

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RICHMOND



CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION POLICY

**Including Diocesan Norms,
Design Guidelines, and Procedures for
Church Renovation and New Construction**

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Diocese of Richmond

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Office of the Bishop

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Please find on the pages that follow the revised *Construction and Renovation Policy* for our diocese. This version was developed by members of the Building and Renovation Commission (BARC), and in consultation with my other advisors, at my request. I am grateful to all who helped.

The BARC is an important arm of the diocesan central administration. I have delegated to this commission the responsibility of reviewing and making recommendations to me regarding the approval of all projects involving liturgical space and other large projects that fall within the BARC's purview as outlined herein. I encourage you to contact the BARC chairman as you begin planning your project. No parish or school has the totality of expertise necessary for the successful completion of large and complex projects. This commission, along with experts and outside professionals, will offer assistance and guidance to you along the way.

This policy clarifies when a project is subject to the BARC's review; it simplifies the approval process; it increases the amounts that parishes and schools may spend as a local decision; and it reduces the paperwork involved, thereby streamlining the process.

It is essential that we make decisions today that will benefit our communities far into the future. Also, it is incumbent that you plan within your region or Local Planning Area (LPA) when major projects are being considered.

Under Church law, I am given certain responsibilities for all diocesan properties. It is my hope that by following these policies as I have laid them out, you will find the process to be both edifying and expedient. I am grateful for your care and attention to buildings, worship, and good stewardship.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis X. Di Lorenzo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Francis X. DiLorenzo, S.T.D.
Bishop of Richmond
July 1, 2014



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RICHMOND

7800 Carousel Lane
Richmond, Virginia 23294-4201

Dear Monsignor, Father, (Principals of Regional Schools and Other Administrators):

I write to ask for your assistance. The restoration, renovation, or alteration of an existing church, school, or retreat center is always a time of excitement. We all take pride in the beauty and quality of those churches, rectories, schools, and retreat centers where we serve. Our actions help to establish a legacy.

As the steward of the entire diocese, the bishop shares these desires and concerns. He also asks that certain work undertaken in any of our churches, rectories, schools, and retreat centers should meet with his approval. For this reason, I urge you, before undertaking any restoration, renovations, or alterations, to contact the Building and Renovation Commission (BARC). By doing so, you allow the bishop to be involved in this process from the earliest stages.

The Building and Renovation Commission now includes representatives from the diocesan Offices of Worship and Finance. Please be advised that any project affecting a church or oratory, including, but not limited to, artistic design, altars, tabernacles, organs, paintings, murals involving the sanctuary or nave, stained glass, or interior color changes—regardless of cost—must be submitted to and reviewed by the BARC.

Should you have any questions in this matter, do not hesitate to contact me. Please be assured of my prayers for continued success in all your endeavors.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Robert J. Cole".

Reverend Father Robert J Cole,
Chairman, Building and Renovation Commission

July 1, 2014

1 - MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Building and Renovation Commission (BARC) is to guide the parishes and schools in the Diocese of Richmond in the construction of new facilities, the renovation of existing ones, and to advise the bishop on matters related to buildings and properties, as well as other issues that may be referred to the commission.

Roles and Relationships

- To advise the bishop of Richmond
- To serve as counsel to the vicar general in his role as the bishop's representative on the BARC (as an *ex-officio* member)
- To collaborate with the Diocesan Finance Council and other diocesan advisory bodies in matters of buildings, construction, and real estate
- To guide, assist, and advise pastors and administrators regarding juridic persons subject to the bishop of Richmond in matters related to construction and renovation of buildings and real estate

Functions

- To establish procedures relative to buildings and real estate which are published in the *Construction and Renovation Policy*
- To assist the diocese, parishes, and schools in the implementation of these policies and procedures
- To serve as a resource to the diocese, parishes, and schools in matters relating to buildings and real estate
- To review all plans for new construction and major renovations in accordance with diocesan policies
- To advise, upon request, the purchase and/or sale of all properties
- To recommend approval of final construction plans and related documents to the bishop

Limitation

The bishop will regularly accept and implement the recommendations and actions of the commission. Where he deems that other considerations, especially those of pastoral matters, make it inadvisable to accept and implement the recommendations of the commission, he shall promptly inform the commission, explaining his reasons. In all cases, the decision of the bishop shall be final.

Membership

The BARC shall be composed of persons with competencies and experiences in architecture, construction, and real estate. Members should also have knowledge of the laws and regulations, (civil and ecclesiastical), which relate to buildings and real estate. Members of the commission will be appointed at the bishop's discretion.

- The vicar general will serve as a voting, *ex-officio* member
- The chief financial officer, or his/her delegate, shall serve as non-voting, *ex-officio* member
- The director of real estate will serve at the discretion of the bishop
- The bishop may appoint a chair person at his discretion
- The chair person, with the bishop's approval, will appoint all other members
- Members of the commission serve at the pleasure of the bishop

Meetings and Quorum

The BARC will meet monthly, as needed, in a time and place mutually agreed upon by the members. Their chairman may call special meetings as the need arises. Approval of matters before the commission will require a majority vote by voting members, including the vote of the chairperson, who will vote on every matter before the commission for approval. If a quorum is not present at the time of the vote, the action will be tentative, pending final approval of a duly constituted quorum. A quorum shall consist of more than fifty percent (50%) of the then current voting members of the commission.

Special Committees

The chairman may, when appropriate, appoint special ad hoc committees to consider items in greater detail and to report to the commission on their recommendations.

2 - INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Parish Catechesis

“One of the most significant and formative experiences in the life of a parish community is the process of building or renovating a church. As part of that process, parish members are called upon to study the Church’s teaching and liturgical theology and to reflect upon their personal pieties, their individual tastes, and the parish history.”¹

Whenever a parish undertakes any building or renovation project, it is opportune that catechesis on liturgy, the sacraments, and the devotional life of the Church and the parish be undertaken as well. This will allow parishioners to understand better their own participation in worship and articulate their vision to the design team.

Dedication of a New Church

Canon law states that the first use of a new church shall be the rite of the Dedication of a Church.² If the pastor wishes any prior use, he should write to the bishop for permission, stating the time, period, and purpose of use before the dedication.³

Legal Responsibility of the Bishop of Richmond

All properties are titled in the name of the bishop of Richmond and his successors. Any proposed sale, mortgage or other disposition, or any proposed purchase or acquisition of property, requires the written approval of the bishop.

It is imperative that pastors, administrators, parish finance and pastoral councils, and agencies of the diocese recognize the legal obligations of the bishop in all of the above matters. Therefore, the steps set forth and described in this manual are mandatory and are detailed for the information and guidance of the user.

The “user” in this manual has the ability to undertake and carry the financial burden of the project. The approval process requires the establishment of a finance plan developed in consultation with the parish finance council. The diocese will provide loan funds, within established limits as approved for the project.

The director of real estate, in consultation with the diocesan chief financial officer, recommends to the bishop the purchase or sale of property.

¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship* (2001), no. 1; cf. no. 190.

² Cf. *Code of Canon Law* (1983), canon 1217; *Dedication of a Church and an Altar* (1977), Dedication of a Church, nos. 1–85.

³ In such a case, the rite of Dedication of a Church in which Mass Is Already Being Celebrated Regularly may apply: “Care should be taken that, as far as possible, Mass is not celebrated in a new church before it is dedicated [cf. Dedication of a Church, nos. 8, 15, 17]. Nevertheless, in the case of the dedication of a church where the sacred mysteries are already being celebrated regularly, the rite set out in this chapter [Dedication of a Church in which Mass Is Already Being Celebrated Regularly] must be used” (*Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church in which Mass Is Already Being Celebrated Regularly, no. 1).

Office of Worship

Liturgical norms must dictate the design of any church or oratory.⁴ Approval for liturgical space will also be given by the BARC, which also includes the director of the Office of Worship as a member of the commission. The Office of Worship will also assist the user in evaluating specific liturgical requirements, and in informing those involved in the planning process of the importance of all elements of the liturgy.

Catholic School Renovation and Construction

If the proposed project involves a school, the superintendent of Catholic Schools, or a delegate of the superintendent, shall be contacted by the school at the initiation of the project and will join the commission for review of that project. By synchronizing activities to these meeting dates, school administrators may avoid delays in their projects.

Required Procedures: Official Norm of the Diocese of Richmond

All projects undertaken within the diocese will be started with Phase One and no design or construction work should have been started prior to completing the analysis. Phase Two will initiate the process of any building or renovation project and at this time the user shall become familiar with all the necessary procedures that must be followed.

It is recognized that each individual project is different and that all steps of the process will not apply in all cases. BARC will render the final decision in this regard. There are some obvious steps which may not be necessary. For example, site selection would not apply if property is already owned. There are many smaller projects that will bypass many of the phases and steps. However, all projects must follow the steps in sequence, unless specific exceptions are approved in advance by the commission.

It is the responsibility of the pastor or administrator to submit any material relevant to a presentation (i.e., financial data, architectural drawings, supporting letters, etc.) a minimum of 10 business days in advance of the scheduled meeting date. This allows commission members to review the material prior to the presentation.

The pastor's attendance is required at Building and Renovation Commission meetings for presentations.

Stewardship: Care of Properties and Capital Reserves

Stewardship is an essential element of parish life. Maintaining facilities in good condition indicates that parish leaders are exercising good stewardship. However, maintaining facilities in good condition only accomplishes part of the goal. It is also important to establish adequate reserves for future maintenance and repair projects. When the inevitable breakdown occurs, funds should be available immediately to address the problem without having to make a special appeal to the faithful and/or without incurring debt. As a general guide, parishes should have a capital reserve fund equal to five percent of the replacement cost⁵ of the current buildings. For newer buildings, this level should be more than adequate; for older buildings, the capital reserve fund should be based upon a current capital budget.

⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1216.

⁵ The building's replacement cost may be obtained by contacting the Office of Risk Management.

Capital Budget and Funding Plan

All parishes and schools should have a current assessment of the condition of their facilities and equipment. This may be accomplished by contracting with a qualified engineering and/or construction professional if parishioners and school members lack expertise. As a result of this study, parishes and schools should have a list of necessary repair and maintenance projects, their associated projected costs, and the timeframe for when the work should be completed. This information constitutes the foundation of the capital budget.

A capital budget will assist in scheduling projects so that they may be handled in an orderly fashion. When projects are rushed, this can lead to an increase in cost and a decrease in quality, not to mention the inefficient use of staff time.

Capital projects are non-routine and financially material in nature. They add value and extend the useful life of the buildings and equipment. These projects should be funded from the capital reserves and not the operating budget.

To complete the capital budget, the sources of funds must be identified. Potential sources include:

1. Annual transfer from the operating budget
2. A parish capital campaign
3. Memorials, gifts, and bequests
4. Loans

OVERVIEW OF BUILDING AND RENOVATION GUIDELINES

LIMITS OF AUTHORITY (LOA)

Level	Approval From	Size of Project
Level I ^{6,7} Small Projects	The pastor or administrator has discretion over small projects	\$10,000 - Small parishes \$25,000 - Large parishes/schools
Level II ^{8,9} Medium Projects (CT1545)	A review and recommendation from diocesan staff is required in order to proceed	Up to \$250,000
Level III (CT1545)	Review and approval by BARC	Over \$250,000 and up to \$1 million
Level IV ¹⁰ (CT1545)	Approval from the bishop after hearing from the BARC, the Diocesan Finance Council, and the College of Consultors for projects over \$1 million. For projects that require borrowing more than \$250,000, the Bishop must obtain the consent of the Diocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors	Over \$1 million and / or borrow more than \$250,000
Level V	Requires the consent of the Holy See (Submitted to the Holy See by the bishop after receiving consents per Level IV)	Borrow over \$3,500,000

POLICY ON BORROWING

The Diocese of Richmond will authorize and provide a guarantee for a loan for a project through the diocesan line of credit within the following parameters:

- Parishes may borrow up to two-times the parish’s ordinary income
- Schools may borrow up to two-times the school’s income, excluding grants and other extraordinary income such as bequests and capital campaigns, gains/losses on investments, and pass-through income
- The diocese will loan up to one-third of the cost of the project
- Loans must be amortized over a period not to exceed 15 years

If requested by the pastor or administrator, the bishop of Richmond may authorize exceptions to the above policies after being advised by the Diocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors.

⁶ Small parishes are those whose ordinary income is less than \$250,000 per year.

⁷ However, Form CT1545 must be submitted for any project of a liturgical nature.

⁸ For projects that involve changes to the sanctuary or are liturgical in nature, the chairman of the BARC may move them to Level III at his discretion.

⁹ The chairman of the BARC refers all Level II projects to the director of real estate. All projects are reviewed with the director of Finance. Other diocesan staff may be consulted prior to providing their recommendation to the proper administrator to proceed, including the superintendent of Catholic Schools and the director of the Office of Worship.

¹⁰ Only the bishop may sign a contract for services that exceed \$1 million.

3 - PROCEDURES FOR CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION

Overview of the Review and Approval Process

Pastoral Planning and Local Needs Analysis		
Phase	Description	Primary Action
One	Ongoing Pastoral Planning	Ongoing ordinary administration
Two	Preliminary Review	Submit CT1545 to BARC
Three	Building/Space Needs Analysis	Establish building committee and complete Space Use and Needs Assessment
Project Feasibility, Design, and Construction		
Phase	Description	Primary Action
Four	Determining Feasibility of Project	See Steps 1–3
Four - Step 1	Financial Feasibility	Prepare project budget
Four - Step 2	Demographic Feasibility	Prepare analysis of demographic trends
Four - Step 3	Architectural Schematic Design	Hire architect to prepare schematic design
Five	Organizing a Capital Campaign	Consult with Office of Development
Six	Validating Initial Design and Cost Estimates	Report to BARC
Seven	Preparation for Implementation/Construction	Ready to Go!

When does BARC review a project?

The pastor or administrator may be requested to meet with BARC at various times during the planning and design phases of the project. The process for BARC’s review and approval of the project is discussed and established during Phase Two, Preliminary Review, for Level III projects (i.e., those projects over \$250,000 or those projects involving liturgical space). Generally, BARC will also review a project at the completion of Phases Three, Four, and Seven. Depending upon the complexity, size, and scope of the project, any of these reviews may be bypassed or additional meetings may be requested.

PHASE ONE: ONGOING PASTORAL PLANNING

1. The pastor, in concert with the parish pastoral council, is to establish a vision in the four areas of parish life described in *We Walk by Faith* (Word, Worship, Community, and Service), as a necessary precondition to any consideration of major construction. This vision is to be established in consultation with the parish at large, and is to be shared with all parishioners once finalized.

2. Every parish, as a normal, routine part of ordinary administration, and prior to consideration of any building or major renovation effort, must gather the following information:

- Parish financial assets;
- Sources of income;
- Projections for future growth;
- Maintenance and replacement of major capital outlay;
- Analysis and assessment of major liability (short- and long-term);
- Schedule for the payment of any existing debt; and
- Present and projected staffing needs.

PHASE TWO: PRELIMINARY REVIEW

1. The pastor, together with the parish pastoral and finance councils, reviews the need for new, additional, or improved space (including restoration or renovation using insurance proceeds). Members of the BARC are available for consultation during this preliminary exploration.

2. If the value of the project falls within the LOA Level II or higher, the pastor informs the chairman of the BARC, using Form CT1545, that the parish wishes to embark on a process to study the question of building, expanding, or renovating. Form CT1545 is required for any project involving liturgical space, regardless of its scope or size.

3. For Level II projects, the BARC chairman shall forward all information to the director of real estate for review by diocesan staff. After such review, the pastor or administrator will be provided with a recommendation as follows:

- To proceed; to proceed with changes; or to perform additional research, planning, or analysis before proceeding.

4. For Level III projects, the BARC chairman, at his discretion, convenes the pastor and parish representatives, along with diocesan staff including the Offices of Finance, Real Estate, Worship, and if applicable, Education, at the regularly scheduled meetings to:

- Hear the preliminary ideas of the parish;
- Review diocesan policies and guidelines for major construction;
- Conduct an initial assessment of whether or not it is advisable to pursue the parish's plan in light of parish resources, regional needs and the long-range plans of the diocese; and
- Identify an agreeable scope for the project, including an acceptable range of cost.

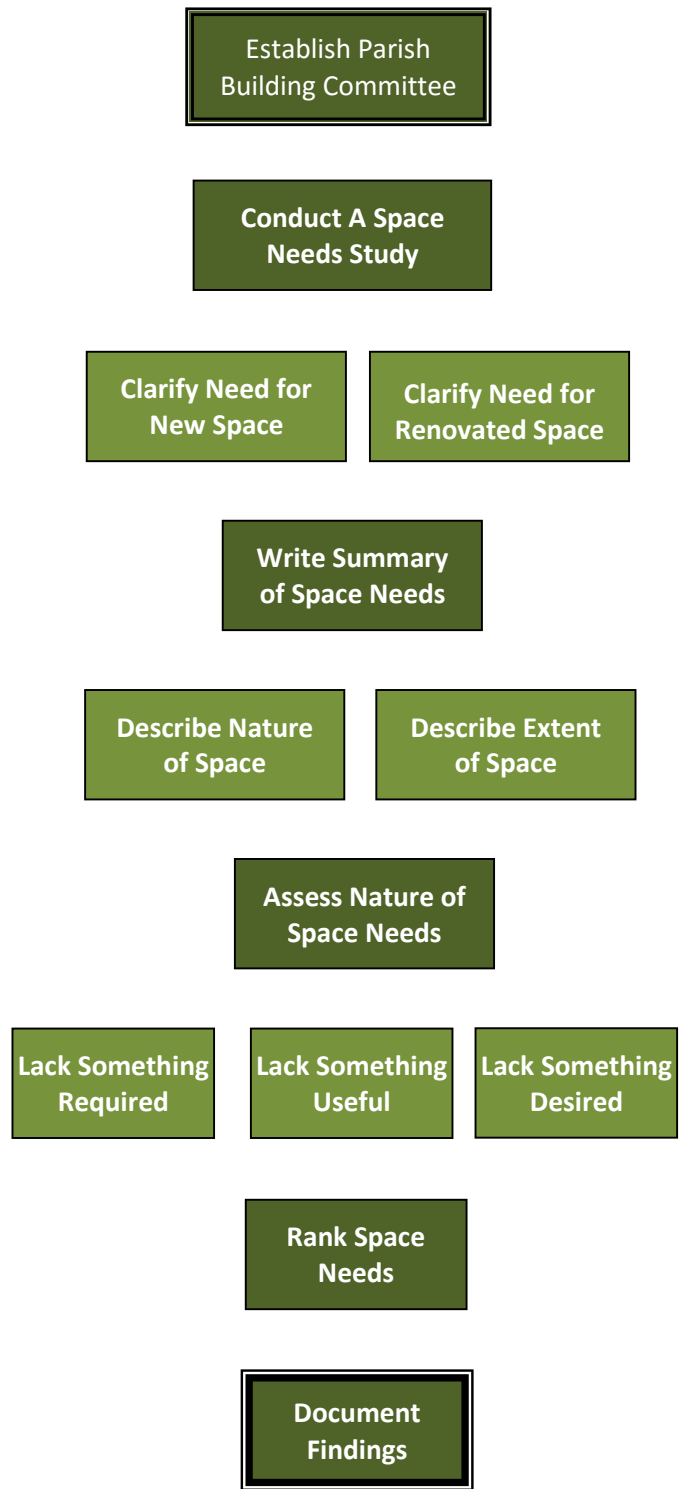
5. If the recommendation is made that the parish pursue its study, the bishop and vicar general are informed of the decision.

6. A sample Certificate of Compliance with Diocesan Procedures is attached in *Section 9 – Diocesan Forms*. The purpose of this certificate is to document that all of the principal parties involved in a parish construction project are aware of, and agree to, follow the process set forth in this manual. This form may need to be resubmitted, since additional signatures are acquired as the project progresses. After all signatures are gathered, the certificates should be forwarded to the director of real estate.

Note: A parish or school is not permitted to solicit funds, initiate a special collection, or conduct a capital campaign for a capital expenditure prior to submitting the project to BARC for review.

**PHASE THREE:
BUILDING/SPACE NEEDS STUDY**

1. The parish establishes a building committee comprised of parishioners. Members of the building committee must not be financially engaged in any aspect of the building or renovation project. Accordingly, each member must complete a conflict-of-interest form found in *Section 9 – Diocesan Forms*.
2. The parish building committee oversees a Space Use and Needs Assessment using the form found in *Section 9 – Diocesan Forms*. This study typically consists of surveying all parish groups, organizations, and ministries to determine what building needs they perceive in the parish. This includes clarifying the groups’ space needs, assessing how existing space can be better utilized, suggesting what space could be renovated to better serve the parish, and examining what new kind of space is desired.
3. The parish building committee writes a summary of its findings, including the nature and extent of the existing space.
4. The parish building committee assesses the space needs of the parish: What kind of space is lacking that may be hindering the community’s ability to function as parish (e.g., a larger church)? What new or renovated space would be useful to the parish? What space does the parish desire but is not essential at this time?
5. Once identified, the parish building committee ranks the space needs in order of importance: the new or renovated spaces that are essential, then the spaces that would be useful, and finally the space that the parish desires.
6. The parish building committee submits the results of the Space Needs Assessment to the pastor. He, in turn, forwards it to BARC (along with a Form CT1545 if parish expenditure limits are exceeded). Depending upon the scope of the parish’s needs, the BARC chairman, at his sole discretion, may require a formal presentation to BARC.



Note: If it is determined that one of the parish’s needs is for a or renovated church, the parish building committee should review *Sections 5 and 6* of this manual.

PHASE FOUR: DETERMINING FEASIBILITY OF PROJECT:

Step 1: Financial Feasibility

1. The parish building committee, working with the parish finance council, conducts a financial analysis of the project. This analysis begins with a review of internal factors. Some important questions to be asked at this time include: What does the parish estimate that it will receive from a capital campaign? What size of a loan can the parish afford to take based upon its ability to pay back in a reasonable time? What are the estimated operating and maintenance costs of the new facility?

2. The parish building committee should determine the current cost ranges for new construction or renovation (i.e., dollars per square foot). The director of real estate or other outside professionals may need to be consulted to assist with developing these estimates. Given the current rate of inflation, how much might these costs increase before construction begins? The committee should document these findings as well.

3. The parish building committee, in collaboration with the parish finance council, establishes a budget range for the project. First, the committee formulates an optimistic budget scenario (i.e., if costs are low, if the parish exceeds its capital campaign goal etc.). Second, the committee formulates a pessimistic budget scenario (i.e., if costs are high, if the parish fails to meet its capital campaign goal, etc.). Third, the parish building committee formulates what is the most likely budget scenario (i.e., if market conditions are stable, if the parish meets its capital campaign goal etc.). Each budget scenario should include a 10-percent contingency for cost overruns.

4. The results of the financial feasibility study are submitted to the pastor, who forwards a copy to the BARC chairman.

Note: In cases of a LOA Level IV project, the bishop must approve the project after being advised by the Diocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors.

**PHASE FOUR:
DETERMINING FEASIBILITY OF
PROJECT:**

Step 2: Demographic Feasibility

1. The parish building committee analyzes parish demographics by first reviewing trends. This examination includes the following statistics: total parish population; changes to the population over the last five, 10 or 15 years; the ratio of Baptisms to funerals; and the results of the October Mass count for the last several years.
2. The parish building committee then reviews and records general population trends. This data may be gleaned from federal census counts, the recent federal census estimates, and regional projections. (Census data is available through the local library or through federal and state government websites such as www.census.gov.)
3. The parish building committee projects future demographics, identifying the most likely future of the parish, be that growth, decline, or stability. For example, if the parish has had a recent increase in Baptisms, it can project an increase in school and/or enrollments in religious education. Parish demographics and census data should be used in determining these projections.
4. Once a future picture of the parish is identified, the scope of the project should be “sized” to these population projections.
5. These findings are submitted to the pastor, who forwards them to the BARC chairman.

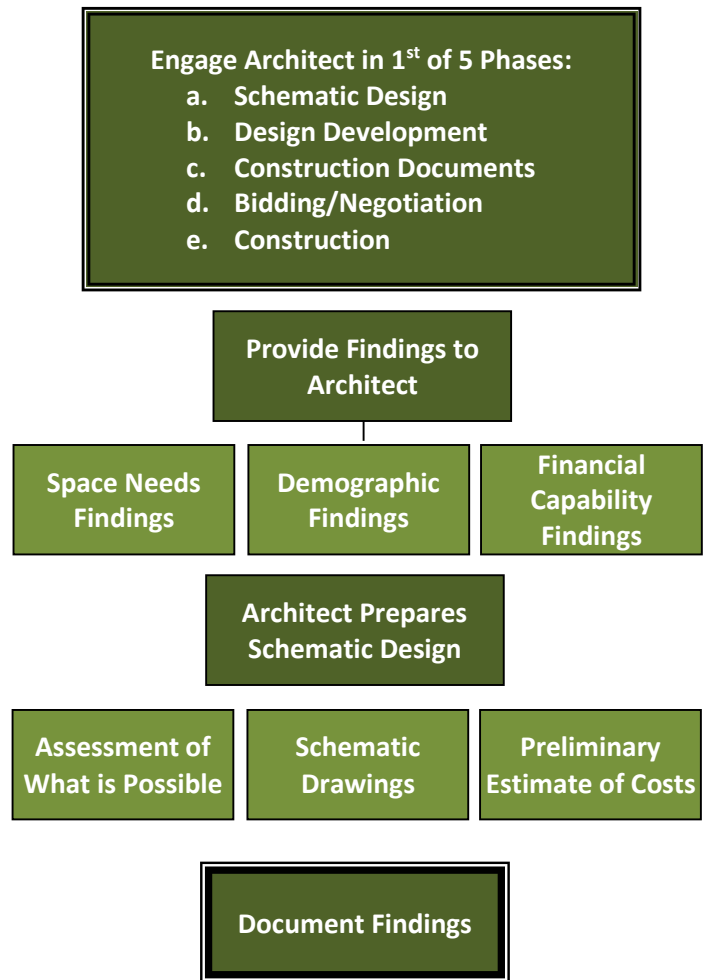


**PHASE FOUR:
DETERMINING FEASIBILITY OF
PROJECT:**

Step 3: Architectural Schematic Design

1. Only qualified architects, who possess specific and relevant experience for the type of work being planned, should be selected. Depending upon the scope of the work, the BARC will provide a list of qualifications for the project and, if the scope of the project warrants, recommend using AIA B305-1993, the Architect’s Qualification Statement, as a part of a request for proposal.
2. Further, the Office of Risk Management must review all contracts for service. If the cost of the project exceeds Level I, a Form CT1545, with the appropriate parish finance council signatures, must accompany the request submitted to BARC prior to hiring the architect.
3. Typically, there are five phases to architectural services. The phases are: (1) schematic design, (2) design development, (3) construction documents, (4) bidding/negotiation, and (5) construction. At this stage, the architect is only being engaged for the schematic-design phase.
4. The parish should submit its space needs, demographics, and financial capability findings to the architect.
5. The architect assesses what is possible for the project, including a schematic of what the project might look like. This schematic may include a narrative scope and an outline of specifications. The architect should also include preliminary cost estimates. These costs may or may not require the services of an estimator by separate contract.
6. The results of the architectural study are submitted to the BARC chairman.

Note: Once all **Phase Four – Determining Feasibility of Project** steps are completed, the BARC chairman will invite the pastor or administrator to review the project at the commission’s next scheduled meeting.



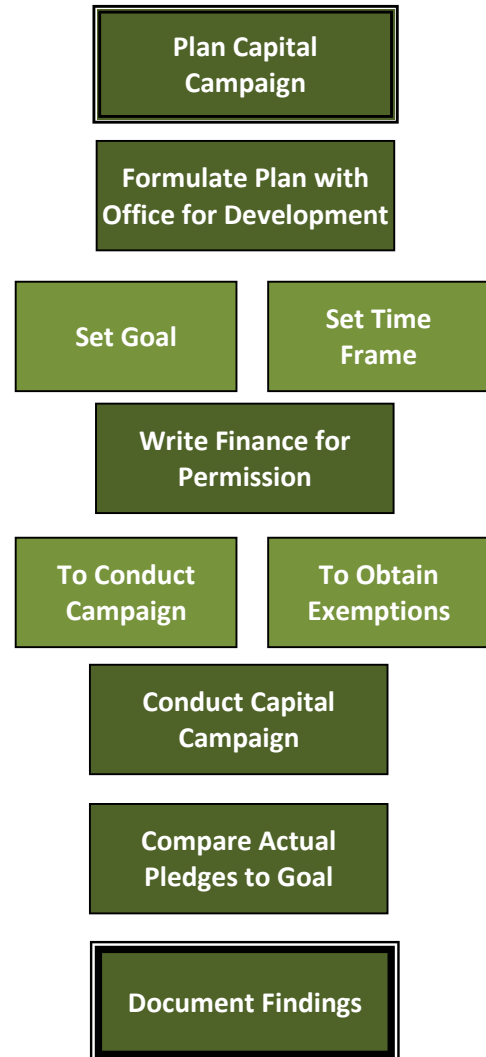
PHASE FIVE: ORGANIZING A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

1. The parish, working with the Office of Development, formulates a capital campaign for the building project. First, the parish determines a monetary goal based upon the cost of building project and the parish's assessment of its financial capabilities. Next, a timeframe for the campaign is set: When is the best time of year for the campaign to begin? How long should the campaign run? Should there be phases of the campaign?

2. Once the campaign is formulated, the pastor must contact the Office of Finance in writing, requesting permission to launch the campaign and to receive exemption from Cathedraticum and Parish Share assessments.

3. Upon receiving permission from the Office of Finance, the parish conducts its capital campaign. During the course of the campaign, the parish should compare actual pledges to the campaign goal.

4. The pastor submits the results of the campaign to the BARC chairman.



PHASE SIX: VALIDATING INITIAL DESIGN AND COST ESTIMATES

1. The parish building committee works with the architect to assess project risk prior to moving to Design Development. The following questions should be answered at the time:

- **What are the site conditions?** Site conditions include such things as: whether or not a building presently exists on the property where the parish wants to build; whether the ground sloped or level; and whether there is drainage or wetlands on the property.

- **What is the scope of work to be completed?** Does a building have to be torn down before new construction can begin? How much excavation and/or grading must be done?

- **How many construction variables are there?** Construction variables might include whether or not utility lines are running through the property; access for construction vehicles; existence of any hazardous materials needing removal, such as asbestos or industrial waste; and the local building codes.

- **What is the financial wherewithal of the parish?** Based upon the financial feasibility study, what work can the parish feasibly afford to undertake?

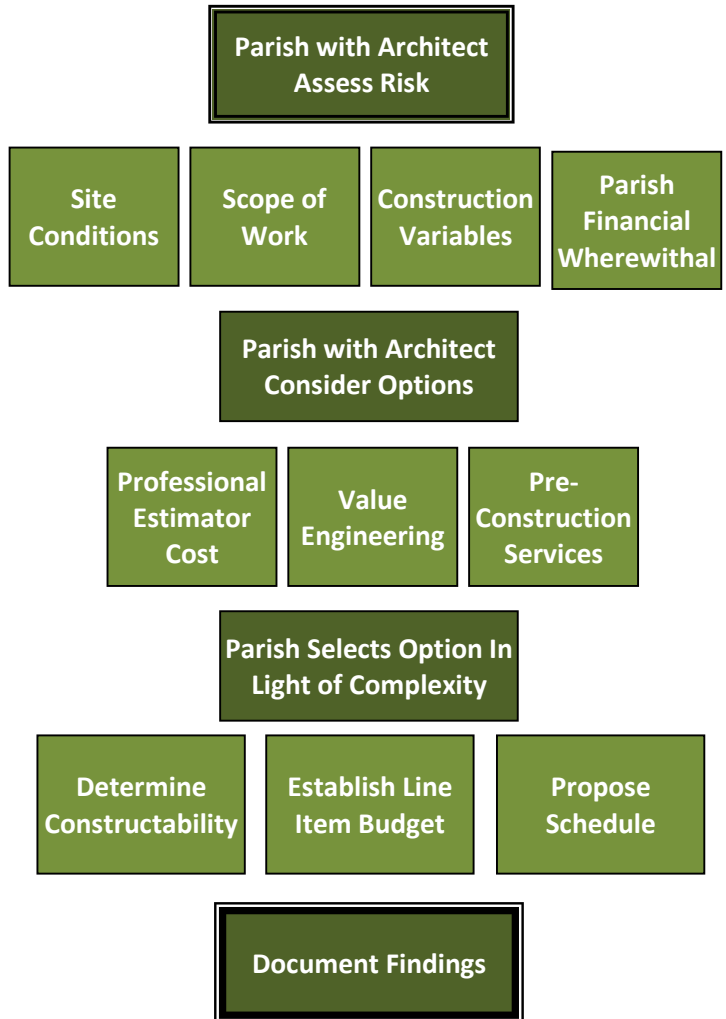
- **What is the impact on parish daily operations, such as the loss of space during construction, and increased building operating and maintenance cost as a result of the project?**

2. The parish building committee and architect consider options for hiring a professional cost estimator, undertaking value engineering and utilizing pre-construction services.

3. After assessing project risk and options, the parish building committee selects its building option in light of the complexity of the project.

4. The parish building committee tabulates the initial design and cost estimates; determines constructability; establishes a line-item budget; and proposes a schedule for the length of construction.

5. The parish building committee submits these findings to the pastor, who forwards them to the BARC chairman.



PHASE SEVEN: PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Upon the recommendation for approval from BARC and/or the bishop, the pastor is granted written approval to proceed with preparing detailed plans, specifications, and final cost estimates within the recommended budget.

Note: In the case of LOA Level IV projects, authorization to proceed, from the bishop, is required before detailed design can begin.

2. Having decided to move forward with detailed design, the parish building committee and the architect execute an architectural services agreement. The Office of Finance and the Office of Risk Management review the agreement to ensure that it clearly establishes the scope of the architect's duties, as well as his or her rate of compensation.

Note: The diocese may recommend or, under certain circumstances require, that the parish building committee engage a construction manager to assist in the design and construction phases of the project.

3. When the detailed design is completed, the parish building committee and the pastor review the design and financial plan with BARC. BARC provides periodic updates to the bishop.

4. If the parish has chosen the competitive-bid method of contractor selection, the parish building committee, working with architect, proceeds to select a contractor.

5. Once the detailed plans and cost estimates have been finalized, and once the contractor has been identified, the parish submits this information to BARC for a final review, to ensure that the designs are consistent with those approved to date.

6. Actual construction can begin once the appropriate construction documents have been fully executed.

Note: Change orders or changes to the project that exceed ten percent of the cost of the project require BARC review prior to authorizing the work.

4 - GENERAL POLICIES FOR EVALUATION

FOR CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION PROJECTS

These General Policies clarify and supplement the *Construction and Renovation Policy*, and are intended to provide summary information to the parish building committee and its architect.

1. The following is a list of elements that should be considered for church building projects in the Dioceses of Richmond:

1. Site

- In general, parking lots should not be placed toward the front of the present or future church. The site should generally have “curb appeal.”
- The number and placement of handicapped parking spaces should be sufficient and convenient to entrances, and should meet current code and zoning requirements. The Diocese of Richmond has determined that a realistic ratio is one parking space per two-and-a-half seats (versus the municipal one-to-four ratio). The diocese encourages parishes to examine the capacity and the location of their parking facilities in the early planning phase.
- Where possible, school pedestrian crossings should not be located across the through-path of the main driveway.
- Permanent fencing at on-site retention ponds: All new projects on property with storm-water retention ponds will be required to install a permanent fence. The fence must be a minimum of six feet in height and have a locking gate. The fence must be located 20 feet outside the crest of the brim.
- Cell phone tower: Parishes must receive approval from the bishop prior to leasing land to cell phone companies for erecting a communications tower.
- The location of dumpsters, and the route to them from buildings, should be carefully considered.

2. Church Buildings

- Individual parish demographic studies shall determine the number of seats, up to a maximum of 1,200, unless the bishop grants prior approval. At the first presentation of a new church to the BARC, the presenters shall explain their church’s capacity to expand, in a practical manner, in the future.
- The platform (i.e., sanctuary) on which the altar, ambo, and priest celebrant’s chair are situated should be sized in proportion to the church, and should comply with the ADA.
- Attention should be paid to the placement of windows in order to reduce the possibility of sunlight shining directly into people’s eyes during Mass or backlighting the celebrant.

- The front doors of the church, the entrance of the nave, and the space in front of the sanctuary should be sufficient to accommodate a catafalque and casket.
- The architect and acoustical engineer shall provide a design that minimizes noise in the nave and other sensitive spaces owing to HVAC equipment. Issues to consider are the locations of both the supply and return grilles, the velocity and volume of air in the ductwork, the location, and the mounting details of the equipment.
- If a pipe organ is not included in the proposed design for a major renovation or for a new church, consideration should be given to having space for one at a later date.¹¹
- Parishes are encouraged to use the highest quality materials in any new building. Life-cycle cost factors and aesthetics should help set material selection priorities.

3. Glass-View Panels in Doors

- All new construction shall include glass-view panels in doors used for offices, and in other rooms used by children (classrooms, daycare rooms, nursery rooms, etc.) An exception may be made for a room reserved for nursing mothers etc.

4. Separate Construction Contracts for One Project

- The separation of a single project into different contracts (i.e., site, contract, building contract, etc.) shall be discouraged, and a single general contractor should be responsible for the entire project. However, multiple subcontractors may be used if it can be clearly shown that executing the project under multiple contracts will save money, and if appropriate measures are in place to coordinate the work and protect the owner from disputes among the various contractors.

5. Elevator

- All buildings with two or more floors that are designed after September 2009 shall have an elevator regardless of any Code interpretation.

6. Prefinished Metal Siding:

- Prefinished metal siding, which is standard for pre-engineered metal building packages, is prohibited. However, pre-engineered steel structural systems or metal products may be used.

7. Cement-Based Siding

- A cement-based siding is strongly recommended for use in new buildings, rather than a vinyl or aluminum siding.

8. Documents Required Per Phase

- Master Plan: proposed new site plan plus any older master plans that were presented in the past. Also included shall be any permitting, code issues, and sub-soil report.

¹¹ Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), no. 120.

- Schematics: floor plans, exterior elevations, building section, wall section for more complicated buildings, and roof plan for more complicated buildings.
- Design Development: same as schematics but with greater detail; outline specifications, cost estimates, sub-soil report, preliminary interior and exterior finish schedules, preliminary site utility plans, and preliminary structural and HVAC plans.
- The BARC must receive 11”x17” drawings of any presentation at least 10 days before the meeting.

The BARC does not recommend the design-build method of project delivery, whereby the contractors—and not the parish—employ the architect.

5 - Guidelines Concerning the Facade and Threshold

COMMENTARY

Introduction

The Church Building Is an Image of the Church and of Christ

1. While it is fundamentally true that the church building receives its dignity and worth—and hence merits reverence and honor—because it is a house of God, it is likewise true that its dignity comes from the fact that it is the place in which his chosen people assemble to celebrate the mysteries of faith. Because the gathered members of God’s Church form the Body of his Son, Jesus Christ, the building that houses this Body must manifest a similar magnificence to the Son of God. The church building must be a sacramental sign of the Church—the Body of Christ—gathered in that place and existing eternally in heaven. Hence, at the beginning of the construction of a church, the Rite of Laying the Foundation Stone explains that, “The structure built of stone will be a visible sign of the living Church, God’s building, which is formed of the people themselves.”¹² Similarly, at the church’s dedication, the rite recalls that, “Because the church is a visible building, it stands as a special sign of the pilgrim Church on earth and reflects the Church dwelling in heaven.”¹³
2. The body of Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, is the “true and perfect temple [cf. John 2:21] of the New Covenant.”¹⁴ His people, incorporated into his Body through the sacrament of Baptism, are the living stones (cf. 1 Peter 2:5) of this temple of God.¹⁵ The visible church building, furthermore, is a sign of this temple: of the living stones that make up the Body of Christ and, ultimately, of Jesus Christ himself.

¹² *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Rite of Laying the Foundation Stone or Beginning Work on the Building of a Church, no. 1.

¹³ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 2.

¹⁴ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 1.

¹⁵ Cf. *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 1.

Concerning the Facade

3. *The external appearance of the church building must seek to convey that it is “the dwelling of God with men reconciled and united in Christ.”*¹⁶
4. The external appearance of the church building is significant. The church building, no less than any other element of our earthly liturgy, is sacramental: that is, through created things, the invisible power and presence of God is made present. In the case of the sacred building, that which is encountered—the facade, the brick or stone, the windows, the steeple, the ringing bells—signifies and, in some way, makes present the Church itself, the Mystical Body of Christ. The liturgical calendar of the Church recognizes this same truth: when a feast of the Lord falls on a Sunday in Ordinary Time, it takes precedence over the Sunday celebration, while other feasts do not.¹⁷ Consequently, when the Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran falls on a Sunday, its celebration has priority over that particular Sunday, for it is a feast of the Lord. Similarly, the anniversary of the dedication of a parish church is a proper solemnity; in many cases it can be transferred to a Sunday.¹⁸ While this may at first seem strange, it expresses the Church’s theology about churches: that they are sacramental signs—and hence, in some way, the reality—of Christ.
5. Church buildings, by the celebration of the rite of dedication that consecrates and calls down the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, become *Christian*, that is, sacred. They, like people, receive an initiation: at the beginning of the rite, their walls are “baptized,” sprinkled with water; these same walls are then “confirmed,” anointed with Sacred Chrism; finally, the first Eucharist is celebrated at the altar, where for the first time it “receives the body of Christ.”¹⁹ Henceforth, churches, like the Christians within them, are set apart; they are sacred signs and symbols of Christ himself.
6. Like Christians, the church building carries on the duties of Christ: those of prophet, priest and king. As *prophet*, this “sermon in stones” proclaims the incarnate Christ who came to reconcile the world to the Father. When passing by a church, the sacramental building itself calls God to our minds,²⁰ as well as our duty to turn back to him. (Many, in fact, sign themselves with the Cross as they pass a church). As an image of Christ the *priest*, the church is a sign of the Sacrifice Christ offered to the Father, for the center of the church (and the center of the Church) is the altar of the Paschal sacrifice. As the Prayer of Dedication asks God, “Here may your children, gathered around your altar, celebrate the memorial of the Paschal Lamb.”²¹ It is also a symbol of the sacrifices made by those who contributed to the construction of the building. Finally, like Christ the King, the church’s *kingly* dimension signifies the Church’s service to the modern world. The Prayer and Dedication for the church continues: “Here may the poor find justice, the

¹⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (2000), no. 1180.

¹⁷ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar* (1969), no. 5.

¹⁸ Cf. *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, Table of Liturgical Days, no. 4c.

¹⁹ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 17.

²⁰ Cf. Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 122.

²¹ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 62.

victims of oppression, freedom.”²² As many pastors can attest, the rectory doorbell rings often: for when one is in need) of food, clothing, spiritual or physical assistance, or other necessities—the church building serves as a beacon of hope and goodwill to the hungry, thirsty, naked, and needy (cf. Matthew 25:31–46). The church building, then, is a sign of Christ, the very love of God made incarnate among us.

Concerning the Threshold

7. *The visibility and beauty of the church’s entrance must reveal the importance of entering into communion with Christ and his members.*
8. “To enter into the house of God, we must cross a *threshold*, which symbolizes passing from the world wounded by sin to the world of new Life to which all men are called. The visible church is a symbol of the Father’s house toward which the people of God are journeying and where the Father ‘will wipe every tear from their eyes [cf. Revelation 21:4].’”²³ The return to the heavenly homeland to which we are called follows, as Christ tells us, the narrow way, through the narrow gate (cf. Matthew 7:13–14); it is a path that humanity could not follow before Christ opened it by his Paschal Mystery, and today it is a path we cannot follow without his grace.
9. If we are to return to God, we are only able to do so in his Son, Jesus Christ, and his Body, which is the Church. The Fathers of the Church recognized this truth in the Old Testament signs. The Ark of Noah, for example, was taken by many to be a sign of the Church: while the deluge destroyed the world of sin outside of it, the Ark carried those within to safety where a new beginning was made in a world cleansed of evil (cf. Genesis 6–8). The instruction that God gave to Moses and Aaron concerning the first Passover (cf. Exodus 12), that the meal was to be eaten in the house and that no one was to go outdoors until morning, pointed to the truth that partaking of the true Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ, could only take place within the house of the Church, and that outside of it was death and destruction. If salvation comes from within the Church, which is Christ’s Body, then the entrance to that safe-haven must show this truth to those who seek it.
10. Christ often spoke of himself as a gate or door (cf. John 10:1–10). At the blessing of a new entrance for a church, we recall that Christ the Good Shepherd “is the door though which those who follow him enter and are safe, go in and go out, and find pasture.”²⁴
11. When preparing to build or renovate a church, therefore, great care is to be taken in constructing an entrance that speaks of welcome into Christ and our communion with him, whom we follow along that narrow road on our pilgrimage back to the Father’s house.

²² *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 62.

²³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1186.

²⁴ Cf. *Book of Blessings* (1989), no. 1229.

Holy Week and the Sacred Paschal Triduum

12. Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion marks the final movement of the Lenten season toward the Triduum. The liturgy of Palm Sunday requires space for a procession that recalls Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem (cf. Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–39; John 12:12–15). For the cathedral church, the additional consideration of elements of the stationary (i.e., pontifical) liturgies should be part of the planning. The Paschal Triduum is the heart of the liturgical year.²⁵ When designing the church, the rites of the Triduum should be reviewed to ensure that planning will provide space for the key elements of the Triduum: an area for the washing of the feet and a location for the Altar of Reposition after the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday; space for the Adoration of the Holy Cross at the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord on Good Friday; and a site for the Blessing of the Fire and the Lighting of the Paschal Candle, along with space for the catechumens to be baptized and for candidates for admission to full communion to stand, if they are admitted at the Easter Vigil in the Holy Night.

The Altar of Repose

13. Following the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, the Blessed Sacrament is carried to a place of reservation. If the Blessed Sacrament is ordinarily reserved in a chapel separated from the central part of the church, the place of repose and adoration will be there. If there is no reservation chapel, then a space for reposition with a tabernacle should be prepared for the occasion.²⁶

The Adoration of the Holy Cross on Good Friday

14. The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord on Good Friday has its particular spatial requirements. After the proclamation of the Passion and the Solemn Intercessions, the entire assembly rises to adore the cross or crucifix. The cross used for the adoration preferably should be of sufficient size to be held easily, be carried in procession, and be adored.²⁷ After the adoration, the cross remains in the sanctuary.²⁸

The Blessing of the Fire at the Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

15. In some circumstances, parishes may be able to create a permanent place for lighting the Easter fire. In others, the rite may be conducted in the gathering area immediately outside the church. While safety is always an important consideration, a flame to “dispel the

²⁵ Cf. *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, no. 18.

²⁶ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts, *Paschale sollemnitatis* (1988), no. 48.

²⁷ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Paschale sollemnitatis* (1988), nos. 68–69; *Roman Missal*, Friday of the Passion of the Lord [Good Friday], no. 19.

²⁸ Cf. *Roman Missal*, Friday of the Passion of the Lord [Good Friday], no. 21.

darkness and light up the night”²⁹ is needed to achieve the full symbolism of the fire. In climates and circumstances where weather precludes lighting the fire outdoors, a more limited fire can be enkindled indoors with the proper accommodations for ventilation, for heat and smoke detectors, for local fire regulations, and for surrounding the space with non-combustible materials.³⁰

The Area Surrounding the Church Building

16. When constructed and maintained well, the outside of a church can proclaim the Gospel to the city or town in which it is located. Even before the members of the worshipping community enter through the doors of the building, the external environment, with its landscaping, artwork, and lighting, can contribute to a gracious approach to the place of worship. Creative landscaping that separates the entrance to the church from the parking area as well as well-placed religious art can facilitate the spiritual transition as people move to a sense of communal worship. Appropriate signage can provide information and can offer hospitality and an invitation to enter the space for worship. Walkways with well-designed patterns of stone or other materials subtly contribute to the awareness that believers are about to enter holy ground. When choosing a site for a church, consideration should be given to the possibility of landscaped setback so that the church building is not completely surrounded by the parking lot.

It is an ancient practice to summon the Christian people to the liturgical assembly or to alert them to important happenings in the local community by means of bells. The peal of bells, then, is an expression of the sentiments of the People of God as they rejoice or grieve, offer thanks or petition, gather together and show outwardly the mystery of their oneness in Christ.³¹

²⁹ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Paschale sollemnitatis* (1988), no. 82.

³⁰ Cf. *Roman Missal*, The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night, no. 13.

³¹ *Book of Blessings*, no. 1305.

6 - Guidelines for the Renovation of Existing Churches or Construction of New Churches

This chapter contains the guidelines for the renovation of existing churches and the construction of new churches in the Diocese of Richmond. The Diocesan Liturgical Commission (DLC) and the Building and Renovation Commission (BARC) are available to offer guidance and support throughout the renovation or construction process. Furthermore, to help curb costs, both commissions **strongly encourage** parish communities to contact the BARC to assist with preliminary planning before they hire an architectural firm.

These guidelines refer to many Church documents regarding the building and renovation of churches. It is important to note that not all documents carry the same weight. Thus, for example, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* is binding and normative for the entire Church; by contrast, *Built of Living Stones*, issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, contains recommendations, not requirements. In the Diocese of Richmond, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* must be followed; *Built of Living Stones* should be taken into consideration.

In this regard, *Built of Living Stones* itself states that,

While the suggestions and guidelines within the documents have been carefully prepared, they are not exhaustive of the subject matter. They are intended to serve as the basis for decision making at the local level and can be the foundation for the development of diocesan guidelines and legislation governing liturgical art and architecture.³²

Concerning the Church Building

The *Dedication of a Church and an Altar* describes the *church* as “the building in which the Christian community gathers to hear the word of God, to pray together, to receive the sacraments, and to celebrate the Eucharist.”³³ The church building—including the eternal facade—should express that a church is “the dwelling place of God” among those “reconciled and united in Christ.”³⁴ Furthermore, the entrance to the church should indicate that one is entering into communion with Christ and his Body.

The principles that should guide parishes in renovating or building churches today are drawn from Vatican Council II, as well as “documents that implemented its decrees.”³⁵ Such documents include the *Code of Canon Law*, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, and the various

³² *Built of Living Stones*, no. 3.

³³ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 1; cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 16.

³⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1180; cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 167

³⁵ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 27.

ritual books for the sacraments and other sacred rites. *Built of Living Stones* lists five principles to guide parish communities:

- (1) The church building is designed in harmony with Church laws and serves the needs of the liturgy.³⁶
- (2) The church building fosters participation in the liturgy.³⁷
- (3) The design of the church building reflects the various roles of the participants.³⁸
- (4) The church building respects the culture of every time and space.³⁹
- (5) The church building should be beautiful.⁴⁰

Regarding this last principle, *Built of Living Stones* stresses that the Church is not limited to the forms of the past, but is open to “embrace new forms that nonetheless have grown organically from her rich heritage of artistic expression.”⁴¹ Furthermore, according to the *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, “The very nature of a church demands that it be suited to sacred celebrations, dignified, evincing a noble beauty, not mere costly display, and it should stand as a sign and symbol of heavenly realities.”⁴²

Concerning the Narthex or Gathering Space

Built of Living Stones explains the purpose of the narthex or gathering space as follows:

The narthex is a place of welcome—a threshold space between the congregation’s space and the outside environment. In the early days of the Church, it was a “waiting area” for catechumens and penitents. Today it serves as gathering space as well as the entrance and exit to the building. 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 that many important liturgical moments occur: men and women participate in the Rite of Becoming a Catechumen as they move towards later, full initiation into the Church; parents, godparents, and infants are greeted for the celebration of baptism; and Christians are greeted for the last time as their mortal remains are received into the church building for the celebration of the funeral rites.⁴³

In addition to its religious functions, the gathering space may provide access to the vesting sacristy, rooms for choir rehearsal, storage areas, restrooms, and rooms for ushers

³⁶ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 28.

³⁷ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 31.

³⁸ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 32.

³⁹ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 38.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 44.

⁴¹ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 45; cf. Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 23.

⁴² *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 3.

⁴³ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 95.

and their equipment. Adequate space for other gatherings will be an important consideration in planning the narthex and other adjoining areas.⁴⁴

The doors to the church have both practical and symbolic significance. They function as the secure, steady symbol of Christ, “the Good Shepherd” and “the door through which those who follow him enter and are safe [as they] go in and go out”. In construction, design, and decoration, they have the ability to remind people of Christ’s presence as the Way that leads to the Father. Practically, of course, they secure the building from the weather and exterior dangers, expressing by their solid strength the safe harbor that lies within. The appearance and height of the church doors reflect their dignity and address practical considerations such as the accommodation of the processional cross or banners.⁴⁵

Concerning the Nave

The body of the church—the nave, which is the place where the assembly is gathered—is a crucial component and should reflect that the assembly is a part of the People of God, called to that “demanded by the very nature of the liturgy,” which is “full, conscious, and active part in liturgical celebrations.”⁴⁶ It is the people’s “right and to which they are bound by reason of their Baptism.”⁴⁷ However, as *Built of Living Stones* states, the nave “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.”⁴⁸

Concerning the Sanctuary

“The sanctuary is the place where the altar stands, where the word of God is proclaimed, and where the priest, deacon, and the other ministers exercise their offices.”⁴⁹ To demonstrate the importance of the actions that take place in the sanctuary, “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.”⁵⁰ The primary furnishings in the sanctuary are the altar, the ambo, and the chair of the priest celebrant.⁵¹ Therefore, the DLC and BARC **strongly recommend** that greater attention and resources be dedicated to the construction of these primary furnishings.

⁴⁴ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 96.

⁴⁵ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 97, quoting *Book of Blessings*, nos. 1229, 1216 respectively.

⁴⁶ Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14.

⁴⁷ Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14.

⁴⁸ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 51; cf. no. 52 regarding the two principles that guide the form and arrangement of the nave.

⁴⁹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 3rd typical ed. (2010), no. 295.

⁵⁰ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 295.

⁵¹ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 55.

Concerning the Altar

The altar is a symbol of Christ himself; on it, the liturgy makes present his life, Death and Resurrection. Since, “the altar is Christ,”⁵² it “should reflect the nobility, beauty, strength, and simplicity”⁵³ of Christ. Regarding its location, “The altar is the natural focal point of the sanctuary”;⁵⁴ it “should be centrally located in the sanctuary”;⁵⁵ and it should be “the center toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns”⁵⁶ “Ordinarily, it should be fixed (with the base affixed to the floor) and with a table or mensa made of natural stone, since it represents Christ Jesus, the Living Stone (1 Peter 2:4).”⁵⁷ However, it is permissible in the United States to use materials other than natural stone, so long as those materials are “worthy, solid, properly constructed.”⁵⁸ For further clarification on this point, please contact the BARC.

The size and shape of the altar should be in “harmony and proportion”⁵⁹ to other furnishings in the sanctuary, namely the ambo and chair of the priest celebrant. The altar should be large enough so that the priest celebrant, deacon, and other liturgical ministers can fulfill their duties; it should also be able to accommodate the *Roman Missal* and “vessels with the bread and wine”⁶⁰ (It should be noted that *Built of Living Stones* uses the plural “vessels,” thereby suggesting that multiple ciboria or patens and chalices should be able to fit on the altar.)

Concerning the Ambo

The dignity of the Word of God requires that in the church there be a suitable place from which it may be proclaimed and toward which the attention of the faithful naturally turns during the Liturgy of the Word. It is appropriate that generally their place be a stationary ambo and not simply a movable lectern. The ambo must be located in keeping with the design of each church in such a way that the ordained ministers and readers may be clearly seen and heard by the faithful.⁶¹

According to the *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, “Great pains must therefore be taken, in keeping with the design of each church, over the harmonious and close relationships of the ambo with the altar.”⁶²

⁵² *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of an Altar, no. 4.

⁵³ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 56.

⁵⁴ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 57.

⁵⁵ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 58.

⁵⁶ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 299.

⁵⁷ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 57.

⁵⁸ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 57.

⁵⁹ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 58.

⁶⁰ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 58.

⁶¹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 309.

⁶² Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, 2nd typical ed. (1981) no. 32

However, the dignity of the ambo, and its harmonious relationship to the altar, does not mean that it should be the same size as the altar. Indeed, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states that, “The altar should occupy a place where it is truly the center toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns.”⁶³

Concerning the Chair of the Priest Celebrant

Signifying the priest’s function “of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer,” the chair of the priest celebrant is to be distinct from those places occupied by the faithful and other liturgical ministers; it should never be “remote or grandiose”⁶⁴ or appear to be a throne. If a seat for the deacon(s) is necessary for the liturgical celebration, it should be placed near the priest celebrant’s chair. In the event of a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest, the chair for the priest celebrant is not to be used by a layperson who presides at one of these services.⁶⁵

Concerning the Baptismal Font

According to the *Book of Blessings*, the baptismal font “should permit baptism by immersion, whenever this is the usage.”⁶⁶ *Built of Living Stones* states that, “Since baptism in Catholic churches may take place by immersion in the water or by infusion (pouring), fonts that permit all forms of baptismal practice are encouraged.”⁶⁷ The National Statutes for the Catechumenate adds that,

Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacraments and, therefore, provisions should be made for its more frequent use in the baptism of adults. The provision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* for partial immersion, namely, immersion of the candidate’s head should be taken into account.⁶⁸

(The practice of administering Baptism in a font in which a candidate kneels or stands and water is poured over him or her constitutes infusion [pouring] and not partial immersion.)

The location of the baptismal font should express the relationship of Baptism to the other sacraments, especially the Eucharist,⁶⁹ and it should be visible to all who enter the church.⁷⁰ Since the primary furnishings in the sanctuary are the altar, the ambo, and the chair of the priest celebrant, the placement of the baptismal font should not overshadow or distract from them.

⁶³ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 299.

⁶⁴ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 310; cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 63.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 64.

⁶⁶ *Book of Blessings*, no. 1085.

⁶⁷ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 2.

⁶⁸ National Statutes for the Catechumenate (1986), no. 17.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, nos. 66, 69.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 67.

Concerning the Location of the Tabernacle

In the Diocese of Richmond, the bishop permits the placement of the tabernacle according to the two options listed in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*:

(1) Either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, in a appropriate form and place, not excluding its being positioned on an old altar no longer used for celebration (cf. no. 303); or (2) even in some chapel suitable for the private adoration and prayer of the faithful and organically connected to the church and readily noticeable to the Christian faithful.⁷¹

If the tabernacle is placed in a chapel, the bishop requires that the chapel be prominent, easily located, and directly accessible from the church.

Concerning the Location for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance

Built of Living Stones, citing the *Code of Canon Law*, indicates that the Sacrament of Penance is to be celebrated in the church.⁷² According to the complementary norm regarding the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance in the United States,

Provision must be made in each church or oratory for a sufficient number of places for sacramental confessions which are clearly visible, truly accessible, and which provide a fixed grille between the penitent and the confessor. Provision should also be made for penitents who wish to confess face-to-face.⁷³

Since the Sacrament of Penance is a constant reminder of God forgiveness, its location “can assist penitents on the path to contrition and sorrow for sin and to proclaim their reconciliation with God and the community of faith.”⁷⁴

Concerning the Placement of Pastoral Musicians

The cantor and choir have unique roles, which include leading the assembly in song. Their location should “express that they are part of the assembly of worshipers,”⁷⁵ and should permit them to participate fully in the Mass.⁷⁶ Whereas the ambo is normally used for singing the Responsorial Psalm,⁷⁷ the cantor stand should be distinct from it.⁷⁸ Additionally, “Occasions or physical situations may necessitate that the choir be placed in or near the sanctuary. In such

⁷¹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 315. For additional information concerning the reservation of the Eucharist as it pertains to building and renovations, cf. nos. 314–316; *Built of Living Stones*, nos. 70–80.

⁷² Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 103; *Code of Canon Law*, canon 964 §1.

⁷³ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Complementary Norm to Canon 964, §2 (2000).

⁷⁴ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 104.

⁷⁵ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 89.

⁷⁶ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 312.

⁷⁷ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 61, 309.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 89.

circumstances, the placement of the choir should never crowd or overshadow the other ministers in the sanctuary nor should it distract from the liturgical action.”⁷⁹

Concerning Sacred Images

According to the *Book of Blessings*, “The Church encourages the devout veneration of sacred images by the faithful, in order that they may see more deeply into the mystery of God’s glory. For that glory has shone in the face of Christ and is reflected in his saints, who have become ‘light in the Lord’ [Ephesians 5:8].”⁸⁰ Therefore, the placement of sacred images should allow the faithful the opportunity for veneration.⁸¹ This can be a challenge for a parish, as sometimes there are various cultural traditions in the community, each with its own devotional practices. A parish should exhibit restraint concerning “the number and prominence of sacred images.”⁸² As the *General Introduction of the Roman Missal* suggests, “there should usually be only one image of any given Saint.”⁸³ in the church. Finally, sacred images should not be located in such a place where they draw the attention of the faithful away from the liturgy and “foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy.”⁸⁴

Concerning the Cross

Either on the altar or near it, there is to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, a clearly visible to the assembled people. It is desirable that such a cross remain near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations, so as to call to mind for the faithful the saving Passion of the Lord.⁸⁵

While it is permissible to place a cross on the altar, one large enough for the assembly to see “might well obstruct the view of the action taking place on the altar; other alternatives may be more appropriate.”⁸⁶ The crucifix may be “suspended over the altar or affixed to the sanctuary wall.”⁸⁷

Accommodating Liturgical Postures: Kneeling

In the construction of a new church, “Kneelers or kneeling cushions should also be provided so that the whole congregation can easily kneel when the liturgy calls for it.”⁸⁸ Furthermore, when

⁷⁹ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 90.

⁸⁰ *Book of Blessings*, no. 1258.

⁸¹ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 318.

⁸² *Built of Living Stones*, no. 137.

⁸³ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 318.

⁸⁴ Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 125

⁸⁵ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 308.

⁸⁶ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 91.

⁸⁷ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 91.

⁸⁸ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 86; cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 43 regarding those instances when the faithful are required to kneel.

an existing church, oratory, or chapel is renovated in the Diocese of Richmond, it must be retrofitted with kneelers.

Considering Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for Liturgical Ministers

The Diocesan Liturgical Commission recognizes that the Building and Renovation Commission is responsible for reviewing construction plans to ensure that they comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Nevertheless, the DLC encourages parish communities—in accordance with the suggestions found in *Built of Living Stones*⁸⁹—to consider accommodating those persons with physical disabilities when constructing or renovating the ambo, altar, or other areas within the sanctuary and nave, as many disabled persons serve as lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, cantors etc.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, nos. 56, 59.

7 – DISPOSITION OF WORKS OF ART NO LONGER NEEDED FOR SACRED USE

PROPERTY DISPOSITION GUIDELINES

In parishes, works of art are to be catalogued according to the norms of the circular letter of the Pontifical Commission of the Cultural Heritage of the Church titled *The Inventory and Cataloguing of the Cultural Heritage of the Church: A Necessary and Urgent Task* (1999). This procedure will enable the diocesan Office of Archives to assist parishes in the proper disposition of works of art no longer needed for sacred use.

PARISH PATRIMONY AND A PASTOR’S AUTHORITY

A parish is a juridic person under Church law.⁹⁰ As such, the parish can acquire property for itself, which includes not only funds and real estate, but also the furnishings, art, books, vessels, vestments and other accouterments needed to carry out the obligations of the parish. Although the pastor is the representative of the juridic person,⁹¹ he does not have the right to alienate (i.e., sell, discard or otherwise dispose) of these items) without due regard for their historic, artistic, or monetary value. This judgment may not be made on his own. If anything, the pastor is to preserve and protect the patrimony of his parish, even if certain objects do not appeal to his taste.

Background

The *Code of Canon Law* makes the fundamental point that, “The Catholic Church has the innate right, independently of any secular power, to acquire, retain, administer and alienate temporal goods, in pursuance of its proper objectives.”⁹² These objectives “are principally the regulation of divine worship, the provision of fitting support for the clergy and other ministers, and the carrying out of the works of the sacred apostolate and of charity, especially for the needy.”⁹³ “Alienation” is the traditional and technical term used to designate any act by which ecclesiastical property, or rights over property, is transferred from its present owner to another owner.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 515; *Built of Living Stones*, no 3.

⁹¹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1279; *Built of Living Stones*, no 2.

⁹² *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1254; cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no 1.

⁹³ *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1254; cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no 2.

Purpose of These Norms

To protect the Church's interests in this regard, especially so that it can pursue its "proper objectives" as mentioned above, canon law has always stipulated certain conditions to govern alienation. One condition is that the competent ecclesiastical authority must grant his permission beforehand. The norms provided here are meant to clarify when permissions are needed for the alienation of ecclesiastical goods, whether those goods are movable or immovable, precious or mundane, sacred or profane. These norms are guidelines; they are not intended to address all the issues that can arise in canon or civil law. It is important to recognize that, without the permission of the competent authority, alienation is invalid.⁹⁴

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALIENATION — The conveyance to another party of property or the encumbrance of property (debt or lien), or the loss of any financial interest in the stable patrimony (real property, fixtures of personal property) of the parish, including demolition.

REAL PROPERTY — All immovable property, such as land and buildings, as well as improvements or fixtures attached to the land or buildings (e.g., fixed altars, plumbing, electrical fixtures, pews, etc.). Real property is distinct from parish personal property (as described below).

PERSONAL PROPERTY — Parish goods that can be moved (e.g., furniture, church furnishings, or supplies). Personal property can be either sacred or profane, and either precious or non-precious.

SACRED GOODS — Personal property designated for divine worship or for a sacred purpose through dedication or a blessing (e.g., movable altars, candlesticks, chalices, statues).

PRECIOUS GOODS — Objects of special worth, which have artistic, cultural, or historical value (e.g., murals, paintings).

OPERATING NORMS

1. The pastor or administrator shall complete an inventory of all immovable and movable goods located in the building, including the rectory and convent that are part of the parish.⁹⁵
2. A copy of the completed inventory, as well as an annual update, shall be kept in the parish office. As part of a visit, an episcopal vicar or diocesan auditor may review the annual updates that the pastor or administrator has completed, to ensure that the updates are current, accurate, and complete.
3. All ecclesiastical goods, including real estate, buildings, furnishings, equipment, etc., are part of the assets (patrimony) of the parish. The pastor or administrator, as the canonical steward of the ecclesiastical goods of the parish, is responsible for determining the needs of the parish and for disposing of parish property in accord with diocesan norms. The pastor or

⁹⁴ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1291.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1283.

administrator should consult with the parish finance council over matters relating to the disposition of parish property.⁹⁶

4. The pastor or administrator may use discretion (with the appropriate counsel of the parish finance council) in disposing of movable property that is neither precious, sacred, nor culturally significant, and whose value is within LOA Level I.
 - a. For the disposition of movable property whose value is greater than LOA Level I, the pastor or administrator must request, in writing, the permission of the bishop.
 - b. All real-estate transactions (renting, selling, leasing, etc.) can only be sanctioned upon the observance of the formalities of the leases, sales agreements, or other legal documents that are prepared in consultation with competent legal counsel, and therefore, follow the formalities of law. Any lease or sale of real estate requires that the pastor or administrator consult first with the parish finance council,⁹⁷ and that the terms of the agreement be prepared in consultation with the diocesan director of real estate, and that the bishop grant written approval.
5. Sacred goods, that is, goods that have been blessed or dedicated for worship (e.g., chalices, ciboria, tabernacles, monstrances and, in certain cases, status, religious articles, candlesticks, etc.), may be donated or transferred only to another parish, religious institute, or to the diocese. Sacred goods may not be donated or transferred to a private person, religious-goods dealer, or anyone else.
 - a. Items such as statuary, which are (1) small enough for a home, (2) made of ordinary rather than precious materials, (3) manufactured rather than handcrafted, and /or (4) were not the object of particular public veneration, may fall outside of the definition of “sacred goods.” The pastor or administrator should consult the diocesan Office of Worship regarding such items before disposing of them.
 - b. The transfer of goods to the Diocese of Richmond grants ownership to the diocese, and therefore constitutes alienation of parish property. Steps outlined in 4.a. above must be followed. These goods are to be transferred to the Office of Real Estate.
6. Sacred goods destined for the missions must be approved by, and the transfer facilitated by, the diocesan Office for the Propagation of the Faith. Donations cannot be made to the missions without such authorization.
7. Sacred goods may be donated to another parish—not to private persons—only when the prescriptions of both canon and civil law, or those imposed at the time of donation by the founder, donor, or legitimate authority, are observed. The pastor or administrator is to consult with the vicar general who will, in turn, consult with diocesan personnel, or outside legal counsel if necessary, regarding the disposition of sacred goods. Records must be kept of what is given and to whom, with a copy of the transaction sent to the Office of the Chancellor.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 537.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 537.

8. Some documents, artifacts, furnishings, equipment, etc., are rather valuable: for example, photographs, bulletins, minutes and documents of various parish organizations, newspaper clippings, antiques, artwork, oriental carpets etc. These items constitute movable precious goods: objects that have historical or artistic value, regardless of their monetary worth. If such good are to be disposed, the diocesan director of archives must approve the transfer.

Options (in general order of preference): ↓	Altar (1, 2)	Relics (including altar stones [2])	Chalice, Paten	Tabernacle, Monstrance	Furnishings (4); Ritual Books; Linens	Artwork (5); Candelabra; Processional cross; Thurible
Reuse in renovation (intact or modified)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Place in a heritage room or archive	X	X	X	X	X	X
Return to donor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	X
Donate or sell (6) to another parish or chapel (including a private chapel properly established under canon law ⁹⁸)	X	X Or transfer to the Office of Archives	X	X	X	X
Donate or sell to a museum (6, 7)	X	NO	X	X	X	X
May be sold or given to an individual (6, 7)	X	No	To another priest only (3)	NO	X	X
Storage	X	X	X	X	X	X
“Return to profane use” by decree ⁹⁹	X	N/A	Blessed objects should be returned to profane use by decree before disposition or destruction, even though destruction, or the act of returning these objects to profane use, itself causes the objects to lose their blessing <i>de facto</i> . ¹⁰⁰			
Destruction (bury, burn)	X	X	X	X	X	X

- 1) An altar not be sold if relics are retained and/or if it will continue to be used as an altar. If it is no longer to be used as an altar, a decree is required to return the altar to profane use,¹⁰¹ and the altar stone should be removed and returned to the diocese (if applicable). If an altar is transferred to another church to be used as an altar, it does not need to be rededicated or blessed.¹⁰²
- 2) Relics may not be sold.¹⁰³
- 3) E.g., to one newly ordained.

⁹⁸ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1226.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1212.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canons 1189–1190, 1212, 1269.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canons 1238 §1, 1212.

¹⁰² Cf. *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Blessing of a Church, no. 22; *Built of Living Stones*, no. 22.

¹⁰³ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1190.

- 4) E.g., an ambo, ambry, priest celebrant's chair, Communion rails, confessional, font, kneelers, pews, or reredos.
 - 5) E.g., stained glass, icons, statues, or Stations of the Cross.
 - 6) When selling an item, care should be taken so that it will not subsequently be used for sordid purposes. Therefore, an open auction, which cannot control who is bidding or why, would be an unsuitable means for selling sacred objects. To the extent possible, sales should be conditioned to prevent unseemly use of sacred items. Although the blessing or consecration of the item is lost by the sale, the fact that the item was once used in divine worship requires that it still be treated with respect.
 - 7) "Sacred objects, which are designated for divine worship by dedication or blessing, are to be treated reverently and are not to be employed for profane or inappropriate use even if they are owned by private persons."¹⁰⁴
- X Allowable alternative for disposition.

¹⁰⁴ *Code of Canon Law*, canon 1171.

8 - COLUMBARIA AND CEMETERIES

Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Cemetery Policy

January 20, 2016

Policy:

Whereas, individual parishes are not perpetual enterprises as parish consolidations, relocations, and closures are possible occurrences to accommodate changing demographics and shifting population centers.

Whereas, church buildings and structures on parish grounds often undergo significant changes in the form of remodels, renovations, and additions, which at times require demolition of existing structures.

Whereas, with due regard for canons 1240 to 1243 of the *Code of Canon Law*, having a cemetery, columbarium, ossuary or mausoleum on parish property might substantially limit options to meet the changing facility and worship space needs of the parish as well as substantially increase the cost of the construction or renovation project. Additionally, the need to move the remains of the deceased may cause emotional distress to relatives and loved ones.

Whereas, having only a columbarium on parish grounds and not being able to offer traditional burial options in the immediate vicinity may imply to those in the Catholic community that the Catholic Church prefers cremation to burial or entombment of the body of the deceased.

Therefore, the Catholic Diocese of Richmond (the “Diocese”) shall no longer authorize the construction or the placement of a cemetery, columbarium, ossuary, or mausoleum on property located in the immediate vicinity of the parish church and surrounding structures effective as of this date, January 20, 2016.

Implementation Clause:

Parishes that have existing cemeteries, columbaria and / or mausoleums on property adjacent to or inside may remain and do not need to be relocated. Also, any existing or approved plans for the construction of, or addition to, columbarium or mausoleums may proceed as long as those plans are approved by the Building and Renovation Commission in accordance with the Diocesan Construction and Renovation Policy. No new plans for the development of cemeteries, columbaria, ossuaries, or mausoleums on parish property adjacent to or inside the church will be approved. Columbaria will not be allowed when there is not an adequate Catholic full body burial option within a twenty-five mile radius.

Any parish that wishes to develop a burial site (cemetery, columbarium, ossuary, or mausoleum) will be asked to submit a business plan to the diocesan finance office. This business

plan shall demonstrate that the development will allow for the recovery of the capital investment and the establishment of an adequate perpetual care fund. Also, this plan shall include information on whether or not the market area is already adequately served with existing Catholic facilities and if there is in fact significant and compelling demand in the area. It is preferable that parishes work within their respective regions to develop well-established regional Catholic cemeteries in order to prevent the need for future relocations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Robert J Cole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Robert J Cole, Pastor, St. John the Apostle
Chair, Building and Renovation Commission
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

APPENDIX I: COMMENTARY ON THE GUIDELINES

This section expands upon the guidelines set forth earlier in this document. These texts are drawn from the primary documents concerning churches and various elements contained therein, such as the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, the *Dedication of a Church and an Altar, Built of Living Stones*, and the *Book of Blessings*. Furthermore, the Diocesan Liturgical Commission advises parishes renovating existing churches or constructing new churches to consult other liturgical documents that offer catechesis, such as the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the *General Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass*, and the *Ceremonial of Bishops*.

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Concerning the Church Building

*The Dedication of a Church and an Altar describes the church as “the building in which the Christian community gathers to hear the word of God, to pray together, to receive the sacraments, and to celebrate the Eucharist.”*¹⁰⁵ *The church building—including the eternal facade—should express that a church is “the dwelling place of God” among those “reconciled and united in Christ.”*¹⁰⁶ *Furthermore, the entrance to the church should indicate that one is entering into communion with Christ and his Body.*

*The principles that should guide parishes in renovating or building churches today are drawn from Vatican Council II, as well as “documents that implemented its decrees.”*¹⁰⁷ *Such documents include the Code of Canon Law, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, and the various ritual books for the sacraments and other sacred rites. Built of Living Stones offers five principles to guide parish communities:*

- (1) *The church building is designed in harmony with Church laws and serves the needs of the liturgy.*¹⁰⁸
- (2) *The church building fosters participation in the liturgy.*¹⁰⁹
- (3) *The design of the church building reflects the various roles of the participants.*¹¹⁰
- (4) *The church building respects the culture of every time and space.*¹¹¹
- (5) *The church building should be beautiful.*¹¹²

*Regarding this last principle, Built of Living Stones stresses that the Church is not limited to the forms of the past, but is open to “embrace new forms that nonetheless have grown organically from her rich heritage of artistic expression.”*¹¹³ *Furthermore, according to the Dedication of a Church and an Altar, “The very nature of a church demands that it be suited to sacred celebrations, dignified, evincing a noble beauty, not mere costly display, and it should stand as a sign and symbol of heavenly realities.”*¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁵ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 1; cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 16.

¹⁰⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1180; cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 167.

¹⁰⁷ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 27.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 28.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 31.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 32.

¹¹¹ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 38.

¹¹² Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 44.

¹¹³ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 45; cf. Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 23.

¹¹⁴ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of a Church, no. 3.

**From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 5:
The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist,
I: General Principles, nos. 288–294.**

288. For the celebration of the Eucharist, the People of God are normally gathered together in a church or, if there is no church or if it is too small, then in another respectable place that is nonetheless worthy of so great a mystery. Therefore, churches or other places should be suitable for carrying out the sacred action and for ensuring the active participation of the faithful. Moreover, sacred buildings and requisites for divine worship should be truly worthy and beautiful and be signs and symbols of heavenly realities. [107]

289. Consequently, the Church constantly seeks the noble assistance of the arts and admits the artistic expressions of all peoples and regions. [108] In fact, just as she is intent on preserving the works of art and the artistic treasures handed down from past centuries [109] and, in so far as necessary, on adapting them to new needs, so also she strives to promote new works of art that are in harmony with the character of each successive age. [110] On account of this, in appointing artists and choosing works of art to be admitted into a church, what should be looked for is that true excellence in art which nourishes faith and devotion and accords authentically with both the meaning and the purpose for which it is intended. [111]

290. All churches should be dedicated or at least blessed. Cathedrals and parish churches, however, are to be dedicated with a solemn rite.

291. For the proper construction, restoration, and arrangement of sacred buildings, all those involved should consult the diocesan commission for the Sacred Liturgy and sacred art. Moreover, the diocesan Bishop should employ the counsel and help of this commission whenever it comes to laying down norms on this matter, approving plans for new buildings, and making decisions on the more important matters. [112]

292. The ornamentation of a church should contribute toward its noble simplicity rather than to ostentation. Moreover, in the choice of elements attention should be paid to authenticity and there should be the intention of fostering the instruction of the faithful and the dignity of the entire sacred place.

293. The suitable arrangement of a church, and of what goes with it, in such a way as to meet appropriately the needs of our own age requires not only that care be taken as regards whatever pertains more immediately to the celebration of sacred actions but also that the faithful be provided with whatever is conducive to their appropriate comfort and is normally provided in places where people habitually gather.

294. The People of God which is gathered for Mass is coherently and hierarchically ordered, and this finds its expression in the variety of ministries and the variety of actions according to the different parts of the celebration. Hence the general arrangement of the sacred building must be such that in some way it conveys the image of the assembled congregation 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 schola cantorum (choir) shall have a place that facilitates their active

participation. [113]

The Priest Celebrant, the Deacon, and the other ministers have places in the sanctuary. There, also, should be prepared seats for concelebrants, but if their number is great, seats should be arranged in another part of the church, though near the altar.

All these elements, even though they must express the hierarchical structure and the diversity of functions, should nevertheless bring about a close and coherent unity that is clearly expressive of the unity of the entire holy people. Indeed, the nature and beauty of the place and all its furnishings should foster devotion and express visually the holiness of the mysteries celebrated there.

Endnotes

- [107] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 122-124; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 5; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 90: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 897; Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, May 25, 1967, no. 24: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 554; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 932 §1.
- [108] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 123.
- [109] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, May 25, 1967, no. 24: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 554.
- [110] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 123, 129; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 13c: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 880.
- [111] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 123.
- [112] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 126; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 91: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 898.
- [113] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, nos. 97-98: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 899.

From the *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Chapter 2: Dedication of a Church, Introduction, nos. 1–3.

1. Through his death and resurrection, Christ became the true and perfect temple [1] of the New Covenant and gathered together a people to be his own. This holy people, made one as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, is the Church [2] that is, the temple of God built of living stones, where the Father is worshiped in spirit and in truth. [3] Rightly, then, from early times “church” has also been the name given to the building in which the Christian community gathers to hear the word of God, to pray together, to receive the sacraments, and to celebrate the Eucharist.

2. Because the church is a visible building, it stands as a special sign of the pilgrim Church on earth and reflects the Church dwelling in heaven. When a church is erected as a building destined solely and permanently for assembling the people of God and for carrying out sacred functions, it is fitting that it be dedicated to God with a solemn rite, in accordance with the ancient custom of the Church.

3. The very nature of a church demands that it be suited to sacred celebrations, dignified, evincing a noble beauty, not mere costly display, and it should stand as a sign and symbol of heavenly realities. “The general plan of the sacred edifice should be such that in some way it conveys the image of the gathered assembly. It should also allow the participants to take the place most appropriate to them and assist all to carry out their individual functions properly.” Moreover, in what concerns the sanctuary, the altar, the chair, the lectern, and the place for the reservation of the blessed sacrament, the norms of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal are to be followed. [4] Also, the norms must be observed that concern things and places destined for the celebration of other sacraments, especially baptism and penance. [5]

Endnotes

- [1] See Jn 2:21.
- [2] See Cyprian, *De oratione dominica* 23: PL 4, 553; LG, no. 4: AAS 57 (1965) 7; ConstDecrDel 96.
- [3] See Jn 4:23.
- [4] See GIRM, nos. 253, 257, 258, 259–267, 271, 272, 276–277. See also Roman Ritual *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, nos. 6 and 9–11.
- [5] See *Rite of Baptism for Children*, no. 25; *Rite of Penance*, no. 12.

From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 1: The Living Church: The Living Church: God’s Building, nos. 12–15.

§ 12 § God created the universe so that all might have a part in his divine life and be joined in communion with him. Thus did he call forth light from darkness, beauty from chaos, and life from the formless void (Gn 1:1–23). When all was in readiness, he fashioned Adam and Eve in the divine image and breathed life into them (Gn 1:24–31) in order to gather all men and women into the great and eternal hymn of praise which is the Church. This is why Christians, from the earliest centuries, could believe that “the world was created for the sake of the Church.” [7]

§ 13 § Despite the sin of Adam, God's call to communion perdured. Gradually, he revealed his wish to save humanity “not as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by making them into a people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness.” [8] With Abraham and his descendants, God entered into an everlasting covenant. He promised to be their God and claimed them as his own, a holy nation, a people set apart to praise his mighty deeds throughout the ages. Through the waters of death he led his people, Israel, accepting their sacrifices at Sinai through the hands of Aaron and his descendants. “All of these things, however, were done by way of preparation and as a figure of that new and perfect covenant which was to be ratified in Christ. . . . this new covenant in His blood . . . calling together a people made up of Jew and Gentile, making them one, not according to the flesh but in the Spirit.” [9]

§ 14 § From the altar of the cross Christ accomplished our redemption, [10] forming a holy people, a “temple of God built of living stones, where the Father is worshiped in spirit and in truth.” [11] The hymn of praise that Christ places within the heart and on the lips of the Church will be sung at the end of time in all its fullness, when all the members gather at the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem.

§ 15 § That same hymn is sung today by the Church whenever the liturgy is celebrated. For every time the Church gathers for prayer, she is joined to Christ’s priesthood and made one with

all the saints and angels, transcending time and space. Together the members worship with the whole company of heaven, “venerating the memory of the saints” and hoping “for some part and fellowship with them”; together they eagerly await Christ’s coming in glory. [12] The sacred liturgy is a window to eternity and a glimpse of what God calls us to be.

Endnotes

- [7] United States Catholic Conference-Libreria Editrice Vaticana, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] (2000), no. 760.
- [8] *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 9.
- [9] Ibid.
- [10] SC, no. 5: “For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament which is the whole Church.”□
- [11] RDCA, ch. 2, no. 1 (International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy: 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* [DOL] [1982] 547, no. 4369): “This holy people, made one as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, is the Church, that is, the temple of God built of living stones, where the Father is worshiped in spirit and in truth.”□
- [12] SC, no. 8: “In the earthly liturgy, by way of foretaste, we share in that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, and in which Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the sanctuaries and of the true tabernacle . . . ; we sing a hymn to the Lord’s glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory (cf. Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4).”□

The Church Building, nos. 16–18.

§ 16 § Just as the term *Church* refers to the *living temple*, God’s People, the term *church* also has been used to describe “the building in which the Christian community gathers to hear the word of God, to pray together, to receive the sacraments, and celebrate the eucharist.” [13] That building is both the house of God on earth (*domus Dei*) and a house fit for the prayers of the saints (*domus ecclesiae*). Such a house of prayer must be expressive of the presence of God and suited for the celebration of the sacrifice of Christ, as well as reflective of the community that celebrates there.

§ 17 § The church is the proper place for the liturgical prayer of the parish community, especially the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday. It is also the privileged place for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and reservation of the Eucharist for Communion for the sick. Whenever communities have built houses for worship, the design of the building has been of critical importance. [14] Churches are never “simply gathering spaces but signify and make visible the Church living in [a particular] place, the dwelling of God” among us, now “reconciled and united in Christ.” [15] As such, the building itself becomes “a sign of the pilgrim Church on earth and reflects the Church dwelling in heaven.” [16] 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.

§ 18 § Churches, therefore, must be places “suited to sacred celebrations,” “dignified,” and beautiful. [17] Their suitability for worship is determined by their ability through the architectural design of space and the application of artistic gifts to embody God’s initiative and the community’s faithful response. Church buildings and the religious artworks that beautify

them are forms of worship themselves and both inspire and reflect the prayer of the community as well as the inner life of grace. [18] Conversely, church buildings and religious artifacts that are trivial, contrived, or lack beauty can detract from the community's liturgy. Architecture and art become the joint work of the Holy Spirit and the local community, that of preparing human hearts to receive God's word and to enter more fully into communion with God. [19]

Endnotes

- [7] RDCA, ch. 2, no. 1 (DOL 547, no. 4369): "Rightly, then, from early times 'church' has also been the name given to the building in which the Christian community gathers to hear the word of God, to pray together, to receive the sacraments, and to celebrate the eucharist."
- [8] Cf. CCC, no. 2691: "The church, the house of God, is the proper place for the liturgical prayer of the parish community. It is also the privileged place for adoration of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The choice of a favorable place is not a matter of indifference for true prayer." □ Cf. RDCA, TC, no. 6.
- [9] CCC, no. 1180: "These visible churches are not simply gathering places but signify and make visible the Church living in this place, the dwelling of God with men reconciled and united in Christ."
- [10] RDCA, ch. 1, no. 2 (DOL 547, no. 4370): "Because the church is a visible building, it stands as a special sign of the pilgrim Church on earth and reflects the Church dwelling in heaven." □ Cf. Canon Law Society of America, *Code of Canon Law* [CIC] (1998), c. 1214: "By the term church is understood a sacred building designated for divine worship to which the faithful have a right of entry for the exercise, especially the public exercise, of divine worship."
- [11] RDCA, ch. 2, no. 3 (DOL 547, no. 4371): "The very nature of a church demands that it be suited to sacred celebrations, dignified, and evincing a noble beauty, not merely costly display, and it should stand as a sign and symbol of heavenly realities."
- [12] Cf. LA, no. 12: "Art must make perceptible, and as far as possible attractive, the world of the spirit, of the invisible, of God. It must therefore translate into meaningful terms that which is in itself ineffable. Art has a unique capacity to take one or other facet of the message and translate it into colors, shapes and sounds which 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." Cf. LA, no. 16: "Beauty is a key to the mystery and a call to transcendence. It is an invitation to savor life and to dream of the future. That is why the beauty of created things can never fully satisfy. It stirs that hidden nostalgia for God which a lover of beauty like St. Augustine could express in incomparable terms: 'Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: Late have I loved you!' (*Confessions* 10:27)."
- [13] CCC, no. 1098: "The preparation of hearts is the joint work of the Holy Spirit and the assembly, especially of its ministers. The grace of the Holy Spirit seeks to awaken faith, conversion of heart, and adherence to the Father's will. These dispositions are the precondition both for the reception of other graces conferred in the celebration itself and the fruits of new life which the celebration is intended to produce afterward." □ It is for this reason that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (nos. 14-17, and 129) maintains that a firm education in liturgical theology and in the historical development of the arts is central to seminary education.

Liturgical Principles for Building or Renovating Churches, nos. 27–32.

§ 27 § The basic liturgical principles for designing and renovating churches today are drawn from the Second Vatican Council and the documents that implemented its decrees. [35] Even though the Church offers no universal blueprint or style for the design of a church, attention to the following principles will insure that from the beginning, the ritual requirements will receive the priority they deserve in the design process. □

- § 28 § (1) *The church building is designed in harmony with church laws and serves the needs of the liturgy.* The liturgical books are the foundational source for those who wish to plan a building well suited for the liturgy. First among these are the prescriptions contained in the fifth chapter of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the norms in the introduction to the *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*. Other directives can be found in the various liturgical books and the *Code of Canon Law*.
- § 29 § 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. [36] The general plan of the building reflects the Church that Christ gathers there, is expressive of its prayer, fosters the members' participation in sacred realities, and supports the solemn character of the sacred liturgy.
- § 30 § The general plan of the building should be such that “in some way it conveys the image of the gathered assembly. It should also allow the participants to take the place most appropriate to them and assist all to carry out their function properly.” [37]
- § 31 § (2) *The church building fosters participation in the liturgy.* Because liturgical actions by their nature are communal celebrations, they are celebrated with the presence and active participation of the Christian faithful whenever possible. [38] Such participation, both internal and external, is the faithful's “right and duty by reason of their baptism.” [39] 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.
- § 32 § (3) *The design of the church building reflects the various roles of the participants.* Since the liturgical celebration is an action of Christ and the Church, it belongs to the whole Body of the Church. [40] While all the members are called to participate in worship, not all have the same role. [41] From the earliest days of the Church, the Holy Spirit has called forth members to serve in a variety of ministries. That same Spirit continues to call the members to various ministries today and to bestow gifts necessary for the good of the community. [42]

Endnotes

- [35] These include the SC, the GIRM, the RDCA, the *Ceremonial of Bishops*, the various sacramental rituals, and the CIC.
- [36] CCC, no. 1179; Second Vatican Council, *Presbyterorum Ordinis: Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests* [PO] (December 7, 1965), no. 5; cf. SC, nos. 122-127; GIRM no. 288: “For the celebration of the Eucharist the people of God normally assemble in a church or, if there is none or one that is inadequate for some reason, then in some other place nevertheless worthy of so great a mystery. Churches and other places of worship should therefore be suited to celebrating the liturgy and to ensuring the active participation of the faithful. Further, the buildings and requisites for worship should be truly worthy and beautiful, signs and symbols of heavenly realities.” □
- [37] RDCA, ch. 2, no. 3 (DOL 547, no. 4371): “The very nature of a church demands that it be suited to sacred celebrations, dignified, evincing a noble beauty, not mere costly display, and it should stand as a sign and symbol of heavenly realities. ‘The general plan of the sacred edifice should be

such that in some way it conveys the image of the gathered assembly. It should also allow the participants to take the place most appropriate to them and assist all to carry out their function properly.”□

- [38] CIC, c. 837 § 2: “Inasmuch as liturgical actions by their nature entail a common celebration, they are to be celebrated with the presence and active participation of the Christian faithful where possible.”□
- [39] SC, no. 14: “[The] Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people’ (1 Pt 2:9, cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.”□
- [40] See GIRM, no. 294 in the earlier section of this document.
- [41] Cf. SC, nos. 14 and 26; PO, no. 2; LG, no. 28; GIRM, nos. 4, 58, and 60. □
- [42] Cf. 1 Cor 12:27-28.□

Chapter 2: The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There, The Eucharist: The Building: The Place for the Liturgical Assembly Gathered as One Body in Christ, no. 50.

§ 50 § 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.” [66] 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.” [67] 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.” [68]

Endnotes

- [66] Congregation for Divine Worship, *Circular Letter on Concerts in Churches* (November 5, 1987), no. 5: “According to tradition as expressed in the rite for the dedication of a church and altar, churches are primarily places where the people of God gather and are ‘made one as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one, and are the church, the temple of God built with living stones, in which the Father is worshiped in spirit and truth.’ . . .” 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. Both in urban areas and in the countryside, the church remains the house of God and the sign of his dwelling among men. It remains a sacred place, even when no liturgical celebration is taking place.”□
- [67] See GIRM, no. 294 under **Concerning the Church Building** in this document.
- [68] See GIRM, no. 294 under **Concerning the Church Building** in this document.

The Area Surrounding the Church Building, nos. 98–99.

§ 98 § When constructed and maintained well, the outside of a church can proclaim the Gospel to the city or town in which it is located. Even before the members of the worshipping community enter through the doors of the building, the external environment with its landscaping, artwork, and lighting can contribute to a gracious approach to the place of worship. Creative landscaping that separates the entrance to the church from the parking area as well as well-placed religious art

can facilitate the spiritual transition as people move to a sense of communal worship. Appropriate signage can provide information and can offer hospitality and an invitation to enter the space for worship. Walkways with well designed patterns of stone or other materials subtly contribute to the awareness that believers are about to enter holy ground. When choosing a site for a church, consideration should be given to the possibility of landscaped setback so that the church building is not completely surrounded by the parking lot.

§ 99 § It is an ancient practice to summon the Christian people to the liturgical assembly or to alert them to important happenings in the local community by means of bells. The peal of bells is an expression of the sentiments of the People of God as they rejoice or grieve, offer thanks or petition, gather together and show outwardly the mystery of their oneness in Christ.

Concerning the Nave

The body of the church—the nave, which is the place where the assembly is gathered—is a crucial component and should reflect that the assembly is a part of the People of God, called to that “demanded by the very nature of the liturgy,” which is “full, conscious, and active part in liturgical celebrations.”¹¹⁵ It is the people’s “right and to which they are bound by reason of their Baptism.”¹¹⁶ However, as Built of Living Stones states, the nave “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.”¹¹⁷

From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Chapter 5: The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist, III: The Arrangement of the Church: The Places for the Faithful, no. 311.

311. Places for the faithful should be arranged with appropriate care so that they are able to participate in the sacred celebrations, duly following them with their eyes and their attention. It is desirable that benches or seating usually should be provided for their use. However, the custom of reserving seats for private persons is to be reprobated. [121] Moreover, benches or seating should be so arranged, especially in newly built churches, that the faithful can easily take up the bodily postures required for the different parts of the celebration and can have easy access for the reception of Holy Communion.

Care should be taken to ensure that the faithful be able not only to see the Priest, the Deacon, and the readers but also, with the aid of modern technical means, to hear them without difficulty.

Footnote

[121] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 32.

¹¹⁵ Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14.

¹¹⁶ Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14.

¹¹⁷ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 51; cf. no. 52 regarding the two principles that guide the form and arrangement of the nave.

From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2: The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There: The Eucharist: The Congregation’s Area, nos. 51–53.

§ 51 § 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. The ministers of music could also be located in the body of the church since they lead the entire assembly in song as well as by the example of their reverent attention and prayer.

§ 52 § Two principles guide architectural decisions about the form and arrangement of the nave: (1) the community worships as a single body united in faith, not simply as individuals who happen to find themselves in one place, and the nature of the liturgy demands that the congregation as well as the priest celebrant and ministers be able to exercise their roles in a full and active way; and (2) the priest celebrant and ministers together with the congregation form the liturgical assembly, which is the Church gathered for worship.

§ 53 § The body of the church is not simply a series of unrelated sections. Rather, each part contributes to the unity of the space by proportion, size, and shape. While various rites are celebrated there, the sense of the nave as a unified whole should not be sacrificed to the need for flexibility.

Concerning the Sanctuary

*“The sanctuary is the place where the altar stands, where the word of God is proclaimed, and where the priest, deacon, and the other ministers exercise their offices.”¹¹⁸ To demonstrate the importance of the actions that take place in the sanctuary, “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.”¹¹⁹ The primary furnishings in the sanctuary are the altar, the ambo, and the chair of the priest celebrant.¹²⁰ Therefore, the DLC and BARC **strongly recommend** that greater attention and resources be dedicated to the construction of these primary furnishings.*

**From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 5:
The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist, II:
Arrangement of the Sanctuary for the Sacred Synaxis, no. 295.**

295. The sanctuary is the place where the altar stands, the Word of God is proclaimed, and the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers exercise their functions. It should be appropriately marked off from the body of the church either by its being somewhat elevated or by a particular structure and ornamentation. It should, moreover, be large enough to allow the Eucharist to be

¹¹⁸ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 3rd typical ed. (2010), no. 295.

¹¹⁹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 295.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 55.

easily celebrated and seen. [114]

Footnote

[114] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 91: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 898.

From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2: The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There: The Eucharist: The Sanctuary Area, nos. 54–55.

§ 54 § The sanctuary is the space where the altar and the ambo stand, and “where the priest, deacon and other ministers exercise their offices.” The special character of the sanctuary is emphasized and enhanced by the distinctiveness of its design and furnishings, or by its elevation. [69] 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.

§ 55 § The principal ritual furnishings within the sanctuary are the altar on which the eucharistic sacrifice is offered, the ambo from which God’s word is proclaimed, and the chair of the priest celebrant. 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.

Footnote

[69] See GIRM, no. 295 under **Concerning the Sanctuary** in this document.

Concerning the Altar

The altar is a symbol of Christ himself; on it, the liturgy makes present his life, Death and Resurrection. Since, “the altar is Christ,”¹²¹ it “should reflect the nobility, beauty, strength, and simplicity”¹²² of Christ. Regarding its location, “The altar is the natural focal point of the sanctuary”;¹²³ it “should be centrally located in the sanctuary”;¹²⁴ and it should be “the center toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns”¹²⁵ “Ordinarily, it should be fixed (with the base affixed to the floor) and with a table or mensa made of natural stone, since it represents Christ Jesus, the Living Stone (1 Peter 2:4).”¹²⁶ However, it is permissible in the United States to use materials other than natural stone, so long as those materials are “worthy, solid, properly constructed.”¹²⁷ For further clarification on this point, please contact the BARC.

The size and shape of the altar should be in “harmony and proportion”¹²⁸ to other furnishings in the sanctuary, namely the ambo and chair of the priest celebrant. The altar should be large enough so that the priest celebrant, deacon, and other liturgical ministers can fulfill their duties; it should also be able to accommodate the Roman Missal and “vessels with the bread and wine”¹²⁹ (It should be noted that Built of Living Stones uses the plural “vessels,” thereby suggesting that multiple ciboria or patens and chalices should be able fit on the altar.)

From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 5: The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist, II: Arrangement of the Sanctuary for the Sacred Synaxis, The Altar and Its Ornamentation, nos. 296–308.

296. The altar, on which is effected the Sacrifice of the Cross made present under sacramental signs, is also the table of the Lord to which the People of God is convoked to participate in the Mass, and it is also the center of the thanksgiving that is accomplished through the Eucharist.

297. The celebration of the Eucharist in a sacred place is to take place on an altar; however, outside a sacred place, it may take place on a suitable table, always with the use of a cloth, a corporal, a cross, and candles.

298. It is desirable that in every church there be a fixed altar, since this more clearly and permanently signifies Christ Jesus, the Living Stone (1 Pt 2:4; cf. Eph 2:20). In other places set aside for sacred celebrations, the altar may be movable. An altar is said to be fixed if it is so constructed as to be attached to the floor and not removable; it is said to be movable if it can be displaced.

¹²¹ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Dedication of an Altar, no. 4.

¹²² *Built of Living Stones*, no. 56.

¹²³ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 57.

¹²⁴ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 58.

¹²⁵ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 299.

¹²⁶ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 57.

¹²⁷ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 57.

¹²⁸ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 58.

¹²⁹ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 58.

299. The altar should be built separate from the wall, in such a way that it is possible to walk around it easily and that Mass can be celebrated at it facing the people, which is desirable wherever possible. Moreover, the altar should occupy a place where it is truly the center toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns. [115] The altar should usually be fixed and dedicated.

300. An altar, whether fixed or movable, should be dedicated according to the rite prescribed in the Roman Pontifical; but it is permissible for a movable altar simply to be blessed.

301. In keeping with the Church's traditional practice and with what the altar signifies, the table of a fixed altar should be of stone and indeed of natural stone. In the Dioceses of the United States of America, wood which is dignified, solid, and well-crafted may be used, provided that the altar is structurally immobile. As to the supports or base for supporting the table, these may be made of any material, provided it is dignified and solid.

A movable altar may be constructed of any noble and solid material suited to liturgical use, according to the traditions and usages of the different regions.

302. The practice of the deposition of relics of Saints, even those not Martyrs, under the altar to be dedicated is fittingly retained. However, care should be taken to ensure the authenticity of such relics.

303. In building new churches, it is preferable for a single altar to be erected, one that in the gathering of the faithful will signify the one Christ and the one Eucharist of the Church.

In already existing churches, however, when the old altar is so positioned that it makes the people's participation difficult but cannot be moved without damage to artistic value, another fixed altar, skillfully made and properly dedicated, should be erected and the sacred rites celebrated on it alone. In order that the attention of the faithful not be distracted from the new altar, the old altar should not be decorated in any special way.

304. Out of reverence for the celebration of the memorial of the Lord and for the banquet in which the Body and Blood of the Lord are offered, there should be, on an altar where this is celebrated, at least one cloth, white in color, whose shape, size, and decoration are in keeping with the altar's structure. When, in the Dioceses of the United States of America, other cloths are used in addition to the altar cloth, then those cloths may be of other colors possessing Christian honorific or festive significance according to longstanding local usage, provided that the uppermost cloth covering the mensa (i.e., the altar cloth itself) is always white in color.

305. (Intentionally left blank.)

306. For only what is required for the celebration of the Mass may be placed on the altar table: namely, from the beginning of the celebration until the proclamation of the Gospel, the Book of the Gospels; then from the Presentation of the Gifts until the purification of the vessels, the chalice with the paten, a ciborium, if necessary, and, finally, the corporal, the purificator, the pall, and the Missal.

In addition, arranged discreetly, there should be whatever may be needed to amplify the Priest's voice.

307. The candlesticks required for the different liturgical services for reasons of reverence or the festive character of the celebration (cf. no. 117) should be appropriately placed either on the altar or around it, according to the design of the altar and the sanctuary, so that the whole may be harmonious and the faithful may not be impeded from a clear view of what takes place at the altar or what is placed upon it.

308. Likewise, either on the altar or near it, there is to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, a cross clearly visible to the assembled people. It is desirable that such a cross should remain near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations, so as to call to mind for the faithful the saving Passion of the Lord.

Footnote

[115] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, □no. 91: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 898.

From the *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Chapter 4: Dedication of An Altar: Introduction, nos. 1–11.

Nature and Dignity of the Altar

1. From meditating on God's word, the ancient Fathers of the Church did not hesitate to assert that Christ was the victim, priest, and altar of his own sacrifice. [1] For in the Letter to the Hebrews Christ is presented as the High Priest who is also the living altar of the heavenly temple; [2] and in the Book of Revelation our Redeemer appears as the Lamb who has been sacrificed [3] and whose offering is taken by the holy angel to the altar in heaven. [4]

The Christian Is Also a Spiritual Altar

2. Since Christ, Head and Teacher, is the true altar, his members and disciples are also spiritual altars on which the sacrifice of a holy life is offered to God. The Fathers seem to have this in mind. St. Ignatius of Antioch asks the Romans quite plainly: "Grant me only this favor: let my blood be spilled in sacrifice to God, while there is still an altar ready." [5] St. Polycarp exhorts widows to lead a life of holiness, for "they are God's altar." [6] Among others, St. Gregory the Great echoes these words when he says: "What is God's altar if not the souls of those who lead good lives?... Rightly, then, the heart of the just is said to be the altar of God." [7]

In another image frequently used by the writers of the Church, Christians who give themselves to prayer, offer petitions to God, and present sacrifices of supplication, are the living stones out of which the Lord Jesus builds the Church's altar. [8]

The Altar, Table of the Sacrifice and the Paschal Meal

3. By instituting in the form of a sacrificial meal the memorial of the sacrifice he was about to offer the Father on the altar of the cross, Christ made holy the table where the community would

come to celebrate their Passover. Therefore the altar is the table for a sacrifice and for a banquet. At this table the priest, representing Christ the Lord, accomplishes what the Lord himself did and what he handed on to his disciples to do in his memory. The Apostle clearly intimates this: “The blessing cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ and the bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ. The fact that there is only one loaf means that though there are many of us, we form a single Body because we have a share in this one loaf.” [9]

The Altar, Sign of Christ

4. The Church’s children have the power to celebrate the memorial of Christ and take their place at the Lord’s table anywhere that circumstances might require. But it is in keeping with the eucharistic mystery that the Christian people erect a permanent altar for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper and they have done so from the earliest times.

The Christian altar is by its very nature properly the table of sacrifice and of the paschal banquet. It is:

- a unique altar on which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in mystery throughout the ages until Christ comes;
- a table at which the Church’s children gather to give thanks to God and receive the body and blood of Christ.
-

In every church, then, the altar “is the center of the thanksgiving that the eucharist accomplishes” [10] and around which the Church’s other rites are, in a certain manner, arrayed. [11]

At the altar the memorial of the Lord is celebrated and his body and blood given to the people. Therefore the Church’s writers have seen in the altar a sign of Christ himself. This is the basis for the saying: “The altar is Christ.”

The Altar as Honoring Martyrs

5. All the dignity of the altar rests on its being the Lord’s table. Thus the martyr’s body does not bring honor to the altar; rather the altar does honor to the martyr’s tomb. For it is altogether proper to erect altars over the burial place of martyrs and other saints or to deposit their relics beneath altars as a mark of respect and as a symbol of the truth that the sacrifice of the members has its source in the sacrifice of the Head. [12] Thus “the triumphant victims come to their rest in the place where Christ is victim: he, however, who suffered for us is on the altar; they who have been redeemed by his sufferings are beneath the altar.” [13] This arrangement would seem to recall in a certain manner the spiritual vision of the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation: “I saw underneath the altar the souls of all the people who have been killed on account of the word of God, for witnessing to it.” [14] His meaning is that although all the saints are rightly called Christ’s witnesses, the witness of blood has a special significance that only the relics of the martyrs beneath the altar express in its entirety.

Erecting an Altar

6. It is desirable that in every church there be a fixed altar and that in other places set apart for sacred celebrations there be either a fixed or a movable altar.

A fixed altar is one so constructed that it is attached to the floor so that it cannot be moved; a movable altar can be transferred from place to place. [15]

7. In new churches it is better to erect only one altar so that in the one assembly of the people of God the single altar signifies the one Savior Jesus Christ and the one eucharist of the Church.

But an altar may also be erected in a chapel (somewhat separated, if possible, from the body of the church) where the tabernacle for the reservation of the blessed sacrament is situated. On weekdays when there is a small gathering of people Mass may be celebrated at this altar.

The merely decorative erection of several altars in a church must be entirely avoided.

8. The altar should be freestanding so that the priest can easily walk around it and celebrate Mass facing the people. "It should be so placed as to be a focal point on which the attention of the whole congregation centres naturally." [16]

9. In accordance with received custom in the Church and the biblical symbolism connected with an altar, the table of a fixed altar should be of stone, indeed of natural stone. But, at the discretion of the conference of Bishops, any becoming, solid, and finely wrought material may be used in erecting an altar.

The pedestal or base of the table may be of any sort of material, provided it is becoming and solid. [17]

10. The altar is of its very nature dedicated to the one God, for the eucharistic sacrifice is offered to the one God. This is the sense in which the Church's practice of dedicating altars to God in honour of the saints must be understood. St. Augustine expresses it well: "It is not to any of the martyrs, but to the God of the martyrs, though in memory of the martyrs, that we raise our altars." [18]

This should be made clear to the people. In new churches statues and pictures of saints may not be placed above the altar.

Likewise, when relics of saints are exposed for veneration, they should not be placed on the table of the altar.

11. It is fitting to continue the tradition in the Roman liturgy of placing relics of martyrs or other saints beneath the altar. [19] But the following should be noted.

a) Such relics should be of a size sufficient for them to be recognizable as parts of human bodies. Hence excessively small relics of one or more saints must not be placed beneath an altar.

b) The greatest care must be taken to determine whether the relics in question are authentic.

It is better for an altar to be dedicated without relics than to have relics of doubtful authenticity placed beneath it.

c) A reliquary must not be placed on the altar or set into the table of the altar, but placed beneath the table of the altar, as the design of the altar permits.

When the rite of depositing relics takes place, it is highly recommended to keep a vigil at the

relics of the martyr or saint, in accordance with the provisions of chapter two, no. 10.

Endnotes

- [1] See Epiphanius, *Panarium* 2, 1, *Haeresis* 55: PG 41, 979. Cyril of Alexandria, *De adoratione in spiritu et veritate* 9: PG 68, 647
- [2] See Heb 4:14; 13:10.
- [3] See Rev 5:6.
- [4] See RM, Order of Mass, no. 96.
- [5] Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Romanos* 2:2: Funk PA 1:255.
- [6] Polycarp, *Ad Philippenses* 4:3: Funk PA 1:301.
- [7] Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum in Ezechielem* 10, 19: PL 76, 1069.
- [8] See Origen, *In librum Iesu Nave*, Homilia 9, 1: SC 71, 244 and 246
- [9] See 1 Cor 10:16-17.16 Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar, Introductions
- [10] GIRM, no. 259.
- [11] See Pius XII, Encycl. *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) 529.
- [12] See RM. Common of Martyrs 8, prayer over the gifts.
- [13] Ambrose, *Epistula* 22, 13: PL 16, 1023. See Ps. Maximus of Turin, *Sermo* 78: PL 57, 689-690.
- [14] Rev 6:9.
- [15] See GIRM, nos. 265, 261.
- [16] GIRM, no. 262.
- [17] See GIRM, no. 263/
- [18] Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 20, 21: PL 42, 384.
- [19] See GIRM, no. 266.

From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2: The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There: The Eucharist: The Altar, nos. 56–60.

§ 56 § At the Eucharist, the liturgical assembly celebrates the ritual sacrificial meal that recalls and makes present Christ's life, death, and resurrection, proclaiming “the death of the Lord until he comes.” [70] The altar is “the center of thanksgiving that the Eucharist accomplishes” [71] and the point around which the other rites are in some manner arrayed. [72] Since the Church teaches that “the altar is Christ,” [73] its composition should reflect the nobility, beauty, strength, and simplicity of the One it represents. In new churches there is to be only one altar so that it “signifies to the assembly of the faithful one Christ and the one Eucharist of the Church.” [74]

§ 57 § 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.” [75] Ordinarily, it should be fixed (with the base affixed to the floor) and with a table or mensa made of natural stone, [76] since it represents Christ Jesus, the Living Stone (1 Pt 2:4). The pedestal or support for the table may be fashioned from “any sort of material, as long as it is becoming and solid.” [77] 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. [78] Parishes building new churches must follow the directives of the diocesan Bishop regarding the kind of altar chosen and suitable materials for new altars.

§ 58 § 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 also want to insure that the other major furnishings in the sanctuary are in harmony and proportion to the altar. The mensa should be large enough to accommodate the priest celebrant, the deacon, and the acolytes who minister there and should be able to hold *The Sacramentary* [*The Roman Missal*] and the vessels with the bread and wine. Impact and focal quality are not only related to placement, size, or shape, but also especially to the quality of the altar's design and worthiness of its construction. The altar should be centrally located in the sanctuary and the center of attention in the church.

§ 59 § 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.

§ 60 § In the Church's history and tradition, the altar was often placed over the tombs of the saints or the relics of saints were deposited beneath the altar. The presence of relics of saints in the altar provides a witness to the Church's belief that the Eucharist celebrated on the altar is the source of the grace that won sanctity for the saints. [79] 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. [80]

Endnotes

- [70] 1 Cor 11:26; cf. Rev 19:9.
- [71] See GIRM, no. 296 under **Concerning the Altar** in this document.
- [72] Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei: On the Sacred Liturgy* (November 20, 1947), no. 21.
- [73] RDCA, ch. 4, no. 4 (DOL 547, no. 4401): "Therefore, the Church's writers have seen in the altar a sign of Christ himself. This is the basis for the saying 'the altar is Christ.'" □
- [74] See GIRM, no. 303 under **Concerning the Altar** in this document.
- [75] See GIRM, no. 299 under **Concerning the Altar** in this document.
- [76] RDCA, ch. 4, no. 9 (DOL 547, no. 4406): "In accordance with received custom in the Church and the biblical symbolism connected with an altar, the table of a fixed altar should be of stone, indeed of natural stone. But, at the discretion of the conference of Bishops, any becoming, solid, and finely wrought material may be used in erecting an altar." □ □ Cf. GIRM, no. 301; CIC, cc. 1235 and 1236a. □
- [77] See GIRM, no. 301 under **Concerning the Altar** in this document; Cf. CIC, c. 1236.
- [78] See GIRM, no. 301 under **Concerning the Altar** in this document; Cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Appendix to the General Instruction for the Dioceses of the United States of America* (1975), no. 263.
- [79] Cf. RDCA, ch. 4, no. 5 (DOL 547, no. 4402): "[In the words of Saint Ambrose] the triumphant victims come to their rest in the place where Christ is victim: he, however, who suffered for all is on the altar; they who have been redeemed by his sufferings are beneath the altar."
- [80] RDCA, ch. 4, no. 11c (DOL 547, no. 4408): "A reliquary must not be placed on the altar or set into the table of the altar, but placed beneath the table of the altar, as the design of the altar permits."

Concerning the Ambo

The dignity of the Word of God requires that in the church there be a suitable place from which it may be proclaimed and toward which the attention of the faithful naturally turns during the Liturgy of the Word. It is appropriate that generally their place be a stationary ambo and not simply a movable lectern. The ambo must be located in keeping with the design of each church in such a way that the ordained ministers and readers may be clear seen and heard by the faithful.¹³⁰

According to the General Introduction to the Lectionary, “Great pains must therefore be taken, in keeping with the design of each church, over the harmonious and close relationships of the ambo with the altar.”¹³¹

However, the dignity of the ambo, and its harmonious relationship to the altar, does not mean that it should be the same size as the altar. Indeed, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal states that, “The altar should occupy a place where it is truly the center toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns.”¹³²

From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Chapter 5: The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist, II: Arrangement of the Sanctuary for the Sacred Synaxis: The Ambo, no. 309.

309. The dignity of the Word of God requires that in the church there be a suitable place from which it may be proclaimed and toward which the attention of the faithful naturally turns during the Liturgy of the Word. [116]

It is appropriate that generally this place be a stationary ambo and not simply a movable lectern. The ambo must be located in keeping with the design of each church in such a way that the ordained ministers and readers may be clearly seen and heard by the faithful.

From the ambo only the readings, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) are to be proclaimed; likewise it may be used for giving the Homily and for announcing the intentions of the Universal Prayer. The dignity of the ambo requires that only a minister of the word should stand at it.

It is appropriate that before being put into liturgical use a new ambo be blessed according to the rite described in the Roman Ritual. [117]

Endnotes

[116] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 92: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 899.

[117] Cf. *Rituale Romanum, De Benedictionibus, editio typica*, 1984, *Ordo benedictionis occasione data auspicandi novum ambonem*, nos. 900-918.

¹³⁰ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 309.

¹³¹ Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, 2nd typical ed. (1981) no. 32

¹³² *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 299.

**From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2:
The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There:
The Eucharist: The Ambo, nos. 61–62.**

§ 61 § 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 that saving word and draws the attention of those present to the proclamation of the word. [81] Here the Christian community encounters the living Lord in the word of God and prepares itself for the “breaking of the bread” and the mission to live the word that will be proclaimed. An ample area around the ambo is needed to allow a Gospel procession with a full complement of ministers bearing candles and incense. The *Introduction to the Lectionary* recommends that the design of altar and ambo bear a “harmonious and close relationship” to one another [82] in order to emphasize the close relationship between word and Eucharist. Since many people share in the ministry of the word, the ambo should be accessible to everyone, including those with physical disabilities. [83]

§ 62 § Our reverence for the word of God is expressed not only in an attentive listening to and reflection upon the Scripture, but also by the way we handle and treat the Book of the Gospels. The ambo can be designed not only for reading and preaching, but also for displaying the open Book of the Gospels or a copy of the Scriptures before and after the liturgical celebration. [84]

Endnotes

- [81] Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *General Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass* [GILM] (1998), no. 32: “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. The place for the readings must also truly help the people’s listening and attention during the liturgy of the word. 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.” □□ Cf. GIRM, no. 309: “The dignity of the word of God requires the church to have a place that is suitable for proclamation of the word and is a natural focal point for the faithful during the liturgy of the word.” As a rule the ambo should be stationary, not simply a movable stand. In keeping with the structure of each church, it must be so placed that the ordained ministers and readers may be easily seen and heard by the faithful. “The readings, responsorial psalm and the Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*) are proclaimed only from the ambo.” □
- [82] GILM, no. 32: “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.” □
- [83] The elevation of the ambo, an access without steps, and in situations where it seems feasible, an ambo with a top section that is adjustable in height either manually or electrically will enable all to serve as celebrant, lector, and cantor. □
- [84] It has become customary to provide a place for the permanent display of the Scriptures in the sanctuary area. This can be done using the front of the ambo or another kind of pedestal. □

Concerning the Chair for the Priest Celebrant

Signifying the priest's function "of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer," the chair of the priest celebrant is to be distinct from those places occupied by the faithful and other liturgical ministers; it should never be "remote or grandiose"¹³³ or appear to be a throne. If a seat for the deacon(s) is necessary for the liturgical celebration, it should be placed near the priest celebrant's chair. In the event of a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest, the chair for the priest celebrant is not to be used by a layperson who presides at one of these services.¹³⁴

From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 5: The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist, II: Arrangement of the Sanctuary for the Sacred Synaxis, The Chair for the Priest Celebrant and Other Seats, no. 310.

310. The chair of the Priest Celebrant must signify his function of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer. Thus the more suitable place for the chair is facing the people at the head of the sanctuary, unless the design of the building or other features prevent this: as, for example, if on account of too great a distance, communication between the Priest and the congregation would be difficult, or if the tabernacle were to be positioned in the center behind the altar. In any case, any appearance of a throne is to be avoided. [118] It is appropriate that before being put into liturgical use, the chair be blessed according to the rite described in the Roman Ritual. [119]

Likewise, seats should be arranged in the sanctuary for concelebrating Priests as well as for Priests who are present at the celebration in choir dress but without concelebrating.

The seat for the Deacon should be placed near that of the celebrant. For the other ministers seats should be arranged so that they are clearly distinguishable from seats for the clergy and so that the ministers are easily able to carry out the function entrusted to them. [120]

Endnotes

- [118] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 92: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 898.
- [119] Cf. *Rituale Romanum, De Benedictionibus, editio typica*, 1984, *Ordo benedictionis occasione data auspicandi novam cathedram seu sedem praesidentiae*, nos. 880-899.
- [120] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 92: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 898.

¹³³ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 310; cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 63.

¹³⁴ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 64.

**From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2:
The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There:
The Eucharist: The Chair for the Priest Celebrant, nos. 63–65.**

§ 63 § The chair of the priest celebrant stands “as a symbol of his office of presiding over the assembly and of directing prayer.” [85] 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. The priest celebrant's chair is distinguished from the seating for other ministers by its design and placement. “The seat for the deacon should be placed near that of the celebrant.” [86] In the cathedral, in addition to the Bishop's chair or *cathedra*, which is permanent, an additional chair will be needed for use by the rector or priest celebrant. [87]

§ 64 § “The [most appropriate] place for the chair is at the head of the sanctuary and turned toward the people unless the design of the building or other circumstances [such as distance or the placement of the tabernacle] are an obstacle.” [88] This chair is not used by a lay person who presides at a service of the word with Communion or a Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest. (Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* [1988], no. 40.)

§ 65 § Other chairs may be placed in the sanctuary for the priest concelebrants and other priests present for the celebration in choir dress.

Endnotes

- [85] See GIRM, no. 310 under **Concerning the Chair for the Priest Celebrant** in this document.
[86] *Ibid.*
[87] *Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 47.
[88] GIRM, no. 310.

Concerning the Baptismal Font

According to the Book of Blessings, the baptismal font “should permit baptism by immersion, whenever this is the usage.”¹³⁵ Built of Living Stones states that, “Since baptism in Catholic churches may take place by immersion in the water or by infusion (pouring), fonts that permit all forms of baptismal practice are encouraged.”¹³⁶ The National Statutes for the Catechumenate adds that,

Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacraments and, therefore, provisions should be made for its more frequent use in the baptism of adults. The provision of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for partial immersion, namely, immersion of the candidate’s head should be taken into account.¹³⁷

(The practice of administering Baptism in a font in which a candidate kneels or stands and water is poured over him or her constitutes infusion [pouring] and not partial immersion.)

The location of the baptismal font should express the relationship of Baptism to the other sacraments, especially the Eucharist,¹³⁸ and it should be visible to all who enter the church.¹³⁹ Since the primary furnishings in the sanctuary are the altar, the ambo, and the chair of the priest celebrant, the placement of the baptismal font should not overshadow or distract from them.

From the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Christian Initiation: General Introduction, Requirements for the Celebration of Baptism, no. 25.

25. The baptistery of 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. The baptistery may be situated in a chapel either inside or outside the church or in some other part of the church easily seen by the faithful; it should be large enough to accommodate a good number of people. After the Easter season, the Easter candle should be kept reverently in the baptistery, in such a way that it can be lighted for the celebration of baptism and so that from it the candles for the newly baptized can easily be lighted.

From the Book of Blessings, Chapter 31: Order for the Blessing of a Baptistery or of a New Baptismal Font, Introduction, nos. 1080–1085.

1080. The baptistery or site of the baptismal font is rightly considered to be one of the most important parts of a church. For it is the place for celebrating baptism, the first sacrament of the New Law, through which those who firmly accept Christ in faith, and receive the Spirit of adoption [1] become in name and in fact God’s adopted children. [2] Joined with Christ in a death and resurrection like his, [3] they become part of his Body. [4] Filled with the anointing of

¹³⁵ *Book of Blessings*, no. 1085.

¹³⁶ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 2.

¹³⁷ National Statutes for the Catechumenate, no. 17.

¹³⁸ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, nos. 66, 69.

¹³⁹ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 67.

the Spirit, they become God's holy temple [5] and members of the Church, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." [6]

1081. Because baptism is the beginning of the entire Christian life, every cathedral and parish church ought to have its own baptistery or a special place where the baptismal font flows or is situated. For pastoral reasons and with the consent of the local Ordinary, [7] other churches or chapels may have a baptistery or baptismal font.

1082. In the building of a baptistery or in the setting up of a baptismal font the primary consideration must be the proper and worthy celebration of the rites of baptism, as these are set out in the *Rite of Baptism for Children* and in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

1083. In the case both of a baptistery that is erected apart from the main body of the Church for the celebration of the entire baptismal rite and of a font that is set up within the church itself, everything must be arranged in such a way as to bring out the connection of baptism with the word of God and with the Eucharist, the high point of Christian initiation.

1084. A baptistery separated from the body of the church is to be worthy of the sacrament celebrated there and is to be set aside exclusively for baptism, [8] as befits the place where, from the womb of the Church, so to speak, Christians are reborn through water and the Holy Spirit.

1085. The baptismal font, particularly one in a baptistery, should be stationary, gracefully constructed out of a suitable materials, of splendid beauty and spotless cleanliness; it should permit baptism by immersion, wherever this is the usage. [9] In order to enhance its force as a sign, the font should be designed in such a way that it functions as a fountain of running water; where the climate requires, provision should be made for heating the water. [10]

Endnotes

- [1] See Romans 8:15.
- [2] See 1 John 3:1; John 1:12; Romans 9:8.
- [3] See Romans 6:5.
- [4] See Ephesians 5:30; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:5.
- [5] See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21-22.
- [6] 1 Peter 2:9.
- [7] See Roman Ritual, *Rite of Baptism for Children*, Introduction, no. 11.
- [8] Roman Ritual, *Rite of Baptism for Children: Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 25.
- [9] See *ibid.*, no. 22.
- [10] *Ibid.*, no. 19.

From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2: The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There: The Baptistery, nos. 66–69.

§ 66 § The rites of baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation, require a prominent place for celebration. [89] 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. This integral relationship between the

baptismal font and the altar can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, such as placing the font and altar on the same architectural axis, using natural or artificial lighting, using the same floor patterns, and using common or similar materials and elements of design.

§ 67 § 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. [90] 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. □ □

§ 68 § Water is the key symbol of baptism and the focal point of the font. In this water believers die to sin and are reborn to new life in Christ. In designing the font and the iconography in the baptismal area, the parish will want to consider the traditional symbolism that has been the inspiration for the font's design throughout history. The font is a symbol of both tomb and womb; its power is the power of the triumphant cross; and baptism sets the Christian on the path to the life that will never end, the "eighth day" of eternity where Christ's reign of peace and justice is celebrated.

§ 69 § The following criteria can be helpful when choosing the design for the font:

1. *One font that will accommodate the baptism of both infants and adults symbolizes the one faith and one baptism that Christians share.* The size and design of the font can facilitate the dignified celebration for all who are baptized at the one font.
2. *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 practice are encouraged. [91]
3. *Baptism is a sacrament of the whole Church and, in particular, of the local parish community.* Therefore the ability of the congregation to participate in baptisms is an important consideration.
4. *The location of the baptistry will determine how, and how actively, the entire liturgical assembly can participate in the rite of baptism.*
5. *Because of the essential relationship of baptism to the celebration of other sacraments and rituals, the parish will want to choose an area for the baptistry or the font that visually symbolizes that relationship.* Some churches choose to place the baptistry and font near the entrance to the church. Confirmation and the Eucharist complete the initiation begun at baptism; marriage and ordination are ways of living the life of faith begun in baptism; the funeral of a Christian is the final journey of a life in Christ that began in baptism; and the sacrament of penance calls the faithful to conversion and to a renewal of their baptismal commitment. Placing the baptismal font in an area near the entrance or gathering space where the members pass regularly and setting it on an axis with the altar can symbolize the relationship between the various

sacraments as well as the importance of the Eucharist within the life and faith development of the members.

6. *With the restoration of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults that culminates in baptism at the Easter Vigil, churches need private spaces where the newly baptized can go immediately after their baptism to be clothed in their white garments and to prepare for the completion of initiation in the Eucharist. In some instances, nearby sacristies can serve this purpose.*

Endnotes

[89] See RCIA, no. 25 in the earlier section of this document.

[90] *Ibid.*, no. 213: “Therefore 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. Either immersion or the pouring of water should be chosen for the rite, whichever will serve in individual cases and in the various traditions and circumstances to ensure the clear understanding that this washing is not a mere purification rite but the sacrament of being joined to Christ.”□

[91] *Ibid.*: “Either immersion or the pouring of water should be chosen for the rite, whichever will serve in individual cases and in the various traditions and circumstances to ensure the clear understanding that this washing is not a mere purification rite but the sacrament of being joined to Christ.”□□ Cf. RCIA, National Statutes for the Catechumenate (1986), no. 17: “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. The provision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* for partial immersion, namely, immersion of the candidate's head, should be taken into account.”□

Concerning the Location of the Tabernacle

In the Diocese of Richmond, the bishop permits the placement of the tabernacle according to the two options listed in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

(1) Either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, in a appropriate form and place, not excluding its being positioned on an old altar no longer used for celebration (cf. no. 303); or (2) even in some chapel suitable for the private adoration and prayer of the faithful and organically connected to the church and readily noticeable to the Christian faithful.¹⁴⁰

If the tabernacle is placed in a chapel, the bishop requires that the chapel be prominent, easily located, and directly accessible from the church.

¹⁴⁰ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 315. For additional information concerning the reservation of the Eucharist as it pertains to building and renovations, cf. nos. 314–316; *Built of Living Stones*, nos. 70–80.

**From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 5:
The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist,
III: The Arrangement of the Church:
The Place for the Reservation of the Most Holy Eucharist, nos. 314–317.**

314. In accordance with the structure of each church and legitimate local customs, the Most Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is truly noble, prominent, conspicuous, worthily decorated, and suitable for prayer. [124]

The tabernacle should usually be the only one, be irremovable, be made of solid and inviolable material that is not transparent, and be locked in such a way that the danger of profanation is prevented to the greatest extent possible. [125] Moreover, it is appropriate that before it is put into liturgical use, the tabernacle be blessed according to the rite described in the Roman Ritual. [126]

315. It is more appropriate as a sign that on an altar on which Mass is celebrated there not be a tabernacle in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved. [127] Consequently, it is preferable that the tabernacle be located, according to the judgment of the diocesan Bishop:

- a) either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, in a appropriate form and place, not excluding its being positioned on an old altar no longer used for celebration (cf. no. 303);
- b) or even in some chapel suitable for the private adoration and prayer of the faithful [128] and organically connected to the church and readily noticeable by the Christian faithful.

316. In accordance with traditional custom, near the tabernacle a special lamp, fueled by oil or wax, should shine permanently to indicate the presence of Christ and honor it. [129]

317. In no way should any of the other things be forgotten which are prescribed by law concerning the reservation of the Most Holy Eucharist. [130]

Endnotes

[124] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, May 25, 1967, no. 54: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 568; cf. also Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 95: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 898.

[125] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, May 25, 1967, no. 52: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 568; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 95: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 898; Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments, Instruction, *Nullo unquam tempore*, May 28, 1938, no. 4: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 30 (1938), pp. 199-200; *Rituale Romanum, De sacra Communionem et de cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam, editio typica*, 1973, nos. 10-11; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 938 §3

[126] Cf. *Rituale Romanum, De Benedictionibus, editio typica*, 1984, *Ordo benedictionis occasione data auspicandi novum tabernaculum eucharisticum*, nos. 919-929.

[127] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, May 25, 1967, no. 55: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 569.

[128] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, May 25, 1967, no. 53: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 568; *Rituale Romanum, De sacra Communionem et de cultu*

mysterii eucharistici extra Missam, editio typica, 1973, no. 9; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 938 §2; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Dominicae Cenae*, February 24, 1980, no. 3: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (1980), pp. 117-119.

- [129] Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 940; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, May 25, 1967, no. 57: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 569; *Rituale Romanum, De sacra Communione et de cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam, editio typica*, 1973, no. 11.
- [130] Cf. particularly in Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments, Instruction, *Nullo unquam tempore*, May 28, 1938: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 30 (1938), pp. 198-207; *Code of Canon Law*, cc. 934-944.

**From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2:
The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There:
The Reservation of the Eucharist, nos. 70–80.**

§ 70 § Christ present in the eucharistic species is a treasure the Church has come to cherish and revere over the centuries. The reservation of the Eucharist was originally intended for the communion of the sick, for those unable to attend the Sunday celebration, and as *Viaticum* for the dying. As the appreciation of Christ’s presence in the eucharistic species became more developed, Christians desired through prayer to show reverence for Christ's continuing presence in their midst. For Catholics, eucharistic adoration has “a sound and firm foundation especially since faith in the real presence of the Lord has, as its natural consequence, the outward, public manifestation of that belief.” [92]

§ 71 § The Second Vatican Council led the Church to a fuller understanding of the relationship between the presence of the Lord in the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist and in the reserved Sacrament, and of the Christian’s responsibility to feed the hungry and to care for the poor. 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, and be impelled to live out their relationship in active charity. 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 [93] 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.

§ 72 § The general law of the Church provides norms concerning the tabernacle and the place for the reservation of the Eucharist that express the importance Christians place on the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The *Code of Canon Law* directs that the Eucharist be reserved “in a part of the church that is prominent, conspicuous, beautifully decorated and suitable for prayer.” [94] It directs that regularly there be “only one tabernacle” in the church. [95] It should be worthy of the Blessed Sacrament—beautifully designed and in harmony with the overall decor of the rest of the church. To provide for the security of the Blessed Sacrament the tabernacle should be “solid,” “immovable,” “opaque,” and “locked.” [96] The tabernacle may be situated on a fixed pillar or stand, or it may be attached to or embedded in one of the walls. A special oil lamp or a lamp with a wax candle burns continuously near the tabernacle as an indication of Christ's presence. [97]

§ 73 § 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. Iconography can be chosen from the rich treasury of symbolism that is associated with the Eucharist.

Endnotes

- [92] Congregation for Divine Worship, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* [HCWEOM] (1976), no. 5: “The primary and original reason for reservation of the eucharist outside Mass is the administration of viaticum. The secondary reasons are the giving of communion and the adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ present in the sacrament. The reservation of the sacrament for the sick led to the praiseworthy practice of adoring this heavenly food in the churches. This cult of adoration rests upon an authentic and solid basis, especially because faith in the real presence of the Lord leads naturally to external, public expression of that faith.” □
- [93] SC, no. 48: “The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a proper appreciation of the rites and prayers they should participate knowingly, devoutly, and actively. They should be instructed by God’s word and be refreshed at the table of the Lord’s body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn to offer themselves too. Through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever closer union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.” □
- [94] CIC, c. 938 § 2: “The tabernacle in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved is to be situated in some part of the church or oratory which is distinguished, conspicuous, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer.” □
- [95] Ibid., c. 938 § 1: “The Most Holy Eucharist is to be reserved habitually in only one tabernacle of a church or oratory.” □
- [96] Ibid., c. 938 § 3: “The tabernacle in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved habitually is to be immovable, made of solid and opaque material, and locked in such a way that the danger of profanation is avoided as much as possible.” □ Cf. GIRM, no. 314. □
- [97] HCWEOM, no. 11: “According to traditional usage, an oil lamp or lamp with a wax candle is to burn constantly near the tabernacle as a sign of the honor which is shown to the Lord.” □

The Location of the Tabernacle

§ 74 § There is a number of possible spaces suitable for eucharistic reservation. The revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states that it is more appropriate that the tabernacle in which the “Blessed Sacrament is reserved not be on the altar on which Mass is celebrated.” [98] The Bishop is to determine where the tabernacle will be placed and to give further direction. The Bishop may decide that the tabernacle be placed in the sanctuary apart from the altar of celebration or in a separate chapel suitable for adoration and for the private prayer of the faithful. In making his determination, the Bishop will consider the importance of the assembly’s ability to focus on the eucharistic action, the piety of the people, and the custom of the area. [99] The location also should allow for easy access by people in wheelchairs and by those who have other disabilities.

§ 75 § In exercising his responsibility for the liturgical life of the diocese, the diocesan Bishop may issue further directives regarding the reservation of the Eucharist. Before parishes and their liturgical consultants begin the educational component and the discussion process, it will be important for all those involved to know what specific directives or guidelines the diocesan Bishop has issued. Good communication at the first stage of the process will help to avoid

confusion or conflict between the parish's expectations, the consultant's experience, and diocesan directives.

§ 76 § The pastor, the parish pastoral council, and the building committee will want to examine the principles that underlie each of the options, consider the liturgical advantages of each possibility, and reflect upon the customs and piety of the parishioners. Many diocesan worship offices assist parishes by facilitating the study and discussion process with the parish. This is also an area where liturgical consultants can be of great assistance to the parish.

Footnote

[98] See GIRM, no. 315 under **Concerning the Location of the Tabernacle** in this document.

The Chapel of Reservation

§ 77 § The diocesan Bishop may direct the parish to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in a chapel separate from the nave and sanctuary but “integrally connected with the church” and “conspicuous to the faithful.” [100] The placement and design of the chapel can foster reverence and can provide the quiet and focus needed for personal prayer, and it should provide kneelers and chairs for those who come to pray.

§ 78 § Some parishes have inaugurated the practice of continuous adoration of the Eucharist. If, for some good reason, perpetual exposition must take place in a parish church, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has directed that this take place in a separate chapel that is “distinct from the body of the church so as not to interfere with the normal activities of the parish or its daily liturgical celebration.” [101]

Endnotes

[100] See GIRM, no. 315 under **Concerning the Location of the Tabernacle** in this document.

[101] Cf. Response of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments Regarding Perpetual Exposition of the Eucharist published in the June 1995 issue of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' *BCL* [Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy] *Newsletter*, p. 21: “Because perpetual exposition is a devotional practice of a religious community or a pious association, it should normally take place in a chapel of that religious community or association. If for some good reason perpetual exposition must take place in a parish church, it should be in a chapel distinct from the body of the church so as not to interfere with the normal activities of the parish or its daily liturgical celebration. When Mass is celebrated in a chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, the Eucharist must be replaced in the tabernacle before the celebration of Mass begins.”

The Tabernacle in the Sanctuary

§ 79 § A special area can be designed within the sanctuary. Careful planning is needed so that the placement chosen does not draw the attention of the faithful away from the Eucharistic celebration and its components. [102] In addition, the placement must allow for a focus on the tabernacle for those periods of quiet prayer outside the celebration of the Eucharist.

§ 80 § Ordinarily, it is helpful to have a sufficient distance to separate the tabernacle and the altar. When a tabernacle is located directly behind the altar, consideration should be given to using distance, lighting, or some other architectural device that separates the tabernacle and reservation area during Mass, but that allows the tabernacle to be fully visible to the entire worship area when the Eucharistic liturgy is not being celebrated.

Footnote

- [102] EM, no. 55 (DOL 179, no. 1284): “It is more in keeping with the nature of the celebration [of the Eucharist] that, through reservation of the sacrament in the tabernacle, Christ not be present eucharistically from the beginning on the altar where Mass is celebrated.”

Concerning the Location for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance

Built of Living Stones, citing the Code of Canon Law, indicates that the Sacrament of Penance is to be celebrated in the church.¹⁴¹ According to the complementary norm regarding the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance in the United States,

Provision must be made in each church or oratory for a sufficient number of places for sacramental confessions which are clearly visible, truly accessible, and which provide a fixed grille between the penitent and the confessor. Provision should also be made for penitents who wish to confess face-to-face.¹⁴²

Since the Sacrament of Penance is a constant reminder of God forgiveness, its location “can assist penitents on the path to contrition and sorrow for sin and to proclaim their reconciliation with God and the community of faith.”¹⁴³

From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2: The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There: The Role of the Church Building in Other Liturgical Rites: The Rite of Penance or Reconciliation, nos. 103–105.

§ 103 § In the sacrament of penance, God forgives sins and restores broken relationships through the ministry of the Church. The Rite of Penance does not describe the place for the celebration of the sacrament except to say that it be in the space “prescribed by law.” [124] The *Code of Canon Law* designates a church or an oratory as “the proper place” for the celebration of the sacrament of penance [125] and requires a screen or fixed grille between penitent and confessor to insure the anonymity of those who wish it. [126] Canon 964 further directs conferences of Bishops to issue more specific norms. 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. [127]

¹⁴¹ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 103; *Code of Canon Law*, canon 964 §1.

¹⁴² National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Complementary Norm to Canon 964*, §2 (2000).

¹⁴³ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 104.

§ 104 § By its design, furnishings, and location within the church building, the place for reconciliation can assist penitents on the path to contrition and sorrow for sin and to proclaim their reconciliation with God and the community of faith.

§ 105 § In planning the reconciliation area, parishes will want to provide for a sound-proof place with a chair for the priest and a kneeler and chair for the penitent. Since the rite includes the reading of Scripture, the space should also include a bible. [128] Appropriate artwork, a crucifix symbolic of Christ's victory over sin and death, icons or images reflective of baptism and the Eucharist, or Scriptural images of God's reconciling love help to enhance the atmosphere of prayer. Warm, inviting lighting welcomes penitents who seek God's help and some form of amplification as well as braille signs can aid those with hearing or visual disabilities. Additional rooms or spaces will be needed as confessional areas for communal celebrations of penance, especially in Advent and Lent.

Endnotes

- [124] Congregation for Divine Worship, *Rite of Penance* [OP] (1974), no. 12: "The sacrament of penance is celebrated in the place and location prescribed by law." □
- [125] CIC, c. 964 § 1: "The proper place to hear sacramental confessions is a church or oratory." □
- [126] Ibid., c. 964 § 2: "The conference of Bishops is to establish norms regarding the confessional: it is to take care, however, that there are always confessionals with a fixed gate between penitent and the confessor in an open place so that the faithful who wish to can use them freely." □
- [127] Complementary legislation approved at the November 1999 meeting of the NCCB: "The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the prescriptions of canon 964 and the approved liturgical rite, hereby decrees the following norms governing the place for sacramental confessions: Provision must be made for a place for sacramental confessions which is clearly visible, truly accessible, and which provides a fixed grille between the penitent and confessor. Provision must also be made for those instances when the penitent wishes to confess face-to-face." □
- [128] OP, no. 17: "Then the priest, or the penitent himself, may read a text of holy Scripture, or this may be done as part of the preparation for the sacrament. Through the word of God the Christian receives light to recognize his sins and is called to conversion and to confidence in God's mercy." □

Concerning the Placement of Pastoral Musicians

The cantor and choir have unique roles, which include leading the assembly in song. Their location should "express that they are part of the assembly of worshipers,"¹⁴⁴ and should permit them to participate fully in the Mass.¹⁴⁵ Whereas the ambo is normally used for singing the Responsorial Psalm,¹⁴⁶ the cantor stand should be distinct from it.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, "Occasions or physical situations may necessitate that the choir be placed in or near the sanctuary. In such circumstances, the placement of the choir should never crowd or overshadow the other ministers in the sanctuary nor should it distract from the liturgical action."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 89.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 312.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 61, 309.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Built of Living Stones*, no. 89.

¹⁴⁸ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 90.

**From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 5:
The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist,
III: The Arrangement of the Church:
The Place for the *Schola Cantorum* and the Musical Instruments, nos. 312–313.**

312. The schola cantorum (choir) should be so positioned with respect to the arrangement of each church that its nature may be clearly evident, namely as part of the assembled community of the faithful undertaking a specific function. The positioning should also help the choir to exercise this function more easily and allow each choir member full sacramental participation in the Mass in a convenient manner. [122]

313. The organ and other lawfully approved musical instruments should be placed in a suitable place so that they can sustain the singing of both the choir and the people and be heard with ease by everybody if they are played alone. It is appropriate that before being put into liturgical use, the organ be blessed according to the rite described in the Roman Ritual. [123]

In Advent the use of the organ and other musical instruments should be marked by a moderation suited to the character of this time of year, without expressing in anticipation the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord.

In Lent the playing of the organ and musical instruments is allowed only in order to support the singing. Exceptions, however, are Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities, and Feasts.

Endnotes

[122] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Musicam sacram*, March 5, 1967, no. 23: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 307.

[123] Cf. *Rituale Romanum, De Benedictionibus, editio typica*, 1984, *Ordo benedictionis organi*, nos. 1052-1067.

**From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2:
The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There:
Accommodating the Liturgical Postures of the Congregation:
The Place for the Pastoral Musicians, nos. 88–90.**

§ 88 § 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. [108]

§ 89 § It is important to recognize that the building must support the music and song of the entire worshipping assembly. In addition, “some members of the community [have] special gifts [for] leading the [assembly in] musical praise and thanksgiving.” [109] The skills and talents of these pastoral musicians, choirs, and instrumentalists are especially valued by the Church. Because the roles of the choirs and cantors are exercised within the liturgical community, the space chosen for the musicians should clearly express that they are part of the assembly of worshippers. [110] In addition, cantors and song leaders need visual contact with the music

director while they themselves are visible to the rest of the congregation. [111] Apart from the singing of the Responsorial Psalm, which normally occurs at the ambo, the stand for the cantor or song leader is distinct from the ambo, which is reserved for the proclamation of the word of God.

§ 90 § The directives concerning music found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the guidance offered by *Music in Catholic Worship* and *Liturgical Music Today* [112] can assist the parish in planning appropriate space for musicians. 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. Occasions or physical situations may necessitate that the choir be placed in or near the sanctuary. In such circumstances, the placement of the choir should never crowd or overshadow the other ministers in the sanctuary nor should it distract from the liturgical action.

Endnotes

- [108] MCW, no. 23; GIRM, no. 103: “The *schola cantorum* or choir exercises its own liturgical function among the faithful. Its task is to ensure that the parts proper to it, in keeping with the different types of chants, are carried out becomingly and to encourage active participation of the people in the singing. What is said about the choir applies in a similar way to other musicians, especially the organist.”□
- [109] National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Liturgical Music Today* (1982), no. 63: “The entire worshiping assembly exercises a ministry of music. Some members of the community, however, are recognized for the special gifts they exhibit in leading the musical praise and thanksgiving of Christian assemblies. These are the pastoral musicians, whose ministry is especially cherished by the Church.”□
- [110] See GIRM, no. 294 under **Concerning the Church Building** in this document.
- [111] Cf. MCW, nos. 33-38.□
- [112] Cf. the section in chapter four of this document on “Placement of the Organ and Other Musical Instruments.”

Chapter 4: Building a Church: Practical Considerations: The Design of the Church and Its Surroundings: Special Concerns: The Placement of the Organ and Other Musical Instruments, nos. 226–227.

§ 226 § Musical instruments, especially the pipe organ, have long added to the beauty and prayerfulness of Catholic worship. [198] 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. This includes the design of the organ casework, if such is used, or the placement of the pipes of large instruments. 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 or competing with the other artwork and iconography. The placement of the organ also must ensure that the instrumentalists have a clear visual connection with the director of music and, if necessary, with the cantor or leader of song.

§ 227 § 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.

Footnote

- [198] SC, no. 120: “In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument, and one that adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to heavenly things. But other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship, with the knowledge and consent of the competent territorial authority, as laid down in Articles 22, § 2; 37 and 40. This may be done, however, only on condition that the instruments are suitable for sacred use, or can be made so, that they accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.”

Concerning Sacred Images

According to the Book of Blessings, “The Church encourages the devout veneration of sacred images by the faithful, in order that they may see more deeply into the mystery of God's glory. For that glory has shone in the face of Christ and is reflected in his saints, who have become ‘light in the Lord’ [Ephesians 5:8].”¹⁴⁹ Therefore, the placement of sacred images should allow the faithful the opportunity for veneration.¹⁵⁰ This can be a challenge for a parish, as sometimes there are various cultural traditions in the community, each with its own devotional practices. A parish should exhibit restraint concerning “the number and prominence of sacred images.”¹⁵¹ As the General Introduction of the Roman Missal suggests, “there should usually be only one image of any given Saint.”¹⁵² in the church. Finally, sacred images should not be located in such a place where they draw the attention of the faithful away from the liturgy and “foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy.”¹⁵³

From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 5: The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist, III: The Arrangement of the Church: Sacred Images, no. 318.

318. In the earthly Liturgy, the Church participates, by a foretaste, in that heavenly Liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem, toward which she journeys as a pilgrim, and where Christ is seated at the right hand of God; and by venerating the memory of the Saints, she hopes one day to have some share and fellowship with them. [131]

Thus, in sacred buildings images of the Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saints, in accordance with most ancient tradition of the Church, should be displayed for veneration by the faithful [132] and should be so arranged so as to lead the faithful toward the mysteries of faith celebrated there. Care should, therefore, be taken that their number not be increased indiscriminately, and moreover that they be arranged in proper order so as not to draw the attention of the faithful to themselves and away from the celebration itself.[133] There should usually be only one image of any given Saint. Generally speaking, in the ornamentation and

¹⁴⁹ *Book of Blessings*, no. 1258.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 318.

¹⁵¹ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 137.

¹⁵² *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 318.

¹⁵³ Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 125

arrangement of a church, as far as images are concerned, provision should be made for the devotion of the entire community as well as for the beauty and dignity of the images.

Endnotes

- [131] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 8.
- [132] Cf. *Pontificale Romanum, Ordo Dedicacionis ecclesiae et altaris, editio typica*, 1977, chapter IV, no. 10; *Rituale Romanum, De Benedictionibus, editio typica*, 1984, *Ordo ad benedicendas imagines quae fidelium venerationi publicae exhibentur*, nos. 984-1031.
- [133] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 125.

From the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 36: Order for the Blessing of Images for Public Veneration by the Faithful, Introduction, nos. 1257–1258.

1257. God made us in his own image and likeness, [21] but by sinning we disfigured this image. By dying out of love, Christ, the full and complete “image of the invisible God,” [22] restored in us the divine image. Those who follow Christ become in him a new creation [23] and are being transformed into his image [24] by the working of the Holy Spirit.

1258. The Church encourages the devout veneration of sacred images by the faithful, in order that they may see more deeply into the mystery of God’s glory. For that glory has shone in the face of Christ [25] and is reflected in his saints, who have become “light in the Lord.” [26]

In many instances sacred images are masterpieces of art, noble in inspiration and resplendent with the beauty that goes out from God and leads back to him. For the faithful such images recall our Lord and the saints whom they depict, but they also in some way lead the faithful back to the Lord and the saints themselves. “The more often we gaze on these images, the quicker we who behold them are led back to their prototypes in memory and in hope.” [27]

Accordingly, the veneration of images ranks among the chief and important forms of the *cultus* that is due to the saints. [28] Images are venerated “not because of a belief that these images themselves possess anything of divinity and power, but because the honor shown them is directed to the prototypes they represent.” [29]

Endnotes

- [21] See Genesis 1:26-27.
- [22] Colossians 1:15.
- [23] See 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- [24] See 2 Corinthians 3:18.
- [25] See 2 Corinthians 4:6; Matthew 17:2.
- [26] Ephesians 5:8.
- [27] Council of Nicaea II, Act. 7: Mansi 13, 378; Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, no. 601.
- [28] See SC, art. 111.
- [29] Council of Trent, sess. 25: Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, no. 1823.

**From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2:
The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There:
The Church Building and Popular Devotions: Sacred Images, nos. 135–138.**

§ 135 § Reflecting the awareness of the Communion of Saints, the practice of incorporating symbols of the Trinity, images of Christ, the Blessed Mother, the angels, and the saints into the design of a church creates a source of devotion and prayer for a parish community and should be part of the design of the church. [154] Images can be found in stained glass windows, on wall frescos and murals, and as statues and icons. Often these images depict scenes from the bible or from the lives of the saints and can be a source of instruction and catechesis as well as devotion. Since the Eucharist unites the Body of Christ, including those who are not physically present, the use of images in the church reminds us that we are joined to all who have gone before us, as well as to those who now surround us.

§ 136 § In choosing images and devotional art, parishes should be respectful of traditional iconography when it comes to the way sacred images are recognized and venerated by the faithful. However, they also should be mindful that the tradition is not limited to literal images. While Mary is the mother of Jesus, she is also an icon of the Church, a disciple of the Lord, a liberated and liberating woman. She is the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States, and Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of all America. Other symbols such as the crucifix, icons, or images of patron saints depicted in various ways can also draw us into the deeper realities of faith and hope as they connect us to the stories behind the image. [155]

§ 137 § The placement of images can be a challenge, especially when a number of cultural traditions are part of a single parish community and each has its own devotional life and practices. Restraint in the number and prominence of sacred images [156] is encouraged to help people focus on the liturgical action that is celebrated in the church. Separate alcoves for statues or icons can display a variety of images through the year. Some parishes designate an area as the shrine for an image that is being venerated on a given day or for a period of time, such as the image of a saint on his or her feast day.

§ 138 § It is important that the images in the church depict saints for whom devotion currently exists in the parish. It is particularly desirable that a significant image of the patron of the church be fittingly displayed, as well as an image of Mary, the Mother of God, as a fitting tribute to her unique role in the plan of salvation. As time passes and demographics change, saints who were once the object of veneration by many parishioners may at another time be venerated by only a few. When this happens, these images could be removed, provided sensitivity is shown with regard to the piety of the faithful and the impact on the building.

Endnotes

- [154] Cf. BB, no. 1258: “The Church encourages the devout veneration of sacred images by the faithful, in order that they may see more deeply into the mystery of God's glory. For that glory has shown in the face of Christ and is reflected in his saints, who have become ‘light in the Lord.’”□
- [155] Cf. BB, no. 1258, quoting the Second Council of Nicea, Act. 7, as cited in Mansi 13, 378 and Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, no. 601: “For the faithful such images recall our Lord and the saints whom they depict, but they also in some way lead the faithful back to the Lord and the saints themselves. ‘The more often we gaze on these images, the quicker we who behold them are led back to their prototypes in memory and in hope.’”□
- [156] SC, no. 125: “The practice of placing sacred images in churches so that they may be venerated by

the faithful is to be firmly maintained. Nevertheless their number should be moderate and their relative locations should reflect right order. Otherwise they may create confusion among the Christian people and promote a faulty sense of devotion.” □

Concerning the Cross

*Either on the altar or near it, there is to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, a clearly visible to the assembled people. It is desirable that such a cross remain near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations, so as to call to mind for the faithful the saving Passion of the Lord.*¹⁵⁴

While it is permissible to place a cross on the altar, one large enough for the assembly to see “might well obstruct the view of the action taking place on the altar; other alternatives may be more appropriate.”¹⁵⁵ The crucifix may be “suspended over the altar or affixed to the sanctuary wall.”¹⁵⁶

**From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Chapter 4:
The Different Forms of Celebrating Mass, I:
Mass with the People: Mass without a Deacon, The Introductory Rites, no. 122.**

122. When they reach the altar, the Priest and ministers make a profound bow.

The cross adorned with a figure of Christ crucified, and carried in procession, may be placed next to the altar to serve as the altar cross, in which case it must be the only cross used; otherwise it is put away in a dignified place. As for the candlesticks, these are placed on the altar or near it. It is a praiseworthy practice for the Book of the Gospels to be placed on the altar.

See GIRM, no. 308, under **Concerning the Altar** in this document.

**From the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 35:
Order for the Blessing of a New Cross for Public Veneration, no. 1233.**

1233. Of all sacred images, the “figure of the precious, life-giving cross of Christ is pre-eminent, because it is the symbol of the entire paschal mystery. The cross is the image most cherished by the Christian people and the most ancient; it represents Christ’s suffering and victory and at the same time, as the Fathers of the Church have taught, it points to his Second Coming.”

¹⁵⁴ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 308.

¹⁵⁵ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 91.

¹⁵⁶ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 91.

**From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2:
The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There:
Other Ritual Furnishings: The Cross, no. 91.**

§ 91 § The cross with the image of Christ crucified is a reminder of Christ’s paschal mystery. It draws us into the mystery of suffering and makes tangible our belief that our suffering when united with the passion and death of Christ leads to redemption. [113] There should be a crucifix “positioned either on the altar or near it, and . . . clearly visible to the people gathered there.” [114] Since a crucifix placed on the altar and large enough to be seen by the congregation might well obstruct the view of the action taking place on the altar, other alternatives may be more appropriate. The crucifix may be suspended over the altar or affixed to the sanctuary wall. A processional cross of sufficient size, placed in a stand visible to the people following the entrance procession is another option. If the processional cross is to be used for this purpose, the size and weight of the cross should not preclude its being carried in procession. If there is already a cross in the sanctuary, the processional cross is placed out of view of the congregation following the procession. [115]

Endnotes

- [113] See BB, no. 1233 under **Concerning the Cross** in this document.
[114] See GIRM, no 308 under **Concerning the Altar** in this document.
[115] See GIRM, no. 122 under **Concerning the Cross** in this document.

Accommodating Liturgical Postures: Kneeling

In the construction of a new church, “Kneelers or kneeling cushions should also be provided so that the whole congregation can easily kneel when the liturgy calls for it.”¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, when an existing church, oratory, or chapel is renovated in the Diocese of Richmond, it must be retrofitted with kneelers.

See GIRM, no. 311, under **Concerning the Nave** in this document.

**From *Built of Living Stones*, Chapter 2:
The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There:
Accommodating the Liturgical Postures of the Congregation, nos. 85–86.**

§ 85 § The location set aside for the people will convey their role within the liturgical assembly. [116] The members of the congregation should be able to see the ministers at the altar, the ambo, and the chair.

§ 86 § Since the liturgy requires various postures and movements, the space and furniture for the congregation should accommodate them well. [117] Styles of benches, pews, or chairs can be found that comfortably accommodate the human form. Kneelers or kneeling cushions should also be provided so that the whole congregation can easily kneel when the liturgy calls for it.

¹⁵⁷ *Built of Living Stones*, no. 86; cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 43 regarding those instances when the faithful are required to kneel.

Parishes will want to choose a seating arrangement that calls the congregation to active participation and that avoids any semblance of a theater or an arena. It is also important that the seating plan provide spaces for an unimpeded view of the sanctuary by people in wheelchairs or with walkers. Experience indicates that space in the front or at the sides of the church is better than in the rear where a standing congregation obscures the view of those seated in wheelchairs at the back of the church.

Endnotes

- [116] See GIRM, no. 294 under **Concerning the Church Building** in this document.
[117] See GIRM, no. 311 under **Concerning the Nave** in this document.

ABBREVIATIONS

BB	<i>Book of Blessings</i> (1989)
BLS	<i>Built of Living Stones</i> (2001)
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> , 2 nd edition (2000)
CIC	<i>Code of Canon Law</i> (in Latin: <i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i>) (1983)
EM	<i>Eucharisticum mysterium</i> (1967)
GIRM	<i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i> , 3 rd typical edition (2010)
GILM	<i>General Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass</i> , 2 nd typical edition (1981)
HCWEOM	<i>Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass</i> (1973)
OP	<i>Rite of Penance</i> (in Latin: <i>Ordo Paenitentiae</i>) (1973)
RCIA	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i> (1988)
RDCA	<i>Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar</i> (1977)
RM	<i>Roman Missal</i> , 3 rd typical edition (2010)
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> (1963)

*Lord,
you built a holy Church,
founded upon the apostles
with Jesus Christ its cornerstone.
Grant that your people,
gathered in your name,
may fear and love you
and grow as the temple of your glory.
May they always follow you,
until, with you at their head,
they arrive at last in your heavenly city.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Rite of Laying the Foundation Stone or Beginning Work on Building a Church, Rite of Blessing: Approach to the Construction Site, no. 13.

APPENDIX II: DIOCESAN FORMS

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RICHMOND FORM CT1545

(Revised 07-01-2014)

Date: _____

Parish Name: _____ Location # _____

Project Title: _____ Est. Cost \$ _____

Pastor: _____

Contact Person (If other than the pastor): _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Building Type (church, school, rectory, social hall, or other): _____

Project Type (new construction, addition, renovation, or maintenance): _____

Current Funds Available for Project: _____

Is this project being funded by a Capital Campaign? YES NO

If yes, is an exemption from the Cathedral Tax being requested? YES NO

On a separate sheet, please provide a description of the project. Include the following:

- ◆ A discussion of the needs to be addressed by the project.
- ◆ The intended capacity (for example, number of seats or classrooms)
- ◆ The vision of how the project might relate to the other parish facilities.
- ◆ A discussion of the extent of parish involvement to date (committees and at-large).
- ◆ A description of professional consultation (architects or engineers) to date.
- ◆ A description of the project's financial plan, i.e., sources and uses of funds
- ◆ Other information that would be helpful for understanding to project.

Name and Title (Please Print)

Signature

Date

**PLEASE SEND TO REV. ROBERT J COLE, BARC - COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AT
frrob@sjavb.org OR 1968 SANDBRIDGE ROAD, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23456**

Thank you for this information.

A diocesan representative will contact you to assist with the subsequent steps in the process.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH DIOCESAN PROCEDURES FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Undersigned pastor, administrator, the architect, contractor, intending to cooperatively under-take a construction project at _____, _____, Virginia, and we do hereby certify that we have received and read the document entitled *Diocesan Construction and Renovation Policy* and hereby agree to all terms and conditions contained therein.

In witness hereof, our signatures affixed hereto.

Print Pastor/Administrator's Name

Signature Date

Print Architect's Name, if applicable

Architect's Signature Date

Print General Contractor's Name, if applicable

General Contractor's Signature Date

**PARISH/SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

As a member of the Parish/School Building Committee of _____,
I hereby declare that neither I nor any member of immediate family will be financially or materially engaged in any manner connected with any contract or bid for furnishing supplies, materials, services, and/or equipment of any kind to _____ as part of the building project for which I am serving as an advisor. Further, neither I nor any member of my immediate family have accepted or shall accept or receive, directly or indirectly, by rebate, gift or otherwise, any money or other things of value whatsoever from any person, firm or corporation to whom any contract may be awarded. Finally, neither I nor any member of my immediate family have accepted or shall receive any promise, obligation or contract for future reward or compensation from any such party.

I certify that I have read and understand the above statement.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

PROJECT COST SUMMARY SHEET

Parish/School Name:				
Project:				
Date:				
Item	Cost	Amt. Paid	Amt. Unpaid	Totals
Feasibility Study and Related Costs				
Site Evaluation Costs				
Land Acquisition				
Land Development and Improvement Costs				
Architectural Fees				
Engineering Fees				
Bonding Costs				
License, Utility, Permit, etc. Costs				
Land I Approval				
Construction Management Costs				
Other Costs (specify _____)				
Construction Costs				
Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment				
Total (estimated) Cost				
Diocesan Contingency Provision (10% /5% of costs)				
Total Cost Including Contingency				
Cash-On-Hand Requirement (50% of Amount Unpaid)				
Actual Cash-On-Hand				
Maximum Loan Amount				

SPACE USE AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This form is being distributed to the leaders of all parish groups and programs to collect information about the kind and frequency of use of various facilities of the parish. The survey requests information about current use as well as about projected use. Please complete this assessment and return it to _____ no later than _____.

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ALL RESPONSES.

Name of Group/Program: _____
 Person Completing Survey: _____
 Phone: (____) _____ Date Completed: _____

Section A: Size of Group/Program

A.1. How many active participants are there currently in your group/program? _____

A.2. How does this number compare with that from five years ago? (*Check only one response*)
 ___ Larger than 5 years ago ___ About the same as 5 years ago ___ Smaller than 5 years ago

Section B: Regular Use

B.1 How often does your group or program meet on a regular basis? ? (*Check only one response*)
 ___ () days a week ___ 3 or 4 times a year
 ___ Once a week ___ Once a year
 ___ Once a month ___ Other (specify): _____

B.2. What is the average attendance of these regular meeting? _____

B.3. Where in the parish plant does your group or program meet [Specify the building(s) and rooms(s)]?

B.4 How adequate is: [place a checkmark (√) in the appropriate box]

	Very Adequate	Mostly Adequate	Somewhat Adequate	Less than Adequate	Not at All Adequate
Size of space					
Kind of space					
Setup of space					
Furnishings					

B.5. If the size of, kind of, setup for, or furnishings in the space you use are “Less than Adequate,” or “Not at All Adequate,” please specify what is needed but not available.

Section C: Occasional Use

C.1. Does your group or program use parish space for occasional events and activities beyond regular meetings?

____ Yes (complete C.2. thru C.6) ____ No (skip to Section D)

C.2. What is the purpose of this occasional gathering?

C.3. What is the average attendance at this occasional meeting?

C.4. Where does your group or program meet [Specify the name of the building(s) and room(s)]?

C.5. How adequate are: [place a checkmark (√) in the appropriate box]

	Very Adequate	Mostly Adequate	Somewhat Adequate	Less than Adequate	Not at All Adequate
Size of Space					
Kind of Space					
Setup of Space					
Furnishings					

C.6. If the size of, kind of, setup for, or furnishings in, the space you use are “Less than Adequate,” or “Not at All Adequate,” please specify what is needed but not available.

Section D: Evaluation

D.1. Indicate for your **group or program** how adequate present facilities are for each item listed below by placing a checkmark (✓) in the appropriate box.

	Very Adequate	Mostly Adequate	Somewhat Adequate	Less than Adequate	Not at All Adequate
Storage Space					
Cloakroom Space					
Parking Space					
Accessibility for persons with disabilities					
Lavatory accessibility					
Kitchen, Food Service					
Sound Equipment					
Lighting					
Seating Arrangements					
Furnishings					
Special Facilities <i>(describe below)</i>					

Describe any special facilities here: _____

D.2. For any “Less than Adequate” or Not at All Adequate” response, describe the kind(s) of need(s) not being met.

Section E: Outside Facilities

E.1. Does your group or program ever use facilities outside of the parish because of space limitations at your parish plant?

____ Yes (complete E.2. & E.3.) ____ No (skip to Section F)

E.2. How often does your group or program use outside space?

() days a week 3 or 4 times a year

_____ Once a week _____ Once a year

_____ Once a month _____ Other (specify): _____

E.3. Does your group or program formally lease this outside space for its activities or meetings?

_____ Yes (complete E.4.) _____ No (skip to Section F)

E.4. Describe the formal rental or lease arrangements.

Section F: Unmet Needs

F.1. Is your group or program hampered in expanding or beginning new activities because of space limitations?

_____ Yes (complete F.2.) _____ No (skip to Section G)

F.2. Describe activities that cannot be offered and the space needs those activities demand.

Section G: General Comments:

What other comments about your group or program and the space/facilities they require would you like to share?

Thank you for your help.

CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond
Construction In Progress - Monthly Financial Report

Description	Original Budget	Change Orders	Revised Budget	Paid Previous Period	Paid Current Period	Paid to Date	Amount Remaining
Architect	\$ 50	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ 40	\$ 5	\$ 45	\$ 5
General conditions	30		30	20	-	20	10
Site	40	5	45	40	0	40	5
Construction	700	30	730	600	50	650	80
Furnishings	100	5	105	10	20	30	75
Professional Fees	20		20	10	5	15	5
Permits	10		10	10	-	10	-
Contingency	50	(40)	10	-	-	-	10
Total	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 730	\$ 80	\$ 810	\$ 190

Description:

The *Construction in Progress Monthly Financial Report* is a tool that should be used in larger construction projects, especially when the project involves multiple construction industry firms (i.e., architects, contractors, engineers, etc.), and when the project will extend over a period of months. Unlike other parish financial reports that relate to a fiscal-year period ending on June 30, this tool may be used to span fiscal years.

The above is an example of a \$1 million project that is 81 percent complete. In this example, there have been \$40,000 in change orders, but note that the change orders have not increased the budget beyond the original \$1 million amount because of the contingency. This example allows the pastor or administrator to know that as of the end of this month, \$190,000 will remain in the budget.

APPENDIX III: RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Insurance

All construction and renovation projects on diocesan properties must be performed by licensed contractors who are fully insured. Prior to the start of any such project, we shall secure from the contractor a *Certificate of Insurance* that provides evidence of the following insurance coverage:

1. General Liability
2. Workers' Compensation
3. Automobile Liability (when applicable)

Certificates of Insurance should verify the above types of insurance. In addition, the certificate should name the diocesan location as an "Additional Insured" and not just as the Certificate Holder.

It is recommended that for any major construction / renovation project that the Certificate of Insurance show \$2,000,000 of per occurrence coverage for General Liability and Automobile Liability. The Diocese can require less than a \$2,000,000 limit depending on the nature of the project and such should be discussed with the Office of Risk Management.

The need for Workers' Compensation insurance on the part of the contractor is the same for all projects.

Agreements / Contracts

Whether the job is major or minor, renovation or repair, installation or service, all projects should have written agreements. These agreements should clearly state which party to the agreement is responsible for damage or loss to property or injury to others. In order to protect the interests of the Diocese, all contracts should clearly state what the contractor will be responsible for in the event of a loss. We encourage diocesan locations to use a standard *Addendum to Construction Contract* (attached) for larger (over \$10,000) construction and renovation projects. On smaller projects of less than \$10,000 we can use the attached *Addendum to Service Contract*which can also be used for agreements with basic service providers. We also encourage diocesan locations to submit a copy of any contract to the Office of Risk Management for review. The Office of Risk Management can work with the location in having unfavorable contract language neutralized in order to arrive at a final agreement that is fair to all parties concerned.

APPENDIX IV: ROLES IN THE PROCESS

CHURCH OFFICIALS AND ADVISORY BODIES

BISHOP — has final and ultimate approval of all extraordinary expenditure of funds and major construction

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER — makes recommendations and provides advice regarding the financial feasibility of the proposed major construction project (e.g., the ability of the parish to amortize its debt)

COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS — advises and make recommendations to the Bishop regarding major construction and expenditure of monies

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE — provides professional consultation services and resources to parishes in developing capital campaigns to finance major parish construction

DIOCESAN BUILDING AND RENOVATION COMMISSION (BARC) — advises the Bishop in areas of architecture, construction and engineering

PARISH BUILDING COMMITTEE — maintains significant responsibility for the consultation, educational components as well the oversight of the actual building or renovation process

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL — advises pastor and parish in matters of limits of funding, debt amortization and financial campaigns

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL — assists the pastor with pastoral planning and coordination in the parish

PASTOR — shepherds the community through the various stages of discernment, planning, fundraising and building

REAL ESTATE OFFICE — prepares and/or reviews all legal documents related to major construction projects

VICAR GENERAL — coordinates the operation of the bishop's administrative staff in providing advice and information to the Bishop and his consultative bodies

WORSHIP OFFICE — provide consultation services and advice on major construction projects involving the construction or renovation of churches

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS/FIRMS

ACOUSTICAL ENGINEER — evaluates architectural designs and advises parish on matters of acoustics

ARCHITECT — offers design plans to the parish

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER — Provides managerial oversight of a construction project

ENGINEER — provides technical expertise in areas of design and construction, including electrical, mechanical, structural and civil engineering

GENERAL CONTRACTOR — oversees the major construction of the church or building and works with various engineers to implement parish plans

LIGHTING CONSULTANT — advises parish on matters of lighting

LITURGICAL DESIGN CONSULTANT — assists the pastor, staff and entire parish with continuing education about the importance, role and value of worship and the impact of the church building upon worship; works with the architect

APPENDIX V: GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

AIA — American Institute of Architects

ALTAR — Table on which the Sacrifice of Christ is effected, and consequently bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, in the celebration of Mass. The altar represents Christ.

AMBO — Special lectern from which, during the Liturgy of the Word, the biblical readings, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel, Homily, and Prayer of the Faithful are read (see **LECTERN**).

AMBRY — Structure that contains the sacred oils use in liturgical celebrations.

ARCHITECTURAL STAGES — Typically, an architect's services comprise five phases: (1) schematic design, (2) design development, (3) construction documents, (4) bidding and negotiation, and (5) construction.

BAPTISTERY — Designated area in the church where Baptism is celebrated, and where the baptismal font is located.

BAPTISMAL FONT — Structure that holds the water for Baptism; this structure is to be fixed within a baptistery.

CHANGE ORDERS — Requests for changes in construction after the original contract is signed; change orders may result in either additional costs or reductions to the parish, depending upon the change(s).

CHAPEL — A sacred building designated for divine worship for the benefit of one or more persons; it is private.

CHURCH — A sacred building designated for divine worship for the benefit of all members of the Christian faithful.

CODE OF CANON LAW The principal body of law for the Catholic Church.

CREDENCE TABLE A small side table which hold the sacred vessels and linens used in the celebration of Mass.

GUARANTEED MAXIMUM PRICE (GMP) — Guaranteed price on construction only for contract specifications. If something unforeseen occurs, such as soil excavation or change orders, the GMP will either increase of decrease.

INCLUSION — The value and effort to provide opportunities for all persons to fully participate in natural settings regardless of their abilities.

LECTERN — A stand in a church from which a cantor sings the Entrance, Communion, and Recessional Chants, and from which announcements are made. (See **AMBO**.)

NAVE — The area of a church reserved for worshippers

NARTHEX — The gathering space or interior vestibule of a church.

ORATORY — A sacred building designated for divine worship for the benefit of a particular community; this is typically what is meant by the term “chapel.” (See **CHAPEL**.)

PERFORMANCE BOND — Funds that must be deposited by a contractor or architect to ensure that he or she will deliver the contracted services.

PRIEST CELEBRANT’S CHAIR — Chair from which the priest presides over Mass and other liturgical rites.

RECONCILIATION ROOM — The area of the church designated for celebration of the Sacrament of Penance (Confession or Reconciliation).

SACRARIUM — The basin drain in which sacred materials are poured, such as the rinse water from the cleaning of sacred vessels following Mass. The sacrarium empties directly into the ground.

SACRISTY — The room attached to the church that houses items used in the divine worship, such as vestments and sacred vessels.

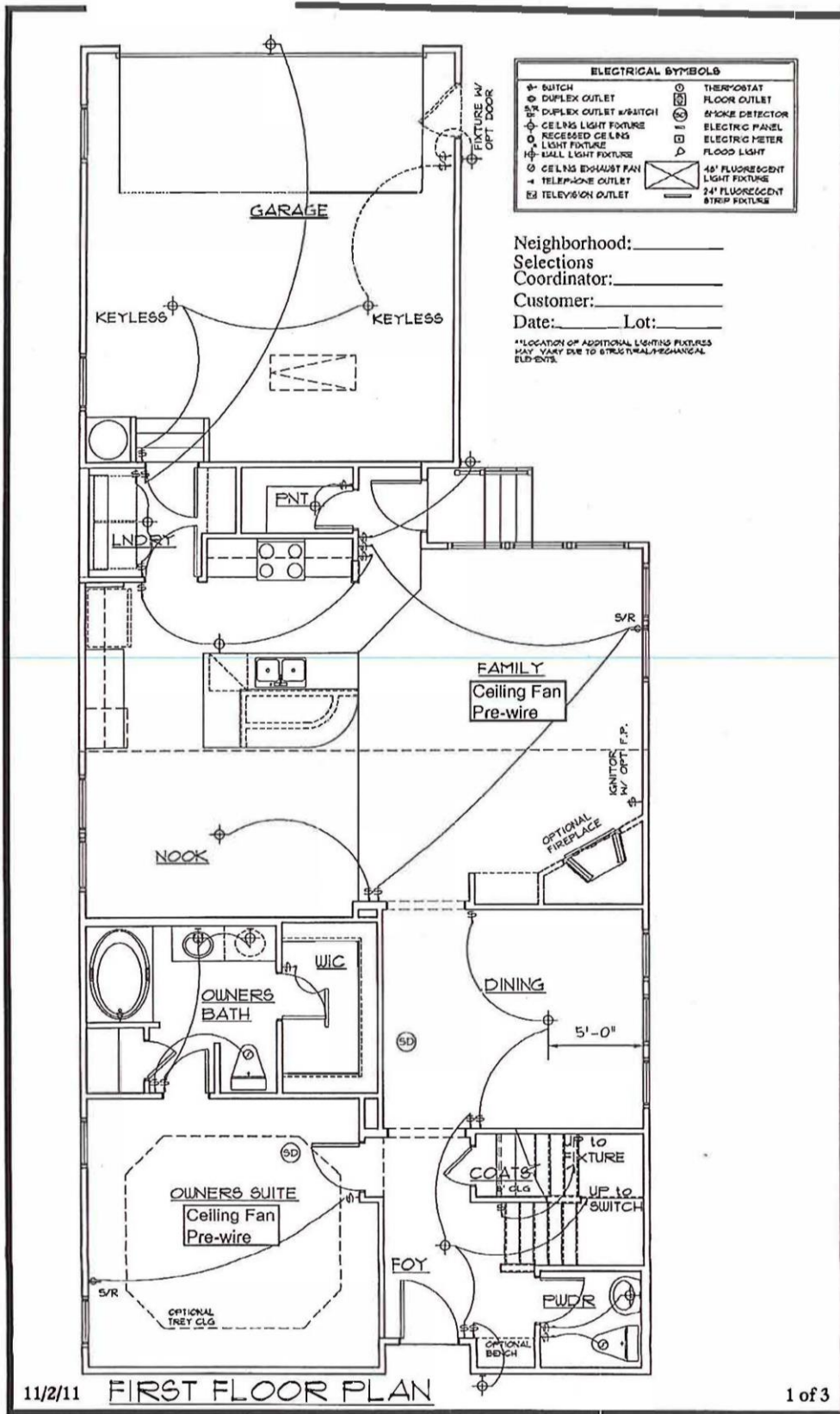
SANCTUARY — The space in a church reserved for the altar, ambo, tabernacle, and the priest celebrant’s chair.

TABERNACLE — The structure which the Eucharist is reserved.

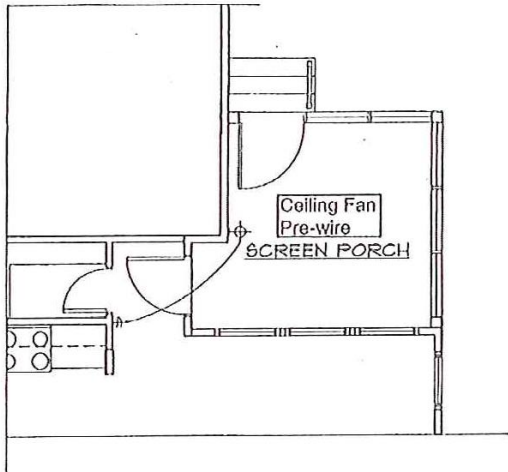
APPENDIX VI: RECTORY OVERVIEW

The following drawings serve as guidelines for square footage and minimum specifications for a rectory. These plans have been implemented in the diocese, and the resulting rectory has functioned well as a residence for two priests (including accommodations for visitors). All rectories should have at minimum a one-car garage and a first-floor master bedroom. The Office of Real Estate can furnish additional drawings per request.

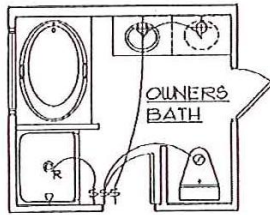
NORGE/WILLIAMSBURG RECTORY



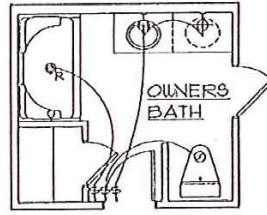
Norge/Williamsburg Rectory



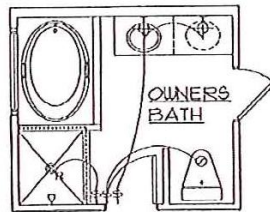
OPT SCREEN PORCH



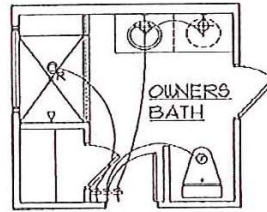
OWNERS BATH #1
OPTIONAL BOARDING T.O.D. W/ FG. 6102.ER



OWNERS BATH #2
OPTIONAL 5' FG. 6102.ER



OWNERS BATH #3
OPTIONAL BOARDING T.O.D. W/ CT. 6102.ER



OWNERS BATH #4
OPTIONAL 5' CT. 6102.ER

Norge/Williamsburg Rectory

