maria, went inside the Oratory, and played one note on our new pipe organ; the sound was so perfect that he was able to confirm his theory and return home.
- The black boxes against the back wall above the choir loft are the large speakers for our electronic organ. Hopefully in time we will receive a donation that will allow us to put up a giant mesh-screen that will have the image of pipes while still allowing the sound from the speakers to pass through.