

St. Francis Solanus Catholic Church

College Avenue at Seventeenth Streets - Modified Gothic - 1884
Bro. Adrian Wewer, C. F. M., architect

In 1859, a Rev. P. Capistran was the first Franciscan, as far as history records, to visit Quincy, helping and assisting for about 50 days, at St. Boniface Church. During his stay, many expressed the desire to have the Franciscan Fathers really settle at Quincy. Mr. Christian Borstadt generously offered the site for this first Franciscan church.

In 1884, permission was obtained from the Bishop to construct the present building... known at the time as "A New Church on the Prairie." The building is 182 feet long, the nave being 70 feet, and the transept is 120 feet wide. The massive, yet graceful spire tapers to a height of 217 feet. A smaller steeple rises 50 feet above the crossing of the transept to a height of 135 feet. An interesting sidelight is that the building was started on July 28, 1884 and was entirely under roof before winter set in! The cornerstone was laid in April, 1885 and the building was completed in 1886, having cost approximately \$75,000. It is built entirely of brick and stone.

The middle nave is resting on 14 graceful pillars and is well lighted by 28 large stained-glass windows of simple design. The sanctuary, with its lofty altar, immediately attracts attention. This masterpiece in carving was moved from the old St. Francis Church and a pioneer Quincian, a Mr. Klingele, helped carve a portion. He also helped carve the confessionals located at the two side entrances.

In the course of time many new features were added to beautify the church still more. In November, 1886, the 14 Stations of the Cross were added. In 1888, the two side altars, one of the Immaculate Conception and the other the Sacred Heart were added. In time all the statues were added... all wood-carved in Munich Germany. In 1890, the artistic pulpit was added. Originally, this ornate wooden piece had a superb spiral stair and a canopy, and was located more to the front of the church. At one time there was a wood-carved Communion Rail across the front of the church.

Two artistically carved doors lead to the community choir of the Friars and to the Vestry. In July and August of 1892, Brothers Isadore and Mauritius put up the stalls on which they had been working for three years. At the outset, many fine paintings, a crucifixion group and stations of the cross... all by famous artists from Germany and Vienna were within the confines of the choir. Through the years many have been transferred to other Franciscan Communities.

The sanctuary is most noteworthy for it is here that we see a large group of statuary. Central is the statue of St. Francis Solanus, the Patron Saint. The statue on the Epistle side represents St. Bonaventure and on the Gospel side is St. Joseph. In the highest niche is a figure of the Seraphic Patriarch, St. Francis of Assisi. The two stained-glass windows on either side of the main altar represent the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Saint Paschal Baylon. The chapel on the north is to honor St. Ann and that on the south to St. Anthony of Padua. The oldest and finest of all of the statues in the church are those on either side of the center aisle. At the altar proper is the beautiful gold tabernacle and beneath is a representation of the "Last Supper."

The organ was built in 1916 by the Wicks Organ Company and replaced an earlier instrument. It is a four-manual organ of five divisions. Three manual and the pedal divisions are located with the console in the west gallery. An Antiphonal Division is located the full length of the church away behind the high altar.

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