

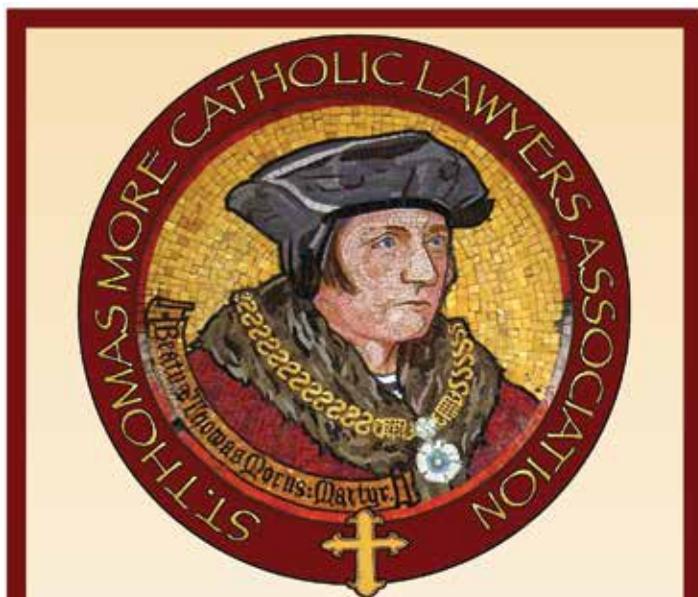


CATHEDRAL

► From PAGE 7 and Monterey all have better claims.

The original wood and wrought-iron central spire was covered in slate in 1859 but still remains behind the slate. The cathedral's high

altar and side altars were designed by Louis Gille and fabricated in Ghert, Belgium. Belgian paintings of St. Francis of Assisi and the Blessed Virgin were hung over the side altars. Over the high altar was placed a painting of St. Louis by Alexander Boulit, who did the murals through-



Chartered in the summer of 1956 at the initiative of Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel and several prominent lawyers, The St. Thomas More Catholic Lawyers Association of the Archdiocese of New Orleans has among its purposes to inculcate and propagate a consciousness of the importance of the Natural Law in the administration of justice and to promote the intellectual and spiritual welfare of its members by fostering and encouraging the study and application of Catholic principles of ethics in the legal profession. The Association immediately undertook the sponsorship of the Annual Red Mass held at St. Louis Cathedral at the invitation of Archbishop Rummel and his successors.

(Source: Archives of Professor Janet Mary Riley)

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The "new" St. Louis Cathedral was dedicated on Dec. 7, 1851.

out the cathedral. Almonester's remains were reinterred in the new cathedral.

The clock in the façade was originally back-lit by gas. In 1853, it caught fire, and in 1891, it was struck by lightning. By 1872, the cathedral's ceiling and sanctuary murals were in poor condition and had to be reworked by Erasmus Humbrecht. He would have to do it again 20 years later.

By the second decade of the 20th century, the cathedral was in such poor condition that the archbishop

ordered the cathedral closed to the public. Temporary "tie chains and supports" were added to hold the cathedral together.

In 1909, there was an explosion in the cathedral during a christening. The choir loft, organ, an altar and virtually every stained-glass window were damaged. The explosion was thought to be from a bomb placed by two men, but the evidence was inconclusive. It may have been a gas explosion.

In 1918, local philanthropist William Irby stepped

forward to pay for the needed structural repairs and restoration of the church. The cathedral's paintings were redone by John George Achille Peretti. The cathedral was reopened on Dec. 8, 1918.

For the 1938 Eighth National Eucharistic Congress, there was yet another renovation. Humbrecht's sanctuary wall mural had to be completely reworked by Oidtmann Studio of New York. On Sept. 4, 1938, The Times-Picayune wrote, "Visitors to the Eucharistic Congress here will see a completely renovated St. Louis Cathedral. This week scaffolding was being removed from the historic religious center as another of a series of renovations near completion."

The church was first air-conditioned in 1956, and two years later, the entire exterior was repaired. In 1960 and 1961, the cathedral had steel framework added to strengthen it.

In anticipation of the nation's bicentennial, the cathedral underwent a major renovation from April 1, 1975, to April 25, 1976, under the direction of architects Kessels-Diboll-Kessels. Work included structural repairs, a new roof, fire suppression system, chandeliers, HVAC system and fresco restoration.

St. Louis Cathedral has been designated a National Historic Landmark, and its image can't be separated from the city's. Who doesn't remember President Bush speaking to the nation following Hurricane Katrina with the cathedral in the background or Pope John Paul II's address to clergy and religious in the cathedral?

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