

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.

Window Symbol: Lyre

The lyre is a harp-like musical instrument often referred to in Sacred Scripture. King David, who is in tradition credited with writing the Psalms, is also known as a skilled player of the lyre. The symbol calls to mind the service of King David and also the Book of Psalms, which forms the foundation of the Church prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours.

Given by: The Sodality of the Children of Mary

On a beautiful spring day, teenage girls in their finest gowns pour out of the church onto Liberty Street. They follow in solemn procession behind tiny flower girls who spread petals on the path to the convent grotto. The congregation falls in behind them. As they process, they sing, *Bring flowers of the fairest, bring flowers of the rarest, from garden and woodland and hillside and vale.* At the grotto the president of the Sodality, resplendent in a bridal gown, climbs a ladder before the statue of Mary. The hymn continues, *O Mary! We crown thee with blossoms today....* In an uncanny precision the crown of flowers she carries always descends to the statue at the exact moment as we hear the words, *we crown thee....* And thus it had been for nearly 100 years.

The Sodality of the Children of Mary Immaculate was established about 1876 by the Sisters of St. Michael School and Rev. Jeremiah S. Fitzpatrick. It quickly became an immensely popular sodality for young girls in the parish, ultimately having both Senior (high school) and Junior (younger) divisions. In the first year alone they had 150 members. They were one of the most visible and active youth groups in the parish for nearly 100 years. They conducted a multitude of social activities, whist parties, plays, and the much anticipated Minstrel Shows. But the most memorable of all was the annual May Crowning.

As I type this story I journey back 60 years. I see the procession, the teenage girls, the little children. In my mind's eye I watch Joan Grills climb the ladder and place the wreath of flowers on the statue's head. And then I hear them. The voices rise until they flood my mind. I hear them now as clearly as if I were standing in that grotto today....

***O Mary! We crown thee with blossoms today,
Queen of the Angels, Queen of the May.***

—Larry O'Keefe

