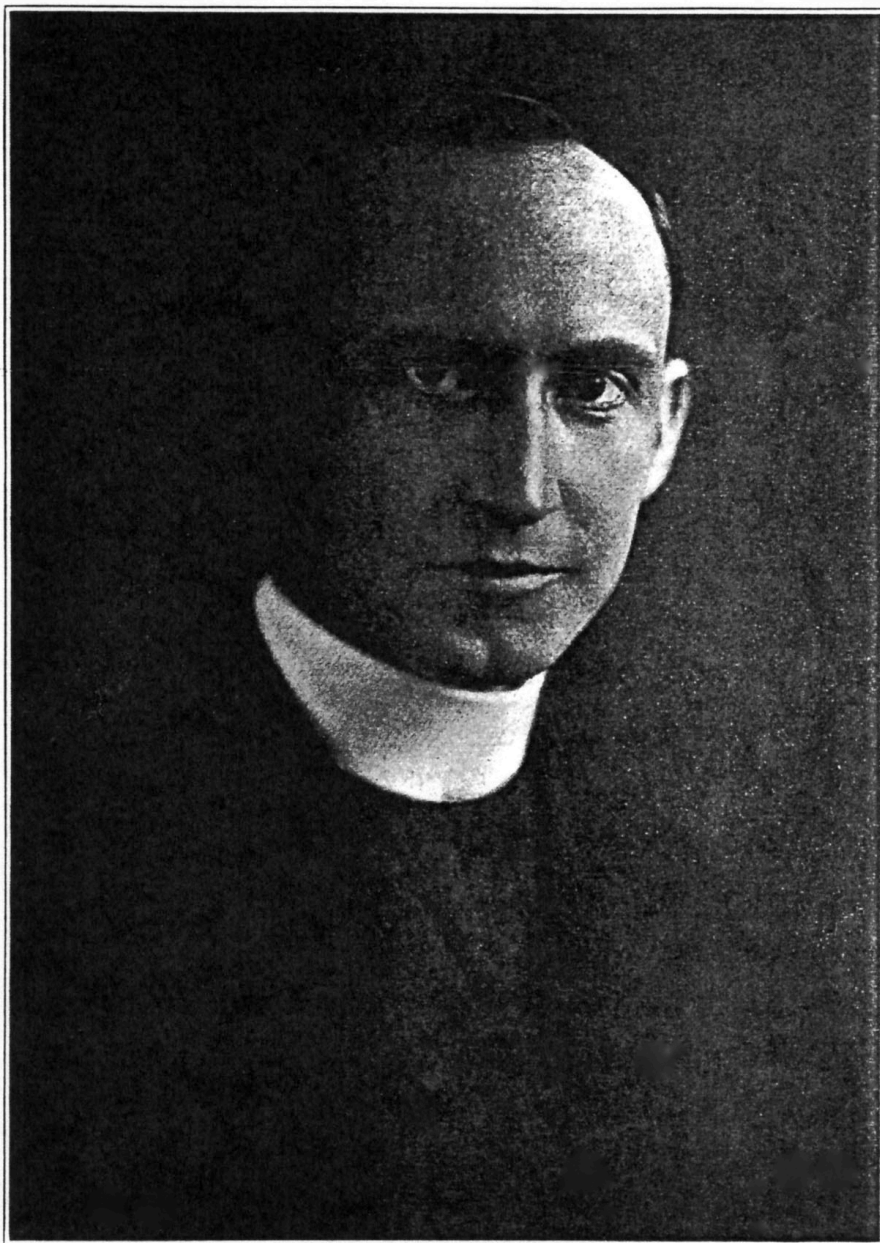


St. Clement's Parish Dedication



Faithfully Yours,
J. J. Schmitt

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Description of St. Clement's Church

An Appreciation by an Artist Friend Whose Modesty Forbids Mentioning His Name

THE building and adorning of a new church is assuredly one of the most important as well as the most noble expressions of the art of man. Through it he manifests his faith, devotion and sacrifice. Ecclesiastical History from the dawning of Christianity down to the present day is replete with glorious manifestations of this faith, devotion and sacrifice of Christians in their shrines, churches and cathedrals the world over. No material was considered too good, no work too skillful in the composing of these grand psalms in the material of stone, wood and metals so wrought as to inspire the faithful to piety, and to honor and glorify their God who dwelt therein.

St. Clement's Church, built in the year of our Lord 1922, is no exception and is causing no hiatus in the history of fine church development. Although not entirely appointed or adorned—having no decorations—yet it is a glorious manifestation of the faith, devotion and sacrifice of the young parish.

St. Clement's is a parish church, planned and designed along parish church lines. Present day costs forbade the choosing of a style or model suitable for a church along cathedral lines. Those who had direct control in designing and planning the new church—the pastor, the councilmen and the architect—felt that it was "better to have ruder work that tells a story or records a fact than the richer without meaning." In other words better to select a simpler, humbler style of building but good architecturally and in harmony with the laws, rules and regulations and spirit of our Church, than a complex, proud style of building which could not be built owing to cost without violating the laws of the art of architecture.

Therefore an adaptation of the Italian Romanesque style was chosen on account of its simplicity of masses, directness of expression, refinement of detail and economy of construction. It permitted brick to be used for the external material with stone and wood trimmings, and required carving and ornament about main entrance only.

In order to produce or create a new beautiful church building good precedent must be our guide. Nothing can be made of nothing. Genius in building therefore is nothing more than making new combinations out of the old—but making combinations that completely fit all the conditions and requirements of time and place. Old work is carefully studied and the principles which governed them followed. Old models are taken for features or motifs of the church and its appointments but they are necessarily changed and modified to suit and fit new conditions.

To fulfill this obligation to the laws of correct design and also to link the new St. Clement's with the old, St. Clement's Church in Rome served as a guide and furnished the motifs for general type, main entrance, main altar and minor details.

For those who are not familiar with the terms used in architectural design permit it to be stated here that the term adaptation of the Italian Romanesque is used to distinguish abject copying from proper assimilation. In other words the new St. Clement's is designed in general in the spirit of the Italian Romanesque using in particular motifs from old St. Clement's as guides for above mentioned details. Every style in architecture is distinguishable by its characteristics just as saliently as for example, trees are distinguishable. The oak is known by its general form, its ramification, its texture and color of bark and leaves, etc. Italian Romanesque architecture is known by its general simplicity of form, its tile roofs, brick walls, stone and wood trimmings, square towers with latticed belfry, rose window, arched windows and arched porches. These general characteristics of the Italian Romanesque style of architecture are also characteristics of St. Clement's, therefore putting it in the category of that style. The exterior of St. Clement's further elicits the feeling that the

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inclemencies of the weather and the soot of the city will neither affect the durability nor mar the somber beauty of it. Red tile roofs, varied colored brick with stone trimmings and wood work painted brown and ivory white is a color scheme particularly suitable for northern Ohio.

The new St. Clement's Church further belongs to the Basilican type of church architecture. The term type is used again to distinguish one class of buildings in a given style from another. Just as Gothic style is known by its various types—French, English, German, Italian and again subdivided into periods—so is the Italian Romanesque. The Basilican types of the Italian Romanesque churches are distinguishable by certain characteristics especially in the interior. It is the oldest form of Catholic Church architecture, in fact the ancient Basilica in Roman times was the home of the Tribunes. The early Christians found it so adaptable to the requirements of their worship that it was the only type used until about the 10th century when they burst into expressions of loftier and costlier types of Romanesque which eventually not being lofty enough found itself developed into Gothic. For comparison of the two types—Basilican and the later Vaulted it may here be stated that the Basilican in true proportion found in the best examples of church architecture is just one-half as high as the later type. St. Agnes Church of Cleveland belongs to this more lofty later type.

The point that is intended to be brought out here is that the Basilican type although humbler than vaulted type is nevertheless architecturally speaking in proper proportion and correct taste and considered very beautiful. The most salient characteristics of this type of interior are its three general divisions of Narthex or Vestibule, Auditorium and Sanctuary. The narthex in the early church in St. Clement's in Rome as was the custom in early times lead into first an "atrium" or open court where a fountain served the Christians with water in which they washed their mouths and hands before entering the church. Here also the catechumens (and certain penitents) begged the prayers of the Christians for the graces necessary to become baptized. In about the 5th century this outer court was omitted and the narthex or vestibule as we have it today was used but larger and where the catechumens assisted at the worship. In the new St. Clement's we find this same idea modified to suit the customs of our times. The baptistry is placed therein, and the holy water fonts into which we dip our fingers and make the sign of the cross re-echoes the custom of old. In new St. Clement's stairways lead to basement auditorium used for social purposes which is a



Part of the Crowd on Dedication Sunday

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modern parish requirement, and a stairway leads to choir balcony—also a comparatively modern innovation in Catholic church architecture—necessitated according to church laws owing to mixed choristers. The placing of choir over vestibule, however, is again going out of custom owing to the decree of Pope Pius X which advises Gregorian chant to be sung by qualified male choristers only, so that many new churches in this country are replacing choirs behind main altars, or in sanctuary as was the custom in medieval and earlier times.

The auditorium of new St. Clement's is divided into three parts in true Basilican form: The nave with clear story and side aisles. Two rows of octagonal columns of oak separate nave from aisles. Perforated wooden trusses featured the roofs or ceilings of both nave and aisles. The arched windows perforating walls are glazed with amber cathedral glass set in lead muntins. In the old Basilican churches in Italy columns, floors and even walls were of marble. Marble there was indigenous. Cost of marble here forbids its use and therefore instead of a sham imitation honest oak was used. Regarding columns in modern churches permit it to be stated here that it would be a direct violation of the Basilican type and Romanesque style to omit them. Honesty and truth is required in architecture as well as any other works of art or science and the omission of columns would be a falsity.

The sanctuary in St. Clement's as in old churches is separated from auditorium by an arched opening. However, the ceiling is not vaulted as is found in its earlier prototypes. This feature is intended still to be done when church is enlarged at a future date. The main altar in sanctuary is an adaptation of the main altar in St. Clement's in Rome. It is called a Baldacchino Altar. This type of altar is found in most churches of the Basilican order. As the nave is separated from sanctuary by plaster arch so also are aisles separated from shrines of Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph by plaster arches.

A perfect harmony, consistency and congruity was achieved throughout the church by adhering religiously to style, to type, and motifs which are echoed and re-echoed everywhere. The large octagonal columns in auditorium are repeated in a smaller scale in communion rail and all altars. The colors in paintings represent the way of the cross are re-echoed in painting in main altar representing the death of St. Clement—martyr.

Arched openings at communion rail lead into a small vestibule from which one may enter sacristies or to outdoors.



or dedication Sunday, Sept. 16, 1923.

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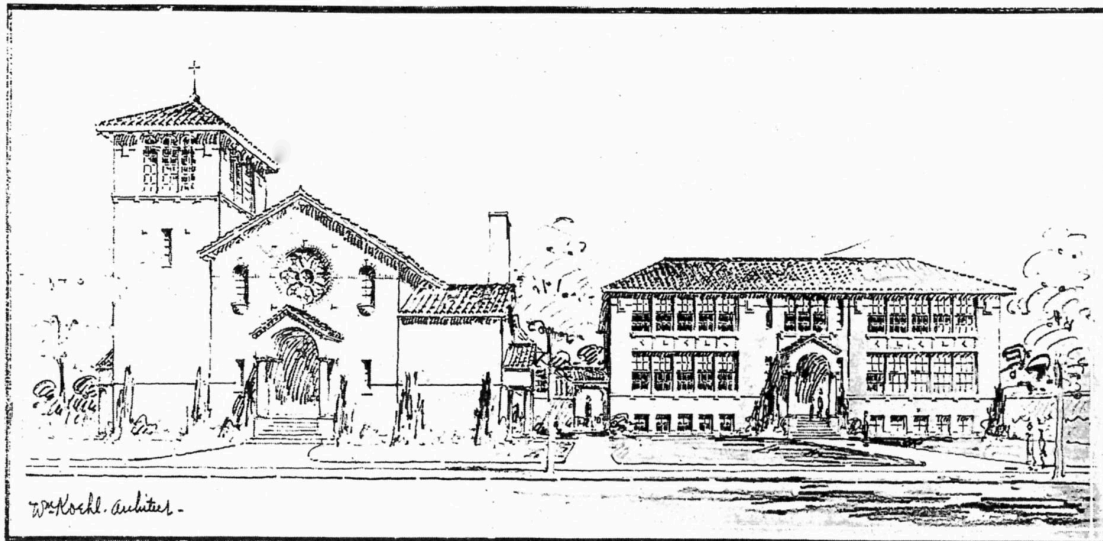


Interior view of St. Clement's Church.

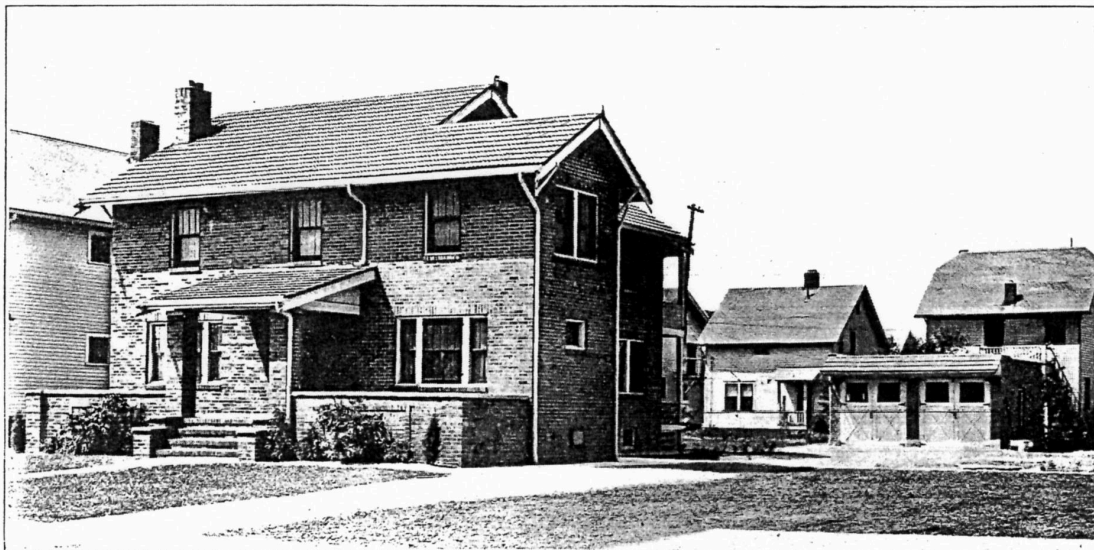
The plan of St. Clement's is the outcome of actual requirement based on utilitarian as well as artistic principles. Whatever beauty it possesses is based on sound and rational planning and construction. Instead of creating a hollow pretending shell St. Clement's parish has achieved the highest degree of fitness and beauty in all its appointments and in doing so have gotten far nearer to the real qualities of the great churches of the past than if they aimed at a mere histrionic reproduction of a cathedral which would give merely the outward semblance of a body from which the soul has fled.

St. Clement's Church possesses a soul worthy to be ranked with the noble churches of the past, not in grandeur nor loftiness but in that strange inscrutable quality of true piety and devotion; not shallow, showy or pretentious as most modern churches are, but full of still, quiet earnestness which seems to lull and soothe the spirit with promises of peace. Such a church is the greatest achievement possible to the art of man; better than the greatest picture because it is not a dream alone but a dream come true—a constant influence and delight especially if wrought into being with that spirit of faith, devotion and sacrifice as manifested in St. Clement's parish, and all for the honor and glory of God Who surely cannot but repeat the words spoken in the Exodus: "They have made me a sanctuary and I will dwell in the midst of them."

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Sketch of Church and Proposed New School.



Parochial Residence.