



ST. HALLVARD'S CATHOLIC CHURCH IN OSLO

St. Hallvard's Church is a Catholic parish church in the diocese of Oslo.



HISTORY

St. Hallvard's Church was consecrated on May 15 1966. The parish has about 16.000 (2019) parishioners with 140 nationalities represented. When the church was built, it included a monastery for the Franciscans in charge of the parish.

The church lies in the middle of Enerhaugen and is surrounded by the distinctive tall buildings of the area. It was designed by Kjell Lund and Nils Slaatto.

St. Hallvard lived in the 12th century. He was a nobleman, of royal blood. He lived on the farm Husaby in Lier, north of Drammen. In an attempt to save a pregnant woman fleeing from some men who accused her of theft, he was shot with three arrows and killed. His body was thrown into the fjord with a millstone round its neck. Later his body was discovered floating in the fjord, glowing

radiantly. It was taken to Oslo and placed in a shrine. Hallvard was declared a saint. Since then St. Hallvard has been the patron saint of Oslo. He is depicted on the coat of arms of the city.

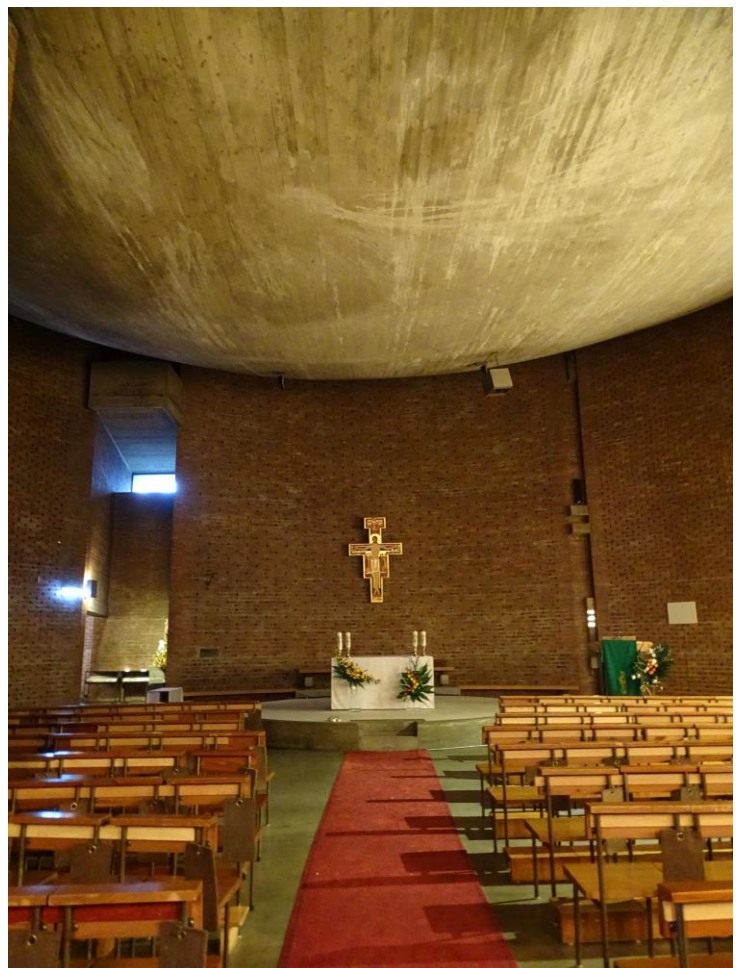
THE CONSTRUCTION OF ST HALLVARD'S CHURCH, ENERHAUGEN

The architects chose rough materials. The church is a modern construction in brick, glass and concrete, influenced by the architectural trends on the Continent at that time. The main form of the building is a square block, which encloses the circular sacred room. In addition, there is a rectangular chapel. Seen from the outside, the church appears as a solid mass of burnt bricks, apart from a wall of windows facing the fjord on the southern side. In 1993 an additional building was completed, which houses the parish hall, a kitchen and offices for The Franciscan Charitable Trust.

The circular shape of the sacred room is meant to express the spirit of fellowship around the altar, the central and highest point in the room, thus emphasizing the presence of God within the parish community. The gradual elevation of the floor towards the altar reinforces this impression. The walls slope gradually outwards, 3 degrees, for acoustic reasons. Apart from the large glass entrance door, no natural light slips into the sacred room.

It is the originality of the ceiling, which arouses most wonder: it falls down into the sacred room, a shell of reinforced concrete. The "anti-cupola" is both awe-inspiring and consoling. It seems as if here God is bending down to his creation, unlike the classic cupola, which stretches up towards heaven.

The church seats from 300 to 350 persons, with additional seating for 70 persons in the chapel.



DECORATION

In accordance with Franciscan spirituality, the church's decoration is simple.

The Byzantine crucifix behind the altar, painted by Anne Lise-Knoff and students from the art school in Buskerud, is a copy of the crucifix which spoke to St. Francis in San Damiano Church in Assisi. On October 5 1986 St. Hallvard's Church received its St. Damiano Cross (see left picture below).



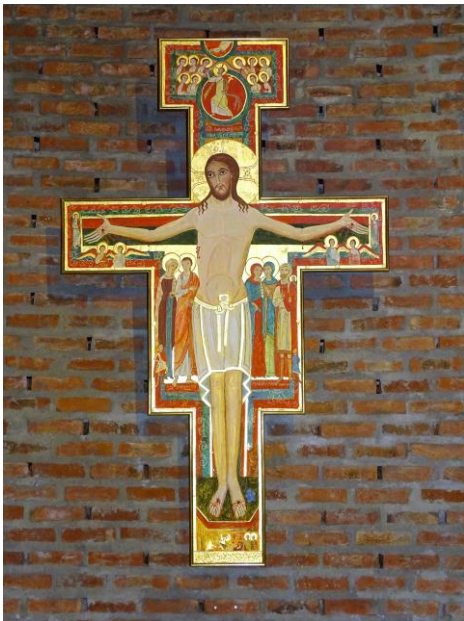
The 15 Stations of the Cross are by Herman Bongard (right).

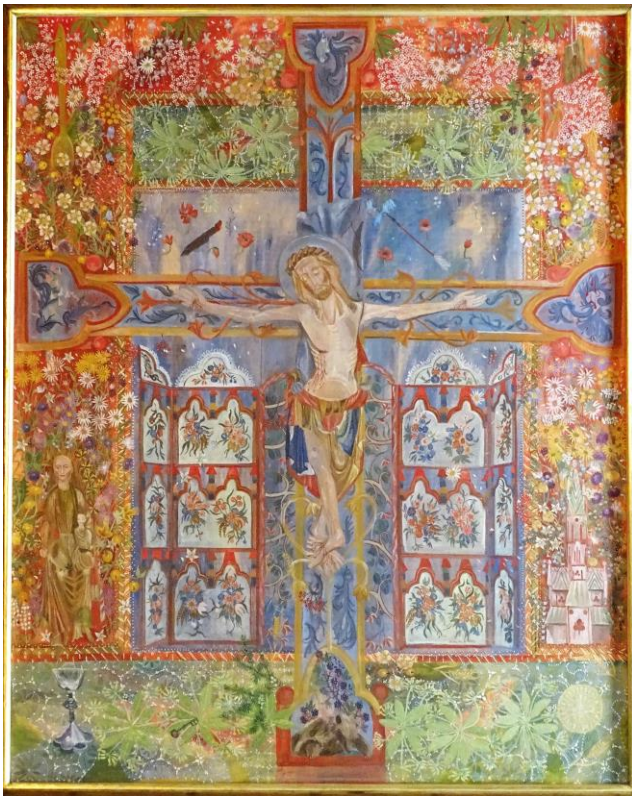


The bronze sculpture of St. Hallvard, made by the Polish artist Krzysztof Piotrowski, was blessed by Bishop Bernt Eidsvig on April 29 2008 (left).

In a column cleft to the right of the altar, a wooden statue of St. Francis, made by the sculptor Ragnhild Butenschøn (middle below).

The Madonna statue is in the passage between the church interior and the Sacramental Chapel. It is a gift from the Sisters of St. Elisabeth in Norway and originates in Germany (right).





The Sacramental Chapel: The frieze with scenes from the life of St Francis of Assisi, was painted by Liv Benedicte Nielsen (picture at the bottom, page 3).

The painting above the altar (left) is by Anne-Lise Knoff. The cross is surrounded by Norwegian motives based on a legend from Hedal Stave Church about a bear, which was discovered in the church after the Black Death.

The figure of Christ on the wall in the Sacramental Chapel (left) is originally from Mexico.



A decorative stone built into the wall at the side entrance is a fragment from the medieval Hallvard Church in Gamlebyen, the old town of Oslo (below).



In the Chapel for Baptism the four concrete mouldings portray baptism symbolized with Biblical motives. The work is by the Dutch Franciscan Renald Rats (below).

