

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

****DATA SHEET**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 RECEIVED MAY 30 1975
 DATE ENTERED JUL 8 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church

AND/OR COMMON St. Joseph's Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 430 Church Street

CITY, TOWN Bowling Green

STATE Kentucky

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 02
 VICINITY OF

CODE 021

COUNTY Warren

CODE 227

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME St. Joseph's Parish

STREET & NUMBER 434 Church Street

CITY, TOWN Bowling Green

STATE Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Warren County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER 429 East Tenth Street

CITY, TOWN Bowling Green

STATE Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)

DATE 1974

--- FEDERAL STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Kentucky Heritage Commission, 401 Wapping Street

CITY, TOWN Frankfort

STATE Kentucky 40601

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Joseph's Church in its present size was constructed over a fourteen-year period, from 1870 to 1884. The church is given a German Romanesque flavor by the brick "Lombard arcades" that take the place of a cornice on the gabled west front, and edge the tower at the base of the spire. The stone capitals both framing the exterior entrance and on the interior colonnade also could be construed as Romanesque. Otherwise, the design could probably best be described as High Victorian Gothic (except for the exterior side walls, whose panelling and cornice brackets seem to revert to a standard mid-Victorian Italianate).

The west front is tripartite with a projecting central tower toward which the flanking walls slope. The corners of the tower and facade are marked by stepped buttresses. Although the structure is of brick, limestone trim is used to emphasize openings in a rather spotty way characteristic of late Victorian sensibility. The tall, narrow central door into the tower has paired squared pilasters interrupted at midpoint by stone bands. The two side doors have more graceful curved molded arches with brick pilasters banded in stone. The shallow gable over the main entrance overlaps the tall window in the second story of the tower, which encloses a delicate rose. Two roundels appear in the spandrel above; a water table just above the main roof-level doubles as a sill for the double louvered lancets under the brick arcade mentioned above. Over the side doors are arched windows with radiating voussoirs.

The original steeple reached skyward 142 feet--the highest in the city. It was blown over during a cyclone in 1923, and was replaced by the present short pyramidal structure now a total of about 87 feet in height.

The interior of St. Joseph's Church is traditionally said to have been inspired by Cologne Cathedral. The rather broad nave, 130 feet long, is flanked by wide aisles, making a total width of about 60 feet. There is no clerestory, as the arches of the aisles reach high into the walls under the plaster rib-vaults, which are apparently supported by foliate corbels over the piers of the colonnade. These quadripartite pillars have simple foliate capitals and are matched by pilasters on the side walls. There is a tall slender lancet window of German glass in each of the ten bays. The semicircular apse extends the full width of the nave and is lit by high side windows.

The otherwise quite dark interior is enlivened by the elaborate frescoing. The capitals and other features are highlighted in gold. The walls and tribune of the sanctuary were originally frescoed by Charles and Guy Leber, Italian-born and trained artists from Louisville, Kentucky. The dome of the sanctuary retains its clustered angels amid clouds and rosebuds, but in 1959 the side walls of the sanctuary (which originally were figured with kneeling angels) and the circular paintings over the side windows were painted over rather than renewed at considerable expense. The ceiling retains a good deal of stencil work and painted clouds which sustain the motif of the sanctuary. The sidewalls of the sanctuary received an effective repeat design of chalices and grapes in

(Continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1870-1884 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Frank Kister, Sr. & Jr.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first pastor appointed in 1858 to the then mission territory of Bowling Green was the Reverend Joseph DeVries, who ministered to the more than a thousand Catholics in the area, chiefly Irish laborers on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. When he decided to make Bowling Green his headquarters, he made many friends among the early settlers in the city. One of these, Mr. Euclid Covington, a non-Catholic, donated the ground to build a church, and this was a small wooden building built in the summer of 1859. The construction of a brick church was started immediately, and services were held there for the first time Easter Sunday 1860, although the church was not completed and dedicated until two years later. This small structure was 57' x 35' and soon outgrown, but it played an important part during the Civil War, having been spared from Federal cannon at the direct request of its young pastor, and used often by soldiers and officers of both armies during their times of occupation of the city as a quiet retreat for prayer and meditation.

In 1871, the need of a larger church became evident, since the congregation had grown so steadily after the War. With a view to future enlargement, the (East) back wall was torn down and replaced with a semicircular addition (the apse) higher and wider than the original church. This was designed and built by the architect and builder of the first church, Mr. Frank Kister, a graduate of the University of Heidelberg, to be a replica of Cologne Cathedral, and the further enlargement of the body of the church completed the design.

The work of building the new larger church around the first small brick rectangular church was accomplished by Mr. Kister's son in 1884, but while working on the spire which was added at this time, Mr. Kister, Jr., fell a distance of 65 feet when scaffolding broke, breaking both arms and both legs and necessitating a recuperative period of one year. The interior of the church was finished in 1887, but was not solemnly dedicated until May 1, 1889.

Three months later on August 10, 1889, Father DeVries died very suddenly. At his request his body was interred in a vault on the Gospel side of the altar, with a modest marble slab marking his resting place. During the thirty years of his pastorate, the congregation had grown to about 900, the first little frame building was set aside for a handsome new edifice, an excellent school run by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, St. Columba's Academy, had been established, and a church cemetery had been purchased.

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lyons, The Rev. John A., Manuscript History of Catholicity in the Bowling Green Deanery in Southern Ky., 1927-1932.
 Index to articles in newspapers, The Advocate, Guardian and The Record, 1858 to 1946.
 Wallis, F. A., ed. Sesqui-Centennial History of Kentucky. Hopkinsville, Ky: Historical Record Association, 1945, pp. 1703-1704.
 Webb, Hon. Ben J. Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky. Louisville: Charles A. Rogers 1884.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|--------------|------------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1, 6 | 54, 92, 1, 0 | 4, 09, 510, 0, 0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mrs. Richard C. Garrison, Historian

(WEL)

ORGANIZATION

St. Joseph's Church

DATE

May 1, 1974

STREET & NUMBER

900 Cherry Drive

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Bowling Green

STATE

Kentucky

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Cedric W. Miller

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

5/27/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

7/3/75

ATTEST:

Charles A. ...

DATE

7.3.75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

acting

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

gold leaf on a pale blue ground. The Gothic chandeliers were installed during a 1937 redecoration. The original elaborately carved reredoses of the central and side altars and the hanging stations of the Cross remain. The overall effect of the interior is quite unified, and has a breadth of proportion that counteracts the somewhat nervous verticality of the exterior.

The rectory to the left of the church was built in 1867. The porch has Romanesquoid capitals and cornice, and the front wall is panelled, with brick dentils under the cornice.

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He was succeeded by the Reverend Thomas J. Haynes, a young Irish-born priest ordained in 1881, who came to his appointment at Bowling Green from his position as vice-president of St. Joseph's College at Bardstown, Kentucky. He served as pastor at St. Joseph's Church for 54 years. To his indomitable energy, the congregation is indebted for most of the embellishments of the church. The Stations of the Cross, the statues, the Baptismal font, the Christmas Nativity scene, all imported from Europe, all outstanding in their beauty, were added. The dedication of the of the \$3,500 grand organ on May 20, 1898, was the occasion for a Sacred Concert given at the church before a large group of people from the town and clergy from over the State. The chorus, which was described in a publication of the period as "the largest and best ever gathered in the city" was made up of the best musicians of the area--the nucleus only being Catholic. The interior of the church was frescoed after a fire in 1901, and it was also electrified about that time. Additional property adjoining was purchased until the church owned the full city block, a school in which nine grades were taught by the Sisters adjoining. When Father Haynes retired because of ill health in 1943 and was appointed pastor-emeritus, his then-assistant the Reverend Joseph L. Spaulding served as pastor until July 1947, at which time the Reverend Charles P. Bowling became pastor and remained until his retirement in 1971.

When St. Joseph's Church celebrated its Centennial in 1959, the fact was noted that the church had had only four pastors in the one hundred years of its existence, but the influence of these four dedicated leaders of St. Joseph's Church on the cultural life of the people of Bowling Green and south western Kentucky has been immeasurable.

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church has ministered to the people of Bowling Green and Warren County for over a century and has been a prominent force in the religious life of the community.

Moreover, the architecture is characteristic of its period and of the aspirations of the still primarily immigrant parishioners, although the architect seems to have preferred German rather than Irish models. Although little-known, he was apparently skilled in High Victorian design. Some of the original frescoes by Milanese artists Charles and Guy Leber, who spent much of their careers in Louisville decorating Roman Catholic churches in Kentucky and nearby states, survive. (Guy Leber was best-known for his life-size replica on canvas of Leonardo's "Last Supper.")