United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received FEB 2 9 1980
date entered APR 91 198

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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Category district public building(s) private structure both object in process being considered	X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted X yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence x religious scientific transportation other:
4. Owner of Proper		rity of the design	
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5. Location of Lega	al Description	f the chaptry. no	the vestibule c
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title Landmarks Preservation Comm	LP-0260 has this pro	ntional entrance fi le benimested elemented el	and has a convo on X sey ?eldige
date October 19, 1966		federal state	e <u>x</u> loca
depository for survey records New York	City Landmarks Pres	servation Commission	n
city, town 305 Broadway, New York		state	New York 10007

7. Description Condition — excellent — good — ruins Check one — unaltered — altered — moved date — moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

unexposed

fair

This dignified French Gothic church, designed by Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, is located on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 53rd Street. The parish house, a separate building, borders the church on the west side. The church is approximately 95 feet in height; it is 214 feet long and 100 feet wide. Constructed of white Kentucky limestone, the structural system was originally masonry bearing wall. Eleven years after completion, however, the unbuttressed, north wall bulged, and steel beams were placed across each pair of columns above the ceiling. Later, when 53rd Street was excavated for subway construction, steel beams were placed under the high altar and reredos.

The Fifth Avenue facade of St. Thomasu'is divided into three asymmetrical parts by two massive buttresses which flank the main entrance. At the north end of the main facade is a narrow subordinate area of wall with an entrance leading to the north aisle of the church. The corner tower is located at the south. A small entrance at the base of the tower leads to the chantry (or Lady's Chapel), south of the nave and the narrow south aisle. The main entrance, in the middle section of the main facade, leads to the off-center nave. The tripartite exterior design clearly expresses the interior plan of St. Thomas': wide nave, narrow north aisle, and chantry to the south.

The deeply recessed portal is decorated with sculpture and carving. Above, statues of the saints, alternating with small windows, are surmounted by a rose window with beautiful tracery. This portion of the facade is capped with a row of saints in niches.

The severity of the design of the corner tower contrasts with the richly ornamented main section of the facade. The design is unified by band courses and decoration in direct horizontal relation to the main design elements of the center section.

The southern wall of the chantry forms the 53rd Street facade of St. Thomas' and is the only other exposed elevation. Buttresses divide this facade into five bays. The easternmost bay contains the 53rd Street entrance, which leads into the vestibule of the chantry. Stained glass windows decorate the other four bays. The wall of the south gallery, above the chantry, is also divided into five bays and each contains a tripartite stained glass window. Behind this wall and rising above it nine great clerestory windows extend the length of the nave.

A parish house is located at the west end of the 53rd Street facade. It is set off from the chapel by an octagonal tower decorated with fine carving and surmounted by a lead cap rising above the five-story roof line. The parish house entrance was originally at the back of the deeply shadowed loggia formed by the triple-arched, cloister-like arcade but has been relocated to the western end of the house and has a conventional entrance from 53rd Street.

(See continuation sheet)

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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PAGE 2

New York County
CONTINUATION SHEET St. Thomas Church ITEM NUMBER

The interior of St. Thomas Church is notable for the variety and richness of the decoration. All but one of the vividly colored clerestory windows were made by Whitefriars of London. The octagonal oak pulpit is decorated by fine carvings while the lectern is ornamented with wood inlay. The carvings embellishing the wooden choir stalls on the north and south sides of the chancel were executed by Irwin & Casson of Boston after design by Goodhue. The most distinctive interior detail, however, is the reredos rising above the altar. The original design was created by Goodhue and modelled by the noted American sculptor, Lee Lawrie. The carving of the figures was done by Bardolino Brothers. It is carved from ivory colored stone from Wisconsin and fills the entire west wall of the nave.

No significant alterations have been made in St. Thomas', though the church continues to add to the exterior decoration in accordance with Goodhue's original plan. In 1962-63, statuary and carving on the Fifth Avenue facade was completed. In 1971, four sculptured figures were set in the corner tower, and in the same year, sixteen stone heads (two different models) were carved as corbels under the highest band of molding on the tower.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C		military music	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1909-1914	Builder/Architect Cran	m. Goodhue & Ferguson	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Thomas Church is an outstanding example of French Gothic Revival style ecclesiastic architecture. It is notable for its main portal which is surmounted by a magnificent rose window of French inspiration, its superb sculptural ornamentation, and the richly detailed chancel and reredos. The church is also a significant example of the work of its architects, Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942) and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue (1869-1924). As partners in the firm of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson between 1897 and 1914, they did much to popularize the Gothic Revival style in ecclesiastic architecture.

Construction of the present day St. Thomas' was begun in 1909 to replace an earlier structure designed by Richard Upjohn which had burned in 1905. The Parish house was completed in 1911 and the church itself was finished three years later. Cram was responsible for the original plan and design, and his partner Goodhue concentrated on the invention and placement of ornamental detail. Prior to completion of St. Thomas Church, the firm of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson was dissolved. Goodhue was retained by St. Thomas' to supervise the completion of the church and to plan and oversee the construction of the reredos and other interior decoration.

The decorative details in wood, stone, and metal which Goodhue designed for St. Thomas' are among the finest examples of his work. In the chancel, the wood carvings given in memory of the World War I armistice, were designed by Goodhue and are rich in imagery and portraiture. There are biblical scenes as well as portraits of Theodore Roosevelt, Lee Lawrie and others. Above the choir stalls the leading figures of the World War I allied powers are depicted as are leading members of the church's congregation. The reredos contain sculptured figures of biblical personalities and likenesses of individuals associated with the development of Christianity and the Protestant Episcopal faith.

St. Thomas' has continued this precedent of including contemporary figures in its decoration. In 1971, four sculptures related by social themes were installed in the church's corner tower: Martin Luther King and Mary Bethune on Fifth Avenue, and Abraham Lincoln and William Wilberforce on 53rd Street.

The present St. Thomas Church is the fourth to house this 155 year old congregation. The first two church buildings were located at Broadway and Houston Street. In 1868 the congregation moved uptown to its present Fifth Avenue location. Richard Upjohn was commissioned to build the first church on this site but the Gothic Revival building burned in 1905. A temporary wooden structure was erected

(See continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

A more complete bibliography may be found in the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission research file: St. Thomas Church and St. Thomas Parish House.

(See continuation sheet)	
10. Geographical Data	UTM NOT VERFED
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organization Landmarks Preservation Commissive & number 305 Broadway City or town New York	telephone (212) 566-7577 state New York 10007
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according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the State Historic Preservation Officer signature	he Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.
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Chief of Registration	date 14/14 1/1300

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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New York County

CONTINUATION SHEET St. Thomas Church ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

on the site to house church services while the present church by Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson was constructed around it. Today St. Thomas' is known for its excellance in sacred music and its choir school, established in 1919; and for its active role in social welfare programs.

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

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CONTINUATION SHEET St. Thomas Church ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE

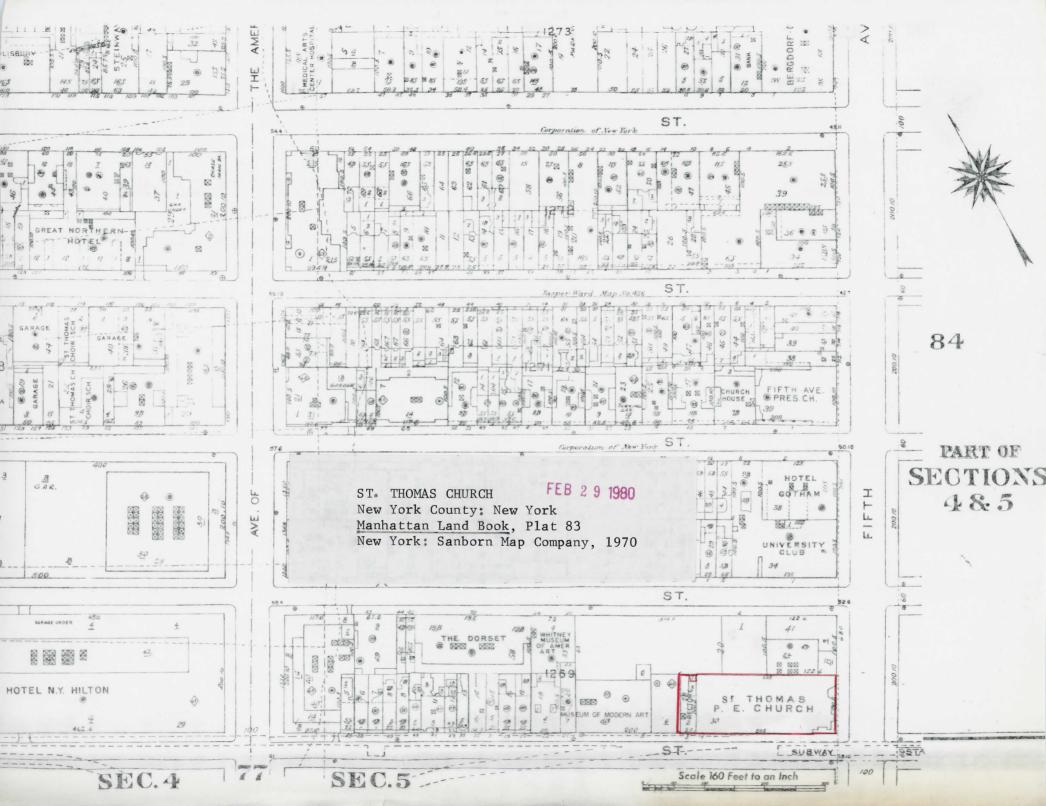
Demille, George E. Saint Thomas Church in the City and County of New York, 1823-1954. Austin: Church Historical Society, 1958.

Grove, Harold E. St. Thomas Church. New York: St. Thomas Church, 1965.

Landmarks Preservation Commission. St. Thomas Church and St. Thomas

Parish House Designation Report (LP-0260).

New York: City of New York, 1973.



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United States Department of the Interior - Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service



St. Thomas Church & Parish House 1-3 West 53rd Street New York, N.Y. County FEB 2 9 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1979 Neg. at: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

View looking Northwest

APR 9 1980 # 10/6



St. Thomas Church & Parish House 1-3 West 53rd Street New York, N.Y. County FEB 2 9 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1979 Neg. at: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

View: Main Facade

APR 9 1980

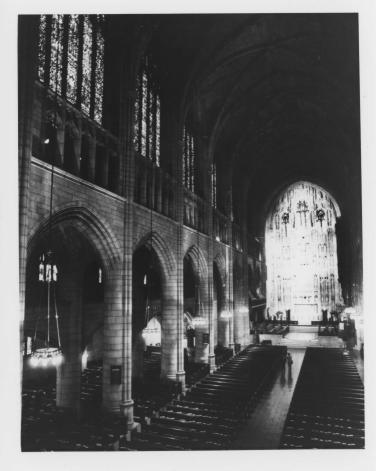
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St. Thomas Church & Parish House
1-3 West 53rd Street
New York, N.Y. Conty FEB 2 9 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1979 Neg. at: New York City Lnadmarks Preservation Commission

View: Narthex, looking north #376



St. Thomas Church & Parish House 1-3 West 53rd Street FEB 2 9 1980 New York, N.Y. County

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1979 Neg. at: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Nave, looking southwest #4466 View:

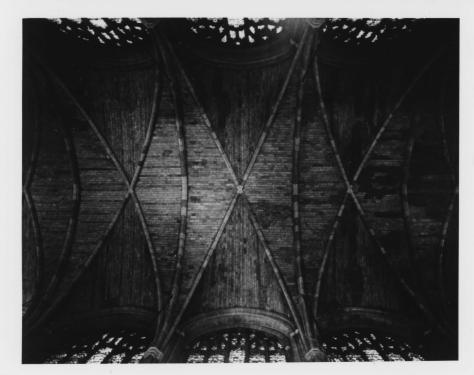
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St. Thomas Church & Parish House
1-3 West 53rd Street
New York, N.Y. County FEB 2 9 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1979 Neg. at: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

View; Reredos APR 9 1980 # 5076



St. Thomas Church & Parish House
1-3 West, 53rd Street
New York, N.Y. Company FEB 2 9 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1979
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View: Nave

Nave Vaulting

#676

APR 9 1980

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

the National or State reservations shown on this map

436

Hot wood to end the MAR 31 1980

Mr. James E. Marlow Sexton-Administrator Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street New York, New York 10019

Dear Mr. Marlow:

Thank you for your kind letter of March 20, 1980, endorsing the nomination of St. Thomas Church and Parish House. New York County. New York, to the National Register of Historic Places. We appreciate your providing us with a copy of the attractive volume on Saint Thomas Church.

The National Register staff will review the nomination after the 30-day comment period ends on April 7, 1980. If the Saint Thomas Church and Parish House is entered in the National Register, we will notify the State Historic Preservation Officer, Mr. Orin Lehman, Commissioner, Parks and Recreation, Agency Building #1, Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12238. The enclosed material should answer your questions about the Grants-in-Aid Program and other preservation programs of the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

If we can be of further assistance to you, please let us know. We appreciate your taking the time to write to us.

Sincerely,

Carol D. Shull [(Sgd.))

Carol D. Shull
Acting Keeper, Division of
the National Register of
Historic Places

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Orin Lehman

Commissioner, Parks and Recreation

Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza

Albany, New York 12238 w/c of inc.

bcc: Director's Reading File

NERO, Regional Director, HCRS-Philadelphia, PA 19106) w/c of inc.

NR-Reading File NR-Sheffield

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN NR

FHR:S Sheffield:mc:3/28/80:343-6404

SAINT THOMAS CHURCH

Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street New York, N.Y. 10019

March 20, 1980

Ms. Carol D. Shull Acting Keeper of National Register United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service Washington, D. C. 20240

Reference number: 661

St. Thomas Church and Parish House

Dear Ms. Shull:

Thank you for your letter of March 7th wherein you advised of St. Thomas' nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The enclosed material should provide you with some detail about the church properties of which you may not be aware. We are very proud of our church and parish house buildings and would, of course, favor their recognition by the government of being worthy of preservation.

We plan during 1980 to do some extensive repair and cleaning to the exterior stone of our buildings and I would appreciate knowing if federal funds are available to us to assist in the cost of restoring and preserving them. I am unable to find an answer to this question from the literature you sent to me and would like a more detailed list of "do's and dont's" for fixing up buildings registered as historical landmarks.

Thank you again, and hope to hear from you soon.

Most sincerely,

James E. Marlow, Sexton-Administrator

-ch 20, 1980

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Nost sincerely,

Tames F. Merlow, Reaton-Administrator

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ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

APR 9 1980

Date Entered

Name

Location

St. Monica's Church

Jamaica Queens County

Williamsburgh Savings Bank

Brooklyn

New Utrecht Reformed Church and Buildings

Kings County

Brooklyn Kings County

Bowling Green Fence and Park

New York

New York County

Sea and Land Church

New York

New York County

St. Thomas Church and Parish House

New York

New York County

Marble Collegiate Reformed Church

New York

New York County

State Historic Preservation Officer-

Also Notified

Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan

Honorable Jacob K. Javits
Honorable Joseph P. Addabbo
Honorable Frederick W. Richmond
Honorable Leo C. Zeferetti

Honorable John M. Murphy Honorable S. William Green

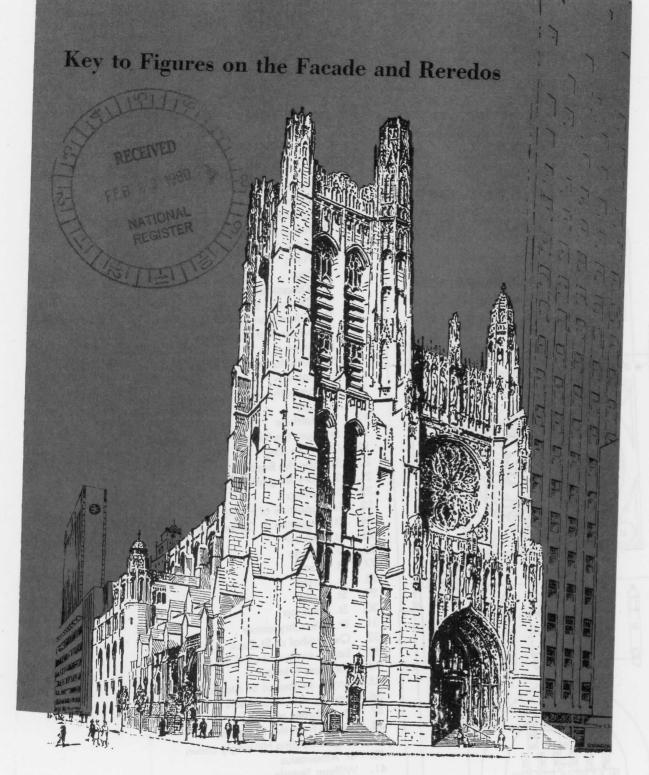
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Mr. Orin Lehman
Commissioner
Parks and Recreation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza

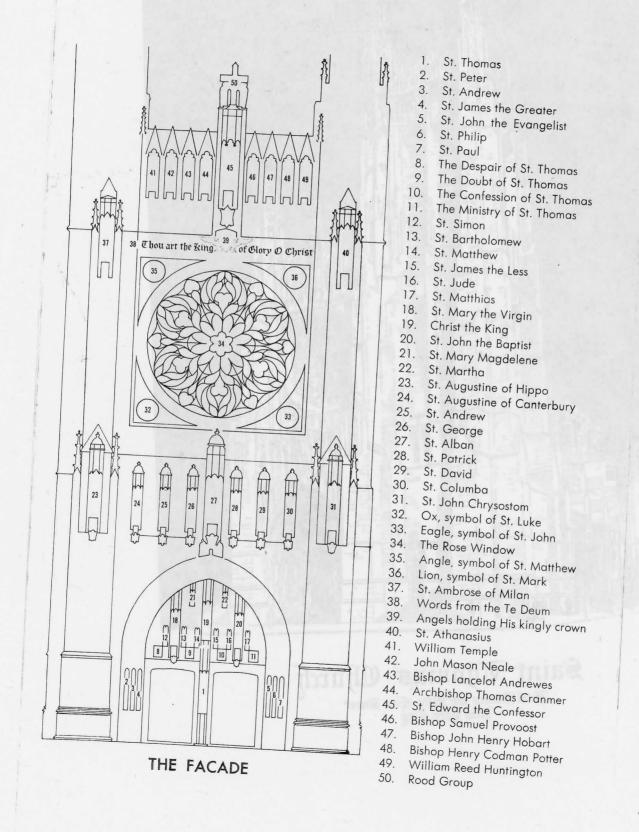
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For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.



Saint Thomas Church Hith Avenue and Hifty-third Street New York City

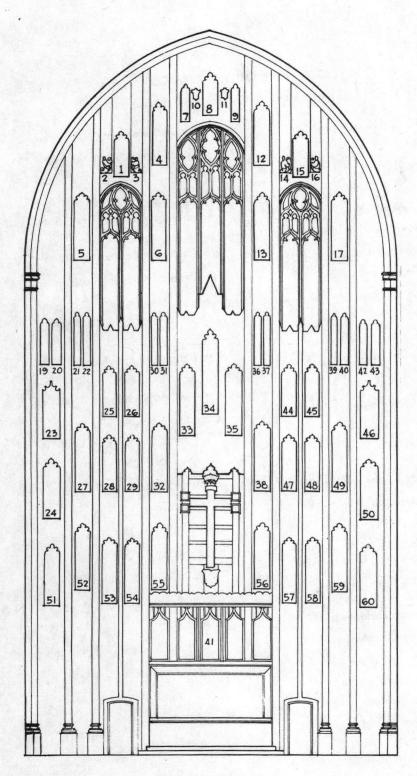


KEY TO FIGURES ON THE REREDOS

(Numbers in parenthesis indicate approximate date of death)

- 1. St. Polycarp (166)
- 2. St. Ignatius (107)
- 3. St. Cyprian (258)
- 4. St. Stephen, first Christian martyr
- 5. St. John Chrysostom (467)
- 6. St. St. Athanasius (373)
- 7, 8, 9. Angels holding the Holy Innocents
- 10-11. Arms of Diocese and Parish
 - 12. St. Philip the Deacon, 1st Century
 - 13. St. Jerome (420)
 - 14. St. Francis of Assisi (1226)
 - 15. St. Gregory the Great (605)
 - 16. Savonarola (1498)
 - 17. St. Augustine of Hippo (1752)
 - 19. Richard Hooker (1600)
 - 20. Bishop Butler (1752)
 - Restitutus, first known Bishop of London (314)
 - 22. St. Columba, Abbot of Iona (597)
 - 23. John Wesley (1791)
 - Canon Liddon,
 St. Paul's Cathedral, London (1890)
 - 25. Bishop Selwyn, New Zealand (1878)
 - 26. Bishop Patterson, Melanesia (1871)
 - 27. St. Bartholomew, Apostle
 - 28. St. Philip, Apostle
 - 29. St. James the Less, Apostle
 - 30. St. Augustine, Canterbury (604)
 - St. Theodore of Tarsus, Canterbury (690)
 - 32. St. James the Great, Apostle
 - 33. Blessed Virgin Mary
 - 34. Christ the King
 - 35. St. John the Beloved Disciple

- 36. The Venerable Bede (735)
- 37. John Wycliffe (1384)
- 38. St. Andrew, Apostle
- 39. Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury (1556)
- 40. William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury (1645)
- 41. St. Thomas kneeling before our Lord
- Samuel Seabury, first Bishop in the United States (1796)
- William White, first Bishop of Pennsylvania (1836)
- 44. John Payne, first missionary bishop to Africa (1874)
- 45. Channing Moore Williams, first missionary bishop to Japan (1910)
- 46. George Washington
- 47. St. Simon, Apostle
- 48. St. Jude, Apostle
- 49. St. Matthias, Apostle
- Phillips Brooks,
 Bishop of Massachusetts (1893)
- 51. William E. Gladstone
- 52. St. John Baptist
- 53. St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist
- 54. St. Mark, Evangelist
- 55. St. Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles
- 56. St. Peter, Apostle
- 57. St. Luke, Evangelist
- 58. St. John the Beloved as Evangelist
- 59. St. Thomas, Apostle and Patron
- Daniel Sylvester Tuttle, Presiding Bishop (1923)



THE REREDOS