

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

877



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 190 Sandford Street  not for publication

city or town New Brunswick  vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Middlesex code 023 zip code 08901

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  See continuation sheet for additional comments.

*[Signature]*  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date June 8, 2010

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

*[Signature]*  
Signature of the Keeper Wilson H. Beall Date of Action 11-3-10

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Name of Property

Middlesex County, NJ  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
One (1)		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
One (1)		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Zero

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Facility

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Facility

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque Revival

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone - Granite

walls Stone - Granite

roof Asphalt

other

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

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### SUMMARY

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Catholic Church, constructed in 1928 and 1929, was designed to reflect the Romanesque architecture and European heritage of the Italian congregation. The church plan, which is 64-feet wide and 122-feet long, is based on the basilica plan adapted by the early Catholic Church from Roman basilicas or justice halls. The church is in good condition and has undergone limited alteration since its construction.

The central barrel-vaulted nave is flanked by two, one-story side aisles and terminates in a semi-arched apse at the west end. The apse is contained entirely within the church, as the west elevation of the church appears as a simple gable end. Two engaged towers with cupolas are at the north and south corners of the east elevation. Two rectangular rooms, a Sacristy and a Vestry, flank the apse at the north and south ends. The building is constructed of dressed, granite block laid in courses, with a concealed steel structure supporting the side aisle roofs and clerestory. The roof covering is asphalt shingles. Round-arched and segmental-arched windows throughout the building contain stained glass. Decorative elements on the exterior are primarily executed in concrete and copper. The walls of the nave feature marbled wainscoting. The columns at the interior are finished with marbled paint and adorned by gold-leaf capitals.

The church, along with the school, rectory, convent, office, and CYO building, is set on a flat, rectangular property, oriented northeast (front) to southwest (rear). For clarity, this narrative refers to the front facade as project east. Therefore, the property is bounded to the project east by Remsen Avenue, project south by Powers Street, project west by Lee Avenue, and to project north by Sandford Street. The entire property is enclosed by a metal fence situated atop two courses of dressed granite block. The church is located on the corner of Sandford Street and Remsen Avenue, facing Remsen. The land immediately surrounding the church is a manicured garden adorned with mature plants and trees, as well as a variety of marble statues, monuments, and a concrete walkway. The Sandford Street garden features a large, granite block grotto to the north of the church that contains a marble sculpture of the Pieta. The northeastern corner of the garden features a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus flanked by two urns. The Powers Street garden features statues of Saints Peter, Paul, and Francis, as well as Mary. The church and these flanking gardens provide the block's entire frontage along Remsen Avenue and represent the extent of the property being nominated to the National Register. The school, rectory, convent, and office, situated to the rear of the church, front on Sandford Street, and are beyond the nominated area, as are two large, asphalt parking lots situated to the north and south of the church complex. Small, two story homes make up the surrounding urban residential neighborhood of New Brunswick.

### Current Appearance of the Church

#### *Exterior*

The east (front) elevation is a symmetrical, three-bay temple facade with flanking, engaged towers capped by copper cupolas at the north and south ends. The face of the nave, two stories high with a gabled roof, is set back from the face of the tower by approximately one foot. The primary entrance consists of three sets of paired, opposite-hinged, brass-clad doors at the center of the elevation set three steps above the sidewalk. The central entry is slightly taller than the flanking doors. The steps are three-sided and project the full width of the nave at the facade. A poured concrete handicapped ramp is located at the northern end of the stairs. Metal railings have been installed at the center of the stairs, approximately at the width of the central door. A cast stone

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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plaque above the central entry is embossed with the text "Ave Maria". Blind, ocular windows are located above each of the flanking doors. The doors are bordered at the exterior and separated by Composite order pilasters that terminate at a plain fascia and frieze, beneath cast stone dentils and a plain cornice capped by triglyphs. A second, smaller cast stone cornice is located above the triglyphs. The entablature continues across the entire facade. Above the entablature is a central rose window with mullions radiating from the central oculus. Just beneath the gable are two sets of raking cast stone cornices. A cast stone cross caps the gable peak. Each of the entrance doors is recessed within a narrow cast stone surround.

The towers are nearly mirror images of each other, with a two-course water table at the base capped by a cast stone band. The first floor of each tower features a central, round-arched window with a cast stone sill. The bay at the south tower features a stained glass window, while the bay at the north tower is blind. The towers feature a cast stone belt course at the height of the upper cornice at the nave façade, with a central round-arched window above. The second story of the tower features a cast stone frieze band. The third level of the tower rises above the roofs of the aisle and nave. This level is identical on all four elevations, with large, round-arched openings flanked by Composite order pilasters capped by an open pediment with a blank plaque situated at the center. In addition to the cast stone pilasters and pediment, each opening features a cast stone surround and keystone. The cast stone accents and central projecting panel provide visual interest and depth to the appearance of the facade. The third level of the tower features a cast stone belt course below dressed granite capped by an octagonal copper cupola. Each panel of the cupola features a blind, rectangular window, infilled with a flat copper panel. The cupolas are capped with a cornice and rounded octagonal dome. A gilded cross is attached to a ball finial at the top of each dome.

The side aisle and the clerestory are visible at the north elevation of the church. The side aisle wall is divided into six bays, each containing a segmental-arched stained glass window with a cast stone sill and granite block arch at the first floor. Near the center of the elevation, a marble slab engraved with Dante's Paradiso is hung from the exterior of the church. The elevation is capped by a dressed, granite block cornice with brackets and a copper gutter. Above the shed roof of the side aisle, located in the clerestory of the nave, are six bays of paired, round-arched, stained-glass windows with cast stone sills. These bays are vertically aligned with the first floor bays. The nave is also capped with a dressed, granite block cornice with granite block brackets.

The west elevation consists of the one-story Sacristy or entry hall and Vestry at the outer edges of the two-story nave. A water table at the base of the elevation is capped by a cast stone sill. From the exterior, the Vestry at the southern end of the elevation and the entry hall or Sacristy at the northern end are nearly identical. The Vestry features a single-hung sash window with a cast stone sill. Above this is a small, louvered ventilation window. The Sacristy or entry hall features a four panel door at center with thick reveals. The door is above grade, accessed by poured concrete steps with granite block cheek walls. A cellar way with poured concrete steps and a granite block half wall is at the base of the center of the elevation and provides access to the undercroft.

The six-bay south elevation differs from the north elevation only in minor details. A small, two-bay, concrete block garage is constructed adjacent to the southwestern corner of the elevation. A large mechanical unit supplying the church's cooling system is situated directly east of the garage.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

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### *Interior*

The interior of the church is traditional in its layout. The central nave is flanked by two side aisles and terminates at the chancel, which contains the main altar within the apse. The side altars are situated at the western end of the side aisles. There are doorways to the Sacristy in the north wall, and to the Vestry in the south wall of the apse. At the rear of the chancel, behind the tabernacle, a small hallway provides access to the Vestry on the south. The vestibule at the eastern end of the church is accessed via three sets of paired, oak doors. The paired, opposite-hinged, six-panel oak doors at the center of the east wall feature an oak transom bar and semi-circular, stained glass transom depicting a kneeling Saint Anthony. Recessed in the east wall of the nave, two confessionals separate the three sets of doors. An oak pediment over the central door is capped by an oak cross. A staircase at the southern end of the vestibule provides access to the choir loft. The electric organ in the choir loft is a later installation. Pipes from the original organ are arranged to conceal the speakers for the electric instrument. There are small storage rooms at the second floor of the north and south towers, with a ladder stair providing access to the belfries above.

The arch is the unifying theme in the design and decoration of the interior. The ceiling of the nave is a barrel vault supported by Roman arches resting on marbleized columns. While the ceiling of the side aisles is angled, Roman arches separate each bay. The curvature of the rose window at the center of the east wall in the choir loft echoes the shape of the vaulted ceiling. The nave, side aisles, and vestibule each feature a terrazzo floor.

The north and south walls of the nave are arcades, with five open arches linking the nave and side aisles on each side. The east-west arches of the nave's walls are balanced with corresponding north-south arches that terminate in gilded corbels at the exterior side aisle wall. The west-east arcade that separates the side aisle and nave, and the north-south arches in the side aisle are supported by marbleized columns with gilded capitals. The arches of the side aisles are repeated as blind arches in the east wall. At the western end of the side aisles, arches frame the recessed side altar areas, with smaller blind arches situated at the rear of each altar. The Altar of the Blessed Mother is located at the western terminus of the south aisle (the left side of the church) and the Altar of St. Joseph is located at the western terminus of the north aisle (the right side).

Segmental-arched, stained glass windows are located in each of the six bays. The stained glass windows are set above oak spandrel panels that conceal modern HVAC equipment. The paired, round-arched, stained glass windows in the clerestory above the nave side wall arcades contribute to the arch theme.

### *Apse and Chancel*

The apse at the western end of the nave features a semi-circular arch above the high altar, which was moved forward away from the rear wall in 1979 as part of the post-Vatican II liturgical changes in celebrating mass. The original altar was removed to the rear of the church, at the northern end of the vestibule, although the portrayal of the Last Supper executed in white marble at the face of the current altar is from the original altar. The altar is raised three steps above the rest of the chancel on three sides. The stair treads and chancel floor are white marble tile while the stair risers are faced with black marble. At the front of the chancel, a marble altar rail separates the chancel from the nave. Open at the center, the altar rail consists of eight sections of seven pink marble balusters with Corinthian capitals and pedestals executed in white marble. The sections join at white marble pillars with recessed black marble panels. The entire altar rail is topped by a white marble rail.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

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The semicircular arch in the apse is adorned with a fresco depicting the Assumption of Our Lady above the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome. The Basilica is flanked with figures from the Old Testament at left, from left to right: Noah, Abraham, King David, King Solomon, Moses, Sarah, and Samuel; and persons from the New Testament and significant Italian figures at right, from left to right: Pope Pius X, Saint Francis, Saint Benedict, Saint Joan of Arc, Dante Alighieri, Saint Patrick, Saint Anthony, and Christopher Columbus. The upper portion of the apse is separated from the ceiling of the nave by a plaster Roman arch. The underside of the arch is decorated with chiaroscuro rose heads on squares. The eastern side of the arch is decorated with the prayer, "Laudetur Et Adorateur In Aeternum SS. Sacramentum."

A plaster cornice provides visual separation between the fresco and the curved walls at the rear of the first floor of the apse. The painted cornice is capped with gilded acanthus leaves atop gilded roping. It is visually supported by four marble pilasters. Each pilaster features a gilded capital which depicts two eagles flanking a cherub.

The Byzantine-style icon above the altar consists of a portrait of St. Mary of Mount Virgin holding the Infant Jesus, set in a gilded frame. In 1979, the icon was enriched with gemstones donated by the congregation. The four surrounding plaster panels are painted pastel blue with symbolic grape vines and wheat sheaths painted around the exterior. Each of the exterior panels features a painted cross at center with an iconographic depiction of Jesus. At the first floor level, in front of the curved apse walls, is a concrete block wall finished with a marble veneer. The gold tabernacle at center is capped with a gilded cross. At either end of the wall are two white-marble infilled arches outlined with black marble.

There are side altars at the western end of each side aisle. At the base of the pilaster on the south side of the church, a carved wood statue of Saint Padre Pio sits on a white marble pedestal. A carved wood statue of Saint Lucy Filippini rests on a white marble pedestal at the right side of the church.

The Altar of the Blessed Mother is at the western end of the south side aisle. The altar is situated toward the rear of the space, situated underneath a Roman arch. The underside of the arch is painted with chiaroscuro roses, identical to the arch over the high altar. The altar has been moved away from the west wall, exposing the unfinished wall behind. Situated one step above the chancel, the altar is a white marble table with block marble pilasters flanking a central gray marble panel outfitted with an "SM" monogram in a black marble medallion. While the floor is covered with white marble tile, the step is faced with black marble. A white marble baptistery is located in front of the altar. The central blind arch behind the altar backs a plaster statue of Mary holding the infant Jesus. The statue of Mary is flanked by a plaster casting of Saint Francis of Assisi to the left, and Saint Rocco to the right. Two small, white marble statuettes of angels sit atop the altar. The blind arch is painted blue and adorned with grape vine and wheat sheath decoration around the border. Painted decoration at the exterior features blue banners with lilies as well as three medallions featuring the faces of cherubs. Wallpaper depicting wheat chaff tops the marbled dado panel around the nave.

The Altar of Saint Joseph on the north side of the chancel is similar in composition to the Altar of Blessed Mary. The white marble altar features gray marble pilasters, a central gray marble panel with a "J" monogram inside a black marble medallion. The central plaster casting of Saint Joseph with the Child Jesus is flanked by plaster statues of Saint Ann with the Blessed Mother and Saint Patrick. A tabernacle is located beneath the statue of Saint Joseph.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

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### *Nave*

The nave of the church has 26 rows of original oak pews arranged in five banks separated by three aisles. The nave extends upward a full story and clerestory to the barrel vaulted plaster ceiling. A six-bay arcade at either side separates the nave from the side aisles. Five columns and two pilasters support the arcades, which mirror each other in decoration. Each column is marbled plaster with a bronze plaque commemorating a member of the congregation killed during World War II. Gilded capitals on each of the columns feature a central peacock flanked by foliated shields and rams heads, capped by a gilded ribbon of fleur-de-lis. The arch intrados are decorated with gilded roping. A hexagonal electric lantern featuring fleur-de-lis and quatrefoil ornamentation hangs from the center of each arch.

The spandrel above each arch features a shell with vine and bell swag at the top, flanked by two reclining angels painted in the chiaroscuro style. Medallions at the center of each spandrel depict Saints of the Catholic Church. Held by the reclining angels, the gold-painted frame of each medallion has a bell-pendant and wheat chaff swag. At the south side, from the front of the church to the back, the medallions portray: Our Lady of Sorrows, Saint Anne, Saint Anthony, Saint Lucy of Syracuse, and Saint Ignatius of Antioch. At the north side, the medallions portray: Saint Longinus, Saint Rita, Saint John the Baptist, Saint John of the Cross, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

A prominent plaster cornice provides a physical and visual break between the arcade and clerestory. The broad cornice features gilded roping and a gilded pattern of repeating quatrefoils. The paired, round-arched windows in the six-bay clerestory feature colored glass squares with central stained glass panes that depict biblical and church icons. There is a marble column between each set of paired windows, above which is a painted urn and flower arrangement. A cherub is painted at the center of the hood above each bay.

The five sections of wall between the windows are painted with robed angels holding scrolls written in Latin that identify the various titles given to Mary by the Catholic Church. The titles translate to: Helper of the Sick, Mystical Rose, Queen of Peace, Consolation of the Afflicted, Refuge of Sinners, Queen of Virgins, Mirror of Justice, Seat of Wisdom, Morning Star, and Gate of Heaven. Each angel is bordered on three sides by floral swag.

The ornately finished plaster ceiling features three large mural paintings that span the length of the nave. *The Glory of Saint Lucy* is closest to the chancel; *The Transfiguration* is situated over the center of the nave; and, *Saint Cecilia, Patroness of Music* is at the rear of the nave, appropriately positioned in front of the choir loft. Each mural features an ornate, shouldered, three-stage, painted frame surrounded by cherubs, gold tone floral swag, and acanthus leaves.

### *Side Aisles*

The north and south side aisles are nearly mirror images of each other. The exterior plaster walls feature a marbled dado panel that is capped with a wallpaper border that features repeating wheat chaff. Votive candles are located at the western end of each side aisle, with a white marble statue of St. Anthony at the north wall and a plaster statue of Saint Jude at the south wall. The walls are six bays, a convention of Catholic Church architecture that allows for the glorification of six apostles and Stations of the Cross on each wall. The bays are divided by the exterior side of a Roman arch that ends in a gilded corbel depicting a crouched man

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

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carrying a cross. The underside of each arch is painted with chiaroscuro roses. Beneath each bracket, a white marble sculpture of one of the Stations of the Cross is recessed into the wall.

A segmental-arched stained glass window is situated at the center of each bay, above an oak spandrel panel concealing modern HVAC equipment. From the front to the rear of the church, the windows on the north wall depict: the Miraculous Medal, the Assumption, the Sacred Heart of Jesus with Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, the Blessed Mother with the Infant Jesus, the Holy Family, and Michael the Archangel casting the Devil out of Heaven. The windows on the south wall depict: Our Lady of the Rosary with Saint Dominic DeGuzman and Saint Catherine of Sienna, Saint Mary of Mount Virgin, Saint Lucy of Syracuse, Saint Anne teaching the Blessed Mother, and the Annunciation. The easternmost window on the south wall is composed of multicolored panels and its surrounds feature a decorative keystone. A medallion painted above the center of each window depicts an apostle. From the front to the rear of the church on the north wall, the medallions depict: Saint Matthew, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Matthias, Saint Simon the Zealot, Saint James, and Saint Andrew. On the south wall, the medallions depict: Saint Bartholomew, Saint Phillip, Saint Jude, Saint Thomas, Saint Paul, and Saint Peter in gold, floral swag, painted frames.

The east wall features a blind arch that echoes the profile of the arches throughout the side aisles. Beneath the center of each arch is a large, painted medallion with a gold-foliated frame. The northern medallion portrays Saint Thomas a' Becket and the southern medallion portrays Saint Thomas More. Beneath each medallion, a set of paired, opposite-hinged, six-panel oak doors provides access to the vestibule. There is a plaster statue of Saint Rita at the southern corner of the east wall with a white marble carving of Our Lady of Mount Carmel directly adjacent. An empty statue ledge is at the northern corner of the wall.

The shed-roofed, plaster ceilings of the side aisles are each painted with a large, Greek Cross at their centers.

### *Secondary Spaces*

The secondary spaces of the church are all connected to the nave and chancel, except for the undercroft, which is accessed from the exterior. At the western end of the church, two small spaces flank the apse. At the northwestern corner of the church, a Sacristy also serves as the primary entrance to the church when the building is not in use for religious purposes. This space is accessed directly from the exterior and is connected to the Vestry at the southwestern corner of the church via a narrow hallway that passes behind the altar. There are two doors in the room. The exterior entry at the center of the west wall is a heavy, six-panel, oak door with plain trim. A six-panel, left-hung door at the eastern end of the south wall provides access to the sanctuary. An original single-hung sash window is set at the eastern end of the north wall. The walls and ceiling are plaster and the floor is covered with carpet. There is a sacarium and storage closet for altar server vestments along the east wall.

The Vestry is situated to the southwest of the altar. This small, rectangular space features a Roman arched entry with a right-hung, five-panel door set at the exterior. The Vestry features two large oak cabinets along the west and east wall. The walls and ceiling are whitewashed plaster, with simple trim around window openings and at the baseboard. A beaded board hatch at the west end of the ceiling provides access to an unfinished storage space above the Vestry. There are two one-over-one, single-hung wood sash windows with frosted glass in the room, one each in the south and west walls.

At the eastern end of the church, the vestibule is more subdued in ornamental decoration than the nave. The east and west walls are painted plaster, with a marbled dado panel and wheat chaff border. There are four, marble Holy Water stoups at the west



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

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wall, two at the central doors, and one at each of the flanking doors. A large crucifix formerly from the apse in the chancel now hangs to the west of the central interior entry. Directly opposite the interior doors are the three sets of exterior-entry doors trimmed with narrow, oak surrounds. Plaster statues of Saint Sebastian and Saint Gerard are at the northern end of the west wall. The ceiling is painted plaster with hanging lights above each door.

At the southern end of the vestibule, a Roman arch leads to an ornately appointed area that at one time was a gated shrine to St. Jude. The icon of St. Jude, however, has been relocated to the nave. The metal gate contains cross and trefoil ornamentation. The walls of the space are tiled with clay. A blind arch at the center of the south wall is trimmed with fluted marble pilasters with a gilded capital and gilded intrados. Marble columns with gilded capitals are located directly to the interior of the pilasters. A round-arch stained glass window at the center of the east wall depicts Saint John the Baptist with Jesus. A painted medallion with a dove is at the center of the ceiling.

The staircase to the choir loft is at the northern end of the vestibule, accessed through two Roman arches. The narrow, steep stairs feature an oak balustrade with square newel posts. The north wall of the stair features a round-arch stained glass window commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church in 2004. A small, modern bathroom has been installed under the stairs at the western corner of the north end of the vestibule.

At the top of the stairs, a small anteroom is finished with plaster walls and ceiling. The floor is covered with carpeting. In the north room, a wooden ladder secured to the west wall provides access to a small hatch in the ceiling. The hatch enters an unfinished space above the anteroom and below the belfry. The choir loft is accessed by a two-light, oak door at the center of the south wall.

The choir loft is a three-sided, rectangular space that narrowly extends out over the nave. A Roman arch at the eastern end of the nave separates the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the choir loft from that of the nave. The underside of the arch is adorned with chiaroscuro roses. The walls of the choir loft are largely plaster, with drywall sections at the center of the east wall, beneath the non-functioning organ pipes. This drywall section features a wood-paneled frieze and heavy, projecting cornice. The current electric organ is situated at the south side of the choir loft, towards the nave. The rose window at the center of the east wall is comprised of ten stained-glass lights arranged around a central oculus depicting Mary. The western half wall is capped by an oak handrail. The floor of the choir loft is composed of three broad steps covered with carpet. A plaster statue of Mary is situated at the northeastern corner of the loft.

At the center of the south wall of the choir loft, a contemporary, flat panel door provides access to a small storage space. The room features plaster walls and a plaster ceiling. The floor is covered with carpet. There are three frosted-glass, three-light round-arched windows, one in each of the west, east, and south walls.

Accessed from the base of the west elevation, the undercroft is located beneath the sanctuary of the church. At the interior of the undercroft, concrete block walls in the largely unfinished storage space divide the undercroft into three separate rooms. Narrow hallways along the west foundation wall of the church provide access to rectangular rooms at the northwestern and southwestern corners of the church's foundation. The third room is a rectangular space at center situated directly in front of the exterior entry door. The exterior foundation walls of the space are rubble-coursed stone finished with parging.

**8 Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria considerations**

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Art

**Period of Significance**

1928 – 1959

**Significant Dates**

1928

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Clyde Smythe Adams (architect)

John P. Hallahan (builder)

**Primary location of additional data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

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Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

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### SUMMARY

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church in New Brunswick, NJ, is significant under National Register Criterion C, Criteria Consideration A in the areas of architecture and art. Its period of significance is from 1928, when construction began, to 1959, after the parish completed its property acquisitions fronting on Remsen Avenue, fenced the grounds, and created outdoor sculpture gardens on either side of the church.

Designed by architect Clyde S. Adams, Sr., of Philadelphia in the Romanesque Revival style, St. Mary's church was erected for the Italian community of New Brunswick by the John P. Hallahan construction company also of Philadelphia in the short time span of seven months. The exterior, of squared dark granite blocks and lighter stone trim, features twin bell towers 90 feet high. The building measures 86 feet maximum width, by 122 feet deep. The interior consists of a vestibule with choir loft above, a nave 27 feet wide and 82 feet long with barrel-vaulted ceiling supported by ten columns, two side aisles 13 feet wide, and a railed chancel area 24 feet deep with rounded apse, high or main altar, and two side altars. Two small rooms on either side of the chancel serve as a Sacristy and a Vestry.

Since it first opened for worship in February of 1929, St. Mary's has gradually been ornamentally enriched with extensive murals and other painted decoration, stained glass, and sculpture. In the 1930s, the parish engaged Gonippo G. Raggi, the foremost ecclesiastical artist of the Roman Catholic Church in his day, to completely cover the interior walls and ceiling of the sanctuary with painted decoration. Raggi, who spent much of his career living in New Jersey, executed large murals on the apse and nave ceilings, plus images of angels, saints, and the Apostles on the walls and clerestory area. Then every void was filled in with an extraordinary proliferation of painted details.

Twenty-eight quality stained glass windows were obtained over time from at least four manufacturers, three of which are identified. They are D. H. Oidtmann of Linnich, Germany, John Keller of Brooklyn, NY, and the Rivell Stained Glass Co. Interior sculpture consists of 14 life-sized statues of saints in cast plaster, white marble, and wood, plus four white marble angels in smaller scale. All of the marble items were sculpted by Ferdinando Palla of Pietrasanta, Tuscany, Italy, a small city noted since the Renaissance for the quality of its local stone. The main high altar features a large bas relief panel also in white marble depicting the Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci that is not visibly signed. A very large percentage of all the artwork in St. Mary's shows the Blessed Mother, either singly or with other figures and under her various names.

In 1979, the painted decoration of the church interior was refreshed by Elisio Da Costa of Colts Neck, also an acclaimed and prolific ecclesiastical artist of the Roman Catholic Church. All principal panels and design elements of the Raggi scheme were retained. At that time, chancel changes involved relocation of the main altar from the rear wall to its center so that the celebrant of the Mass could face the congregation, one of the major liturgical reforms that followed Vatican II (1962 - 1965). That move required reconfiguration of the chancel railing as the old one did not provide adequate space.

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church represents an unusually enriched, traditional house of worship filled with beautiful, sacred, liturgical, symbolic, and inspirational art.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

---

### ST. MARY OF MOUNT VIRGIN PARISH EVOLVES

A Roman Catholic presence in New Brunswick, New Jersey, evolved slowly in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first account of a priest stopping in the city was about 1820. He spent the night and preached to the Catholics who had gathered that evening. The first Mass was offered in a private home in 1825. Rev. Dr. Powers, a priest who came from New York, served as celebrant. The first baptism was also said to have taken place in 1825. The first recorded baptism, however, was performed on September 9, 1829, followed by the first recorded marriage on October 17 of the same year.<sup>1</sup>

New Brunswick functioned as a mission station in these early years. Priests came out from New York to celebrate Mass. The first Catholic church building erected in the city was St. Peter's Church in 1830. Starting in 1833, resident priests were assigned to the congregation. By August 1843, 250 Catholics were recorded in New Brunswick, most of them Irish immigrants working on the Delaware and Raritan Canal, the railroads, and in local factories. St. Peter's Church was enlarged in 1854 to serve this growing community, and by 1865 was completely finished.<sup>2</sup>

Sacred Heart Church was established in 1883 as the second English speaking parish in New Brunswick. Polish Catholics began arriving in the city in 1888. They were permitted to worship in their native tongue at St. Peter's until their own church, St. Joseph's, was built in 1925. Hungarian Catholics settling in the community formed St. Ladislaus Hungarian Catholic Church in 1904.<sup>3</sup>

According to U. S. Census data, there were only 1,547 Italian-born residents in New Jersey in 1880. That number quickly swelled to 12,989 in 1890, 41,865 in 1900, 115,444 in 1910, 157,285 in 1920, and 190,858 in 1930. In this last year, Italian-born citizens represented 4.7% of the total State population. Sixty-eight percent of these immigrants enumerated in 1930 had settled in the four densely populated and industrialized counties of northeastern New Jersey, including Essex (44,656), Hudson (43,716), Passaic (21,049), and Bergen (20,785).<sup>4</sup>

Italian immigration to Middlesex County followed the rising statistical patterns of Essex, Hudson, Passaic and Bergen, but with much smaller numbers. The count of foreign-born Italians in Middlesex increased from 709 in 1900, to 2,079 in 1910, 4,338 in 1920, and 5,479 in 1930. It can be assumed that a reasonable percentage of these individuals settled in and near New Brunswick, given its employment opportunities.<sup>5</sup> However, the 1903-1904 City Directory listed only 20 persons with an Italian family name. But this number is deceptive as many people (particularly newly arrived immigrants unable to speak English) were typically not captured by directory data collection representatives. Those that were enumerated held jobs as laborers, junk dealers, peddlers, bakers, boot and shoe makers, teachers, dressmakers, boarding house and saloon owners, grocers, barbers, etc.<sup>6</sup>

The spiritual needs of the Italian community in New Brunswick were recognized in 1901 with the appointment of Rev. Aloysius Pozzi as supervisory missionary. Under his supervision, a mission church was established. It remained as such until the arrival of Rev. Francesco Vodola in 1904 as first parish administrator. Within a few months, the church obtained a Certificate of Incorporation. Dated August, 23, 1904, it reads as follows:<sup>7</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

---

Middlesex County SS: Whereas, in pursuance of an Act of the Legislature of the State of New Jersey, approved April 9<sup>th</sup>, A. D. eighteen hundred and seventy five entitled "An Act to Incorporate Trustees of Religious Societies."

The Right Reverend James A. McPaul, Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, the Rt. Reverend John H. Fox, Vicar-General of said Diocese, and the Reverend Francesco Vodola, now being the Rector of the Roman Catholic Church now known as "St. Mary's Italian Church in the City of New Brunswick in said county" have selected Francesco Tomino and Giovanni D'Alessandro two lay members of said Church according to the provisions of the act, and for the purpose of incorporating said Church. Now therefore, we the said James A. McPaul, Bishop as aforesaid, Rt. Rev. John H. Fox, Vicar-General as aforesaid, Francesco Vodola, Rector as aforesaid, and Francesco Tomino and Giovanni D'Alessandro, the lay members aforesaid, do further in pursuance of the provisions of said Act hereby certify, that the name by which we and our successors shall be known and distinguished as a body corporate is St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, New Brunswick, N. J.

Witness our hands this 23 day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and four.

This Certificate of Incorporation was duly presented and recorded by the Middlesex County Clerk on August 25, 1904, at 1:15 pm. With formal establishment as a legal entity, Father Vodola began immediately to keep proper parish records. He recorded the first death on August 25 (the very day the certificate was filed), the first baptism on August 27, and the first marriage on December 18 of that year. Vodola was succeeded by Rev. Girardo Cristiano, and then by Rev. Joseph A. Ryan, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish where in these early years the members of St. Mary's worshipped in the church basement.<sup>8</sup>

Incorporation allowed St. Mary's parish to acquire property in its own name. Two parcels at the corner of Remsen Avenue and Delavan Street were accordingly purchased for \$825 in February of 1905.<sup>9</sup> About 1907, the parish erected a very humble church on its lots. This structure may have been just the basement section of what was to become a larger, more ambitious building at some point in the future. This most modest house of worship served the growing congregation until 1923.

As St. Mary's parish grew, it seems that a larger church property became necessary in order to erect a campus complex of buildings that the Delavan Avenue site could not accommodate. In February of 1921, two contiguous parcels one block south bounded on the north by Sandford Street, the east by Remsen Avenue, and south by Powers Street were purchased for \$8,400.<sup>10</sup> This irregularly shaped tract, representing roughly two-thirds of the city block, gave the parish 288 feet of frontage on Sandford, 87.34 feet on Remsen, and 200 feet on Powers. Strangely, though, the two corner lots facing Remsen Avenue were not included in these transactions. One measured 50 feet on Remsen by 100 feet on Sandford; the other 62.66 feet on Remsen by 100 feet on Powers. It would be more than 30 years before St. Mary's could obtain title to those two strategic properties.

While still housed in their basement facility on Delavan Street, St. Mary's parish opened its first parochial school. On September 17, 1922, 220 students enrolled, which increased to 265 by the end of the week. A large curtain made from materials used for bales separated the classes. "The children . . . were forced to write by placing their notebooks on the wall or by kneeling and placing their notebook on their seat, or on the kneeler of the altar railing." Clearly, this was only a temporary situation as plans were already underway to erect a new school building on the Sandford Street property. "Every now and then, the students would ask:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

---

'Sister, when are we going to the new school?' Sister would answer, 'Soon.' And then the students would be delighted and smile."<sup>11</sup>

Teaching was carried out from the start by the Maestre Pie Filippini, an Italian order of teaching sisters which came to the United States in 1910. They were first assigned to St. Joachim's School in Trenton, whose founder, Rev. Aloysius Pozzi, had served as the first missionary to St. Mary's. He had visited Rome and successfully appealed to Pope Pius X for their services.<sup>12</sup> Six nuns arrived in New Brunswick on September 13, 1922, ready to begin their mission as teachers with enthusiasm.<sup>13</sup> The order remains with the St. Mary's parochial school to this day.

The year 1922 proved to be pivotal in the development of St. Mary of Mount Virgin parish. Construction of their first building on the new Sandford Street property commenced in that year. A two-story, yellow brick school was erected with an auditorium on the second floor that doubled as a sanctuary for services. More than 1,000 people attended ceremonies for laying the cornerstone held on October 2, 1923. It should be noted that this parish followed an unusual custom of laying cornerstones as part of dedications when a building was completed, rather than at the start of construction. That on the school bears the date "1922" even though it was not installed until a year later. Also, on December 8, 1922, Rev. Joseph De Masi was installed as the first Pastor of St. Mary's, a position he held until November 4, 1923.<sup>14</sup>

It is not surprising that St. Mary's parish placed priority on the establishment of a parochial school on their large new property even before erecting a suitable church. American public schools of the day stressed "not only the need to develop a system of internal moral restraints learned during a prolonged period of maturing, but additionally, they proposed that maturity could not be completed by a mere imitation of adults. Role models were acceptable, it was argued, but the youngster had to develop unique behavioral modifications from within." Italian-American parents departed radically from this view. "On the one hand, the imitative model of learning which they espoused effectively squelched any pretense of an internally-directed maturing process which allowed for flexibility." So by 1900, many Italian Catholic parishes began opening parochial schools so that parents could remove their children from the more liberal public school systems. "One of their concerns was the school's refusal to accept the imitative model of learning. By the early decades of the twentieth century, they were increasingly turning to Roman Catholic schools . . . which would reproduce the parental training at home in an outside institution."<sup>15</sup>

Father De Masi was succeeded as Pastor on November 14, 1923, by Rev. Pasquale Mugnano. Father Mugnano was born in Naples, Italy, on June 4, 1888. At an early age he received a call to the priesthood, entering the seminary in Naples. Mugnano then went on to complete his studies at Collegio D'Emigrazione in Rome. He was ordained on August 24, 1914. Rev. Mugnano had performed his first religious ceremony at St. Mary's parish on April 17, 1921, not then knowing that he would serve as its Pastor from 1923 to 1970, a total of 47 years. This distinguished priest was elevated in 1960 to the rank of Domestic Prelate, with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. Father Mugnano retired to Florida, then went to visit his family in Italy. He died there on April 12, 1971, at the age of 82. His body was returned to New Brunswick for interment in St. Peter's Cemetery. The energetic Father Mugnano was much loved by his parish. One newspaper editor summarized his record of achievement as follows:

So it is, that adding the tact of the diplomat and Christian tolerance to his many other virtues, the Right Reverend Monsignor Pasquale Mugnano gives further evidence of his prowess as a man of God. He has earned much

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

---

respect for building a modest Italian immigrant parish into a church boasting a sizeable segment of the city's industrial, civic, business, financial and political leadership.

A member of the parish said it more succinctly. "Monsignor gave all of himself to his people."<sup>16</sup>

Only six months after Father Mugnano assumed his duties at St. Mary's, the parish Trustees on July 15, 1924 "resolved to build a Convent for the Sisters of our Parochial School."<sup>17</sup> This attractive, two-story, yellow brick structure was situated on Sandford Street just west of the school itself. It replaced a residence for the sisters at 307 Handy Street that had been used by them since October of 1922. The following year, the Trustees on January 10, 1925, "resolved to build a 14 thousand dollar rectory."<sup>18</sup> Again, a two-story residence for the Pastor located east of the school on Sandford Street was built of yellow brick to match harmoniously with the school and convent. Increasing student enrollment in the school then led the Trustees on September 25, 1925, to vote "to build a classroom in the auditorium according to plans drawn by Mr. Bach."<sup>19</sup> But much more ambitious expansion plans were soon underway.

### AN IMPOSING NEW CHURCH

On March 23, 1927, the Trustees "resolved that a Church Building Society be formed for the purpose of gathering funds for the erection of a church, subject to the approval of the Rt. Rev. Bishop of the Trenton Diocese. It was further resolved to ask the Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Walsh, Bishop of Trenton, for a letter of approval, and his Blessing for the success of this undertaking."<sup>20</sup> The Bishop returned the minutes of the meeting with his approval and signature on March 29.<sup>20</sup> Public and parish fund raising efforts went on for more than a year. As an example, the New Brunswick *Daily Home News* carried an announcement on February 15, 1928, that "The St. Mary of Mt. Virgin new church fund is expected to benefit handsomely from the returns of the dance to be held this evening at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Dancing will start at 7:30 o'clock with music furnished by a popular orchestra. An invitation has been extended by Rev. Pasquale Mugnano to all to take part in the entertainment and dance."<sup>21</sup> In May, the Rosary Society announced that it "will conduct a party tomorrow evening at its hall on Sandford Street. Proceeds go toward the parish fund. Beautiful prizes have been donated and the public is invited to attend."<sup>22</sup> The annual St. Mary's Carnival held for a week each year in June proved to be a major fund raiser. "There will be a large number of features, including a dancing pavilion and many fun booths. . . . Proceeds from the carnival are to be applied to the fund for the erection of a new church building."<sup>23</sup> "A band concert furnished by a South Amboy band composed of young musicians will be the feature of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin carnival on Sandford Street tomorrow evening. The concert is expected to attract a large crowd. The attractive booths arranged by the committee has [sic] been the means of attracting large numbers and Rev. Mugnano reports the carnival a huge success. The public is invited."<sup>24</sup> The carnival was extended about one week due to bad weather. "The St. Mary of Mt. Virgin carnival on Sandford Street was the scene of a lively gathering last evening. Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of the church, is more than pleased with the turn-out and with good weather promises to make up for losses sustained last week when the weatherman was not agreeable. There is a surprise in store for those attending the carnival each night. All are invited."<sup>25</sup>

Apparently armed with a large infusion of funds from the carnival, the St. Mary's parish Trustees met on July 11, 1928, when "the following resolution was taken: That a new Church be constructed of the value of \$120,000 and the architect be Clyde S. Adams, Builder be John P. Hallahan. The above resolution is, however, subject to the approval of the Rt. Rev. Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton." Again, the Bishop, Rt. Rev. John J. McMahon, returned the minutes promptly with his signature of approval.<sup>26</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

---

On July 18, the *Daily Home News* carried front page headlines announcing the construction of the new church:<sup>27</sup>

### **Sign Contract for New Church**

### **Bishop Approves Plan for \$100,000 Church**

### **Fine New Edifice to Be Erected by St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Parish on Sandford Street to Be Completed in Ten Months**

An announcement that should bring much joy to members of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin parish was made by their pastor, Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, last evening when he declared the final approval for the erection of a new church to cost in the neighborhood of \$100,000 had been given by Bishop John McMahan of Trenton and that work would start on the new edifice within two weeks.

Preliminary plans are in the hands of the contractors and the new church will be erected on Sandford street. About ten months' time will be required to complete the project. A contract was signed by Father Mugnano last evening for the erection of the new church.

Two towers, each eighty-six feet high, with ornamental domes and crosses will mark the front view of the new edifice. The front will be sixty-four feet high and the edifice will be 122 feet in length.

Construction will be of granite stone, a substance selected for wearing and ornamental qualities. The entire exterior will be of granite stone.

The interior of the new church will be forty-four feet in height and have a length of sixty feet. There will be a large main altar and large sanctuary with two auxiliary altars on either side. A baptistry will be located near the front part of the church with ample space being provided.

Father Mugnano, in speaking of the announcement this morning declared that it was a great responsibility for the members of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin parish.

"I am pleased to announce the final approval of Bishop McMahan has been given for the erection of a new St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Italian Catholic Church on Sandford street," he said. "We now have a great responsibility resting on our shoulders. Those who have not come to our assistance should do so now. When completed the church will be a monument to our sacrifices as we are not receiving any outside help. It is our church, and we will some day be happy to occupy the beautiful edifice."



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

---

Through the efforts of the societies of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Church, Father Mugnano has been able to collect enough funds to warrant the start of the project. It is believed that the Italian people of this city will get behind their pastor in this enterprise.

Father Mugnano came to this city in 1923, succeeding Rev. Joseph De Masi. Since his arrival in this city the erection of a school, rectory and convent has taken place. There are 400 children enrolled in the school and they are instructed by Sisters of the Maestre Pie Filippini order, who have their mother house at Villa Victoria near Trenton. There are nine sisters teaching school.

At the present time there are 4,000 members in the parish. It is believed that this number will be considerably increased with the erection of a new church.

With the completion of the new church, the school building will be used as an auditorium. If necessary, at some future time the auditorium may be converted into class rooms. Class rooms are on the first floor of the school building with the present second floor auditorium being used for church purposes.

The architect for the new church was Clyde Smythe Adams, Sr., of Philadelphia, PA. Born in Hammonton, NJ, on November 29, 1876, he attended Philadelphia public schools. In 1890, he began working with the Philadelphia-based architectural firm of Wilson Brothers, where he remained until 1903, rising from the position of office boy to chief draftsman. During this time he attended night classes at Drexel Institute and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. From 1903 to his death on December 19, 1939 at the age of 63, Adams maintained a private practice as both architect and engineer. He added to his knowledge of architecture by visiting both Rome and Paris in 1910, and by embarking with his wife and son on a world cruise in 1924.<sup>28</sup>

Adam's prominent and prolific practice concentrated on school projects, but included a number of hotels, public buildings, residences, apartment buildings, commercial structures, factories, and churches as well. More than 200 of his engagements and commissions are known. He was a member of the national American Institute of Architects, but appears to have dropped his membership in 1938. He was also active in Pen and Pencil and Old Colony Clubs, Tall Cedars of Lebanon, and Elks Lodge #932 of Camden, NJ. He was a 32<sup>nd</sup> degree Freemason and a life member of the Blue Lodge of Philadelphia. Among Adams's 76 known New Jersey works were: 55 schools in Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Atlantic, Burlington, and Warren counties (some of which are still serving educational purposes); fire stations in Deal, Monmouth County, and Pennsgrove, Salem County; a club house in Island Heights, Ocean County; an Elks Club in Pennsgrove, Salem County; residences in Camden, Gloucester, Atlantic and Burlington counties; factories in Millville, Salem County, and Camden County; and the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Vineland, Cumberland County.<sup>29</sup>

To erect their new church, St. Mary's parish engaged John P. Hallahan Co., Inc., of Philadelphia as the prime contractor. The work of this large, commercial construction firm included projects for Haverford College, Bryn Mawr College, the University of Pennsylvania, and Temple University; the Pennsylvania Railroad; large private residences; factories, banks and office buildings; the Walt Whitman Bridge; and four other churches in Philadelphia and Havertown, PA.<sup>30</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

---

Once the contract was signed, St. Mary's parish lost no time in starting up construction of the new church. The *Daily Home News* carried the following news item on 2 August:<sup>31</sup>

### To Begin Work on New Church in Short Time

Ground for the new St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Catholic Church on Sandford street will be broken in the near future, according to a representative of the Joseph [should read John] P. Hallahan Company, Inc., of Philadelphia, who applied for a building permit at the office of Building Inspector John F. Lynch Tuesday. The application made to Building Inspector Lynch calls for the expenditure of \$115,000 in the construction of the new edifice.

Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin parish, recently announced plans for the erection of a new church. He said no financial assistance would be forthcoming from outside sources, but that the church would represent a sacrifice made by the people of the parish. He urged his parishioners to stand by him in his effort to provide them with a house of worship.

It is understood the new church will face Remsen avenue. At the present time three buildings are owned by the parish, all facing Sandford street. The buildings are the rectory, school and church building, and convent, all recently constructed. When the new church is erected, the second floor of the school building, which is now being used for church services, will be used as an auditorium.

As the parish owned only 87.34 feet of frontage on Remsen, 50 feet from Sandford Street and 62.66 feet from Powers, the church was sited almost on the south property line so that, should St. Mary's acquire the two corner lots at some future point, the church would be more centered on the lot. Clearance from the pre-existing Rectory also required that the building be set slightly south of the city block's center line. Within a month, enough progress had been made on the foundations and walls of the church that a procession around it could take place as part of the annual feast day celebrations of St. Mary of Mount Virgin on September 8<sup>th</sup>:<sup>32</sup>

The feast day of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin will be appropriately celebrated tomorrow by members of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Church. Rev. Pasquale Mugnano has arranged for an all-day celebration to begin at 8 o'clock in the morning, when the City Band, under the leadership of Manlo Palombi, will conduct a parade on Sandford street.

At 9 o'clock, Father Mugnano will offer mass and preach a sermon in honor of the day. In the afternoon at 4 o'clock a procession will take place around the church.

As darkness falls the streets about the church will be illuminated. The closing event of the day will be a big fireworks display and band concert at 11 o'clock. Director Palombi has arranged an attractive program.

By mid-November, the masonry work was finished and structure completely roofed. At that point, the contractor estimated that construction would be finished in time for the congregation to occupy their new sanctuary by February 1, 1929. The following news item appeared in the *Daily Home News* on November 15:<sup>33</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

---

### To Occupy Church First of February

Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Catholic Church, announced this morning that a roof now covers the new church edifice and that the parish will probably be able to occupy the building on February 1.

Those who have made pledges are asked to carry out their promises and those who have not as yet pledged any financial assistance are asked to do so at once. Salvatore Chibbaro is chairman of the finance committee and is making a visit amongst the people of the parish in an effort to secure the necessary funds to defray the expense of building the church.

Swift progress by the contractor was no doubt placing strain on the financial resources of St. Mary's parish. In addition to the fundraising actions noted above, on November 28 the church's Trustees "resolved that a sum of \$50,000 be taken at the First National Bank of Perth Amboy, N. J., at the rate of 5% interest. Such money is to be used for the construction of the new building of the Parish." They then "resolved that the property of the old Church, on the corner of Remsen & Delavan Sts. Be sold to Mr. Joseph La Pelosa for \$10,000 and a lot of the same property of 24 X 100 ft. be sold to Salvatore Chibbaro for \$1,000. This money is to be used for the erection of the New Church of the Parish."<sup>34</sup>

J. P. Hallahan nearly met their ambitious time estimate for completing construction of the new church by February 1, 1929, in the remarkably fast time span of only seven months, three months ahead of the original schedule. Only the delayed delivery of pews kept the parish from worshipping in their imposing new sanctuary by early February. Nonetheless, announcements were placed in the *Daily Home News* to keep the public informed on its status, and when the Blessing and celebration of the first Mass would take place:<sup>35</sup>

### Catholic Church to be Blessed on February 24

Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Italian Catholic Church, announced this morning that the handsome new church on Remsen avenue will be blessed on Sunday, February 24 and will then be opened for worship. The new edifice was started seven months ago by Contractor Hallahan of Philadelphia and remarkable strides have been made by the builder, so that the church is ready long before the contractor expected. The edifice was erected at a cost of \$120,000.

At present benches are being awaited before the church is completed. The altars have been put in position and the interior of the church is practically completed.

Rev. Mugnano declares he would like to have parishioners make good their pledges toward the building of the new church.

Two days before the opening of the church, another article appeared in the paper:<sup>36</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

---

### **First Mass to Be Said in New Italian Church Sunday Morning**

Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of the Catholic Church of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin, is pleased to announce that the first mass will be said in the handsome new church on Remsen avenue at 7:30 o'clock Sunday morning. There will be a second mass at 9 o'clock and a third mass will be solemnized by Rev. Linus A. Schwarze, pastor of the Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist, at 11 o'clock. Every member of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin parish is urged to attend the opening celebration.

The new church was completed by the John P. Hallahan Company of Philadelphia and will seat nearly 800 comfortably. It was erected at a cost of over \$100,000. There are over 3,000 parishioners, according to Father Mugnano.

With the occupation of the new edifice, the entire school will be devoted to the interest of the children. Previously the Sunday services were held in the auditorium of the school.

Rev. Joseph Massolo, curate of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Church, will read one of the masses Sunday.

A story in the Sunday Times will tell of the progress made by the Italian speaking people of the city in the upbuilding of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin parish, as well as details concerning the erection of the handsome new church.

The lengthy front page *Sunday Times* article of February 24 featured a large perspective rendering cut of the handsome new church, and a portrait photograph cut of Father Mugnano.<sup>37</sup>

### **First Mass Will Be Solemnized Today In New \$100,000 Edifice of Church of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin on Remsen Avenue**

After a long period of patient waiting, the members of the Catholic Church of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin, composed of Italian speaking people of this city, will be able to enjoy the privilege of attending mass at the handsome new edifice at Remsen avenue and Sandford street, Sunday morning.

Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of the church, will solemnize high mass at 7:30 o'clock and the new house of worship is expected to be crowded on this occasion. All members and friends of the parish are invited to participate in the celebration.

Mass will also be said at 9 o'clock and 11 o'clock, the late mass being celebrated by Rev. Linus A. Schwarze, pastor of the Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist.

Rising in a stately manner from a plot of ground on Remsen avenue, the new St. Mary of Mt. Virgin church is a symbol of the tremendous sacrifices made by the Italian speaking people of this city. Overcoming obstacles that

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

---

proved almost impossible to surmount, the parishioners have worked zealously with Father Mugnano and the day of rejoicing is at hand.

Erected by the John P. Hallahan Corporation of Philadelphia, at a cost of over \$100,000, the new church is a striking example of modern architecture. Granite stone is used in the exterior while the interior is of white with ornamental arches and pillars setting off the elaborate decorative effects.

Two towers rise to a height of eighty-six feet with Roman crosses standing on either tower for an added height of four feet.

The interior height of the edifice is forty-three feet and the building is 143 feet long [actually 122 feet] and sixty-four feet wide. According to Father Mugnano, the seating capacity is 700. A large choir loft is at the rear of the church and will provide places for seventy people.

One of the features is the adequate ventilation and lighting. There are twenty-four windows which will allow perfect lighting and the parishioners will be able to read without the aid of artificial light.

The high altar was transferred from the old church on Sandford street. A pulpit will be stationed on the side of the main altar.

A beautiful marble altar rail is one of the decorative features. The floors are of marbleoid terrazi and similar to the flooring recently placed in the St. John the Baptist Church on Neilson Street.

On either side of the church are found special rooms. At the rear of the main altar is found the vestment room of Father Mugnano and on the opposite side the sacristy is located. At the front is the baptismal font. Every modern convenience is provided in the various rooms.

An up-to-date furnace is located in the cellar directly in back of the church that will provide heat for the immense building. The cellar does not extend the full length of the church but is adequate for present needs.

Father Mugnano will attend to the blessing of the church some time during the day. The blessing is a special ceremony and will not be attended by the parishioners. At a later date, Bishop John A. McMahon will participate in the cornerstone laying ceremony, at which time clergymen from all over the state will take part.

The parish of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin was begun in 1904, when quarters were taken in the basement of the Sacred Heart Church on Throop Avenue. It was Rev. Gerald Christiano who supervised the erection of a building at Remsen avenue and Delavan street which served as a house of worship for many years.

The late Rev. Joseph De Masi was in charge of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin parish for a number of years and was succeeded by Father Mugnano. Father De Masi died in Italy about five years ago.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

---

Father Mugnano now has an assistant in Rev. Joseph Massolo who came to this city a few months ago.

The pastor is elated over the remarkable assistance given him in the erection of the new church. He urges that all who have not paid the amount of their pledges to do so at the earliest possible time.

Father Mugnano said he was thankful that God allowed the parish to have a new church and that the parish was proud to honor the Blessed Virgin by naming the church in her honor.

"We thank God for our new church and are proud to honor the Blessed Virgin by having a church named in Her honor. We are the only parish in this city to have such a distinction, and we think it will be a special blessing for our parish," said Father Mugnano.

Father Mugnano declared that in Europe there is not a city without a church named after the Blessed Virgin and that the Italian people are usually most proud of their churches for that reason.

Much credit is due to Salvatore Chibbaro, chairman of the financial committee in connection with the church building program, as well as every member of the parish.

Father Mugnano expects to have every member of the Catholic faith in this city visit the handsome new St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Church on the occasion of the opening celebration.

At the present time it is believed that there are over 3,000 members of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin parish. A school building, convent and rectory are located on Sandford street.

A review of the first Masses in the new St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church appeared in the *Daily Home News* the next day.<sup>38</sup>

### **Large Crowds Attend Masses at Opening of New Italian Church**

Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of the Catholic Church of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin, celebrated the first mass in the handsome new church on Remsen avenue yesterday morning at 7:30 o'clock. A second mass was said at 9 o'clock by the pastor, and at 11 o'clock Rev. Linus A. Schwarze, pastor of the Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist, officiated. The edifice was so crowded that it was impossible for another person to enter. Sermons commemorating the opening of the new church were appropriately delivered. Throughout the day a steady stream of visitors entered the church.

Father Mugnano is well pleased with the large attendance at the opening of the new church. At the early masses he thanked his parishioners for the assistance given him and urged them to continue their faithful work.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

---

At the 11 o'clock mass Father Schwarze delivered a wonderful sermon in which he reminded the Italian people that they were Catholic by nature, that they were born of Catholic parents and were raised in the Catholic faith. He prompted them to continue to worship as Catholics and to assist in the affairs of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Church.

Within a short time Bishop John McMahon of the Trenton diocese will visit the new Italian Catholic Church for the purpose of laying the cornerstone.

The day of formal dedication and ceremonial laying of the cornerstone was announced to the public on May 29. Again, St. Mary's parish followed the unusual practice of laying a cornerstone at the completion of construction, rather than at the start.<sup>39</sup>

### **Bishop McMahon to Dedicate New St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Church**

Bishop John J. McMahon, of the Trenton diocese, will dedicate the new Italian Church built by the people of St. Mary's parish, tomorrow at 10:30 o'clock in the morning. Father Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of the church announced today. A solemn high mass will be celebrated after the blessing of the cornerstone. After the services, the Bishop and visiting clergy, who will number about forty priests from Middlesex and Somerset counties, will be guests of the parishioners at a banquet in the Woodrow Wilson Hotel.

Arrangements for the banquet are under the direction of Salvatore Chibbaro, a diligent church worker who has been responsible for many of the successful social events that the parish has held.

The church which was completed in February is a beautiful structure of Romanesque architecture. It comfortably seats 720 people. A gallery and choir loft are two of its attractive features. Rev. Gerard Christiano of the Holy Trinity Church at Long Branch, pastor of St. Mary's Church in this city until eight years ago, will celebrate the mass. Rev. Linus Schwarze of St. John's Church will be the deacon, and one of the priests from the Sacred Heart Church, the sub-deacon. The school choir will sing during the mass.

Father Mugnano wishes that the members of the Holy Name Society be in the auditorium of the school on Sandford street not later than 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. The men will escort the bishop from the rectory to the church.

A large number of visitors is expected to witness the dedication ceremonies. The new church reflects a great deal of credit upon Father Mugnano and the parishioners who assisted him working for its construction.

Full coverage of the impressive ceremonies appeared the day after as a front page item in the *Daily Home News*. It was illustrated by a large portrait photograph of Bishop McMahon.<sup>40</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

---

### **Bishop Lays New Church Cornerstone**

### **Impressive Services Held at St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Church Yesterday**

### **Bishop McMahan Lays Cornerstone**

### **Offers Blessing of Italian Church**

The cornerstone of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin Church on Remsen avenue was laid with impressive services yesterday morning by the Rt. Rev. John J. McMahan, Bishop of the Trenton Diocese in the presence of the members of the congregation and many priests from Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset counties.

The laying of the cornerstone was followed by the blessing of the edifice by Bishop McMahan and then followed a requiem solemn high mass which was celebrated by Rev. Gerald Christiano of Long Branch, assisted by Rev. Linus Schwarze, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church as deacon, and Rev. Alfonso Palombi of Trenton as sub-deacon. Rev. Francis Dalton of Hopewell was master of ceremonies.

The priests of the diocese assembled at the rectory of St. Mary of Mt. Virgin at 10 o'clock to receive Bishop McMahan upon his arrival. With priests acting as an escort, Bishop McMahan at 10:30 o'clock was taken into the church.

The aides to the bishop were Rev. Peter J. Hart, pastor of St. Peter's Church and Rev. Joseph A. Ryan, pastor of St. Mary's Church of Perth Amboy.

Outside of the rectory were drawn up the members of the Holy Name Society of the parish. Through the ranks of the Holy Name Society, the solemn procession proceeded. Hundreds of Italian people gathered on Sandford street and Remsen avenue to witness the spectacle.

### **Bestows Blessing**

Reaching the church, Bishop McMahan laid the cornerstone and bestowed his blessing. He was then taken into the church with the visiting priests where the blessing continued after which the congregation was admitted and the mass was started.

Practically every seat in the church was filled when Father Christiano came on the altar to say the mass. The visiting priests occupied chairs within the sanctuary while Bishop McMahan occupied a throne. The mass was sung by the children's choir of the parish under the direction of the Sisters of the St. Mary of Mt. Virgin school.

Before benediction by Bishop McMahan, the congratulations of the diocese were extended by Bishop McMahan to Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of the church, and the members of the congregation for their splendid



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 15

---

accomplishment in the erection of the Temple of God which had shortly before been blessed and sanctified in the name of God.

"My heart rejoices today because I am with you good Italian people of New Brunswick and we join in erecting another temple for God," said Bishop McMahan.

He told the parishioners that they should dwell in the tabernacle of God for in that way, they would reach Heaven. He declared the church was a gateway to Heaven and he urged the Italian parishioners to live with Jesus Christ and to support their good pastor.

"Through your goodness, we have this temple of God, where you can worship your God," said Bishop McMahan. "These mighty walls and the roof of this church are necessary but what good will they do if you don't give your heart to God?"

### **Praises Father Mugnano**

In concluding his brief remarks, Bishop McMahan paid tribute to the eloquence of Father Mugnano who preceded him in addressing his congregation in his native tongue. "Such eloquence as I heard today coming from the lips of the anointed one of God, I have never heard since I was in Rome," declared Bishop McMahan.

Father Mugnano expressed his appreciation to the members of the congregation for the co-operation extended in making possible the construction of the church. He declared that in building the church, they were doing it for God and in the Heavenly Kingdom, they would be rewarded for whatever sacrifices they had made.

The services were closed with benediction by Bishop McMahan after which Bishop McMahan was escorted by the visiting priests back to the rectory. Later in the day, a banquet was tendered to the Bishop and visiting clergy at the Woodrow Wilson Hotel by members of the parish. Representatives of the congregation also attended this function with Father Mugnano.

### **Beautiful Edifice**

The beautiful church was completed last February but the formal dedication was deferred until yesterday. Father Pasquale Mugnano, pastor of the church, said the first mass in the church on February 24 and every Sunday and Holy Day thereafter has witnessed a large attendance of the parishioners.

The article then concluded with a detailed description of the new church that repeated almost verbatim the information contained in the February 24<sup>th</sup> article on celebration of the first Mass.

Along with the festive events of opening, and then dedicating and laying the cornerstone, came the necessity of securing funds to pay for the new church. On March 4, 1929, the Trustees "resolved that a sum of money of \$10,000 be taken at the Citizen's Bank

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 16

---

of New Brunswick, N. J. This money is to be used for the payments of the newly erected Church.”<sup>41</sup> A month later, the Trustees “resolved that a sum of \$15,000 be taken at the First National Bank of Perth Amboy and \$5,000 at the Peoples Bank of New Brunswick. Such money is to be used to finish up the payment of the newly erected Church. This will make a total debt of \$100,000 on the Church’s Corporation but it is all we need.”<sup>42</sup> By the end of September, the Trustees decided to consolidate all of their small bank notes into a single mortgage. They “resolved that a mortgage of \$60,000 at 5 ½% be had on the Church property to pay the notes we have on such property.”<sup>43</sup>

To round out the Church campus on Sandford Street, the Trustees on April 1 “resolved that a small house be erected on the Church’s property as a janitorial dwelling house not exceeding \$2,000.”<sup>44</sup> This small house was sited to the west of the convent at the extreme end of the parish’s property. Three months later the plan was revised by the Trustees, who “resolved that, while building the janitor’s house, already approved by the Rt. Rev. Bishop, a second floor be added for classrooms, the main building being too small to contain the children.”<sup>45</sup>

By late 1929, construction activities by the St. Mary of Mount Virgin parish came to an end at the Sandford Street location. In only seven years, the congregation had erected a school, convent, rectory, church, and custodian’s residence, all accomplished with a residual debt of about \$100,000. The total cost of these facilities is unfortunately not now known. Clearly, though, the parish had raised a very significant amount of money during that time. But the world changed abruptly on October 29, 1929, when the stock markets in the United States crashed, causing a global depression that lasted ten years.

The imposing new Romanesque Revival church built of granite with twin towers rising 90 feet above Remsen Avenue dominated this New Brunswick neighborhood of working class houses and light industry. It immediately became a landmark source of pride to the Italians of St. Mary’s parish who worked so hard to bring their fine house of worship to fruition. When first opened, however, the interior appearance of the church was very different than today. Newspaper accounts quoted above indicate that the interior was initially painted white, and the windows contained clear glass. Gradually over the years, the sanctuary became ornamentally enriched with painted murals and decorations covering every inch of the walls and ceiling, high quality stained glass windows, and a significant collection of religious statuary. The precise dating of these enhancements has proven to be problematic as many church records and related historical items were destroyed when the convent basement flooded in 2000. Also, most if not all of the stained glass windows and statues were given to the church as memorial or personal gifts. Payment for them would in all likelihood have been handled privately.

The net effect today of all the interior enhancements at St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church is most impressive. Their purpose was to inspire those who worshipped in this sacred space.<sup>46</sup>

The great object in decorating our churches . . . is three-fold; firstly, to instruct the people by placing vividly before them the scenes of the Sacred Scripture and the mysteries of the Christian faith; secondly, to move the hearts and souls of men by enabling them to contemplate all that God has done for them, and thereby to arouse them from spiritual lethargy and to draw them nearer to our Lord; thirdly, to keep in mind the saving truths of the Gospel, since we more easily remember what we see than what we hear.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 17

---

The extensive ornamental painted work, Byzantine icon, stained glass windows, and statuary will each be discussed in separate sections below.

### PAINTED MURALS AND DECORATIONS

It is believed that the interior of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church was lavishly ornamented with painted murals, religious scenes, images of Saints and Apostles, etc., in the 1930s. Parish minutes, unfortunately, make no specific reference to this project. Two citations regarding refinancing and increased indebtedness, though, may provide some idea of a time frame. On September 13, 1931, the Trustees "resolved and passed that a loan (mortgage) of \$125,000 be taken for the period of ten years to pay off the bank notes. The interest on that loan would be at 5 ¼ % and a commission of 3 % and other little expenses. The Mercantile Commerce Co. Inc. from St. Louis would give said mortgage. The present debt on all the church property (and Mission) is \$117,700."<sup>47</sup> That transaction left the parish with a positive balance of \$7,300 apparently to be used for other purposes. A little more than a year later, "it was resolved that \$60,000 at 5 ½ % for 10 years be taken from the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, Hartford, Connecticut."<sup>48</sup> The ceiling of St. Mary's also shares one particular mural in common with a new chapel at the Villa Walsh Convent in Morristown, NJ, that was built in 1935. This convent serves the Religious Teachers Fillipini (the name by which the Maestre Pic Filippini are known in English) who have staffed St. Mary's parochial school since 1922. It is known that the same artist executed both murals, which depict the order's founder St. Lucy Fillipini. Senior members of the St. Mary's congregation recently recalled that the painted artwork was certainly in place by the late 1930s as they remember it from their childhood.<sup>49</sup>

To carry out this extraordinary ornamental enrichment of their church, St. Mary's parish turned to Gonippo Giuseppe Raggi (1875 - 1959), the foremost ecclesiastical artist of the Roman Catholic Church in his day. Raggi was born in Rome on May 6, 1875, the son of sculptor Ernesto Raggi and Filemena Bianchi Raggi. He first attended St. Michael's Institute of Art in Rome, and then in 1897 earned the honor of becoming a Prize Graduate of the prestigious St. Luke's Royal Academy of Rome. Raggi became a member of the Accademian of the Pontifical Academy Virtuosi al Pantheon, the Italian national fine arts academy in Rome, in 1933. The artist married Angelina Palmerio in 1900. They had four children: two daughters born in Italy, and two sons born in the United States. The latter, Louis P. (1906 - 1972) and G. Ernest Raggi (1910 - 1994), assisted their father in his art studio later in life.<sup>50</sup>

Significant honors accorded to Gonippo Raggi included:

- Made a Knight Commander of St. Gregory in 1925 by Pope Pius XI, who also appointed him a private chamberlain in 1934.
- Confirmed as a Papal Chamberlain of Cape and Sword in 1939 by Pope Pius XII, who also awarded him the Grand Cross of St. Sylvester after World War II.
- Decorated by King Alfonso of Spain, King Victor Emmanuel of Italy, and King Albert of Belgium in 1930, 1932, and 1934 respectively, and also by France in 1934.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 18

---

Raggi first came to America in 1904 under engagement by Martin Maloney, a Philadelphia utilities executive, to decorate St. Catherine's Church in Spring Lake, NJ, which was built as a memorial to Maloney's daughter Catherine. He spent much time in the United States through 1916, living for most of those years in the Boston vicinity, even though he made 6 transatlantic voyages in those 12 years. In 1906, he returned to the U. S. with his wife and two daughters. She apparently died young, as in 1914 Raggi's mother Filomena came to America as his "housekeeper." No further mention could be found of Raggi's wife Angelina.<sup>91</sup>

At the outbreak of World War I, the Raggi family returned to Italy for the duration of the conflict. By 1918, the artist went to South America for two years, where he is known to have painted a portrait of Jose Pardo y Barreda (1864 - 1947), President of Peru from 1915 to 1919, and also a religious mural entitled "Glorification of Santa Rosa de Lima" for the Church of Santo Domingo in Lima. This last work is dated 1918.

After returning to Italy, Gonippo Raggi, his mother, and his four children returned to the United States in 1921. Unfortunately, Filomena Raggi soon passed away in Spring Lake, NJ, in 1923 at the age of 78. Her interment took place in the Saint Catherine Cemetery. Between 1928 and 1940, the artist made 11 trips to Europe, frequently accompanied by one or more of his children. Early on, his residence was listed as Boston and then New York. By 1934, he had settled in East Orange, NJ. But by 1937 he had moved again to nearby Orange, where he lived for the remainder of his life. The studio, however, remained in East Orange.

Gonippo Raggi became a naturalized United States citizen in January of 1935 at the Federal District Court in Newark. From 1940 to 1949, he seems to have stayed in the United States, no doubt due to the terrible disruptions in his native Italy and throughout Europe caused by World War II. But by 1949, the artist resumed his transatlantic travels, making 8 trips in 8 years, 6 of them with his son Louis. With fame and success as a much acclaimed artist, Raggi booked first class accommodations on the newest Italian luxury liners such as the Andrea Doria and the Cristoforo Colombo. For his last known trip back to the United States in 1957, however, the 82 year old artist decided to fly home from Rome on TWA.

By his own account, Gonippo Raggi decorated more than 100 Roman Catholic cathedrals, basilicas, churches and chapels in Europe, North America, and South America.<sup>92</sup> Twenty-two of these sacred places, plus the dome of a Liberal Arts building on a Catholic college campus, have been identified as part of this study using several internet search engines. Six of Raggi's known commissions were found in Massachusetts (reflecting his years of residence there), 9 in New Jersey, and others in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Kansas. Those located in New Jersey include: St. Catherine's Church, Spring Lake (1904 - 13; after 1921); St. Lucy's Church, Newark (1929 - 49); St. Patrick's Pro-Cathedral, Newark (1929 & 1950); Seton Hall University Chapel, South Orange (1931); St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, New Brunswick (1930s); Villa Walsh Convent Chapel, Morristown (after 1935); Immaculate Conception Seminary Chapel, Darlington (1937); Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Newark (1940s); and the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Newark (1950 - 1954). (See the Appendix for a complete listing)

Raggi's earliest work in America, dating from 1904 to 1913, at St. Catherine's Church in Spring Lake was painted by applying pigments directly onto plaster. But soon after, he developed an alternative approach in which large panels and detailed pictorial work were painted on canvas which was then glued in place. This technique allowed Raggi to execute fine work in a studio context rather than spending endless hours lying on his back atop scaffolding. These canvas panels were then surrounded by an array of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 19

---

trompe l'oeil frames, arabesques, figures, and other details in paint applied directly to plaster surfaces, at least some of which had been painted beforehand.

Many of Gonippo Raggi's commissions are difficult to date as full ornamental enrichment of church interiors typically was not finished when these houses of worship first opened. St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church serves as a good example. At St. Catherine's Church in Spring Lake, Raggi's work there took place in two phases - the first between 1904 and 1913, and the second between 1921 and the early 1930s. This phased approach may well prove to be the norm rather than the exception.

As his distinguished career evolved, Raggi frequently collaborated with other artists on large engagements: with his brother Palamedo on St. John's Church in Beloit, Kansas; with artist Conrad Schmitt on the large St. Josephat Basilica in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and with artist Marion Rzeznik on the Basilica of Our Lady of Victory in Buffalo, New York. After 1937, Raggi's son Louis (then 21 years old) assisted his father, as did son Ernest after World War II. Raggi no doubt created the decorative master plan. And he presumably reserved the key panels and fine work for himself. Other decorative elements and symbolic decoration could have easily been delegated to others.

Raggi's last known major work was carried out during completion of the massive Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Newark. From 1950 to 1954, the artist and his two sons supervised the making and installation of marble altars, Stations of the Cross, and stained glass windows in this majestic Gothic Revival edifice. By then, they had evolved into a full-service ecclesiastical decorating firm, in addition to their longstanding specialty in painted ornamentation.

Gonippo Raggi passed away in Orange, NJ, on October 22, 1959, at the age of 84. His funeral Mass was celebrated two days later at St. Catherine's Church in Spring Lake, which was most fitting given his decades of service to the beautification of this remarkable New Jersey landmark.<sup>53</sup> Interment took place in the St. Catherine's Cemetery, where this renowned international artist was laid to rest beside his mother.

Raggi's painted ornamentation at St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church covered every square inch of wall and ceiling space in the sanctuary. Over the high altar in the chancel, an elaborately detailed mural of the Assumption of Our Lady surmounts a scene of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in Rome. The Basilica is flanked on the left by an eclectic group of Old Testament figures including Noah and King Solomon, and on the right by an equally unusual gathering of Roman Catholic saints, prophets, Pope Pius X, and, strangely, Dante Alighieri.<sup>54</sup> In the arch above the apse, a Latin inscription reads "May the Most Holy Sacrament be praised and adored for all Eternity." The lower walls around the altar were enriched with a decorative pattern in red and gold, filling in between four marble pilasters. At a later time, the Crucifix which hung above the altar was replaced by an antique icon of St. Mary of Mount Virgin. This work will be discussed below. The Crucifix now hangs in the church vestibule.

From the arch framing the apse to the choir loft at the rear of the sanctuary, Raggi placed three large framed panels. From front to back, they represented St. Lucy Filippini in Glory, The Transfiguration (which reproduces a painting dated 1521 in the Vatican museum by Raphael), and Saint Cecelia (the patron saint of music and musicians). Paintings of ten angels between the clerestory windows hold banners with the various Latin titles of the Blessed Mother, Saint Mary. Images of the Twelve Apostles were affixed high up above the windows of the two side aisles, and representations of ten Saints were located in the spandrels above the columns. Then all voids were filled with a profusion of frames, borders, trompe l'oeil architectural effects, arabesques, putti,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 20

---

angels, trefoils, vines, etc. The three large ceiling panels, plus the images of the Twelve Apostles and ten Saints, were apparently painted on canvas and glued in place. All other decorative elements were painted directly on plaster.

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church apparently suffered, almost since construction, from dampness and water penetration, especially at the joints where the lower roofs of the side aisles meet the exterior walls of the clerestory section. As early as 1944, the Trustees "resolved that the Rev. Pasquale Mugnano, having already obtained verbal permission of the Most Rev. Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, spend the sum of four thousand dollars for the work of restoration and partial redecoration of the Church, by the D'Ambrosi's Ecclesiastical Art Studio, Inc., 324 [?] Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y.<sup>55</sup> That seems like an extensive amount of work on interior decorations that were only about 10 years old.

Damp staining and water damage, plus 40 years of soot deposits from burning candles, again took its toll. By the mid 1970s even more extensive work became mandatory. Under the leadership of Rev. Francis J. Crupi, pastor of St. Mary's who succeeded Monsignor Magnano in 1970, the parish engaged Elisio I. Da Costa of Colts Neck, NJ to refresh the church's interior murals and ornamentation in 1979. Da Costa, who was born in Portugal on April 27, 1929, specialized in Roman Catholic ecclesiastical art, as had Gonippo Raggi decades earlier. One newspaper article describing the project provided background on this prolific artist, who claimed that St. Mary's was his 581<sup>st</sup> church commission.<sup>56</sup>

The 50-year-old, self-taught artist, who began his career at the age of 17, specializes in Catholic church art. To date, he said, "I've done 580 churches in this country and Europe." His is a rare, exacting and difficult task, which often calls for painting of ceilings and walls from high scaffolding. This is exacting, painstaking art, too, for holy personages usually are depicted in graphic detail as historically or traditionally known in church literature. Few practitioners of ecclesiastical art exist today. Da Costa, who once employed scores of artists, is working here with the help of only one other artist. . . .

Da Costa, who repainted the church statues two years ago, said "Father Crupi has been waiting for me for two years to do the interior." "I very seldom do murals. It occupies too much of my time," he said. "I'm doing this for Father Crupi."

Da Costa, who was born in central Portugal and frequently visits his native land where he retains citizenship, came to the United States at the age of 2. "Since I was a kid I said I was going to be an artist and do churches. I'm self-taught. I've been doing this since I was 17. I have been in business since I was 17."

He opened his own studio in Watertown, Conn., at the age of 17 and a year later moved to Elizabeth in this state. He subsequently had offices in Philadelphia and New York City. Before the artist reached the age of 21 he was commissioned to design a shrine to Our Lady of Fatima in Washington. He still was in his early 20s when he was named custodian of all statues at Mount Assisi Monastery in Pennsylvania.

Da Costa went on to design, renovate and build shrines for churches and religious institutions throughout this country and abroad. The commission for St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church is the artist's second in this city.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 21

---

Earlier Da Costa "did all the marble, the complete church interior" at St. Joseph's Church in New Brunswick. He also designed shrines at Our Lady of Peace Church in Fords, Woodbridge, and St. Mark's Church in Sea Girt.

The extensive article then went on to describe the artwork renewal project.

"It's not being restored. It is being completely repainted," emphasized Da Costa. He and artist Joseph Little of Spring Lake started the stupendous task right after Easter. They expect to finish shortly before Christmas. "Mr. Little does the faces and I do the robes," explained Da Costa, who described the church as "like the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican." This is the first venture into ecclesiastical art for Little, a former illustrator for Hearst publications who recently returned to the country after 13 years in Spain.

"We are keeping the color scheme of light pastel colorings, with emphasis on pastel blue to represent the Blessed Mother," said Da Costa. . . .

The artists just completed the mural on the 40-foot-high rotunda [actually apse] of the sanctuary, which depicts Mary's Ascension. The figures of Mary and an assemblage of heavenly hosts on billowing clouds are slightly larger than life size.

Da Costa and Little now are working on the Byzantine icon, which the church's former pastor, the late Rev. Msgr. Pasquale Mugnano, brought back from Italy. . . . On finishing the icon, the artists will turn their attention to painting the murals in the nave and choir loft. Scaffolding is already set up in the loft.

They will have to emulate Michelangelo when they redo the murals on the 40-foot-high ceiling of the 100-foot-long and 30-foot-wide nave. Also to be painted are the murals on the ceiling and walls of the two side aisles, which have the same height and measure 100 by 20 feet in length and width.

All of the principal design elements of the Raggi scheme remained, including the scene of Assumption over the altar, the three large panels on the sanctuary ceiling with frames, the ten angels holding banners inscribed with the Latin names of Mary, the ten saints, and the twelve Apostles. The paint-on-canvas images of the Apostles, however, were moved to a lower position over the windows, where they could be seen to better advantage. Da Costa's team then filled the voids with a profusion of putti, angels, vines, and trompe l'oeil effects similar to those executed by Gonippo Raggi, if somewhat simplified. The most obvious change occurred in the chancel, where the earlier red and gold color scheme was superseded by a soft, pastel blue enriched with two crosses in the panels on either side of the large icon of St. Mary of Mount Virgin and delicate vines. Twenty-two carat gold leaf applied to column and pilaster capitals, archivolts (the moldings or bands surrounding the arched openings), and elsewhere further enriched this impressive church interior.

Elisio Da Costa died on October 15, 1988, at the relatively young age of 59.<sup>37</sup> As of this writing, problems with water penetration and dampness in the church have recurred, particularly in the north aisle where damaged parts of the ceiling have been taken down, and plaster repairs are being made to the walls.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 22

---

### BYZANTINE STYLE ICON OF ST. MARY OF MOUNT VIRGIN

Perhaps the most historic, recognized, and venerated piece of art in St. Mary's church is the large icon of Our Lady of Mount Virgin centered on the wall behind the main altar. It was brought back from Italy by Monsignor Mugnano on one of his many trips to that country. Estimates on its age vary from 300 to 450 years. The painting, which measures 3 feet by 10 feet, was executed on a three-section wood panel. During the 1979 renewal of interior painted decorations, the Da Costa team also refurbished the icon. The newspaper article cited previously provided this description of their work:<sup>58</sup>

Da Costa and Little now are working on the Byzantine icon, which the church's former pastor, the late Rev. Msgr. Pasquale Mugnano, brought back from Italy. The artists expect to spend nearly a month on the icon, which Da Costa said, is "about 300 to 400 years old." The 3-foot by 10-foot painting, which is extraordinarily large for an icon, is on three panels of wood that are splintering at the edges and need careful restoration. "It is going to be gold leafed and there are going to be gems on it like there were once," Da Costa said, adding, "we won't put real diamonds. We will use Zircons."

The icon bearing the image of the church's name saint is a replica of the original, which was found years ago on Mount Virgil near Naples, Italy, according to Italian-born Father Crupi, who in 1970 succeeded the monsignor as pastor of the New Brunswick church. He believes the original is in the Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Virgin in Italy.

Explaining the origin of the saint's name, Father Crupi said it derives from a corruption of the mountain's actual name. Initially, the mountain near Naples was known as Mount Virgil, because it was frequented by the famous Latin poet of that name.

After the icon was found on the mountain it became a shrine to St. Mary of Mount Virgil. In time, visitors to the shrine began to call the saint St. Mary of Mount Virgin, the name used today.

Gemstones which once graced the icon had long since disappeared. So replacement jewels generously donated by parishioners were applied to the painting, along with much gold leaf.

### STAINED GLASS

The St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church contains a large collection of stained glass windows representing many different styles and manufacturers as they were obtained one or two at a time over many years. Twelve windows in the side aisles are matched by twelve double windows in the clerestory section above them. Three more can be found in the vestibule, including a Centennial window installed in 2004 to commemorate the parish's hundredth anniversary. A large rose window above the main entrance serves as a prominent feature of both the exterior façade and interior.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 23

---

Eleven of twelve windows on the main floor depict various saints or gospel scenes, eight of which contain the Blessed Mother, either by herself or with other figures. Roman Catholic symbols of faith and sacraments appear in the twenty-four panels of the double clerestory windows.

Three of the windows contain unusual stained glass portraits from photographs of those individuals being memorialized by the donors. One of those also contains a portrait of Monsignor Mugnano as an older middle age man, along with his parents (Monsignor Mugnano would have been 50 years old in 1938).

Three windows are also signed by the studio that created them.

- The second window from the front of the sanctuary in the south aisle of St. Ann Teaching the Blessed Mother is signed "D. H. Oidtmann, Linnich RHL D. / Germany." The Oidtmann firm is the oldest stained glass workshop in Germany. Founded in 1857 by Heinrich Oidtmann, M. D., family members of the fifth generation continue today to be involved with the manufacture, care and research of artistic glazing. Linnich is located in the former German state of Rhineland (since 1945 included in the newly formed state of North Rhine-Westphalia) near the Dutch border, and not far north of the city of Aachen. The workshop was entirely destroyed during World War II, but afterward revived. The use of the abbreviation RHL D. for Rhineland implies that the St. Ann window dates from the 1930s. A careful study of color schemes, border designs, and other details suggests that the first window from the front in the south aisle depicting the Annunciation, and perhaps the last window at the rear of the sanctuary in the north aisle of St. Michael the Archangel, are also likely from the Oidtmann firm.<sup>59</sup>
- The second window from the sanctuary front in the north aisle of the Assumption is signed "John Keller \* Brooklyn \* N\*Y." Again based on stylistic and detailing similarities, the front window in the north aisle of the Miraculous Medal may also be by Keller.
- The fourth window from the front in the north aisle of the Blessed Mother with the Infant Jesus is signed "Rivell Stained Glass Co."
- Five windows appear to be from the same as-yet unidentified workshop, including numbers 3, 4 and 5 from the front in the south aisle, and numbers 3 and 5 from the front in the north aisle. All five feature identical border designs of lavender squares containing quatrefoils alternating with yellow foliate scrolls on purple panels within blue and yellow banding. Memorial inscriptions are also contained within identical yellow scrolled banners against a purple and green foliate background surrounded by blue banding. They depict the Sacred Heart with Saint Margaret Mary Alcoque, the Holy Family, Our Lady of the Rosary with St. Dominic DeGuzman and St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Mary of Mount Virgin, and St. Lucy of Syracuse.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 24

---

### SCULPTURE

The sculpture collection at St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church contains fourteen life-size statues and four smaller works in the church interior, ten larger pieces in the gardens, the main or high altar frontal, and the Fourteen Stations of the Cross in the north and south aisles of the sanctuary.

Ten of the large statues of saints or the Blessed Mother are made of painted cast plaster. Three of these bear the mark of "Bernard[?] Statuary Co.," the manufacturer, impressed into their bases. The most readable example can be found on St. Anne with the Blessed Mother to the left of the right-hand (north) side altar. The other two are of St. Patrick, to the right of the north side altar, and St. Sebastian in the church vestibule. This whole group of sculpture was repainted in 1979 by Elisio Da Costa, as mentioned above.

Two large white marble statues of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Anthony are signed "Cav. F. Palla, Scultpor / Pietrasanta, Italy" and "Cav. Ferdo Palla, Scultpor / Pietrasanta, Italy" respectively. The four smaller white marble works -- two kneeling angels and two standing angels -- bear inscriptions from the same studio. Pietrasanta is a small city in Tuscany about six miles southeast of Carrara, the legendary Italian source of white marble. It has Roman and medieval roots, but really became noted in the 15<sup>th</sup> century for the quality of its own local stone. Michelangelo was reputedly the first artist to recognize its beauty. The Ferdinando Palla Studio has been in business at least since 1931, when it published a 96-page catalog of ecclesiastical sculpture it could supply, along with photographs of the quarry, studio, etc. The studio still exists as of this writing. Among the firm's recent notable works is a bust of Hubert H. Humphrey installed in 1984 in the United States Capitol in Washington, D. C. <sup>60</sup>

Two very realistic, life-size, wooden statues of St. Lucy Fillipini and St. Padre Pio were added to the collection for the St. Mary's parish Centennial celebrations in 2004. The latter, on the left side of the chancel arch, is marked with a tag that reads "VDF / Art Studio / Demetz / Italy." The VDF Dem-Art studio, situated in Ortisei, Val Gardena, Italy, produces ecclesiastical woodcarvings, bronze and marble monuments, wood and fiberglass nativities, etc.

The altar frontal, although not visibly signed, is a three-dimensional bas relief in white marble of the Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci. The Fourteen Stations of the Cross in St. Mary's Church are set into wall niches, seven each in the north and south aisles. They were made of cast plaster in the della Robbia style with figures glazed in white against a dark background. <sup>61</sup>

### POST WORLD WAR II

After much hard work and effort, St. Mary of Mount Virgin parish was able to pay off and ceremonially burn its mortgage on the church in 1951. Father Mugnano said, "To all of you, my spiritual children, I wish to express my sincerest and appreciative thanks. Your earnest cooperation and efforts brought about this day of joy and happiness to all of us." The President of the PTA responded, "Every parishioner can boast of the accomplishment in the parish and their cooperation with their zealous pastor in having succeeded in liquidating the mortgage on this half-million dollar property. However, we must remember that, to succeed, it was necessary to have a strong hand at the helm to direct and guide." An enthusiastic parishioner rhapsodized the event through poetry. One stanza of the ode entitled "An Ode to St. Mary's Parish" reads: "From a meager place of worship / In nineteen hundred and four / To a church of art and splendor / We cherish more and more." <sup>62</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 25

---

About a year later, on December 13, 1952, the parish purchased the corner lot at Remsen Avenue and Powers Street from Lillie and Samuel Levine.<sup>63</sup> And on July 14, 1955, the other corner lot on Remsen Avenue and Sandford Street was acquired from Antonia DeFillipo.<sup>64</sup> At long last, St. Mary's had taken title to all the street frontage of their Remsen Avenue block. This allowed for a major landscaping effort in order to beautify the setting of the church. The grounds were surrounded by a handsome iron and stone fence. Both lots were then turned into sculpture gardens that presently contain ten works of art. Of note is a grotto housing a replica of the "Pieta" by Michelangelo, and a "Sacred Heart of Jesus" memorial on the Sandford Street side. A photographic post card view, taken about 1960, shows the church shortly after this work was completed.

Changing educational and social requirements of the parish resulted in the construction of a new multi-function building in 1963. On March 22, the Trustees "resolved to erect a building at a cost of \$60,000, \$30,000 of which should be obtained through a mortgage loan from the Peoples National Bank, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Principal and interest would be paid back over a ten year period. The contract for the loan is to contain a clause whereby loan can be repaid within a shorter period of time. The building to be erected will contain an auditorium which will be used for all social functions of the parish."<sup>65</sup> This yellow brick, two-story facility, erected on parish property, conformed as closely as possible to the character of existing parochial buildings. The first floor contained rooms for meetings, plus a dining hall with a modern kitchen. The second floor provided a much-needed auditorium/gymnasium where young people and other members of the parish could find adequate space for sports and recreation.

Changes in the configuration of the chancel took place in conjunction with the church interior renewal in 1979. The main or high altar was moved out from the wall so that the priest could face the congregation while celebrating Mass, in accordance with Roman Catholic liturgical reforms following Vatican II (1962 - 1965). Architectural guidelines published by the American Bishops' Council on Liturgy in 1977 stated that "The altar, the holy table, should be the most noble, the most beautifully designed and constructed table the community can provide. It is the common table of the assembly, a symbol of the Lord, at which the presiding minister stands and upon which are placed the bread and wine and their vessels and the book. It is holy and sacred to this assembly's action and sharing, so it is never used as a table of convenience or as a resting place for papers, notes, cruets, or anything else. It stands free, approachable from every side, capable of being encircled. It is desirable that candles, cross, any flowers or other decoration in the area should not be so close to that altar as to constitute impediments to anyone's approach or movement around the common table."<sup>66</sup>

As the old horse-shoe shaped altar rail around the main altar did not provide enough room for this important modification, a new one of pink and white marble was installed that spanned the entire width of the nave, thereby enclosing all three altars within a common space. This made it much easier for celebrants to move from place to place during liturgies. The bas relief sculpture of the Last Supper was retained and incorporated into a new altar more suitable to function as a free-standing unit. A low concrete block wall approximately 7 feet high erected behind the altar provided a small private corridor between the Sacristy to the right of the chancel and the priest's Vestry to the left. Matching white marble was then installed on the expanded chancel floors, the new wall, and the four large pilasters (which had formerly been of white and pink veined marble). Two new side altars, and four sculpture pedestals, all of pink and white marble, completed the interior changes made at this time. Other work carried out during the pastorate of Father Francis J. Crupi (1970 - 1999) included a new church roof, new doors on the main entrances that were faced with textured bronze, electrical service upgrades, replacement of the lighting fixtures in the nave, and installation of protective glazing over the stained glass windows. More recently under Rev. Robert L. Santa Barbara, who succeeded Crupi in 1999 to

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 26

---

become the fourth pastor of St. Mary's, the bell towers have been re-pointed, the stained glass re-leaded, and a new handicapped ramp constructed that was designed by Susan Sheffmaker, a New Brunswick architect.<sup>67</sup>

### CONCLUSION

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church maintains a commanding presence in this section of New Brunswick. Many descendants of the Italian families who built, ornamented and furnished this remarkable house of worship continue today as members of the parish, although evolving neighborhood demographics are certainly changing the makeup of the congregation. From 1922 to the present, St. Mary's has been served by only four pastors, all of whom have contributed to and respected the ornamental enrichment of the church interior and grounds.

In 1977, the Bishops' Council on Liturgy stated in the overview of its guidelines that "With the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963) and the publication of the revised *Roman Missal* (1969), most Roman Catholic worship spaces became obsolete. Paradoxically, some of our oldest spaces, for example, many of the Roman basilicas, are more amenable to the celebration of the reformed rites than churches built in this century. The task of adapting older spaces or building new ones adequate to the normative celebration of the reformed rites remains a challenge. The renewed understandings of God, church, sacrament and ministry that emerged in the reforms require a vastly different approach to church building than that used during the 400 years before Vatican II."<sup>68</sup>

With regard to art and sculpture, the guidelines continued: "In a period of Church and liturgical renewal, the attempt to recover a solid grasp of Church and faith and rites involves the rejection of certain embellishments which have in the course of history become hindrances. In many areas of religious practice, this means simplifying and refocusing on primary symbols. In building, this effort has resulted in more austere interiors, with fewer objects on the walls and in the corners."<sup>69</sup>

Many Roman Catholic writers criticized this trend to strip churches of their art and ornaments. "As modern man turns more and more to the creative artist for visions of transcendence, so the Church seems to be turning away from the portrayal of its own unique view of earthly reality and man's heavenly goal. In many, if not most of our new churches, visual images that point to the vertical dimension of our faith have all but disappeared. Churches are built, or renovated, as community service centers where Christians gather to celebrate God's great deeds in history, and share their hopes for a better and brighter future. . . . As a result, increasing numbers of the faithful, having lost their rational and visual focus, flee to more spiritually and emotionally satisfying cults or fundamentalist sects that, at least, still speak of virtue and vice, heaven and hell."<sup>70</sup>

St. Mary's church continues a traditional approach wherein worshippers are to be spiritually inspired when surrounded by artwork, murals, sculpture, and other beautiful items of a religious nature. "Within this church there are dozens of images of Our Blessed Mother alone, along with the angels, saints, prophets, writers, and explorer, a dog, and even the most notorious and hated of all sinners. . . . We are blessed here at St. Mary's to have a church filled with beautiful, sacred, liturgical, symbolic, and inspirational art."<sup>71</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 27

---

### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> John P. Wall, *The Settlement and Progress of the Catholic Church in New Brunswick, N. J.*, New Brunswick: Catholic Record Press, 1907, n. p.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> *Saint Mary of Mount Virgin, New Brunswick, New Jersey: A Centennial Celebration, 1904 - 2004*, Devon, PA: Cooke Publishing Co., [2004], p. 9
- <sup>4</sup> Dennis J. Starr, *The Italians of New Jersey: A Historical Introduction and Bibliography*, Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1985, pp. 59 - 61
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 60
- <sup>6</sup> *St. Mary of Mount Virgin*, op. cit., p. 10
- <sup>7</sup> Middlesex County Clerk's Office, Incorporations, book F, p. 51. The possessive form of the church corporate name, St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, appears in the Certificate of Incorporation, and on such subsequent legal documents as property deeds. It does not appear to have ever been used publicly.
- <sup>8</sup> *St. Mary of Mount Virgin*, op. cit., p. 13
- <sup>9</sup> Middlesex County Clerk's Office, Deeds, book 365, p. 520, and book 367, p. 441
- <sup>10</sup> Middlesex County Clerk's Office, Deeds, book 688, p. 251, and book 692, p. 295
- <sup>11</sup> *St. Mary of Mount Virgin*, op. cit., p. 14
- <sup>12</sup> Dennis J. Starr, op. cit., p. 36
- <sup>13</sup> *St. Mary of Mount Virgin*, op. cit., p. 14
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 15
- <sup>15</sup> Michael J. Eula, *Between Peasant and Urban Villager: Italian-Americans of New Jersey and New York, 1880 - 1980*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1993, pp. 112 - 114
- <sup>16</sup> *St. Mary of Mount Virgin*, op. cit., pp. 16, 28 - 32
- <sup>17</sup> St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Trustees Minutes, Vol. 1, July 15, 1924
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, Vol. 1, January 10, 1925
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid, Vol. 1, September 25, 1925
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, Vol. 1, March 23, 1927
- <sup>21</sup> *Daily Home News*, February 15, 1928
- <sup>22</sup> *Daily Home News*, May 17, 1928
- <sup>23</sup> *Daily Home News*, June 8, 1928
- <sup>24</sup> *Daily Home News*, June 19, 1928
- <sup>25</sup> *Daily Home News*, June 28, 1928
- <sup>26</sup> St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Trustees Minutes, Vol. 1, July 11, 1928
- <sup>27</sup> *Daily Home News*, July 19, 1928
- <sup>28</sup> Athenaeum of Philadelphia, American Architects and Buildings database, [www.philadelphiabuildings.org](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org); *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 21, 1939, p. 5; *New York Times*, December 21, 1939, p. 23
- <sup>29</sup> Athenaeum of Philadelphia, American Architects and Buildings database, [www.philadelphiabuildings.org](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org)
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 28

- <sup>31</sup> *Daily Home News*, August 2, 1928
- <sup>32</sup> *Daily Home News*, September 7, 1928
- <sup>33</sup> *Daily Home News*, November 15, 1928
- <sup>34</sup> St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Trustees Minutes, Vol. 1, November 9, 1928
- <sup>35</sup> *Daily Home News*, February 1, 1929
- <sup>36</sup> *Daily Home News*, February 22, 1929
- <sup>37</sup> *Sunday Times*, February 24, 1929
- <sup>38</sup> *Daily Home News*, February 25, 1929
- <sup>39</sup> *Daily Home News*, May 29, 1929
- <sup>40</sup> *Daily Home News*, May 31, 1929
- <sup>41</sup> St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Trustees Minutes, Vol. 1, March 4, 1929
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. 1, April 1, 1929
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. 1, September 30, 1929
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. 1, April 1, 1929
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. 1, July 1, 1929
- <sup>46</sup> Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Shahan, *St. Catherine's Church (Maloney Memorial) Spring Lake, N. J.: History and Guide*, New York: William H. Sadler, 1928, pp. 34-35
- <sup>47</sup> St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Trustees Minutes, Vol. 1, September 13, 1931
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. 1, September 13, 1931
- <sup>49</sup> Joseph Giorciari, Personal Communication to Joseph W. Hammond, August 20, 2008
- <sup>50</sup> Basic biographical information on Gonippo Raggi has been drawn from the following sources: Joseph W. Carlevale, *Americans of Italian Descent in New Jersey*, Clifton: North Jersey Press, 1950, pp. 735-36; "Gonippo Raggi is Dead at 84; Church Artist Honored by Popes," *New York Times*, October 23, 1959; Patricia F. Colrick, ed., *A Centennial History of St. Catherine Church, Celebrating 100 Years of Worship, 1902 - 2002*, Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 2001, pp. 39 - 48
- <sup>51</sup> These and all subsequent references to transatlantic voyages have been drawn from U. S. Immigration & Emigration arriving passenger lists for New York and Boston. These detailed lists, which varied from time to time in what data points were recorded, can be found on the internet and in a searchable format at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>52</sup> *New York Times*, October 23, 1959
- <sup>53</sup> *Asbury Park Press*, October 23, 1959
- <sup>54</sup> Durante degli Alighieri (c. 1265 - 1321), commonly known as Dante Alighieri, was a poet of the Middle Ages from Florence, Italy. His central work, the *Divina Commedia* (originally called "*Commedia*" and later called "*Divina*" divine by Boccaccio hence "*Divina Commedia*"), is often considered the greatest literary work composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature.
- <sup>55</sup> St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Trustees Minutes, Vol. 1, May 27, 1944
- <sup>56</sup> *The Home News*, July 15, 1979
- <sup>57</sup> U. S. Social Security Death Index, available on the internet at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>58</sup> *The Home News*, July 15, 1979
- <sup>59</sup> "The Oldest Stained Glass Workshop in Germany: Chronicle of the Oidtmann Workshop." [www.glasmalerei-oidtmann.de/index-englisch/Chronik-englisch/chronik-englisch.html](http://www.glasmalerei-oidtmann.de/index-englisch/Chronik-englisch/chronik-englisch.html)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 29

---

<sup>60</sup> Internet search using key words "Ferdinando Palla Sculptor Pietrasanta Italy"

<sup>61</sup> Luca della Robbia (1400 - 1482) was an Italian sculptor from Florence noted for his terra cotta works. Della Robbia developed a pottery glaze that made his creations more durable in the outdoors and thus suitable for use on the exterior of buildings. His work is noted for its charm rather than the drama of the work of some of his contemporaries. He was the first of a dynasty of important pottery artists, including Andrea della Robbia (his nephew), and Giovanni della Robbia (his grand-nephew and son of Andrea).

<sup>62</sup> *Saint Mary of Mount Virgin*, op. cit., pp. 26-27)

<sup>63</sup> Middlesex County Clerk's Office, Deeds, book 1657, p. 177

<sup>64</sup> Middlesex County Clerk's Office, Deeds, book 1833, p. 475

<sup>65</sup> St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Trustees Minutes, Vol. 2, March 22, 1963

<sup>66</sup> Bishop's Council on Liturgy, *Environment & Art in Catholic Worship*, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1977, guideline 71

<sup>67</sup> *Saint Mary of Mount Virgin*, op. cit., pp. 34 - 36, 55

<sup>68</sup> Bishop's Council on Liturgy, op. cit., p. i

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, guideline 99

<sup>70</sup> Hamilton Reed Armstrong, "The Transmission of Faith through Art," in *Communio* 28 (Summer 2001)

<sup>71</sup> St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Tour Text typescript, 2005, p. 1

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 30

---

### APPENDIX

#### Known Commissions of Gonippo G. Raggi

This checklist has been compiled largely from information found on a wide range of internet web sites using several search engines, including Google and Yahoo.

All Saints Church, Roxbury, MA, no date  
Basilica of Our Lady of Victory, Buffalo, NY, 1924 - 1926, with artist Marion Rzeznik  
Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Newark, NJ, 1950 - 1954  
Church of Santo Domingo, Lima, Peru, 1918  
Immaculate Conception Seminary Chapel, Darlington, NJ, 1937+ This seminary closed in 1982. The chapel, considered one of Raggi's greatest masterpieces, is believed demolished.  
Liberal Arts Building Dome and Rotunda, Marywood College, Scranton, PA, 1935 - 1938  
Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Church, Newton Upper Falls, MA, 1910+  
Notre Dame Church, Stockbridge, MA, 1912 - 1916  
Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Newark, NJ, 1940s  
St. Aloysius Church, Olivia, MN, 1927+  
St. Catherine's Church, Spring Lake, NJ, 1904 - 1913, and after 1921  
St. Columbkille's Church, Brighton, MA, no date  
St. John's Church, Beloit, KS, 1913 - 1923, with brother Palamedo Raggi  
St. John's Seminary Chapel, Brighton, MA, 1908 - 1909  
St. Joseph's Church, Roxbury, MA, no date  
St. Joseph at Basilica, Milwaukee, WI, 1928, with artist Conrad Schmitt  
St. Lucy's Church, Newark, NJ, 1925 - 1949  
St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, New Brunswick, NJ, 1930s  
St. Patrick's Pro-Cathedral, Newark, NJ, 1929 and 1950  
St. Peter's Church, Scranton, PA, 1934  
Seton Hall University Chapel, South Orange, NJ, 1931  
Shrine of the Little Flower, Baltimore, MD, ca. 1951  
Villa Walsh Convent Chapel, Morristown, NJ, after 1935



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

---

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-----, "The Transmission of Faith through Art," *Communio* 28, Summer 2001. Downloaded from [www.agdei.com/faith&art.html](http://www.agdei.com/faith&art.html)

*Asbury Park Press*, Asbury Park, NJ. Microfilm archive at the Monmouth County Historical Association, Freehold, NJ.

Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA. American Architects and Buildings database, available on the internet at [www.philadelphiabuildings.org](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org).

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Giorciari, Joseph. Personal Communication with Joseph W. Hammond, August 20, 2008.

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*Daily Home News*, New Brunswick, NJ. Microfilm archive at Rutgers University Alexander Library, New Brunswick, NJ.

Eula, Michael J. *Between Peasant and Urban Villager: Italian-Americans of New Jersey and New York, 1880 - 1980*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1993.

Flynn, Rev. Joseph M. *The Catholic Church in New Jersey*. New York: The Publishers' Printing Co., 1904.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

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Middlesex County Clerk's Office, New Brunswick, NJ.

### Deeds

Mary Adrain Hall to St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, February 3, 1905. Book 365, p. 520.  
Henry and Virginia Dahmer to St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, February 16, 1905. Book 367, p. 441.  
The Caffaro Real Estate Company to St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, February 7, 1921. Book 688, p. 251.  
Joseph Cahill et. al. to St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, February 12, 1921. Book 692, p. 295.  
Samuel and Lilly Levine to St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, December 30, 1952. Book 1657, p. 177.  
Antonia DeFillipo to St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, July 14, 1955. Book 1833, p. 475.

### Incorporations

St. Mary's of Mount Virgin's Church, August 23, 1904. Book F, p. 51.

*New York Times*, New York, NY. Microfilm archive at Rutgers University Alexander Library, New Brunswick, NJ.

*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, PA. Microfilm archive at Rutgers University Alexander Library, New Brunswick, NJ.

*Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey: A Centennial Celebration, 1904 - 2004*. Devon, PA: Cooke Publishing Company, 2004.

*Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Pictorial Publication, 2005*. State College, PA: School Annual Publishing Company, 2005.

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church, New Brunswick, NJ.

Church Tour Script, typescript copy, 2005

Newspaper clippings and photograph collection

Property Survey, 1935

Trustees Minutes, 1918-1981

Shahan, Rt. Rev. Thomas J. *Saint Catherine's Church (Maloney Memorial), Spring Lake, N. J. History and Guide*. New York, William H. Sadler, 1928.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 3

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*Sunday Times*, New Brunswick, NJ. Microfilm archive at Rutgers University Alexander Library, New Brunswick, NJ.

"The Oldest Stained Glass Workshop in Germany: Chronicle of the Oidtmann Workshop." [www.glasmalerei-oidtmann.de/index-englisch/Chronik-englisch/chronik-englisch.html](http://www.glasmalerei-oidtmann.de/index-englisch/Chronik-englisch/chronik-englisch.html)

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United States Passport Applications, 1795 - 1925. Available on the internet at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

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United States Social Security Death Index, available on the internet at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

Wall, John P. *The Settlement and Progress of the Catholic Church in New Brunswick, N. J.* New Brunswick, NJ: Catholic Record Press, 1907.

Name of Property

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of property 1 acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	546560	4481640	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title Joseph W. Hammond, Consulting Architectural Historian & Jon Schmidt, Preservation Specialistorganization Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants date January 2009street & number 425 White Horse Pike telephone (856) 547 - 0465city or town Haddon Heights state NJ zip code 08035**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Churchstreet & number 190 Sandford Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_city or town New Brunswick state NJ zip code 08901**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

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### BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

That portion of Block 238, Lot 1.10 bounded to the southeast by Remsen Avenue, to the southwest by Powers Street, and to the northeast by Sandford Street. The northwest boundary is irregular, encompassing the section of the original lot on which the church was constructed, as well as the small parcels to either side, on the corners of Remsen Avenue and Powers Street and Remsen Avenue and Sandford Street. The two small parcels have since been merged with the original lot to form the southeastern third of Block 238, lot 1.01.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries represent the portion of Block 238 Lot 1.01 that was originally associated with the church building and the sculpture gardens that give it context and presence along Remsen Avenue. The remainder of the lot, not included in the National Register Nomination boundaries, includes later, noncontributing buildings that do not enhance the building's setting and context.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 1

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### LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Common to all Photographs 1 through 21.

1. St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church
2. Middlesex County, New Jersey
3. Jon Schmidt
4. August 20, 2008
5. Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants  
425 White Horse Pike, Haddon Heights, NJ 08035-1706

- 1 of 33. Perspective view of the south and east elevations.
- 2 of 33. View of the east elevation.
- 3 of 33. View of the entry at the center of the east elevation.
- 4 of 33. View of the grotto adjacent to the north elevation.
- 5 of 33. Oblique view of the west gable end and north elevation.
- 6 of 33. View of west elevation and southern bell tower.
- 7 of 33. View of the southern bell tower.
- 8 of 33. View of the nave, chancel, and apse looking west.
- 9 of 33. View of the high altar at the center of the chancel.
- 10 of 33. View of the Altar of the Blessed Mother at the western terminus of the left or south side aisle.
- 11 of 33. View of St. Joseph's Altar at the western terminus of the right or north side aisle.
- 12 of 33. View of the northwestern corner of the nave showing elements of the interior decoration of the church.
- 13 of 33. View of a typical first story stained glass window bay showing marble dado panel and paneled oak spandrel.
- 14 of 33. Detail of a typical capital atop a column in the arcade.
- 15 of 33. Detail of a typical corbel found in the north and south exterior walls of the side aisles.
- 16 of 33. View of the Roman arches in the arcade separating the nave and aisle.
- 17 of 33. Detail of fresco paintings adorning the spandrel around the Roman arches.
- 18 of 33. Detail of *The Glory of Saint Lucy* at the chancel end of the ceiling above the nave.
- 19 of 33. Detail of *The Transfiguration* at the center of the barrel vaulted ceiling above the nave.
- 20 of 33. Detail of *St. Cecelia, Patroness of Music* at the choir loft end of the ceiling above the nave.
- 21 of 33. View of the vestibule at the eastern end of the nave, looking north.

Common to all Photographs 22 through 33, unless otherwise noted.

1. St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church
2. Middlesex County, New Jersey
3. Provided by St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 2

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4. 2005
5. Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants  
425 White Horse Pike, Haddon Heights, NJ 08035-1706

22 of 33. Byzantine-style icon of St. Mary of Mount Virgin, ca. 1600, as reconditioned in 1979 and enriched with gemstones donated by members of the parish.

23 of 33. Representative angel from the clerestory area, holding a banner which reads in English *Consolation of the Afflicted*.

24 of 33. Representative Apostles from above the first floor windows, showing St. Matthew on the left, and St. John on the right.

25 of 33. Representative saints from the spandrels between columns, showing Our Lady of Sorrows on the left, and St. Ann Teaching the Blessed Mother on the right.

26 of 33. Stained glass window of St. Ann Teaching the Blessed Mother, signed lower right D. H. Oidtmann, Linnich RHLD / Germany.

27 of 33. Detail of 26 showing the Oidtmann signature in the lower right corner of the window, with a representative example of one of the portraits in stained glass made from a photograph. Courtesy Jon Schmidt, Photographer.

28 of 33. Stained glass window of The Assumption, signed lower right John Keller, Brooklyn, NY.

29 of 33. Stained glass window of the Blessed Mother with the Infant Jesus, signed lower right Rivell Stained Glass Co.

30 of 33. Stained glass window of St. Lucy of Syracuse, not signed but identical in border details, memorial banner and its background, etc., to four others from an as-yet unidentified manufacturer.

31 of 33. Cast plaster statuary around the Altar of St. Joseph at the western end of the north aisle, depicting St. Ann and the Blessed Mother on the left, and St. Patrick on the right. Both of these works bear the impressed mark of the Bernard[?] Statuary Co.

32 of 33. White marble statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, signed on the right by Ferdinando Palla, sculptor, of Pietrasanta, Tuscany, Italy.

33 of 33. Representative terra cotta Station of the Cross, XII, *Jesus Dies on the Cross*, in the della Robbia style with glazed white figures on a dark background.

## ALTAR

- I1** Saint Mary Of Mount Virgin Icon, pg 1
- T** Tabernacle, pg 5
- BF** Baptismal Font, pg 7

## WINDOWS

- W1** Miraculous Medal, pg 14
- W2** The Assumption, pg 14
- W3** Sacred Heart with Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, pg 14
- W4** Blessed Mother with the Infant Jesus, pg 15
- W5** The Holy Family, pg 15
- W6** Michael the Archangel casting the Devil out of heaven, pg 15
- W7** Multi colored panels, no images, pg 16
- W8** Our Lady of the Rosary with Saint Dominic DeGuzman and Saint Catherine of Sienna, pg 16
- W9** Saint Mary of Mount Virgin, pg 16
- W10** Saint Lucy of Syracuse, pg 17
- W11** Saint Anne teaching the Blessed Mother, pg 17
- W12** Annunciation, pg 17

## WINDOWS, CLERESTORY pg 24

- Wc1** Gate with two sheep  
Chalice
- Wc2** Flowers  
Temple
- Wc3** Tower  
Vase with plants
- Wc4** Fern  
Angels over an altar
- Wc5** Vase  
Crown on a stand
- Wc6** Flowers  
Holy Spirit
- Wc7** Ascension of Christ (feet only)  
Ran
- Wc8** Draped Cross  
Christ carrying the cross.
- Wc9** INRI  
Pillar
- Wc10** Chalice being raised  
Tablets with the ten commandments
- Wc11** Doves in a cage  
Radiant star
- Wc12** Blessed Mother and Elizabeth  
Holy Ghost (Dove)

The Titles of the Blessed Mother, pg 23

## WINDOWS – VESTIBULE AND CHOIR LOFT

- Wv1** Saint Anthony, pg 25
- Wv2** Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist, pg 26
- Wv3** Centennial window, pg 26
- Wcl** The Rose window, pg 25

## THE APOSTLES

- A1** Saint Matthew, pg 20
- A2** Saint John, the Evangelist, pg 20
- A3** Saint Matthias, pg 20
- A4** Saint Simon, the Zealot, pg 20
- A5** Saint James, pg 20
- A6** Saint Andrew, pg 20
- A7** Saint Bartholomew, pg 21
- A8** Saint Phillip, pg 21
- A9** Saint Jude, pg 21
- A10** Saint Thomas, pg 21
- A11** Saint Paul, pg 21
- A12** Saint Peter, pg 21

## STATUES

- S.1** Saint Lucy Filippini, pg 8
- S.2** Saint Ann and the Blessed Mother, pg 8
- S.3** Saint Joseph and the Child Jesus, pg 8
- S.4** Saint Patrick, pg 8
- S.5** Saint Anthony, pg 9
- S.6** Saint Sebastian, pg 26
- S.7** Saint Gerard, pg 26
- S.8** Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pg 9
- S.9** Saint Rita, pg 9
- S.10** Saint Jude, pg 9
- S.11** Saint Francis, pg 7
- S.12** Blessed Mother, pg 7
- S.13** Saint Rocca, pg 7
- S.14** Saint Padre Pio, pg 7

## STATUES – GARDENS

- Sg1** Sacred Heart of Jesus, pg 27
- Sg2** Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pg 27
- Sg3** Dante's Paradiso, pg 27
- Sg4** Pieta, pg 27
- Sg5** Saint Joseph, pg 27
- Sg6** Time Capsule, pg 27
- Sg7** Saint Peter, pg 28
- Sg8** Saint Francis, pg 28
- Sg9** Saint Paul, pg 28
- Sg10** Blessed Mother, pg 28

## THE SAINTS pg 22

- St1** Our Lady of Sorrows
- Sl2** Saint Anne
- Sl3** Saint Anthony
- Sl4** Saint Lucy of Syracuse
- Sl5** Saint Ignatius of Antioch
- Sl6** Saint Longinus
- Sl7** Saint Rita
- Sl8** Saint John the Baptist
- Sl9** Saint John of The Cross
- Sl10** Our Lady of Perpetual Help

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS

- SC1** Jesus is condemned to death, pg 18
- SC2** Jesus is made to carry his cross, pg 18
- SC3** Jesus falls the first time, pg 18
- SC4** Jesus meets his Mother, pg 18
- SC5** Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross, pg 18
- SC6** Veronica wipes the face of Jesus, pg 18
- SC7** Jesus falls the second time, pg 18
- SC8** Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem, pg 19
- SC9** Jesus falls the third time, pg 19
- SC10** Jesus is stripped of his garments, pg 19
- SC11** Jesus is nailed to the cross, pg 19
- SC12** Jesus dies on the cross, pg 19
- SC13** Jesus is laid in the arms of His Blessed Mother, pg 19
- SC14** Jesus is laid in the tomb, pg 19

## PAINTINGS

- P1** Ascension, pg 6
- P2** Saint Lucy Filippini, pg 11
- P3** Transfiguration, pg 12
- P4** Saint Cecelia, pg 13
- P5** Saint Thomas a'Becket, pg 25
- P6** Saint Thomas Moore, pg 25





Historic photograph 1 of 5. Photograph of Clyde S. Adams, Sr. (1876 - 1939), architect of Philadelphia, PA, who designed St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church in 1928. 1924 U. S. Passport photograph from U. S. Passport Applications, 1795 - 1925, available on the internet at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
190 Sandford Street, New Brunswick  
Middlesex County, New Jersey



Historic photograph 2 of 5. Photograph of an oil on canvas self-portrait of Gonippo G. Raggi (1875 - 1959), renowned ecclesiastical artist of the Roman Catholic church who in the 1930s enriched the interior of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church with painted murals, images of angels, saints and Apostles, then filled every void with an extraordinary proliferation of painted details. Courtesy of St. Catherine's Church, Spring Lake, NJ.

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
190 Sandford Street, New Brunswick  
Middlesex County, New Jersey



Historic Photograph 3 of 5. Exterior view of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, taken in the late 1950s after the parish obtained title to the two corner lots fronting on Remsen Avenue, fenced the grounds, and created outdoor sculpture gardens on either side of the church. Courtesy of the New Brunswick Free Public Library, New Brunswick, NJ.

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
190 Sandford Street, New Brunswick  
Middlesex County, New Jersey



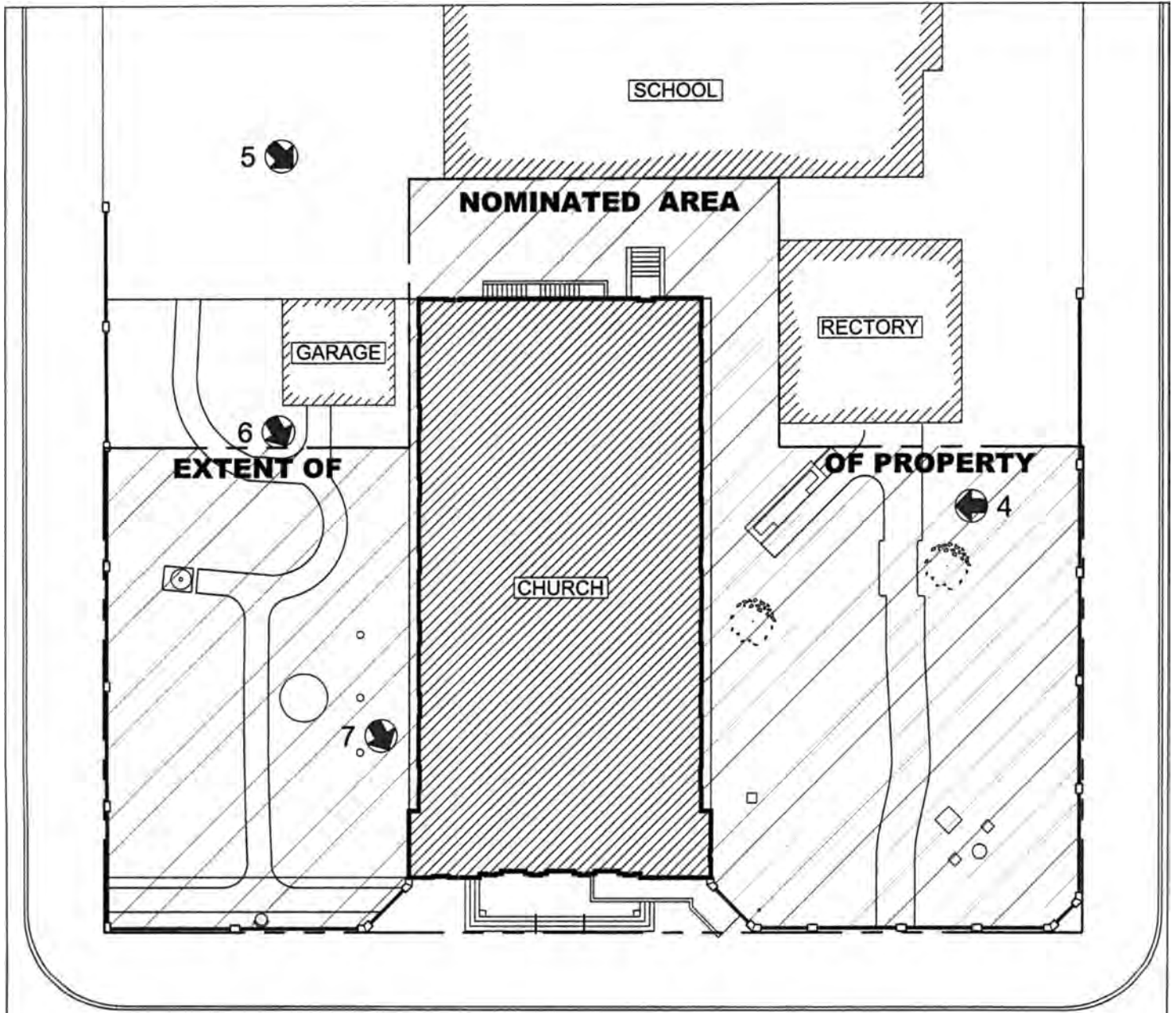
Historic photograph 4 of 5. Interior view of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, taken in 1958, showing the Raggi painted murals and decorations as partially restored and renewed in 1944 by the D'Ambrosi Ecclesiastical Art Studio of New York, NY. Courtesy of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, New Brunswick, NJ.

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
190 Sanford Street, New Brunswick  
Middlesex County, New Jersey



Historic photograph 5 of 5. Photograph of ecclesiastical artist Elisio Da Costa (1929 - 1988) of Colts Neck, NJ, working in 1979 on the project to refresh the interior painted decorations of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church. From the New Brunswick *Home News*, July 25, 1979.

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
190 Sandford Street, New Brunswick  
Middlesex County, New Jersey



Remsen Avenue

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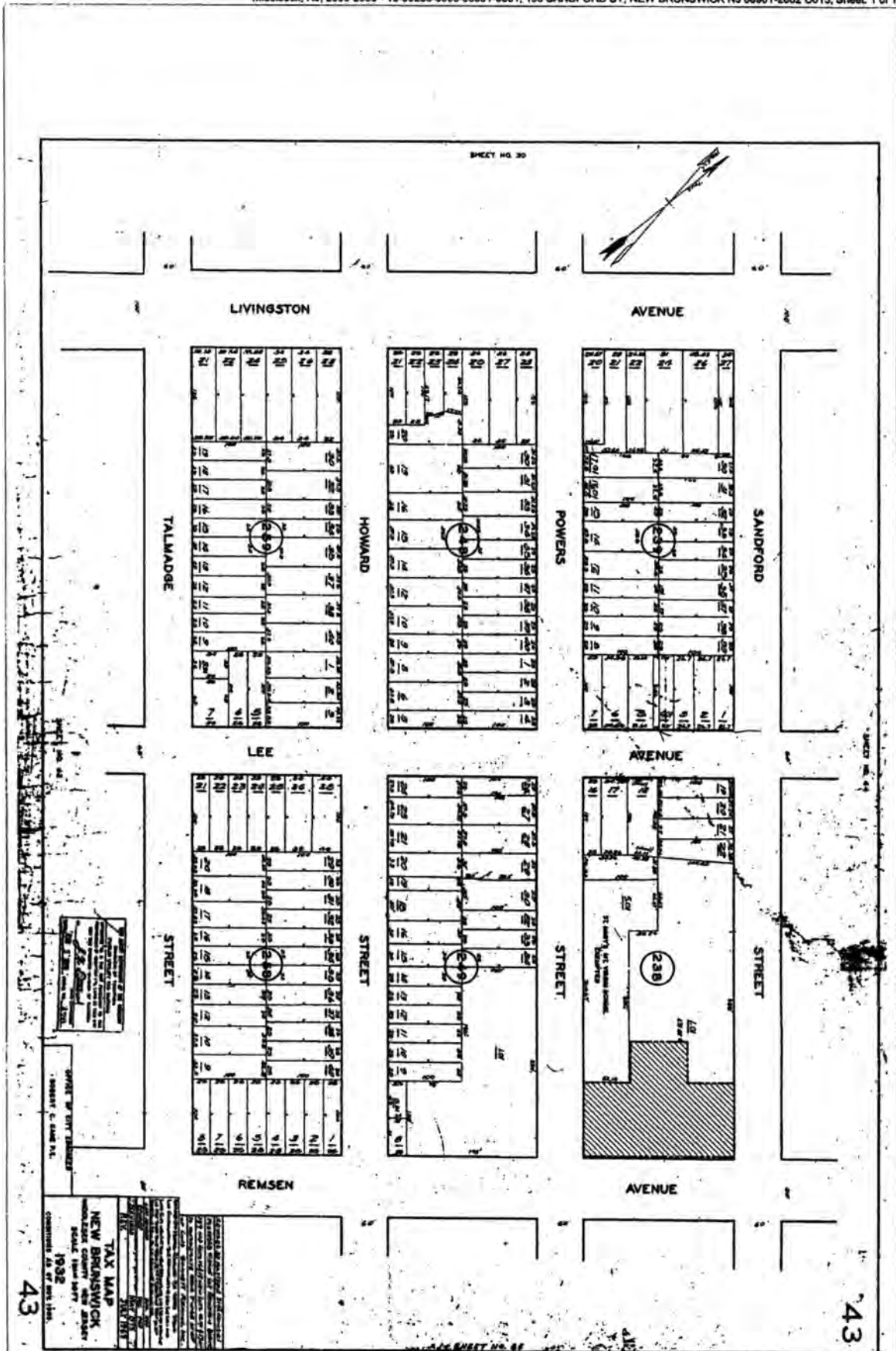
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St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

**Site Plan** ANNOTATED

Scale: 1" = 30'-0"



Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Church  
 Middlesex County, New Jersey



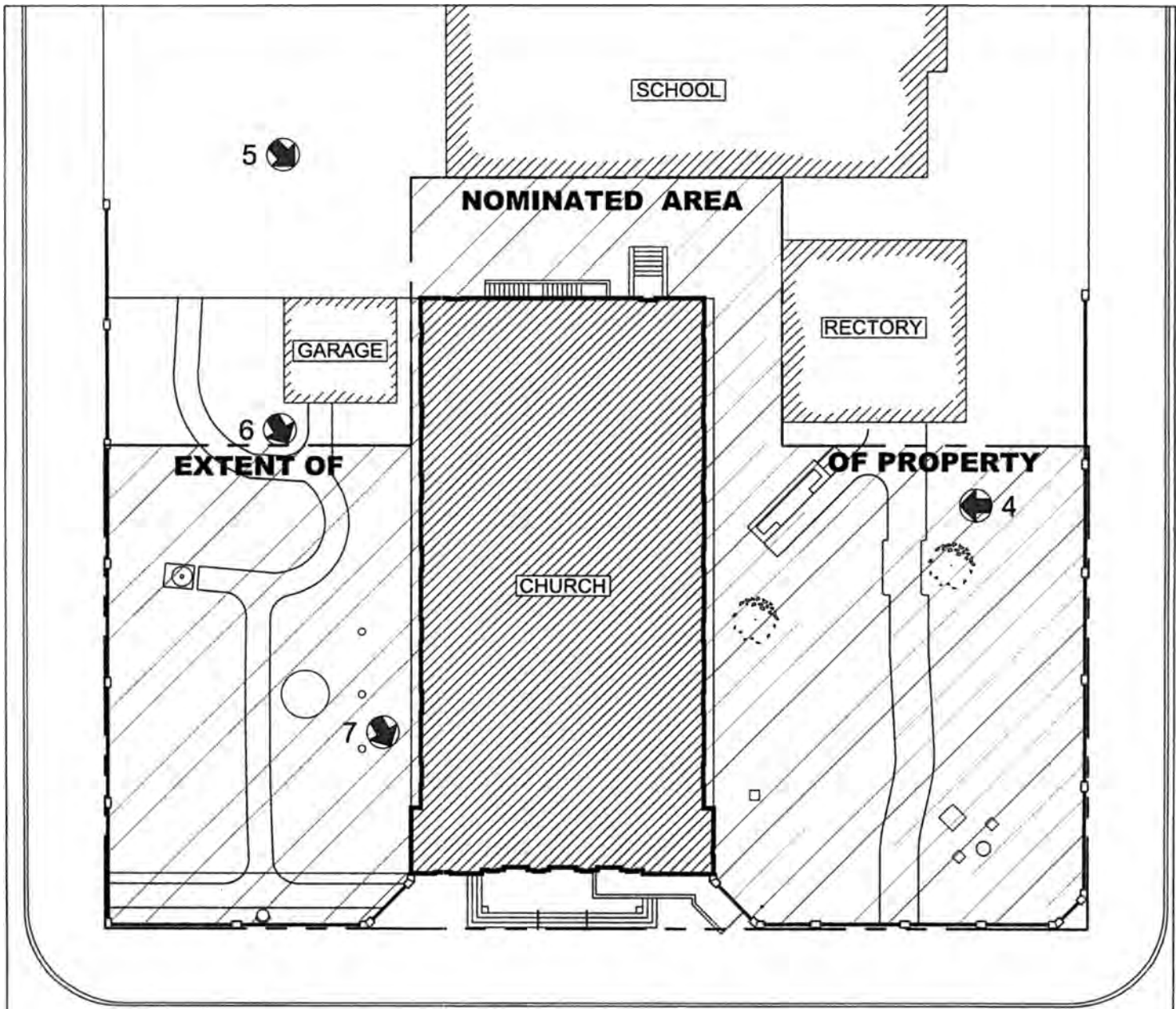
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**TAX MAP**  
 NEW BRUNSWICK  
 MIDDLESEX COUNTY NEW JERSEY  
 SCALE: 1"=100' AS SHOWN  
 1932  
 CORRECTED AS OF 10/1/1988

SHEET NO. 43  
 SHEET OF CITY ZONING  
 MAP

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Remsen Avenue

KEY:	
	Photograph's Viewing Direction
#	Photograph's Numeric Reference (e.g. 1,2,3, etc.)

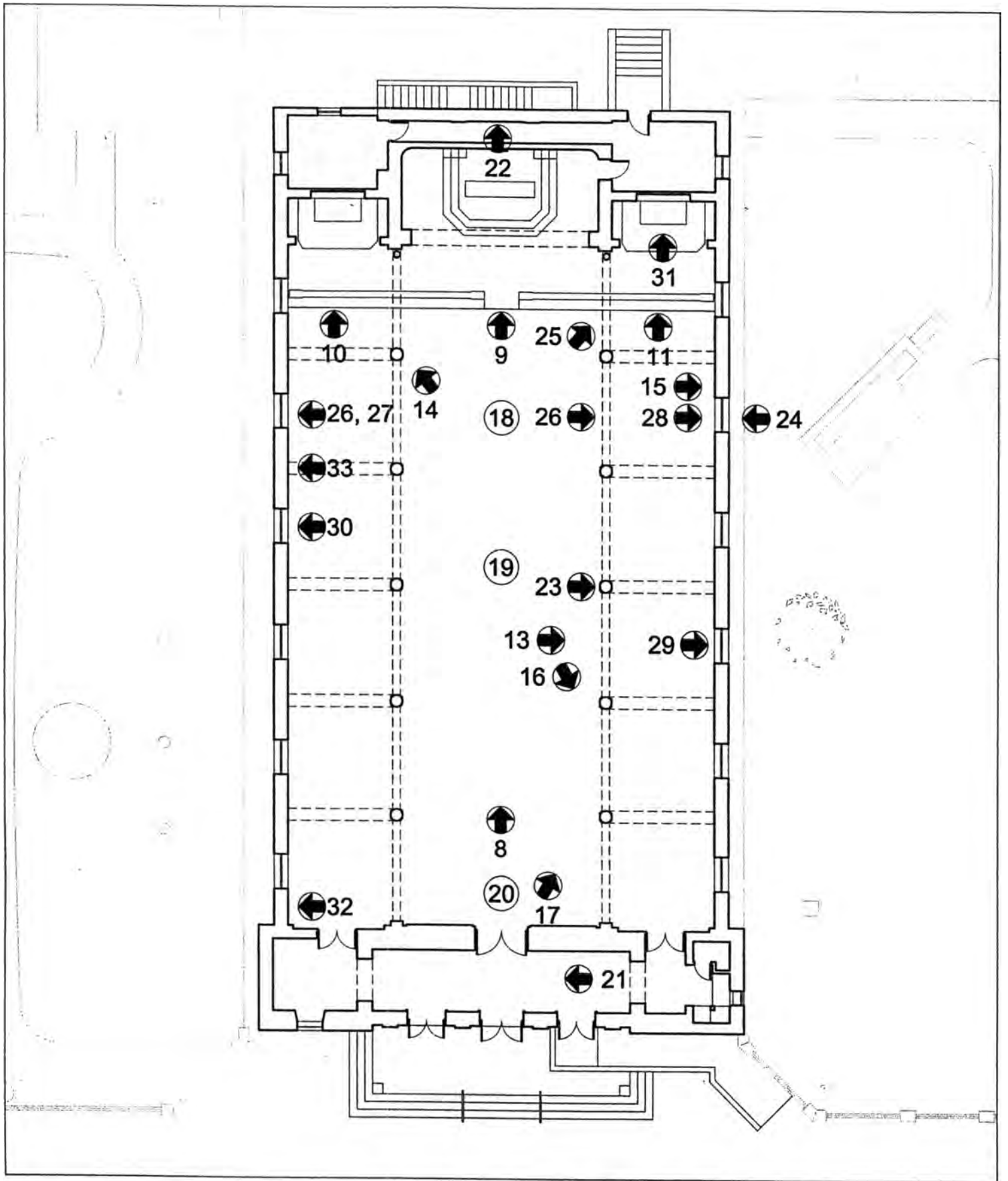


St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey



Site Plan ANNOTATED

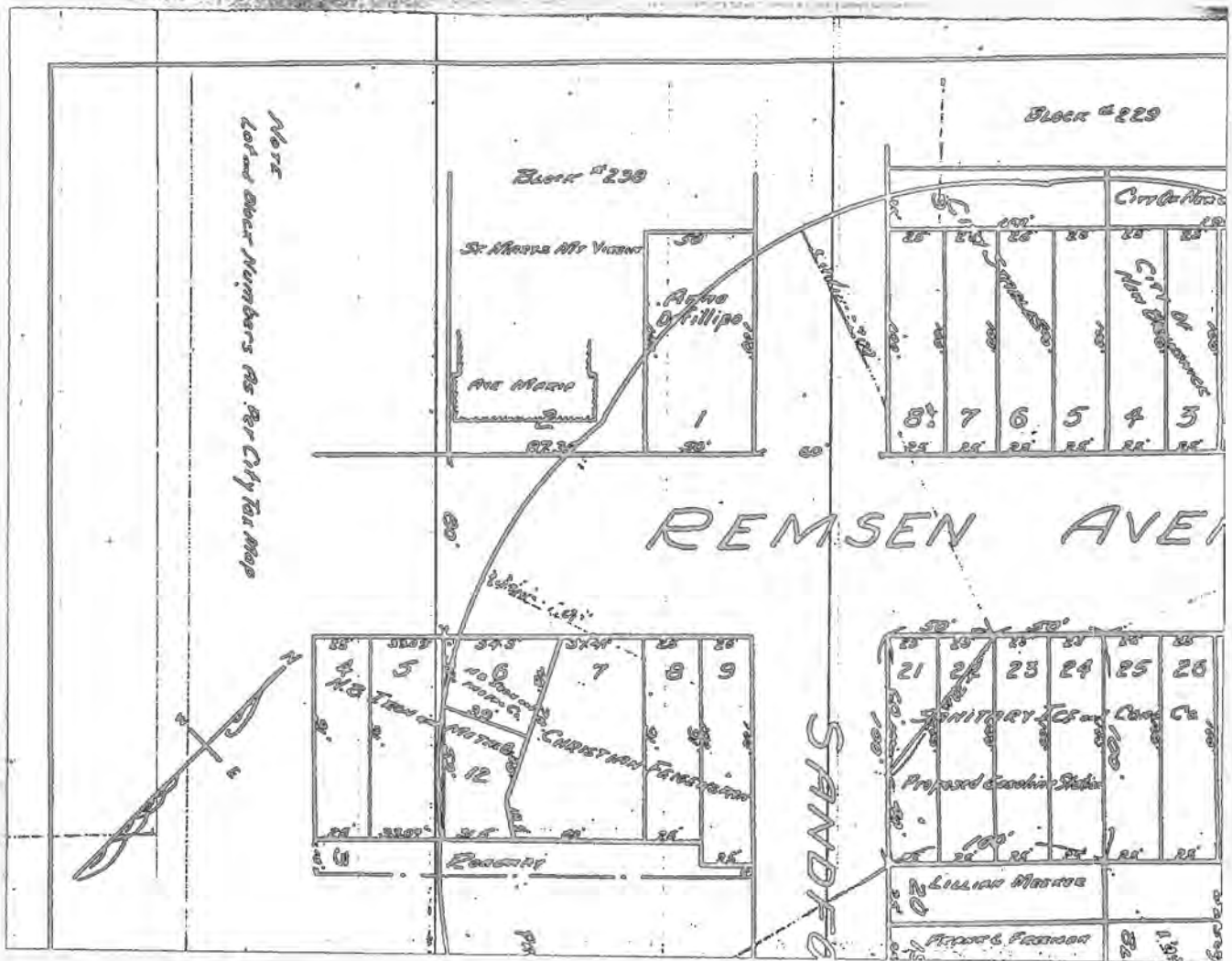
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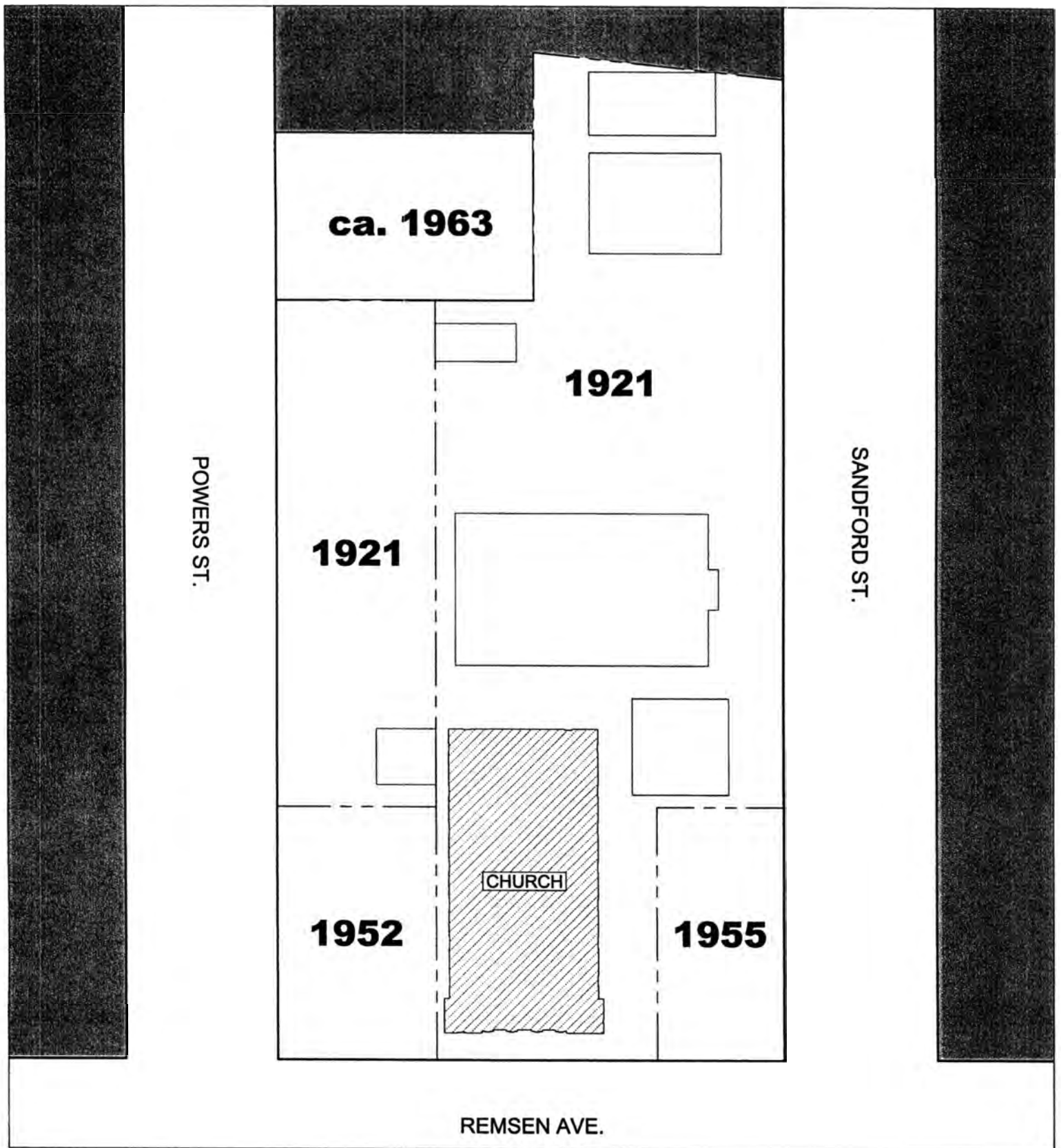
St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

**First Floor Plan** ANNOTATED   
Scale:  $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'-0''$  



Upper left portion of a map entitled Map Showing Property Owners Within a Radius of 200 Feet of Sanitary Ice and Coal Company, dated July 9, 1935. It shows St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church in the upper left, with the two corner blocks fronting on Remsen Avenue owned at the time by others. Courtesy of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church.

St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
 190 Sanford Street, New Brunswick  
 Middlesex County, New Jersey

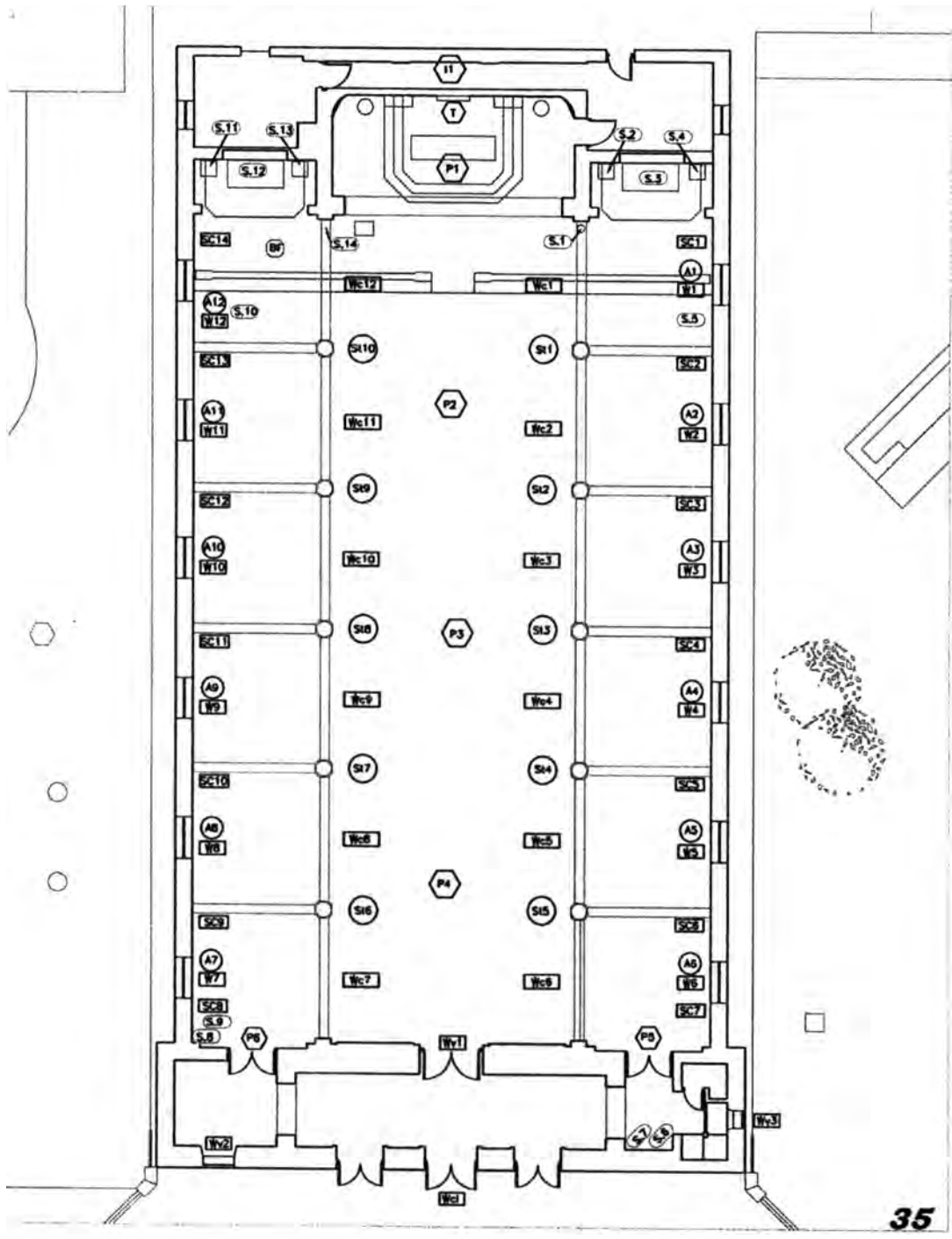


St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church  
Middlesex County, New Jersey

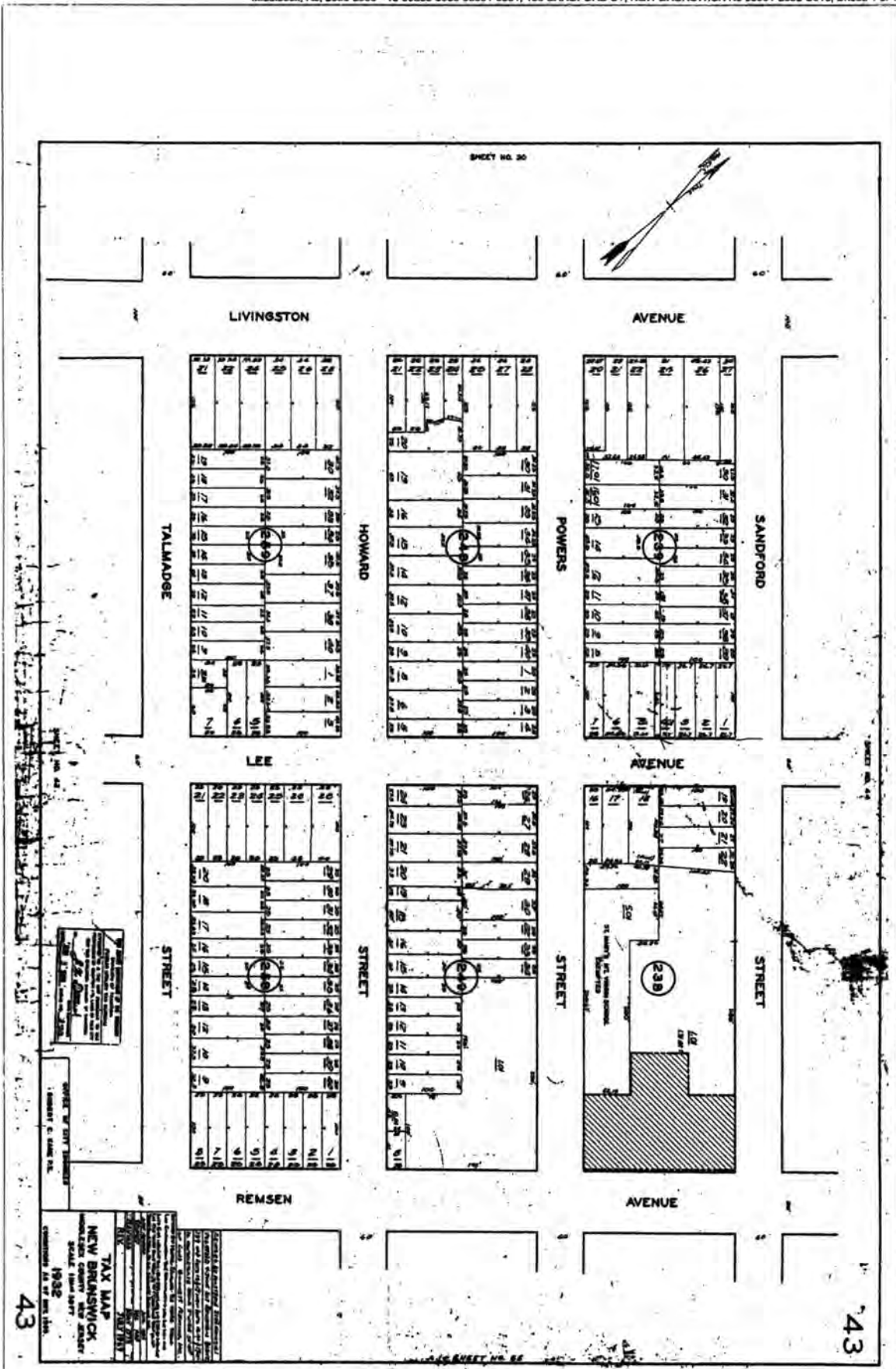
**Property Acquisition Plan**

Scale: 1" = 50'





St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
 190 Sandford Street, New Brunswick  
 Middlesex County, New Jersey



Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Church  
 Middlesex County, New Jersey

 Nominated Area  
 of Property

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 9/20/10 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/18/10  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/02/10 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/04/10  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000877

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 11.3.10 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

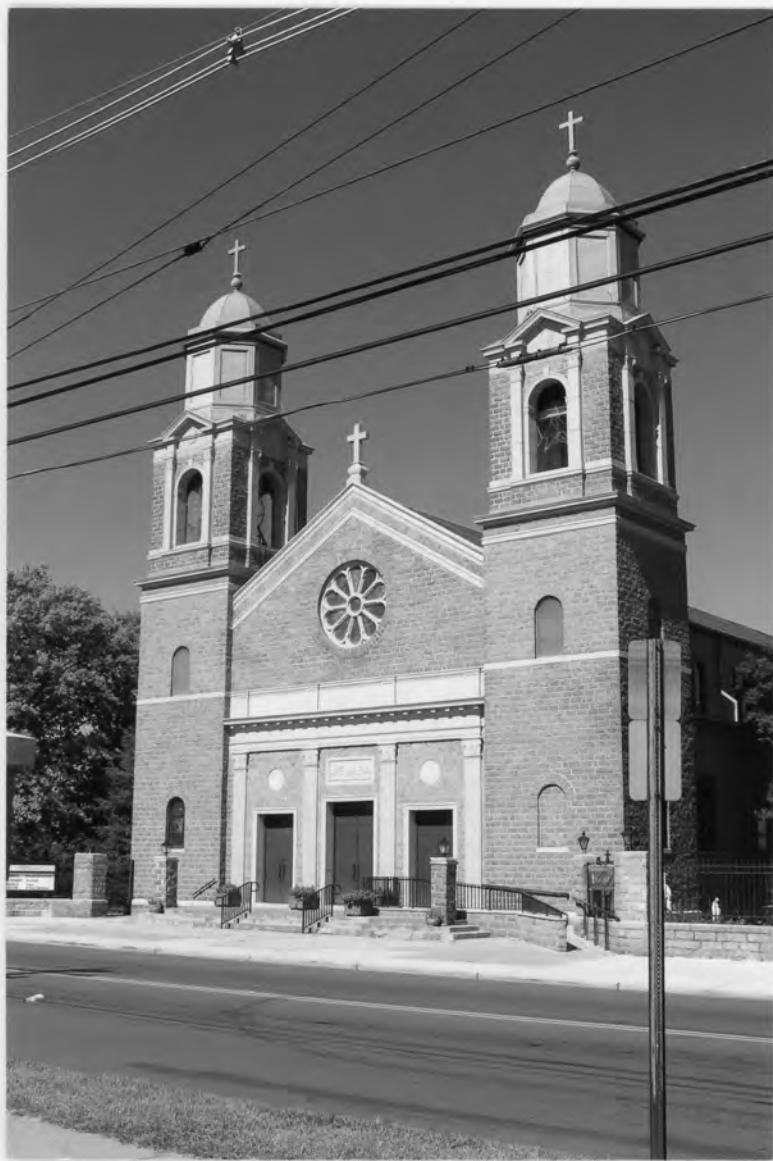
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



















































THE CONSOLATRIX AFFLICTORUM





*Saint Matthew*



*Saint John*



*Our Lady of  
Sorrows*



*Saint  
An*

*Saint*







De Muro  
children

S. K. OBTMANN LINNICH RHL.  
GERMANY









*Saint Ann &  
the Blessed Mother*

*Saint Joseph and  
the Child Jesus*

*Saint  
Patrick*



IN MEMORY OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



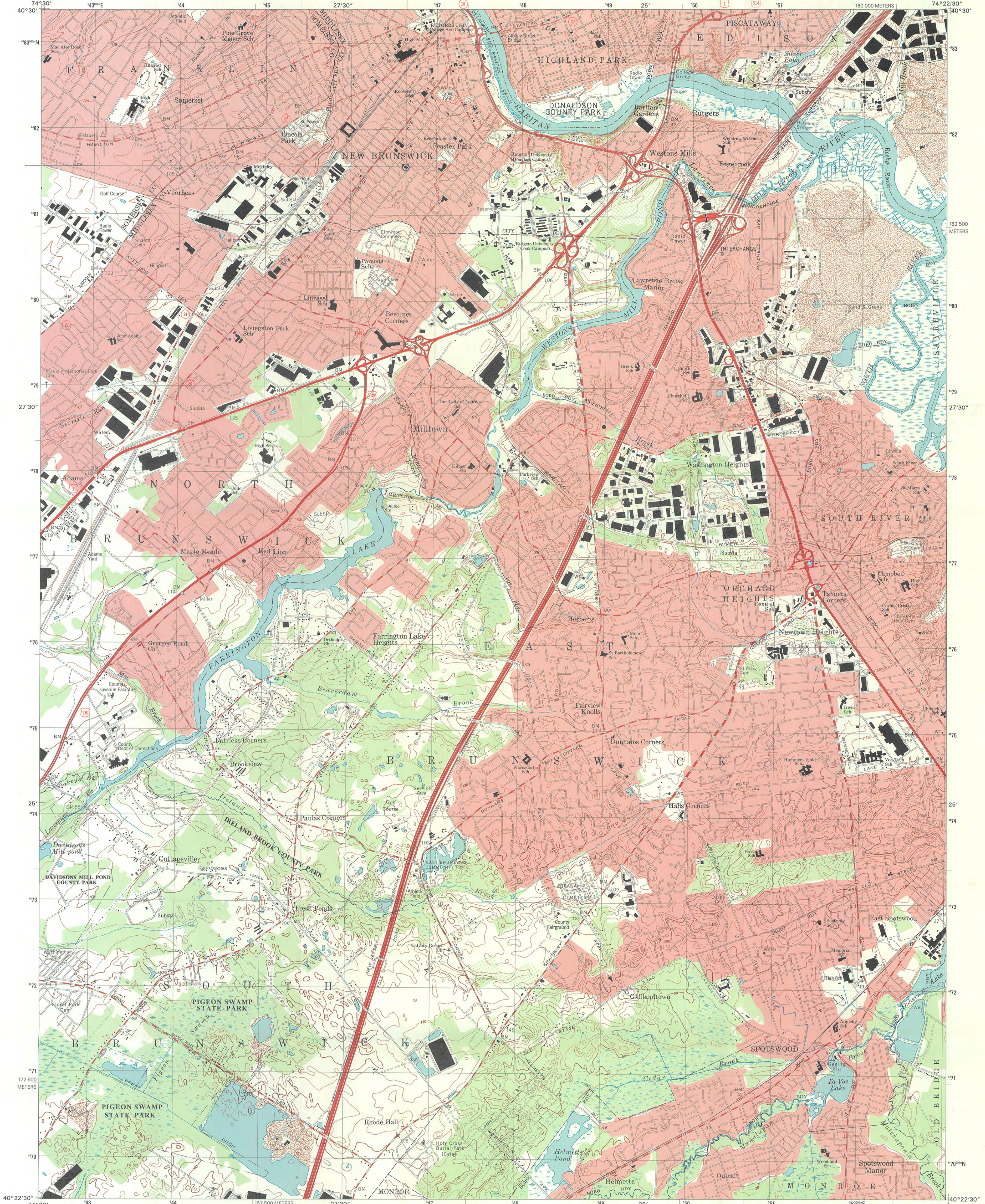
***XII - Jesus dies on the Cross***



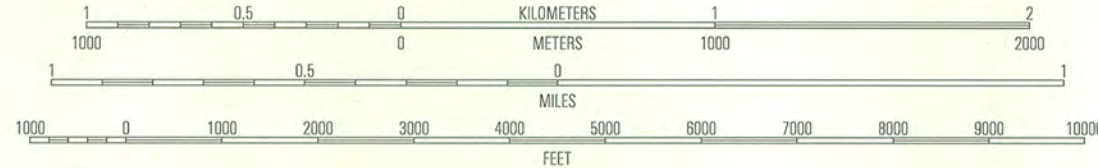
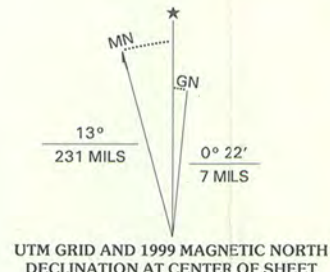
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

ST. MARY OF MOUNT VIRGIN CHURCH  
MIDDLE SEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
18 546560 4481640

NEW BRUNSWICK QUADRANGLE  
NEW JERSEY  
7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Topography compiled 1939. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1995 and other sources. Survey control current as of 1954  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18  
2 500-meter ticks: New Jersey Coordinate System of 1983  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geographic Survey NADCON software  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map  
Landmark buildings verified 1989



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

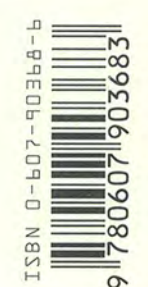
Primary highway hard surface .....	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface .....
Secondary highway hard surface .....	Unimproved road .....
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
State Route	

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

1 Bound Brook  
2 Plainfield  
3 Perth Amboy  
4 Monmouth Junction  
5 South Amboy  
6 Hightstown  
7 Jamesburg  
8 Freehold

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ  
1995  
NIMA 6164 IV NW-SERIES V822

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Log #09-0477-4

## State of New Jersey

### DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER  
P.O. Box 404,

Trenton, NJ 08625-0404  
TEL: (609)292-3541  
FAX: (609)984-0836

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
*Governor*

KIM GUADAGNO  
*Lt. Governor*

BOB MARTIN  
*Commissioner*



Paul Loether, Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

I am pleased to submit the Saint Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church, Middlesex County, New Jersey for National Register consideration.

This nomination has received majority approval from the New Jersey State Review Board for Historic Sites. All procedures were followed in accordance with regulations published in the Federal Register.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact Daniel D. Saunders, Acting Administrator, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 404, Trenton, New Jersey 08625 or call him at (609) 633-2397.

Sincerely,

Amy Cradic  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer