



Historic Renovation/Restoration Saint Joseph's Cathedral | Wheeling, WV



CFB was hired to renovate this beautiful Lombardy-Romanesque Cathedral which contained an intense series of murals and paintings by a famous German-American muralist. The project requirements centered on a complete preservation and restoration of the interior coupled with the introduction of modern liturgical appointments and ceremonial spaces.

Bright, 1950's pendant-hung fixtures illuminated the nave, chancel and altar resulting in glare and inadequate reading light. The murals were obscured and the interior was filthy due to 70 years in a steel making, industrial valley. The restoration design incorporated all new liturgical and ceremonial spaces including a raised predella under the dome, development of a "Cathedral in the Round" by reorganizing pews in the transept spaces, inclusion of handicap access to the former sanctuary and introduction of a new Altar, Ambo, Lectern and Bishop's Chair. This Roman Catholic Church now utilizes full immersion baptism. Located on the center aisle, adjacent to the Narthex, is a new Baptistry using the original Baptismal Font as a fountain that fills and overflows into the pool, creating continual acoustical perfume.

Improvements included: a complete cleaning of the stone and plaster interior, as well as free-hand painting of 550 new canvas inserts for the coffered ceiling to replace the existing burlap panels that were beyond repair. Each of the surface murals was cleaned and restored; in-fill painting was kept to a minimum. Decorative paintings at side aisle ceilings and around windows were uncovered and restored. Lighting design concentrated on the magnificent coffered ceiling, highlighting of the murals, and gentle lighting appropriate for reading hymnals and conducting services. All lighting is dimmer controlled. There are preset programs to highlight ceremonial locations at the Baptistry, Ambo, Altar, Lectern and similar areas of the church. A new HVAC system was installed, incorporating completely quiet, full air conditioning. The Cathedral now stands as a beacon to renewed religious life, incorporating appropriate contemporary symbols, while preserving the architecture and paintings of the past.

Client:
Diocese of Wheeling-
Charleston