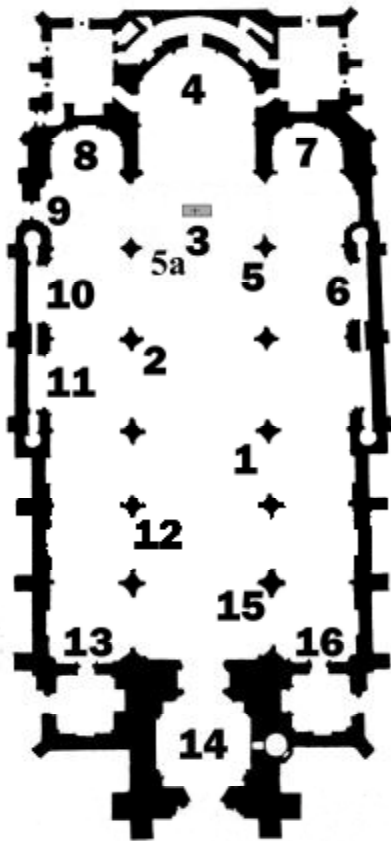


## Dear visitors of our parish church,

we are glad, that you have decided to visit our parish church und would like to welcome you to step in and take a closer look. May we ask you to please remain respectful of the dignity of our Lord's house and the people in prayer.

The church was consecrated to the holy Archangel Michael. After 25 years of collections, it was financed from own resources and built during the years from 1878 to 1883 in neo-Gothic style, replacing the little village church from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which had become too small. The old church was located on the opposite side of the market square and was separated from it by houses, as was the custom in the Lower Rhine region. The new church received a dominating location, clearly visible from the distance. The master builder was Heinrich Wiethase from Cologne. On September 29, 1878, on Patrocinium Day, the foundation stone was laid. On May 1st, 1883, the church, which today is commonly known as the "Schwalmtaldom" (Schwalmtal Cathedral) was inaugurated. In the early 1980s, Reverend Karl Wilhelm Koerschgens had the inner painting, originally provided by the Berchem Company from Essen in 1916, exposed and restored, leaving the interior of the church bright and inviting.

The following little sketch may help you in discovering our church.



(1) The statue of St. Matthias dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In one hand, Matthias is holding a model of the Matthias Basilica in Trier, in the other a hatchet, indicating his martyrdom by hatchet. The statue was donated by the St. Matthias brotherhood, which has been pilgrimaging to Trier every year since 1648.

(2) The pulpit is a masterpiece of Lower Rhine wood craft from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It comes from the Kramer workshop in Kempen, dated 1894. On the base, you can see the prophets from the Old Testament: Jeremiah, Isaiah, Elijah and Moses. Above, you will find individual scenes from the New Testament, separated by the great Fathers of the Church, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, Pope Gregory and St. Augustine.

(3) The celebration altar, altar crucifix, bookrest and sedilia (seats) are modern works by artist Eginio Weinert of Cologne, whose works can also be found in the Vatican Museum in Rome. The same holds true for the St. Matthias reliquary under the altar table.

(4) The high altar, dating back to 1892, was created by artist F. Kramer from Kempen and

connects the Old Testament with the passion of Christ. It is noteworthy, that even the so-called predelle panels, which are actually merely meant to elevate the altar fixture, are decorated with carvings. They show scenes from the Old Testament. The paintings on the (folding) altar wings, created by Waldniel painter Windhausen, show Christmas night and the Adoration of the Magi. The opened main section contains impressive scenes from the passion of Christ. The center piece received its current form in 1913 by Ferdinand Langenberg of Goch, who was a distinguished Lower Rhine artist of the epoch. The choir stalls on the right and left of the altar were also made in the Kramer workshop in Kempen. The altar rails, benches and the wooden gospel desk were created following a design by architect Wiethase.

(5) The Madonna is an outstanding piece of art from the Lower Rhine, dating back to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

(5a) The baroque cross is a very precious piece dating to the time of 1680 till 1700. It was already a part of the ancient church.

(6) The chorus - organ, produced in 1884, was moved from Culcheth, England, to our church in 2001. In 2007 it was restored by Fa. Scholz from Mönchengladbach. It has two manuals and ten stops.

(7) The St. Joseph Altar, dating back to 1901, was created in Ferdinand Langenberg's workshop in Goch. The altar's main group represents the death of St. Joseph.

(8) Just like the St. Joseph Altar, the St. Mary Altar from 1898, also crafted by Ferdinand Langenberg, is another significant testimony to the art of wood working in the Lower Rhine region. The chief motive shows Mother Mary as a rosary queen, handing the rosary to St. Dominic.

(9) Above the baptistery, created by Eginio Weinert of Cologne, you will see one of the two last remaining stained glass window panes, most of which were destroyed in World War II. During the 1950s, the current windows from the workshop of a young artist named Walter Benner from Aachen were installed in the main choir and the two side choirs. The window above the baptistery dates back to 1897. It was made by Derix Company from Kevelaer, just as the Saint Cecilia window, which was installed above the main portal in 1904.

(10) The vespers statue, dated around 1500 in the Lower Rhine region, shows the Mother of God with the body of her dead son in her lap. Next to her is Mother Anna, who was particularly revered in the Lower Rhine region in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Judging from the theme and the contents of the painting, this group is a mixture of a vespers image and an "Annaselbdritt"; it shows both the Mother of God's pain over her son's death and the quiet closeness and shared mourning of mother and daughter. In Germany, there is nothing that is iconographically comparable to this. Since its restoration in 1996/1997, it is in a wonderful condition, providing a special and precious source of meditation and beauty for our church.

(11) The confessionals date back to 1890 and 1895 and were created by Bros. Endlich in Emmerich.

(12) The Sacred Heart figurine dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

(13) The statue of St. Roch is a wood carving in Late Gothic style, created in the Lower Rhine region around 1500. The flap of his hat is adorned with pilgrimage badges: the crossed keys of St. Peter, which were worn by pilgrims to Rome, as well as the Veil of Veronica.

(14) In the tower hall you will find the altarpiece from the baroque altar of the previous church. It shows the presentation of Jesus in the temple by an aged Simeon, painted by artist Pierre Verneuil of Bordeaux, 1775. Attached to the opposite wall is a memorial plaque for the construction of the parish church.

(15) The statue of Archangel Michael is a baroque piece dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

(16) The statue of St. Sebastian was created in the Lower Rhine region around 1500. The base has a barely legible inscription: ST.SEBAST.OPN.1736. (St. Sebastian, pray for us. 1736).

The organ loft as you see it today was created by F. Langenberg in 1906. The large organ, made in the Romanus Seifert & Sohn workshop in Kevelaer, was installed in 1967. It has 3 manuals, 40 registers and 3013 pipes.

The walls in the lower part of the church show the Via Crucis. Just like the paintings on all altar wings, these, too, were created by Theodor Heinrich Windhausen and his sons. Windhausen was born here in Waldniel, but relocated to Roermond with his family in 1873.

Apart from the little baptism bell, the church originally had 4 bronze bells. Only one of these was returned after confiscation in World War II. The other three were recast in 1960 in order to restore the old familiar ringing.