

## CARDINAL RITTER BIRTH ROOM RESTORED TO 1890 PERIOD

Thanks to the contribution of period furniture and family photographs, along with a major financial donor, the actual room where Elmer Joseph Ritter was born in 1892 is now a permanent reflection of the late Victorian period at the Cardinal Ritter Birthplace in New Albany, Indiana.



Furnished in Eastlake Style period furniture, the room was repainted, wallpapered, and features two large photographic portraits in antique frames above the fireplace. Images of Nicholas and Bertha (Luette) Ritter were donated by Gertrude "Trudy" Ritter, widow of Frank Nicholas Ritter – a nephew of the Cardinal.



The home at 1218 East Oak Street was restored between 2004 and 2010 by the Cardinal Ritter Birthplace Foundation, Inc. Most of the circa 1880 two-story home and adjoining bakery store front is now modern office space leased to local outreach organizations at reduced cost. In 2011, a Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC) was added. The 1700 sq. ft. facility accommodates 75 people and is available rent-free to local 501(c)(3) organizations for meetings, events, and programs. In 2012 a Museum Room

connecting the home with the NRC was created to tell the story of Ritter's life; his early years, Indianapolis years, St. Louis years, and global years via the Second Vatican Council.

Tours of the Cardinal Ritter Birthplace are currently available by appointment ONLY.



#### **A BRIEF HISTORY**

*Joseph Cardinal Ritter, small in stature but towering in transformational actions in America, was born in 1892 in New Albany, Indiana. Ordained a priest in 1917, he rose rapidly through the ranks of the Church; auxiliary bishop of Indianapolis in 1933 and then bishop of the diocese in 1934 - the youngest in America at the time. Ritter soon planted the seeds of social change. Between 1937 and 1943, he integrated the Catholic schools throughout the diocese, a full decade before the Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education decision of 1954.*

*In 1944, when Indiana was divided into several dioceses (or districts), Indianapolis became an archdiocese and Ritter its first archbishop – at age 52 the youngest in the country. In 1946, Pope Pius XII appointed Ritter to Archbishop of St. Louis where he promptly integrated all Catholic schools and hospitals under his jurisdiction. He also actively opened dialogue with leaders of other faiths. In 1961, Pope John XXIII elevated Archbishop Ritter to the College of Cardinals. The only Indiana-born priest to reach that ecclesiastical rank in the Roman Catholic Church, he became a dynamic influence on the global stage, advocating for the introduction of liturgy in vernacular languages and strongly promoted religious liberty causes. Cardinal Ritter died June 1967 and is interred in the St. Louis Cathedral.*



## **BEFORE**

*Cardinal Ritter Birth Room* while in use by the Home of the Innocents as a counselling room for children between 2010 and 2021.

## **AFTER**

*Ritter Museum Birth Room* after complete renovation in Spring 2023.



### **For more information:**

Website <http://www.cardinalritterhouse.org/>

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/cardinalritterbirthplacefoundation>

**Cardinal Ritter Birthplace Foundation, Inc.**

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4/15/2023 – Ray Day