

STAINED GLASS MIRACLE

When it was built in 1873, beautiful traditional stained glass windows containing traditional Catholic images and iconography were installed in St. Stanislaus church. During the 1960's, these 100-year-old windows were aging and leaking. Rather than invest in costly restoration, these stained glass windows were removed. New, more maintenance-friendly windows were installed, which also employed a highly abstract design with no religious imagery, popular in that era. The decision has been made to replace them all as part of our overall restoration plan to bring the windows closer to the historical style of the church.



Designers and artists at Conrad Schmitt studios began to plan windows with a more traditional design consistent with the original windows of a century ago and the architectural style of the building. However, since the original windows were destroyed, and since only a few, low-quality pictures exist of these windows, artists were left to guess as to their content and design.

Suddenly and quite providentially, an extraordinary discovery was made in a local workshop of actual fragments of the windows that were destroyed in the 1960's! These precious boxes

of glass were generously returned to St. Stanislaus. These fragments were immediately taken to Conrad Schmitt Studios, where they have been carefully analyzed. From this research, we have learned the manufacturers of the glass – a company still in existence! They have also helped us to realize the patterns, designs and colors used in the original windows. The new windows are being designed to closely resemble those 150-year-old images. Some of the fragments are also being added to the new windows as they are being designed and created.

This incredible recovery of window pieces and the continuing planning for new windows for the church have brought a buzz of excitement and great joy to parishioners as restoration work goes forward.



Future Restoration Plans

The renovation of the Church building itself will continue for the next few years and parishioners eagerly await the day when our major projects will be complete. Plans in the immediate future include the finishing of interior painting, refurbishing the choir loft, and renewing the main exterior front doors of the narthex to recapture their original beauty and to increase security. In addition, all the patronal saints of the nave art will be given identifying name plaques and ribbons to encourage veneration and intercessory prayer.

Perhaps the most visible project will be finishing the replacement of all the stained glass windows in the nave. We have begun this process by installing two new windows in the sanctuary; they present wonderful images of the Blessed Mother and Saint Stanislaus. In the next phase, the ten remaining windows need to be designed and installed. This is a half-million-dollar project in itself, and will be the focus of a major fundraising effort over the next few years.

All these restorations and repairs have brought a sense of excitement and joy to parishioners old and new. Neighbors are enjoying the renaissance; tour groups are visiting. There is a great feeling of satisfaction at the thought that this generation's sacrifices and work are continuing those begun by our immigrant predecessors. We believe they would be proud and thankful that their church is being treasured, cherished and loved and that it will stand for generations to come!

