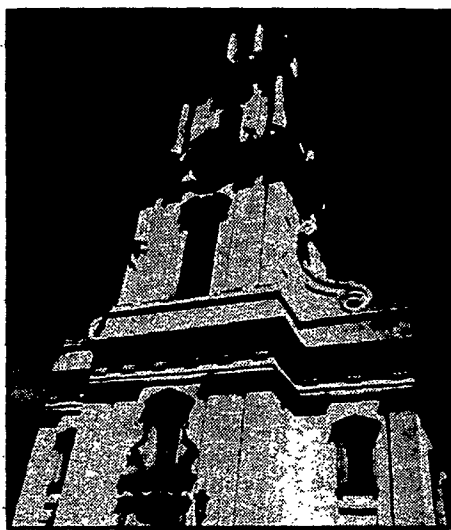


# Cathedral renovations abound



James Pearson/Catholic Herald

The front facade of St. John the Evangelist Cathedral in Milwaukee is seen from street level in a recent photo.

By Jerry Filteau  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — While controversy has made the Milwaukee Catholic cathedral renovation a topic of national news, there are several other cathedral renovations under way across the country.

In fact, about two-thirds of the nation's Catholic cathedrals have been renovated since 1980, according to a recent study by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.

The CARA study, conducted in 1998, found that 37 percent of the cathedrals date back to the 19th century and 79 percent were built before 1951.

Nearly three-fifths are former parish churches converted into cathedrals.

Milwaukee's St. John the Evangelist Cathedral was dedicated in 1853, gutted by a fire in 1935 and rebuilt in 1943.

Its \$4.5 million renovation, begun this spring by Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland, was nearly brought to a halt by last-minute complaints lodged with the Vatican by opponents of the project.

Meanwhile, renovation plans are moving ahead in Rochester. Dedicated as a parish church in 1927, Sacred Heart became the pro-cathedral in 1937 when the original cathedral was sold and demolished, and it was formally designated as the cathedral in 1957.

A renovation subcommittee recently completed a detailed inventory of Sacred Heart's furnishings and art pieces, helping determine the cathedral's contents

and an idea of their value, in part as a first step toward determining what will be re-incorporated.

Although preliminary renovation plans aren't due until this fall after consultations around the diocese, already opponents worry that renovators will "dismantle" the interior, and the altar and sanctuary "will be jack-hammered."

Taking a cue from the Roman intervention that put the Milwaukee project in the news, the Sacred Heart Preservation Committee announced June 20 that "a well-known legal advocate in Rome ... has agreed to pursue an injunction to halt Sacred Heart's renovation."

Diocesan spokesman Michael Tedesco said the diocese had not been notified

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CNS photo courtesy National Park Service

A bear and her cubs roam Yellowstone National Park in this undated file photo. Over the past 10 years, there has been an increase in awareness of a connection between religious faith and environmental issues.

## Faithful keep watch over nature

If a tree falls in a forest, will environmentalists be the only ones to hear it?

Not necessarily.

In growing numbers, religious organizations have joined the environmental bandwagon, saying they have a unique dimension to bring to conservation efforts and discussions.

So it comes as no surprise that Catholics have taken on many of the environmental issues raised by the Bush administration in recent months.

They've had something to say on everything from the Kyoto global warming treaty that President Bush rejected this year to the administration's proposals to drill for oil in the

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or to lift the ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park.

Although it may come as a surprise to some that Catholics are active in environmental efforts, those who do so say they take their cue from Pope John Paul II. In his 1990 World Day of Peace Message, he said, "Christians, in particular, realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty toward nature and the creator are an essential part of their faith."

Catholic environmentalists also can look to the 1991 U.S. bishops' statement called "Renewing the Earth," which de-

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