



# BUILDING A HOUSE FOR EVERY AGE

Principles to guide the process of building and  
renovating the worship space

Diocese of St. Petersburg  
Office of Worship  
Committee for Liturgical Art, Architecture & Environment

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## Principles

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When churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they are well suited to celebrating liturgical services and to bringing about the active participation of the faithful. (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [CSL]*, no. 124)

Collaboration is essential to every architectural project, but it is even more so in architecture at the service of liturgy, for cooperation reflects the very nature of the Body of Christ. The members of the parish community along with their pastor, the liturgical consultant, the artist, the architect, and the contractor are all called to a collaborative effort, whose goal is to summon forth the finest expressions of faith within their means. Mutual trust and openness are central components of the collaborative effort. The parish, represented by its pastor and committees, the architect and liturgical design consultant, the artist, and the contractors should strive to listen to each other with careful attention so that a place of sacred beauty will emerge from their mutual dialogue. (*Built of Living Stones [BLS]*, no. 205)

The norm for designing liturgical space is the assembly and its liturgies. The building or cover enclosing the architectural space is a shelter or skin for a liturgical action. It does not have to look like anything else, past or present. Its integrity, simplicity and beauty, its physical location and landscaping should take into account the neighborhood, city and area in which it is built. (*Environment and Art in Catholic Worship [EACW]*, no. 42)

The church building respects the culture of every time and place. The Roman rite respects cultural differences and fosters the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. This cultural diversity can be expressed in architectural styles, in art forms, and in some instances in the celebration of liturgical rites with appropriate adaptations. (*BLS*, no. 38)

Special attention must be given to the unity of the entire liturgical space. Before considering the distinction of roles within the liturgy, the space should communicate an integrity (a sense of oneness, of wholeness) and a sense of being the gathering place of the initiated community. Within that one space there are different areas corresponding to different roles and functions, but the wholeness of the total space should be strikingly evident. (*EACW*, no. 53)

Because the church is a house of prayer in which the Eucharist is celebrated and the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, a place where the faithful assemble, and a setting where Christ is worshiped, it should be worthy of prayer and sacred celebration, built in conformity with the laws of the Church, and dignified with noble beauty and intrinsically excellent art. The general plan of the building reflects the Church that Christ gathers there, is expressive of its prayer, fosters the member's participation in sacred realities, and supports the solemn character of the sacred liturgy. (*BLS*, no. 29)

The church building is a sign and reminder of the immanence and transcendence of God – who chose to dwell among us and whose presence cannot be contained or limited to any single place. Worship is the loving response of God’s People to the mystery of God who is with us and who is yet to come. “As visible constructions, churches are signs of the pilgrim church on earth; they are images that proclaim the heavenly Jerusalem, places in which are actualized the mystery of the communion between man and God” (Congregation for Divine Worship, *Circular Letter on Concerts in Churches*, November 5, 1987). In addition, the church building manifests the baptismal unity of all who gather for the celebration of liturgy and “conveys the image of the gathered assembly” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM 2002]*, no. 294). While various places “express a hierarchical arrangement and the diversity of functions,” those places “should at the same time form a deep and organic unity, clearly expressive of the unity of the entire holy people (*Ibid.*). (*BLS*, no. 50)

## General Ideas

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1. Space for worship must facilitate the active participation of all present in its liturgical and sacramental celebrations.
2. Mutual cooperation, listening, and learning on the part of everyone involved in building a church – parishioners, pastor, the Diocesan Committee for Liturgical Art, Architecture & Environment (DCLAAE), architect, liturgical consultant, artist, and contractor - is essential.
3. Great diversity in architectural form and artistic expression is possible. Integrity, simplicity, and beauty must not be sacrificed.
4. The entire liturgical space and everything in it must possess a visible, organic unity.
5. The liturgy demands a dignified setting of noble beauty, one truly worthy of sacred celebration. Everything placed in a space used for worship must be appropriate and of the highest quality.
6. The principles and directives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops guidelines *Built of Living Stones (BLS)*, the revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM 2002)*, and these diocesan guidelines (*Building a House for Every Age*) must be consulted and applied to the building and renovation of all worship spaces in the Diocese of St. Petersburg. In addition, a working knowledge of the rites of the Church and of the following liturgical documents is also necessary for all who will be involved in building or renovating a church:

- ✧ *Ceremonial of Bishops (CB)*
- ✧ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL)*
- ✧ *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship (EACW)*
- ✧ *Fulfilled in Your Hearing. (FYH)*
- ✧ *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (SL)*

## Principles

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The gathering space helps believers to make the transition from everyday life to the celebration of the liturgy, and after the liturgy, it helps them return to daily life to live out the mystery that has been celebrated. In the gathering space, people come together to move in procession and to prepare for the celebration of the liturgy. It is in the gathering space many important liturgical moments occur. (*Built of Living Stones [BLS]*, no. 95)

If it is at all possible, provision should be made for a *gathering place* of the people near the church where the blessing of candles, of palms, and of fire, as well as other preparatory celebrations, may take place and from which processions to the church may begin. (*Ceremonial of Bishops [CB]*, no. 54)

Paths provided for those approaching on foot, especially paths that lead to the principal gathering space outside the building, should receive special attention. The space at which these paths converge should be welcoming and hospitable, drawing together those who assemble for worship and providing for those who wish to linger in conversation with one another after liturgical services. Pavement patterns, borders, and configurations; shrines containing images in sculpture, mosaic, or other art media; as well as planters and outdoor benches will help with the passage from the mundane to the sacred worship space. (*BLS*, no. 210)

## General Ideas

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### Outside Space

The exterior space provides the first impression of “church” to those who gather for worship. This space should offer a sense of invitation from the inner gathering space to the outside world. As such, the exterior grounds of the church should be well-planned and landscaped.

The parking lot should provide easy access to the “main entrance” of the church itself. This outside gathering space could include a covered portico or simply be an open-air plaza.

This space should be designed so that the various preparatory rituals can be adequately celebrated there (i.e., processions, blessings, the reception of the body for funerals, the initiation rite of welcome, Passion Sunday, and the building of the Easter fire, to name a few). Also, it could be used for other church gatherings, either before the liturgy begins or upon its conclusion (i.e., ministry fairs, parish registrations, coffee and doughnuts, etc.).

**Landscape Architecture**

Consideration should be given to using ecologically appropriate trees and shrubs. Xeriscaping is a viable and recommended alternative in Florida. Certainly an attempt to blend existing foliage, added landscaping, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, entrances and lighting should be made. It is important to follow state, county, and city regulations.

**Entrance / Narthex**

The internal gathering space should be adequate enough to accommodate the entire assembly. This entrance or narthex should allow all, including the disabled, to gather comfortably.

The space needs to be large enough to accommodate the reception of the body during funerals. This space should also contain adequate public service rooms (i.e., restrooms, bride's room, usher's room, wake room, storage rooms, nursery, etc.). Restroom facilities should be conveniently located and able to accommodate a wheelchair or walker.

Provisions should be made so that distracting sound from the gathering space does not enter the main worship space during liturgical services.

Above all, the entrance or narthex should provide a sense of welcome and hospitality to those who gather as well as promote a sense of unity for those who are assembled.

## Principles

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Initiation into the Church is entrance into a eucharistic community united in Jesus Christ. Because the rites of initiation of the Church begin with baptism and are completed by the reception of the Eucharist, the baptismal font and its location reflect the Christian's journey *through* the waters of baptism *to* the altar. (*Built of Living Stones [BLS]*, no. 66)

The font should be large enough to supply ample water for the baptism of both adults and infants. Since baptism in Catholic churches may take place by immersion in the water, or by infusion (pouring), fonts that permit all forms of baptismal practices are encouraged. (*BLS*, no. 69.2)

Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacrament and, therefore, provision should be made for its more frequent use in the baptism of adults. (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA]: National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 17)

In the celebration of baptism, the washing with water should take on its full importance as the sign of that mystical sharing in Christ's death and resurrection through which those who believe in his name die to sin and rise to eternal life. (*RCIA*, no. 213)

[The baptistry/font] should be designed and equipped in keeping with the provisions of the Roman Ritual. (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 52; *RCIA: General Introduction*, no. 25)

The location of the baptismal font, its design, and the materials used for its construction are important considerations in the planning and design of the building. It is customary to locate the baptismal font either in a special area within the main body of the church or in a separate baptistry. Through the waters of baptism the faithful enter the life of Christ. For this reason the font should be visible and accessible to all who enter the church building. While the baptistry is proportioned to the building itself and should be able to hold a good number of people, its actual size will be determined by the needs of the local community. (*BLS*, no. 67)

Whether the placement of the font is an area near the main entrance of the liturgical space or in the midst of the congregation, it should facilitate full congregational participation, especially during the Easter Vigil. Always the basic design . . . should be guided by the correct and full celebration of the Easter Vigil . . . It may well be that the existing font may not be visible to the assembly at all times. But in this text of the *Ceremonial of Bishops* (no. 52), the presumption is that it needs to be. (*Ceremonial of Bishops: A Reader*, pp. 90-91)

## General Ideas

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### Location

The baptistry or the area where the baptismal font is located should be reserved for the sacrament of baptism and should be worthy to serve as the place where Christians are reborn in water and the Holy Spirit. (*RCIA: General Introduction*, no. 25)

There should only be one font on the property. (*Code of Canon Law*, no. 858 §1).

If the baptismal area is located in the inside-gathering place or at the main entrance, it is accessible for people to dip their hands into the font and sign themselves as a reminder of baptism as they enter the worship space. This would eliminate the need for multiple holy water fonts.

Care must be taken to avoid making the baptismal area remote or isolated from the assembly. It is most desirable that a permanent font (preferably with the potential for full immersion) be installed.

### Structure

The shape of the baptismal font may vary. The shape can reflect a particular theology, e.g., rectangle – “death and resurrection,” round – “womb/new birth,” octagon – “eighth day of creation” to name a few. It should be substantial, well constructed and attractive, while not dominating the worship space. It should be simple, beautiful and harmonize with the other liturgical furnishings.

The font should be constructed to reflect an abundance of living, moving water, and include a provision for warming the water for immersion. (*Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, no. 77)

Many materials can be used for the font. For health reasons it must be of a material that can be kept clean.

### Portable Fonts

The symbolic character of baptism is always to be maintained. If there is no permanent font and a portable one is used, the same dignity, stability and quality of a permanent font must be conveyed.

### Ambry

The ambry is the place where the three sacramental oils – Oil of the Sick, Oil of the Catechumens, and Sacred Chrism – are stored and displayed. Although placement of the ambry near the baptistry is an obvious choice, other locations could be considered because the oils are used in a number of rituals.

### Other References:

- ✧ *Built of Living Stones*, The Baptistry, nos. 66-69
- ✧ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, Introduction, nos. 1-31
- ✧ *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Introduction, nos. 1-35

## Principles

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### ✦ The Assembly

Every church building is a gathering place for the assembly, a resting place, a place of encounter with God, as well as a point of departure on the Church's unfinished journey toward the reign of God. (*Built of Living Stones [BLS]*, no. 17)

In the liturgical assembly, Christ's presence is realized in all *the baptized* who gather in his name, in the *word of God* proclaimed in the assembly, in the person of *the priest* through whom Christ offers himself to the Father and gathers the assembly, in *sacramental celebrations*, and especially, in the *Sacrament of his Body and Blood*. (cf. *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 7 and *General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM 2002]*, no. 27). In building a house for the Church that is also the house of God on earth, all the expressions of Christ's presence have prominence of place that reflects their proper nature. (*BLS*, no. 22)

The People of God, gathered for Mass, has a coherent and hierarchical structure, which finds its expression in the variety of ministries and the variety of actions according to the different parts of the celebration. The general ordering of the sacred building must be such that in some way it conveys the image of the gathered assembly and allows the appropriate ordering of all the participants, as well as facilitating each in the proper carrying out of his function. The faithful and the choir should have a place that facilitates their active participation. (*GIRM 2002*, no. 294)

Because liturgical actions by their nature are communal celebrations, they are celebrated with the presence and active participation of the Christian faithful whenever possible. Such participation, both internal and external, is the faithful's "right and duty by reason of their baptism." The building itself can promote or hinder the "full, conscious, and active participation" of the faithful. Parishes making decisions about the design of a church must consider how the various aspects and choices they make will affect the ability of all the members to participate fully in liturgical celebrations. (*BLS*, no. 31)

The most powerful experience of the sacred is found in the celebration and the persons celebrating, that is, it is found in the action of the assembly: the living words, the living gestures, the living sacrifice, the living meal. This was at the heart of the earliest liturgies. Evidence of this is found in their architectural floor plans which were designed as general gathering spaces, spaces which allowed the whole assembly to be part of the action. (*Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, no. 29)

### ✦ Arrangement and Design

Places should be arranged with appropriate care for the faithful so that they are able to participate in the sacred celebrations visually and spiritually, in the proper manner. It is expedient for benches and seats usually to be provided for their use . . . Moreover, benches or

chairs should be arranged, especially in newly built churches, in such a way that the people can easily take up the postures required for the different parts of the celebration and can easily come forward to receive Holy Communion. Care should be taken that the faithful be able not only to see the priest, the deacon, and the lectors but also, with the aid of modern technical means, to hear them without difficulty. (*GIRM 2002*, no. 311)

The space within the church building for the faithful other than the priest celebrant and the ministers is sometimes called the *nave*. This space is critical in the overall plan because it accommodates a variety of ritual actions: processions during the Eucharist, the singing of the prayers, movement during baptismal rites, the sprinkling of the congregation with blessed water, the rites during the wedding and funeral liturgies, and personal devotion. This area is not comparable to the audience's space in a theater or public arena because in the liturgical assembly, there is no audience. Rather, the entire congregation acts. (*BLS*, no. 51)

There are no universal norms regarding fixed or flexible seating but the diocesan bishop may issue further directives in this area. Many churches have found that a combination of fixed and flexible seating works best to accommodate the various liturgical actions. Ideally, no seat in the nave would be located beyond a point where distance and lighting level of the sanctuary severely impede the view of and participation of liturgical actions. (*BLS*, no. 87)

## General Ideas

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1. Above all else, seating for the assembly should facilitate the full, conscious, and active participation of all the faithful. To create an expectation of hospitality, people must be able to see and hear each other, as well as those in the sanctuary.
2. Making space for worship where the room and its furnishings welcome and even demand a participating assembly is a goal. Therefore, when decorating for liturgical seasons and feasts the space for the assembly should be included as a symbol of the unity of those gathered together for worship.
3. The space and furniture should be arranged so that wide aisle spaces are available for processions.
4. A combination of fixed and flexible seating can be used to accommodate the various liturgical actions. Pews or chairs should comfortably accommodate the human form. Seats that are too small are undesirable, and luxurious seating is inappropriate. Seating that gives the impression of a living room, a theater, or an arena should be avoided.
5. Careful arrangement of seating, with special attention for the full integration of persons with disabilities [cf. *BLS*, no. 211], can make all people feel welcome and naturally encourage their participation in the liturgy. Good seating will serve to unify the assembly and strengthen liturgical celebration.

## Principles

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The sanctuary is the place where the altar stands, where the word of God is proclaimed, and where the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers exercise their offices. It should suitably be marked off from the body of the church either by its being somewhat elevated or by a particular structure and ornamentation. It should, however, be large enough to allow the Eucharist to be celebrated properly and easily seen. (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM 2002], no. 295)

The special character of the sanctuary is emphasized and enhanced by the distinctiveness of its design and furnishings, or by its elevation. The challenge to those responsible for its design is to convey the unique quality of the actions that take place in this area while at the same time expressing the organic relationship between those actions and the prayer and actions of the entire liturgical assembly. The sanctuary must be spacious enough to accommodate the full celebration of the various rituals of word and Eucharist with their accompanying movement, as well as those of the other sacraments celebrated there. (*Built of Living Stones* [BLS], no. 54)

The principal ritual furnishings within the sanctuary are the *altar* . . . the *ambo* . . . and the *chair*. . . These furnishings should be constructed of substantial materials that express dignity and stability. Their placement and their design again make it clear that although they are distinct entities, they are related in the one eucharistic celebration. (BLS, no. 55)

Each piece of furniture has its own requirements, but at least two criteria are applicable to all of them, in fact, to any object used in any way in the liturgy: 1) None should be made in such a way that is far removed from the print of the human hand and human craft. When mass-produced items are chosen, care must be taken that they are truly suitable. Dignity and beauty in materials used, in design and form, in color and texture - these are concerns of artists for their work . . . and not the concerns of many mass manufacturers. 2) All furnishings taken together should possess a unity and harmony with each other and with the architecture of the place. (*Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, no. 67)

### ◆ Altar

The altar is the natural focal point of the sanctuary and is to be “freestanding to allow the [priest] to walk around it easily and Mass to be celebrated facing the people.” (BLS, no. 57; GIRM 2002, no. 299; and *Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 48)

In the United States it is permissible to use materials other than natural stone for a fixed altar, provided these materials are worthy, solid, properly constructed, and subject to the further judgment of the local ordinary. (BLS, no. 57; see also GIRM 2002, no. 301)

Although there is no specified size or shape for an altar, it should be in proportion to the church. The shape and size should reflect the nature of the altar as the place of sacrifice and the table around which Christ gathers the community to nourish them. In considering the dimensions of the altar, parishes will want to insure that the other major furnishings in

the sanctuary are in harmony and proportion to the altar. . .The altar should be centrally located in the sanctuary and the center of attention in the church. (*BLS*, no. 58)

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the altar must be visible from all parts of the church but not so elevated that it causes visual or symbolic division from the liturgical assembly. Methods of elevation can be found that still allow access to the altar by ministers who need wheelchairs or who have other disabilities. (*BLS*, no. 59)

The custom of placing small relics of martyrs or other saints in an altar stone and setting this in the mensa has changed since the Second Vatican Council. Relics of martyrs or other saints may be placed *beneath* the altar, as long as the relics are of a size sufficient for them to be recognizable as parts of a human body and that they are of undoubted authenticity. Relics are no longer placed *on* the altar or set into the mensa in an altar stone. (*BLS*, no. 60; see also *GIRM 2002*, no. 302 and *Rite of Dedication of a Church & Altar*, chapter 4, no. 11c)

### ◆ **Ambo**

The dignity of the word of God requires that the church to have a place that is suitable for proclamation of the word and toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns during the Liturgy of the Word . . . The ambo must be located in keeping with the design of each church in such a way that the ordained ministers and lectors can be clearly seen and heard by the faithful. (*GIRM 2002*, no. 309)

There must be a place in the church that is somewhat elevated, fixed, and of a suitable design and nobility. It should reflect the dignity of God's word and be a clear reminder to the people that in the Mass the table of God's word and of Christ's body is placed before them. . . Great pains must therefore be taken, in keeping with the design of each church, over the harmonious and close relationship of the ambo with the altar. . . In order that the ambo may properly serve its liturgical purpose, it is to be rather large . . . Provisions must be made for readers to have enough light to read the text and, as required, to have modern sound equipment enabling the faithful to hear them without difficulty. (*Lectionary for Mass*, Introduction, nos. 32 & 34)

The central focus of the area in which the word of God is proclaimed during the liturgy is the *ambo*. The design of the ambo and its prominent placement reflects the dignity and nobility of the saving word and draws the attention of those present to the proclamation of the word . . . An ample area around the ambo is needed to allow a gospel procession with a full complement of ministers bearing candles and incense . . . Since many people share in the ministry of the word, the ambo should be accessible to everyone, including those with physical disabilities. (*BLS*, no. 61)

### ◆ **Chair**

The chair of the priest celebrant signifies his office of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer. The best place for the chair is in a position facing the people at the head of the sanctuary, unless the building's design or other circumstances impede this: for example, if a great distance interferes with communication between the priest and the gathered assembly, or if the tabernacle is in the center behind the altar. Any appearance of a throne, however, is to be avoided. (*GIRM 2002*, no. 310; see also *BLS*, nos. 63-64)

The seat for the deacon should be placed near that of the celebrant. (*GIRM 2002*, no. 310; see also *BLS*, no. 63)

An appropriate placement of the chair allows the priest celebrant to be visible to all in the congregation. The chair reflects the dignity of the one who leads the community in the person of Christ, but is never intended to be remote or grandiose. (*BLS*, no. 63)

## General Ideas

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### **Sanctuary**

The sanctuary is to be distinct but not distant from the body of the church, spacious and uncluttered, allowing for generous movement.

Every liturgical action that takes place in the sanctuary must be able to be seen and heard clearly by all in the assembly. Careful lighting and sound enhancement accomplishes this. Particular attention should be given to use of lighting in the sanctuary and church for the various liturgical seasons and celebrations (i.e., the Easter Vigil).

The design of the sanctuary should be unified, possess a noble simplicity, and be consistent with the architecture of the building.

To maintain a sense of noble simplicity, care should be taken when decorating the liturgical environment. Certainly, the art and decoration of the sanctuary space will be that of the local culture. However, identifying symbols (i.e., flags, non-liturgical banners, etc.) of particular cultures, groups or nations are not appropriate permanent parts of the sanctuary. A more appropriate placement would be in the narthex, outside of the church, or in the church hall.

### **Altar**

The altar should be a truly beautiful table and easily approachable from all sides. It must be the primary focal point of the worship space, for it symbolizes Christ himself. It may be constructed from stone, wood, or another worthy, solid and well-crafted material.

As a symbol of Christ, the altar should be designed so that it is free from extraneous symbols and ornamentation.

### **Ambo**

The ambo must also be beautiful, functional, and well proportioned in relation to the altar. The area around the ambo should provide ample space for a Gospel procession with candles and incense.

### **Chair**

The presider's chair is to have a position that is prominent but not dominant. Its design should be in harmony with the altar and the ambo. It is the only chair to be permanently set in the sanctuary. All other chairs should be placed in the sanctuary only when they are needed.

## Principles

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Among the many signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of preeminent importance. (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [CSL]*, no. 112; *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship [SL]*, no. 5)

Music is integral to the liturgy. It unifies those gathered to worship, supports the song of the congregation, highlights significant parts of the liturgical action, and helps to set the tone for each celebration . . . It is important to recognize that the building must support the music and song of the entire worshipping assembly. (*Built of Living Stones [BLS]*, nos.88-89)

The choir should be positioned with respect to the design of each church so as to make clearly evident its character as a part of the gathered community of the faithful fulfilling a specific function. The location should also assist the choir to exercise its function more easily and conveniently allow each choir member full, sacramental participation in the Mass. (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM 2002]*, no. 312; *SL*, nos. 95-96 & 98; see also 1967 *Instruction Musicam Sacram*, no. 23)

The placement and prayerful decorum of the choir members can help the rest of the community to focus on the liturgical action taking place at the ambo, the altar, and the chair. The ministers of music are most appropriately located in a place where they can be part of the assembly and have the ability to be heard. (*BLS*, no. 90)

The organ and other lawfully approved musical instruments are to be placed in an appropriate place so that they can sustain the singing of both the choir and congregation and be heard with ease by all if they are played alone. (*GIRM 2002*, no. 313; *SL*, no. 99)

Planning sufficient space for the organ and other instruments that may be used to accompany the assembly's prayer is an important part of the building process . . . An acoustical specialist and musicians working together can arrive at a placement that allows the pipes to be seen and heard well without becoming a distraction. (*BLS*, no. 226)

Some instruments are used only occasionally for more solemn and festive occasions. For this reason there is need for flexibility in the arrangement of the space allotted for music so that there will be adequate room to accommodate them when they are included in the worship services. (*BLS*, no. 227)

## General Ideas

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### Location of Musicians

First and foremost, pastoral musicians are leaders and facilitators of sung prayer. The proper placement of musicians and instruments for liturgical celebration are quite different from a placement that would serve other needs, i.e., a concert performance.

For practical purposes, the music ministers (director, choir, cantor, and instrumentalists) should be placed relatively close together to facilitate good ensemble performance.

It should be remembered that the music ministers are, first and foremost, members of the gathered assembly. It is desirable that these ministers appear to be part of the worshiping assembly (*SL*, no. 98). As far as possible, this placement should be within the visibility of the rest of the assembly.

Ideally, the music ministers (especially cantors and choir) should face the assembly so that they might have the power to animate and lead. Elevated tiers or risers could be provided, especially with larger choirs, to improve projection and visibility.

The acoustics of the planned worship space will also play a role in the location of the music ministry. (cf. *SL*, nos. 101-104)

## **Instruments**

The pipe organ is the traditional instrument of the Church and is held in high esteem for the splendor that it adds to worship (*CSL*, no. 120). Because of its importance, the installation of a pipe organ should be strongly considered in any new church or renovation project. Some circumstances may also allow for the consideration of an electronic organ, or combination pipe/electronic organ.

Planning sufficient space for the organ casework and placement of pipes is an important part of the building process and should involve an acoustical specialist and the musicians (*BLS*, no. 226). The location of the speaking portion of the organ (pipes or speakers) in relation to the console (keyboard and organist) and in relation to the congregation, choir and cantors needs to be carefully planned. Each part of the musical equation needs to work together in harmony for the music ministry to transcend printed notes into sung prayer.

Provisions for other instruments, including guitars, hand bells, piano and other instruments, should be considered carefully so that there will be adequate room to accommodate them (*BLS*, no. 227).

All instruments used for liturgical celebration need to be musically superior. They should be authentic, beautiful and coherent with their environment.

## Principle

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A day chapel is an optional chapel setting for liturgical celebrations with smaller groups. Its design would follow the same guidelines and principles as the larger main body of the church, but with the ability to be even more flexible.

## General Ideas

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**Purpose** The day chapel gives the parish a more intimate space for smaller gatherings. The day chapel could be used primarily for the celebration of the Eucharist on weekdays, and could also serve the needs for intimate weddings, funerals, wake services, the Liturgy of the Hours, and prayer groups.

A day chapel can address the practical and economic concerns of cooling and heating the larger church building. Climate control of this smaller space would be more efficient and cost effective.

**Furnishing** The day chapel is furnished with the same primary liturgical appointments as the larger main church body: altar, ambo and chair. Due to the many ways the day chapel could be utilized, flexibility and creativity should be primary considerations when designing the assembly's seating. Everything in the room should be moveable to allow for various uses.

The day chapel should not become the "catch all" place for devotional iconography and statuary. The same principles of noble simplicity, quality and appropriateness called for in designing the main church building should be used in designing the day chapel.

**Acoustics** Acoustics should also be considered when designing a day chapel. Because of its smaller size and acoustics, an electronic sound system may not be necessary. The importance of music to the rites suggests that the day chapel have access to the necessary equipment for musicians.

**Placement** The day chapel is separate and distinct from the eucharistic reservation chapel, although they could be adjacent.

## Principles

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Christ present in the eucharistic species is a treasure the Church has come to cherish and reserve over the centuries (*Built of Living Stones* [BLS], no. 70). The *Code of Canon Law* directs that the Eucharist be reserved in a part of the church that is distinguished, conspicuous, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer (CCL, no. 938 §2). The place of reservation should be a space that is dedicated to Christ present in the Eucharist and that is designed so that the attention of one praying there is drawn to the tabernacle that houses the presence of the Lord (BLS, no. 73).

The primary and original reason for reservation of the Eucharist outside Mass is the administration of viaticum. The secondary ends are the giving of communion and the adoration of our Lord Jesus present in the sacrament. The reservation of the sacrament for the sick led to the praiseworthy practice of adoring this heavenly food that is reserved in churches. (*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* [HCWEOM], no. 5)

The place for the reservation of the Eucharist should be truly preeminent. It is highly recommended that the place be suitable also for private adoration and prayer so that the faithful may readily and fruitfully continue to honor the Lord, present in the sacrament, through personal worship. . . This will be achieved more easily if the chapel is separate from the body of the church, especially in churches where marriages and funerals are celebrated frequently and in churches where there are many visitors because of pilgrimages or the artistic and historical treasures. (HCWEOM, no. 9; *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, no. 53)

As the baptized grow to understand their active participation in the Eucharist, they will be drawn to spend more time in quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, . . . In reverent prayer before the reserved Eucharist, the faithful give praise and thanksgiving to Christ for the priceless gift of redemption and for the spiritual food that sustains them in their daily lives. Here they learn to appreciate their right and responsibility to join the offering of their own lives to the perfect sacrifice of Christ during the Mass and are led to a greater recognition of Christ in themselves and in others, especially in the poor and needy. Providing a suitable place for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is a serious consideration in any building or renovation project. (BLS, no. 71)

### Other References:

- ✧ *Built of Living Stones*, nos. 70-80
- ✧ *Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 49 (See also: *Ceremonial of Bishops: A Reader*, pp.87-88)
- ✧ *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, no. 53 [Documents on the Liturgy (DOL 179), no. 1282]
- ✧ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM 2002], nos. 314-317
- ✧ *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, nos. 5-10
- ✧ *Rite of Dedication of a Church and Altar*, chapter 4, no. 7

## General Ideas

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### Environment

Due to the devotional character of eucharistic adoration, care should be taken to create a space that is warm while acknowledging the mystery of the Lord's presence. It should support private meditation by minimalizing surrounding distractions. Kneelers and chairs for those who come to pray should be provided (*BLS*, no. 77).

Iconography or statuary should be kept to a minimal so as not to obscure the chapel's primary focus on the reserved Eucharist.

### Location

If the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in a separate chapel of reservation, that chapel should be separate from the nave and sanctuary, but integrally connected to the church and conspicuous to the faithful (*BLS*, no. 77). It should be accessible from the main worship space as well as the outside. Ideally, the chapel should be designed so that it is accessible during the day for private devotion and meditation without having to open the main church.

The location should allow for easy access by people in wheelchairs and by those with other disabilities (*BLS*, no. 74).

The bishop is to determine where the tabernacle will be placed and to give further direction in his diocese (*BLS*, no. 74). In the Diocese of St. Petersburg, when new churches are constructed the chapel of reservation is to be located in a place that is separate and distinct from the sanctuary. In the renovation of churches, an assessment regarding the placement of the reserved Eucharist will be made in conjunction with the parish and the Diocesan Committee on Liturgical Art, Architecture & Environment (DCLAAE) on a case-by-case basis.

### Tabernacle

There should be only one tabernacle in a church building (*CCL*, 938 §1). It may be located in a wall niche, on a pillar or eucharistic tower, or be suspended. Because the altar is the place for the eucharistic *action*, anything resembling an altar should be discouraged for the tabernacle's placement.

To maintain reverence for the reserved Eucharist, the tabernacle's design should stress dignity and simplicity. It also is to be solid and unbreakable (*GIRM 2002*, no. 314; *CCL*, 938 §3). It should be worthy of the Blessed Sacrament – beautifully designed and in harmony with the overall décor of the rest of the church. (*BLS*, no. 72)

To signify the presence of Christ, a well-designed oil lamp or a lamp with a wax candle should burn continuously near the tabernacle (*GIRM 2002*, no. 316; *CCL*, 940; *HCWEOM*, no. 11; *BLS*, no.72).

## Principles

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The practice of reserving a special place in churches for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation is a clear expression of the truth that sacramental confession and absolution constitute a liturgical action which involves the entire body of the Church and is intended to renew the participation of the faithful in the Church's offering of the sacrifice of Christ. (*Book of Blessings*, no. 1203)

The bishops of the United States have directed that the place for sacramental confession be visible and accessible, that it contain a fixed grille, and that it allow for confession face-to-face for those who wish to do so. (*Built of Living Stone*, no. 103)

A room or rooms for reconciliation of individual penitents may be located near the baptismal area (when that is at the entrance) or in another convenient place. Furnishings and decoration should be simple and austere, offering the penitent a choice between face-to-face encounter or the anonymity provided by a screen, with nothing superfluous in evidence beyond a simple cross, table and bible. The purpose of this room is primarily for the celebration of the reconciliation liturgy; it is not a lounge, counseling room, etc. (*Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, no. 81)

When a number of penitents assemble at the same time to receive sacramental reconciliation . . . If necessary, several priests should be available in suitable places to hear individual confessions and to reconcile the penitents. (*Rite of Penance: Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution*, no. 22)

## General Ideas

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1. The reconciliation room needs to provide the option of: a) anonymity for the penitent and b) face-to-face celebration between priest and penitent. To insure these options the reconciliation room needs to provide a kneeler and/or chair by a screen or divider (crates) and two chairs by the screen for face-to-face celebration.
2. The environment should be welcoming but simple. A small table should be accessible to both the priest and penitent. A bible, copy of the ritual and cross/crucifix may be placed on the table. A suitable piece of art or wall hanging would be appropriate. Attention should be paid to subdued lighting.
3. The reconciliation room should be as sound proof as possible and well ventilated.
4. The reconciliation room should allow for the easy access of wheelchairs or walkers and be sensitive to the needs of the hearing and visually impaired.

5. Because of the unique relationship between baptism and penance, there is merit to the reconciliation room being situated near the baptismal font, especially if the font is located near the entrance of the church.
6. For the protection of the penitent and confessor, it is required in the Diocese of St. Petersburg that there is a glass door or a door with a window.
7. Rite II: Reconciliation of Several Penitents would suggest appropriate stations in the body of the church for individual confessions. These stations might be marked with appropriate artwork or banners that are removable.

## Principles

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The fine arts are deservedly ranked among the noblest expressions of human genius and this applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, sacred art. These arts, by their very nature, are oriented toward the infinite beauty of God, which they attempt in some way to portray by the work of human hands. They are dedicated to advancing God's praise and glory to the degree that they center on the single aim of turning the human spirit devoutly toward God. (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [CSL]*, no. 122)

Liturgical art and architecture reflect and announce the presence of the God who calls the community to worship and invite believers to raise their minds and hearts to the One who is the source of all beauty and truth. (*Built of Living Stones [BLS]*, no. 44)

Art chosen for the place of worship is not simply something pretty or well made, an addition to make the ordinary more pleasant. Nor is the place of worship a museum to house artistic masterpieces or artistic models. Rather, artwork truly belongs in the church when they are worthy of the place of worship and when they enhance the liturgical, devotional, and contemplative prayer they are inspired to serve. (*BLS*, no. 142)

Authentic art is integral to the Church at prayer because these objects and actions are "signs and symbols of the supernatural world" and expressions of the divine presence. While personal tastes will differ, parish communities should utilize the criteria of quality and appropriateness in evaluating art for worship. (*BLS*, no. 146)

**Quality** is perceived only by contemplation, by standing back from things and really trying to see them, trying to let them speak to the beholder. *Quality* is evident in the honesty and genuineness of the materials used, the nobility of the form embodied in them, the love and care that goes into the creation of a work of art, and the personal stamp of the artist whose special gift produces a harmonious whole, a well-crafted work . . . The integrity and energy of a piece of art, produced individually by the labor of an artist, is always to be preferred above objects that are mass-produced. (*BLS*, nos. 146-147)

**Appropriateness** for the liturgical action is the other criterion for choosing a work of art for church. The quality of *appropriateness* is demonstrated by the work's ability to bear the weight of mystery, awe, reverence, and wonder that the liturgical action expresses and by the way it serves and does not interrupt the ritual actions that have their own structure, rhythm, and movement. . . Art that is used in worship must therefore evoke wonder at its beauty but lead beyond itself to the invisible God. Beautiful, compelling artworks draw the People of God into a deeper awareness of their lives and of their common goals as a Christian community as well as of their roles and responsibilities in the wider world. Art that fulfills these qualities is art *worthy* of the Christian assembly. (*BLS*, no. 148)

Art has the unique capacity to take one or another facet of the message and translate it into colors, shapes and sounds that nourish the intuition of those who look or listen. It does so without emptying the message itself of its transcendent value and its aura of mystery. (Pope John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, no. 12 – "The Church Needs Art")

Consultation with persons who are experts, at least one in liturgy and one in the arts, is not a luxury but a necessity for those furnishing the liturgical space...Dignity and beauty in materials used, in design and form, in color and texture --- these are concerns of artists for their work... All furnishings taken together should possess a unity and harmony with each other and with the architecture of the place. (*Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, no. 67)

[Sacred] images of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Saints, in accordance with the Church's most ancient tradition, should be displayed for veneration by the faithful in sacred buildings and should be arranged so as to usher the faithful toward the mysteries of faith celebrated there. For this reason, care should be taken that their number not be increased indiscriminately, and that they be arranged in proper order so as not to distract the faithful's attention from the celebration itself. There should usually be only one image of any given Saint. (*CSL*, no. 125; *General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM 2002]*, no. 318)

## **General Ideas**

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1. The Church has a long history as a promoter of the arts.
2. There should be balance and harmony between “the primacy of the assembly and its actions” and any sacred image(s) introduced.
3. Quality and appropriateness are the guiding liturgical principles for sacred art.
4. Artistic talent is to be preferred to poor-quality items placed for the sake of personal devotion.
5. The work of an individual artist is to be preferred to mass-produced art.
6. Consultation with persons who are experts, at least one in liturgy and one in the arts, is not a luxury but a necessity for those furnishing the liturgical space.
7. Strive for noble simplicity: few are better than many.
8. Sacred objects and images (i.e., saints, crosses) should not be multiplied. Duplication of these in the same space may actually weaken the power of the symbol to speak to the hearts of the faithful (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM 2002]*, no. 318).
9. Shrines should be located outside the main worship area.
10. Stations of the Cross could be located outside the church; marking the devotion as a true journey.
11. There is merit in having a variety of images of artistic worth that can be used for a particular liturgical season or feast and then put away.
12. Fabric used in creating banners, wall hangings and vestments should be chosen because of the quality of design, texture and color.

13. In the interest of authenticity and symbolism, the integrity of appointments is to be respected; i.e. plants should be real, wax candles are to be used, vessels and vestments should be of high quality, etc.
14. Decorate for the liturgical seasons. Consider the symbols of the seasons and use them lavishly in proportion to the space. Focus on the entire space: gathering areas, entryways, parking lots, and the assembly's seating area. Creatively expand the decorations beyond the sanctuary space.
15. Iconography has played an important role in the Christian Church; therefore, consideration could be given for its use as appropriate liturgical art.
16. National flags or the flags/insignia of associations are more appropriate for the narthex, outside the church, or in the church hall, and not the sanctuary (cf. *Order of Christian Funerals*, no. 132).

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## Diocesan Regulations for Construction and Remodeling of Liturgical and / or Worship Spaces

As the priestly leader of the diocese, the bishop is intimately involved with the liturgical prayer of the diocese. Not only is the bishop the president of the assembly's prayer (*The Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops – "Ecclesiae Imago"*) he also is the "moderator, promoter, and custodian" of the liturgical life within the diocese (cf. Code of Canon Law, 835 §1). Therefore, the Church entrusts the bishop with providing that the liturgy in his diocese, which is the common and public worship of the people of God, be celebrated with dignity and with the faithful's full, active, and conscious participation. Many things are left to the judgment of the bishop, who specifies how the local church is to function. One of these areas is the building and/or remodeling of church worship spaces. With his college of consulters (the Presbyteral Council, Office of Worship, and Diocesan Committee for Liturgical Art, Architecture and Environment), the bishop provides the policies, practices, and direction for the building and/or remodeling of worship spaces or the improvements to the diocesan properties entrusted to him.

After evaluating the parish's needs (space and growth), the mission statement of the parish, a strategic plan for growth, and working with an architect to define the building project, the following are the Diocesan Regulations for Construction and Remodeling of Liturgical and/or Worship Space that are to be followed.

1. Before initiating plans for the new construction or remodeling of an existing space used for liturgy and worship, the pastor is to contact the Diocesan Committee for Liturgical Art, Architecture and Environment (DCLAAE) through the Office of Worship.
2. When planning new construction or remodeling existing space used for liturgy and worship, the pastor and architect must present to the DCLAAE the following:
  - a) Program Information
  - b) Budget Requirements
  - c) Master Site Plan
  - d) Schematic Design
3. The pastor and the project architect will schedule a meeting with the DCLAAE for review and discussion of the proposed Master Site Plan and Schematic Design. The review and discussion will be guided by all the appropriate documents of the church, including but not solely limited to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM 2002)*, the *praenotandae* to the various liturgical rites, the guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: *Built of Living Stones*, and the guidelines for the Diocese of St. Petersburg: *Building a House for Every Age*.
4. This first meeting will attempt to harmonize the proposed project with program information, church budget and church praxis.

5. Within ten working days of the first meeting, the DCLAAE will respond in writing to the pastor with a comprehensive summary of the discussion which took place. This summary will identify:
  - a) *Acceptable elements* - no change is necessary
  - b) *Objectionable elements* - require a redesign that must be adopted
  - c) *Suggested changes* - items that should be studied for possible changes or redesign, though which need not be adopted
6. The architectural elements that are required to be redesigned as noted in #5, must be incorporated into the Schematic Design and resubmitted for approval by the DCLAAE. If the pastor and/or architect object to the incorporation of the new elements of design, the pastor must make a written appeal for mediation to the bishop. Upon receiving the written request from the pastor, a second meeting of the DCLAAE/or DCLAAE representatives, with the bishop, pastor, and architect will be scheduled. The purpose of this meeting will be to mediate the concerns. The bishop will notify the pastor within ten working days of his decision which will be final.
7. The redesign of the Schematic Drawings is to be submitted to the DCLAAE for review and approval.
8. Upon the approval of the changes, the architect may proceed to the Design Development stage. When the Design Development stage is complete, the architect/pastor must submit the drawings to the DCLAAE and the bishop for their approval. The architect commences with construction documents only after the bishop and the DCLAAE sign off on the project.
9. If there are any changes required by a municipality in the permitting process, those changes must be approved by the DCLAAE and the bishop.
10. Upon completion of the building, a site review will be conducted by the DCLAAE/or DCLAAE representatives to ensure that the drawings' intent was not altered during construction. The DCLAAE is to sign off on the building before the parish can use the building for worship.