



# ACCESSIBILITY *to Beauty*

A COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN OF  
ST. MARY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



Keeping beauty accessible to  
the public through relationship,  
community and calls to action



For more than 125 years, St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church has been welcoming the stranger and creating family.

Our church was founded in 1898 by Eastern European immigrants in search of a better life. It has the distinction of being the oldest Eastern Catholic church in Indiana and Chicagoland.

Today, our congregation represents five language groups and offers a multicultural and intergenerational experience of prayer and community. We pray according to the Byzantine rite, a spiritual tradition that emphasizes beauty, chant, mysticism and asceticism. Our tradition is ancient, but our community is committed to living our faith in the present day.

St. Mary's parishioners have put their church and volunteerism at the service of the Whiting-Robertsdale community and beyond for over a century. To help us continue being beacons of light in Northwest Indiana and witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ in our Byzantine tradition, we launched an ambitious \$1.6-million campaign in fall 2024, raising over \$225,000 in donations and pledges by the end of the year. We are seeking to raise the rest starting in 2025.

I hope once you read this case for support about how your funds will be used to preserve and promote the jewel that is St. Mary's, you will choose to become part of our story and make a gift that will continue our church's legacy for years to come. Thank you and may God reward you for your generosity!

Rev. Andrew J. Summerson, S.Th.D



## MAKING *Beauty* PUBLIC PROPERTY

St. Mary's participates in the long-standing tradition of local pride and investment through our commitment to the sacred arts, classic architecture, beautiful worship, public events, educational outreach and volunteerism. We want our community to be a beacon of beauty for the region.

# BEAUTY SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERY HUMAN HEART

Every church should bring beauty, truth and goodness more clearly into view.

## CREATION *is Beautiful*

### THE BLESSING OF LAKE MICHIGAN

Since 2019, St. Mary's has partnered with city officials to gather over 1,000 people at our **ANNUAL BLESSING OF LAKE MICHIGAN** each January. The event has garnered national media attention and encouraged environmental advocacy.

### MARIAN PRAYER GARDEN

Beauty is to be shared, which is why St. Mary's opened up its grounds to create a beautiful outdoor space for the public. The park benches invite passers-by to peaceful contemplation of a glorious mosaic of sacred art and of a classic Byzantine icon in our Marian flower garden.



## WHITING *is Beautiful*

### FAMILY AND FUN

Whiting's Pierogi Fest is a huge draw for families and St. Mary's is in the middle of the action, with our "Holy Rollers" participating in the parade and selling the best homemade walnut, poppy seed and apricot rolls in the region.

St. Mary's also plays a key role in making Whiting a national hub for the Catholic community.

In 2024, St. Mary's introduced **CATHOLIC DAY** at Pierogi Fest, drawing over 500 people for an outdoor concert featuring the chart-topping bluegrass band The Hillbilly Thomists. We also welcomed over 200 people for a **SUMMER FAMILY CAMP** and hosted the **NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION** at the request of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, drawing over 600 people.

In July 2025, St. Mary's will welcome 400 Byzantine Catholics for the **NORTH AMERICAN BYZANTINE CATHOLIC ASSEMBLY**—a week dedicated to prayer, fellowship and evangelization. The Eastern Catholic bishops chose St. Mary's as the model of a historic church embracing growth and renewal.

# EDUCATING *for Beauty*

## FORMATION OF THE WHOLE PERSON

St. Mary's is a driving force in Northwest Indiana in educating for beauty through its lecture series, retreats, symposia, parish missions, family camps, icon-painting workshops and a monthly reading group, called "Taproom Talks," at The Standard Taproom in downtown Whiting.

The parish has also sponsored and coordinated public lectures in Chicago on faith and work, and an Eastern Christian sacred music concert at the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Chapel with the world-renowned Cappella Romana.



## *The Beauty of* **COMMUNITY**

### EMPOWERING VOLUNTEERISM

Whiting's volunteer base is largely comprised of the men and women who pray in our churches, including the parishioners of St. Mary's, who have dedicated countless hours to raise up our community, offering care and comfort for those in need.

Whether they are organizing national faith gatherings, coordinating Lunch With Friends, making weekly soup delivery to shut-ins or helping to plan Pierogi Fest or other Chamber of Commerce events, St. Mary's volunteers bring love for their neighbor and their community to everything they do.

**DONATE TODAY**  
[www.stmarywhiting.org](http://www.stmarywhiting.org)

# *The Beauty of* HOSPITALITY

Virtual connections are on the rise, yet we seem more isolated than ever. The only antidote is face-to-face encounters with a place that cares and that recognizes the value of each person. St. Mary's is that place.

Our theology of iconography gives us a face-to-face encounter with the living God and urges us to seek the image of God in each other.

The interior remodel of our church in 2012, which included the addition of numerous beautiful icons in the Byzantine tradition, also led to a renewal of our congregation. Today more than 70% of parishioners with young families and people of all ethnic traditions, have been members less than five years. These new members have been blessed by St. Mary's spirit of welcome.

YOU are welcome, too!



# YOUR INVESTMENT WILL HELP US TO:



## *Preserve* OUR STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS

### NEED

Our stained-glass windows—our largest and most historic sacred art, weathered and worn by the natural elements for over 100 years—need repair.

**INVESTMENT: \$750,000**

### PLAN

Install protective glazing; repair wooden window frames; create a climate-controlled ventilation system for windows; expose covered windows and restore damaged areas.

## *Expand* OUR HOSPITALITY

### NEED

Our growing community needs more suitable space for hospitality after Sunday worship and for educational and outreach activities.

**INVESTMENT: \$150,000**

### PLAN

Expand our narthex to create a multipurpose space for parish meetings, an information station and hospitality for large groups after services, lectures and concerts.



## *Create* ACCESSIBILITY

### NEED

Our church needs a stairless entrance and bathrooms that can accommodate people with disabilities, as well as diaper-changing facilities for our growing infant population.

**INVESTMENT: \$200,000**

### PLAN

Install an ADA-compliant ramp by the church entrance and renovate the facilities to create an accessible ADA-compliant restroom with a family-friendly change station.

## *Leave* A LEGACY

### NEED

We need to stabilize our finances for future generations of parishioners.

**INVESTMENT: \$500,000**

### PLAN

Expand an endowment to sustain our building and ministries into the future.



# *Be a part* **OF OUR FUTURE**

Join us in shaping the future while honoring the rich legacy of our past. Through our sacred space, cherished traditions, and vibrant community, we continue to be a beacon of faith and connection in Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland.

Your support—whether through online contributions, planned giving, or charitable gifts—plays a crucial role in advancing our mission and realizing our vision for generations to come.

Together, we can ensure that the values and heritage we uphold continue to thrive and inspire.



2011 Clark Street | Whiting, IN 46394



# CONTRIBUTE *Today!*

Together we can keep the beauty accessible in Whiting for another 125 years.

## DONATE ONLINE

Go to [www.stmarywhiting.org](http://www.stmarywhiting.org) and click on "Donate." Choose "Accessibility to Beauty" as your fund.

## SEND A CHECK

Payable to "St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church," to:

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church  
2011 Clark St.  
Whiting, IN 46394

Write "Accessibility to Beauty" in the memo line.

## MAKE A GIFT OF STOCK OR A BEQUEST

Email [frasummerson@parma.org](mailto:frasummerson@parma.org) or call (219) 659-0277.