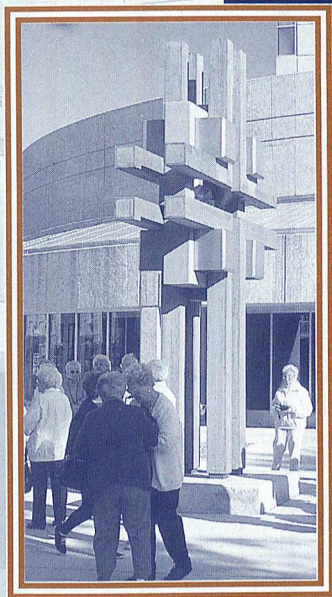


# Church of Our Lady of the Snows



**NATIONAL SHRINE  
OF OUR LADY  
OF THE SNOWS**

# Church of Our Lady of the Snows

The designers of the Church of Our Lady of the Snows gave careful attention to creating a worship space that would serve the particular needs of those who visit the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who own and operate the Shrine, have built a “House of God’s People,” where they can gather during their pilgrimage to celebrate the Lord’s Supper and Sacrifice.



## Pilgrim's Gate

In the courtyard is the trellised “Pilgrim’s Gate,” giving human dimension to the total structure as a seemingly always open door, inviting the pilgrim to come in.

The cross, ordinarily affixed to a Catholic church, stands 16 feet tall at the end of the “Pilgrim’s Gate.” This massive sign of our redemption shines from within in the evening, as if to remind us that it is through the Cross of Christ that we find our salvation.

## Icon of Mary

In the gathering space, a visitor will find a stunning contemporary icon of Mary, Our Lady of the Snows, presenting her Divine Son for our contemplation and our imitation.

The painting dates back to the 5th century of the Christian era. This method of attempting to represent the things of heaven through stylized images has been particularly popular in the Eastern branches of Christianity.



The authentic iconographer makes painting a prayerful experience, not only for those who view the work, but also for the artist who prays and fasts while executing the piece. Centuries-old rules are followed concerning everything from the mixing of the paints to the posture of the sacred figures.

Surrounding the two figures of Virgin and Child is a “mandorla” or “glory,” suggesting radiant holiness and heavenly glory. The figures and surrounding mandorla float freely upon the night sky: the cool blues set against white garments evoke a sense of the “North,” thereby placing the Madonna and Child into the context of the Oblate missions to the natives of the Far North.

The garments of both Virgin and Child are highlighted with gold lines. Gold leaf, applied to icons, serves to suggest the incorruptibility of the realm of heaven: gold does not tarnish because of its purity. The gold haloes surrounding the Virgin and Child likewise symbolize the heavenly glory of “restored” humanity. Christ’s cross-inscribed halo, exclusive to his figure, proclaims his triumph over sin and death through the cross.

In Christ’s left hand, he holds a scroll to symbolize his prophetic role -- proclaiming the Word of God -- during his earthly ministry. His right hand is held in a gesture of blessing, directed at the faithful before him. This conventional gesture signals that Christ is actively reaching out to the faithful through his holy image; the icon is not a passive object of observation but encounters the faithful, directing the believer to turn mind and heart to the Christ who speaks through this image.

The triple medallions on Mary’s shoulders and forehead symbolize her perpetual virginity. She presents Christ to the faithful and challenges them to “do whatever he tells you to do.”



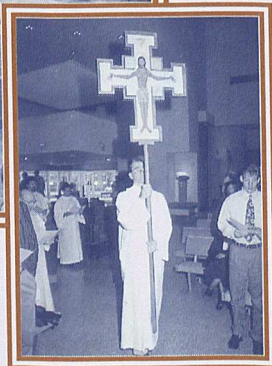
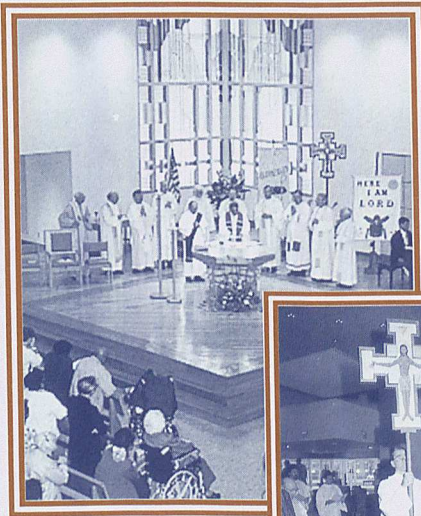


## Altar Area

The liturgical consultant designed the oak altar, pulpit, and tabernacle to meet the lines of the architecture and the softness of the oaken colors in the sanctuary floor.

Designed to seat 600 persons in fixed pews, with overflow areas behind movable partitions for 300 more worshippers, the building has a very simple, but bright interior because of the numerous skylights and windows.

Behind the altar, a 15 ft. by 20 ft. double "Aurora Borealis" window, lends brilliance to the sanctuary and offsets the sacredness of the altar of Sacrifice. The space above the pulpit is decorated by banners and mobiles in order to embellish the area reserved for the Liturgy of the Word.



## Living

The Living Water Font, continually circulating blessed water, serves as a reminder to the faithful that they become part of God's People, passing through the waters of Baptism. Risen Paschal Candle

Near the font, the oils blessed for the conferral of (Anointing of Baptism); Sacrament of Holy Orders), Bible, the Word, its relationship to sacramental life

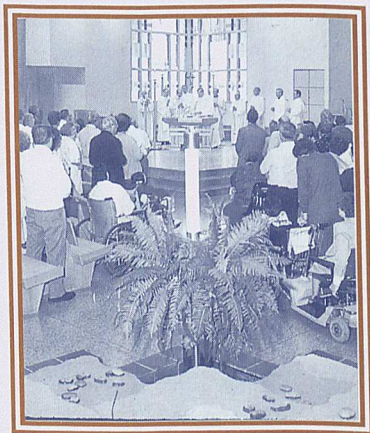
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l by the local bishop and used in the  
the sacraments: Oil of the Sick  
(the Sick); Oil of Catechumens  
red Chrism (Baptism, Confirmation,  
Opposite the ambry one finds the  
rd of God, enthroned here to show  
o the faith of the believer and the  
e of the Church.

## Pipe Organ

amp Pipe Organ lends its melodi-  
oice to the voices of the faithful  
urgical celebrations.

## National Shrine of OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

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