



St. Mel's

QUEENS, NY

When St. Mel's was built in the mid-20th Century, the church was planned to be constructed across the street, but concerns about children crossing a busy road led to putting the church in what had been planned as the gymnasium. Practical though it may have been, a church in a gym struggles to suggest a foretaste of heaven, but St. Mel's community was vibrant and committed to redeeming their spiritual home.

EverGreene was commissioned to develop concepts, budgets, and an implementation strategy to transform St. Mel's making it more functional and more beautiful. To break up the strong vertical thrust of the ceiling panels featuring symbols of the sacraments, shields of bishops and orders significant to the parish's history were introduced. The carpeted floor was replaced with tile with borders and marble inlay to lend the open space a stronger sense of procession.

Confessionals that looked like utility closets were given simple surrounds that invite participation in the sacrament. New murals, scriptural passages, holy monograms and decorative painting behind statuary engage parishioners in prayerful contemplation.

At the dedication, a parishioner remarked, "When you have an ugly baby you still love it, but that's what we had here with our church, and now it's so beautiful! It feels like a church!"

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/st-mels-academy/>

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