



TRUSTED LITURGICAL DESIGNERS,
ARTISTS AND ARTISANS FOR OVER HALF A CENTURY

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church Lambertville, NJ



OVERVIEW

The Rohn team was engaged to help develop a unified master plan for St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Parish, a beloved French Gothic-style building in Lambertville, New Jersey. This challenging renovation included space formation, sanctuary renovation, interior decoration and finishes, side shrines and statuary restoration.

The project was an enormous undertaking involving a variety of needs that were not only liturgical but also functional, aesthetic and related to issues of historic preservation. Project planning was complicated by the purity of its architectural and liturgical styles that made the needs less readily identifiable and therefore more difficult to explain to the community.

Rolf Rohn, the Liturgical Design Consultant for the project, working with the pastor, Fr. Robert Kolakowski, J.C.L., and the Parish Building Committee, developed a strict budget of \$2.2 million dollars that would make it possible for the church to not only meet the needs of today's congregation but tomorrow's as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rolf, in collaboration with Rohn & Associates Custom Studio, gathered vital input from Father Kolakowski and the Building Committee to define and implement the multifaceted project. As they worked on the project, their vision spread from the integration of a new Adoration Chapel to liturgical furnishings, congregational seating, restoration of leaded glass and interior surfaces including flooring, walls and ceilings, lighting and lighting control, artwork, and other appointments and amenities such as restrooms and elements that would afford greater participation to the handicapped.

PROJECT EXECUTION

Among the significant features of the renovation, Rohn and Associates Custom Studio, Inc., designed and executed the following:

- A new mural was introduced above the sanctuary featuring the Lamb of God, Christ, who takes away the sins of the world, the Holy Spirit, and a pelican. The pelican is a Eucharistic symbol—a bird that was believed to feed its young with its own blood by piercing its breast. In ancient times, the pelican was seen as a symbol of Christ who shed his blood for his people. The pelican in the mural echoes the image carved in the altar long ago.
- The Stations of the Cross were carefully restored using an artistic technique known as Trompe d'oeil, and highlighted with a gold leaf background in the niches to bring out the details emphasizing the “way” we travel when we participate in this devotion.
- The faux marbling and light gilding and glazing of the columns and capitals, as well as a sapphire night sky in the apse ceiling—twinkling with celestial gold stars—provide a sense of grandeur and soaring height to the interior that is in character with the French High Gothic architecture characteristic of this church.



- A brand new wash of color and intricate stenciling on the shrines of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph add much-needed vitality to the images of these individuals who served as parents to the Lord in their Holy Family. Their significance is further emphasized by their placement at the head of the main aisle with a lovely inlaid Chi-Rho Symbol.
- The now light-filled Adoration Chapel, approachable through the Narthex, is enhanced by its fresh decoration, which helps to complete the goal of returning the Church of St. John the Evangelist to an atmosphere that is more traditional and brings to the environment a majestic, yet meditative sacredness.

COMPLETED PROJECT

The newly renovated church now embraces a vision of the New Jerusalem, the City of God, helping to impart new life to the parish and preserving this proud legacy of faith for both new and life-long parishioners. In the carefully executed plan upon which the renovation was based, clergy and parishioners are encouraged to see themselves in active and spiritual communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit, as well as with Mary, St. Joseph and all the saints, celebrating—as the one Body of Christ—the Mass and the Sacraments, worshiping the Lord truly present in the tabernacle and bringing their prayers, their needs, their praise to God.

RECOGNITION FROM LEADERSHIP

“We are all excited each day to see the progress [that was] made. The painting is making an amazing impact: the beautiful royal blue ceiling with gold stars, the faux marble finish on the columns, and the intricate painting on the Stations of the Cross. And the newly restored stained glass windows...when the sun shines through them you can now see vivid reflections of the scenes right on the church floor...it wasn't like that before they were repaired.”—Father Robert Kolakowski, J.C.L., Pastor





COMPLETED PROJECT

