



# Restoring a Sacred Treasure

## Preserving the safety, integrity, and beauty of St. Joseph Chapel

After extensive consultation with experts in the field of church architecture, art, and historic preservation, the International Leadership Team and Office of Mission Advancement announced plans this spring to undertake an extensive restoration of St. Joseph Chapel in Milwaukee.

Repair and restoration of the chapel's plaster, marble, mosaics, and windows began in mid-June, following our community's celebration of the sisters' Jubilee anniversaries. Masses and other services have been celebrated in St. Joseph Hall while the work is being performed.

"Our team conferred with numerous architects, engineers, and craftspeople, and it was clear to us that we could not defer maintenance on the chapel," said Sister Deborah Fumagalli, President of our congregation. "St. Joseph Chapel is a

sacred treasure, and we must be responsible stewards in preserving and enhancing its safety, integrity, and beauty. Taking these restoration and preservation steps now will help to ensure that it remains a beloved worship space for generations to come."

A team of expert artisans from the nationally acclaimed Daprato Rigali Studios in Chicago was chosen to perform the restoration, with the goal of completing the work in nine to 12 months. The project has included plastering, painting, tile repair and cleaning to address issues that are crucial to maintaining the historic, 107-year-old chapel.

"We receive a weekly update from Ellie Galvin, project manager, where she shares photos of the completed work and artistic discoveries from that

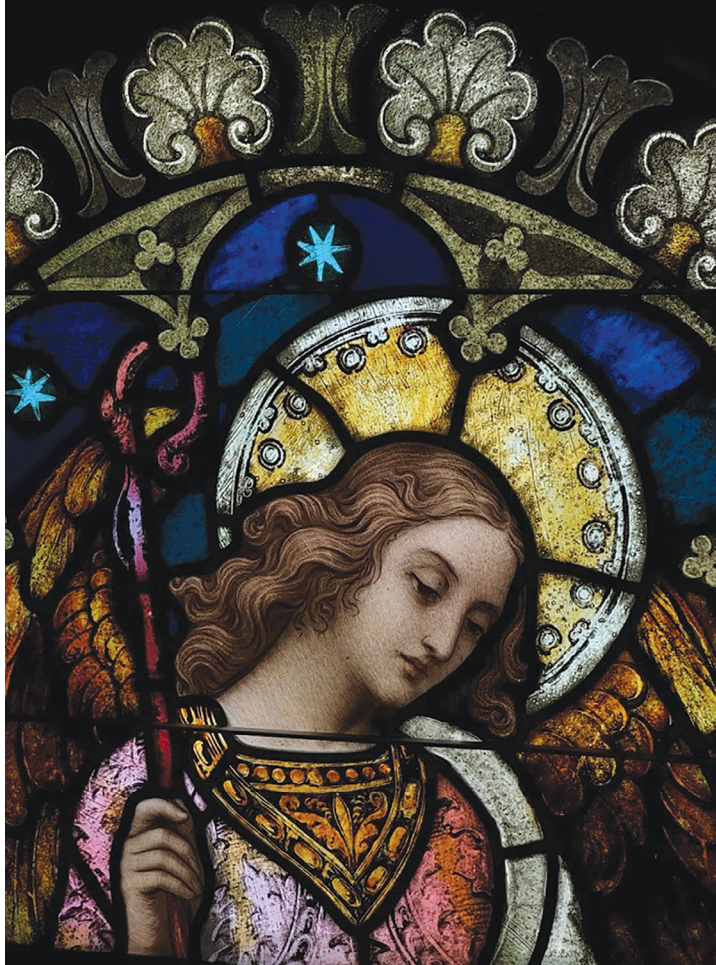


week,” Sister Deborah shared. “The restoration work has gone very smoothly and efficiently, and on schedule.”

The Daprato Rigali team has a history of excellence in the field of church statuary, decoration, and restoration that goes back to 1860. “My great, great-grandfather started the business, which means I am fifth generation,” Ellie said. “Our goal is to help highlight the beauty in a space for all to enjoy for many years to come. We are fortunate to work with extremely skilled and consistent craftsmen to help us with this mission.”

Ellie said the work has been progressing well, without any major obstacles or surprises. “There have been a few areas where there was water damage, but we have been able to patch and repair those areas and then prime and paint,” she said.

Reaching the towering heights of the chapel’s ceiling is a feat of engineering requiring hundreds of pieces of scaffolding. “That has been one of the most difficult aspects of the restoration process,” Ellie said. “The restoration of the mosaics has been a challenge as well. It is an intricate process to clean each of the individual tiles while making sure the structure is still sound.”







# Breathtaking, Treasured, Sacred Place

Ellie noted that because of the chapel's enormous size, many areas have not been cleaned or touched up over the course of many years. "The 'before and after' is so dramatic," she said. "It really gives great satisfaction to our crew to make that big of a difference. We feel so honored and blessed that we were chosen to work in this amazing space, and we are so excited to see the end result!"

Sister Deborah echoed that excitement, noting, "Most surprising to me has been the magnificent color of the mosaics. The work has revealed much more luster from many previously unseen colors. The piece behind the altar in the Adoration Chapel reveals angels and clouds that radiate a blue chroma."

"The vision of our foundresses, especially Mother Alfons Schmid, continues to make us aware of the limitless beauty of music and art in this sacred place." Sister Deborah continued. "We are ever grateful for the generous spirit and support of our benefactors and donors, with whom this spectacular restoration is made possible. I am delighted that these precious artistic pieces will be enjoyed by worshipers and performers as they were intended by the artisans over 100 years ago."




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**If you would like to support this restoration of the sisters' sacred treasure, we invite you to donate on our website, [www.sssf.org](http://www.sssf.org), or contact our Mission Advancement Office at 414-384-3334.**