

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.

Psalm 26:8

How the altar crucifix came to be at St. Nicholas

In the spring of 1993, St. Nicholas' parish family began worshipping in the chapel of Canaan-in-the-Desert, the home of the Evangelical Sister of Mary in north Phoenix. When he made his visitation (then) Bishop Robert Morse (now retired Archbishop) appreciated the beauty of the chapel's crucifix. Through Sr. Josepha, he petitioned Canaan's Mother House in Germany for a like corpus to be placed over the altar of the Heritage Church in Washington, DC. The sisters graciously acceded to his request, and one of them hand delivered it on her return from Germany.

Fr. Dart, then vicar at St. Nicholas, writes

I have to admit that this gave me mixed emotions. I was very happy about the gift of the corpus to the flagship parish of the Province of Christ the King, but I also knew that our chances of acquiring one for our parish were significantly diminished. Bill Cheshire (parish warden at the time) and I found out that this particular piece is very hard to come by. Still, we held our hope, and prayed with others in the parish that one day our Church would be graced by this emblem of love.

In 1996, St. Nicholas' own sanctuary was ready for occupancy. Following is part of the letter which Fr. Dart wrote to Mother Basilea Schlink (now deceased) in Germany, co-foundress of the Sisterhood.

“As we approach this move and prepare to leave our blessed way station at Canaan, I ask you, personally and for my people, if we might have a copy of the crucifix that hangs in Jesus’ Victory Chapel. We would be willing to pay any price you deem appropriate.

Since our new beginning in 1993, this crucifix has been the focal point of our assembly and part of our worship of God in the Holy Communion. You know, more than I do, how well it expresses the love of Jesus for us and his offering to the Father. I know that, were we to place another crucifix above the altar at St. Nicholas Church, it would be less than what we started with.

We are very grateful to you and to your sisters for the love you have showed us in helping us to establish our church, which we sincerely pray will be, both now and through time, a living witness of the life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

St. Nicholas’ copy of the corpus arrived very soon after. “You must know that this just doesn’t happen,” remarked Sr. Rebekah, explaining that works of this size are not regularly manufactured by the sisterhood. “We have a workshop in Switzerland where the sculptures are made, but they produce only smaller ones now.” She further related how one of the sisters at the Swiss branch sent notice to the Mother House that they had a large crucifix unclaimed. The Swiss sister wrote in her letter, **“Is there no one who wants the Lord Jesus?”** Fr. Dart’s petition arrived at about the same time.

Mother Basilea graciously granted St. Nicholas’ request and the corpus was carried to Phoenix soon after.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.

James 1:17

Praise the Lord!