



ST. MARY OF THE HILL PARISH

The Most Unique Parish in Wisconsin



WELCOME

I would like to thank you for visiting Saint Mary of the Hill parish on behalf of all your brothers and sisters in faith here in the Holy Hill area.

What can we say to you but what Our Savior, Jesus Christ, said to the two disciples in the Gospel (Jn. 1:39): "Come, and you will see. So, they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day." Yes, come and see. Stay as they stayed with Him.

Saint Mary of the Hill is a Roman Catholic Parish. That means that it has roots all the way back to the original Roman parish of Saint John of the Lateran in Rome. Saint John of the Lateran is the parish church and cathedral of the Holy Father as the Bishop of Rome. From this parish were sent forth the missionaries that converted all of Europe and through Europe the US to the faith.

One might think that Saint Mary's is not traditional because there are no stain glass windows, marble altars, kneelers and large building with classic architecture. If you go to the old Roman churches in Rome you will find little of this. The old Roman churches have slim cut slabs of white marble instead of glass, and no kneelers or pews (they were introduced by the Austro-Hungarian Emperor in the 1100s). Even the old Gothic Churches in Europe are just beginning to use chairs.

Kneeling and bowing came as a result of the influence of non-Roman practice of belittling oneself before the emperor. The Roman citizen stood before the Emperor as a sign that he/she shared in the dignity of being a Roman Citizen whom the Emperor represented. So, to the Christian, Jesus is the greatest of all Emperors and so they would stand all during the Liturgy. Roman churches had a shelf built into the inner walls of churches and called it the Mercy Seat. It was called this because if you sat, because of illness, age or youth, God would have mercy on you for sitting in His presence.

If you lost your Roman dignity through a capital crime you were beheaded (this is why Saint Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified, Paul was a Roman citizen, Peter was not). No longer could you raise your head in dignity with the Emperor as a Roman citizen.

Holy Hill is a 12th century Romanesque structure, thus tied more to the more recent European practices of its time. In any case the purpose of Church structures is to draw one closer to God. The most important element of these buildings is that they are open to anyone ("My house shall be called a House of Prayer for all people."), from the most affluent to the average and poor.

Saint Mary of the Hill is one of the most unique parishes in the Kettle Moraine area: 1st century House Church Model meeting the 12th Century Romanesque. Where else could you have available both legitimate traditions of the Church, Roman and European?

We hope you know that you are always welcome at our unique parish community. May the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, along with Our Blessed Mother Mary, continue to fill you with their love.

Friar Fr. Bonaventure Lussier, OCD