

Fire and Smoke Damage in Unique Church

ACR has been called upon for more than 27 years to apply restorative cleaning after fire and smoke have damaged churches and their associated facilities. In mid-2012, ACR was dispatched to an extremely ornate church in Lake County, IL that had experienced fire damage as well as decades of accumulated smoke damage from candle burning.

The additional challenge in this case was that every inch of the interior is hand-painted by a world-renown iconographer, *taking three years to complete*. Special experience and knowledge was required to execute the restorative cleaning. The results were beyond the expectations of church leadership, and could not have be accomplished without use of the latest and most thorough techniques in restorative cleaning.



A highly unique place of worship, New Gracanica, of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese, is well known globally for its iconography painted throughout the entire interior. It is among the largest collections of iconographic frescoes in the world and was painted using acrylic paint on dry plaster by renown artist, iconographer, Fr. Theodore Jurewicz, who was flown in to inspect the damage personally.

The pages, following, highlight the work done by ACR in this restorative cleaning assignment, of which we are proud to have served. Only through the use of top level protocol restorative cleaning was it possible to restore the damage, as opposed to the prohibitively costly and time-consuming repainting option.

The Damage:

In the photo provided by the Church from immediately after the fire event, thick smoke is evident and copious.

Remaining evidence of the damage can easily be seen in photos capturing the common occurrence of "ghosting." This is a phenomenon in which the sooty film adheres most easily to colder surfaces, like where structural woodwork stands behind the wall surface.



Ghosting is seen clearly:



About ACR's Perspective on Approaching the Restorative Cleaning:

Based on ACR's unique "No Conflict of Interest" Service Policy, our goal in every project is to accomplish pre-loss condition through restorative cleaning and drying **faster, less expensively and with less disruption** than resorting to tear out and replacement.

This project took these goals to an extreme positive result, as replacement would take up to the three years that was originally needed to paint the icons. The expense advantage of restorative cleaning versus repainting is overwhelmingly obvious. And in terms of disruption, a few weeks of scaffolding and cleaning activity is an easy win over three years of scaffolding and painting activity.

It was stated by church officials that ACR must do this work with accommodation for continued masses and events in the church, as well as frequent visits by members for their daily worship. This was accomplished by ACR via thorough superior project management, continuous communication...*OPERATIONAL CONTINUITY WAS MAINTAINED.*



A scaffold was constructed to reach the highest point, the central dome, approximately 7 stories up. Additionally, several scissor lifts were brought in after thoroughly protecting both the entrance and the supporting floor.



Top protocol restorative cleaning dictates that **DRY** removal of the accumulated soot was required. Wet cleaning cannot be used in situations like this, resulting in both poor results and a high potential for causing further damage.

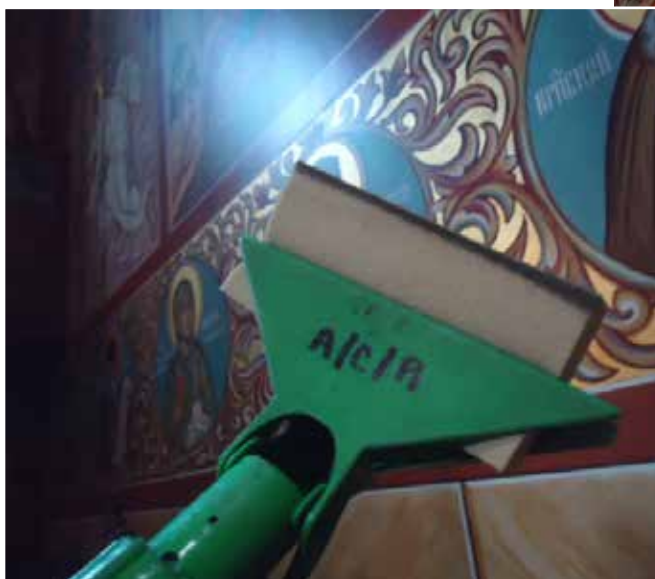
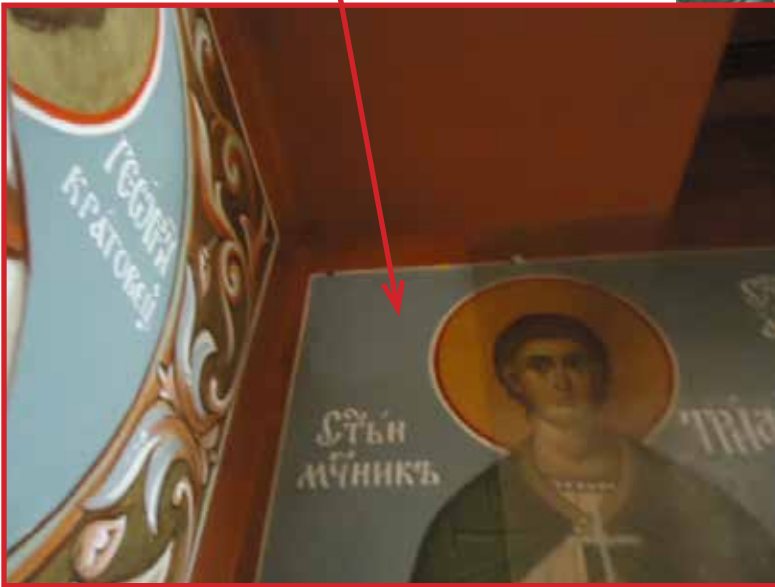
Only by knowing and following the best-practices approach could a positive outcome be expected.



Because of the delicate nature of the painted surfaces and highly ornamental carvings, a great deal of hand work was required by our experienced technicians.

The decades of experience and training serves ACR's Bob Smolka, Manager of our Fire and Mold Division. Bob personally tested and approved all steps prior to execution, guaranteeing impressive results and safety for both our staff and the structure.

The impressive results of our dry approach are seen below. The surface is clearly restored to its original brightness and luster with the removal of the sooty film coating the surfaces with minimal risk.





Church leadership was consistently informed throughout the project, assuring their complete understanding of the work being done and their ultimate satisfaction for an exemplary outcome.

Righting Past Wrongs:

The challenges which always accompany fire/smoke damage cleaning, this project posed the additional challenge of damage caused by past improper cleaning by "wet" means. Running, streaking and physical damage was seen in numerous areas on our initial inspections.

Fortunately, by applying the correct cleaning method now, ACR was able to restore nearly all of the damage caused by "wet" cleaning in the past.



Alarmingly, in executing the cleaning of the church's enormous central chandelier, ACR ordered an electrician's assessment, resulting in the report that the chandelier was in fact highly overloaded and could at any time have caused a serious fire in itself.



Conclusion of the Project: A Clearly Positive Outcome

ACR not only executed the successful restoration, but also coordinated the actions of numerous other tradespeople required. This included carpenters to build the ramp needed for scissor lifts to enter the church without damage, scaffold builders to erect the substantial central structure, electricians and HVAC vent cleaning specialists.

ACR boasts a clearly positive outcome in this project, having relied on principles that guide our company and our mission daily.

Dedication to restorative cleaning and drying over tear out and replacement has once again resulted in having achieved pre-loss condition faster, less expensively and with minimal disruption - even under difficult and unique circumstances - and doing so with overwhelmingly convincing results, to the complete satisfaction of all claim stakeholders.

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СРПСКИ ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЕПАРХИЈА
НОВОГРАЧАНИЧКО-СРЕДЊЕЗАПАДНОАМЕРИЧКА



THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX DIOCESE
OF NEW GRACANICA-MIDWESTERN AMERICA

August 17, 2012

Mr. Robert Smolka
A.C.R.
925 Seton Court #6
Wheeling, Illinois 60090

Dear Mr. Smolka,

Enclosed please find a Cashiers' Check for the final payment on the restoration work that was completed here at our Monastery.

The results that ACR was able to achieve are truly amazing. The various cleaning processes that were used have renewed the frescoes, woodwork, furniture and other objects in the church to a state far better than we expected.

We know there were many challenges that were presented to you and your staff. Having to work on scaffolding sixty to seventy feet above ground could not have been easy.

We enjoyed having you and your staff here. They were courteous, respectful and diligent in their work. They exercised great care in covering and protecting the floors and fixtures from any damage while they worked.

Thank you for a job well done.

Sincerely,

Paul Grosnick, Financial Secretary



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