



When they live by the labor of their hands, as our fathers and the apostles did, then they are really monks.

The Rule of Saint Benedict, Chapter 48



de Cosmas Hoff
monk architect sculptor designer



THE
SAINT VINCENT GALLERY

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Preface: The Story of a Discovery

In 1983, having just completed my novitiate and needing an assignment, I asked Archabbot Paul Maher, O.S.B., if he would assign me to take care of the monastery's art collection, which was sitting in storage with no one caring for it. Although I had little experience, he named me curator. One of the first things I did was try to reconcile what was in storage and out on view in various campus locations with a partial inventory. I found an intriguing Neo-Gothic "Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception" in the Nazarene style (**catalog № 1**) that was listed as by an unknown artist. I was puzzled by how previous curators could have missed seeing "Frank Duveneck, 1864" in large script at the bottom of the painting.

Shortly after being named curator, the maintenance director at Saint Vincent, Fr. Frank Ziemkiewicz, O.S.B., had to move the blueprint room¹ to a new and smaller location. From a high shelf in the back of a closet, he pulled out almost one hundred hand-drawn schematics of buildings, altars with statues and paintings, pulpits, and other church furnishings. The drawings had no immediate relationship to any current building at Saint Vincent, and he was offering them to me for the art collection. Most of the drawings were signed by Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., a Saint Vincent monk, so I accepted the drawings.

About the same time, I was attending a lecture at the Westmoreland Museum of Art in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, by the director, Dr. Paul Chew. His topic discussed the works of the American Impressionist landscape painter, John Henry Twachtman. Throughout the lecture, Dr. Chew kept mentioning Twachtman's teacher and mentor, Frank Duveneck. I kept telling myself that I knew that name and later remembered the Immaculate Conception painting. Later, I took photographs of the painting and signature to Dr. Chew and asked him what he thought. He said that the subject and technique were so different from anything he was familiar with by Duveneck, and that the date would indicate that the artist would have been only 15-years-old when he painted it. He was unable to form an opinion, but suggested that I write and send the photographs to the Cincinnati Art Museum.

After sending pictures of the monastery's painting to the Cincinnati Art Museum to see if they could verify Duveneck's signature, they put me in touch with Michael Quick (then Curator of American Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, in California), who was working on an exhibition and catalog about Frank Duveneck's European years scheduled to open in Cincinnati in 1987. He was intrigued to learn of the monastery's painting, as it was previously unknown to the art world.

¹The office where the drawings were found was located on the second floor of Gregory Hall (now called Roderick), and could well have been Br. Cosmas Wolf's studio since that section of the building was built in 1859 and housed monastic cells and workshops.

I began to read everything I could find on Duveneck and discovered that the master of the studio he worked in as an apprentice was another name I knew: Cosmas Wolf. However, much of the literature identified Wolf as a Franciscan priest who was a superior of a church in Newark, New Jersey. In reality, Cosmas Wolf was a Benedictine lay-brother from Saint Vincent Archabbey, who worked on the interior design and decoration of the Benedictine abbey church of St. Mary's, in Newark. Previous scholars' mistakes were based on a letter Br. Cosmas Wolf sent from Newark to Duveneck's parents encouraging them to send their son to study art in Munich. The letter was signed "fr. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B." However, scholars did not realize that "fr." stood for "frater" (Latin for brother), and not for "Father," which would have indicated a priest. They also must have misread the hard-to-read handwritten "O.S.B." as an abbreviation for "Order of St. Francis," and not "Order of St. Benedict." That mistake is perhaps somewhat excusable for scholars from Cincinnati, as the Franciscans are heavily represented there, whereas Benedictines are not.

In the course of that research, it was a pleasure for me to help contribute to Michael Quick's research, and his exhibition catalog, and to call attention to a previously unknown painting by Duveneck and Br. Cosmas's role in his artistic formation.² We are still in periodic contact with each other. In 1986, new duties at Saint Vincent College made it impossible for me to continue the intensive research needed to uncover further information. However, over the years, I have had the pleasure of sharing my findings and assisting in the research of two scholars who devoted much of their professional activities to Br. Cosmas and his studio, albeit with different *foci* than mine, who shared their findings with me. The first was Dr. Annemarie Springer, an Americanized German art historian from the University of Indiana at Bloomington, who died in 2011. She specialized in the art of Johann Schmitt (one of the painters from Br. Cosmas's studio). The second is Dr. Beate Stock, a German scholar at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, who studies the work of Wilhelm Lamprecht (another painter from Br. Cosmas's studio).

I could never have finished the research or prepared this catalog and the exhibition itself without the invaluable insistence and assistance of Jordan Hainsey, whose enthusiasm fed my own. Jordan has spent countless hours scouring the archives for letters and pictures, arranging for transliterations and translations of previously unknown letters, and studying the drawings and photographs—often making amazing connections. All of us, and I in particular, are indebted to him for convincing me to return to this subject and honor one of Saint Vincent's most important 19th century monks, who also happens to be a significant, but little-known, figure in the history of German artists in America.

Never in my wildest thoughts did I ever think that it would take me almost 30 years to finish my research on Br. Cosmas and the Catholic Altar Building Stock Company. Perhaps it is actually still premature to say "finish," as I am well aware of what I still do not know, and it is entirely possible more information may spring up from some previously unconsidered source. Meanwhile, any mistakes that may be found in this current assessment of Br. Cosmas Wolf and his work are mine and mine alone.



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October 2013

²See: Michael Quick, *An American Painter Abroad: Frank Duveneck's European Years* (Cincinnati Art Museum, 1987).

Preface to the Second Edition

In the preface to the first edition, I wrote “it is entirely possible more information may spring up from some previously unconsidered source.” In one of life’s great ironies, shortly after the catalog for “Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.: Monk, Architect, Sculptor, Designer” was printed and the exhibition was opened, new information that would change several sections of this catalog was found in the Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey. This information was in the form of letters, two of which were filed in unexpected places. These include a letter from Pittsburgh Architect Joseph Stillburg to Br. Cosmas, and one from Br. Cosmas to Abbot Boniface Wimmer.

Other pieces of information were discovered hidden in the letters from the Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, which had never been completely transliterated or translated. It was discovered that the index to the letters was not as comprehensive as previously believed, and that the actual letters themselves had to be scanned to find references to Br. Cosmas in them. In the course of reviewing each letter, a previously unknown letter from Müller to Br. Cosmas was found hidden in the pile of about eighty or so letters.

I am most grateful to Jordan Hainsey for his diligence in finding these gems and never stopping the search, and to Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B., who has spent countless hours transliterating and translating the difficult to read Fraktur handwriting.

The sections most affected by this new information are: “Return to Europe in 1857,” “Architecture,” “His Final Work,” and “His Legacy: Was He a Sculptor?” The appendix “Known Works in America by Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.” also had some major changes made.



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January 2014



Introduction

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., was a Benedictine lay-brother of Saint Vincent Archabbey active in the second half of the 19th century. He was a monk, architect, sculptor and designer. Studying sculpture in Munich, Br. Cosmas was trained under the old medieval apprentice system to become a master sculptor and designer/draftsman. He brought to America his talent and created a studio that built church furnishings and decorated dozens of churches in nine states.

His Covington Altar Building Stock Company was a prolific institution that fulfilled the needs of Catholic German-Americans throughout what is called the “German Triangle,” creating and designing everything from altars and statues, to croziers and sacred vessels. Br. Cosmas assembled some of the best church artists of the 19th century, including the painters Johann Schmitt and Wilhelm Lamprecht, to assist him in his work; and, he took an apprentice by the name of Frank Duveneck, who later became one of the most important artists and teachers in the American Impressionism movement.

Br. Cosmas relocated his studio in 1868 to Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, where he continued to work on his church designs, expanding his talents to include architecture. In addition to his normal altar and pulpit designs and statues, he planned multiple churches, monasteries, schools and even a house. The artistic vision of Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., the founder of Saint Vincent, enabled Br. Cosmas to dedicate himself to his art for over 30 years.

Although his life has been relatively unknown, his art has touched the lives of thousands of people. Most of what is known about Br. Cosmas comes from his obituary, and a few short passages written about him in various Saint Vincent and parish histories. He is also briefly mentioned in a few biographies of Frank Duveneck, or Johann Schmitt, or Wilhelm Lamprecht. However, many of these sources do not reveal much about him as a person, or for that matter even tell us where all of his artwork is, or was, located. And unfortunately, sometimes these sources have erroneous information.

The Br. Cosmas drawings from the Saint Vincent Art Collections, recently discovered letters by him and about him, and his baptismal parish's records have all served as primary sources for creating a more complete and accurate profile about who he was, and his importance to 19th century American church art and architecture. It is unfortunate that a photograph of him has not been found. It would be nice to put a human face to his work.

Jose Cosmes Hoff
monk architect sculptor designer



Early Life

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., was from a small village in Bavarian Swabia, named Großkissendorf, which has now been incorporated into Bibertal, Bavaria, Germany. The parish register records that he was born Johan Baptist Wolf, on June 20, 1821, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and that he was baptized the same day. His parents were Johann Wolf,³ a freeman, and Theres Pannholzer, a freewoman,⁴ both of whom were from Großkissendorf. The godparents were Sebastian Kempter and Krescenz Rau, also from Großkissendorf.⁵ All of the official records at Saint Vincent Archabbey, as well as his grave marker, record his date of birth as June 24, 1822. It is not known why there is a discrepancy.

His father, Johann, was the oldest son of Anton Wolf (baptized on August 20, 1757) and Rosina Harder, who lived in Großkissendorf, and had five children. Johann was born and baptized on June 17, 1792, and his godparents were John George Götz and Barbara Wolfinn. His siblings were Joseph (born September 27, 1796), Antonius (born September 25, 1800), Crescenz (born April 1, 1803), and Joh[ann] Georg (born April 17, 1807). According to the 1808 census of the Parish of Großkissendorf, the family lived in House No. 1, and had one maid in the household.⁶

Br. Cosmas's mother, Theres, was the only daughter of Joseph Pannholzer⁷ (baptized on November 19, 1767) and M[aria] Anna Götzin, who also lived in Großkissendorf, and had four children. Theres was baptized on November 15, 1801, and her siblings were Franz Xavier (born December 14, 1789), Joseph (born July 2, 1805), and Jacobus (born July 19, 1811). In the 1808 census of the Parish of Großkissendorf, the family lived in House No. 8, and had one servant and one maid in the household.⁸

According to the parish records, his parents never married, and it can be ascertained, from the addresses listed for them in Br. Cosmas's baptismal entries, that his parents were living separately with their families. Later, when they died, they were still unmarried and living in their childhood homes with at least one of their siblings who had inherited the family homes.⁹ This situation was rather common in the first half of the 19th century in Germany. Marriages between non-land owning persons were rare. Family properties were usually inherited by the oldest son, who was also responsible for his unmarried younger siblings.

³To avoid confusion with his similarly named father, Br. Cosmas will be used to denote the son.

⁴The original German says "Bauernshohn" and "Bauerntochter," which can also be translated as "peasant" or "farmer."

⁵*Taufbuch der Pfarrei Großkissendorf*, vol. 3, pg. 171 and vol. 5, (Archiv des Bistums Augsburg, Germany).

⁶*Seelenbeschrieb (1808) der Pfarrei Großkissendorf*, vol. 18 (Archiv des Bistums Augsburg, Germany).

⁷Sometimes the family name is listed as Banholzer.

⁸*Seelenbeschrieb (1808)*, *ibid.*

⁹*Familienbuch (1878) der Pfarrei Großkissendorf*, vol. 21, (Archiv des Bistums Augsburg, Germany).

This appears to have happened in Theres' case. However, for some unknown reason, Johann's younger brother, Antonius, seems to have inherited the family home and Johann lived with him. Why would the oldest son not inherit? A clue may be found in a cryptic phrase found in the 1836 parish census: "under supervision" ("*Unter Aufsicht.*").¹⁰ Dr. Erwin Naimer, Archivist for the Diocese of Augsburg, suggested writing to the Staatsarchiv Augsburg to find out what the notation means. Was Br. Cosmas's father a criminal on parole? Or, was he under surveillance by the police for some reason? Unfortunately, inquiries to the Staatsarchiv Augsburg and the Historischer Verein Bibertal have gone unanswered to date.

It is not known in which household Cosmas grew up, or which parent raised him. And, although the parish records have provided a number of details on Br. Cosmas's relatives, they say very little about him. For instance, we do not know how much education he received with the exception that he is listed in an 1836 school register,¹¹ which would have made him about 15-years-old at the time.

Br. Cosmas's mother died of consumption at the age of 48, at 3:30 a.m., on February 21, 1849, and was buried at 8:30 a.m., on February 23. She is listed in the parish's death register as an unmarried farmer's daughter, Catholic, living at Großkissendorf 8.¹² Br. Cosmas was 27-years-old at the time of his mother's death. It is not known what he was doing, or where he was, but it is probably safe to assume that he was still in Swabia or Bavaria at this time.

His father died of pleurisy at the age of 73, at 10:15 a.m., on October 7, 1864, and was buried at 8 a.m. on October 9. He is listed in the parish's death register as an unmarried farmer's son, Catholic, living at Großkissendorf 1.¹³ At the time of his father's death, Br. Cosmas would have been active building altars and church furnishings in Covington, Kentucky, and so he would have been unable to attend the funeral.

The final entry concerning Br. Cosmas in the records of the Parish in Großkissendorf is a remark that on August 30, 1853, he went to Saint Vincent in America, to become a lay-brother.¹⁴

Training and Education

Saint Vincent Monastery, Latrobe, Pennsylvania

According to the *Album Fratrum Conversorum*¹⁵ of Saint Vincent Archabbey,¹⁶ Br. Cosmas Wolf was the 79th lay-brother to enter the monastery. He entered on September 24, 1853, and was clothed in the habit of a novice on January 6, 1854. He made triennial vows (for three years) as a Benedictine lay

¹⁰*Seelenbeschrieb (1836) der Pfarrei Großkissendorf*, vol. 18, House No. 1. (Archiv des Bistums Augsburg, Germany).

¹¹*Verzeichnis aller ledigen Schul- und Christen=Lehr=Pflichtigen der Pfarrey Großkissendorf u. Anhofen (1836)*, Signatur: ABA Pf 70, K. 8, (Archiv des Bistums Augsburg, Germany).

¹²*Sterbebuch der Pfarrei Großkissendorf*, vol. 13, page 53, (Archiv des Bistums Augsburg, Germany).

¹³*Sterbebuch der Pfarrei Großkissendorf*, vol. 14. (Archiv des Bistums Augsburg, Germany).

¹⁴*Taufbuch der Pfarrei Großkissendorf*, *ibid.*

¹⁵Maintained by the archivist of Saint Vincent Archabbey, the *Album Fratrum Conversorum (The Book of Lay-Brothers)* records the basic information of each lay-brother who enters Saint Vincent Monastery in the order of their date of entry. It records birth names and dates, date of arrival and entry into the monastery, as well as profession of vows and death dates.

¹⁶Saint Vincent Monastery was founded in 1846, on the outskirts of what is today Latrobe, Pennsylvania. In 1855 it was made an abbey, and raised to the rank of an Archabbey in 1892.

brother¹⁷ on January 14, 1855, but did not profess perpetual vows until January 6, 1876.¹⁸

What may have called Br. Cosmas to come to the United States to become a Benedictine is hinted at in two short passages. The first is an observation by Fr. Felix Fellner, O.S.B., in his history of Saint Vincent in which he simply says: “One of the Brothers, Cosmas Wolf, who had studied art before he entered the Order...”¹⁹ The other is a notation from one of the earliest histories of Saint Vincent:

In the year 1851 the abbot [Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B.]²⁰ brought an excellent sculptor with him from Bavaria in the person of Brother Salomon,²¹ who however already after a half year stay at Saint Vincent passed over into a better life. In his place came Brother Cosmas Wolf in the following year. He applied his art since then almost exclusively to the construction of altars and erected beautiful monuments of his industriousness in many churches of the Order to the honor of God and the edification of the faithful.²²

There are two drawings in the art collections at Saint Vincent that indicate Br. Cosmas had indeed studied art before coming to the United States. Both are signed “Joh. [Johann] Wolf” implying that they were drawn before he became a monk, and almost certainly while he was still in Europe. Therefore, they can be safely dated to before 1853. The first is a drawing of a statue and niche in Neo-Gothic Style (**catalog № 2**). The sketch of the statue depicts Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, which was defined as dogma in 1854.²³ The second drawing confirms that it was drawn while he was still in Europe, as it is a study of the famous choir stalls at Münsters zu Ulm in Germany (**catalog № 3**). The actual area of the choir stalls depicted in various elevations on the Br. Cosmas drawing can still be identified today (**catalog № 4**).

¹⁷There were two types of Benedictine monks at Saint Vincent monastery in the 19th century. One was the priest or clerical monk, and the other was the lay-brother. A lay-brother is a Benedictine monk who takes vows and lives and prays in community while working to help support the monastery. In the 19th century, lay-brothers were primarily craftsmen, tradesmen, and farmers.

¹⁸Normally one would expect perpetual vows to be taken three years after triennial vows. No official explanation why Br. Cosmas waited for 21 years has been found.

¹⁹Fr. Felix Fellner, O.S.B., *Abbot Boniface and His Monks* (Unpublished), (Latrobe, Pennsylvania: Saint Vincent Archabbey), vol. 4, 1956, pg. 452.

²⁰Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B. (1809-1887), was the founder of the Benedictine Order in the United States and Canada, and of Saint Vincent monastery in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. In 1855, Saint Vincent Monastery was named an abbey with Wimmer as its first abbot. In 1883, he was named Archabbot. Wimmer was truly one of the greatest missionary figures of the 19th century, who felt that implanting the Benedictine charisms by establishing a network of monasteries, schools, and parishes would best serve German immigrants. He had the full support of King Ludwig I of Bavaria, whose gifts made it possible to transplant German and European education and culture—particularly in the fine arts—to the New World. It is therefore not surprising that Wimmer would want artists, sculptors, and craftsmen among his monks. Wimmer’s most definitive biography to date is: Jerome Oetgen, *An American Abbot* (The Catholic University of America Press, 1997).

²¹There is little known about Br. Salomon (Latin form of the English name Solomon) Merk, O.S.B. What little biographical information there is comes from diaries of Abbot Boniface Wimmer’s nephew Sebastian Wimmer (1831-1921), which are in the Public Library in St. Marys, Pennsylvania. The sources used for the information presented here are from a privately published translation of excerpts from the diaries by Chas. J. Schaut, called *The First Journey to the United States by Sebastian Wimmer – 1851*, and found in the Library of Saint Vincent Archabbey and College; and the *Necrology of the American-Cassinese Congregation of the Order of Saint Benedict, 1846-1946*, (Saint John’s Abbey: Collegeville, Minnesota, 1948), pg. 5. These sources record that he was born in Kempten, Bavaria, came to Saint Vincent monastery in 1851, and was a “skilled sculptor.” He died on February 9, 1852 from “nerve fever,” after eight days of being sick. His funeral was on February 19, 1852, and presided over by Father Otto. (This is probably a misreading by Schaut of the German Fraktur handwriting, as there was no Saint Vincent Benedictine named Otto at this time. There was, however, a Fr. Utto Huber, who was ordained on December 6, 1851.) Sebastian Wimmer and a Mr. Hume were the only other mourners present.

²²Oswald Moosmüller, *St. Vincenz in Pennsylvanien*, (New York: Fr. Pustet & Co., 1893), pg. 170.

²³The appearance of the Immaculate Conception may at first seem to argue against dating this drawing to before Br. Cosmas entered the monastery and took the religious name of Cosmas in 1853, because the doctrine was not definitively defined as an article of faith until December 8, 1854. However, the doctrine was a long-held belief among Roman Catholics, and the portrayal of the Virgin Mary as the “Lady of Revelation,” from which the imagery of the Immaculate Conception comes, had been a popular subject in religious art for centuries.

Both drawings make it readily apparent that Br. Cosmas was interested in the design and construction of ecclesiastical furnishings, and that he already had developed drafting skills. Whether he heard that Saint Vincent monastery in the United States was looking for a replacement sculptor for Brother Salomon and volunteered to come, or he was specifically recruited, is not known.

Return to Europe in 1857

In 1857, Br. Cosmas went to Munich to study sculpture with Johann Nepomuk Petz,²⁴ a sculptor and church designer of some international repute (**catalog № 5**). Br. Cosmas's official obituary (**see appendix A**), and various other sources, state that he was a student at the Royal Academy of Art in Munich (now known as Akademie der Bildenden Künste München). However, this cannot be confirmed as his name does not appear in the Academy's matriculation records, which are available online. It is possible that Br. Cosmas was a guest student, an informal classification of student for whom the Academy did not maintain records.

Before continuing the discussion of Br. Cosmas's studies with Petz, it is interesting to speculate about Br. Cosmas's status while he was in Munich. A letter written to Abbot Boniface Wimmer by Br. Cosmas from Munich on July 20, 1857 (**see appendix B**), hints that there may have been some difficulties with his presence in Bavaria. He wrote:

I also repeat the same wishes and requests, and I also confidently hope that you will graciously grant me your paternal favor. From now on I will use my artistic ability, as God has given it, with doubled zeal for the holy cause, and I can assure you that I will use each minute in order to be again in your company and to be able to carry out obediently your paternal orders and admonitions in all love. Although things are going well with me, I have great home sickness. Only I hope that you will have the kindness at your next opportunity to send me an American passport; for I was able to get here easily with these papers but I cannot return [by means of them], as I have been made aware of [by] the police. For this reason I ask you at your convenience to send me a passport... Finally I ask again for forgiveness of my mistakes and, remembered in your prayer and begging your paternal blessing, I await with longing and hope!

*Your unworthy son, with all love and respect,
Frater Cosmas Wolf²⁵*

Four months later, King Ludwig I's Court Chaplain, Joseph F. Müller²⁶ is involved in the situation. In a lengthy letter to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, he has this to say about Br. Cosmas:

²⁴Br. Cosmas's teacher is listed as "Petz," "Pez," and "Pelz" in various sources, and although his first name is not recorded, there is little doubt that his teacher was Johann Nepomuk Petz, who was born on May 16, 1818, in Leermaas bei Reuti in Tyrol, Austria. Petz's talent at carving was recognized at an early age, and he was sent to Munich to study sculpture. He entered the Royal Academy of Art (Akademie der Bildenden Künste München) on October 13, 1837, but no exit date is listed. A notation in the academy matriculation records questions whether he was a student or guest student. Akademie der Bildenden Künste München, Germany, <http://matrikel.adbk.de/> accessed: May 19, 2013.

²⁵Letter from Br. Cosmas Wolf to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, sent from Munich July 20, 1857 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). This letter had been misfiled and found only recently (November 2013) by Jordan Hainsey. It has been transliterated and translated by Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B. The letter also refers to a July 5, 1857 letter from Br. Cosmas to Abbot Boniface, which has not yet been found. In that letter, Br. Cosmas apparently expresses similar sentiments.

²⁶Fr. Joseph Müller served as a court chaplain to King Ludwig I, and was an influential advocate of Abbot Boniface Wimmer and the missions of the Benedictine Order in the United States with the Royal Court of Bavaria and its charitable missionary foundation, the Ludwigsmissionsverein.

I reproached Br. Cosmas for being released from the monastery. The good man began to weep and fell at my feet and implored me without ceasing that I beg the abbot [of Sankt Bonifaz Abbey in Munich] to receive him again, for he certainly did not leave the monastery due to dissatisfaction but purely because of art. There was a craving in him that he could not withstand anymore. I promised to intercede. As anxious as he is here, I cannot say the least thing disparagingly about him. He is working industriously and is making great progress with the sculptor Petz. He has never uttered a word of dissatisfaction but always expressed his attachment and love for the monastery. He says the others made it hard on him because he is pious. According to what he says, he never conceded to the suggestions of the agitators. I saw and heard only good things in his regard. A letter is included in which he presents his case. Therefore be merciful and compassionate.²⁷

After the first edition of this catalog was published, it was discovered that the subject index to the Müller letters was incomplete, and that there is additional information concerning Br. Cosmas in them. At the present time they are still being transliterated and translated, however, some information has been extracted that have added a few pieces to the puzzle of Br. Cosmas's time in Munich.²⁸ It is now clear that Abbot Boniface Wimmer sent Br. Cosmas to study art in Germany in 1857, and that he lived with the Benedictine monks at the Abbey of Sankt Bonifaz in Munich until at least 1858. It seems that he temporarily moved out of the monastery in Munich for a short period of time in 1857, because "the others made it hard on him," but that Müller helped resolve any tension for Br. Cosmas to move back.

Br. Cosmas is occasionally mentioned throughout Müller's 1857-1862 letters to Abbot Wimmer. Most are just quick statements that Br. Cosmas is doing well with his studies under Petz, including one reference to him doing drawings for the main altar of the Liebfrauenkirche (the Cathedral church) in Munich, and that "He is now a real acquisition for your monastery."²⁹

A July 11, 1858 letter from Müller to Br. Cosmas gives interesting details about what appears to be a planned trip for him to return to the United States, although it is not certain that he actually made the trip. In the *post script* of the letter, Müller informs Br. Cosmas that the *Hudson* was no longer going to depart on July 17, and that he should book passage on a sailing vessel instead of waiting until August 4 to take another steam ship. Müller seems to have assumed that Br. Cosmas made alternative passage, because in his subsequent letters to Abbot Wimmer over the next several months he asks several times if Br. Cosmas had arrived. Wimmer's responses have not been found, but it appears that Br. Cosmas may have not made the trip and stayed in Germany. Whether he made the trip or not, by at least 1860 he was back in Munich and working again with Petz.³⁰

²⁷Letter from Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller to Boniface Wimmer, written in Munich, November 6, 1857, and received at Saint Vincent monastery, February 28, 1858 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). This letter was discovered earlier in 2013 by Jordan Hainsey and transliterated and translated by Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B.

²⁸I am grateful to Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B., who is one of the few people I know who can read Müller's Fraktur handwriting and who is working on the transliterations and translations.

²⁹Letter from Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller to Boniface Wimmer, written in Munich, January 19, 1858, and received at Saint Vincent monastery, February 20, 1858 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). The transliteration and translation is by Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B.

³⁰Letter from Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller to Boniface Wimmer, written in Munich, January 26, 1860, and received at Saint Vincent monastery, February 25 [1860] (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). This letter was discovered in November 2013 by Jordan Hainsey and transliterated and translated by Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B.



Catalog № 7 *Drawing of a Wood Carved Panel*, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., graphite with wash on paper, ca. 1857, 16.75 x 10.5 inches, unsigned, SVA 1880.028

The Mother Benedicta Riepp Controversy

Another interesting passage in Müller's letter to Wimmer also concerns Br. Cosmas and his peripheral involvement in one of the first controversies to embroil Abbot Boniface Wimmer, namely his contentious relationship with Mother Benedicta Riepp, O.S.B. The animosity began when Sr. Benedicta and her companion nuns were not met personally by Wimmer when they landed on the docks of New York City—even though Wimmer had made arrangements for the nuns to be taken care of, and their expenses and travel arrangements handled.³¹ Both individuals were headstrong and convinced that they were the religious superior over the Benedictine women in America. Wimmer was convinced that he had the right and authority as “Patriarch” of the Benedictine Order in America to oversee the gifts of money being sent from Europe, the building of convents, and the decisions of where the nuns should be located. In turn, Mother Benedicta saw herself in that role. Both Wimmer and Riepp made numerous appeals to Bavaria and Rome for a decision on who had final jurisdiction over the Benedictine women in the United States. Both ended up losing. Wimmer lost because the Benedictine sisters were placed under the jurisdiction of local bishops, and Mother Benedicta lost because the Benedictine women were prohibited from taking solemn vows as nuns, which would have given them greater autonomy from the bishops.³²

Br. Cosmas's involvement in this affair seems to have been minor, and is referred to in Court Chaplain Müller's letter:

Since that time I have heard nothing more of the two nuns except that Brother Cosmas came to me with a letter from her [presumably Benedicta Riepp], in which she wanted to raise money in the hometown of Cosmas from a sister who was clothed in the habit in St. Marys. Luckily Cosmas's relatives sent the letter to him and he brought it to me. I dictated an answer for him, namely that they could not send the money until the spring.³³

Although not mentioned by name, the letter makes it clear that Müller is discussing Mother Benedicta Riepp and the complaints she had against Wimmer for spending money meant for the nuns in St. Marys, Pennsylvania. Müller goes on to state that although he supported Wimmer and his actions, King Ludwig and the Ludwigsmissionsverein were running out of patience with the many complaints and appeals being lodged against Wimmer by Riepp.

His Studies with Johann Petz in Munich

Johann Petz (May 16, 1818-March 7, 1880) was a pupil of the sculptor Konrad Eberhard (1768-1859), and was artistically influenced by the Neo-Gothic and Nazarene art movements popular in Bavaria, and known as the Pre-Raphaelite movement in England. He made a reputation for himself in 1840 by creating a memorial for the German theologian Heinrich Klee which included a carved sandstone sculpture of the “Good Shepherd” set in a Neo-Gothic style pointed-arch niche adorned with pinnacles and finials. This resulted in commissions for similar works from England and the United States, launching his career as a sculptor and church designer. Petz was also known to have worked with the sculptors Joseph Otto Entres and Joseph Knabl.³⁴ A recently discovered letter from Müller to Abbot Wimmer states that

³¹Helen Herbstritt, O.S.B., and Ephrem Hollermann, O.S.B., “Record of a Journey: Mother Benedicta Riepp and Companions Travel to America” in *The American Benedictine Review*, Part I in 64:1, March 2013 and Part II in 64:2, June 2013.

³²For a fuller account of the conflicts between Wimmer and Riepp, see Jerome Oetgen, *An American Abbot* (The Catholic University of America Press, 1997), pp. 196-226.

³³Müller to Wimmer, *ibid.*

³⁴Deutsche Biographie, www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz95065, accessed February 8, 2013.

Br. Cosmas was working on a project with Petz for the main altar of the Liebfraven Kirche. Knabl was a professor of religious sculpture at the Royal Academy of Art before joining the Franz Mayer of Munich Company³⁵ in 1859. He became the artistic director of the statuary department in 1868. Unfortunately, the company's statuary department records were destroyed by a fire bomb in 1944, so it is not possible to ascertain whether Petz, and perhaps even Br. Cosmas, worked with Knabl on projects for Mayer.³⁶

Two of Br. Cosmas drawings can be dated to 1857, the year he began studies with Petz. Both are renderings of wood carved panels. The first is signed and dated 1857 (**catalog № 6**),³⁷ and although the second is not dated (**catalog № 7**), the paper, material, technique, and subject all indicate that this was done at the same time. Both demonstrate that Br. Cosmas was already quite accomplished, and that he was working with full-scale detailing that would comprise a larger work, such as an altar. The drawings could either be study pieces of already existing woodwork, or schematics from which wood carvers in the studio could make panels. Whatever the original purpose, the drawings are well-executed and good examples of detail work for larger projects.

Between 1855 and 1866, Petz was known to have done multiple works for the parish church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Vilsbiburg, Bavaria. His handiwork included a 47-foot-tall high altar, as well as the side altars, pulpit, choir stalls, and organ case—all in Neo-Gothic style. A drawing in the Saint Vincent Art Collections demonstrates that Br. Cosmas was familiar with Petz's work in Vilsbiburg, and was studying his techniques. It is a drawing of the high altar with empty niches (**catalog № 8**), and matches, with some variations, the tracery elements in Petz's drawing of the entire high altar (**catalog № 9**). It is noteworthy to compare Petz's drawing with Br. Cosmas's many depictions of altars, as their techniques are identical and almost indistinguishable. Although drafting does have conventions and standards for depicting three dimensional objects, the similarities between their drawings are simply too great to ignore.

While working with Petz, Br. Cosmas may have been working on his own design for an altar at the hospital chapel in Vilsbiburg. There is a drawing of an altarpiece depicting St. Michael the Archangel flanked by two female martyr saints, St. Catherine of Alexandria on the left and St. Barbara on the right. In the lower register of the reredos is a depiction of the "Adoration of the Magi." All of the sculptural elements are framed in a Neo-Gothic altar (**catalog № 10**). In the top left is written in German: "Design for a Side Altar for the Hospital Chapel at Vilsbiburg." It is in a more formal script than Br. Cosmas's other drawings, and the word "Entwurf" ("Design") is used, almost as if this is a proposal and not a depiction of something that exists. Br. Cosmas has not identified any of his other European drawings in this manner, and so this could well be one of his original designs, rather than copying the work of his master.

³⁵The Franz Mayer of Munich Company is still in operation, making religious art for churches. They are renowned for providing stained glass windows, statues and sculptures, and other church furnishings for hundreds of churches throughout Europe and the United States. In fact, this company made the five stained glass windows in the apse of the Saint Vincent Archabbey Basilica in 1905.

³⁶Email from Wilfred Jaekel of Mayer of Munich to Br. Nathan Cochran, O.S.B., May 23, 2013, (Saint Vincent Art Collections files)

³⁷The Br. Cosmas drawings discussed in this section were dated using multiple methods. One drawing was signed and dated 1857, thus making the identification easy. Others were marked with the names of churches or towns that Petz is known to have worked on, and so these were identified as dating between 1857 and 1862. Additional drawings marked with the names of other European cities and towns (although it is not currently known if Petz did work for them), are presumed to date to between 1857 and 1862. Drawings with similar inks, pen markings, and papers were then identified as probably dating to between 1857 and 1862 as well. Once the possible 1857-1862 drawings were identified, it was discovered that all of the designs are more delicate, elaborate, and decorative than those found in Br. Cosmas's known American drawings.

Petz was also known to have done three Neo-Gothic altars for a church in Taufkirchen vorm Wald, Bavaria, during this time period. There is a signed, undated drawing in the Saint Vincent Art Collections of a high altar that Br. Cosmas has labeled: “Hochaltar in Taufkirchen, Bav.” (**catalog № 11**). The main altarpiece is a sculptural grouping of the “Beheading of St. James,” which is flanked by statues of St. Barbara and St. Joseph. The main subject of the altar indicates that the patron saint of the church is St. James. Although there is a St. Jakob (James) Church in Taufkirchen, further research needs to be done to definitively establish the connection.

Other churches for which Petz was known to have done commissions during this time period include the abbey church at Isen (1860), where he created a Neo-Romanesque style high altar; and Riederer am Simssee (bei Rosenheim), where he made the altar and other furnishings. He also completed a “Last Supper” for the Corpus Christi altar in the newly restored Munich Liebfrauenkirche in 1859, which was unfortunately destroyed during World War II.³⁸ The altars and other furnishings by Petz at a church in Bad Hindelang (**catalog № 12**)³⁹ are dated to about 1867, and are thus too late for Br. Cosmas’s involvement. However, there are surprising similarities with two of the Br. Cosmas drawings.

The first of these drawings is identified as the “Hochaltar in Holzhausen, Bav.” (**catalog № 13**). It is not known if Petz created anything for a church in Holzhausen, but the design certainly appears to be his work. It is a Neo-Gothic altar with multiple finials and elaborate tracery, and a main altarpiece sculpture depicting the “Baptism of Christ.” This work is flanked by statues of St. Barbara and St. Joseph. In the upper register of the reredos is a sculptural grouping of God the Father with two angels. On either side of the tabernacle niche are two angels in adoration. It is interesting to compare this altar with the actual high altar in Bad Hindelang (**catalog № 14**), as the basic composition of both altars is remarkably similar. The composition consists of a main altarpiece depicting the “Baptism of Christ” flanked by two saints, a God the Father sculpture flanked by two angels in the upper register, and two adoring angels flanking the tabernacle niche. The poses of all of the figures in the sculptural groups only slightly vary between the drawing and actual carvings, indicating that Petz had a particular iconographic scheme for depicting subjects.

The second of these drawings (**catalog № 15**) has a handwritten notation “Funfkirchen” (“Five Churches”), which seems to identify the altar as one intended for a church there. The subject of the main altarpiece is the same as the Bad Hinderland and Holzhausen altars—a “Baptism of Christ,” flanked by two saints (an unidentified bishop-saint and St. Michael the Archangel)—which is depicted in a similar manner as the previous two. The overall design, however, is more modest in size, and does not include an upper register in the reredos. What makes this drawing more mystifying is that Funfkirchen is the German name of the Hungarian city of Pécs, located in the southwestern corner of Hungary, near the Croatian border. The question arises, did Petz design an altar for a church in Hungary, and if so, did he and Br. Cosmas travel there? Further research into this is needed.

In addition to altars, Petz designed other furnishings for churches, including pulpits, and presumably baptismal fonts. These too are represented in the Br. Cosmas drawings. It is not known for which church the drawing of a Neo-Gothic pulpit (**catalog № 16**) was intended, but basic elements are typical of Petz’s work. The canopy over the lectern area is comprised of multiple pointed arches and finials, and the

³⁸Verein für Christliche Kunst (München), *Festgabe des Vereins für christliche Kunst in München: zur Erinnerung an das 50jähr. Jubiläum den Ehrenmitgliedern, Mitgliedern und Gönnerngewidmet*, (München: Lentner 1910); and Deutsche Biographie www.deutsch-biographie.de/sfz95065.html, (accessed February 8, 2013).

³⁹I am grateful to Dr. Michael Schmid, Diözesankonservator Kirchliches Bauwesen und Kunst for the Diocese of Augsburg, Germany, for sending me information and multiple photographs of this church.

entire piece is richly carved. An interesting, unintentional element has been added to this drawing. A few ink smudges with fingerprints on the paper may very well be those of Br. Cosmas himself. There are also two drawings of baptismal fonts (**catalog № 17 and 18**), both of which demonstrate Petz's ornately and delicately carved Neo-Gothic designs, so emblematic of his work.

A final drawing from this period of Br. Cosmas's life to be considered is another altar design. It is a classically styled altar dedicated to St. Sebastian (**catalog № 19**), that is a departure from the typical Neo-Gothic designs Petz and the Nazarenes favored. The main altarpiece has a sketch for a painting of St. Sebastian, which is flanked by two sculptures of saints (perhaps Ss. Peter and Paul?) that are part of the framework for the rounded-arch painting niche. The lower register also has a sketch for a painting to be inserted, which depicts St. George rescuing the maiden and slaying the dragon. The altar itself is not rectangular, but imitates sarcophagus-style altars popular in the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

The Br. Cosmas drawings coming from his time with Petz indicate that he was studying and learning his master's techniques and style, primarily according to the ideals and characteristics of the Neo-Gothic movement. He brought back to the United States his skills and drawings that would inspire him for his work to come. His work in the United States exhibits the Neo-Gothic influence of his teacher—albeit in a more simplified expression—but also show other forms of expression influenced by the Neo-Classical movement or what some 19th century writers called Byzantine style.

Catholic Altar Building Stock Company

In 1860 there were 1.3 million German-born people living in the United States. Most of them were recent immigrants, and it was anticipated that many more would be coming in the years ahead. Many of these immigrants were Catholic and settling in what became known as the "German Triangle," the area between Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. From 1850 to 1860, the Cincinnati urban area population increased by almost 50,000 people, an increase of a third, with a large percentage of them having been German-born.⁴⁰ St. Joseph Church in Covington, Kentucky, was a German ethnic parish, and was rapidly growing. A new church was still being decorated, and new mission churches from it were being founded and built in the surrounding Kentucky area at Ashland, Florence, Augusta, St. John's Hill (now Wilder), Verona, Foster's Landing, Brookville, and Mullins Station (also known as Morningview). In 1862, Fr. Odilo Vandergrün, O.S.B.,⁴¹ pastor of St. Joseph Church and a monk of Saint Vincent Abbey, petitioned Abbot Boniface Wimmer to send sculptors and craftsmen to Covington to help build and decorate the many new churches under construction.⁴²

The Organization of the Catholic Altar Building Stock Company

In response, Br Cosmas, having just returned from his studies in Munich, was sent to be the founding director and head designer for a studio that became known as the Catholic Altar Building Stock Company (sometimes also called the Institute of Catholic Art). The studio was founded at St. Joseph Church in

⁴⁰The Library of Congress European Reading Room, "The Germans in American," <http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/imde/germchro.html>, (accessed June 2, 2013), and U.S. Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, "Through the Decades," http://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/ (accessed June 2, 2013).

⁴¹His surname appears in various sources as "von der Green" and "Van der Green," while the Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey lists his name as "Vandergrün."

⁴²Fellner, *ibid.*; and *Centennial Souvenir of Saint Joseph Church, Covington, Kentucky, 1856-1956*, 1956, pg. 18.

Covington, and located adjacent to it in a wood-framed building on Bush Street.⁴³ Working with him were Br. Claude (a sculptor),⁴⁴ Paul Gestrein (a wood carver), Louis Steiner (a general painter), William Grawe, Harry Gehring, George Roesse, Mr. Geisler, Schroeder, Wehrle, Schroepfer, Meyer, Dressman, Wessel, Philip Lohr, Liebler, Ewald, Becker, and others.⁴⁵ An announcement of the opening of the studio appeared in a November 1862 issue of a Munich Sunday paper, stating that they are available to take commissions for altars, tabernacles, pulpits, and other such furnishings, in any style, with 100 altar plans available from which to choose.⁴⁶

Br. Cosmas Recruits Johann Schmitt

Immediately upon arrival, with multiple commissions for altars coming in, Br. Cosmas recruited Johann Schmitt to paint altarpieces. Schmitt was born on November 17, 1825, in Heinstadt in Baden. He had no formal art training, but he came in contact with many Munich artists before coming to the United States in 1848.⁴⁷ He initially set up a studio in Melrose, Westchester County, New York, and regularly advertised his services as a painter of religious art in the German language Catholic newspaper, *Der Wahrheits-Freund*, which was published by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. It is believed that Br. Cosmas may have seen one of these advertisements which ran in 1862,⁴⁸ and invited Schmitt to move to Covington and join his studio. However, other sources indicate that Schmitt was already living at 13th and Greenup Streets in Covington sometime around 1860,⁴⁹ before Br. Cosmas arrived, but this is doubtful as his 1862 advertisements listed his address as Melrose, New York. Whenever and however he came, by early 1863 Schmitt had a painting studio, which was adjacent to Br. Cosmas's "altar building factory" in the Catholic Altar Building Stock Company building. A visit by "A Friend of Christian Art, M. Dr.," recounted in the February 25, 1863 edition of *Der Wahrheits-Freund*, states that Schmitt was working on a painting of the Holy Family for the central altarpiece for a Franciscan church in Oldenburg, Indiana,⁵⁰ and Br. Cosmas was working with Paul Gestrein and Louis Steiner on a Neo-Gothic altar for St. Francis Xavier Church, a Jesuit church in Cincinnati.⁵¹ The account continues: "This altar promises to be their masterpiece in altar building, and I was glad to see real religious art executed so excellently in America."⁵²

Wilhelm Lamprecht Joins in 1867

Br. Cosmas also used the services of another painter for altarpieces, Wilhelm Lamprecht. Lamprecht was born on October 31, 1838, in Altenschönbach near Würzburg, Bavaria. He was the son of a district forester, and entered the Royal Academy of Art on November 24, 1859. There is a comment in the

⁴³Unfortunately, neither the church nor the framed building survives, and company records have not been found.

⁴⁴Probably Br. Claude Francis Faber, O.S.B., who was born March 11, 1838, in Gehrden, Paderborn, Borussia, and came to Saint Vincent in May 7, 1860. He became a novice on July 11, 1860 and took first vows on January 6, 1862. (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey).

⁴⁵*Der Wahrheits-Freund*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Archdiocese of Cincinnati, October 1, 1862,) pg. 78, and *Centennial Souvenir of St. Joseph Church, 1856-1956*, Covington, Kentucky, 1956, pg. 18. Very little is known about these men, sometimes not even their first names.

⁴⁶*Münchner Sonntagsblatt*, 47 (November 23, 1862), pg. 372.

⁴⁷Some sources say 1850.

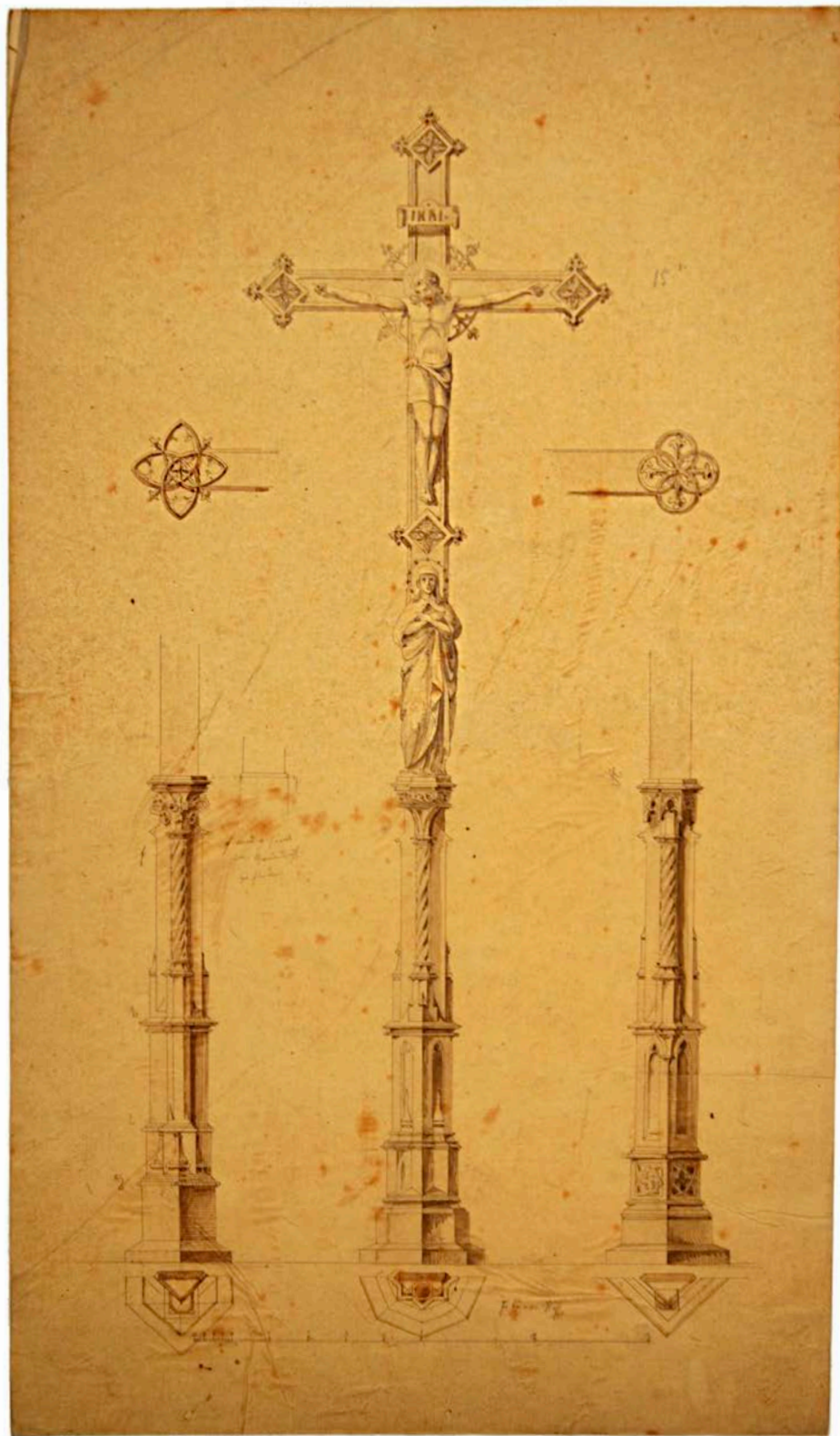
⁴⁸Pohlkamp, pg. 148.

⁴⁹Larry Abeling, "St. Elizabeth Hospital and Two Churches in Covington Boast Paintings by Teacher of the Great Frank Duveneck," in *The Kentucky Post*, October 29, 1937, pg. 2. The article also says that the Bishop of Louisville gave Schmitt the title of "The first Catholic Artist of the West."

⁵⁰The Schmitt painting referred to is still extant in Holy Family Church, Oldenburg, Indiana.

⁵¹St. Francis Xavier Church in Cincinnati burned to the ground in 1882. None of the altars or artwork survived and the parish has no records or photographs of this church.

⁵²*Der Wahrheits-Freund*, (February 25, 1863).



Catalog № 36 *Drawing for an Altar Set with Crucifix and Two Candlesticks, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with graphite on paper, ca. 1862-1868, 18.125 x 10.5 inches, signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf", SVA 1875.016*

Academy's records that he was matriculated on January 11, 1861, and his course of study was the Classical art tract. His teachers were the historical painting professor Karl von Piloty, and the religious painting professor Johann von Schraudolph. Although a date is not given for when he left the academy,⁵³ it is generally accepted that he studied there until 1867 when he left to go to the United States. He arrived at the port of New York on June 28, 1867.⁵⁴

The story of how, when, and where Lamprecht came to the United States has multiple versions, with many contradictions and errors of fact. Some of the confusion appears to stem from Josephine Duveneck's summary of Lamprecht's career. According to her, Lamprecht would have been in Newark by 1865, after he had already completed work in Cincinnati, Louisville, at a "monastery in Pittsburgh" [probably a reference to Saint Vincent], and in a town near Quebec.⁵⁵ This scenario does not fit in with known dates, and so her account seems to be a listing of places where she knew Lamprecht worked, rather than a true chronological listing.

The most likely scenario of how, when, and where Wilhelm Lamprecht came to the United States can best be told by combining three accounts showing the involvement of the Benedictines. In the first, Saint Vincent historian, Fr. Felix Fellner, wrote:

*Father William Walter, a student from St. Vincent at the University of Munich succeeded in obtaining the services of professor Ignatius [sic] Lamprecht in that city to decorate the church [St. Mary's Church, Newark, New Jersey]. The first sketches had been made by Brother Cosmas Wolf of the St. Vincent art-school. They were submitted to Bro. Luke Schraudolph of Metten, corrected by John Schraudolph, his brother and celebrated decorator of the cathedral of Speyer. He entrusted his favorite disciple, professor Lamprecht with the execution. It became the first work of his artistic career in the United States.*⁵⁶

Although Fellner's narrative lists Lamprecht with the wrong first name, he ascribes a previously unknown role to a Fr. William Walter, a role which is plausible and believable when taken into consideration with two other accounts.

An account in an 1883 New York journal reports that in 1868, while Lamprecht was still at the Royal Academy of Munich, he was invited by the Benedictine Fathers of Newark to come to the United States, and that the first work he performed in America was the frescoing of St. Mary's Church in Newark, for which he received no payment.⁵⁷ Although the year is incorrect—Lamprecht having arrived in 1867—the rest of the story is in basic agreement with the next, and most plausible, account.

On the occasion of Wilhelm Lamprecht's 50th wedding anniversary in 1920, the *Stadtanzeiger München* and *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung* ran the same feature article about his career. The article relates Lamprecht's own account about how he came to the United States, it says:

*While in Munich, Lamprecht had met Abbot Wimmer from St. Vincent in Pennsylvania, who was on his way to Rome.*⁵⁸ *The young artist painted Wimmer's portrait at the Academy. The*

⁵³Akademie der Bildenden Künste München, Germany, <http://matrikel.adbk.de/> accessed: May 19, 2013.

⁵⁴Ira A. Glazier and P. William Filby, eds., *Germans to America: List of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1991), Vol. 19 (Jan. 1867–Aug. 1867), pg. 350. I am grateful to Dr. Beate Stock for making me aware of this discovery.

⁵⁵Josephine W. Duveneck, *Frank Duveneck: Painter-Teacher*, (San Francisco, California: John Howell-Books, 1970), pp. 29-30.

⁵⁶Fellner, pp. 451-2.

⁵⁷*New-York Freeman's Journal*, (April 23, 1883).

⁵⁸Wimmer was in Bavaria and Rome in 1866.

*Abbot had granted only a few sittings to Lamprecht, who then sent the finished painting to St. Vincent where it pleased everyone so much that Abbot Wimmer offered the young artist the job of decorating the newly erected Benedictine church in Newark, New Jersey, with ceiling- and wall paintings, Lamprecht accepted the flattering offer, and this is how the promising young artist moved his activities to America.*⁵⁹

The portrait of Abbot Boniface Wimmer referred to in the newspaper story was identified by Dr. Beate Stock in 1996 from a number of Wimmer portraits in the Saint Vincent Art Collections (**catalog № 20**). It depicts Wimmer from the waist up, in front of a pulled-backed drapery revealing a view of Saint Vincent as it was at the time of Wimmer's arrival in 1846. In the portrait, Wimmer appears to be seated, and his hands are not visible. She noticed a remarkable similarity to a portrait that Lamprecht painted of Curé Pierre-Téléphore Sax, the pastor of the church of Saint-Romuald in Lévis, near Québec City in 1867/8 (**catalog № 21**), and which depicts the Curé standing in three-fourths length pose, with one hand pointing to documents on a table and the other hand at his side.⁶⁰ What makes her identification astonishing is that it was only last year that a photograph of the painting dating to the late 19th or early 20th century (**catalog № 22**) was discovered in the archives by Jordan Hainsey. It shows that the Wimmer portrait was originally a full-length portrait depicting him standing in an identical pose as the Curé Sax portrait.⁶¹ It is not known why the portrait was cut down to its current size, however, Wimmer is depicted wearing a mozetta directly over his Benedictine habit which would have been an incorrect usage of this choir dress garment. It is possible that an overzealous monk wanted his abbot to be correctly portrayed and cut it down.

Cincinnati Society of Christian Art

Across the river from Covington, Cincinnati was a major transportation gateway to the "German Triangle," and the home of a number of German-trained artists and artisans working on Christian art. Lamprecht and the Rev. Anthony Schroeninger founded the Cincinnati Society of Christian Art in 1867, with Lamprecht serving as president.⁶² It appears that Lamprecht modeled the society on the Verein für Christlich Kunst (Society for Christian Art) in Munich, which was active in the 1840's and 1850's and founded by his teacher, Johann von Schraudolph. The Cincinnati society regularly sponsored presentations and talks discussing issues facing artists. Many of the artists associated with the Catholic Altar Building Stock Company were members of this society. In addition to Lamprecht, Br. Cosmas, Br. Claude, Paul Gestrein, and Johann Schmitt were also members. Little else appears to be known about the society.⁶³

Frank Duveneck Becomes an Apprentice

A young altar boy of St. Joseph Church discovered the adjacent Catholic Altar Building Stock Company shortly after it was founded in 1862, and began visiting and helping out the artists and artisans. His name was Frank Duveneck, and he would become one of the most important American artists of the

⁵⁹"Wilhelm Lamprecht zum Feste seiner goldenen hochzelt am 26. März 1920," in *Stadtanzeiger München* and in *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung*, (March 26, 1920).

⁶⁰Letter from Beate Stock to Br. Nathan Cochran, O.S.B., January 14, 1996, (Saint Vincent Art Collections files).

⁶¹The photograph was originally thought to have been a studio photograph portrait of Wimmer, but it had been lost for about 20 years. When it was found and Mr. Hainsey did a digital scan and enlargement, it was discovered that it was a photograph of a painting, and not a studio photograph of Wimmer.

⁶²Rev. Henry S. Spalding, S.J., "William Lamprecht, Artist," in *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, (Chicago, Illinois: Illinois Catholic Historical Society), vol. X, no. 1, July 1927, pg. 54.

⁶³Pohlkamp, pg. 150.

last quarter of the 19th century.⁶⁴ The great painter John Singer Sargent himself is reputed to have stated, at a London, England, dinner party in the 1890's, that "After all's said, Frank Duveneck is the greatest talent of the brush of this generation."⁶⁵ Duveneck was only 13- or 14-years-old when the studio first began to operate in Covington, but he had already demonstrated an affinity toward painting. He painted shop signs for a butcher shop and his step-father's beer garden sometime around 1861, and by the time he began visiting the Stock Company studios he had also painted two charming little genre paintings. One was called "Little Match Girl," and the other named "Boy with Skein of Yarn."⁶⁶

Duveneck must have been a favorite in the studios because he quickly became an apprentice, much like in the medieval tradition. Br. Cosmas, Johann Schmitt, and later Wilhelm Lamprecht all had important roles nurturing, teaching, and mentoring Frank, and they eventually encouraged him to study in Munich—a move that changed his life and artistic outlook.

Duveneck was apprenticed as early as 1862 to Br. Cosmas and Johann Schmitt. From Br. Cosmas he learned how to use tools, carve wood, model figures, and design friezes, as well as to gild. From Johann Schmitt he learned how to mix pigments, clean brushes, paint floral borders, and paint on canvas and make wall murals. His painting skills were quickly recognized, and he began to receive painting instruction and assignments.⁶⁷ By 1864, Duveneck was an accomplished painter. His confidence in painting "Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception" (cf. **catalog №1**), in the Saint Vincent Art Collections, is evident. It is a well-executed, mature work, which belies his age of 15-years-old at the time. The literature is unclear about when Duveneck was at the monastery in Latrobe, but the painting's date of 1864 suggests that he was there then.

In 1866, the studio was working on a project in Newark, New Jersey, at a Benedictine monastery founded by Saint Vincent Abbey in Latrobe. The commission included a high altar (**catalog № 23**), two side altars,⁶⁸ and murals for St. Mary's Church, which had been recently built (**catalog № 24**).⁶⁹ The exact times Duveneck was in Newark are unknown, but a letter from Br. Cosmas to Frank and his parents dated February 25, 1866 (**see appendix C**), suggests he may have been in Newark in 1865 and then went back to Covington. Wilhelm Lamprecht joined the studio on this project in 1867, and was responsible for painting the ten murals which were based on a schema by Br. Cosmas.⁷⁰ Duveneck returned to Newark at that time to assist Lamprecht.

The lengthy letter indicates that Br. Cosmas was literate, articulate, and pious, and that he had a warm and fatherly relationship with Duveneck, who would have been 17-years-old at the time. It encourages him, gives him advice, and states that if he still planned to go to Munich to study, Br. Cosmas would

⁶⁴He was friends with some of the biggest names of American art, including William Merritt Chase and James McNeil Whistler; and the teacher of others, such as John Twachtman and Joseph DeCamp.

⁶⁵Often quoted in the Duveneck literature, it is usually without further citation.

⁶⁶Both of these paintings were last known to be in the collection of the Duveneck family.

⁶⁷Duveneck, pp. 29; and Billy Ray Booth, *A Survey of Portraits and Figure Paintings by Frank Duveneck, 1848-1919*, (University of Georgia Ph.D. Dissertation, 1970), pg. 11.

⁶⁸The altarpieces for the Newark church were all sculptural. So Johann Schmitt, who had a number of commissions in Indiana and Louisville, Kentucky at this time, was probably not present in Newark.

⁶⁹This appears to be a drawing by the architect of the church that Br. Cosmas used for planning his altar and mural designs.

⁷⁰Fellner, *ibid*.

make arrangements for a Herr Scharrer⁷¹ to act as his guardian and teacher. He then addressed Frank's parents and asks if they would support their son in this endeavor, and if they could afford to pay \$150⁷² a year for two or three years for his room and board. He cautions them not to give the money directly to Frank, but to give it to the guardian to disperse as needed.

Besides the usual advice one would give to a young man about to embark on a study abroad adventure, he reminds Duveneck: "*But!! take special pains with your drawing. That is more important for you than free-hand painting.*"⁷³ Also in the letter is a curious little statement: "My greetings to all the good people of Covington, but not to the master shoemaker, John Schmitt; the thankless man didn't even call on me. But he won't ever get another cent's worth of work out of me!"⁷⁴

Is the reference to the "master shoemaker John Schmitt" actually an insult against the painter, Johann Schmitt? Did the two of them have a falling out? The invective seems to be too strong to be against an actual shoemaker, with whom it is presumed he would have had a less-intense and infrequent relationship. But, it makes sense if Br. Cosmas felt the painter had slighted him. Making the comment to Frank is also understandable because he would have known both of them and known the circumstances of any disagreement. It is interesting to note that from 1866 on, there is no further evidence of Br. Cosmas collaborating with Johann Schmitt. Beginning in 1867, when he does work with a partner, it is with Wilhelm Lamprecht.

Duveneck's parents agreed to support Frank while he studied art in Munich, but they wanted him to wait until he was twenty-one. In the meantime, after executing the murals in Newark, Lamprecht took Duveneck with him as an assistant to decorate other churches in Montreal, Quebec, and Philadelphia.⁷⁵ In 1868, they were in Quebec decorating the church of St.-Romuald d'Etchemin, which has been designated a historic monument by the minister of culture in Quebec. Lamprecht continued to teach Frank drawing and painting, and permitted him to fill in some of the larger areas of his church murals. An interesting account of Lamprecht's teaching methods was recorded by Frank's daughter-in-law, Josephine Duveneck:

*[Lamprecht] was a strict task master. Every morning before breakfast he made Frank draw two or three eyes until he found out how to do it with skill and dispatch. This discipline stood him in good stead in later years, for nearly all of the Duveneck portraits look out of their frames with startlingly life-like eyes.*⁷⁶

Duveneck continued studying and working with Lamprecht and the studio until he left for his studies in Munich in 1870.

⁷¹No one by the name of Scharrer is listed in the matriculation or teacher lists of the Royal Academy of Art in Munich. However, in a letter from Abbot Boniface Wimmer to Abbot Utto Lang of Metten, Bavaria, written from Saint Vincent on April 2, 1878, Wimmer mentions owing some money to a Munich artist named Scharrer who painted some small altar pictures for the church at Saint Vincent (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey).

⁷²According to The Inflation Calculator at <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/> this would be a little over \$2,300.00 in today's economy.

⁷³Duveneck, pg. 31.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Robert Neuhaus, *Unsuspected Genius: The Art and Life of Frank Duveneck*, (San Francisco: Bedford Press, 1987), pg. 1.

⁷⁶Duveneck, pg. 29.

Br. Cosmas: The Studio's Artistic Vision

There are three interesting drawings of high altars with the artwork for the niches drawn or sketched by Br. Cosmas. All three of them date to between 1863 and 1869, the time period he worked with either Johann Schmitt or Wilhelm Lamprecht, and all three were built and still exist. Comparing the drawings to the actual finished altars helps to understand Br. Cosmas's role as the studio's artistic vision.

The first is a drawing for a Neo-Gothic high altar at St. Boniface Church in Quincy, Illinois (**catalog № 25**), and a photograph of the interior of St. Boniface dating to no later than 1912 (**catalog № 26**). Comparing the drawing to the photograph reveals that the altar was built almost exactly as designed. Because detailed accounts of altar commissions are so rare, it is worth quoting a 1912 account at length:

So the best altar builder of those days, the Benedictine Brother Cosmas of Covington, Kentucky, was called upon, July 1863, to construct three massive new altars, to be finished in gray and gold, the principal one of which was to cost \$2,000.00, and the others \$500 each.⁷⁷ In May, 1864, the new altars were set up, and they are the same ones that are doing service still [1912]. The paintings, included in the price, are the work of John Schmitt, also of Covington, and represent, on the main altar and in the larger panel, St. Boniface converting the Teutons, with the deacons St. Stephen and St. Lawrence in the smaller panels to his right and left; and on the side altars, aside the statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, respectively, SS. Theresa and Elizabeth, SS. Anthony and Aloysius. The three new altars were consecrated by Bishop Juncker, and the main one was constituted a privileged altar, by virtue of which a special plenary indulgence is attached to every Mass for the deceased which is celebrated thereat.

To pay for these altars, St. Boniface Society had already in Aug. 1861, when it was first decided to order them, allowed \$100.00. This good example was followed by St. Joseph Young Men's Society, whose members during the following winter gave a special entertainment to raise funds for the purpose, whilst the St. Elizabeth Ladies' Society, in July, 1863, donated \$270.00 and \$530.00 more in October, with \$250.00 added the following May and still \$500.00 in October. A number of individual contributions were also made, so that there remained only \$300.00 to be paid out of the treasury of the church.⁷⁸

Br. Cosmas and Johann Schmitt worked together on another high altar commission, this time for St. Peter Church in Brookville, Indiana. The drawing indicates a Neo-Gothic style reredos, with a painted main altarpiece depicting "The Commissioning of St. Peter," and two paintings of St. Anthony of Padua and St. Gregory the Great in the side niches (**catalog № 27**). The drawing and completed altar appear to date sometime between 1864-5.⁷⁹ The altar still exists (**catalog № 28**),⁸⁰ and raises an important question about Br. Cosmas and his artistic role in the studio. Are the drawings actual design schematics or renderings of finished projects? Annemarie Springer articulates this issue quite well:

⁷⁷ According to The Inflation Calculator at <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/> the three altars would cost over \$55,100 today.

⁷⁸ "Souvenir of the Diamond Jubilee of St. Boniface Congregation, Quincy, Illinois: Including a Historical Sketch, 1837-1912," (Quincy, Ill.: Jost & Kiefer, 1912), pg. 23-24.

⁷⁹ Springer, chapter 5, page 2. Annemarie Springer wrote that Br. Cosmas's drawing dates to 1864, and Schmitt's painting was done in 1867. She did not cite how she arrived at these dates, and I have been unable to verify her dating. I believe that both must date to before 1866, when Br. Cosmas began work in Newark, and he and Schmitt seem to have had a falling out (see above).

⁸⁰ The altar had many of the finials and much of the decorative tracery removed during a renovation of the church in the late 1970's or early 1980's, but the basic structure and altar paintings remain.



Catalog № 27 “Hochalter [sic] in St. Peter’s Ind.” (“High Altar in St. Peter’s. Ind. [Brookville, Indiana]”), Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1864/5, 17.375 x 10.625 inches, signed: “fr. Cosmas, O.S.B. [illegible],” SVA 1880.011

*Did Cosmas Wolf not only plan the structure of his Neo-Gothic altars but also determine the scheme of the paintings to grace them? Did Cosmas create the drawings of his altars after they had been built and the altar paintings had been installed? And finally, was Cosmas Wolf the arbiter of the subject matter for a church painting, outlining the arrangement of the figures and settings for the painters?*⁸¹

The evidence seems to point to the conclusion that the Br. Cosmas drawings are design schematics, and that his artistic vision is the one that the painters followed.

A sketch in graphite exploring how to expand the width of the altar has been drawn on the side of the completed St. Peter altar drawing, giving a strong indication that this is a working-design drawing. In addition, a simple comparison of the differences between the St. Peter altar drawing and the actual altar supports the argument that these drawings are in fact designs and not records of finished works.

The main altarpiece painting is similar to the drawing, and has many of the exact areas: St. Peter kneeling before Christ, the sheep in the bottom right corner, and the background are all faithfully rendered as in the drawing. However, there is a dramatic difference concerning the portrayal of the figure of Christ. The drawing shows Christ in the traditional pose of handing the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to St. Peter (Matthew 16:19)—a depiction one would expect to see in a Roman Catholic church dedicated to that saint—yet the actual painting shows Christ in the traditional portrayal of the “Good Shepherd.” Instead of handing keys to Peter, Christ holds a shepherd’s crook, thus transforming the scene to Christ telling Peter if you love me, “Feed my sheep” (John 21:17)—a scene that might be more expected in a protestant church. Why the portrayal of Christ and the message of the altarpiece was changed, and by whom, is not known.

In addition, the side panel paintings of St. Anthony of Padua and St. Gregory the Great have been switched in their niches, and although the pose of the St. Anthony of Padua painting is the same (save that it is a mirror image of the drawing), the St. Gregory the Great painting is an entirely different composition. It is interesting to note that besides other noticeable changes, St. Gregory’s vestment has been changed from a chasuble to a cope, and the liturgical color changed from red to blue (a non-liturgical color), an inconsistency with traditional Western iconography not usually found in the work of the studio.

A circa 1900 photograph of the interior of the church⁸² shows that these changes date to at least that time, but it is probable that the changes date back to when Johann Schmitt originally painted the three artworks. The fact that the altarpieces are not exactly the same as the drawing argues against the assertion that the drawing is documenting a finished work, and it is a favorable indication that it is a design schematic.

A third drawing of a Neo-Classical altar also gives a clue about Br. Cosmas’s role as the artistic vision behind the studio’s creations. The Benedictine parish at St. Mary’s Church in St. Marys, Pennsylvania, commissioned Br. Cosmas to create a new high altar for their church (**catalog № 29**). It was consecrated on August 15, 1869. Wilhelm Lamprecht painted the altarpieces, including the main altarpiece of the “Declaration of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception,” which is reputed to have been displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. The painting portrays Our Lady of the Immaculate

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²See “Saint Peter’s Catholic Church, Franklin County, Indiana,” <http://www.ingenweb.org/infranklin/pages/churches/stpeters.html>.

Conception, Bishop John Neumann of Philadelphia (now a Saint, and who was present at the declaration), Pope Pius IX (now Blessed, and who proclaimed the dogma), St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Benedict.⁸³

The Br. Cosmas drawing has fully articulated drawings for the two side panel paintings of St. Patrick (left) and St. Boniface (right),⁸⁴ but only a rough outline sketch of the main panel. This may be an indication that he was confident knowing what he wanted for the side panels, as they were traditional depictions of well-known saints. However, he may have been less sure of his concept for the central panel whose depiction may have been unfamiliar to him, as the declaration of the dogma only occurred 16 years earlier. This may suggest that he wanted Lamprecht, a trained historical painter, to have input in the final articulation and execution of the painting, or that he had full confidence in Lamprecht's work. Whatever the situation may have been, all of the Lamprecht paintings (**catalog № 30**) follow the designs indicated for them in the drawing.

All three of these drawings of altars help create a picture of Br. Cosmas that shows he was the artistic vision behind the works produced by the Catholic Altar Building Stock Company, whether collaborating with Johann Schmitt or Wilhelm Lamprecht. They show that the drawings are working-designs, and not merely records of a finished work. They also demonstrate that Br. Cosmas was giving instructions to his painters on what subjects to paint, and how they should be composed. Sometimes the paintings were completed as designed, and other times they had modifications, which would indicate either a change of plan by the designer, or the acceptance of changes suggested by the painter or donor.

In addition, there are three undated drawings that appear to be studies for paintings, probably intended to be altarpieces. Although it is not known if the drawings date to this period, they do show that Br. Cosmas was interested in sketching painting compositions. The first is a sketch for a pietà (**catalog № 31**). It is signed by Br. Cosmas and shows all of the elements one would expect to find in a study for a painting—a rocky background, details in the foreground, and shading are all articulated. The other two drawings have been attributed to Br. Cosmas based on the close artistic similarity to the signed work, and the fact that they were found with the other Br. Cosmas drawings. One portrays a scene of the baptism of Christ (**catalog № 32**), and the other a detail showing Christ at the Last Supper (**catalog № 33**). All three of the drawings indicate that Br. Cosmas was interested not only in the design of altars, but also in the actual artwork that the altars would hold.

It is clear from studying the altar drawings that they are design plans, and that in many cases the altars were built exactly as they were planned—including the paintings articulated in Br. Cosmas's designs which were later executed by Johann Schmitt and Wilhelm Lamprecht. In some cases, such as the St. Peter altar, some modifications were made, but the overall design remained Br. Cosmas's proposal. It is also apparent that Br. Cosmas was interested in drawing studies for paintings, which it is presumed were to be painted to grace his altars. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to state that Br. Cosmas was the artistic vision for the studio, and the painters were executing his concepts.

⁸³Boniface Buerkle, O.S.B., *Mary's Legacy, Saint Mary's Church*, (St. Marys, Pennsylvania: McKee Press, 1988), pp. 15 and 17. Fr. Boniface Buerkle seems to have contradictory information. On page 15 he states that the new main altar was installed in 1866, and that the "Professor William Lambrecht [sic]" painting was installed in 1876, which seemingly implies that it was not in St. Marys before that time. This information is almost certainly incorrect as it seems doubtful an altar would be consecrated without the main altarpiece. More than likely the painting dates to the same time as the altar's consecration in 1869. The painting may have been temporarily removed so that it could be lent to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876, but it is also possible that this is an inflated telling of the story. Albert G. Brehm's *History... St. Mary's Church*, (St. Marys, Penna.: Lenze Associated Enterprises, Inc., 1960), pg. 39 merely states that the painting "was on display in the art gallery in Philadelphia for some time and gained great acclaim from many art lovers visiting that institution daily."

⁸⁴Buerkle, pp. 18-19. Fr. Boniface Buerkle has the identities of these two paintings reversed in his work.

Not Only Altars: Other Work by the Studio

The Covington Catholic Altar Building Stock Company did not just make altars. They made church windows, other church furnishings, and altar appointments. Alongside a painting studio and wood working facilities, there was an art glass department.⁸⁵ The drawings of Br. Cosmas from this period reflect this. There is a design for a church window (**catalog № 34**), which was probably intended for an Irish parish, as there are shamrocks in the top register of the window. There is also a design for a frame intended for a church (**catalog № 35**), and marked “1865.” It may have been proposed for a set of the Stations of the Cross, or some other devotional religious art work. The studio must have had metalsmithing capabilities as well,⁸⁶ because there are drawings for croziers, altar sets of candlesticks and crucifixes (**catalog № 36**), and one chalice designed by both Br. Cosmas and Johann Schmitt (**catalog № 37**).

The Paul Keck Controversy

The Abbot of Saint Vincent, Boniface Wimmer, was caught up in another controversy in the early 1860's that reached beyond the confines of the monastery's walls in Latrobe. Accounts of events at Saint Vincent were published in national newspapers, and the eventual confrontation between Wimmer and a troublesome novice reached the desks of various bishops in the United States, and the offices of cardinals in Rome. The conflict began when a novice by the name of Paul Keck was recuperating from an illness in the infirmary. He claimed to have been visited by the ghost of a monk who had died 77 years earlier. The deceased monk asked the monks of Saint Vincent for their prayers, and for them to perform certain devotions and acts of reparation. When it was discovered that the clues the ghostly monk had given about his identity seemed to fit an actual monk, Keck's visions began to gain credence in the monastic community. The novice began making prophecies which frequently appeared to come true, gaining him further support as he attempted to take over governance of the monastery from Abbot Boniface.⁸⁷

Paul Keck had been in Covington, Kentucky, living at the monastery at St. Joseph Church where Br. Cosmas was in residence. Abbot Boniface apparently requested Br. Cosmas's opinion about Keck's behavior in Covington, and on September 17, 1863, Br. Cosmas wrote a lengthy letter that had thirteen points of complaints about Keck (**see appendix D**).⁸⁸ The letter makes multiple criticisms about Keck's lack of monastic decorum and manners, some of which appear to be minor infractions, which seemed to be bigger issues for someone of Br. Cosmas's pious nature.⁸⁹ Some of these complaints include making unnecessary noise, and breaking the monastic grand silence. From his various complaints, it is obvious that Br. Cosmas found Keck to be loud, obnoxious, and disagreeable. Another point of contention is

⁸⁵*Der Wahrheits-Freund*, (February 25, 1863).

⁸⁶If the studio in Covington did not have this capability, the drawings could have been sent for execution at Saint Vincent Abbey where there were shops with blacksmiths, metalsmiths, coppersmiths, silversmiths, and goldsmiths. Gerard Bridge, *An Illustrated History of St. Vincent Archabbey*. (Beatty, Pennsylvania: Archabbey Press, 1922), pg. 118.

⁸⁷For a fuller account of the Paul Keck controversy, see Jerome Oetgen, *An American Abbot*, (The Catholic University of America Press, 1997).

⁸⁸Letter from Brother Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B. in Covington, Kentucky, to Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, September 17, 1863 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). The letter was discovered in 2013 by Jordan Hainsey and translated by Simon Stuchlik. There is also apparently an earlier letter in which Br. Cosmas informs Abbot Boniface Wimmer that Keck had applied to join the Franciscans in Cincinnati, but his application was denied. The letter has not been found in the Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey. Fellner, *ibid.*, vol. 3, pg. 342, fn. 42.

⁸⁹*Der Wahrheits-Freund* reported on at least two occasions that Br. Cosmas served as liturgical master of ceremonies at pontifical solemn high masses. The role of a master of ceremonies is all about making sure the rituals are properly performed, and that decorum and manners are maintained. If this was Br. Cosmas's personality type, then his irritation with Paul Keck becomes a little clearer.

when Br. Cosmas recounts that Keck spent \$7 on a teapot, which did not correspond with Br. Cosmas's sense of monastic simplicity and poverty. However, adjusted for inflation, that teapot would cost a little over \$128 today,⁹⁰ so perhaps his complaint was not such a little matter.

Br. Cosmas lodges more serious complaints about Keck's visions and the way he treated doubters. He also makes grave allegations about his lack of chastity, which are ultimately charges that brought about Keck's downfall. The Br. Cosmas letter is important because it gives direct testimony about what he witnessed concerning a significant controversy in Saint Vincent history. It also helps us to know that Br. Cosmas was an intelligent, educated, and pious man, who could argue a point logically, and write it coherently.

The Covington Studio Comes to an End, but Their Individual Careers Continue

The Covington Catholic Altar Building Stock Company came to an end about the time Br. Cosmas relocated in 1868 to work as a sculptor at Saint Vincent Abbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.⁹¹ He continued to design and make altars and other church furnishings, as well as designs for churches, schools, monasteries, and at least one rectory. Johann Schmitt continued having a successful career painting altarpieces and murals for churches through the "German Triangle," until his death in 1898. Wilhelm Lamprecht, too, had a successful career as a church altarpiece and mural painter; occasionally, he and Br. Cosmas collaborated on projects. Lamprecht returned to his native Bavaria around 1901, and died in 1922. Frank Duveneck went to Munich in 1870, and studied at the Royal Academy of Art in Munich. There he learned a looser technique of painting, and became one of the most important figures in the American Impressionist movement. He died in Cincinnati in 1919.

Returns to Saint Vincent Abbey

Br. Cosmas returned to live at Saint Vincent Abbey in 1868⁹² and began the second half of his career based from the monastery. For the next 26 years, most of his work was for Saint Vincent, or other Benedictine monasteries, convents, or parishes. Although during this time period he frequently is called only a sculptor, he continued designing altars and other church furnishings, and his drawings demonstrate that he began designing buildings as well.

Altar Building Continues: How Were They Painted? Were they Actually Built?

It is clear that throughout his career Br. Cosmas's primary focus was on the creation of altars for Catholic churches, whether in the Neo-Gothic style of his training, or in a Neo-Classical style that has been described by some as Byzantine or even Baroque. Annemarie Springer, using Roger Kennedy's *American Churches* for support, has argued that:

⁹⁰The Inflation Calculator <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>.

⁹¹No records of the Catholic Altar Building Stock Company, except for the Br. Cosmas drawings, have been found, so it is difficult to say when the disbanding actually occurred. However, Fr. Oswald Moosmüller indicates Br. Cosmas was working as a sculptor in Latrobe in 1868, so it must have been about this time. Oswald Moosmüller, *St. Vincenz in Pennsylvanien* (Fr. Pustet & Co.; New York, 1893), pg. 335.

⁹²Moosmüller, *ibid*.

Without exception, the Covington-produced⁹³ wooden altars were painted white, and the majority of the altar-paintings featured a gold leaf background. White and gold had been the dominant color scheme of Baroque churches in southern Germany. It is the opinion of several architectural historians that the only concession to the Bavarian Baroque style by German-American church artists was the white and gold color scheme of high altars.⁹⁴

However, this assertion seems to be completely wrong. While it is true that many of the surviving Br. Cosmas altars have been painted cream or white and gilded, archival photographs and some parish histories indicate that most of the Neo-Gothic style altars were natural wood, highlighted in bold Gothic colors and gilded. One such altar is a small votive altar to Saint Benedict (**catalog № 38**) that was made for the 1400-year celebration of the birth of Saint Benedict at Saint Vincent Abbey in 1880. Only the statue survives today, and tragically it was stripped of its polychromatic paint in the 1960's when a different aesthetic prevailed. Even some of the Neo-Classical altars appear to have been executed with the natural wood showing, such as the high altar at St. Mary's Church in N.S., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which was installed in 1872 and not painted a cream white and gold until 1898.⁹⁵

Other evidence that not all of the altars were intended to be white and gold include two drawings. The first is from the 1880's and depicts a Neo-Gothic altar, with gold gilt and green paint highlighting the niches (**catalog № 39**). There is no sign indicating where this lovely, little altar was intended to be built, but it is clear that it was not intended to be painted white and gilded. Another drawing, this time for an altar with a main altarpiece depicting the Sacred Heart of Jesus (**catalog № 40**), also shows similar detailing where gilding is indicated. It is dated 1885 and was probably intended for an Irish church, as the side panels depict St. Patrick and St. Brigit of Kildare.⁹⁶ Both of these drawings are similar to the way the upper tier of the reredos from the high altar (**catalog № 41**), and the altar itself (**catalog № 42**), from St. Boniface Chapel on Chestnut Ridge near Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, were finished, which was dismantled in sections. The top was removed shortly after 1937 and the altar itself in the 1970's. They were stored in the choir loft, and the finish has been virtually untouched since leaving Br. Cosmas's hands.

At Saint Vincent Abbey, Br. Cosmas designed and made altars for the 1835 monastery and parish church.⁹⁷ An 1876 drawing shows one design to be used for both side altars (**catalog № 43**), one dedicated to St. Joseph and the other to St. Vincent de Paul, the patron saint of Saint Vincent Abbey and Parish. Both altars were made and finished around 1880. An archival color photograph from the 1950's showing all three altars (**catalog № 44**) confirms that Br. Cosmas did not intend his Neo-Gothic altars to be painted cream and white, and that he intended them to be natural wood, highlighted in bold colors and gilt.

⁹³In this context, Dr. Springer is using a broader definition of what constituted a "Covington-based" altar. She is referring to any altar designed by Br. Cosmas.

⁹⁴Springer, chapter 2, page 2.

⁹⁵Rev. Lambert Daller, O.S.B., "Souvenir of the Diamond Jubilee Celebration of St. Mary's Church, N.S., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1848-1923," (Colonial Press: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1923). Until its closing in 1980, this parish was staffed by Benedictines of Saint Vincent.

⁹⁶It is interesting to note that the two side paintings of St. Patrick and St. Brigit of Kildare match the side panel paintings of the epistle-side altar in the Saint Vincent Abbey Church that Br. Cosmas designed and made just a few years later. Although the monastery was founded by German-born monks, the parish had a fairly large contingent of Irish descended parishioners. The rest of the altar, while similar in design, is not a match.

⁹⁷Built in 1835, this church served the needs of both the monastery and parish at Saint Vincent. It was completely destroyed in a fire that occurred in 1963.



Catalog № 46 *St. Boniface*, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., Polychromed wood, 1874, approximately 66 x 21 x 17 inches, unsigned, SVA 1997.004

These drawings and photographs are just a few of the many examples that contradict Dr. Springer's earlier assertion that "without exception" the altars designed by Br. Cosmas were white and gold. In fact, the evidence concerning the Neo-Gothic style altars demonstrates just the opposite. These altars were all designed to have natural wood finishes with highlighting done in rich colors and gilding. There is even evidence, as noted above, that some of the Neo-Classical altars were meant to be natural wood finish with highlighting. The fact that many of the surviving altars have been painted cream or white with gold gilt may actually reflect on changing tastes over time, rather than Br. Cosmas's aesthetic and the work he completed for them.

Changing tastes tells the story of the statues of the high altar of St. Mary's Church in Erie, Pennsylvania (**catalog № 45**). The polychromatic statues of St. Gregory the Great and St. Boniface (**catalog № 46**), were made in 1874, but painted off-white during a 1945 renovation. The altar was dismantled during a 1970-1972 renovation⁹⁸ and the statues were placed in a basement storage room until they were brought to Saint Vincent, and re-polychromed in 1997. The main altarpiece was a painting by Wilhelm Lamprecht and depicts the "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary." It remains at the church, but is on a back wall.

There is ample evidence that many—if not most—of the original altars designed by Br. Cosmas were constructed. Unfortunately, many, like the Saint Vincent altars previously mentioned, no longer exist. Such is the case with an altar designed for the convent chapel of the Benedictine Sisters working in the school at St. Benedict Church in Carrolltown, Pennsylvania (**catalog № 47**), which was razed in the 1960's. The drawing is dated 1883, and is one of the simplest designs Br. Cosmas drew. There is no tracery and very little decorative carving. The altar has only one opening for an altarpiece, which could have been for a sculpture or painting. On the reverse is another drawing, which is a fairly complete design for a Neo-Gothic style altar, with rough outlines of a bishop-saint and an angel sketched in two of the four niches. There are no markings on the reverse side of the drawing to indicate where the work was intended to be placed, and it is currently not known if it was ever built.

A similar fate seems to have befallen an 1883 design Br. Cosmas made for the high altar at the Benedictine abbey in Atchinson, Kansas (**catalog № 48**). St. Benedict's was founded by Abbot Boniface Wimmer, and its first monks were monks of Saint Vincent, and so it is logical that as the foundation continued to grow Br. Cosmas would begin making plans for their abbey church. The plan itself depicts a Neo-Classical style altar, which has some highlighted areas indicated for finishing. According to Abbot Owen Purcell, O.S.B., the current archivist for St. Benedict's Abbey, the altar was never built.⁹⁹

It is a sad testament of time that many of the altars that were built no longer exist. Some have been lost due to natural disasters, such as flood, fire, or tornado. Others have been replaced by newer altars made of marble, and some have been altered or even removed due to liturgical renovations.

Other Church Furnishings

Br. Cosmas also designed other furnishings for churches, such as pulpits, baptismal fonts, communion rails, frames for paintings, and candlesticks. It is worthwhile to note some of these designs to see the variety of his work, thought and attention to detail.

⁹⁸*St. Mary's Parish, A Brief History*, Issued to Commemorate the Dedication of the New Altar of Sacrifice (Erie, Pennsylvania: St. Mary's Parish), May 24, 1972.

⁹⁹Email, Fr. Abbot Owen Purcell, O.S.B., to Br. Nathan Cochran, O.S.B., June 19, 2013 (Saint Vincent Art Collections files).

One of the most curious drawings from his Saint Vincent period is a design for a communion rail. Br. Cosmas has written on it “Communionbank” (**catalog № 49**), which is German for communion rail. He has also written the German word for wood: “Holz,” along with his signature. In another hand is written the notations: “Rog. H. 19 J” and “1 Okt. 1869,” in the lower left. The date is obviously October 1, 1869, but the meaning of the rest of that notation is unknown. In the lower right, also in another hand, is written “A. Lange Architect, Coln.” which appears to be a reference to a Cologne architect by the name of A. Lang. The design of the communion rail itself is more ornate and decorative than Br. Cosmas’s normal projects, and so it appears to be Br. Cosmas documenting the work of A. Lang. The 1869 date indicates that Br. Cosmas was in the United States, and not Europe, at the time. So where did Br. Cosmas see the original communion rail in order to draw it? Or, did Br. Cosmas put his signature on a drawing by the architect Lang?¹⁰⁰ This remains one of the many unanswerable questions.

Two detail drawings of four different frieze patterns demonstrate that Br. Cosmas was quite skilled at rendering realism and the appearance of volume. The drawings may have been used to decide on a possible pattern to use for a project, or used as a guide for woodcarvers to sculpt decorative friezes (**catalog № 50 and 51**). His altar designs and other works may not have been as elaborately articulated and intricately carved as his European counterparts (as seen in the communion rail above, or the work of his teacher Petz), but they were graceful and elegant as can be seen in a drawing for a Neo-Gothic frame for an XI Station of the Cross (**catalog № 52**).

He may have simplified his designs for the skill level available to him in the labor force in the United States, and an American aesthetic. Such may have been the case with an octagonal baptismal font he designed (**catalog № 53**). It is much less ornate than the work of his teacher (**cf. catalog № 17 and 18**), but still follows the traditional octagonal shape that dates back to the early centuries of Christianity. The drawing may have been the design for an actual baptismal font found in storage at Saint Vincent (**catalog № 54**). It is not known where this baptismal font was originally, but it may have come from St. Boniface Chapel on Chestnut Ridge. Even though someone attempted to restore it and began to strip the paint away without finishing the job, the quality of the workmanship still shines through. On the reverse of the drawing is another design for a baptismal font (**catalog № 55**) that is more ornately decorated.

Br. Cosmas designed a set of high mass candlesticks in 1883 for the high altar in the abbey church at Saint Vincent. The drawing is a full-scale schematic that has notations in German specifying where gold leaf should be applied, and where silver nail heads or rubies should be inserted (**catalog № 56**). Although a full set of six was made and placed on the high altar (**cf. catalog № 43**), only five have been found to date: four at St. Mary’s Church in St. Marys, Pennsylvania,¹⁰¹ and one at Saint Vincent (**catalog № 57**).

It is possible that he worked with stone, but the only time Br. Cosmas is known to have done so is for the gravestone of Fr. Peter Lemke, O.S.B., (1796-1882), at St. Benedict Church Cemetery in Carrolltown, Pennsylvania (**catalog № 58**). It is in Neo-Gothic style with finials and nodes, and a raised carved crucifix. It is monumental in scale, and sits in the center of the cemetery in honor of the German missionary to Central Pennsylvania. Fr. Lemke was responsible for the Catholic community of Carrolltown and was influential in convincing the Benedictines to come to Pennsylvania to begin their first foundation. Although Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., rejected the idea of staying in Carrolltown—because the soil was too rocky and poor for the farming needed to support a large monastery—the Benedictines have had

¹⁰⁰The drawing style, the probable European origin, and type of paper used are strong arguments to date this drawing to his student days in Bavaria between 1857 and 1862. However, the handwritten date argues against this. The actual date appears to be a mystery with no apparent solution.

¹⁰¹I am grateful to Mr. Michael Quick for calling my attention to the location of the candlesticks in St. Mary’s.

a presence in Carrolltown since 1846. In fact, Lemke himself became a Benedictine in 1852, and went to Kansas to help begin the Benedictine foundation there. After serving in a parish in Elizabeth, New Jersey, he retired to Carrolltown and died on November 29, 1882. Br. Cosmas's monument is a fitting tribute to this great man.

Architecture

There were numerous building projects at Saint Vincent between 1870 and 1905.¹⁰² It is conceivable that Br. Cosmas was involved in designing at least some of these projects, but no drawings indicating his role have been found. Although he does not specify what he designed, Fr. Gerard Bridge noted:

The work begun and so well carried on for many years by Brother Cosmas is continued in a measure and in some particulars on a larger scale by his former pupil, the Ven. Brother Wolfgang Traxler.¹⁰³ Brother Cosmas made the plans for future buildings at St. Vincent Archabbey and Brother Wolfgang executed them. The gymnasium building, the new seminary building, the shops, and above all the Archabbey Church, were under the supervision of Brother Wolfgang, whose services to the community for over thirty years have been of incalculable benefit.¹⁰⁴

In addition to Br. Wolfgang, Br. Cosmas may have also been teaching two other monks about architectural principles. Found among the Saint Vincent drawings were a number of architectural plans signed by Br. Wolfgang, as well as Fr. Chrysostomus (active in 1875 and possibly Fr. Chrysostom Lochschmidt, who died in 1937), and Fr. Alban (active in 1879 and possibly Fr. Alban Seckler, who died in 1918). There are also several drawings by Francis G. Himpler, a successful New York City architect, who may have worked with Br. Cosmas on several projects. The drawings by Br. Wolfgang and Mr. Himpler are quite accomplished, whereas the ones by Fr. Chrysostom and Fr. Alban are not as skilled.

There are almost a dozen architectural projects with drawings by Br. Cosmas, indicating that he was working on architecture from 1875 to 1889. He designed several chapels and churches, a monastery, a convent, a school building, and a rectory. A letter, discovered after the first printing of this catalog, indicates that Br. Cosmas had a working relationship with Joseph Stillburg, a Pittsburgh architect who designed St. Anthony of Padua Chapel in Troy Hill, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and apparently helped Br. Cosmas with building projects at Saint Vincent.¹⁰⁵

His earliest known architectural drawing is for a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary (**catalog № 59**). Dated 1875, it was to be constructed of stone, and had Neo-Gothic embellishments. The incorporated buttress supports, pointed-arch windows and doorway, and complicated vault ceiling are

¹⁰²In the 1870's, Benedict (now Headmasters) and Gregory (now Roderick) Halls were extended, and Anselm Hall was built; the brewery was expanded and a malt house, ice house and a factory for beer vats and barrels were built; a clock tower was built and the original church had an extension added; a large brick barn, and a buggy shed, carriage house and pig sty were also built. In the 1880's, an art studio was built and the Gristmill was enlarged to include a sawmill; Placid Hall was constructed, as was a boiler house to heat all of the buildings by steam heat. In the 1890's, the building of Andrew Hall and the abbey church were the focus of construction activities at Saint Vincent Abbey. Gerard Bridge, O.S.B., *An Illustrated History of St. Vincent Archabbey*, (Beatty, Pennsylvania: Archabbey Press, 1922).

¹⁰³Br. Wolfgang Traxler, O.S.B., was born in Bohemia in 1852 or 1853, and came to Saint Vincent in 1871. He was known for his talents as a construction foreman and oversaw all of the major construction projects at Saint Vincent during his lifetime. His skills were so sought after that he also supervised construction projects at other Benedictine foundations. There are several building designs with his signature in the Saint Vincent Art Collections. One of them was for a school building at Newark Abbey in New Jersey. He died in 1931.

¹⁰⁴Bridge, 182.

¹⁰⁵Joseph Stillburg to Br. Cosmas, August 16, 1884 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). The letter was discovered by Jordan Hainsey in November 2013 in an unrelated file.



Catalog № 67 "St. Vincent Kapelle Convent" ("St. Vincent Monastery Chapel"), Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1890-1892, 16.375 x 9.5 inches, signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf," SVA 1880.010

quite skilled and gracefully articulated. It is not known if this chapel was an exercise, or actually built, but it is one of the most elegant of Br. Cosmas's architectural designs.

Several of Br. Cosmas's church designs are of a more humble and practical character, including the one he designed for St. Joseph's Church in Wetaug, Pulasky County, Illinois.¹⁰⁶ There are three drawings for the little wooden church of St. Joseph among Br. Cosmas's drawings. The drawings are dated 1881, but the first mass was not celebrated in the new church until April 16, 1882.¹⁰⁷ One of the drawings depicts a cross-sectional view of the interior from the front, and the façade, with details of a pointed-arch window and the bell steeple between (**catalog № 60**). A second drawing articulates details for the portal, with full-scale specifications for the ornamentation of the wooden covering (**catalog № 61**). This combination of German Neo-Gothic principles (particularly the pointed-arch window), with the humble building material of wood used in a modest design became a popular style in the Mid-West, known as American Gothic, and made famous in Grant Wood's painting of that name.

In addition to construction activities at Saint Vincent Abbey, a number of monastic foundations from Saint Vincent also were having major construction projects. St. Benedict's monastery was founded in Atchison, Kansas, in 1857, and experienced steady growth. It became a conventual priory in 1858, and an abbey in 1876. A monastic church, designed by the New York architect Francis G. Himpler, was dedicated in 1869, and a complex of monastic buildings connected to it were planned. The archives at St. Benedict's Abbey do not have any information on who designed these monastic buildings, and they have no records of Br. Cosmas.¹⁰⁸ However, a floor plan drawing of the monastic complex for Kansas (**catalog № 62**) was found among the Br. Cosmas drawings. Although it is unsigned, the handwriting and drawing techniques appear to be consistent with Br. Cosmas's work.

Abbot James Albers, O.S.B., of St. Benedict's examined the drawing on June 19, 2013, and confirmed that many of the buildings detailed in the drawing were built. He noted that the walls marked in grey were built in 1859, but are now gone. Walls marked in aqua at the bottom of the drawing, and the walls colored in brown, were never built, but the monastery section drawn in orange was built in 1880, and is known today as Bishop Fink Hall. The aqua-colored walls at the top of the drawing were built and still exist, but the staircase sketched in graphite is actually on the other side of the hallway. Abbot James also noted that the passage from the church apse into the section behind the church is wider than depicted, and there is no room off to the side.

An elevation drawing of a monastery or school (**catalog № 63**) was created by Br. Cosmas in 1886. It is similar in style and design as several buildings at Newark and Belmont Abbeys, and may have been meant for a building project in one of those locations. It appears to be an extension coming off another building, which was how many of the older buildings at Saint Vincent Abbey were constructed—namely, a wing or section would be added as growth and money permitted. There are no markings on the drawing to indicate whether it is intended to be a school or monastery, however, the bell steeple on the right of the roof may indicate that the building contained a chapel.

¹⁰⁶A Benedictine foundation was briefly attempted there with the establishment of a parish dedicated to St. Joseph in 1881, and a monastic foundation was founded nearby, a year later, named Cluny. The monastery was transferred in 1903 to Saskatchewan, Canada, and known today as St. Peter's Abbey.

¹⁰⁷Letter from William A. Hight to Boniface Wimmer, April 18, 1882, (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey).

¹⁰⁸Email from Abbot Owen Purcell, O.S.B., of St. Benedict's Abbey to Br. Nathan Cochran, O.S.B., June 7, 2013 (Saint Vincent Art Collections files).

Br. Cosmas apparently designed smaller scale domestic architecture, as is shown in one drawing of a house. The drawing shows the front and side elevations, and has the floor plans for the first and second stories. It is a variation on a four-square home that was probably intended to be a rectory (**catalog № 64**). It features a housekeeper's sitting room behind the kitchen, with a private staircase to an upstairs bedroom that does not have access to the rest of the second floor. This would be an appropriate home for one to four priests and a housekeeper, and a typical living arrangement for parish priests in the 19th century.

In 1889, Br. Cosmas drew a cross-sectional side elevation with a floor plan for a small church or chapel (**catalog № 65**). It is a modest structure that would be appropriate for a small parish, but it is not known where it was intended to be built. A few years later, in 1894, the monks of Saint Vincent Abbey laid the cornerstone for a small, wood-framed chapel for their farm and forest property on Chestnut Ridge, near Kecksburg, Pennsylvania. It was dedicated to St. Boniface and is similar in size and details to the drawing, with a few minor variations. This is a common design used by many of the small mining communities that dot the Western Pennsylvania landscape, and it may be possible that Br. Cosmas designed some of these small churches and chapels, particularly for parishes served by the monks of Saint Vincent.

Also in 1889, Br. Cosmas drew the front elevation of a grand church (**catalog № 66**). Abbot Boniface Wimmer had long dreamed of building an appropriately majestic abbey church at Saint Vincent, and after his death in 1887, the monks were determined to see the vision through. This front elevation by Br. Cosmas appears to be a proposal for the new abbey church. There are many striking similarities to the present Saint Vincent Archabbey Basilica. The red brick exterior and two front towers are the most obvious. At the time that this drawing was done, Br. Cosmas would have been 68-years-old. He and the Benedictine community probably saw that he might not live to oversee the construction of such a large-scale church. Although he was still alive when the ground was broken to build the church, the task for designing it fell to J. William Schickel (1850-1907), a German immigrant and architect from New York City. The responsibility of supervising its construction fell to Br. Cosmas's protégé, Br. Wolfgang Traxler, O.S.B.

His Final Work

At the time of his death in 1894, Br. Cosmas was still constructing his altar for the new Choir Chapel at Saint Vincent Archabbey.¹⁰⁹ The drawing of this altar (**catalog № 67**) indicates a box-shaped reredos in the Neo-Gothic style. In the center niche a sculptural grouping of the "Adoration of the Magi" is depicted, flanked by statues of St. Benedict and St. Boniface in the pointed-arch side niches. Because it is related to his final work, it has been assumed that the drawing was made in the early 1890's, but a recently discovered letter from the Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller¹¹⁰ indicates that it may have been drawn as early as 1859 or 1860. This will be discussed fuller in the final section.

All of the sculptures depicted in the drawing were made and still exist, however, they are mirror images of the original drawing. The Magi sculpture is still polychromed (**catalog № 68**), and was restored in 1983. The St. Benedict statue (**catalog № 69**) had the paint removed to the bare wood sometime soon after 1956, and sustained light damage in the process. It was damaged further when it was stolen by

¹⁰⁹ Andrew Hall, where the Choir Chapel was located, was built in 1892; however, decorative murals were still being painted in 1899. Saint Vincent Abbey was raised to the rank of an Archabbey in 1892.

¹¹⁰ Letter from Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, sent from Munich, January 26, 1860, arrived at Saint Vincent February 25, 1860 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). Discovered by Jordan Hainsey in November 2013 and transliterated and translated by Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B.

a college student and went missing until its return on Ash Wednesday in 2001, some 20 years later.¹¹¹ The St. Boniface statue (**catalog № 70**), which has been in storage most of the time since 1956, appears to have been damaged in the 1963 fire at Saint Vincent Archabbey that destroyed a major part of the campus—including the store room where the statue was being kept. It was damaged further by someone who began to remove the polychrome, sometime in the late 1950's or early 1960's.

One of the earliest photographs of the altar (**catalog № 71**) shows two gilded-wood reliquaries (**catalog № 72**) on both sides of the tabernacle, which were likely made by Br. Cosmas at the same time as the altar. Comparisons between the drawing and this early photograph show that while the altar niches have the same basic shapes, the decorative elements are quite different. With the information currently available, it is difficult to explain why the altar was not made according to the drawing, or why the sculptures were reversed, but we have seen before samples of Br. Cosmas's finished works not matching perfectly his design drawings.

One thing to take note of in the photograph is that part of the decorative trim at the top left of the altar is broken, which could be an indication that the altar may in fact be older than the 1890's when it was installed in the Choir Chapel. It is plausible that the photograph is actually of an older altar in what Müller in his January 26, 1860 letter refers to as the "house chapel," the precursor to the Choir Chapel. Photographs of the altar in the Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey show that it was installed in the Choir Chapel while it was still under scaffolding in the early 1890's. It now appears that Br. Cosmas may have been recycling one of his older works, taking the altar from the "house chapel" and reinstalling it in the Choir Chapel. With that in mind, the vagueness of his obituary makes better sense: "He was last engaged in the construction of an altar intended for the Father's chapel. However, before he had the satisfaction of completing the same, he met the summons to the throne of God..."¹¹²

Just a couple of years later, when electric lights replaced the gas lamps, some of that decorative trim on the altar was removed. Then, around the 1910's or 1920's the standing electric lights were replaced with hanging lights, and photographs show that the reredos holding the sculptures (**catalog № 73**) was replaced as well.

In 1956, the reredos and sculptures were removed from the Choir Chapel (**catalog № 74**). The statue of St. Benedict was stripped to the bare wood and put on display in the Scholasticate. Today, it is now usually on display in the monastery refectory. The statue of St. Boniface has been kept in storage. The sculptural grouping of the "Adoration of the Magi" was put on display in the Choir Chapel in its previous position only during the Christmas season until the Choir Chapel and altar were razed after a massive fire in 1963. Today, the sculptural grouping is the centerpiece of a small chapel on the fourth floor of the new monastery building.

This exhibition has brought the statues together to be seen as a group for the first time in over 50 years. Because the altar they were made to sit above no longer exists, they are displayed on the main altar Br. Cosmas fabricated circa 1894 for the St. Boniface Chapel on Chestnut Ridge, near Kecksburg, Pennsylvania (**cf. catalog № 42**).

¹¹¹ Heather Ellwood, "Missing century-old statue returns in time for St. Benedict Day, March 21," *The Review*, (Latrobe, Pennsylvania: Saint Vincent College) volume 48, issue 5, March 21, 2001, pg. 1.

¹¹² *St. Vincent Journal*, Vol. III, Issue 8, April 15, 1894, pg. 264.

His Death and Legacy

Death and Funeral

On April 7, 1894, at 9:00 a.m., after being fortified by the Sacraments, the Venerable Lay-Brother Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., died in the Lord.

On April 9, the monastic choir prayed the Office of the Dead for Br. Cosmas at 5:00 a.m. It was unsung. It was followed by a Solemn Requiem Mass celebrated at 5:30 a.m., with the Rev. Fr. Prior Celestine¹¹³ presiding. Fr. Edward was deacon, and Fr. Alexander was subdeacon. Afterwards, Br. Cosmas was laid to rest in the Saint Vincent Monastic Cemetery.

According to the monastic custom of the American-Cassinese Benedictine Congregation, two additional masses were celebrated for the repose of his soul. One was a sung Requiem Mass celebrated at 5:30 a.m., on April 11. The second was also a sung Requiem Mass, which was celebrated at 5:30 a.m., on April 16.¹¹⁴

Requiescat in Pace

His Legacy: Was He a Sculptor?

Br. Cosmas was a significant church designer, architect, and altar builder, who assembled some of the best church painters and craftsmen of the 19th century to produce unparalleled works of artistic and religious brilliance in wood. After collaborating on projects with him, Johann Schmitt and Wilhelm Lamprecht continued having successful careers painting altarpieces and murals, receiving major recognition for their work. His apprentice, Frank Duveneck, was deeply influenced by his example and guidance. Although Frank did not become the great church painter Br. Cosmas hoped he would, he did turn out to be one of the most influential artists and teachers in the American Impressionism movement during the last quarter of the 19th century, in both Europe and America.

Br. Cosmas's altars and designs have inspired and been the focus of prayer for tens of thousands of people in Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas and Minnesota. Unfortunately, the ravages of time, due to natural disasters and changing tastes, have meant the loss of many of his works. But his contribution to 19th century Catholic art and architecture can be remembered, still, by studying his drawings, archival photographs, and his surviving works.

The amount and versatility of work he accomplished is truly impressive, yet one question has not been addressed—"Was he a sculptor?" It turns out that this is probably the hardest question to answer about Br. Cosmas. None of the statues attributed to him are signed, and the quality of their workmanship is what one would expect from imported sculptures from Munich. So the question remains, did this Bavarian-trained immigrant make them, or were they ordered from Europe? His obituary, published just eight days after he died, states that he was a "skillful sculptor,"¹¹⁵ yet there are cases where he did not carve the sculptures in his altars.

¹¹³ Fr. Celestine Engelbrecht, O.S.B., was one of the original 18 companions who first came to Saint Vincent with Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., in 1846. He was one of Wimmer's closest friends and confidants. He died in 1904.

¹¹⁴ *Missae Fundatae* (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey).

¹¹⁵ *St. Vincent Journal*, Vol. III, Issue 8, April 15, 1894, pg. 264.

The best documented case involves the three altars he made for St. Joseph Church in Covington, Kentucky, between 1862 and 1865. A parish history states that Br. Cosmas and his studio made the altars, but all of the statues in them came from Munich. It then lists the cost of the sculptures as \$1,900, and that shipping from Munich to New York cost \$405.75, and freight from New York to Covington cost \$90.25.¹¹⁶ It is interesting to note that Abbot Boniface Wimmer complained to Archbishop Scherr of Munich that Br. Cosmas only charged \$2,400 for making the altars, which he states was too cheap, causing the studio to lose money on the project. Wimmer also wrote that for Br. Cosmas's next project—the high altar in the Jesuit Church in Cincinnati—he charged a more appropriate sum of \$5,000.¹¹⁷ With detailed information such as this, it is obvious that Br. Cosmas did not carve the statues for St. Joseph Church, but does that mean he did not sculpt any of the statues in his altars?

Most of the statues that are still extant and attributed to Br. Cosmas are at Saint Vincent Archabbey and Newark Abbey in New Jersey. Oral tradition at both monasteries, dating back to at least the 1950's, attribute the statues to him. However, a previously untranslated and unpublished letter was discovered in the Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey in November 2013 which indicates that at least some of these sculptures were from the workshop of Johann Petz. The letter was written by King Ludwig I of Bavaria's Court Chaplain, Fr. Joseph Müller, to Abbot Boniface Wimmer on January 26, 1860. The lengthy missive discusses a number of issues, including Br. Cosmas, Mr. Petz, and altarpieces for Saint Vincent and St. Mary's Abbey in Newark:

I have enclosed your account statement on a separate page. The outlays of Br. Cosmas will amount to about the same. In addition I have taken on the [expense of] 200 florins for your house altar, the bas-relief of the holy three kings. Fr. Prior Rupert [Seidenbusch of Newark] was a bit crude in a letter to the sculptor Petz. He pained this good man very much; but that is the way Americans are; they think one can simply pull anything fully baked right out of the oven. What is meant to be well done takes time, and Mr. Petz was not able to deliver the figures any earlier. The setting required too much time....

Now Br. Cosmas has to pay Mr. Petz here for the figures for the altar in Newark. I will direct him to pay the sum of about 600-700 fl. [against your account]....

Mr. Petz has not brought me his bill. Consequently I cannot say how much Fr. Prior Seidenbusch should pay you. He will get a notice of his own from me.

*Munich, 26 January 1860
Müller, Court Chaplain*

P.S. Just before the end of this letter I learned that their statues, the ones that Mr. Petz sent to Newark, cost 1050 fl. So there is nothing left over [in your account] for Rome and for the bishop. Since I can make up the failing 27 fl., this offers Newark another opportunity. I will direct Fr. Prior to reimburse you the 1023 fl..¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ "Centennial Souvenir of St. Joseph Church, Covington, Kentucky, 1856-1956," 1956, pg. 18. According to The Inflation Calculator <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>, the statues today would cost \$28,095.12, the shipping from Munich to New York would be \$5,99.79, and the shipping from New York to Covington would cost \$1,334.52.

¹¹⁷ Letter from Abbot Boniface Wimmer to Archbishop Scherr of Munich, sent on February 26, 1863 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey).

¹¹⁸ Letter from Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, sent from Munich, January 26, 1860, arrived at Saint Vincent February 25, 1860 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). Discovered by Jordan Hainsey in November 2013 and transliterated and translated by Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B.

It has long been noted that the Saint Vincent “Adoration of the Magi” sculpture (cf. **catalog № 68**) bears a striking similarity to Newark’s “Lamentation Over the Dead Christ” (**catalog № 75**) and “Adoration of the Magi” (destroyed in a 1930’s fire), and that they are undoubtedly by the same workshop, and probably even by the same hand. They are almost certainly the sculptures Müller refers to in his January 26, 1860 letter, and so should now be listed as from the workshop of Johann Petz. However, does this mean that Br. Cosmas did not carve them? It is the belief of this author that it is still likely that Br. Cosmas is the actual sculptor.

Petz’s large workshop more than likely operated under the centuries-old master/apprentice system in which the master supervised apprentices executing his designs, to which he would then apply a few finishing touches before selling them under his name. Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Sir Peter Paul Rubens are but two well-known masters who produced a large number of works in this manner. The same could easily be true in this case, as Br. Cosmas was apprenticed to Petz at the time these sculptures were made. According to Müller’s letter he was an intermediary between the American Benedictines, Müller, and Petz. He was ideally positioned to have been the main sculptor of these statues. If this is the case, it explains why the oral traditions at both monasteries say that Br. Cosmas was the sculptor. Br. Cosmas probably did work on them—possibly even doing most of the work. He would have been proud of them, telling those whom he met in both Latrobe and Newark that he was the sculptor.

Did Newark receive more than the “Lamentation Over the Dead Christ,” and “Adoration of the Magi” for the 1050 florins¹¹⁹ they were charged? The price of 200 florins¹²⁰ charged to Saint Vincent for their sculpture might at first indicate that Newark should have received about five times as many sculptures than just the two mentioned above. However, Müller was expecting the cost to be considerable less, in the 600-700 florin range. His letter does give a clue why the price might have been inflated by about 40%: Fr. Prior Rupert Seidenbusch of Newark had been rude to Petz and hurt his feelings. Could this have caused Petz to increase his price? If so, than the original price would be more consistent with the cost of the Saint Vincent sculptural grouping—especially if shipping costs were part of that price—so it is quite possible that Newark did not receive in 1860 more than the two sculptures under discussion.

Whether that theory is completely accurate or not, Newark has nine more sculptures attributed to Br. Cosmas, which seems to be far too many for the price paid. They are all life-sized, and the extra 40% cost does not seem to be enough for that many more statues. Could all or some of them be by Br. Cosmas when he was building Newark’s new altars in 1866 and 1867? In addition, there are five more statues at Saint Vincent attributed to Br. Cosmas. Can these still be safely attributed to him?

It seems then that there are four major arguments in favor of continuing to attribute these statues to Br. Cosmas. The first, is that at least some of them were created in the workshop of Johann Petz while Br. Cosmas was apprenticed to him in a master/apprentice relationship. Although Petz may have received the credit and payment, Br. Cosmas still could have executed them. Second, oral tradition at both Saint Vincent Archabbey and Newark Abbey tells us Br. Cosmas was a sculptor, and that various statues at both monasteries were carved by him. The third argument is perhaps the most convincing, namely,

¹¹⁹ A letter from Fr. Augustine Wirth, O.S.B., Prior of the Benedictine Mission, Atchison, Kansas, to King Ludwig I of Bavaria, written December 16, 1859 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey), indicates that the exchange rate at that time was US\$ 0.60 to one Bavarian florin. This would be approximately US\$ 630 in 1860, or almost \$16,000 today (The Inflation Calculator <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>).

¹²⁰ A little over \$3,000 in today’s economy (The Inflation Calculator <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>).

those who knew him in life and wrote about him called him a sculptor,¹²¹ stating that he replaced a sculptor who had died.¹²² If Br. Cosmas did not sculpt, why do his contemporaries call him a sculptor? Finally, all accounts of his life agree that he studied sculpture in Munich with a sculptor. Why spend five years studying with a sculptor, if not to sculpt? The only logical answer is, because he *did* sculpt.

If this is so, why then did he not sculpt the statues for St. Joseph Church in Covington, Kentucky? And the answer more than likely lies in the sheer number of commissions he was working on at the same time. From 1862 to 1867, Br. Cosmas and his studio were doing altars, pulpits, and other furnishings for as many as 17 different churches (**see appendix E**), if not more. The sheer volume alone indicates that he probably did not have time to sculpt statues as well, and probably explains why the studio relied so heavily on painted altarpieces during this period.

In conclusion, Br. Cosmas was an accomplished artist in many art forms. The words of Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller to Abbot Wimmer neatly summarize Br. Cosmas's artistic career: "In Cosmas you now have, in regard to art, a great treasure."¹²³ He was an accomplished church designer and altar builder, an architect, and a sculptor. He did not seek fame or reward, but performed his work for the glory of God, humbly and piously. His name may not be as celebrated as his apprentice, Frank Duveneck; or the painters Johann Schmitt and Wilhelm Lamprecht whom he commissioned to create the paintings he designed; but his memory lives on in the drawings, sculptures, and other surviving works he created. They are his indelible legacy, and witness to his faith made corporeal. They give mute testimony to a little-known monk, who was one of the most prolific and important church artists in 19th century America.

¹²¹ Moosmüller, pg. 335 and *St. Vincent Journal*, Vol. III, Issue 8, April 15, 1894, pg. 264.

¹²² Moosmüller, pg. 170.

¹²³ Letter from Bavarian Court Chaplain Joseph Müller to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, sent from Munich, May 27, 1858, arrived at Saint Vincent July 7, 1858 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey). Transliterated and translated by Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B.



Exhibition Illustrations





Catalog № 1 *Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception*, Frank Duveneck, oil on canvas, 1864, 38 x 24 inches, Signed: "Frank Duveneck, 1864," SVA 1864.00. On exhibit with the permanent collection

Catalog № 2

Drawing of a Neo-Gothic Style Statue and Niche

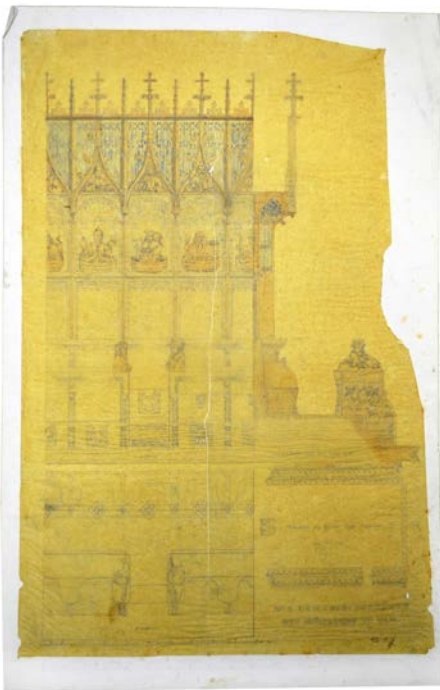
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, pre-1853

16.625 x 8.5 inches

Signed: "Joh. Wolf"

SVA 1875.017

**Catalog № 3**

"Aus den chor = Gestühledes Münsters zu Ulm"

("From the Choir Stalls at Münsters zu Ulm")

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink and graphite paper, pre-1853

16.75 x 10.75 inches

Signed: "Joh. Wolf"

SVA 1880.019

Catalog № 4

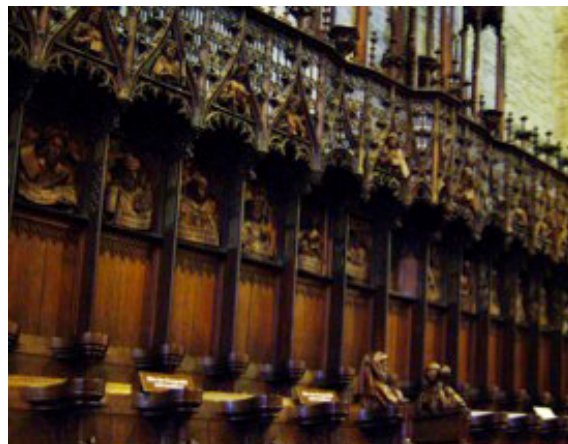
The Choir Stalls of the Cathedral at Münsters zu Ulm

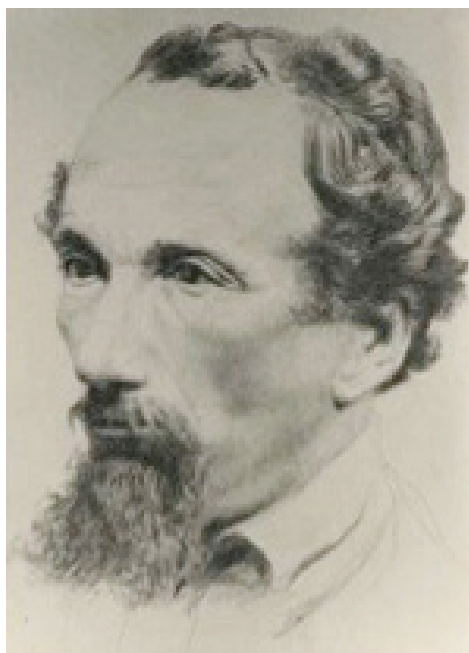
Photograph by Joachim Köhler

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Not in exhibition



**Catalog № 5***Photograph of Johann N. Petz*

Unknown

Photograph, ca. 1880-1890

Porträtsammlung des Münchner Stadtmuseums

<http://stadtmuseum.bayerische-landesbibliothek-online.de>

accessed May 21, 2013

Not in exhibition

Catalog № 6*Drawing of a Wood Carved Panel*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Graphite with wash on paper, 1857

20.25 x 13.5 inches

Signed: "gez: Cosmas Wolf, 1857" with illegible portion underneath

SVA 1857.001

**Catalog № 7***Drawing of a Wood Carved Panel*

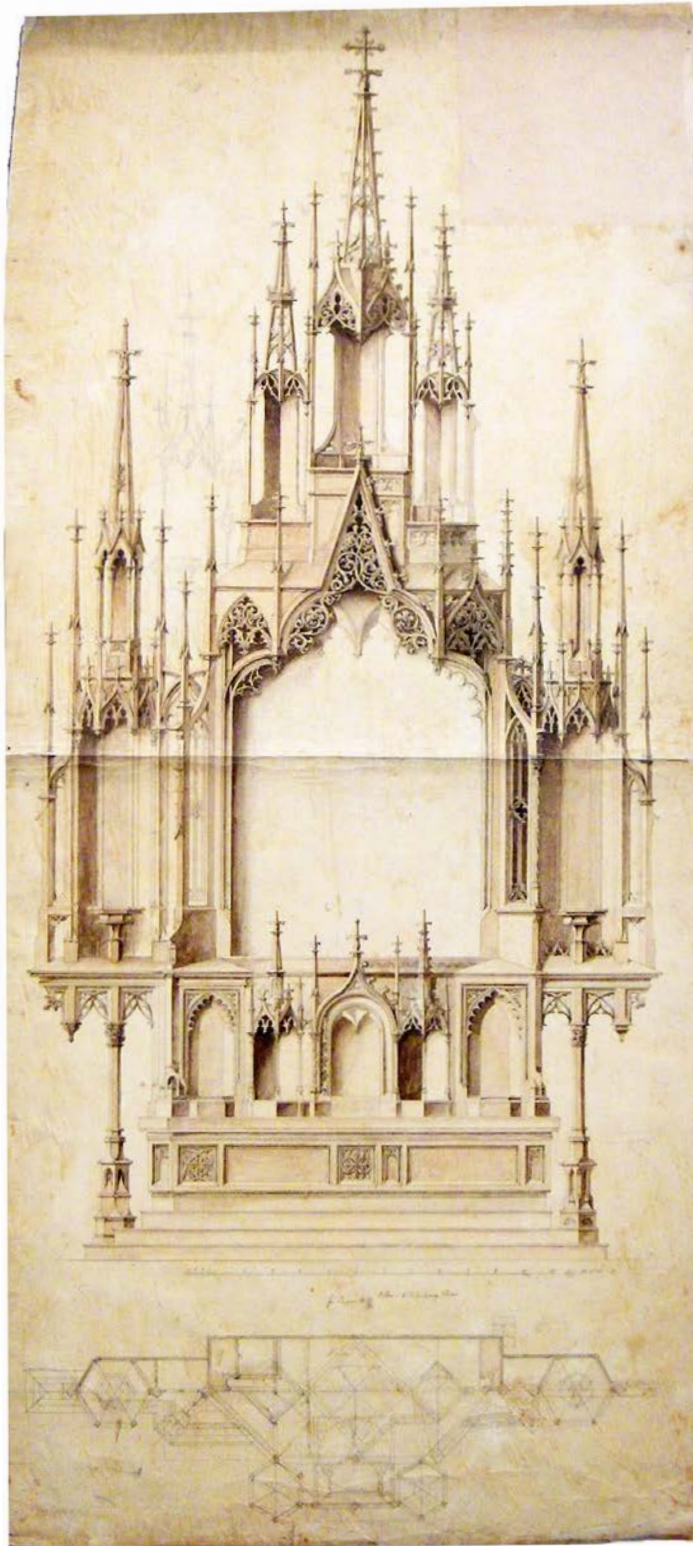
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Graphite with wash on paper, ca. 1857

16.75 x 10.5 inches

Unsigned

SVA 1880.028



Catalog № 8 "Alter [sic] in Vilsbiburg, Bav." ("Altar in Vilsbiburg, Bav[aria]") Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1857-1862, 37.5 x 16.75 inches, signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf," SVA 1880.017. Not in exhibition



Catalog № 9 *Drawing of High Altar at Vilsbiburg*, Johann N. Petz, ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1855-1862, Heimatmuseum Vilsbiburg—Kröninger Hafnermuseum, <http://www.museum-vilsbiburg.de/index.php?id=52>. Not in exhibition

Catalog № 10

*“Entwurf zu einem Seitenaltare in d.
Spitalkirche zu Vilsbiburg”*

*(“Design for a Side Altar for the Hospital Chapel at
Vilsbiburg”)*

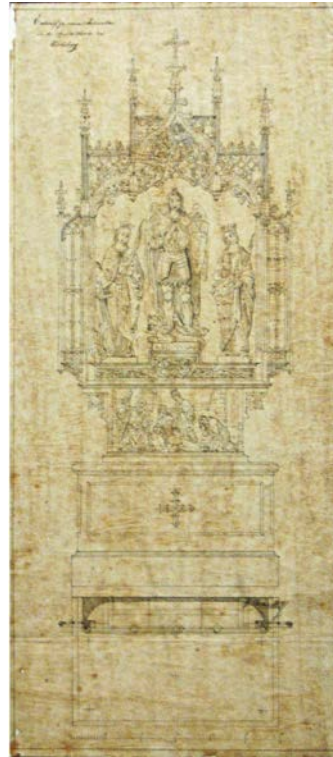
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Pen and ink on paper, ca. 1857-1862

15.125 x 6.75 inches

Signed: “fr. Cosmas Wolf”

SVA 1880.029

**Catalog № 11**

“Hochaltar in Taufkirchen, Bav.”

(“High Altar in Taufkirchen, Bav[aria]”)

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash on paper, ca. 1857-1862

21.125 x 11.5 inches

Signed: “fr. Cosmas Wolf”

SVA 1880.015

Catalog № 12

This photograph shows the interior of the Church in Bad Hindelang with altars, pulpit, and other various furnishings and decorations by Johann N. Petz, done about 1867. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Michael Schmid, Diözesankonservator Kirchliches Bauwesen und Kunst for the Diocese of Augsburg, Germany.

Not in exhibition





Catalog № 13 *"Hochaltar in Holzhausen, Bav."*
("High Altar in Holzhausen, Bav[aria]")

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.,

Ink with wash and graphite on paper

ca. 1857-1862

20.875 x 11.125 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf"

SVA 1880.016



Catalog № 14

The High Altar in the Church in Bad Hindelang

Johann N. Petz

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Michael Schmid,

Diözesankonservator

Kirchliches Bauwesen und Kunst

for the Diocese of

Augsburg, Germany

Not in exhibition



Catalog № 15

Drawing for an Altar with Baptism of Christ

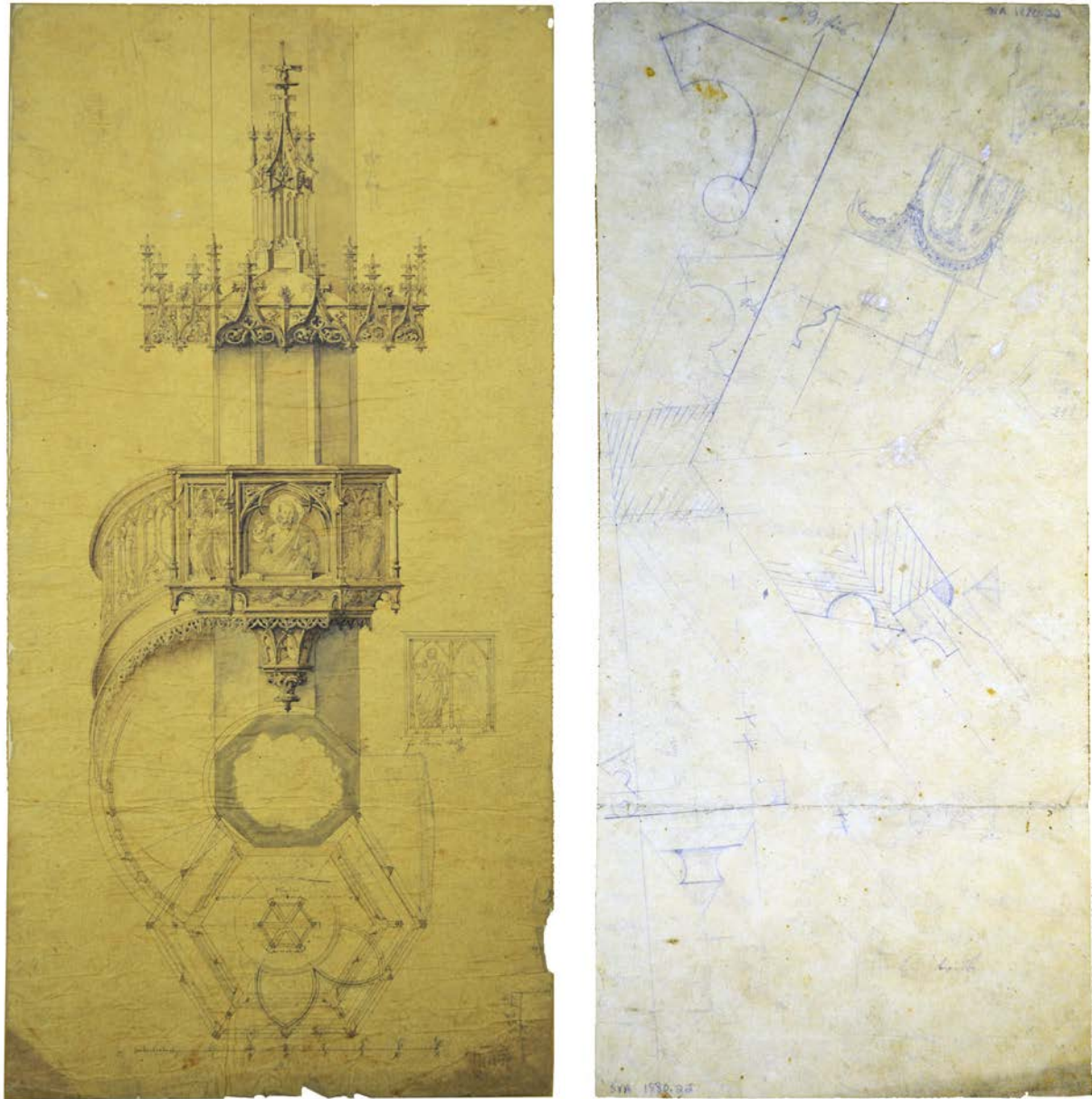
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash on paper, ca. 1857-1862

11.875 x 7.75 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf"

SVA 1880.007



Catalog № 16 *Drawing of a Neo-Gothic Pulpit (obverse)/Sketch (reverse)*, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1857-1862, 17 x 7.75 inches, signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf," SVA 1880.022



Catalog № 17 *Drawing of a Neo-Gothic Baptismal Font with Baptism of Christ Sculpture*, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash on paper, ca. 1857-1862, 15 x 8.5 inches, signed: "Cosmas Wolf," SVA 1880.027

Catalog № 18*Drawing of a Neo-Gothic Baptismal Font*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash on paper, ca. 1857-1862

15 x 8.75 inches

Signed "Cosmas Wolf"

SVA 1880.008

**Catalog № 19***Drawing for an Altar to Saint Sebastian (obverse)/
Graphite Sketch (reverse)*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1857-1862

12.625 x 5.5 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf"

SVA 1880.009

Catalog № 20*Portrait of Abbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B.*

Wilhelm Lamprecht

Oil on canvas, 1866

39 x 29 inches

Unsigned (signature was probably lost
when painting was cut down)

SVA 1890.001

On exhibit with the permanent collection





Catalog № 21

Portrait of Curé Pierre-Télésphore Sax

Wilhelm Lamprecht

Oil on canvas, ca. 1867/8

Church of Saint-Romuald opposite Québec City

Photograph of portrait © Brian Merrett,

merrettimages.ca

Used with permission

Not in exhibition

Catalog № 22

Portrait of Abbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B.

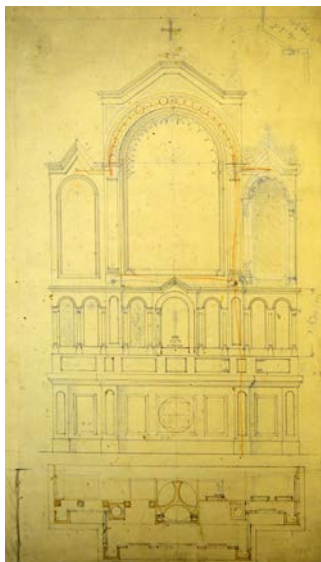
by Wilhelm Lamprecht

Unknown

Carte de visite, late 19th/early 20th century

ASVA

Not in exhibition



Catalog № 23

Preliminary Architectural Sketch for

Side Altar of Newark Abbey (obverse)/

Photograph of Completed Altar (reverse)

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1865/6

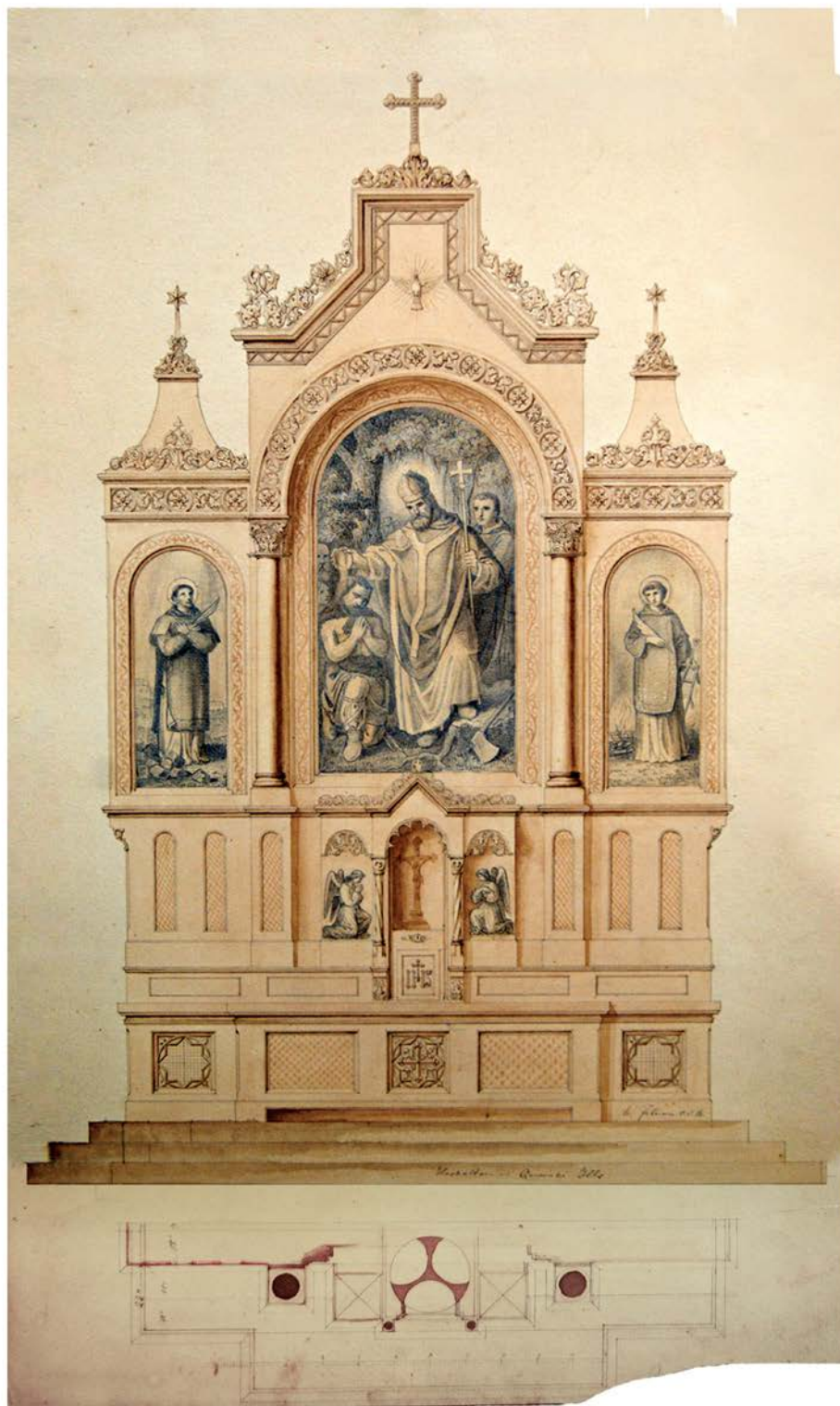
18.25 x 10.875 inches

Unsigned

SVA 1866.002



Catalog № 24 *Front and Side Elevation, with Floorplan and Cross-Sectional Drawing of Newark Abbey Church, unknown, probably by Henry Engelbert, ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1865/6, 15.5 x 12.125 inches, unsigned and undated, SVA 1866.003*



Catalog № 25 "Hochaltar in Quinci, [sic] Ills., S. Bon. Church" ("High Altar in Quincy, Illinois, St. Boniface Church"), Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. July 1863-May 1864, 22 x 13.25 inches, signed: "Ar: fr. Cosmas, O.S.B.", SVA 1880.012

Catalog № 26*Interior of St. Boniface Church, Quincy, Illinois*

Unknown

Photograph, ca. 1912

<http://archive.org/stream/souvenirofdiamon00stbo#page/54/mode/2up>

Accessed August 4, 2013

Not in exhibition

**Catalog № 27***"Hochalter [sic] in St. Peter's Ind."**("High Altar in St. Peter's. Ind. [Brookville, Indiana]")*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1864/5

17.375 x 10.625 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas, O.S.B. [illegible]"

SVA 1880.011

Catalog № 28*Interior of St. Peter Church, May 11, 2013*

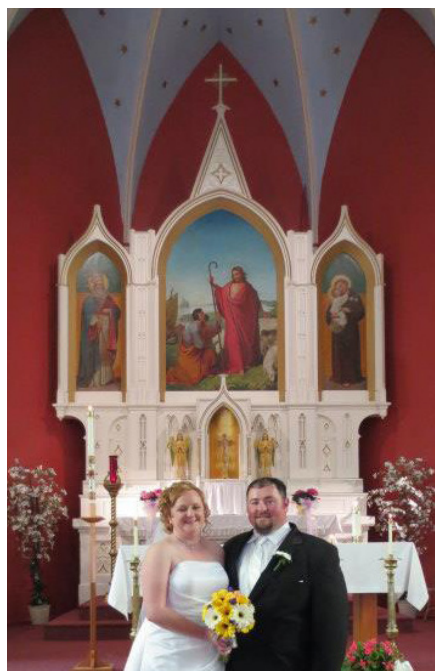
Amy Moore and Joe Bulach's

wedding picture of May 11, 2013

<http://www.scotthighschoolalumni.org/amy-moore-97-marries>

Accessed August 2, 2013

Not in exhibition





Catalog № 29

"Hochaltar in St. Mary's Elk Co., PA"

("High Altar in St. Mary's, Elk County, Pennsylvania")

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1869

Signed: "gem. fr. Cosmas"

SVA 1880.032

Catalog № 30

High Altar in St. Mary's Church,

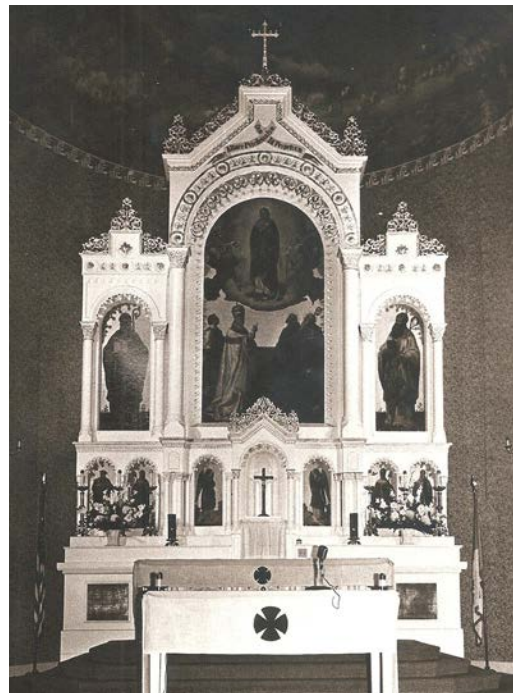
St. Marys, Pennsylvania

Photograph, ca. 1988

Boniface Buerkle, O.S.B.,

Mary's Legacy, Saint Mary's Church, (St. Marys,
Pennsylvania: McKee Press), 1988, pg. 17

Not in exhibition



Catalog № 31

Study for a Painting of the Pietà

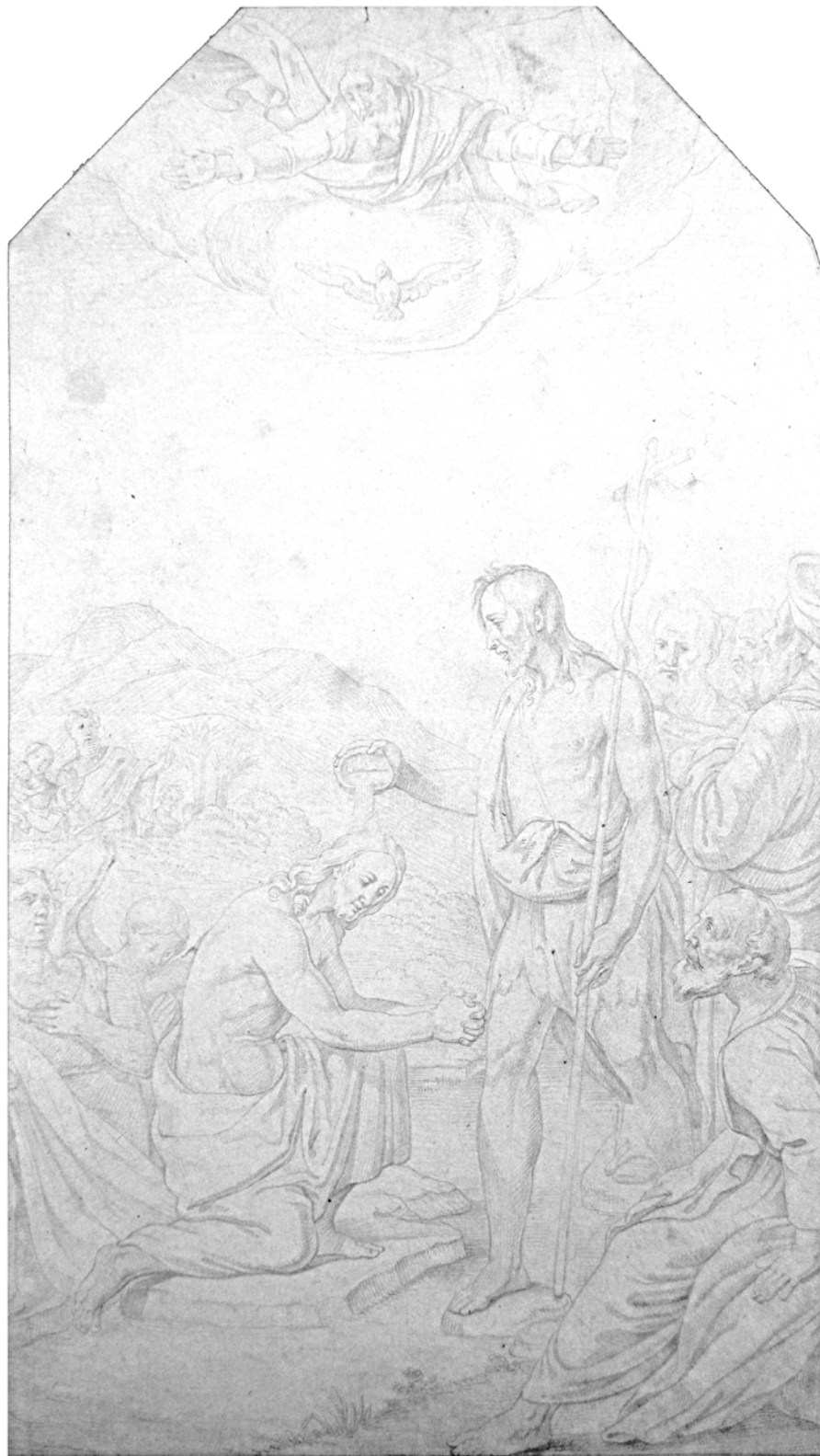
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Graphite on paper, ca. 1862-1890

9.875 x 8.375 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas, O.S.B."

SVA 1880.003



Catalog № 32 *Study for a Painting of the Baptism of Christ*, attributed to Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., graphite on paper, ca. 1862-1890, 16.25 x 9.5 inches, unsigned, SVA1880.001



Catalog № 33 *Detail Study of Christ at the Last Supper*, attributed to Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., graphite on paper, ca. 1862-1890, 7.15 x 5 inches, unsigned, SVA 1887.206

Catalog № 34

*Design for a Church Window (obverse)/
Graphite Sketches (reverse)*

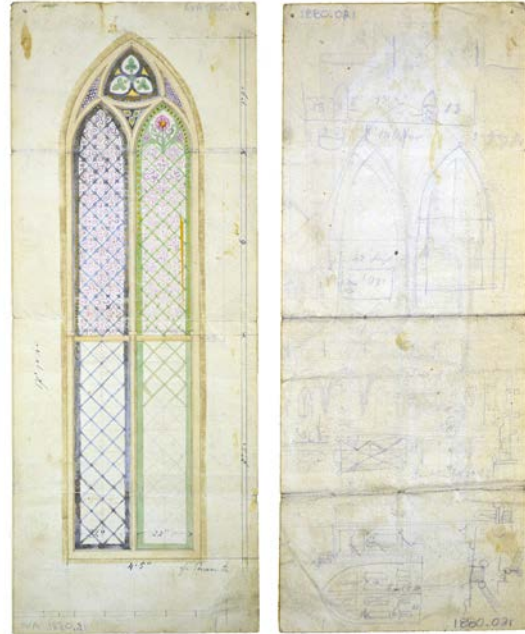
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with graphite on paper, ca. 1862-1868

10.85 x 4 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas, Ar."

SVA 1880.021

**Catalog № 35**

"1865" Design for a Church Frame

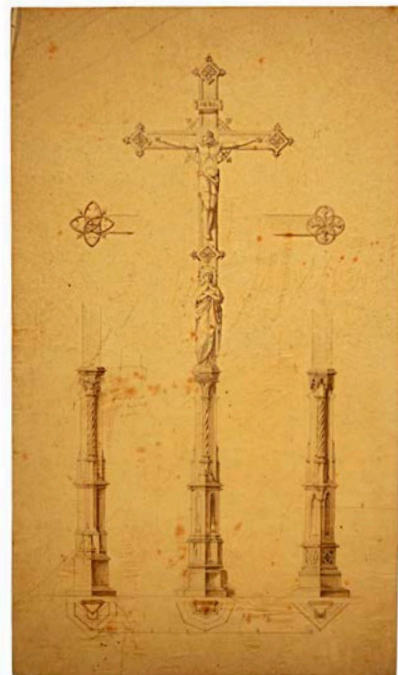
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash on paper, 1865

12.875 x 8.125 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B."

SVA 1865.001

**Catalog № 36**

*Drawing for an Altar Set with
Crucifix and Two Candlesticks*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with graphite on paper, ca. 1862-1868

18.125 x 10.5 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf"

SVA 1875.016


Catalog № 37

Design for a Chalice with Crucifix Node

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., and Johann Schmitt

Graphite on paper, ca. 1862-1866

10.25 x 14.25 inches

Signed: "Entwurf v. f. Cosmas & Maler

John. Schmitt, Covington, Ky-"

SVA 1870.003

Catalog № 38

Photograph of St. Benedict Votive Altar

by Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Photograph, ca. 1900

ASVA

Not in exhibition


Catalog № 39

Drawing for a Neo-Gothic Altar

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash on paper, ca. 1880's

18.25 x 9.75 inches

Signed: "gem. fr. Cosmas, O.S.B."

SVA 1889.002



Catalog № 40 *Drawing for a Neo-Gothic Altar*, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash on paper, 1885, 24.25 x 14.75 inches, signed: "gem. fr. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1885," SVA 1885.002



Catalog № 41 *Upper Tier of High Altar Reredos with St. Boniface Chapel*, Chestnut Ridge (Kecksburg), Pennsylvania, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., wood with paint and gilding, ca. 1894, 94.5 x 83 x 6.5 inches, unsigned, SVAC

"Sanctus Bonifacius Martyr" ("Saint Boniface Martyr"), Unknown Italian (?), oil on canvas, ca. 1895, 60.5 x 32.5 inches, signed: "Ad dies Roma," Gift in 1895 from Bishop Richard Phelan of Pittsburgh to St. Boniface Chapel, Chestnut Ridge (Kecksburg), Pennsylvania, SVA 1895.002

Catalog № 42

*High Altar from St. Boniface Chapel,
Chestnut Ridge*

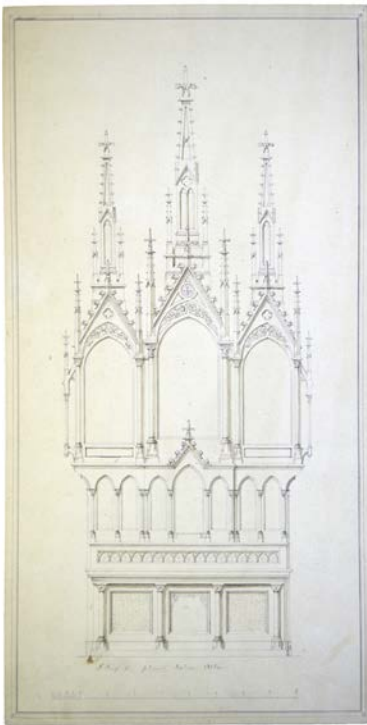
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Wood with gilding, ca. 1894

Approximately 45 x 85.25 x 48 inches

Unsigned

Saint Vincent Abbey

**Catalog № 43**

"S. Joseph & S. Vincent Seiten Altar"
(*"St. Joseph & St. Vincent Side Altars"*)

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink on paper, 1876

21.5 x 10.750 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1876"

SVA 1876.001

Catalog № 44

Interior of Saint Vincent Abbey Church

Color postive picture, ca. 1950's

ASVA

Not in exhibition





Catalog № 45

Interior of St. Mary's Church, Erie, Pennsylvania

Photograph, before 1945

ASVA

Not in exhibition

Catalog № 46

St. Boniface

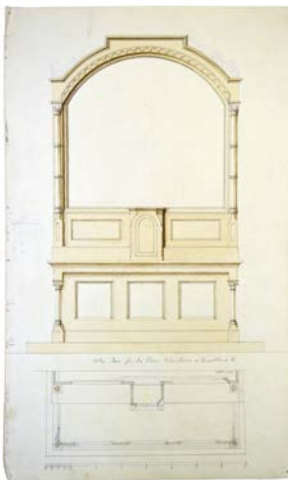
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Polychromed wood, 1874

Approximately 66 x 21 x 17 inches

Unsigned

SVA 1997.004



Catalog № 47

"Altar Plan für die Ehrw: Schwestern in Carrolltown, Pa." (obverse)/Unidentified Altar Plan (reverse)

("Altar Plan for Venerable: Sisters in Carrolltown")

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, 1883

18.5 x 11.5 inches

Signed: "gem. fr. Cosmas, 1883"

SVA 1883.001



Catalog № 48 *"Altar Plan für Kansas, Abby [sic]"* ("Altar Plan for Kansas, Abbey"), Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash and graphite on paper, 1883, 19.5 x 12.75 inches, signed: "fr. Cosmas, 1883," SVA 1883.002



Catalog № 49 "Communionbank" ("Communion Rail"), Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash on paper, October 1, 1869, 5.25 x 9.75 inches, signed: "fr. Cosmas," SVA 1869.001

Catalog № 50*Drawing of Two Wood Carved Friezes*

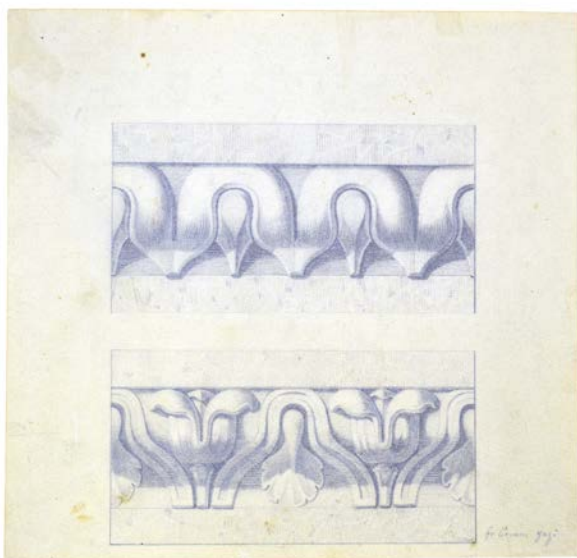
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Graphite on paper, ca. 1880's

10 x 8 inches

Signed: "gnz. fr. Cosmas"

SVA 1880.030

**Catalog № 51***Drawing of Two Wood Carved Friezes*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Graphite on paper, ca. 1880's

7.75 x 8 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas gnz."

SVA 1880.041

**Catalog № 52***Drawing for a Neo-Gothic Frame for**Station XI of the Cross*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash on paper, ca. 1880's

10.5 x 6 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas"

SVA 1880.025

**Catalog № 53***Drawing for a Baptismal Font (obverse)*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, 1881

14.875 x 7.5 inches

Signed: "gem. fr. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1881"

SVA 1881.006 (obverse)

**Catalog № 54***Baptismal Font*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Approximately 50 x 23 x 23 inches

Wood, ca. 1880's

SVAC

Repolychromed in 2013

**Catalog № 55***Drawing of a "Taufstein Cösten (Baptismal Font)" (reverse)*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, 1881

14.875 x 7.5 inches

Signed: "gem. fr. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1881" (on obverse)

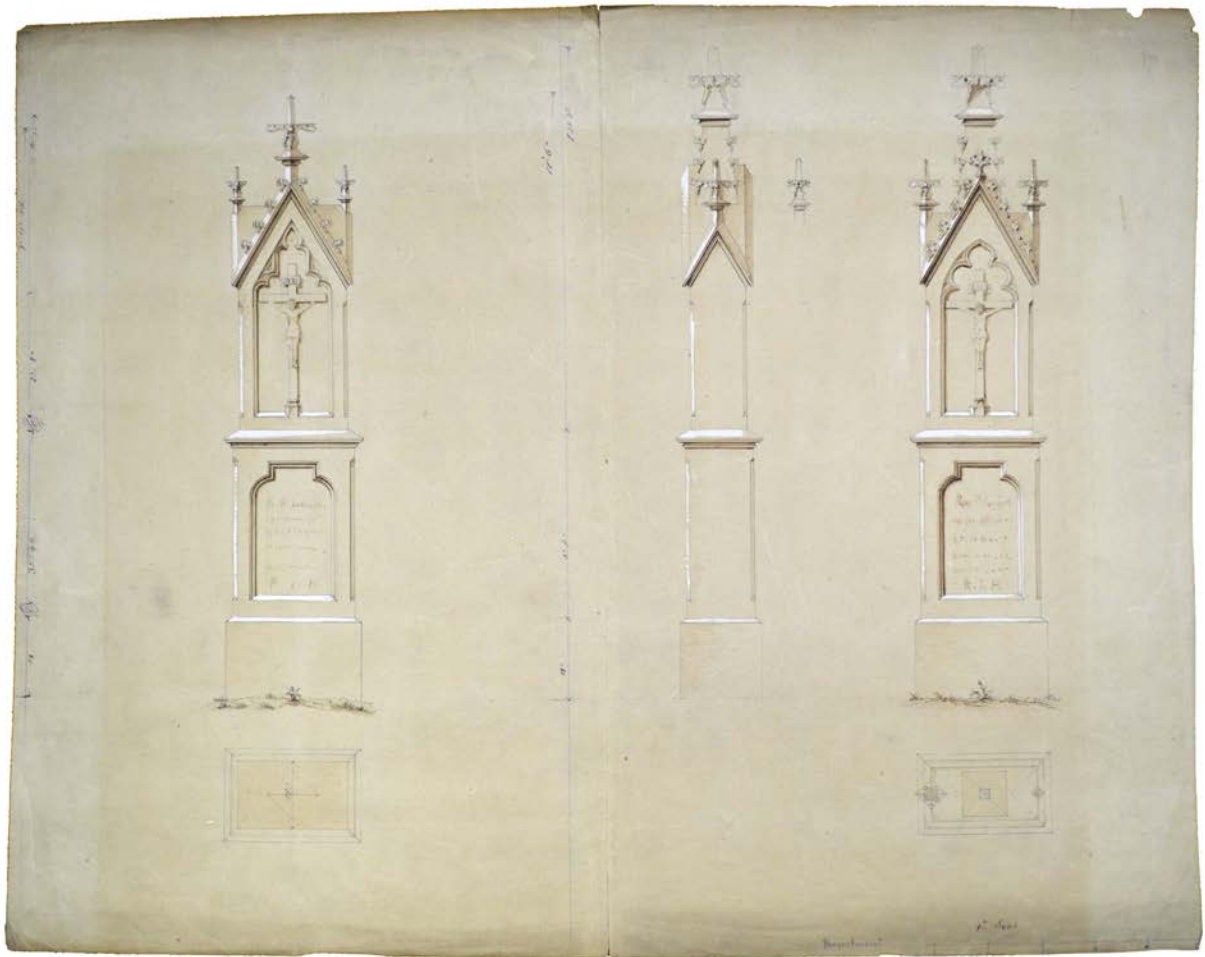
SVA 1881.006 (reverse)

Not visible in exhibition



Catalog № 56 *Drawing of a Candlestick in Full-Scale*, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., graphite on paper, 1883, 61.5 x 15.25 inches, signed: "gem. fr. Cosmas, 1883," SVA 1883.003

Catalog № 57 *Candlestick from a High Mass Set*, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., gilded wood with metal, 1883, approximately 61.5 x 9 x 9 inches, unsigned, SVA 1883.006



Catalog № 58 *Front and Side Elevations for the Grave Monument of Father Peter Lemke, O.S.B., Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash on paper, ca. 1882, 18 x 21.75 inches, signed: "Cosmas," SVA 1880.024*

Catalog № 59*"Entwurf zu einer Marien=Kapelle"**("Design for a Marian Chapel")*

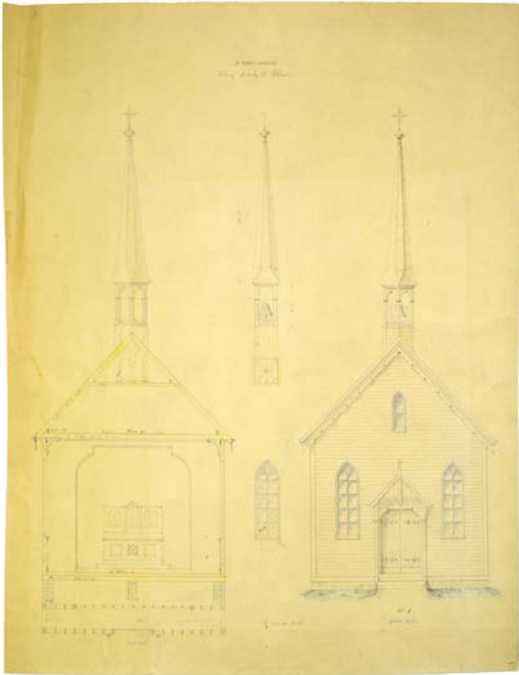
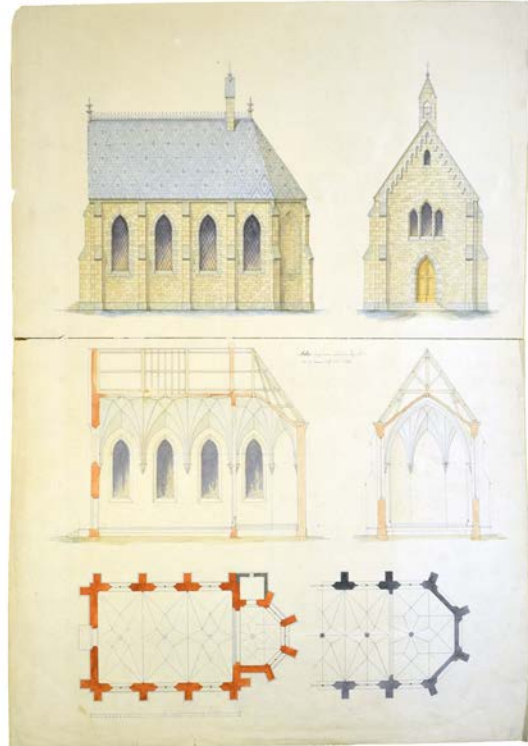
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash on paper, 1875

24 x 17.5 inches

Signed: "von fr. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., 1875"

SVA 1875.020

**Catalog № 60***"St. Josef's Chursch [sic], Wetaug, Pulasky Co., Illinois"*

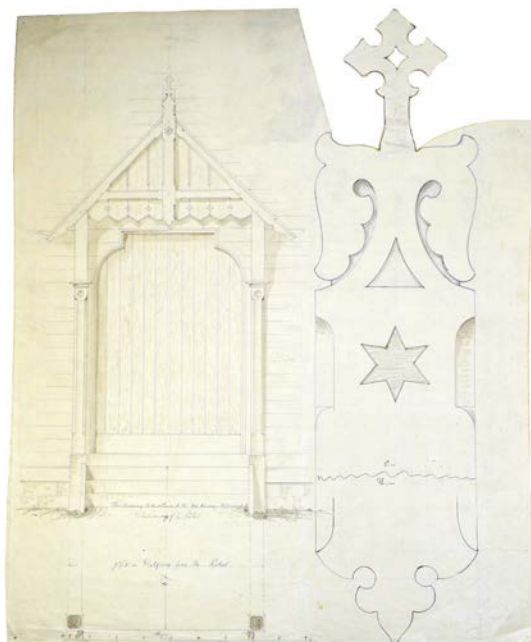
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink on paper, 1881

21.75 x 18 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1881"

SVA 1881.002

**Catalog № 61***"Detail Drawing of the Portal" St. Josef Church,**Wetaug, Illinois*

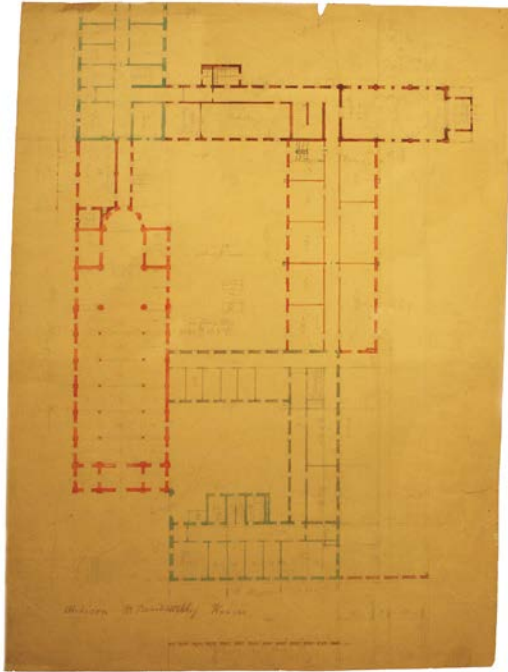
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, 1881

24 x 19.5 inches

Signed: "gn. fr. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1881"

SVA 1881.005

**Catalog № 62**

"Atchison St. Benedikt Abtey [sic], Kansas"

("St. Benedict Abbey, Atchison, Kansas")

(obverse)/Sketch for Altar

Steps and Altar Side Elevation (reverse)

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink and graphite on paper, ca. 1880

19.25 x 14.375 inches

Unsigned

SVA 1880.055

Catalog № 63

Front Elevation of a Monastery or School

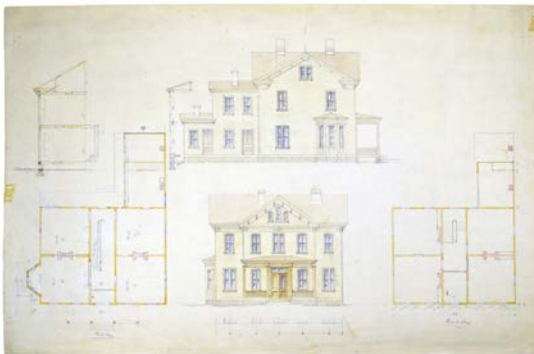
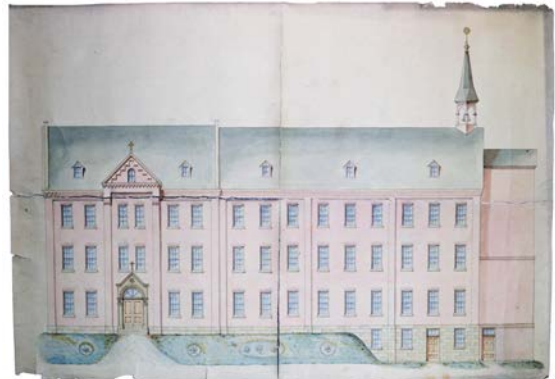
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, 1886

18 x 26 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1886"

SVA 1886.002

**Catalog № 64**

Side and Front Elevations and Floor Plans for a Two-Story House (Rectory)

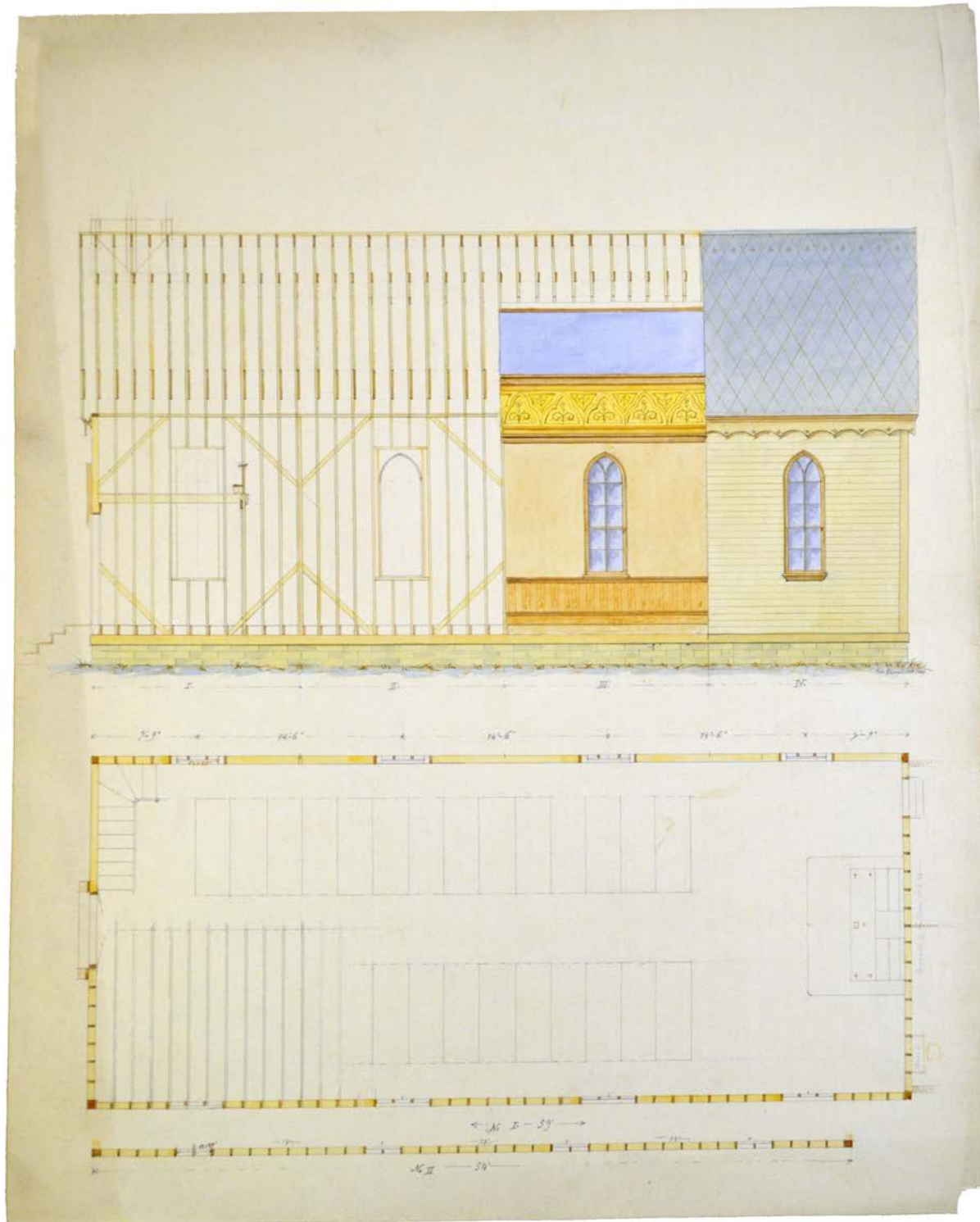
Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1880's

14.375 x 22.25 inches

Signed: "gem. Cosmas, O.S.B."

SVA 1880.040



Catalog № 65 *Cross-Sectional Side Elevation and Floor Plan for a Small Church,*
 Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash and graphite on paper, 1889, 21.75 x 17.5
 inches, signed: "gem. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1889," SVA 1889.005



Catalog № 66 *Front Elevation for a Large Neo-Gothic Church*, Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., ink with wash on paper, 1889, 35 x 17 inches, signed: "fr. Cosmas, O.S.B., 1889," SVA 1889.003

Catalog № 67

"St. Vincent Kapelle Convent"
("St. Vincent Monastery Chapel")

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Ink with wash and graphite on paper, ca. 1890-1892?

16.375 x 9.5 inches

Signed: "fr. Cosmas Wolf"

SVA 1880.010

**Catalog № 68**

Adoration of the Magi

Workshop of Johann Petz (Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.?)

Polychromed wood, 1860

Approximately 52.75 x 40 x 10 inches

Unsigned

SVA: 1899.018

Catalog № 69

St. Benedict

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Polychromed wood, ca. 1892-1894

Approximately 38 x 11.5 x 10.5 inches

Unsigned

SVA: 1899.019



Catalog № 70*St. Boniface*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Polychromed wood, ca. 1892-1894

Approximately 38 x 11.5 x 10.5 inches

Unsigned

SVA: 1899.020

**Catalog № 71***The Saint Vincent Archabbey Choir Chapel Altar*

Glass plate negative, ca. 1892

ASVA

Not in exhibition

Catalog № 72*Two Reliquaries for the Saint
Vincent Archabbey Choir Chapel*

Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

Gilded-wood, ca. 1892-1894

27 x 11 3.5 inches

Unsigned

SVA: 1899.021 and 1899.022

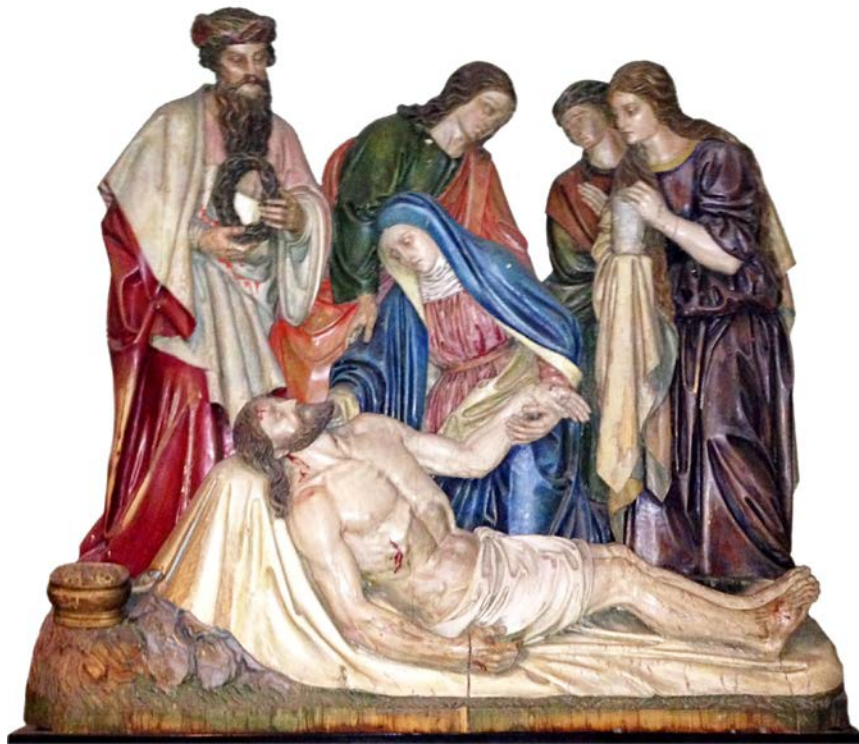




Catalog № 73 *The Saint Vincent Archabbey Choir Chapel Altar*, photograph, ca. 1920's, ASVA. Not in exhibition



Catalog № 74 *The Saint Vincent Archabbey Choir Chapel Altar*, photograph by Michael Fedison, 1956, ASVA. Not in exhibition



Catalog № 75 *Lamentation Over the Dead Christ*, workshop of Johann Petz (Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.?), polychromed wood, 1860, approximately 52.75 x 40 x 10 inches, Unsigned. Newark Abbey Church, Newark, New Jersey. Not in exhibition



Appendices



Appendix A

Obituary of Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B.

St. Vincent Journal, Vol. III, Issue 8, April 15, 1894, pg. 264.

OBITUARY

Saturday, April 7th, at 8.45 P.M., St. Vincent's Archabbey sustained the loss of one of its most deserving members in the person of Brother Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B. The deceased was a native of Grosskissendorf, Suabia, where he was born on the 24th of June, 1822. He entered the Order on the 24th of September, 1853, and by the late Archabbot Wimmer was admitted to vows on the 14th of January, 1855. Great were the services which, as a skillful sculptor, altar-builder, and architectural designer, he rendered to St. Vincent's for a period of nearly forty [sic] years. The works which he leaves, are a beautiful monument to his zeal. To mention but a few; he build [sic] the high-altar in St. Mary's Church, Allegheny;¹²⁴ altars in St. Joseph's, Covington; St. Mary's Elk Co.¹²⁵ and in the abbey-churches of Newark and St. Vincent's. He was last engaged in the construction of an altar intended for the Fathers' chapel. However, before he had the satisfaction of completing the same, he met the summons to the throne of God, where, as we confidently hope, he will receive an eternal reward for his labors. R. I. P.

¹²⁴Now known as North Side, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

¹²⁵Pennsylvania.

Appendix B

Letter from Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B.,
Munich, July 1857 (Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey)

*This letter was discovered in November 2013 by Jordan Hainsey
and transliterated and translated by Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B.*

Munich, 20 July 1857

Praised be Jesus Christ
Very Reverend Fr. Abbot!

I hope that my letter of 5 July found you in the best of health, just as this one; I wish it from my heart. I also repeat the same wishes and requests, and I also confidently hope that you will graciously grant me your paternal favor. From now on I will use my artistic ability, as God has given it, with doubled zeal for the holy cause, and I can assure you that I will use each minute in order to be again in your company and to be able to carry out obediently your paternal orders and admonitions in all love. Although things are going well with me, I have great home sickness. Only I hope that you will have the kindness at your next opportunity to send me an American passport; for I was able to get here easily with these papers but I cannot return [by means of them], as I have been made aware of [by] the police. For this reason I ask you at your convenience to send me a passport.

My cousin Kremmeter [?] asks your forbearance in regard to the property of the venerable Sister John Evangelist. He assures you that he will give her the same share as to the other three children; it is just that right now he is having a hard time and he asks for forbearance for a whole year until his son Joseph marries; and he sends his greetings. Also a lay brother asks for acceptance; he has been here for one year as a candidate and is recommended with good testimonials.

I also have met the Reverend Fr. Okorner [likely: O'Connor]. He sends his greetings and will begin his return journey next week. Finally I ask again for forgiveness of my mistakes and, remembered in your prayer and begging your paternal blessing, I await with longing and hope!

Your unworthy son, with all love and respect,
Frater Cosmas Wolf

You will allow me another request if I may greet all my reverend fathers as also my confreres, whom I greet while asking their prayers. Also greetings to Mr. Elten [?], Binkle [?], Kuns [Kuhns?], Lebus [?], Albert Oküm [?].¹

Many greetings from Ulm to Br. Damian², especially from the Kremmeters, Steiners [?], and Fiechel [?], the latter of whom is keeping yet to his old life.

¹ The spellings are approximations, as perhaps were his own pronunciation of them, similar to Okorner.

² This would be Damian Jacob; they made the novitiate year together at Saint Vincent and both professed monastic vows on 15 January 1855.

Appendix C

Letter from Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., to Frank Duveneck and His Parents, February 25, 1866

Newark, New Jersey
February 25, 1866

My dear Frank:

Since I have had no answer I imagine that you did not receive my last letter dated December 19, 1865, just as I failed to receive your last one. In regard to the letter from Father Claudius, this is what I told you in the letter that you did not receive.

I gather that you still want to go to Munich, and for that enterprise I wish you nothing but good luck. What my slender powers can do to help you in your undertaking that I will do with the greatest pleasure. Only, in order to accomplish this fine lofty aim, you, as well as your parents, will have to make sacrifices. From you I require absolute obedience to the gentlemen to whom I shall recommend you. For, should Herr Sharrer be good enough to assume guardianship over you, you would have to obey him implicitly—inasmuch as this gentleman is a very good Catholic and a great master of Christian art, under whose training you may become a really able painter. If your parents agree to bear the necessary expense, I will write to the gentlemen in question to see if he will be willing to undertake your education.

My dear Frank, it is not only a hard thing for you to do, to go away from home for the first time, but it is also dangerous. But all this ought not to discourage you if you really want to continue in the course you have begun. With God's help to support you, you can unquestionably succeed, and if you keep yourself pure and are patient, then the dear Lord will bless you and your work, for the man who fights his battles bravely will surely receive the laurel wreath of victory. And now let me address a word to your parents.

Are you willing to assist Frank in his education, and can you give him a yearly sum of \$150.00¹²⁶ for one, two or three years for his board and lodging? Can you afford it for at least two years? But the money should not be put into Frank's hands, lest he be too easily led into temptation, which might make him unhappy for all time and eternity also. He ought to receive whatever he needs for living expenses from his guardian every month. In this way you will keep the temptation to sin away from him, and cause him to spend his days industriously. Can and will you acquiesce in this? Write me immediately and I

¹²⁶According to The Inflation Calculator, <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>, this would be \$2,317.70 today.

will apply to my good friends in Munich.¹²⁷ In the meantime, Frank, continue to learn as much as you can. *But!!* take special pains with your drawing. That is more important for you than free-hand painting. My greetings to all the good people of Covington, but not to the master shoemaker, John Schmitt; the thankless man didn't even call on me. But he won't ever get another cent's work out of me!

I have just ordered three altar pictures from Munich and we have still more in prospect. If you should go to Munich you would receive a great deal of this kind of work from us to make your studying easier, because you could carry it out under the direction of the Herr Professor. When you have successfully completed your education, then you can begin right away in our church. There are ten scenes from the life of the blessed Virgin Mary to be executed, and several other pictures too, which will be work amounting to some \$1000.00¹²⁸ That would be a nice beginning.¹²⁹ So go to it and be of good cheer. The dear Lord will protect you and keep you from all evil. Attend to your devotions and prayers faithfully and be a good boy. For then the blessings of God will accompany you through your whole career.

All this your friendly old Father [sic] Cosmos [sic] wishes you with his whole heart. In closing I greet you and yours many times.

Your devoted

Father [sic] Cosmos [sic] Wolff. [sic]¹³⁰

¹²⁷The parents agreed but stipulated that Frank must wait until he was 21-years-old, in late November 1869. He was finally in Munich by 1870.

¹²⁸According to The Inflation Calculator, <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>, this would be more than \$15,450 today.

¹²⁹This seems to be a reference to the murals for the Benedictine monks at St. Mary's Church in Newark, New Jersey, that Wilhelm Lamprecht would begin to execute in 1867 with Frank Duveneck's assistance.

¹³⁰Duveneck, pp. 30-32. The original, written in German, is in the collection of the Cincinnati Historical Society. The publication of this translation of the letter in one of the first major Duveneck biographies is probably the primary source of Br. Cosmas's incorrect identification as a priest rather than a "frater" (brother), and the variations in the spelling of his name. The original letter spells Br. Cosmas's name correctly and uses the lower-case "f" for frater. The signature also has a hard to read O.S.B. at the end. Email from Christine Schmid Engels, Archives Manager of the Cincinnati Museum Center to Br. Nathan Cochran, O.S.B., September 3, 2013.

Appendix D

Letter from Brother Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B.
Covington, Kentucky, September 17, 1863 (ASVA)

This letter was discovered in 2013 by Jordan Hainsey and translated by Simon Stuchlik.

Covington, Ky., September 17, 1863

Blessed be Jesus and Maria!
Your Excellency, most esteemed, gracious Abbot!
I hope and pray that these lines will reach you in best health.
As for your worthy letter, I should have preferred the mercy to speak with your Excellency personally in order to tell you about my own findings regarding Paul Keck. But as I am asked to write, I will answer the following points to the best of my knowledge and memory.

Your Excellency! I was surprised to read that the esteemed Fr. Louis disagreed with my claims, and very much regret that the man has not been healed from his devotion to Paul Keck.—But to the case at hand, I will write nothing that I cannot attest to or rather claim in front of both God and his holy church.—

§ First, Paul Keck has defamed and persecuted as much as he could those who did not believe his visions. Of this I have assured myself from multiple people and could ask them to be witnesses: for example Fr. Lambert, Mr. Mohr, etc.

§ Second, the Silentium was neither followed by day or by night. An hour of small talk generally preceded meals, often consisting of worldly tales or objectionable slander about priests, especially about the spiritual gentlemen of Cincinnati—which can also be attested to by brothers such as Br. Peter, Br. Notker, and Br. Wunibald.

§ Third, one could often hear Paul sing and yell in the evenings, which led people on the streets to stop while neighbors would complain about the noise.

§ Fourth, for months on end Paul would stay with the Sisters between 5:30 and 7 in the mornings and ate breakfast there, not three! but over thirty times. Additionally, he would visit at least two or three times a week during the day, and overall about four to five times at night, as far as I can remember. I beg Your Excellency to kindly ask the other Brothers about these points. When Paul was sick, food was brought into the house by the Sisters, which Br. Wunibald will truthfully attest to.

§ Fifth, any time something was decided or acted on against his will, he mysteriously became ill and showed disagreement in any possible way from words to facial expressions.

§ Sixth, Paul always ate sweet tidbits outside of the allowed times, which his sister continuously sent him so that he always had a reserve. Paul Keck also bought a teapot for \$7,¹³¹ out of which both of them drank every night after compline, which Brother Wunibald as the cook and Notker can both attest to.

§ Seventh, I saw Paul twice tightly embraced and kissing in bed with Fr. Louis, as well as Fr. Gerhard, an act that Br. Notker is also said to have seen multiple times.

§ Eight, Br. Notker will also be able to attest to the fact that Paul often talked until 10 p.m. with Fr. Louis or Fr. Gerhard in their cells.

§ Ninth, Paul has claimed that the local St. Joseph's Church was built with mortal sin, and that it would collapse within a year's time. But thanks be to God, it is still standing today!-

§ Tenth, Rev. Fr. Otto Jair O.S.F has told me himself that Paul Keck has asked for acceptance twice while he was here with us. – He has also said to the teacher Mohr, “that the Benedictines would gladly welcome him if his acceptance wouldn't come soon.” —

§ Eleventh, Paul *secretly* wrote and received letters from worldly people and has told Mr. Mohr that “the Prior doesn't have to know everything that's going on.”

§ Twelfth, Paul also said that the holy St. Benedict has appeared to him, *just like* Fr. Gerhard has described him; *with six fingers*.!!!

§ Thirteenth, I can't quite remember the number of times that Paul openly expressed his anger and rage. But it was especially extreme twice, to the point where his face got white and his body convulsive, so that he fell ill 2-3 days later.—

I believe that in these short sentences, I have followed your wish in recounting my experiences with Paul Keck to you, though it would be impossible for me to write down everything that I have seen and heard. Thus I beg your Excellency once again to also question the other Brothers that were here at the time; and if they are telling the truth, they will tell you similar stories about Paul.

May your Excellency not interpret the above sentences as malicious antagonism on my side toward the involved parties, but as a decent opinion directed toward the salvation of our monastery and the honor of our Holy, time-honored order.

What I have written in this letter, I will claim and attest to repeatedly before God and the world, and can substantiate it through witnesses. I am distraught that I should have so much to do with this distressing situation and especially that I have to bother your Excellency; thus, I wish from the bottom of my heart that peace will return to our monastic community as soon as possible. May our loving God grant us this wish! —

Finally, once again greeting your Excellency and asking to be in Your prayers, I remain in the highest esteem and love,

Your Excellency's dutiful son,
Br. Cosmas, O.S.B.

¹³¹According to The Inflation Calculator, <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>, this would be \$128.70 today.

Appendix E

Known Work in America by Br. Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B., and Their Locations

The information in this chart is compiled from clues found in a variety of sources. The information has been pieced together and strives to be the most current and accurate information about where Br. Cosmas's works were located, and what their current statuses are. Sites have been identified from various histories that link Br. Cosmas to a town or site, and from his identifications on his drawings. Letters, emails, phone calls and internet searches have been employed to confirm the status. When a work no longer exists but a photograph of it *in situ* has been found, it is noted. It is truly unfortunate that so few works remain, and that there is little documentation of what has been lost.

Date	Location and Work	Status
1862	Silver Sanctuary Lamp Old St. John Church Covington, Kentucky A silver hanging sanctuary lamp for over the tabernacle was completed and installed in time for Christmas. It is unclear if Br. Cosmas did any other work for the 1854 church.	The 1854 church was completely rebuilt in 1889 and a new altar was installed. In 1924, a new church was dedicated, and the old church was razed shortly thereafter. It is not known what became of the sanctuary lamp.
1862-1863	High Altar and Two Side Altars St. Francis Seraph Church Cincinnati, Ohio Br. Cosmas designed and executed the high altar and two side altars. He was assisted by Br. Claude, Paul Gestrein and Louis Steiner. The antependium of the high altar had four pictures of four of the Church Fathers: St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Ambrose and, St. Jerome. The high altar's main altarpiece was an 18-foot high painting of St. Francis ascending into heaven by Johann Schmitt. He also painted side panel paintings for the high altar and side altars of St. Veronica Giuliani, St. Margaret of Cortona, St. Lawrence of Brandisi, and St. Leonard of Port Maurice. Johann Schmitt painted additional wall murals in 1869.	Only the paintings of St. Veronica Giuliani, St. Margaret of Cortona, St. Lawrence of Brandisi, and St. Leonard of Port Maurice by Johann Schmitt have survived various renovations. A pre-1907 photograph of the interior of the church exists.

1862-1863	<p>High Altar, Two Side Altars, and Pulpit Holy Family Church Oldenburg, Indiana</p> <p>A Br. Cosmas drawing of the pulpit exists: SVA 1880.026</p> <p>The altars and pulpit were designed and executed by Br. Cosmas, with altar paintings by Johann Schmitt. The altar paintings include: the main altarpiece of the Holy Family flanked by side paintings of St. Boniface and St. Louis; the gospel side altar painting is of the Immaculate Conception, and the epistle side altar painting is St. Joseph and the Christ Child receiving homage from St. Aloysius.</p> <p>The main altarpiece painting of the Holy Family is the same design-composition as the main altarpiece sculpture made for St. Joseph Church, Covington, Kentucky.</p>	<p>The altars and paintings are still extant. The pulpit was removed during a renovation in the 1960's.</p>
1862-1865	<p>High Altar, Side Altars, and possibly the Pulpit St. Joseph Church Covington, Kentucky</p> <p>A Br. Cosmas drawing of the high altar exists: SVA 1880.012</p> <p>The main altar was designed and executed by Br. Cosmas. It was 40 feet high, and cost \$2,000. The side altars cost \$500 each. Johann Schmitt, assisted by Frank Duveneck, painted the altarpiece paintings for the side altars, and also gilded them. It is possible that the pulpit was also designed and executed by Br. Cosmas.</p> <p>The sculptures for the high altar were ordered from Munich, probably because the studio was receiving multiple orders, and Br. Cosmas did not have time to design, take commissions, supervise the work of the studio, and sculpt as well.</p> <p>The main altarpiece sculpture of the "Holy Family" is the same composition as the main altarpiece painting at Holy Family Church in Oldenburg, Indiana.</p> <p>In 1879, Johann Schmitt painted two large murals.</p>	<p>The church (and apparently all of its contents) was razed in 1970.</p> <p>Various photographs of the interior of the church before it was razed exist.</p>
ca. 1862-1868	<p>Altars? St. Peter Church (St. Francis of Assisi since 1860) Teutopolis (Island Grove), Illinois</p> <p>Only a reference that Br. Cosmas did work for this church has been found.</p>	<p>The High altar was replaced sometime between 1901-1912, so any work by Br. Cosmas and the studio is apparently lost.</p>

ca. 1862-1868	<p>Altars? St. Augustine Church Augusta, Kentucky</p> <p>Only a reference that Br. Cosmas did work for this church has been found.</p> <p>The church was founded and originally staffed by Saint Vincent Benedictines, including Fr. Oswald Moosmüller, O.S.B. (an early historian of Saint Vincent Archabbey), Fr. Emmeran Bliemel, O.S.B. (who was a Confederate Civil War chaplain killed in the line of duty), and Fr. Leander Schnerr, O.S.B. (who was later elected third archabbot of Saint Vincent).</p>	<p>A sanctuary enlargement occurred sometime between 1887-1904. It is not clear if the current high altar dates to this time, or if it is a Br. Cosmas altar. The side altars were removed sometime after Vatican Council II.</p>
ca. 1862-1868	<p>High Altar? Side Altars? St. Pius Church (St. Francis de Sales since 1932) Georgetown (also called White Sulfur), Kentucky</p> <p>It is known that Johann Schmitt painted a scene of the crucifixion that was placed in the high altar of this church. It is believed that the painting was done at the request of Bishop George A. Carrell of Covington, who was bishop from 1853-1868. The date of the altar and who designed and fabricated it is not known, but it possibly could be by Br. Cosmas.</p>	<p>The high altar still exists, and the painting is currently undergoing conservation.</p>
ca. 1862-1868	<p>Altars St. John the Baptist Church St. John's Hill (now Wilder), Kentucky</p>	<p>The 1858 church is still in use, but the Br. Cosmas altars no longer exist. They were probably replaced by new altars in 1880 by Rev. Bernard Hillebrand.</p>
ca. 1862-1868	<p>Unknown Convent of the Franciscan Sisters Covington, Kentucky</p> <p>There is only a brief mention in one source that mentions Br. Cosmas doing work for a convent of Franciscan sisters. It does not specify what the work was, or which Franciscan sisters it was for.</p> <p>The Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis ran St. Elizabeth Hospital, and their first hospital was dedicated in 1860, and their second building was dedicated in 1868.</p> <p>Another group of Franciscan sisters from Oldenburg, Indiana, came to Covington in 1866, to staff the school at St. Aloysius Church in Covington.</p>	<p>The original St. Elizabeth Hospital buildings were replaced by a new building in 1914. It is assumed any work that Br. Cosmas and the studio may have done is lost.</p> <p>The parish of St. Aloysius was suppressed after the church burnt down after being struck by lightning in 1985. The whole complex was razed and became a parking lot.</p>
1863	<p>High Altar St. Francis Xavier Church Cincinnati, Ohio</p> <p>The high altar was designed and fabricated by Br. Cosmas. It is not known what it looked like.</p>	<p>The church was completely gutted by fire in 1882.</p>

1863	<p>Altar Convent Chapel of the School Sisters of Notre Dame Baltimore, Maryland</p> <p>The altar was designed and fabricated by Br. Cosmas. The altarpiece is a "Descent from the Cross" by Johann Schmitt. They were both assisted by Frank Duveneck</p>	<p>The altar was dismantled in the 1990's during a liturgical renovation. Contacts with the sisters have not been able to ascertain if any parts of it were saved.</p>
1863-1864	<p>High Altar and Two Side Altars St. Boniface Church Quincy, Illinois</p> <p>Br. Cosmas designed and executed the altars. The high altar cost \$2,000, and the side altars were \$500 each. The price included the paintings.</p> <p>The altarpiece paintings were by Johann Schmitt. The main altarpiece paintings depicted St. Boniface Converting the Teutons, and the deacon martyrs St. Stephen and St. Lawrence. The side altar paintings are of St. Theresa, St. Elizabeth, St. Anthony and St. Aloysius.</p> <p>Wilhelm Lamprecht later painted wall murals ca. 1870.</p>	<p>The 1848 church was damaged by fire in 1959 and replaced by a new church in 1962. The Archives of the Diocese of Springfield has not been able to ascertain whether any parts of the altars were saved.</p>
1863-1867	<p>Altars St. John the Baptist Church Cincinnati, Ohio</p> <p>There are references that Br. Cosmas did work for this church. The side altars are remarkably similar to the side altars installed in St. Anthony's Chapel on Troy Hill in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1892, which may be by Br. Cosmas.</p> <p>Johann Schmitt painted several murals here in 1867.</p>	<p>The 1860 church was damaged by fire and replaced with a new church. That church was replaced in 1915 with a new building. The parish was closed in 1969, and it is assumed the altars were dismantled.</p> <p>There is a 19th century photograph showing the interior of the church.</p>
1864	<p>High Altar St. Peter Church Brookville, Indiana</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing for high altar exists: SVA 1880.011</p> <p>Br. Cosmas designed and fabricated the high altar. The altarpiece paintings of St. Peter, St. Anthony of Padua, and St. Gregory the Great were painted by Johann Schmitt.</p>	<p>Still extant, but a 1983 photograph shows that a renovation occurred about that time which removed most of the finials and decorative tracery.</p> <p>There is a 1901 photograph of the interior of the church.</p>
1866?	<p>High Altar and Two Side Altars St. Michael Church Brookville, Indiana</p> <p>Br. Cosmas is thought to have designed and fabricated the altars. Johann Schmitt painted the altarpieces, including St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Aloysius.</p>	<p>The altars were dismantled in 1962, but five of the Schmitt paintings have survived.</p>

1866-1867	<p>High Altar, Two Side Altars, and Ten Murals St. Mary's Abbey Newark, New Jersey</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing for side altar exists: SVA 1866.002</p> <p>The following sculptures were in the high altar: the Blessed Virgin Mary being Assumed into Heaven, Isaiah the Prophet, the Evangelist John, and King David playing a large harp. They were flanked by statues of St. Benedict, and St. Boniface. On the side altars, were depictions of the "Adoration of the Magi" on the epistle side, and the "Lamentation Over the Dead Christ" on the gospel side. Newark Abbey also has statues of St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome. It is unclear which sculptures may have been by Br. Cosmas and which were by his teacher, Petz, as the evidence so far indicates that the side altar statues were by Petz and done between 1859-1860, while Br. Cosmas was apprenticed to him. The remaining sculptures are probably by Br. Cosmas in 1866 or 1867.</p> <p>Although Wilhelm Lamprecht painted the murals, Br. Cosmas has been credited with designing the iconographical program and compositions of the ten murals.</p> <p>Frank Duveneck assisted both Br. Cosmas and Lamprecht.</p>	<p>Murals and sculptures are still extant, with the exception of the Adoration of the Magi sculpture which was destroyed in a 1930's fire. The altars themselves were dismantled during a renovation in 1986.</p> <p>There are photographs of the high altar from about the time it was built, and there are photographs of the interior of the church dating to before the renovation.</p>
1866-1869	<p>High Altar St. Mary's Church St. Marys, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing for high altar exists: SVA 1880.032</p> <p>Br. Cosmas designed and fabricated the high altar. The altar painting of the "Declaration of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception" was by Wilhelm Lamprecht. The other paintings of St. Patrick, St. Boniface, as well as six smaller painting were probably painted by Lamprecht as well.</p>	<p>Still extant. At some point electrical decorative lighting was added.</p>
1867-1876	<p>Altars? Holy Family Church Ashland, Kentucky</p> <p>This was a mission church of St. Joseph Church in Covington, Kentucky. It is thought that Br. Cosmas did work for this church.</p>	<p>The church was redecorated in 1904 and 1922, and had major renovations in 1940 and 1960. It was destroyed by fire in 1978. Any altars made by Br. Cosmas and the studio are assumed lost.</p>
ca. 1867	<p>Altars? St. Aloysius Church Covington, Kentucky</p> <p>It is not known whether Br. Cosmas made the altars and sculptures for this church, but a postcard of the interior of the church postmarked in 1913 shows the altars, which look to be Br. Cosmas's style.</p>	<p>The church was built in 1867. It was struck by lightning and destroyed by fire in 1985.</p>

1869	<p>Altars? St. Benedict Church Mullins Station (a.k.a. Morningview), Kentucky</p> <p>This was a mission church of St. Joseph Church in Covington, Kentucky. It is thought that Br. Cosmas did work for this church.</p>	<p>The original church was replaced in 1886, and renamed St. Mary of the Assumption. Any altars made by Br. Cosmas and the studio are assumed lost.</p>
<p>Date Unknown Possibly 1860's</p>	<p>"Rose Colored" Altar Basement Chapel of Sacred Heart Church Collegeville, Minnesota</p> <p>Altar may have had paintings by Johann Schmitt. It is known to have existed in 1946.</p>	<p>Unknown. Requests for information have not provided additional information.</p>
ca. 1871-1879	<p>Side Altars St. Joseph Church Johnstown, Pennsylvania</p> <p>The side altars were made by Kark Oswald under the direction of Br. Cosmas.</p>	<p>Destroyed in the May 31, 1889 Johnstown Flood.</p>
1872	<p>High Altar St. Mary's Church N.S., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</p> <p>The sculptures in this altar were polychromed cast metal, and not wood.</p> <p>Lamprecht painted murals on the side walls of the church in 1882.</p>	<p>The entire church was remodeled and renovated in 1898, and the high altar was painted cream and gilded. The church was closed in 1981, and later reopened as a banquet hall. The altars were dismantled several years later, and the statues were dispersed. The murals are still extant but they are in poor condition and covered by drapery.</p> <p>Photographs of the interior of the church before 1981 exist.</p>
1874	<p>Altars? St. Paul Church Florence, Kentucky</p> <p>This was a mission church of St. Joseph Church in Covington, Kentucky. It is thought that Br. Cosmas did work for this church.</p>	<p>The 1856 church was replaced by a newer church in 1904. Any altars made by Br. Cosmas and the studio are assumed lost.</p>
1874	<p>High Altar Benedictine Sisters Convent Chapel Erie, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing exists: SVA 1874.002</p>	<p>Razed in the 1960's.</p>

1874	<p>High Altar St. Mary's Church Erie, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas designed and fabricated the altar, and carved the sculptures. The main altarpiece was a painting of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Wilhelm Lamprecht. It was flanked by life-size statues of St. Gregory the Great and St. Boniface. In the upper register were two smaller statues of the deacon martyrs: St. Lawrence and St. Stephen.</p>	<p>Decorative parts were removed during a 1945 renovation and statues were painted white. It was completely dismantled ca. 1970-1972 and the statues were placed in storage in the basement. In 1997, the St. Gregory the Great, and St. Boniface statues were re-polychromed and brought to Saint Vincent. The Lamprecht painting is now hanging on a back wall of St. Mary's Church. It is not currently known where the two smaller statues are located.</p> <p>Photographs of the interior of the church at various times before 1970 exist.</p>
1876-ca. 1880	<p>High Altar and Side Altars Saint Vincent Abbey Church Latrobe, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawings for the side altars exist: SVA 1876.001; 1880.013 (?); 1880.037; and 1885.002 (?)</p> <p>It is not known who painted all of the altarpieces, but some of the smaller panels were by a Bavaria artist named Scharrer.</p>	<p>Completely destroyed by fire in 1963.</p> <p>Photographs of the interior of the church at various times before the 1963 fire exist.</p>
1880	<p>Votive Altar with St. Benedict Statue Saint Vincent Abbey Latrobe, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Made for the 1880 celebration at Saint Vincent Abbey of the 1400-year anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict.</p>	<p>The altar is lost, and may have burned in a 1963 fire. The statue of St. Benedict still exists, but the polychrome was removed in the 1960's. It is currently in the second floor hallway of Roderick Hall.</p> <p>Photographs of the full votive altar exist.</p>
1880	<p>Bishop Fink Hall St. Benedict Abbey Atchison, Kansas</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing of monastic complex exists: SVA 1880.055</p>	<p>Still extant.</p>

1881	<p>High Altar? and Pulpit St. Joseph Church Johnstown, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing of the pulpit exists: SVA 1881.004</p> <p>According to a history written by Fr. Modestus Wirtner, O.S.B., a new high altar was installed in 1881 because the temporary high altar was not in harmony with the beautiful side altars made by Kark Oswald under the supervision of Br. Cosmas. He does not state who designed and built the high altar, but if Br. Cosmas was designing and fabricating a pulpit for the church in 1881, he could well have created the high altar too.</p>	Destroyed in the May 31, 1889 Johnstown flood.
1881-1882	<p>St. Joseph Church Building St. Joseph Church Wetaug, Pulasky County, Illinois</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawings for church exists: SVA 1881.002; 1881.03; and 1881.005</p>	It was razed sometime between 1910 and 1930.
1882	<p>Grave Monument of Fr. Peter Lemke, O.S.B. St. Benedict Parish Cemetery Carrolltown, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing for the monument exists: SVA 1880.024</p> <p>Br. Cosmas designed the monument. It is not known if he actually carved it.</p>	Still extant.
1883	<p>High Altar St. Benedict Abbey Church Atchison, Kansas</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing for the high altar exists: SVA 1883.002</p>	It is unclear if this altar was actually built. If it was, it was replaced by a new altar and baldachin that were installed in 1895.
1883	<p>Altar Benedictine Sisters Chapel Carrolltown, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing for the altar exists: SVA 1883.001</p>	Razed in the early 1960's.
1883	<p>High Mass Candlestick Set Saint Vincent Abbey Church Latrobe, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing for the candlesticks exists: SVA 1883.003</p>	One is located at Saint Vincent Abbey, and four are at St. Mary's Church in St. Marys, Pennsylvania. It is not known where the sixth one is located.

1892	<p>Two Side Altars? St. Anthony Chapel Troy Hill, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</p> <p>It is not known if Br. Cosmas did the side altars here, but the style is remarkably similar to his work, particularly the side altars at St. John Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he is thought to have created the side altars between 1863-1867. There is also a Saint Vincent connection—the founder of the chapel studied at Saint Vincent Seminary from ca. 1854-1857, and could have met and known Br. Cosmas. And an August 16, 1884 letter from the architect, Joseph Stillburg, indicates they had a working relationship.</p>	Still extant.
1892	<p>Main Altar? St. Ann Church Ashland, Virginia</p> <p>The only records the parish have state that it was made by a Benedictine, but it is not clear whether or not that Benedictine was Br. Cosmas or a monk from Belmont Abbey.</p>	Still extant.
1894	<p>St. Boniface Chapel and Altars Chestnut Ridge Property of Saint Vincent Archabbey Kecksburg, Pennsylvania</p>	<p>The chapel still exists but has been significantly altered. The altars were gradually dismantled at various times and have been placed in storage. The top register of the main altar and the altar itself been added to the Saint Vincent Art Collections.</p> <p>Various photographs of the exterior and interior of the church exist.</p>

1894	<p>Choir Chapel Altar Saint Vincent Archabbey Latrobe, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Br. Cosmas drawing for altar exists: SVA 1880.010</p> <p>Br. Cosmas was working on this altar when he died. The "Adoration of the Magi" is from 1860 and the workshop of Johann Petz, who was likely assisted by his apprentice, Br. Cosmas. The statues of St. Benedict and St. Boniface are probably from around 1890-1894 and by Br. Cosmas.</p>	<p>The altar reredos was replaced sometime around the 1920's. The statues were removed from the altar in 1956. The "Adoration of the Magi" sculptural group is still extant, and normally located in a chapel in the monastery. The St. Benedict statue had the polychrome removed in the 1960's and is normally in the monastery refectory. The St. Boniface statue had most of its polychrome removed and has been damaged. It has been in storage of the Saint Vincent Art Collections for over 30 years.</p> <p>Various photographs of the interior of the chapel exist, showing its multiple incarnations.</p>
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