### **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only date entered

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NAME:

Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Peace

LOCATION:

FM-Road 340

Sweet Home, Lavaca County, Texas

OWNER:

Most Rev. Charles V. Grahmann, D.D.

Catholic Archdiocese of Victoria, Texas

P. O. Box 4708

Victoria, Texas 77903

ARCHITECT:

Unknown

BUILDER: Vincent Falbo, contractor,

M. Deodati, assoc., contractor

INTERIOR CRAFTSMAN:

Unknown

SPECIFIC DATES:

1918 (construction)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage of nominated property: less than one acre

UTM reference: 14/687480/3247260

Verbal boundary description: Beginning at a point southeast of the church, at the intersection of the U-shpaed drive with FM Road 531, a line along the inner edge of the drive continuing around the church, to the drive's northern intersection with FM Road 631, along the road's edge, returning to the starting point.

#### DESCRIPTION:

Sweet Home's Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Peace, stands as the prominent structure in this rural community. This 1918 building is rectangular with a massive truncated tower projecting forward from the front entrance. The exterior is constructed of red brick with a concrete water table, with accenting patterns of raised corbel tables of pitch-faced buff, gray, and green brick on the front facade and side

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buttresses. Greek crosses in contrasting brick form string courses along the side walls, while checkerboard patterns are seen in the string courses along the tower and in sections of the tower face. Above the string courses, on the side walls, red stretchers and green headers are laid in Flemish bond. With the exception of a wheel window on the tower, all openings are immense lancets topped by red-brick hood molds delineated with lancets of buff brick and keystones. The windows are of stained glass placed in triplet and doublet lancets.

The interior is composed of a nave separated from two side aisles by wooden columns with Corinthian capitals that have been skillfully marbled in ochre and brown. The ceiling, which is finished in pressed metal with cross motifs, is arched slightly over the side aisles and forms a lancet arch over the nave. The ceiling beams which run the length of the nave are stenciled. Their horizontal (bottom) surfaces show interlocking circles in ochre and creme, while the upright (side) surfaces exhibit alternating snowflake motifs in creme, red, and blue.

On the apse spandrel is a freehand mural. Against a clouded-sky background is portrayed the Ascension of Christ with the figure cloaked in red. Two flanking angels in lavender and aqua robes face the Christ in a kneeling position. The slight distortion of figures proportions indicates either a rather unconvincing attempt to portray the scene as it should be viewed from below, or else a lack of skill by the painter. On the other hand, the painted column marbling of the columns is quite effective as a trompe l'oeil technique, and the stenciling shows a clear attention to accuracy.

#### SIGNIFICANCE:

With its patterns of contrasting brick, the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Peace, in Sweet Home is a good example of a brick structure in Gothic Revival style. It is the major landmark in the community.

This rural community was settled by Catholic Bohemian farming families in 1860. These people attended Mass at nearby churches in communities such as Yoakum and Hallettsville, till they formed their own parish in 1895. The first home for their church was a remodeled dance hall, which continued to serve as a mission until 1928. The present church building was constructed in 1918 by V. Falbo and M. Deodati. These two contractors later built Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church in nearby Shiner, a more elaborate structure which shows many similarities to the Sweet Home Church in the brickwork and

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ceiling surfaces. In 1967 a tornado destroyed the original eight-sided spire and severely damaged the church.

The simple interior painting consists of well-executed marbling and stenciling, combined with naive freehand painting. The names of the painters and the date of the painting have not been discovered. One document does state, however, that while repairs were being made to the exterior following the tornado of 1967, the interior was also redecorated.

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Multiple Resource Area Thematic Group dnr-11

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Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen	
of Peace (Churches with Decorative Interior	
Painting TR)	
_avaca County	Working No. MAY 9
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	Date Due: 6/9/83-6/
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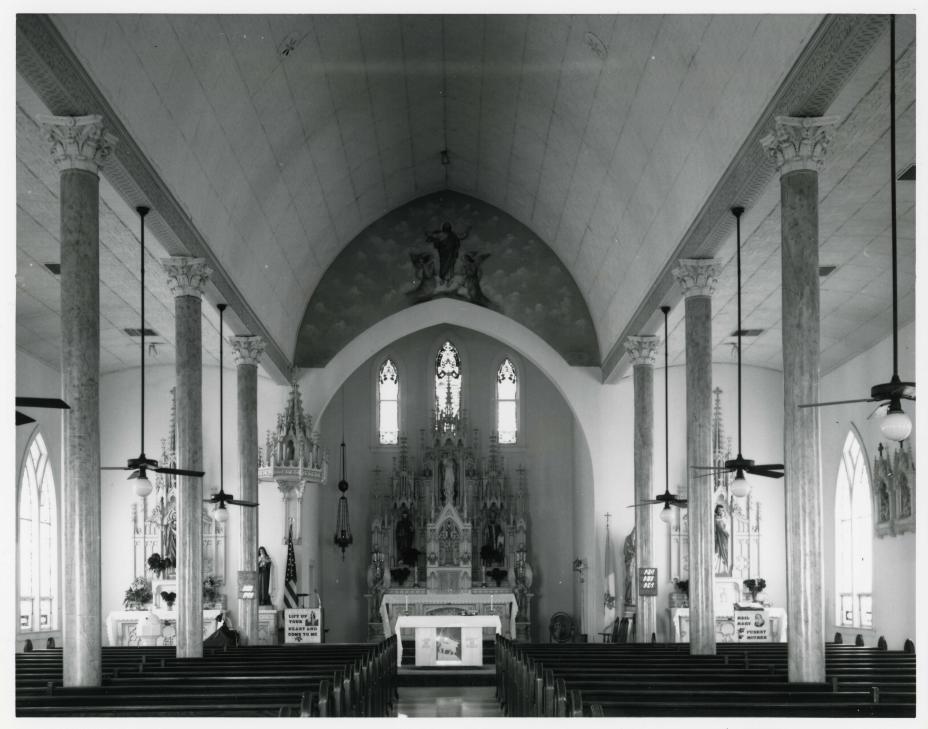
8. Significance  Period Areas of Significance—Check and Justify below	
Specific dates Builder/Architect	
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)	or Pence (Courcipes with Securative Interior
summary paragraph	March
completeness	
clarity	
applicable criteria	
justification of areas	
relating significance to the resource •	
context	
relationship of integrity to significance	
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Other	
9. Major Bibliographical References	
Acreege of nominated property	
11. Form Prepared By	
12. State Historic Preservation Officer C	ertification
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is: national state tocal	
State Historic Preservation Officer signature	
m	
13. Other	
Maps Photographs Other	
Questions concerning this nomination may	be directed to
Signed Date.	Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Queen of Peace
Churches in Texas with Decorative
Interior Painting
Sweet Home, Lavaca County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission,
Austin, Texas
Exterior, Northwest oblique, camera
facing Southeast
Photo #79 of 98



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Queen of Peace
Churches in Texas with Decorative
Interior Painting
Sweet Home, Lavaca County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission,
Austin, Texas
Interior, view toward altar
Photo #80 of 98



Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Queen of Peace
Churches in Texas with Decorative Interior
Painting
Sweet Home, Lavaca County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas
Interior, detail of column and stenciled
ceiling beam
Photo #81 of 98



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen
of Peace
Churches in Texas with Decorative Interior
Painting
Sweet Home, Lavaca County, Texas
Carol Kennedy
October, 1980
Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas
Interior, detail of column painting
Photo #82 of 98

