

St. Mary of the Angels became a parish church of the Parish of Halston Street and Church Street in December 1998. Up to that time, it was friary church working within the parish.

The Capuchin Franciscans have had a friary in this area for over 300 years.

Our picture shows the front of the church as seen from Church Street. The church has undergone considerable renovations in 1999/2000 - come and check us out.



The community currently living in the Friary serves the local community through

- Parish Work
- Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless Persons
- Capuchin Mission Office

Brief History of Church Street Church

Church Street church is located in the heart of Dublin's North Inner City, 10 minutes walk from O'Connell Street.

The first known link of the Capuchins with Church Street is a document dated 3 May 1691. The church and friary has gone through many changes since those early days.

In recent times the church was refurbished and work completed on the sanctuary and side altars.

There are three branches of the Order founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209; the Friars Minor, the Conventuals and the Capuchins. The Capuchin branch first appeared in 1525, and in 1618 Pope Paul V declared it to be a completely autonomous branch of the Order founded by St. Francis.

The Capuchin Order came to Ireland in 1615 and settled in Thomas Street, Dublin. In 1624 they moved to Bridge Street. They were expelled from here, and later, from a house at St. Audoen's Arch. They came to Church Street shortly after the Battle of the Boyne (1689), settling first at the spot now occupied by The Tap Bar. Shortly afterwards they built a small "Mass House" where the present Church of St. Mary of the Angels stands. This was enlarged in 1796 and became "Church Street Chapel". In 1881 the present church replaced the old chapel of the Penal days.

The present St. Mary of the Angels Catholic Church, in the revived **Decorated Gothic** style, is one of the most beautifully designed churches in Dublin. It consists of a long narrow nave without aisles, with a semicircular apse and a remarkable wooden ceiling. The outside view of the apse, from Friary Avenue, should not be missed.

The foundation stone for the present church was laid by Cardinal Cullen in 1868 on the site of the former church, and it was completed in 1881. The architect was **James J. McCarthy**, a distinguished Gothic Revival exponent, whose works include the cathedral at Monaghan, the noble chapel at Maynooth, St. Michael's, Dun Laoghaire and St. John's, Tralee.

James Pearse, father of Padraig and Willie Pearse, two of the Irish patriots who were executed in 1916, designed and built the high altar and reredos. Fittingly,

he incorporated several angels in golden mosaic and marble into the sanctuary. There are four mosaics on the reredos depicting St. Louis of France, St. Laurence of Brindisi, St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen and St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Two statues, one of St. Clare and one of St. Felix of Cantalice, also adorn the reredos.

The altar front has a carving depicting the granting of the Portiuncula indulgence to Francis. Christ, Our Lady and Francis are surrounded by angels in this beautiful marble carving. The pulpit has depictions of St. Anthony and St. Clare, and the chair and baptismal font were added to commemorate the Jubilee Year 2000.

There are two side altars, one to Our Lady, decorated with depictions of the Annunciation and the Visitation: and the other to St. Francis of Assisi which has scenes from the life of St. Francis.

Over the sanctuary there are five very attractive paintings which deserve mention. These are St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Bonaventure, Our Lady of the Angels, St. Anthony of Padua, and St. Margaret of Cortona. Again the painting of Our Lady is surrounded by a profusion of angels.

The oil paintings depicting the Stations of the Cross are unique in Dublin, if not in the country. They may well be the first to have Irish inscriptions or titles.

Franciscan saints grace the walls of the sanctuary and stand out from the side walls of the church. These include St. Laurence of Brindisi, St. Felix of Cantalice, with his beggar's bag; St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Bernardine of Siena with the I.H.S. (because of his devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus) and St. Bonaventure with the cardinal's hat.

The church is narrow in proportion to its height and length. The reason for this is that the friars, at the time, possessed only this constricted site (62ft. x 164ft. x 61ft.) on which the church now stands. The roof was pitched so high because of the need for ventilation, and so the church got one of its most striking aspects, namely the very fine ceiling, which was stripped back to its natural state in 1975. There is a large attic above the high ceiling, which proved to be an occasional but effective hiding place for patriots during the war of independence.

There are shrines in honour of Padre Pio, St. Anne, The Infant of Prague, The Little Flower, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Divine Mercy, Our Lady of Perpetual Help and of course St. Anthony.

On the outside, the statues of St. Francis and St. Clare on either side of the statue of Our Lady on the façade of the church are by **Leo Broe**, head of a well known family of sculptors in Dublin. The cut stone used in the building of the church came from Carraig Quarry in Co. Kildare.

The Apostle of Temperance, Father Theobald Mathew often celebrated Mass here. Other well known names of Capuchins who worked at Church Street friary were Frs. Aloysius, Albert and Augustine who attended the 1916 leaders immediately prior to their executions. Frs. Columbus and Canice as well as Br. Brendan were also well known.