

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. 10305.000691
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

BS 56

YOUR NAME: Town of Islip/SPLIA DATE: February 1990

Town Hall, 655 Main St.

YOUR ADDRESS: Islip, LI, NY 11751 TELEPHONE: 516.224.5450

ORGANIZATION (if any): Dept. of Planning, Housing, and Development

IDENTIFICATION

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church

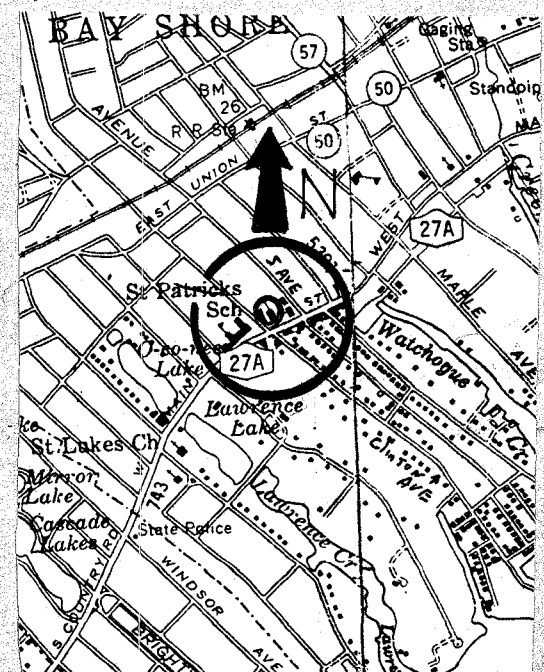
- 1. BUILDING NAME(S): _____
- 2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Islip VILLAGE: Bay Shore
- 3. STREET LOCATION: West Main St., north side, bet. 5th and Clinton Aves.
- 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
- 5. PRESENT OWNER: _____ ADDRESS: _____
- 6. USE: Original: church Present: church
- 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
Interior accessible: Explain by appointment

DESCRIPTION

- 8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other clay tile roof
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints
(if known) b. wood frame with light members
c. masonry load bearing walls
(?) d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
- 10. CONDITION: a. excellent b. good c. fair d. deteriorated
- 11. INTEGRITY: a. original site b. moved if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known):
altar plan altered 1986

12. PHOTO: Neg. KK IV-13, fm. W/SW

13. MAP: NYS DOT Bay Shore East & West Quads



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known b. zoning c. roads
 d. developers e. deterioration
 f. other: _____
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
 a. barn b. carriage house c. garage
 d. privy e. shed f. greenhouse
 g. shop h. gardens
 i. landscape features: large specimen tree west of church
 j. other: parochial school, mtng. hall, rectory (see photos)
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
 a. open land b. woodland
 c. scattered buildings
 d. densely built-up e. commercial
 f. industrial g. residential
 h. other: _____

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:

(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

St. Patrick's Church is located on the north side of Montauk Highway (historic State Highway 27) among smaller commercial buildings that line the road. Directly north is the rectory (1960), directly east is the Hall (1968), and directly west is the parochial school (1938).

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):
 St. Patrick's church is a large, multi-story, axial plan, gable roof brick building with an octagonal tower over the transept. Each facade is decorated with intricate brick and masonry designs. The round arch entrance is layered with colored terra cotta molds and extruded columns. The eaves and rakes feature drip arches formed of layered brick. The choir loft stairs were designed by Guastavino.

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1916-1919

ARCHITECT: Gustave E. Steinbeck

-refer to continuation sheet-

BUILDER: _____

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

This handsome church in the Lombard style and its matching Parochial school make a strong architectural statement on Bay Shore's Main Street.

This building will be listed in the upcoming AIA guide to Long Island architecture.

The interior decoration was not completed until 1924/25.

21. SOURCES:

Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library Vertical Files, folder "St. Patrick's".
 The American Architect, October 25, 1925.
 Interview, Mrs. Frank Gulden (Guastavino's daughter), 12/1989.

22. THEME:

Research by the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities - KEK

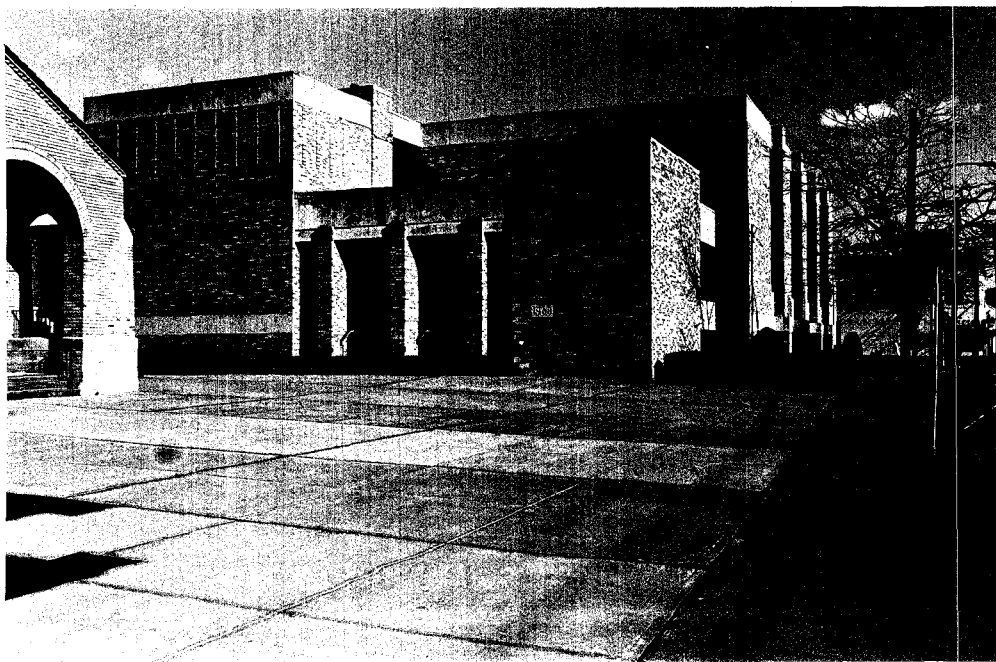
19 - (continued)

Interior decoration by Rambusch Decoration Company in conjunction with the architect.

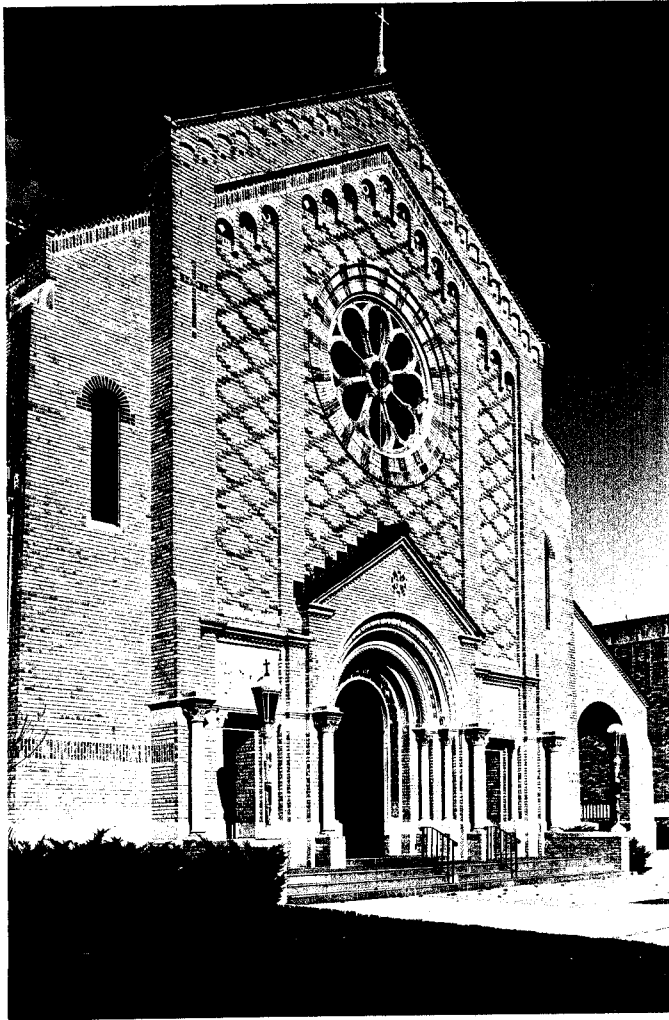
1983 restoration of limestone by A. Ottavino Corp., Ozone Park, L.I.
Rose window restoration under the supervision of Stephen Gottlieb.



Neg. KK IV-15, fm. SW. Parochial school, built 1938.



Neg. KK IV-18,
fm. W., Hall
built 1968.



Neg. KK IV-17, fm. SW.
Detail of main entrance.



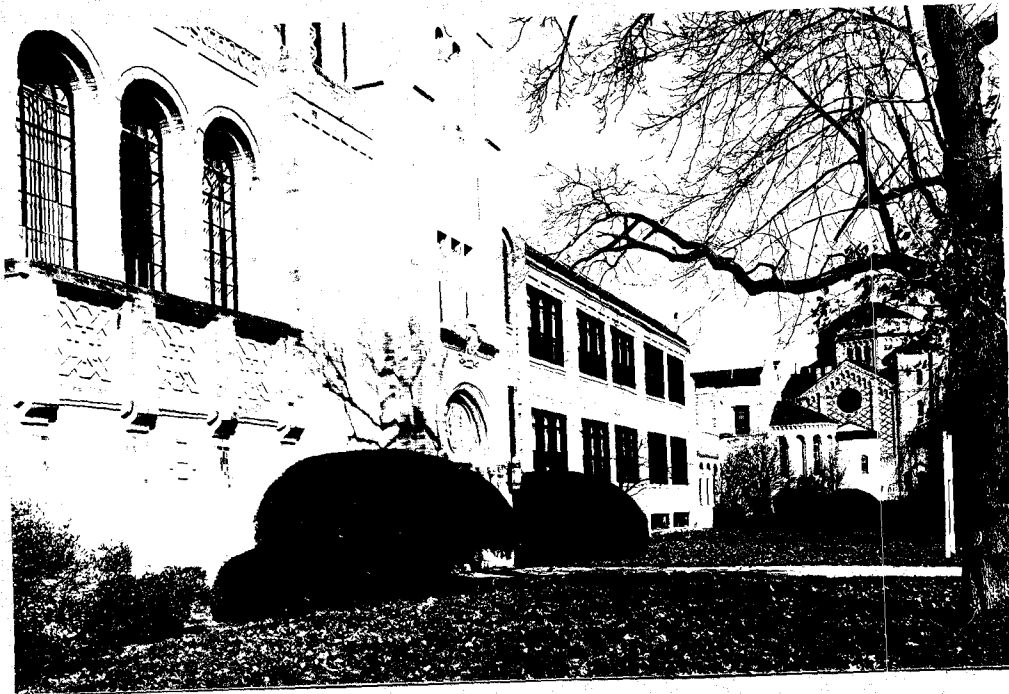
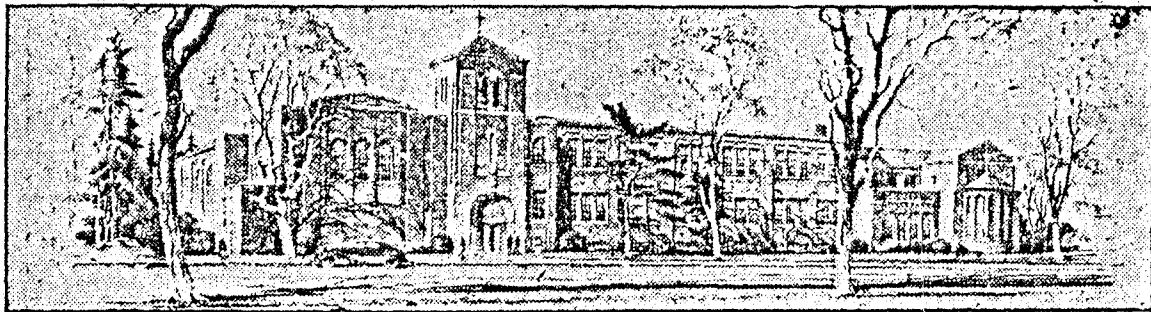
Neg. KK IV-14, fm. W.
Rectory at 9 N. Clinton
Ave., built 1960.

p10

7/15/48

BAY SHORE SENTINEL CENTENNIAL SUPPLEMENT

Parochial School; Dedicated 1938



Neg. KK IV-19, fm. W/SW. Parochial School built 1938.

Bay Shore-Brightwaters
Public Library
One So. Country Road
Brightwaters, N.Y. 11718

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

Modern Fresco Decoration

FRESCO is popularly misconstrued as meaning any sort of painted wall decoration. Fresco painting, as opposed to that executed through the medium of oil paint on canvas, is applied directly to the walls of a building, and, on account of that being its distinctive feature, it is essentially a technique adapted to mural painting. This is probably the origin of the idea that all painted wall decorations are frescoes. True fresco painting (from the Italian word *fresco*, meaning fresh or wet) is the method, then, of painting directly on mortar while it is still moist, whereby the pigment, which is dissolved in lime-saturated water, is absorbed by the wet surface. As the mortar gives up its moisture, the lime becomes chemically affected by the carbon dioxide of the air, and a natural thin crust of carbonate of lime is thus formed over the painting, protecting

and hermetically sealing all the colors. Conversely, if the pigment be applied after the mortar is perfectly dry, the operation is called *secco*, from the Italian word meaning dry. In this latter process, the surface which is to be decorated is carefully rubbed and washed with lime water preparatory to applying the pigment, so that the mortar still yields a feeble protecting film of carbonate of lime, similarly as in fresco painting, but too feeble to allow of the same satisfactory results, principally because the colors

actually a structural decoration, and therein lies one of its chief assets.

The permanency of the colors and their harmonious blending each with the other (for the pigments are in almost every case natural earth



THE WROUGHT IRON REFLECTORS HUNG ON THE WALLS ON EACH SIDE OF THE ALTAI

do not penetrate the mortar to the same extent as in the fresco method. By its very method of execution, fresco painting is so closely affiliated with the structure of a building, that it becomes



A HEAD IN FRESCO WHICH SHOWS THE CHARACTERISTIC TEXTURE OF THIS METHOD OF PAINTING

colors) are, perhaps, the two most vital characteristics of fresco painting, although, as a decorative element, the fact that this technique produces no sheen is greatly in its favor. Surfaces thus treated can be seen from any angle, and from no position do they become indistinct because of the reflection of light. "One of the particular charms of fresco painting," writes Harold W. Rambusch, promoter of fresco painting, in a recent issue of the *Brooklyn Museum Quarterly*, "lies in the fact that it preserves the texture of the mortar. The lime and sand have a beauty in themselves, for each grain of the latter seems to catch and reflect the light in its own way, and this, together with the crude trowel marks of the mason as they roll on and on, seems to blend and produce that wonderful texture typical of the mortar covered vaults and walls of so many of the old churches." But, in spite of the fact that fresco painting retains

Reprinted from *The American Architect* of October 20, 1925 for Rambusch Decoration Co., 2 West 45th Street, New York City

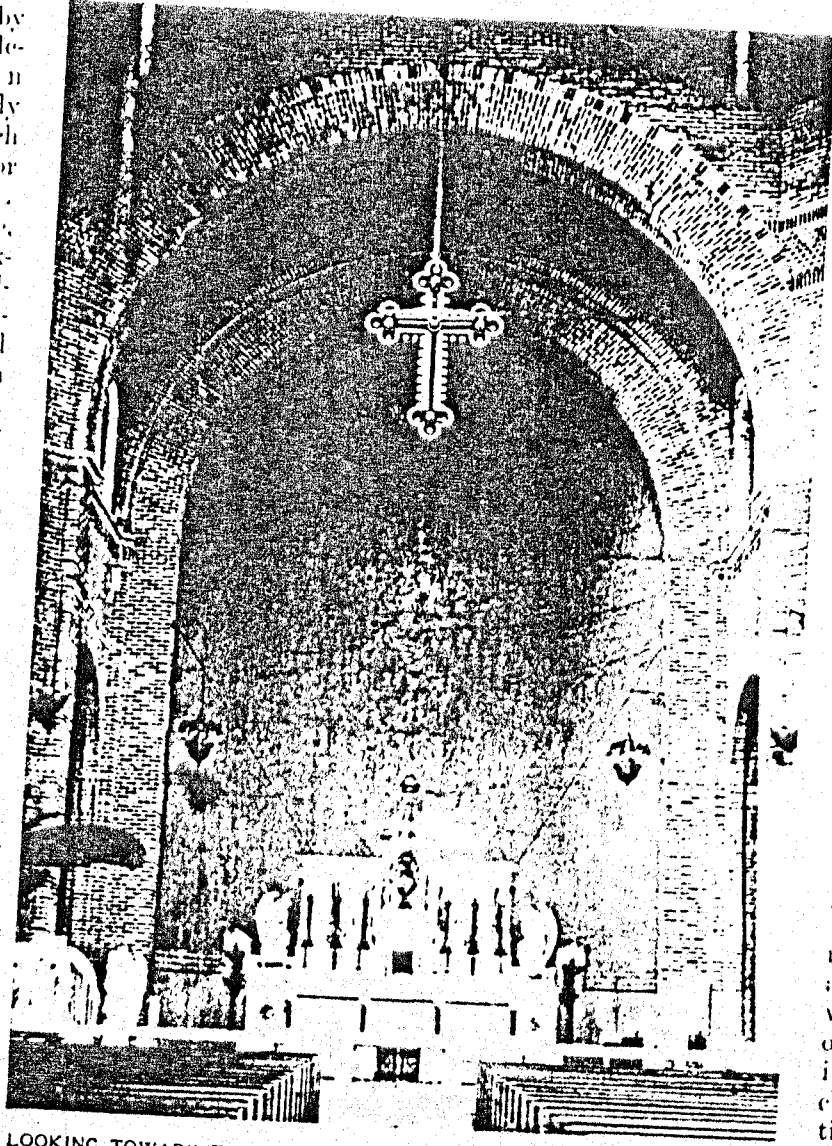
THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

permanently its brilliancy and clearness of color, and that in texture these line decorations cannot be rivaled by anything executed in oils on canvas for mural decoration, this method is not extensively used now. This is partly due to the sweating of walls in this climate, which alone makes fresco painting practically impossible, although that condition can be and often is overcome by erecting a skeleton wall on which to apply the paint, which has no exterior connection. That, of course, increases the expense materially. Consequently, the method of painting on canvas in oil, and applying the painted canvas to the wall is more generally preferred. The disadvantage of this process, in comparison with painting directly on the wall, lies in the fact that the decoration cannot become older than the material on which it is painted, making it impossible to leave it attached to a wall surface for any length of time. The fading of the colors, too, is also a disturbing factor of oil painting, for even with the best of care some colors will fade more than others, and the original harmony of color is thus ruined. The sheen produced by the smooth surface of the canvas often prevents the entire work from being seen to advantage at one time, except from certain favorable positions, and this, too, is a serious handicap to decorative work of this description. In the metropolitan district, we have been

The American Architect,

called cannibalistic, as far as our architecture is concerned. "We build up that we might tear down," is the way some one recently put it. What interest, then, can there be in permanency? Oil paintings have an added value to such people in that they may be salvaged from the wreckage and applied intact to some other building where they will continue to serve as decorative features. The lover of fresco painting has no reply to such an argument. But, fortunately, what is said of New York City, cannot be said of the whole country. Well designed and beautifully decorated buildings are being more and more appreciated everywhere, and the more permanent their beauty, the more chance they have of surviving. The American churches, especially, come under this category, and thus fresco painting now, as in medieval times when it was originated, lends itself well to church decoration, where its permanency and beauty are considered assets, while the temporary and other unfavorable qualities of oil

on canvas are looked upon as detrimental to its use. It is to the fresco decoration on the dome and walls of the sanctuary of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church at Bayshore, Long Island, N. Y., that attention is herewith invited, considering first the illustration which shows a view of the interior looking toward the altar before the painted decoration was applied. The church was



LOOKING TOWARD THE ALTAR BEFORE THE FRESCO DECORATION WAS APPLIED TO THE WALLS AND DOME

ST. PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, BAYSHORE L. I., N. Y.

GUSTAVE E. STEINBACK, ARCHITECT

October

20, 1925

designed by Gustave E. Steinback about ten years ago, and the brick walls were left unfinished at the time, awaiting funds to apply a decorative scheme worthy of the architectural design of the church. A scheme of painted decoration was worked out by the Rambusch Decorating Company in conjunction with the architect, to which the Rector, Rev. Edward J. Donovan gave his approval, and the treatment of the walls and dome of the sanctuary, embodied in that scheme, has just been completed. An actual photograph in color is reproduced herewith. A comparison between it and the photograph already referred to, showing the church in the unfinished state, proves the worth of the fresco decoration. The design of the ornamentation of the dome was inspired by the original mosaic decoration of the dome in St. Clemente at Rome. It is symbolical throughout, as so much of the decoration of churches at the time of its inception was, and, as such, illustrates well the imaginative

power of the mediaeval mind. In it, for example, are seen the four streams of the four Evangelists, with the drinking cups symbolizing the human thirst for God; the peacocks symbolizing immortality; the thirteen lambs symbolizing Christ with the twelve Apostles going out from Jerusalem and Bethlehem; while the small figures, the shepherds, nobility and servants are a classical way of ex-

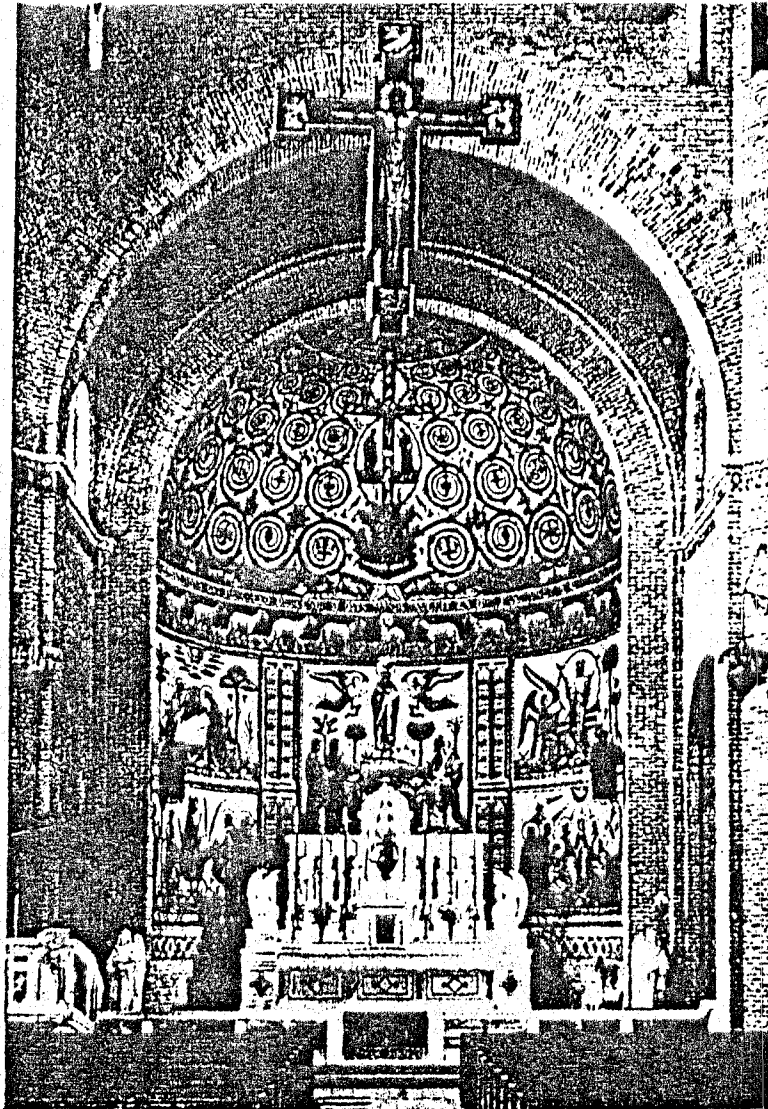
The American Architect, October 20 1925.

pressing the many sides of life. And yet the decorative feature has not been neglected. In fact, it was this ability to create decorative ornamentation from symbolical motives that makes the work of the early mural painters, especially that applied to walls of churches, so interesting. The panels on the

walls below the dome represent the four seasons of the church year, strictly an original conception, while the central panel is dedicated to the patron saint, as a request from the hierarchy at Rome calls for a statue or painting of the patron saint of the church to be put on or above the main wall.

In adapting the general character of this design of the fourth century to the interior of a twentieth century church, the decorators have retained its symbolical interest and made it the feature of the decorative scheme of the complete interior. A design that was originally executed in mosaic has here been interpreted in paint, and the vast difference in the manner of expression has in itself been

accountable for marked discrepancies between the two designs, thereby not only making the adaptation more appropriate, but giving it more individuality than an out and out reproduction would possess. The decoration is especially interesting in color, the tones being soft, as is always so characteristic of real fresco painting, while the color scheme has been worked out to be in complete har-



SHOWING THE FRESCO DECORATION AS APPLIED TO THE DOME AND WALLS OF THE SANCTUARY

ST. PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, BAYSHORE, L. I., N. Y.
RAMBUSCH DECORATING COMPANY, DECORATORS

with, as well as appropriate to, the architectural and decorative elements with which it is associated, and no attempt has been made to produce the colors in which the original mosaic decoration in St. Clemente was executed.

Other features of the decorative scheme which the decorators included in their plans and which have already been installed in the church are a fresco painted ceiling in the vestibule, two semi-circular chapels or shrines, and a niche, all painted in fresco decoration, in the church proper, two hand wrought iron reflectors, attached to the wall on either side of the altar, and a painted wood rood hanging from the center of the dome at the crossing of the transept and nave, the latter features visible in one of the photographs reproduced. The wrought iron reflectors, referred to above and illustrated in detail on another page, have been successfully worked out by the decorators to throw light on the altar without retaining the glare that accompanies

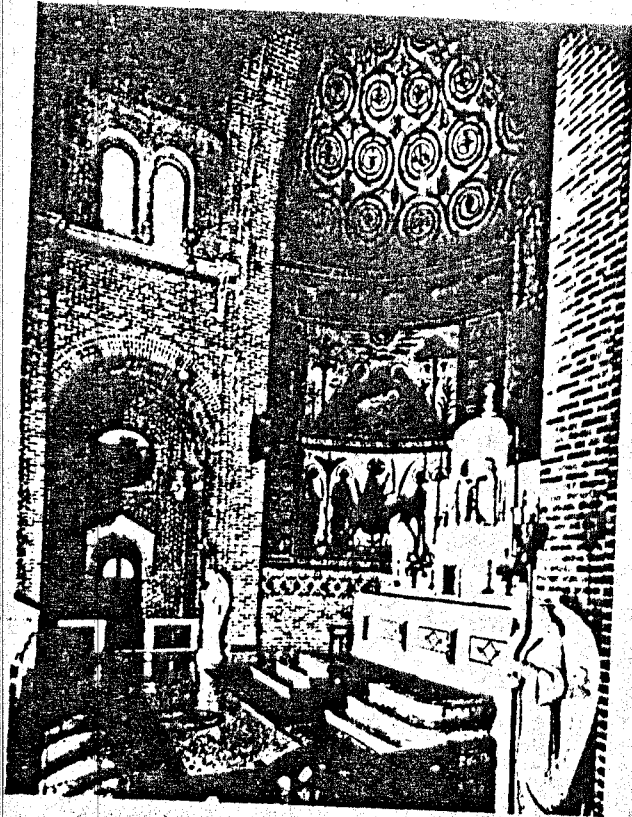
unprotected lighting units. They have been so constructed that the reflected light can be tinted in certain desirable colors, thereby adding much to

the impressiveness of the various services which are conducted in the church. The face of these reflectors has been designed to be appropriate to the important and prominent place they occupy in the decorative scheme of the interior, and the workmanship is entirely in keeping with their dignified and sacred surroundings. They are hand wrought throughout. The extremities of the huge rood which hangs from the center of the dome are decorated with the symbols of the four Evangelists. Symbolism is in this, as in so much ecclesiastical work, the keynote of the design throughout, and therein lies one of the main reasons why church decoration in this country today continues to be

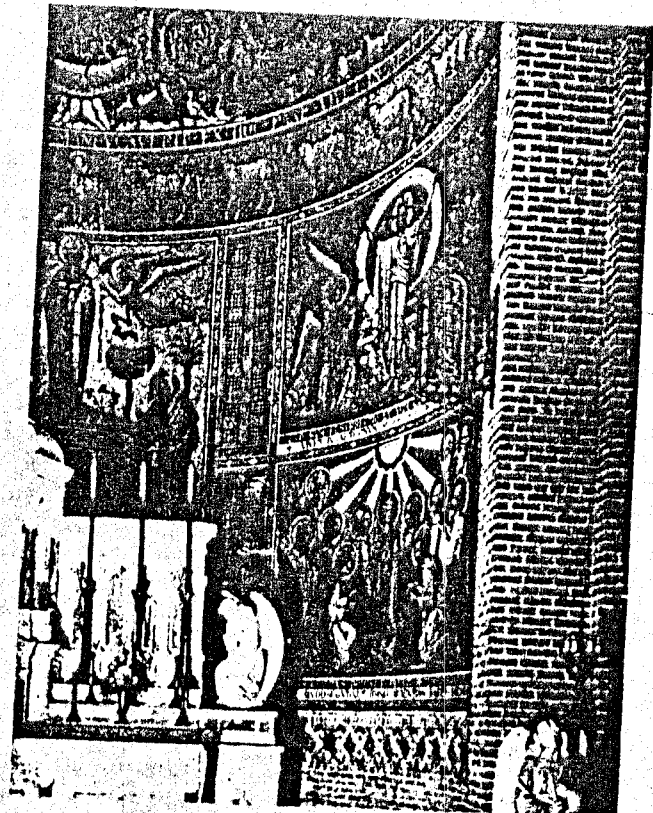
so successful. Acknowledgment is made to Rambusch Decorating Company for their courtesy in supplying the illustrative material.



A SECTION IN DETAIL OF THE ORNAMENT ON THE DOME



LOOKING ACROSS THE ALTAR SHOWING DETAILS OF SURROUNDING ARCHITECTURE



SHOWING A CLOSER VIEW OF THE ORNAMENT ON THE WALLS ENCIRCLING THE ALTAR