

I hope that many of you note the new doors at the entrance to the church. They were initially the result of a simple request by a number of our elderly, who found our doors heavy and somewhat difficult to open. They wanted automatic doors that could open with a touch of a button in order to enter without the danger of a fall. The old doors were a true barrier for those in a wheelchair or trying to negotiate a walker or cane. We've had it on our 'to-do-list' since I got here – but it kept getting bumped by more pressing needs – an organ, a new roof, a new floor and paint job, AC units, etc.

But thanks to your generosity, we were finally able to accomplish them. In the meantime, Jenny Barrier asked if we could do something to integrate the stained glass in the entranceway with those doors. So she and David Blackford and Mike Linthicum set out to design and implement the installation of these doors.

But there is a deep piece of our Catholic theological tradition tapped in such a suggestion as Jenny's. She wanted something that would be beautiful. Some of you may remember that St. Thomas Aquinas listed beauty as one of the 5 'ways' - to God. Any of you who have carefully listened to Bishop Barron over the years have heard him return to the theme of beauty time and time again. In his book *TO LIGHT A FIRE ON THE EARTH*, he first quotes someone he claims as one of his great mentors – Hans Urs von Balthasar: "Before the beautiful—no not really *before* but *within* the beautiful – the whole person quivers. He not only 'finds' the beautiful moving; rather, he experiences himself as being moved and possessed by it."

And Barron adds, "The beauty leads to the good and the true. But I think strategically, and I got it from Balthasar, it's better to start with the beautiful in our postmodern society. That's not cowardice. It's a strategic thing. We can be sure that whoever sneers at beauty as if she were an ornament of a bourgeois past – whether they admit or not – can no longer pray and soon will be no longer able to love." (p. 48, 49)

I hope and pray that as we enter and exit our church, we will be called to the Beauty-that-is-God through beautiful doors, calling us in to pray – and then out to live out our prayer – in our beautiful world. My deep thanks to Jenny, David and Michael for the countless hours they gave to making these doors happen. ....and to all of you for your generosity which made this beauty possible.