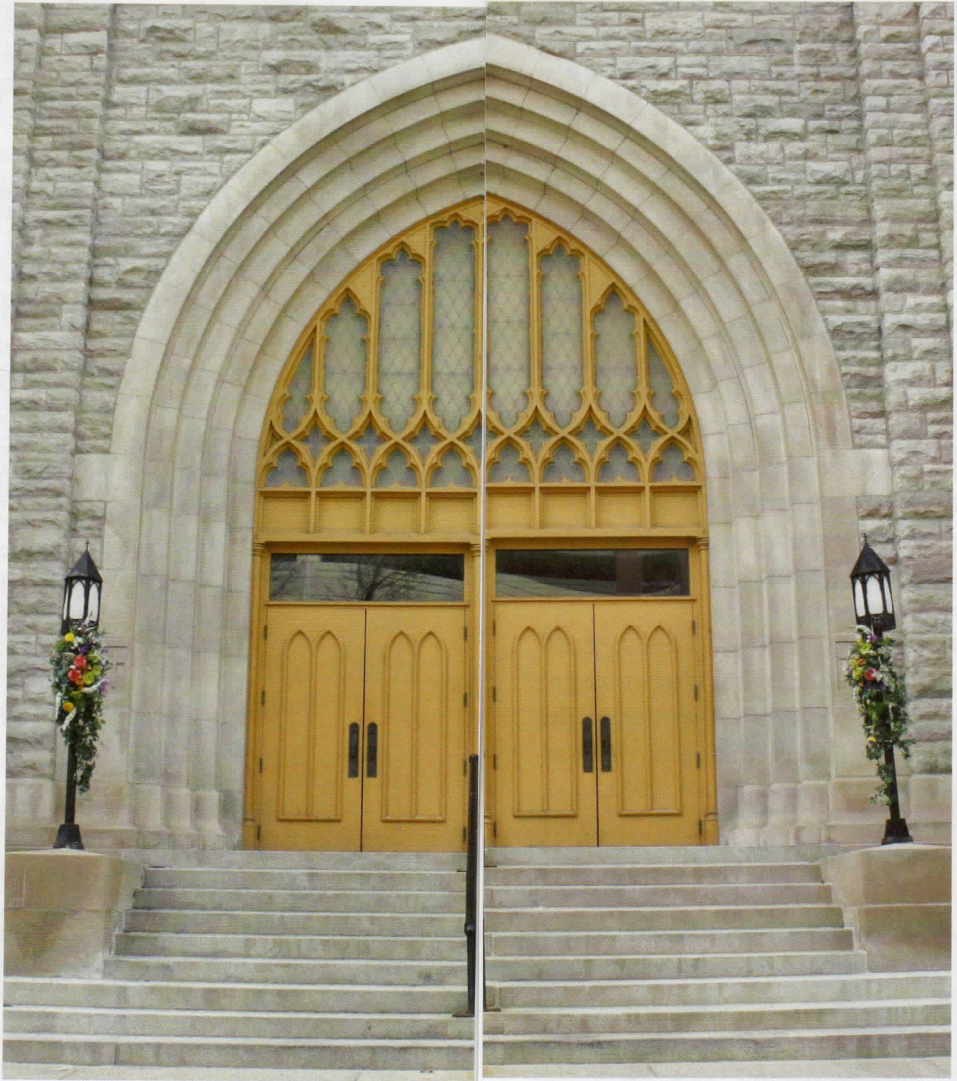


# Self Guided Tour

# Saint Mary Cathedral



219 Seymour Avenue  
Lansing, Michigan

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# Cathedral History 1913-2013

The saintly Fr. Lafayette Isadore Brancheau came to the parish in 1897. He quickly saw the advantage of transferring the parish site (originally at the corner of Madison and Chestnut) closer to the Capital.

Construction of the Cathedral began with the groundbreaking on August 5, 1910. Many farm families drew wagon loads of stone to the construction site. On July 4, 1911, the cornerstone was laid.

The church is Norman Gothic in design. The crucifixion scene behind the main altar was the concept of Fr. Brancheau. [The figures of Jesus, Mary, and John are now located in the parish cemetery in Mendon, Michigan.]

The initial church cost was \$135,000. The nave width is 108 feet long and has a 50-foot ceiling. The church was entirely debt free by November 1913 so it could be consecrated rather than dedicated in a five-hour ceremony held on December 8, 1913. The building faced with Indiana limestone was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Four major renovations have occurred. The Munich stained glass windows and the Czech Stations of the Cross with brass gothic frames were added in the 1920's. The apse was painted to portray Jerusalem and much of the walls were stenciled. The simple side altars and the plaster statues of the Sacred Heart and Blessed Virgin Mary were replaced with ornate gothic marble ones.

The second restoration occurred in anticipation of Bishop Albers' silver episcopal jubilee in December of 1954. During that renovation, the side altars were stripped of their gothic spires and the gothic frames of the stations were removed.

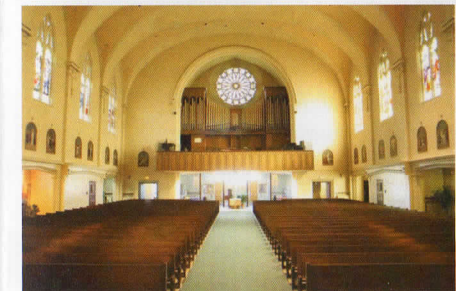
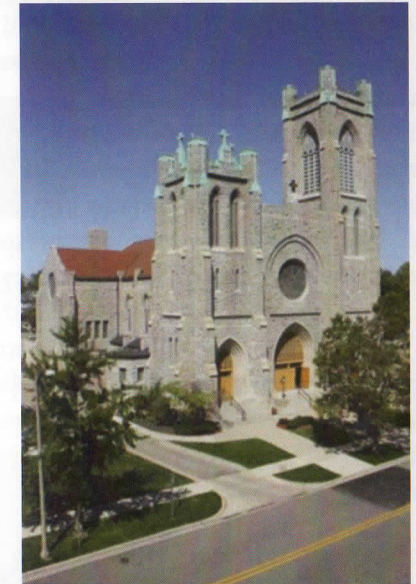
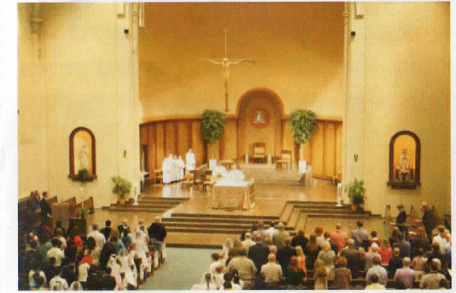
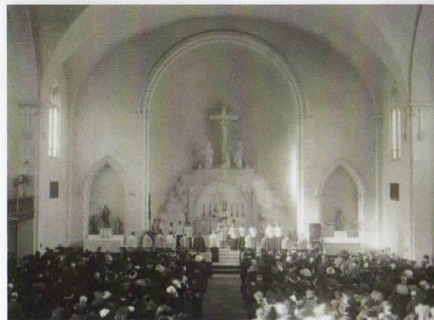
The 1967-68 redecoration was controversial because the Calvary scene, side altars, choir loft and the stations were removed. The choir loft and organ were moved to the back of the church while the area under the former choir loft became the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. The dark walnut gothic doors at the four entrances to the church were replaced with clear glass ones with glass windows above. The \$530,810 renovation won awards but not the hearts of many lifelong parishioners. The altar railing was removed and the sanctuary was expanded to facilitate concelebration. The tribune pews facing each other and the stepped pews under the nativity window were also added. The side altars and the confessionals in the nave were reconfigured. One was removed to make way for a new entrance with bathrooms.

The Cathedral was redecorated in 1986 by the Potente firm from Wisconsin in preparation for the diocesan 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1987. The stations were re-hung. The Baldachino was installed over the new Tabernacle. The Leonardo da Vinci Last Supper relief which had been part of the 1913 original high altar was placed on the south wall of the chapel.

The Icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which cost \$15,000, was blessed on September 15, 1996.

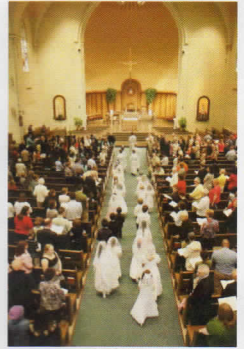
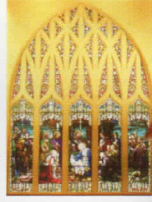
In preparation for the celebration of the Sacred Triduum in the Holy Year 2000, the alcoves for the statues in the sanctuary were created where the old side altars had been. The statues first purchased for the 1923 renovation were returned to their original location.

For the full history of the Cathedral, please visit our website at [www.stmarylansing.org](http://www.stmarylansing.org).





# *Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception*



*O Mary, conceived without sin,  
pray for us who have recourse to thee.*