

CENTENNIAL GAZETTE

St. James Cathedral, Seattle

Issue #7

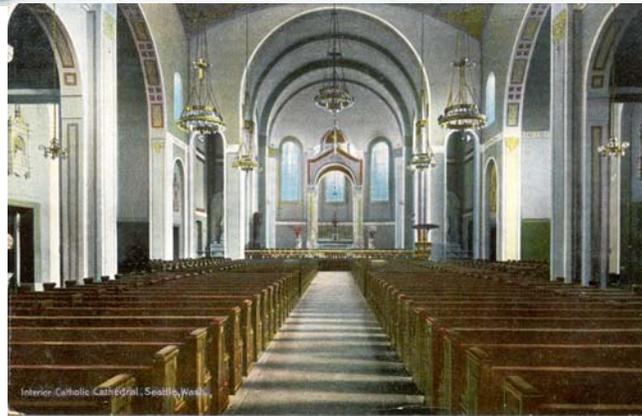
March 11, 2007

A GUIDED TOUR OF ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL – 1908

In 1908, St. James Cathedral had some very distinguished visitors: four Carmelite sisters who had come all the way from Baltimore to establish the first Carmelite convent in Seattle, St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill (now in Shoreline). Mother Cyril and her companions lived a rigorous life of prayer, silence, work, and community, in keeping with their ancient rule. But in Seattle, as they were watching over the building of their new convent (the generous gift of Mr MacDougal, whose daughter was a member of the community), Bishop O'Dea urged them to take a detour and visit the new Cathedral. It was October 3, 1908, and the building had been open just ten months. In her account of the founding of the new monastery in Seattle, Mother Cyril gives us a rare guided tour of St. James in its earliest days.

“Oct. 3rd, 1908.—In obedience to His Lordship's wishes, we stopped at the Cathedral. It is a very fine building of cream-colored brick with two towers, and being on one of the highest hills in Seattle can be seen at a great distance, and of course commands a fine view of the city, the Sound, and surrounding country. The interior is very beautiful, the coloring delicate and harmonious. We made a visit first to Our Divine Lord hidden in the Tabernacle, then to our Lady, a white marble statue, the Sacred Heart, St. Anthony of Padua, and lastly to dear St. Joseph. [Note: All these statues, with the exception of St. Anthony—which was later replaced—are still venerated in the Cathedral.]

“After making our devotions and lighting some candles at the different shrines, we went into the winter Chapel where we saw an exquisite statue of our Lady. The statue was colored. She is looking down. To stand just under her and look up, her expression and whole face is beautiful in the extreme. [Note: This statue is now to be found at the entrance of Cathedral Place.] We then went into to the sacristy adjoining and found the



Two early postcards show the Cathedral's interior as it appeared at the time of its dedication. Above, the view from the sanctuary toward the west, with Hutchings-Votey organ; below, the view from the west looking east to the sanctuary.

door of the cope closet open. We looked in and were admiring the numerous handsome copes when Mother Sub-Prioress said, “suppose there is an electric bell and we start it?” Hardly had she finished speaking when we heard hurried steps and had barely time to get in the Chapel when a priest and companion rushed through the opposite door. I had gotten on my knees and tried to look devout but the others were still standing and all of us were convulsed with laughter. The priest recognized us and turned off on the other side going into the Church proper.

“We put a sudden end to our devotions and left the building in haste, not knowing if we had really rung the alarm or not.”

Special thanks to Sister Michael Marie and Sister Sean of St. Joseph's Carmelite Monastery for sharing this

passage preserved in their archives. The Carmelite Nuns celebrate their own Centennial in 2008.

—Corinna Laughlin

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE: **THE IMPENDING DOME; OR, THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE REAR ADMIRAL'S FUNERAL**

MY CATHEDRAL

Share your favorite story of Saint James Cathedral during our Centennial Year. Don't know where to start? Here are some questions to get you thinking!

- Do you remember the first time you visited St. James? What was the occasion? What details stuck in your mind from that visit?
- Has the Cathedral been part of great moments in your life? Perhaps a baptism? Wedding?
- Do you have a favorite place to pray or a favorite work of art in the Cathedral?

E-mail your story to Maria Laughlin, mlaughter@stjames-cathedral.org. Your story may appear in a future issue of the *Centennial Gazette*!