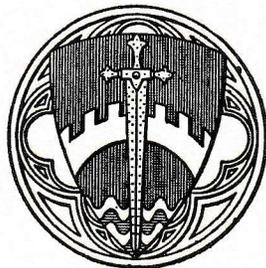
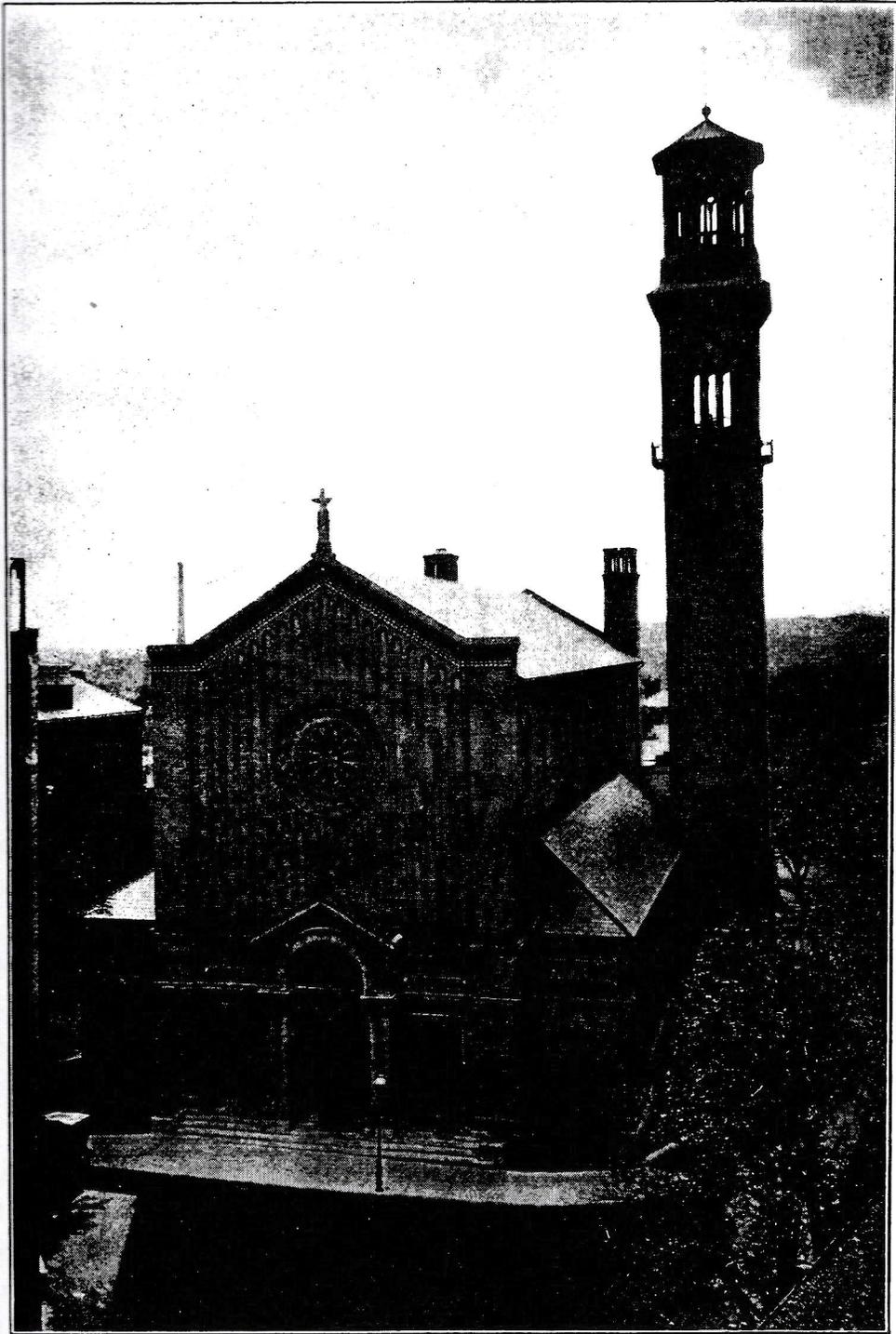


ST PAUL CHURCH CAMBRIDGE - MASS.

DESCRIPTION, EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR
By The REVEREND JOHN J. RYAN, I. P. P.



OCTOBER 13, 1924



FOREWORD



THE present booklet is given publication at the expressed wish of His Eminence, Cardinal O'Connell. After listening to a report, by the Pastor, of the work on St. Paul's Church, then near completion, His Eminence enthusiastically said, "The edifice you describe, Father Ryan, is a book in stone, and must be put into print. At the first opportunity, I enjoin you to write what you have said to me, and a great deal more; for I see that you have indicated but the merest outline of the effort put into the church. It would be an absolute loss to leave unrecorded the lessons conveyed by that edifice, interiorly and exteriorly embodied in symbolism and embellishment. All this, I repeat, should be prepared for the inquiring public."

The frank opinion of the Cardinal so freely spoken, was wholly unexpected; it was, therefore, most gratifying.

At the first free time, the Pastor set himself to writing an account of all that had been achieved by the erection of St. Paul's. The labor proved not a task, as perhaps one might suppose, but most pleasurable because the mental review of plan and detail, of decoration and furnishings, appeared like building anew without the worry and toil required by the actual construction of the edifice.

The Cardinal's words became clearly understood, and anxiety grew that the descriptions set down might fail their purpose, namely, to illumine the faithful and any others who should desire to know the meaning or significance of the illustrations and emblems of Christian teaching.

Reports of the beauty of the church had found their way to the public. Although time is demanded for thorough workmanship, especially where there is artistic detail, interest grew apace, until the wish was expressed most urgently to have the church opened. Much remained for the workmen to do; furnishings in large measure were lacking, so that it was a real difficulty to find a way to

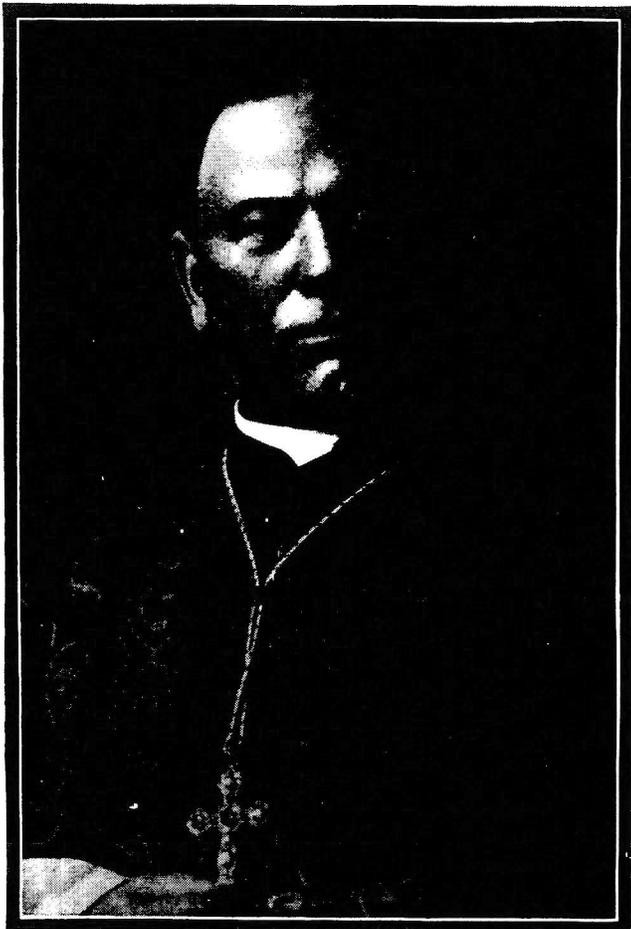
gratify the public request. For the reasons stated, the dedication of the church must be deferred until the Fall, but the delay seemed too long. Easter Sunday 1923, the doors were opened. The faithful crowded each service. Their enthusiasm was overflowing. They came with friends for Vespers, and the number of visitors was such, that to accommodate all, it was necessary to leave open the church into the evening hours. Many sought a printed explanation of all they beheld. The assurance of a booklet, explanatory of everything to be seen in their church, was welcomed with joyful satisfaction.

It is said that some painters of our day belittle, more or less scornfully, churches and church architecture in this country; and, what is more to be deplored, openly assert that religion has lost its vitality and no longer holds within itself the power of inspiration. Vainly is it pointed out that the need of place and money, varying changes in the populace, local encroachments by business or civic requirement are the causes which hinder the erection of churches like those of olden days.

On the side of the believer, the question is asked, if the fault is not within themselves? If faith is dead, how can they catch the vision that religious conception gives forth? Be that as it may, some artists, not of the Catholic faith, who visited St. Paul's on Easter Day conceded this church to be an exception in their experience.

Even before this occurrence a certain Catholic artist, now engaged in special work abroad, told the Pastor the joy he felt that his own parish church, the place of his nativity, was a strong refutation of the contention held by a class of artists who seemed bent upon belittling every honest endeavor put forth in church building, condemning it as unworthy of the consideration of real art.

May we say further that the gentlemen who were favorable in their criticism of St. Paul's were not suffered to depart without having been informed that previous to the World War a school of Modern Christian Art had flourished in Belgium and the lower provinces of Germany along the Rhine. Members of this school were professional men of note who had adorned chapels, palaces,



HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL O'CONNELL

and some later churches in a manner that challenged the standards of ages; and it was not thought an exaggeration when judges declared some of the productions surpassed many of the accepted paintings of the days ago.

A professor from this school of Modern Art has been employed in painting several subjects to be placed in the New Church. St. Paul's is abreast of present day requirements; it is prepared to face religious demands of whatever kind; for it is "The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth."

"THE CHURCH PIAZZA"



JUST off Massachusetts Avenue, the principal thoroughfare of the city, a little to one side and parallel, in a piazza all its own, rises the new St. Paul's Church. Architects, educators, and well-informed individuals have declared it to be among the handsomest of the late buildings erected there, and of such character as to do credit to Cambridge. The site is the center of the Parish. The principal streets radiate and make easy access from all directions. From the farthest boundary, the faithful may come to service within a short ten minutes. The location happens to be the focus of the boulevard system planned for, and even beyond, greater Boston. It is at the head of the "Gold Coast," a term given to the street on which front the splendid dormitories of the reputed wealthy students of Harvard.

While viewing the buildings in company with Mr. Edward T. P. Graham, the architect, the President of one of the best Art Clubs of Boston unhesitatingly asserted the site to be the most European, so far as had come under his notice in this country. By way of explanation he stated that in the old countries it was almost universal to build churches apart from the noise and rumble of traffic; thus, it happens the important churches occupy, each its own piazza, where the quiet recollection befitting religious devotion prevails, and when the service is ended, the congregation may have easy egress to the spacious area without.

St. Paul's Church is of the Lombardic style of architecture; this was deemed best suited to the type of buildings in the vicinity which, for the most part, make up the University group. The front of the church which opens on the piazza extends along DeWolfe Street west, until it meets Mt. Auburn Street south, then eastward through the playground of the Parish School. On the west side rising to a height of 187 feet is the campanile, so attractive as to merit praise from all.

Whatever view of the edifice one takes, the dominating presence of the campanile is felt. As it lifts itself clear above the housetops,

it is a striking feature in the landscape and stands out before all who travel in that direction along Massachusetts Avenue. As we cross the Harvard Campus to the side of Widener Library, the charming sight of the campanile and the church facade arrests the attention and not infrequently stays the hurrying footsteps that a second and longer look might be obtained. The Larz Anderson Bridge offers another good view; but most people agree the best of views is from Memorial Drive which skirts the Charles River; for there, the whole building and campanile are seen completely. At the proper distance, the effect produced has slowed the speed of the autoist for a more satisfying glance, and has called forth many cordial expressions of approbation. The campanile, looked at from Memorial Drive, has been likened to "a lily lifting itself above the stalk."

As one looks upward, his eye delights in viewing the finish at the topmost part of the tower. The design is an octagonal crown surmounted by cross, resting upon the stone slab (the roof to the belfry itself); but at the distance below, the diadem seems placed upon a cushion, fringed round about by trappings which are beautiful and fitting. One marvels that brick and stone could have been wrought into the design, even as the deft hand weaves into costly fabric. The clock dial has its proper place; the sweet-toned Westminster chimes ring out the hour on the quarter, and if it be at the angelus, the silvery notes of St. John The Baptist bell tell out the salutation of Gabriel. The eye follows downward the plain shafting of the tower, relieved at intervals by hollow squares that bestow life and buoyancy to the surface.

The constructive material is brick with free stone trimmings. These are employed almost solely in the structures of the vicinity, and judged by the surroundings, the few attempts made to use stone altogether have not been satisfactory.

It is estimated that more than one million bricks were used in construction, but they were used with elaborate design and skill. The pattern bordering the walls at the church eaves is wrought in such wise as to appear crocheted and inserted in a rich fabric. Over the window tops, the courses of brick run in wavelike order, establishing a nice divisional line along the solid masonry. At the time of

erection, an edition of the Bricklayers' Journal called attention to the variety of design followed in the church, and commended the skill of the tradesmen who had been so successful in the undertaking. Some building constructors have not hesitated to say that a lesson is furnished by showing how bricks may be used even for the artistic, thus relieving the plainness of the wall now commonly erected.

The front and rear walls of the church display raised lines, perpendicular, and spaced at small intervals, that catch light and shade until the surface area appears to be in plaited folds. In the rear wall, on a line with the tabernacle and facing the street, is a richly sculptured crucifix of stone; a hood shelters the crucified form of the Saviour which is lighted in evening hours by an overhead electric light. The eichorn at the street corners of the old world is reproduced in this new country.

The front wall of the church follows the plaited rows as on the rear wall, but with far different effect. High up at the center there is a most perfect rose window, the frame of stone and ornate, while the glass panels, flashing out colors of richest red and green and blue, transform the appearance into fascinating interest. Indeed, as one visualizes, fancy reveals brooch antique with jeweled center, golden chains and pendants. The window becomes the central jewel; the golden chains are the parallel lines in the masonry tipped by crosses indentured, except the outer drop chain on either side; for these support the sculptured armorial bearings of Benedict XV and those of His Eminence, Cardinal O'Connell.

Unlike anything else in the outward arrangement is the facade of stone, substantial in form and point of detail. The pediment carries to the right and left, sheltering the tympanum, which, in turn, is supported by the frieze; the whole resting upon the ornamental capitols of clustered columns, placed at the divisional spaces that form the entrances. The doors are deeply recessed in casements of stone slabs, large, and of bordered ornament. The vine is worked into the design and even on the capitols of the pillars.

St. Paul's Church is the formal expression of an unqualified belief in revealed religion and the Divinity of Christ. Looking at the frieze, this faith is disclosed by the Angel of Revelation supporting a

cross; towards the cross are ancients looking for the salvation that shall be the gift of the cross; and, counterbalancing, are to be seen the Christians who also regard the cross as the source of salvation and every spiritual good. The tympanum exhibits a beautiful bas-relief bust of St. Paul, the interpreter of the old law and the new law, his finger on the text and the page held open by the sword grasped in his left hand. The text is engraven on the rim of the tympanum and reads; "The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." (1. Timothy. Chapter III.) The quotation from St. Paul, the Patron of the church, is the key to the complete understanding of everything within and without this temple of the Lord. The scriptures, history, the arts, and science have been called upon, in some measure, to contribute to the elaboration of the text that revealed truth shall prevail. Undertaken in this spirit, the "book of stone" is wrought. To read the open page a visit must be paid within.