

# The Windows of St. Michael's

*A brief history about those who donated the stained glass windows of St. Michael's, or in whose memory they were given.*

## Given by: Rev. John J. Neale

John J. Neale was born June 22, 1864 in Middletown, Connecticut. He was the son of Patrick Neale and Elizabeth Connelly, who had emigrated from County Louth, Ireland during The Great Hunger. They settled in Middletown, where Patrick Neale became a successful ice merchant.

Young John pursued the religious life, completing his studies at St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore. He received his doctorate at St. Bonaventure. He was ordained a priest of the Hartford diocese by Archbishop Williams on June 21, 1888. His first assignment was assistant at St. Augustine parish in Bridgeport, followed by the same position at St. Patrick's in Norwich. His first pastorate was Immaculate Conception parish in Terryville. On July 28, 1910, Father John J. Neale, LL.D., became pastor of St. Michael's parish in Pawcatuck. He served at St. Michael's for three years, moving on to St. Rose of Lima parish in Meriden in 1914. Wherever he went as pastor he brought with him his sister, Julia Neale, as his housekeeper.



REV. JOHN NEALE

Father Neale had quite an impact on St. Michael parish during his three short years here. He installed a new altar rail, frescoed the walls of the church, installed more stained glass windows, and wiped out the parish debt. Father was also an ardent sportsman. He organized athletic events for youth of the parish regularly and had a tennis court installed behind the convent. He was even known to occasionally invite a parishioner or two into the barn to engage in a boxing match with him.

Father Neale was also quite a world traveler. Passport records show that he made at least 20 trips out of the country between 1913 and 1933, including a trip to Europe while he was our pastor. He traveled throughout Europe a number of times, as well as frequent trips to Cuba, the West Indies, Key West, and the Bahamas. On all of his trips, he gave "restoring his health" as the reason for travel. He must have been pretty healthy after all those trips.

His final years were spent in St. Rose of Lima parish in Meriden, where he had been appointed permanent rector. He was elevated to Right

Reverend Monsignor while at St. Rose. He also was presented with the Benemerenti award by the Pope for his long and exceptional service to the Catholic church throughout the years.

And, of course, he is permanently memorialized in The Last Supper window of St. Michael's, where his image appears as one of the "apostles."

