

JULY 2008

The deconstruction of the cathedral took place in July.

The interior furnishings that survived the fire were, as far as possible, removed for future use in the new cathedral complex. This included marble elements from the sanctuary, the two side mosaics and the stained glass. These elements, along with some architectural details and a good amount of stone from the cathedral walls, were taken to the Bishop O'Connor Catholic Pastoral Center for storage.

After extensive study, the salvage of the central mosaic was found unfeasible. That mosaic was mounted on a block wall, meaning that a mosaic of thousands of pieces was affixed to a very heavy but brittle and fragile substrate. An effort could have been made to brace the mosaic and wall together, and to lower them to horizontal as gently as possible for transport, but that would have been prohibitively expensive and no one could guarantee that the mosaic would have survived even with those precautions. Conrad Schmitt Studios, which executed the original mosaic, could replicate it from scratch for less than the cost of attempting to move it.

SEPTEMBER 2008

Stones from the cathedral were made available to parishioners and the general public on two Saturday mornings: September 6th and September 13th. Hundreds of people came to get large stones or just a fragment as a memento. Those who came were also given prayer cards featuring the new icon of St. Raphael that is traveling throughout the diocese.

There was a good story about the stone distribution in the Sunday, September 7th edition of the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

In honor of the Feast of the Archangels in September, an engraving of the historic buildings of St. Raphael was displayed – for two weeks at Holy Redeemer and then for the two weeks at St. Patrick.

The engraving shows four buildings that no longer stand: the church (pictured without the addition that was built as the “new” sanctuary) with a small rectory next door (which was replaced by a larger rectory before the current 1950's building was erected); a former parish school (which stood on the site of the later school at the corner of Washington and Henry) and a convent (which seems to have been across Henry Street from the school). Not only have all four of these buildings passed into history, but so has the State Capitol that stands in the background in that engraving. That was a fire too! We have here no lasting city.

The engraving is now in the parish offices at the St. Patrick site.

OCTOBER 2008

By early October, the deconstruction work at the St. Raphael site was complete, with the grounds seeded and mulched.

The original intention has been to fence the property – especially to discourage vandalism on the

remaining rectory building. But it was decided to save that expense, and for the time being leave it as an open green space.