

## History of Saint Mary's Kneelers at the Altar

There is a special location where each cushion should be placed in order to maintain the rhythm and flow of the beautiful pattern. Recently, Linda Hutton sewed large numbers (1-10) on the bottom of each cushion to facilitate their being placed properly. Number one begins at the far left (the pulpit side) as you face the altar, and they continue around the rail ending toward the Lady Chapel.

You might be interested in a little history of these lovely kneelers. They were designed by Susan Nagy of Newberry Street, Boston, who is a well known painter of needlepoint canvases. Mrs. Nagy visited St. Mary's and used many flowers from our church gardens for her designs. The first six cushions (3-8) were worked by 10 members of the Altar Guild. These six were used when the altar was at the far east end of the church – where the organ stands now. The whole project took almost 2 years to complete and gave us great satisfaction and pride.

When the altar was moved forward into the congregation it was necessary to add four more cushions for the side rails. Since Mrs. Nagy had retired we were able to procure a needlepoint designer from Connecticut who tried to duplicate the originals. Each cushion is a memorial gift, and the initials of those memorialized can be seen at the back of each. We also asked the donor to choose the center design of the piece they were giving. Each one cost about \$500 at the time. One gentleman gave two cushions - #3 in memory of his first wife and #4 in memory of his second. We were always amused by the two cushions lying besides each other. The long cushion in front of the rail in the Lady Chapel was designed by Louise Block of Hyannis and given in memory of Irene Ballantyne Larkin, my mother.

St. Mary's is fortunate to have such beautiful art work. I only hope the present Altar Guild will preserve and cherish them as we did.

Louise L. Nelson  
Former Altar Guild Directress  
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