

Welcome!

*Thank you for visiting our place of worship,
the heart of our community!*

Saint Thomas More Catholic Community, founded on January 1, 2008, is the union of two Catholic Parishes on Summit Avenue: The Church of Saint Luke (1888) and The Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (1949). Our rich heritage from these two communities of faith has blessed us with over 125 years of Catholic worship, community and ministry in this historic area of Saint Paul.



History

John Theodore Comès, one of America's most famous architects, designed Saint Thomas More Catholic Church. Comès, a native of Saint Paul, headed the firm of Comès, Perry and McMullen of Pittsburgh and was invited by Archbishop John Ireland to design and oversee the construction of this church building. When Comès died suddenly in 1922, his associate William Perry brought the project to completion. Under the direction of the Walter Butler Co. Inc. of Saint Paul, construction began in 1924 and was completed in 1926. This work was

carried out during the pastorate of Msgr. James Byrne. The dedication stone was laid by Archbishop Michael Dowling on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1925. The Mass of Dedication was celebrated by Archbishop Gregory Murray in early October, 1926. The entire work took place during the pontificate of Pius XI, whose coat of arms is carved above the southwest entrance of the church.

Architecture

Saint Thomas More Catholic Church is a notable example of "Romanesque Revival" architecture, which thrived throughout Europe and North America from 1888 to 1930. Romanesque Architecture is a combination of the architectural styles of the Roman and Byzantine empires and flourished throughout Europe and England between the 9th and 12th centuries.

Main Characteristics

- A basilica floor plan
- Barrel vault ceilings
- An apse at one end of the building
- Apsidal chapels around the apse and/or throughout the nave



Facade

The church is constructed of Indiana Bedford Limestone and measures 198 ft. in length. A glorified cross surmounts the imposing 122 ft. façade on Summit Avenue. Below the cross is the Paschal Lamb and a statue of Saint Luke, the original patron. The great rose window with the symbols of the four evangelists stands at the center of the facade.

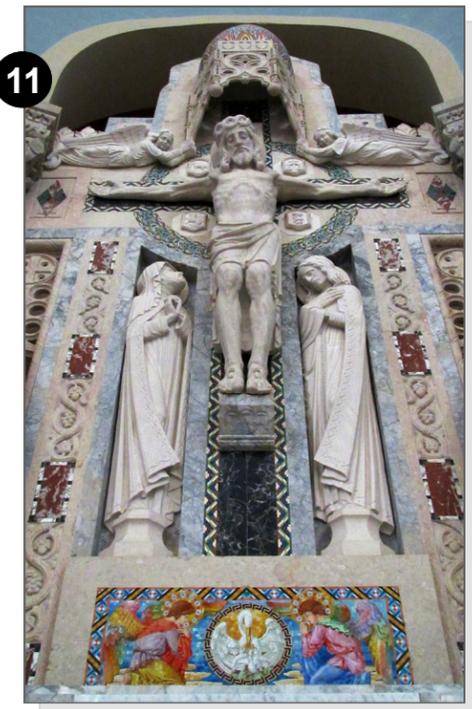


West and East Portals

Over the three portals of the facade, the history of Salvation is epitomized. Above the west portal is the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden with Noah's ark below. This west portal is complemented by the east portal of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary above and the ship of the Church below.

Central Portal: Christ in Majesty

The great arch surrounding this image contains fifteen discs, seven of which are symbols of Christ. Carvings of the twelve apostles appear immediately below Christ in Majesty. To the left of the apostles are the prophets and to the right of the apostles are holy men and women from the early and medieval Church. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is carved to the left of the center doors and Melchisedech's Offering to the right. The Archangels Michael and Raphael stand to the left and right of central portal.



11

The Italian marble and mosaic reredos designed by Frank Aretz of Pittsburgh shows Jesus crucified with Mary and John standing beneath his cross. Six saints surround the crucifix and complete the reredos (west to east): Saint Agnes, Saint Luke, Saint Peter, Crucifixion, Saint Paul, Saint Thérèse of Avila and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary.



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The Saint Joseph Altar, a gift of the Bell Family in 1937, is the work of Joseph Capecchi of the Saint Paul Statuary Co. The wall behind the statue is made of Montana travertine and the altar is Montana onyx.

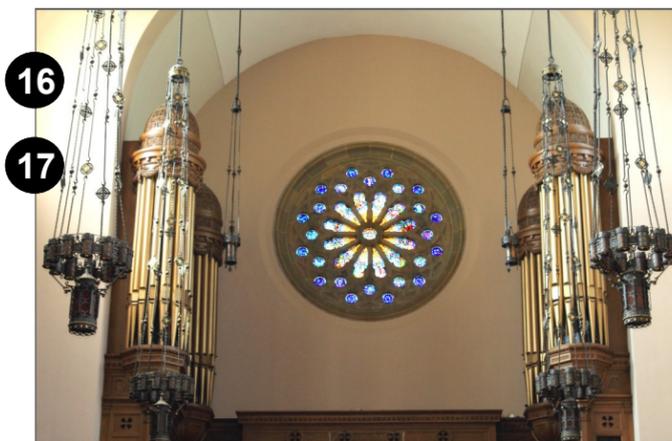
The statue of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux is carved from a solid block of white Botticino marble and was placed on the altar in 1928. The altar, designed by Fredrick A. Slifer, is built of light Botticino marble, with a reredos one shade darker, inlaid with blue, green and gold mosaics. The construction of this church coincided with Thérèse's beatification and canonization process. The workers were placed under her protection. No serious accidents occurred during the erection of the building.



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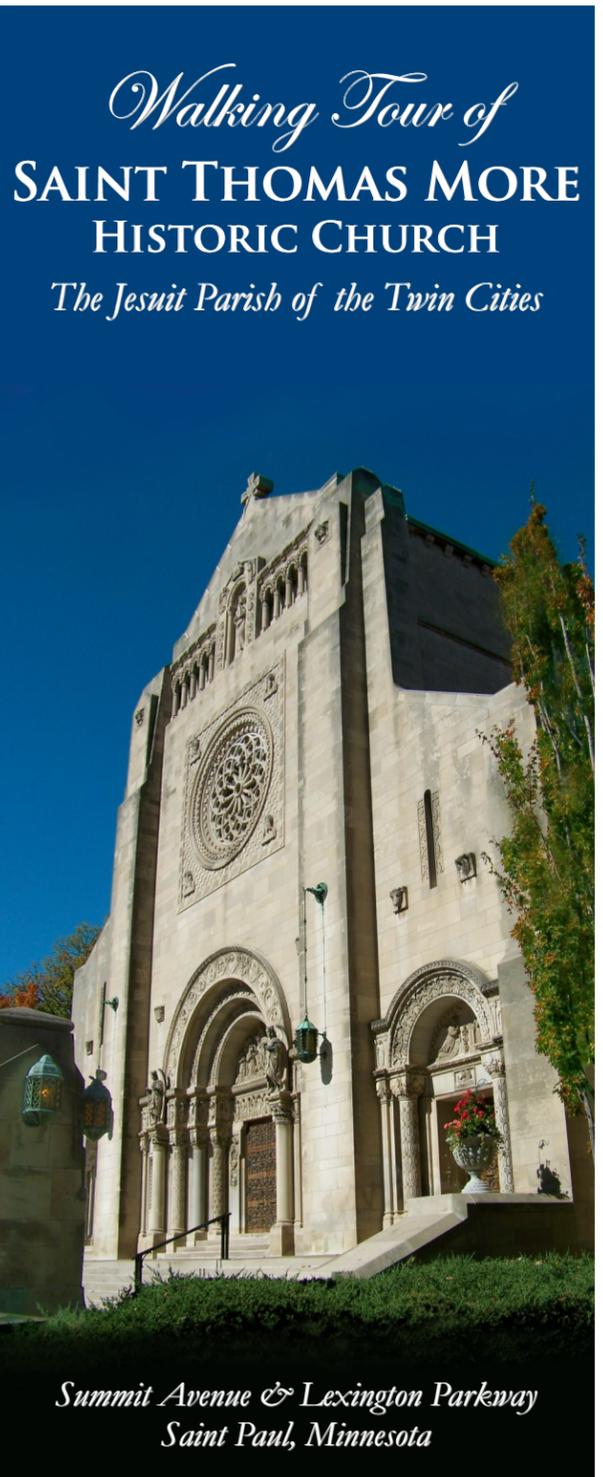
The rose window (and three sets of four round windows in the northwest entrance) were designed by Andreas Larson of Minneapolis. The Holy Spirit forms the axis of the rose window from which radiates the seven gifts and twelve fruits of the Spirit.

This three manual and pedal organ is the work of Casavant Freres of Quebec and has 40 stops divided into 39 ranks. Built for this church in 1926, it is one of the last organs built under the personal supervision of the Casavant brothers. Casavant organs continue to be considered among the finest quality in the world.



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17



Walking Tour of
SAINT THOMAS MORE
HISTORIC CHURCH
The Jesuit Parish of the Twin Cities

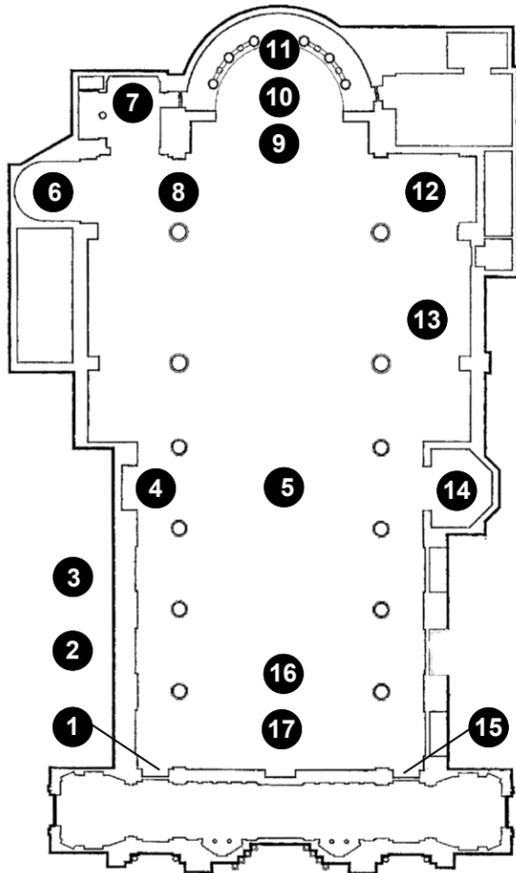
Summit Avenue & Lexington Parkway
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Self-Guided Tour

This tour takes you from the main entrance up the west aisle, over to the baptismal font in the center, to the Eucharistic Reservation Chapel in the northwest corner, across the sanctuary to the Saint Joseph Altar, back down the east aisle, passing the Saint Thérèse of Lisieux Chapel, and finishing at the Rose Window and Pipe Organ.

Floor Plan

- 1 Saint Boniface
- 2 Sorrows of Mary above the nave's east and west windows
- 3 Fourteen stations of the cross, displayed on the east, west and south walls
- 4 Shrine to Saint Thomas More
- 5 Baptismal Font
- 6 Eucharistic Reservation Chapel
- 7 Our Lady of Victory Chapel
- 8 Ambo
- 9 Altar
- 10 Apse
- 11 Altar Crucifix
- 12 Saint Joseph Altar
- 13 Stained Glass Windows, located throughout the nave
- 14 Saint Thérèse of Lisieux Chapel
- 15 Saint Patrick
- 16 Rose Window, located above the choir loft
- 17 Pipe Organ, in the choir loft



Statuary and sculpture not identified in this brochure were designed at the Pittsburgh studios of Frank Aretz and Frank Vittor and the studio of Brioschi-Minuti Co. of Saint Paul. The Gherati Co. of Saint Paul executed the works. These include the transept reliefs of the Angel Uriel (God is Love) and the Angel Jerahmeel (God is Mercy) as well as the Ascension of Christ over the interior of the central nave doors.



4

The statue of Saint Thomas More is the generous gift of our parishioners and the family and friends of Mary Ellen Sarafolean, beloved member of this faith community, for whom it is a memorial. Cast in ground Carrara marble, the statue of our patron was designed and created by sculptor Leo C. Irrera of Washington, D.C. In this statue Mr. Irrera wanted to create a visual statement that would capture Saint Thomas More's essence: to choose God over power. For this reason the Lord Chancellor's "Chain of Service" is at his feet while the Cross of Christ rests on his heart. A true renaissance man before his time, Saint Thomas More was an outstanding and articulate example of a

Christian humanist. He is shown pointing down to a few of the many books he authored, among them Utopia, The Sadness of Christ and a book of his English poetry. He reminds us daily of the supremacy of conscience formed in Christ and the inalienable dignity of the human conscience. He was martyred in the Tower of London on July 6, 1535. His feast day is June 22.



5

At the center of the nave stands the baptismal font. This font is constructed from sections of the original wooden communion rail, which was replaced in 1933 with the existing marble railing.



6

In 1988 the baptistery became the Eucharistic Reservation Chapel. The tabernacle is an original Florentine piece of art created in antique bronze. It now rests on the original baptismal font.



7

Victor Cordella of Minneapolis designed the altar for Our Lady of Victory Chapel. The statue of Mary under this title is a replica of the one brought here by Bishop Cretin, the first Bishop of Saint Paul. It is made of Carrara marble and is the work of Da Prato Studio, Chicago. The altar was financed by the children of the school through the zeal of Sister Bernarda.



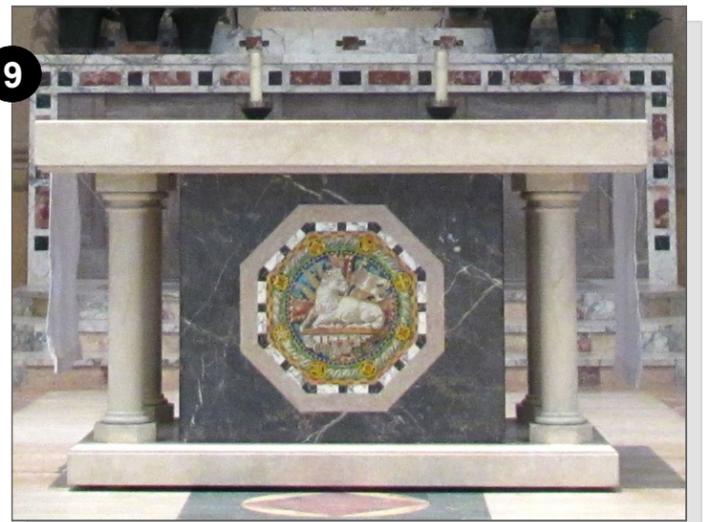
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The ambo is made of Italian marble, which was imported from Piedrasanta, Italy. It is adorned with three angels signifying the meaning of God's Word for the Church: the Torch for Knowledge, the Ten Commandments for the Law, and the Lamp for Wisdom.



10

The Rambusch Company of New York was selected by Comès and Perry to design and execute the monumental murals for the apse and sanctuary. These were not created until 1950. The original mural, rendered in Byzantine style, depicted Christ the Teacher enthroned upon a rock flowing with life giving water. To this living water come the sheep of Christ's flock. Behind Christ is the cosmos with the sun, moon and stars. Beneath him the seraphim stand with faces covered by their wings before Christ's glory. In the 1988 renovation the mural was altered to its present state.



9

The altar stands at the center of the sanctuary. It is constructed of Formosa marble with inset mosaic medallions taken from the original altar. The medallions on either side depict grapes and wheat, symbols of the Eucharist. The central medallion on the front of the altar depicts Christ the Pascal Lamb.



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