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## **Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship**

*Guidelines of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops*

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## Preface

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. By bringing together these personal and ecclesial elements in faith and in charity, parishioners help to build a new structure and to renew their parish community.

The decision-making process and the parish education component that are part of the building experience can assist the parish and its individual members to deepen their sense of Catholic identity. This identity is shaped by the history of the particular parish, by its relationship to other parishes in the local Church known as the diocese, and by its relationship within the communion of local Churches known as the Roman Catholic Church.

*Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship* is presented to assist the faithful involved in the building or renovation of churches, chapels, and oratories of the Latin Church in the United States. In addition, the document is intended for use by architects, liturgical consultants and artists, contractors, and other professionals engaged in the design and/or construction of these places of worship. The text also may be helpful to those who wish to understand the Catholic Church's tradition regarding church buildings, the arts, and architecture. While the suggestions and guidelines within the document 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 also can become the foundation for the development of diocesan guidelines and legislation governing liturgical art and architecture.<sup>1</sup>

Catholics who live and worship in the United States in the twenty-first century celebrate a liturgy that is the same as that of earlier generations in all its essentials but significantly different in its language, style, and form. Recent shifts in the visual arts and in building styles as well as the development of new materials and sound amplification systems have created both opportunities and challenges for those engaged in the building and renovation of places for worship.

To be able to make specific recommendations about building and renovation projects, parish members need to understand the nature of the liturgy, the space it requires, and the ways in which the physical building can help or hinder worship. Because of the spectrum of ideas, opinions, spiritualities, and personal preferences present in every parish, the assistance of church documents and teachings and of consultants and facilitators is beneficial in the processes of learning and making decisions. With such assistance, parish leaders and members can develop the skills needed for building consensus and resolving conflicts.

The challenges of building or renovating church buildings increase as the Church grows. The richness of ethnic and cultural groups in the Church in the United States today presents opportunities as we strive to become truly "catholic." The Church seeks to integrate and utilize each culture's strength in accomplishing Christ's mission to bring the Gospel to every person and to proclaim—through all the concerns of daily life—the abiding love and presence of God in the world.<sup>2</sup>

In 1962 Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council to help the Church renew its sense of mission. The first of the conciliar documents, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, articulated the goals of the Council and, in keeping with those goals, established general principles for the reform and promotion of the sacred liturgy. In addition to mandating that liturgical books and rites be revised,<sup>3</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* called for the revision of legislation governing the material elements involved in the liturgy, particularly the construction of places of worship and altars, the placement of the tabernacle and the baptistry, and the use of images and decoration.<sup>4</sup>

In the thirty-five years following the Second Vatican Council, both the Apostolic See and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops have issued documents to implement the provisions of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 128. In 1977 the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship issued the revised Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar. In addition to the norms in the recently revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, pertinent documents have been issued by Vatican congregations concerning the care of the Church's artistic heritage, artists and the arts, and vesture.<sup>5</sup>

In the United States, the committee statement *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship* was published by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy in 1978.<sup>6</sup> This statement has had a profound impact on the building and renovation of parish churches in the United States. Parish communities have studied, discussed, and disagreed about the document; many liturgical design consultants have utilized the text in parish education programs; and architects have tried to transform the underlying principles and theology into brick and mortar, stone and glass. Twenty-two years after the publication of *Environment and Art*, the bishops of the United States present a new document on church art and architecture that builds on and replaces *Environment and Art* and addresses the needs of the next generation of parishes engaged in building or renovating churches. *Built of Living Stones* reflects our understanding of the liturgy, of the role and importance of church art and architecture, and of the integral roles of the local parish and the diocese that enter into a building or renovation project.

This document has been approved by the bishops of the Latin Church of the United States and issued by the authority of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on November 16, 2000. *Built of Living Stones* contains many of the provisions of universal law governing liturgical art and architecture and offers pastoral suggestions based upon the experience of the last thirty-five years. The document presents guidelines that can serve as the basis for diocesan bishops to issue further guidelines and directives for their dioceses. Where the document quotes or reiterates norms from liturgical books and the *Code of Canon Law*, those prescriptions are binding on local communities and dioceses.

The document begins with a theological reflection on the liturgy and liturgical art and architecture. Since decisions about church art and architecture should always be based upon the theology of the eucharistic assembly and its liturgical action and the understanding of the Church as the house of God on earth, the first chapter is foundational for the chapters that follow. The second chapter outlines the liturgical principles for parish communities to apply when building or renovating liturgical space, and it reviews the spatial demands of the major liturgical celebrations during the year. The third chapter offers suggestions for including art in places of worship and for choosing artists and artistic consultants. The fourth and final chapter describes the practical elements involved in the building or renovation process, including the development of a master plan, the design process, the development of a site plan, and the role of professionals in the process. A section on the special issues involved in the preservation and restoration of artworks and architecture has been included.



## Key to Reference Abbreviations

BB	<i>Book of Blessings</i>
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici: Code of Canon Law</i>
CT	<i>Catechesi Tradendae: On Catechesis in Our Time</i>
DD	<i>Dies Domini: Observing and Celebrating the Day of the Lord</i>
DOL	<i>Documents on the Liturgy, 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts</i>
EACW	<i>Environment and Art in Catholic Worship</i>
EM	<i>Eucharisticum Mysterium: On Worship of the Eucharist</i>
GILM	<i>General Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass</i>
GIRM	<i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i>
HCWEOM	<i>Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass</i>
IRL	<i>Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy</i>
LA	<i>Letter to Artists</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church</i>
MCW	<i>Music in Catholic Worship</i>
MF	<i>Mysterium Fidei: On the Doctrine and Worship of the Eucharist</i>
OA	<i>Opera Artis: On the Care of the Church's Historical and Artistic Heritage</i>
OCF	<i>Order of Christian Funerals</i>
OP	<i>Ordo Paenitentiae: Rite of Penance</i>
PCEF	<i>[Circular Letter Concerning] the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts</i>
PO	<i>Presbyterorum Ordinis: Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests</i>
PW	<i>The Place of Worship: Pastoral Directory on the Building and Reordering of Churches</i>
RCIA	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i>
RDCA	<i>Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar</i>
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy</i>



## Chapter One

### The Living Church

#### **The Living Church: God's Building**

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."<sup>7</sup>

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."<sup>8</sup> 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."<sup>9</sup>

From the altar of the cross Christ accomplished our redemption,<sup>10</sup> forming a holy people, a "temple of God built of living stones, where the Father is worshiped in spirit and in truth."<sup>11</sup> 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.

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.<sup>12</sup> The sacred liturgy is a window to eternity and a glimpse of what God calls us to be.

#### **The Church Building**

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."<sup>13</sup> 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.



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.<sup>14</sup> 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."<sup>15</sup> As such, the building itself becomes "a sign of the pilgrim Church on earth and reflects the Church dwelling in heaven."<sup>16</sup> 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.

Churches, therefore, must be places "suited to sacred celebrations," "dignified," and beautiful.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

### **Worship in Time and Space**

Liturgy is "the participation of the People of God in 'the work of God.'"<sup>20</sup> It is the "exercise of the priestly office of Jesus" in which God is worshiped and adored and people are made holy.<sup>21</sup> God begins the work of sanctifying people in time and space and brings that work to completion. Those who respond to God in worship and in service are given the privilege of becoming co-workers in the divine plan.<sup>22</sup>

The Church marks *time* as holy by setting aside Sunday and by celebrating the Liturgical Year with its rhythm and seasons. It demonstrates God's reign over all *space* by dedicating buildings to house the Church and its worship. Each Sunday the baptized are challenged to rest from their daily labors, to contemplate the goodness of God, to make present the victory and triumph of Christ's death (SC, no. 6), to enter the joy of the Risen Lord, to receive the life-giving breath of the Spirit, and to commit themselves to serve those in need. Sunday affirms both the primacy of God and the dignity of the person.<sup>23</sup> While the worship of God is not limited to any one place, Christians build churches to shelter the liturgical assembly that praises God and celebrates the sacraments through which the Church is sanctified.

The liturgy is the perfect expression of the Church, "the summit toward which [all the Church's] activity is directed" and the source of all her power.<sup>24</sup> In the New Testament, the term *liturgy* is intimately connected with the proclamation of the Good News and with active charity.<sup>25</sup> Through baptism and confirmation, Christians share in Christ's priesthood which they exercise through their worship of God and their vocation of service to others. At the Eucharist, Christ calls his members to conversion in the proclamation of the word; he invites them to join with him in offering his perfect sacrifice to the Father; and he sends them forth from liturgy to serve the community in charity. Liturgical participation commits a person to a life of faithful discipleship. "Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others."<sup>26</sup>

### **Christ's Presence in Sign and Symbol**

In the liturgical assembly, Christ's presence is realized<sup>27</sup> in all the *baptized* who gather in his name, in the *word of God* proclaimed in the assembly, in the person of the *priest* through whom Christ offers himself to the Father and gathers the assembly, in *sacramental celebrations*, and especially, in the *Sacrament of his Body and Blood*.<sup>28</sup> In building a house for the Church that is also the house of God on earth, all the expressions of Christ's presence have prominence of place that reflects their proper nature.

Among these, the eucharistic species is accorded supreme prominence.<sup>29</sup> From the very beginning of the planning and design process, parishes will want to reflect upon the relationship of the altar, the ambo, the tabernacle, the chair of the priest celebrant, and the space for congregation.

Gestures, language, and actions are the *physical, visible, and public* expressions by which human beings understand and manifest their inner life. Since human beings on this earth are always made of flesh and blood, they not only will and think, but also speak and sing, move and celebrate. These human actions as well as physical objects are also the signs by which Christians express and deepen their relationship to God.<sup>30</sup>

Jesus himself used physical signs to manifest his union with the Father and to reveal his mission to the world. Jesus was baptized in the waters of the Jordan River, he fed the multitudes with bread, healed the sick with his touch and forgave sinners. He was anointed with oil, he shared a Passover meal with his disciples, and he surrendered his body to death on the cross. Christ, the incarnate one, used material signs to show to humanity the invisible God.<sup>31</sup>

Christ, taking on human flesh, reveals the Father. "No one has ever seen God" (1 Jn 4:12). The only begotten Son, living in the Father's heart, has revealed him. Indeed, Jesus said, "Whoever sees me sees the one who sent me" (Jn 12:45). Christ is himself the sacrament of the Father. In his risen glory, he is no longer visible in this world and Leo the Great testifies that "What has been visible of our Savior has passed over into the sacraments": *Quod igitur conspicuum fuit Salvatoris Nostri in sacramenta transivit* (*Sermo. 74, 2: PL 54, 398*). And so washing and anointing, breaking the bread and sharing the cup, raising arms in blessing and imposing hands are *visible* signs by which Christ manifests and accomplishes our sanctification and salvation in the Church.<sup>32</sup> To the central signs and word, the Church adds gestures and material elements such as incense, ashes, holy water, candles, and vestments to dispose us for the heavenly gifts of our crucified and Risen Lord and to deepen our reverence for the unceasing mercy and grace that come to us in the Church through the passion and death of Jesus, our Lord.

Just as Christ invited those who heard him to share his personal union with the Father through material signs, so Christ leads the Church through these same signs in the liturgy from the visible to the invisible.<sup>33</sup> As a result, effective liturgical signs have a teaching function and encourage full, conscious, and active participation, express and strengthen faith, and lead people to God. Poorly utilized or minimal signs do not enliven the community's faith and can even diminish active participation.<sup>34</sup> It must likewise be kept in mind that the liturgy and its signs and symbols do not exercise merely a teaching function. They also touch and move a person to conversion of heart and not simply to enlightenment of mind.

### **Liturgical Principles for Building or Renovating Churches**

The basic liturgical principles for designing and renovating churches today are drawn from the Second Vatican Council and the documents that implemented its decrees.<sup>35</sup> 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.

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*.

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.<sup>36</sup> 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.

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."<sup>37</sup>

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.<sup>38</sup> Such participation, both internal and external, is the faithful's "right and duty by reason of their baptism."<sup>39</sup> 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.
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.<sup>40</sup> While all the members are called to participate in worship, not all have the same role.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>

**The Church** is a holy people, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, whose members give thanks to God and offer the sacrifice of Christ. Together, they take part in the liturgy conscious of what they are doing, with reverence and full involvement. They are instructed by God's word and nourished at the Table of the Lord's Body; they are formed day by day into an ever more perfect unity with God and with each other—they are sent forth for the transformation of society, so that finally God may be all in all. And by offering "Christ, the Victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him," they learn to offer themselves.<sup>43</sup>

**The bishop** is the high priest, the principal dispenser of the mysteries of God, and the director, promoter, and guardian of the entire liturgical life of the particular Church.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, every authentic celebration of the liturgy is directed by the bishop, either in person or through the priests who assist him.<sup>45</sup> Within the process of building or renovating a church, the diocesan bishop has an irreplaceable role and final responsibility. The construction of a new church requires the permission of the bishop, who must consult and determine that the building will contribute to the spiritual welfare of the faithful, and that the parish has the necessary means to build and care for the church.<sup>46</sup>

**Priests** are consecrated to "celebrate divine worship and sanctify the people."<sup>47</sup> The priest "stands at the head of the faithful people gathered together, presides over its prayer, proclaims the message of salvation, joins the people to himself in offering the sacrifice to God the Father through Christ in the Spirit, gives his brothers and sisters the bread of eternal life, and shares in it with them."<sup>48</sup> As the one who presides, he always prays in the name of the Church and of the community gathered together. As the leader and representative of the local parish, the pastor takes the lead in the building process, keeps the local parish in communication with the bishop and other diocesan officials, and helps to draw the parishioners together in the decision-making process.

**A variety of ministries** serve the assembly at the liturgy. First among the ministers is the deacon.<sup>49</sup> Some faithful have been installed in the ministries of lector or acolyte. Others serve as readers, altar servers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, cantors, musicians, and sacristans.<sup>50</sup> As members of the Church, each person forms an essential and distinct part of the assembly that is gathered by God in an "organic and hierarchical" way.<sup>51</sup> Each minister, ordained or lay, is called upon to fulfill his or her role and only that role in the celebration of the liturgy.<sup>52</sup>

By its design and its furnishings, the church reflects this diversity of roles. The one who presides, those who proclaim God's word, the ministers of music, those who assist at the altar, and members of the congregation all play an integral part in the public prayer of the Church. The design of the church should reflect the unity of the entire assembly and at the same time insure that each person is able to exercise his or her ministry in a space that fully accommodates the ritual action called for by that ministry. Careful attention to the placement of the individuals and groups who comprise the liturgical assembly can manifest and enhance their relationship with one another and with the entire body.

4. *The church building respects the culture of every time and place.* The Roman rite respects cultural differences and fosters the genius and talents of the various races and peoples.<sup>53</sup> This cultural diversity can be expressed in architectural styles, in art forms, and in some instances in the celebration of liturgical rites with appropriate adaptations.

Just as each local community is different, styles and forms of churches will vary. The New Testament speaks of the upper room where Christ gathered the apostles for the Last Supper and appeared to them after the resurrection, and where the Holy Spirit descended on the Blessed Virgin and the Twelve at Pentecost. After the Lord's ascension, believers gathered in homes for the celebration of the "breaking of the bread."<sup>54</sup> Such homes evolved into "house churches" and became the Christian community's earliest places for worship. The unique forms and architecture of the Roman and Byzantine world provided the Church with an architectural language in the form of the basilica. With its long nave and an apse for the bishop and clergy, the basilica quickly became a standard architectural form for churches of the West. The effect of these architectural forms is still reflected in the structure of our liturgical life today.

The rich history of Catholic worship space traces a path through every people and place where the liturgy has been offered. Innumerable monasteries, cathedrals, and parish churches stand as witnesses to an organic growth of the liturgical and devotional life of the Church throughout the world. Since the Church is not wedded to a single architectural or artistic form, it seeks to engage the genius of every time and place, to craft the finest praise of God from what is available.<sup>55</sup> The rich dialogue between the Church's liturgy, as a singular expression of divine revelation, and a local culture is an essential ingredient in the evangelization of peoples and the celebration of the Roman Catholic liturgy in a given time and place. The liturgy is proclaimed, celebrated and lived in all cultures in such a way that they themselves are not abolished by it, but redeemed and fulfilled.<sup>56</sup>

Inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian message within particular cultures which have their own sense, artistic expressions, vocabulary and grammar, and conceptual frameworks.<sup>57</sup> All ancient and modern evangelizing strategies in art and architecture are acts of inculturation to enable church buildings to proclaim the creative and redemptive meaning of the Gospel in every time and place.

When the Gospel was first brought to America, it arrived clothed with expressions of European Christian culture and piety. Grateful for these invaluable gifts, the Church in America slowly, and often reluctantly, developed an appreciation for native music, language, and art and accepted them for use in the service of the liturgy. Today the Church in the United States is again exploring how to translate the Gospel and to build churches in conversation with complex, secularized cultures that have sometimes rejected religion and attempted their own forms of human transcendence through intricate electronic modes of communication, art, and architecture.<sup>58</sup> Secular cultures in industrial and post-industrial countries have been particularly difficult to evangelize since they often treat human dignity selectively, attempting to control the mystery that animates the human thirst for meaning and purpose, and ignore those who do not fit their economic or social purpose. The Gospel requires that particular care be taken to welcome into the Church's assembly those often discarded by society—the socially and economically marginalized, the elderly, the sick, those with disabilities, and those with special needs. In building a church, every diocese and parish must wrestle with these and other complex questions raised by the Church's mission to evangelize contemporary cultures.

Parishes in the United States today often find their places of worship shared by people of varied languages and ethnic backgrounds and experience vast differences in styles of public worship and personal devotion. What can sustain Christian communities in this challenge of hospitality is the realization that a pluralism of symbolic, artistic, and architectural expression enriches the community.<sup>59</sup>

5. *The church building should be beautiful.* The external and internal structure of the church building should be expressive of the dignified beauty of God's holy people who gather there and of the sacred rites they celebrate. Liturgical art and architecture reflect and announce the presence of the God who calls the community to worship and invite believers to raise their minds and hearts to the One who is the source of all beauty and truth. Art or architecture that draws more attention to its own shape, form, texture, or color than to the sacred realities it seeks to disclose is unworthy of the church building.<sup>60</sup>

The Church's great treasury of art and architecture helps it to transcend the limitations of any one culture, region, or period of time.<sup>61</sup> The Church is not exclusively identified with the forms of the past, but is ever open to embrace newer forms that nonetheless have grown organically from her rich heritage of artistic expression. Great religious art fosters the life of prayer of contemporary assemblies who, while rooted in prior artistic traditions, hear God's unceasing call to proclaim the reign of Christ in the languages of a particular time and place. Every artistic form that is at once capable of faithfully expressing sacred realities and serving the Church's liturgical action with the highest quality of the arts can find a home in the Church's house of prayer.<sup>62</sup>



## Chapter Two

### The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There

The church building houses the community of the baptized as it gathers to celebrate the sacred liturgy. By its practical design and beauty it fosters the full, dignified, and graceful celebration of these rites. The primary concern in the building or renovation of a space for worship must be its suitability for the celebration of the Eucharist and other liturgical rites of the Church. Consequently, the fundamental prerequisite for those engaged in the building or renovation of a church is familiarity with the rites to be celebrated there.

The prayer life of the Church is richly diverse. The eucharistic liturgy, the other sacraments, and the Liturgy of the Hours are sacred actions surpassing all others. The praise and thanksgiving, which are at the heart of the Eucharist, are continued in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. The Liturgy of the Hours is the Church's daily liturgical prayer that expresses the nature of the praying Church and is, itself, a sign of the Church.<sup>63</sup> In addition to their participation in communal prayer, Christ's followers deepen their relationship with God through private prayer, which flows from the liturgy. Thus, the Church encourages popular devotions that "harmonize with the liturgical seasons" and "lead people to [the liturgy]."<sup>64</sup> Besides its primary role of providing a suitable place for the celebration of the liturgical rites, the church building also offers a place to which individuals may come to pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and in which groups of the faithful may gather for a rich variety of devotions expressive of the faith life of a given culture, region, or ethnic community.

This chapter is intended to help a community fulfill its role in designing a place that readily accommodates all these needs. In new construction, parishes usually have several options for various elements of design. Sometimes those options are limited by the space or terrain, or by financial resources. And sometimes, as in the case of renovation, there are additional limits imposed by the existing structure. This chapter reviews the spatial demands of the various liturgical rites and offers principles for choosing among the various options. Many dioceses have developed their own procedures and guidelines for the building and renovation of churches. The principles in this document should guide dioceses in the writing of local directives.

#### **The Eucharist**

The celebration of the Eucharist is the center of the entire Christian life, both for the universal Church and for local faith communities. The other sacraments, like every other ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are linked with the Holy Eucharist and have it as their end.<sup>65</sup> The celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is the appropriate starting point for understanding the demands of space, sound, and visibility made upon a church building. An analysis of these requirements will include attention to the place for the congregation, for the preaching of the word, and for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, with special care for the location of the altar, the ambo, and the chairs for the priest celebrant and deacon, as necessary. Considerations about the narthex and the environment of the

building flow from the central action of the Eucharist. The celebration of the Easter Vigil and of the Sunday Eucharist are appropriate starting points. In addition, special consideration should be given to the place for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

### **The Building: The Place for the Liturgical Assembly Gathered as One Body in Christ:**

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."<sup>66</sup> 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."<sup>67</sup> 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."<sup>68</sup>

**The Congregation's Area:** 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.

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.

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.

**The Sanctuary Area:** 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.<sup>69</sup> 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.

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.

**The Altar:** 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."<sup>70</sup> The altar is "the center of thanksgiving that the Eucharist accomplishes"<sup>71</sup> and the point around which the other rites are in some manner arrayed.<sup>72</sup> Since the Church teaches that "the altar is Christ,"<sup>73</sup> 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."<sup>74</sup>

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."<sup>75</sup> Ordinarily, it should be fixed (with the base affixed to the floor) and with a table or mensa made of natural stone,<sup>76</sup> 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."<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup> Parishes building new churches must follow the directives of the diocesan bishop regarding the kind of altar chosen and suitable materials for new altars.

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.

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.

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.<sup>79</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup>

**The Ambo:** 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.<sup>81</sup> 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 an "harmonious and close relationship" to one another<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup>

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.<sup>84</sup>

**The Chair for the Priest Celebrant:** The chair of the priest celebrant stands "as a symbol of his office of presiding over the assembly and of directing prayer."<sup>85</sup> 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."<sup>86</sup> 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.<sup>87</sup>

"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."<sup>88</sup> 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.)

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

## **The Baptistry**

The rites of baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation, require a prominent place for celebration.<sup>89</sup> 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.

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.<sup>90</sup> 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.

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.

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.<sup>91</sup>
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.

## **The Reservation of the Eucharist**

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."<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> 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.

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."<sup>94</sup> It directs that regularly there be "only one tabernacle" in the church.<sup>95</sup> 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."<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup>

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.

**The Location of the Tabernacle:** 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."<sup>98</sup> 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.<sup>99</sup> The location also should allow for easy access by people in wheelchairs and by those who have other disabilities.

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.

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.

**The Chapel of Reservation:** 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."<sup>100</sup> 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.

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."<sup>101</sup>

**The Tabernacle in the Sanctuary:** 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.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the placement must allow for a focus on the tabernacle for those periods of quiet prayer outside the celebration of the Eucharist.

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.

### **Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum**

Passion (Palm) Sunday 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 (Mt 21:1-11). For the cathedral church, the additional consideration of elements of the stational (i.e. pontifical) liturgies should be part of the planning. The Paschal Triduum is the heart of the liturgical year. When designing the church, the rites of the Triduum should be reviewed to insure that planning will provide space for the key elements of the Triduum: an area for the washing of the feet, a location for the Altar of Reposition after the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, space for the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday, a site for the Blessing of the Fire and the Lighting of the Paschal Candle, and space for the catechumens to be baptized and for candidates for admission to full membership to stand if they are admitted at the Vigil.

**The Altar of Reposition:** 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.<sup>103</sup> If there is no reservation chapel, then a space for reposition with a tabernacle should be prepared for the occasion.

**The Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday:** The celebration of the Lord's passion on Good Friday has its particular spatial requirements. After the proclamation of the passion and the General Intercessions, the entire assembly rise to venerate the cross or crucifix.<sup>104</sup> The cross used for the veneration preferably should be of sufficient size to be held easily, be carried in procession, and be venerated. After the veneration, the cross remains in the sanctuary.

**The Blessing of the Fire at the Vigil Service:** 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 darkness and light up the night" is needed to achieve the full symbolism of the fire."<sup>105</sup> 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.

### **Accommodating the Liturgical Postures of the Congregation**

The location set aside for the people will convey their role within the liturgical assembly.<sup>106</sup> The members of the congregation should be able to see the ministers at the altar, the ambo, and the chair.

Since the liturgy requires various postures and movements, the space and furniture for the congregation should accommodate them well.<sup>107</sup> 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. 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.

**Seating:** There are no universal norms regarding fixed or flexible seating but the diocesan bishop may issue further directives in this area. Many churches have found that a combination of fixed and flexible seating works best to accommodate the various liturgical actions. Ideally, no seat in the nave would be located beyond a point where distance and the lighting level of the sanctuary severely impede the view of and participation in liturgical actions. In earlier periods churches designed for large congregations were limited by engineering constraints. The latest construction and engineering technologies now allow for cost-effective and flexible approaches to designing churches with greater roof spans.

**The Place for the Pastoral Musicians:** 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.<sup>108</sup>

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."<sup>109</sup> 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 worshipers.<sup>110</sup> In addition, cantors and song leaders need visual contact with the music director while they themselves are visible to the rest of the congregation.<sup>111</sup> 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.

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*<sup>112</sup> 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.

## Other Ritual Furnishings

**The Cross:** 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.<sup>113</sup> There should be a crucifix "positioned either on the altar or near it, and . . . clearly visible to the people gathered there."<sup>114</sup> 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.<sup>115</sup>

**Candles:** Candles, which are signs of reverence and festivity, "are to be used at every liturgical service."<sup>116</sup> The living flame of the candle, symbolic of the risen Christ, reminds people that in baptism they are brought out of darkness into God's marvelous light.<sup>117</sup> For the celebration of the Eucharist it is appropriate to carry candles in the entrance procession and during the procession with the *Book of the Gospels*.<sup>118</sup> At least two candles are placed near the altar in the sanctuary area. If there is a lack of space, they may be placed on the altar. Four or six candles may be used for the celebration of Mass and for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. If the bishop of the diocese celebrates, seven candles may be used. Candles placed in floor-standing bases or on the altar should be arranged so they do not obscure the view of the ritual action in the sanctuary, especially the action at the altar.

Candles for liturgical use should be made of a material that provides "a living flame without being smoky or noxious." To safeguard "authenticity and the full symbolism of light," electric lights as a substitute for candles are not permitted.<sup>119</sup>

**The Paschal Candle:** The paschal candle is the symbol of "the light of Christ, rising in glory," scattering "the darkness of our hearts and minds."<sup>120</sup> Above all, the paschal candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choices of size, design, and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed. During the Easter Vigil and throughout the Easter season, the paschal candle belongs near the ambo or in the middle of the sanctuary. After the Easter season it is moved to a place of honor in the baptistry for use in the celebration of baptisms. During funerals the paschal candle is placed near the coffin as a sign of the Christian's passover from death to life.<sup>121</sup>

## The Gathering Space or Narthex

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.

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

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."<sup>122</sup> In construction, design, and decoration, they have the ability to remind people of Christ's presence as the Way that leads to the Father.<sup>123</sup> 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.

## The Area Surrounding the Church Building

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 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.

## The Role of the Church Building in Other Liturgical Rites

The church building is the space for the celebration of the other sacraments, in addition to the Eucharist. While preserving the primary focus upon the eucharistic assembly and the unity and integrity of the building as a whole, the design of the church must also accommodate the needs of these rites.

**The Rites of Initiation:** Through the waters of baptism Christians are buried with Christ and rise to a new life with him. They are made sharers of God's own life and members of Christ's Body, the Church, and they are regenerated and cleansed of sin. In confirmation the seal of the Holy Spirit is set upon them, and their initiation is completed through their participation in the Eucharist. The specific spatial needs for the celebration of baptism and the Eucharist are addressed in the earlier sections of this chapter.

**Holy Orders:** In the sacrament of holy orders, the ministry of word and sacrament is established and fulfilled. The sacrament is most often celebrated in the cathedral but may also be celebrated in the parish church. Planning should include space for the prostrations and the key liturgical actions such as the imposition of hands, the anointing, and the handing over of the vessels.

**The Rite of Penance or Reconciliation:** 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."<sup>124</sup> The *Code of Canon Law* designates a church or an oratory as "the proper place" for the celebration of the sacrament of penance<sup>125</sup> and requires a screen or fixed grille between penitent and confessor to insure the anonymity of those who wish it.<sup>126</sup> 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.<sup>127</sup>

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.

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.<sup>128</sup> 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.

**The Rite of Marriage:** The Rite of Christian Marriage contains no directives about the spatial requirements for the celebration. Instead, the ritual focuses upon the consent given by the bride and the groom, the ambo from which the word of God is proclaimed, and the altar at which the couple share the Body and Blood of Christ within a nuptial Mass.

The options within the Rite of Marriage provide for a procession of the priest and ministers to the door of the church to greet the wedding party, followed by an entrance procession, or the entrance of the wedding party and movement down the aisle to meet the priest celebrant at the altar. Some planners have experimented with seating arrangements that eliminate a center aisle in favor of two side aisles. Although this plan can be very useful by allowing the congregation to face the altar and the priest celebrant directly, it challenges parishes to plan how they will provide for entrance processions and recessions, especially during wedding processions when all wish to have equal visual access to the wedding party.

If it is the custom to have the bride and groom seated in the sanctuary, then the design of the sanctuary should be spacious enough to allow an arrangement of chairs and kneelers that does not impinge upon the primary furniture in the sanctuary. Many ethnic groups and local churches have additional customs for the celebration of marriage that can be honored and accommodated when they are in keeping with the spirit of the liturgy.

**The Rite of Anointing of the Sick:** The *Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick* provides for the communal celebration of the sacrament in a parish church or chapel. As noted earlier<sup>129</sup> the church building must be accessible to those with disabilities, including those in wheelchairs and those who must travel with a breathing apparatus. Since many of those to be anointed may be unable to approach the priest, the parish will want to provide an area where the priest is able to approach persons with disabilities with ease and grace. Often this is possible in a section of the church that has flexible rather than fixed seating.

**Christian Funerals:** The *Order of Christian Funerals* mark the final stage of the journey begun by the Christian in baptism. The structure of the current rites dates back to "Christian Rome where there were three 'stages' or 'stations' [during the funeral rite] joined by two processions": the first from the home of the deceased to the church and the second from the church to the place of burial.<sup>130</sup> While the current rite preserves the procession to the church by the mourners who accompany the deceased, a funeral cortege of automobiles is more common than a procession on foot in most places in the United States.

Because the faith journey of the deceased began in baptism, it is appropriate that there be a physical association between the baptismal font and the space for the funeral ritual. "In the act of receiving the body, the members of the community acknowledge the deceased as one of their own, as one who was welcomed in baptism and who held a place in the assembly."<sup>131</sup> With the baptismal symbols of water, light, and the pall, the mourning community prepares for the "liturgy in which it asks for a share in the heavenly banquet promised to the deceased and to all who have been [baptized in Christ]."<sup>132</sup>

In designing the seating configuration, parishes will want to consider the size and placement of the casket and the paschal candle during funerals as well as the presence of the cremated remains when cremation has taken place before the funeral Mass. Good planning will ensure that doors and aisles are



wide enough for pall bearers to carry a coffin easily.

The permission to celebrate the funeral Mass in the presence of the cremated remains necessitates a dignified place on which the remains can rest during the Mass.<sup>133</sup> To avoid ritual use of makeshift carriers or other inappropriate containers, parishes may wish to obtain a well designed urn or ceremonial vessel and stand to hold the cremated remains during the vigil and funeral.

The funeral rites permit the celebration of the vigil for the deceased in the church.<sup>134</sup> If this is the practice, it is appropriate to wake the body in the baptistry or gathering area or in another dignified area of the church that will not interfere with the normal liturgical life of the parish.

### **The Liturgy of the Hours**

The Liturgy of the Hours is the public, daily prayer of the Church. Recognizing the importance of the Liturgy of the Hours in the life of the Church,<sup>135</sup> many parishes are rediscovering the spiritual beauty of the Hours and are including Morning or Evening Prayer in their daily liturgical life. Although there are no specific spatial requirements for the celebration of the Hours, the focal points of the celebration are the word of God and the praying assembly. An area of flexible seating can facilitate the prayer of a smaller group divided into alternating choirs. The importance of music in public celebrations of the Hours suggests that the place designated for their celebration should provide access to necessary equipment for musicians, particularly cantors and instrumentalists who accompany the singing community.

### **Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest**

The celebration of the Eucharist is the norm for Sunday assemblies. However, a decrease in the number of priests makes this difficult or impossible on a weekly basis in some communities. When the celebration of Mass on a Sunday is not possible in a given parish and the people have no reasonable alternatives, the diocesan bishop can permit the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word or the Liturgy of the Hours or one of these combined with a communion service.<sup>136</sup> When a community gathers for a Sunday celebration in which a priest is not present, the deacon who presides leads the community's prayer from the presidential chair in the sanctuary.<sup>137</sup> A lay person who presides leads the prayer from a chair placed outside the sanctuary.<sup>138</sup>

### **The Place for the Sacred Oils**

The consecrated oil of chrism for initiation, ordination, and the dedication of churches, as well as the blessed oils of the sick and of catechumens, are traditionally housed in a special place called an ambry or repository.<sup>139</sup> These oils consecrated or blessed by the bishop at the Mass of Chrism deserve the special care of the community to which they have been entrusted.<sup>140</sup> The style of the ambry may take different forms. A parish church might choose a simple, dignified, and secure niche in the baptistry or in the wall of the sanctuary or a small case for the oils. Cathedrals responsible for the care of a larger supply of the oils need a larger ambry. Since bright light or high temperatures can hasten spoilage, parishes will want to choose a location that helps to preserve the freshness of the oil.

### **The Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar**

In addition to containing the rituals of dedication, the Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar contains liturgies for laying the cornerstone, for commencing work on the building of a church, for dedication of a church already in use, and for the blessing of a church and an altar.<sup>141</sup> These rituals serve as a foundational resource for those engaged in designing and building churches. Just as the initiation of

a person into the Christian community occurs in stages, so the construction of church building unfolds over a period of time. Rites are celebrated at the beginning of the building process "to ask God's blessing for the success of the work and to remind the people 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."<sup>142</sup> At the conclusion of the construction, the church is dedicated to God with a solemn rite.<sup>143</sup> Familiarity with this rite and the context of prayer that it offers will help to prevent the building project from degenerating into a purely pragmatic or functional enterprise.

Since the celebration of the Eucharist on the new altar after it has been solemnly anointed, incensed, covered and lighted, is at the heart of the dedication ritual,<sup>144</sup> a new or renovated church is, as far as possible, not used for the celebration of the sacraments until after the Rite of Dedication has taken place. To celebrate the rite after the altar has been in use is anti-climactic and can reduce the rite to empty symbolism.<sup>145</sup> Use of a temporary altar in the period before the dedication is a viable alternative that can help to heighten anticipation of the day of dedication when the new altar will receive the ritual initiation that solemnly prepares it for the celebration of the central mystery of our faith.

When the people of the parish community gather to dedicate their new church building or to celebrate its renovation, they will have made many decisions, balanced a variety of needs, and overcome a multitude of challenges. As the diocesan bishop celebrates the Rite of Dedication and receives the church from his people,<sup>146</sup> the connection between the diocesan Church and the parish community is particularly evident.

The Rite of Dedication provides that the walls of the church may be anointed with sacred chrism in four or twelve places depending on the size and design of the structure. These points can be marked by crosses made from stone, brass, or another appropriate material or carved into the walls themselves. A bracket for a small candle should be affixed to the wall beneath each of these crosses.<sup>147</sup> The candles in these brackets are then lighted during the ritual lighting at the dedication, on anniversaries of the dedication, and on other solemn occasions.

### **The Liturgical Year: Seasonal Decorations**

During the liturgical year the Church unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, from his incarnation and birth through his passion, death, and resurrection to his ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of his coming in glory. In its celebration of these mysteries, the Church makes these sacred events present to the people of every age.<sup>148</sup>

The tradition of decorating or not decorating the church for liturgical seasons and feasts heightens the awareness of the festive, solemn, or penitential nature of these seasons. Human minds and hearts are stimulated by the sounds, sights, and fragrances of liturgical seasons, which combine to create powerful, lasting impressions of the rich and abundant graces unique to each of the seasons.

Plans for seasonal decorations should include other areas besides the sanctuary. Decorations are intended to draw people to the true nature of the mystery being celebrated rather than being ends in themselves. Natural flowers, plants, wreaths and fabric hangings, and other seasonal objects can be arranged to enhance the primary liturgical points of focus. The altar should remain clear and free-standing, not walled in by massive floral displays or the Christmas crib, and pathways in the narthex, nave, and sanctuary should remain clear.

These seasonal decorations are maintained throughout the entire liturgical season. Since the Christmas season begins with the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and ends with the baptism of the Lord, the placement and removal of Christmas decorations should coincide with these times. Since the Easter season lasts fifty days, planning will encompass ways to sustain the decor until the fiftieth day of Pentecost.

In the course of the liturgical year, the feasts and memorials of Our Lady and of saints with special significance for the parish afford opportunities to show devotion by adorning their images with tasteful floral arrangements or plants.

Fabric art in the form of processional banners and hangings can be an effective way to convey the spirit of liturgical seasons, especially through the use of color, shape, texture, and symbolic form. The use of images rather than words is more in keeping with this medium.

Objects such as the Advent wreath,<sup>149</sup> the Christmas crib,<sup>150</sup> and other traditional seasonal appointments proportioned to the size of the space and to the other furnishings can enhance the prayer and understanding of the parish community.

The use of living flowers and plants, rather than artificial greens, serves as a reminder of the gift of life God has given to the human community. Planning for plants and flowers should include not only the procurement and placement but also the continuing care needed to sustain living things.

### **The Church Building and Popular Devotions**

Throughout history and among widely differing cultures, a rich heritage of popular devotions honoring Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints has developed in the Church. Popular devotions "express and nourish the spirit of prayer"<sup>151</sup> and are to be encouraged when they are in conformity with the norms of the Church and are derived from and lead to the liturgy.<sup>152</sup> Like the liturgy, devotions are rituals. They can involve singing, intercession, thanksgiving, and common postures. Devotional prayer is another way for people to bring the very personal concerns of life to God and to ask the intercession of the saints and of other members of the Christian community. Sacred images are important not only in liturgical prayer but also in devotional prayer because they are sacramentals that help the faithful to focus their attention and their prayer. The design of the church building can do much to foster devotions and to insure that they enhance and reinforce rather than compete with the liturgical life of the community.

**The Stations of the Cross:** The Stations of the Cross originated early in the history of the Church. It was the custom of the faithful to follow the way walked by Christ from Pilate's house in Jerusalem to Calvary. As time went on, pilgrims to the holy city desired to continue this devotion when they returned home. In the fourteenth century when the Franciscans were entrusted with the care of the holy places in Jerusalem they promoted the use of images depicting the Lord's Way of the Cross.

Whether celebrated by a community or by individuals, the Stations of the Cross offer a way for the faithful to enter more fully into the passion and death of the Lord and to serve as another manifestation of the pilgrim Church on its homeward journey. Traditionally the stations have been arranged around the walls of the nave of the church, or, in some instances, around the gathering space or even the exterior of the church, marking the devotion as a true journey.<sup>153</sup>

The Stations enjoy a long tradition. In recent times some parishes have clustered the stations in one place. While such an arrangement may be expedient, it is not desirable because it eliminates space for movement, which characterizes this devotion as a "way" of the cross.

**Sacred Images:** 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.<sup>154</sup> 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.

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.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> 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.

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.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the liturgical actions of the Church provide the guidelines for the building of a church. There must be space for the variety of the community's prayer, which extends from the primary worship of the Eucharist to popular devotions. The complex balance of all these factors and of the people who participate in them is the most important dimension for the education, planning, and execution of a building plan for a community. The following chapter will reflect upon the use of the arts and the importance of planning for their proper placement early in the design process.



## Chapter Three

### The Work of Our Hands: Art and Artists

#### Assisting the Church at Prayer

When God's people gather for prayer, the most intimate and all-embracing aspect of their life together occurs: the moment when they touch, taste, smell, hear, see, and share those hidden realities that would otherwise remain imperceptible. Together they adore the holiness of God and give expression to the unceasing life God has given them. God nourishes them as a community and makes them holy through the use of *ordinary* perceptible signs of water, oil, bread, and wine, transformed by *extraordinary* grace. The *place* where God gathers this people powerfully draws them more deeply into communion and expresses in beauty God's profound holiness. This is the place that prompts them to recognize the divine image in which they have been created, now restored in Christ. "For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen."<sup>157</sup>

Throughout the history of the Church, a dynamic tension has existed between the continuity of traditional artistic expression and the need to articulate the faith in ways proper to each age and to diverse cultures. In every age the Church has attempted to engage the best contemporary artists and architects to design places of worship that have sheltered the assembly and disclosed the presence of the living God. In the past, dialogue between the Church and the artist has yielded a marriage of faith and art, producing sublime places of prayer, buildings of awe-inspiring, transcendent beauty, and humble places of worship that, in their simplicity, inspire a sense of the sacred.

#### **The Role of Religious Art**

In the Christian community's place of prayer, art evokes and glorifies "the transcendent mystery of God—the surpassing invisible beauty of truth and love visible in Christ."<sup>158</sup> Therefore the "Church entrusts art with a mediating role, analogous, we might say, to the role of the priest or, perhaps better, to that of Jacob's ladder descending and ascending. Art is meant to bring the divine to the human world, to the level of the senses, then, from the spiritual insight gained through the senses and the stirring of the emotions, to raise the human world to God, to his inexpressible kingdom of mystery, beauty, and life."<sup>159</sup>

Art chosen for the place of worship is not simply something pretty or well made, an addition to make the ordinary more pleasant. Nor is the place of worship a museum to house artistic masterpieces or artistic models. Rather, artworks truly belong in the church when they are worthy of the place of worship and when they enhance the liturgical, devotional, and contemplative prayer they are inspired to serve.

The central image of Christianity is the cross, calling to mind the passion, resurrection, and Christ's final coming in glory. Every work of Christian art or architecture shares in this image and embraces the ambiguities of suffering and death, healing and resurrection, recognizing that "by his wounds we are healed." Such art draws from the mystery of redemption a unique power to provoke and invite the world more deeply into the mysteries of our faith.

Likewise, Christian art is also a product of "spontaneous spiritual joy" that challenges believers to complete the reign of God for which they hope.<sup>160</sup> Born from an ecstatic love of God, Christian beauty proclaims something new and original, manifesting itself as an echo of God's own creative act.

### **Components of True and Worthy Art**

Authentic art is integral to the Church at prayer<sup>161</sup> because these objects and actions are "signs and symbols of the supernatural world"<sup>162</sup> and expressions of the divine presence. While personal tastes will differ, parish committees should utilize the criteria of quality and appropriateness in evaluating art for worship. *Quality* is perceived only by contemplation, by standing back from things and really trying to see them, trying to let them speak to the beholder. *Quality* is evident in the honesty and genuineness of the materials that are used, the nobility of the form embodied in them, the love and care that goes into the creation of a work of art, and the personal stamp of the artist whose special gift produces a harmonious whole, a well crafted work.

*Quality* art draws the beholder to the Creator, who stands behind the artist sharing his own creative power, for the "divine Artist passes on to the human artist a spark of his own surpassing wisdom."<sup>163</sup> This is true of music, architecture, sculpture, painting, pottery making, textiles, and furniture making, as well as other art forms that serve the liturgical environment. The integrity and energy of a piece of art, produced individually by the labor of an artist, is always to be preferred above objects that are mass-produced. Similarly, in the construction of new church buildings, there is no standard pattern for church art nor should art and architectural styles from any particular time or culture be imposed arbitrarily upon another community. Nonetheless, the patrimony of sacred art and architecture provides a standard by which a parish can judge the worthiness of contemporary forms and styles.

*Appropriateness* for liturgical action is the other criterion for choosing a work of art for church. The quality of *appropriateness* is demonstrated by the work's ability to bear the weight of mystery, awe, reverence, and wonder that the liturgical action expresses and by the way it serves and does not interrupt the ritual actions which have their own structure, rhythm and movement. Since art is revelatory, a gift from God, a truly beautiful object stretches "beyond what the senses perceive and, reaching beneath reality's surface, strives to interpret its hidden mystery." Nonetheless, there is always the chasm between "the work of [the artist's] hands" and the "dazzling perfection" glimpsed in God's creative moment.<sup>164</sup> Art that is used in worship must therefore evoke wonder at its beauty but lead beyond itself to the invisible God. Beautiful, compelling artworks draw the People of God into a deeper awareness of their lives and of their common goals as a Christian community as well as of their roles and responsibilities in the wider world.<sup>165</sup> Art that fulfills these qualities is art *worthy* of the Christian assembly.

Worthy art is an essential, integral element in the sacred beauty of a church building. Through skilled use of proportion, shape, color, and design, art unifies and helps to integrate the place of worship with the actions of worship. Artistic creations in the place of worship inspire contemplation and devotion. Sculpture, furnishings, art-glass, vesture, paintings, bells, organs, and other musical instruments as well as windows, doors, and every visible and tactile detail of architecture possess the potential to express the wholeness, harmony, and radiance of profound beauty.

### **The Artist Within the Christian Community**

When artists are called upon to serve the Christian community, there is an "ethic," a "spirituality of artistic service."<sup>166</sup> Breadth of imagination enables artists to communicate deep meaning and powerful religious sentiment with grace and sensitivity. This gift from God is combined with refined educated talents that execute elegantly crafted objects for the good of the community and the glory of God. Like the gift of prophecy, religious imagination is a power through which the Holy Spirit can move and

speak. As a result, artists do not always confirm comfortable piety but, like the prophets of old, they may confront God's People with their faults and sins and they challenge the community's injustice and lack of love. "Even when they explore the darkest depths of the soul or the most unsettling aspects of evil, artists give voice in a way to the universal desire for redemption."<sup>167</sup>

Artists respond to the demands of art, actualizing in aesthetic form their ideas, feelings, and intentions so that when artists activate their imagination, their intentions and inner life are expressed in their work. In working with a parish, artists will also express the intentions, faith, and life of that community. A truly worthy and beautiful artwork can transform the artist and the community for which it is intended. The dialogue with God that an artwork mediates can persuade and invite; however, it does not force its meanings upon individuals or communities.

Artists willing to accept commissions destined for a place of worship must be respectful and supportive of the doctrines, beliefs, and liturgical practices of the Church. They also should be knowledgeable about the traditional iconography and symbolism of Christian art. Artists who are genuinely in search of meaning in their work and in their lives will find a homeland for their souls since, in the realm of Christianity, the most vital personal and social questions are posed. Not only does the Bible provide a rich inventory of themes and ideas, but also artists who have envisioned these stories and images have offered unique perspectives on the heart of revelation itself and "this partnership has been a source of mutual spiritual enrichment."<sup>168</sup>

A commission for a church or for worship affords artists an opportunity to join their creative gifts to those in a long history of artists who have placed their talents at the service of God and who have enriched the Church's treasury of sacred art and architecture. "All artists who, in view of their talents, desire to serve God's glory in holy Church should ever bear in mind that they are engaged in a kind of sacred imitation of God the Creator, and are concerned with works destined for use in Catholic worship and for the edification, devotion, and religious instruction of the faithful."<sup>169</sup>

The Church needs art and artists to communicate Christ's message, and artists need the Church to inspire their investigations of the material world, their own inner lives, and the fabric of the community. Before an artist is selected, the parish will want to carefully consider and evaluate the artist and his or her work with the assistance of those best qualified to advise the community. Once a community has chosen artists to assist them in worship, they should give the necessary direction and then trust those they have selected. Artists deserve the independence appropriate to their gifts.

### **The Special Requirements of Liturgical Art**

In order to create art that truly serves the liturgy, the artist must have an understanding of and reverence for the liturgy. There is both a distinction and a connection between devotional art and that designed for public liturgy. Liturgical arts are integrally related to the sacraments of the Church while devotional arts are designed to enrich the spiritual life of the community and the personal piety of its members. As the devotions of the Church are derived from the liturgy and lead to it,<sup>170</sup> so devotional art must be in harmony with the liturgy, respect its nature, and draw people to its celebration. "The primary norm is that sacred art be functional, that is, the felicitous expression of what the liturgy is meant to be, the worship of God and the language of the community at prayer."<sup>171</sup> Parishes will want both liturgical and devotional art.

Prominent among Christian devotions is piety directed to Mary, the Mother of God. Since the earliest days of the Church God's people have grown in their love of Mary as their mother, given to them by Jesus on the cross. Venerated and loved, invoked and imitated, she is a model for Christian faith, a support and refuge in time of need, and an eschatological image of what the Church hopes to become.<sup>172</sup> Although this devotion differs essentially from the prayer of adoration directed to Christ, to the Spirit,

and to the Father, it is one that is deeply imbedded in the hearts of Catholics.

The special and unique dignity of the Mother of God has been expressed in the devotional art of the Church. Artists have painted her image in wondrously meditative fashion as a "sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim People of God."<sup>173</sup> At the same time, veneration of Mary, like that of all other devotions, leads clearly to the worship of her Son. The location, style, and importance of Marian images in the church demonstrate the intimate connection she has with the eucharistic liturgy of Christ, as well as its distinctions.

### **The Integration of Art Within the Liturgical Setting**

The role of the Church is to educate artists in the appropriate relationships between their personal approach to art and the needs of the liturgy. The role of artists is to explore the powerful personal resonances that exist between sacred art, interior devotion, and the public life of the community. An essential ingredient for a successful marriage between the artistic needs of the Church and the creative talent of the artist is the ability to collaborate. Artists must cultivate the capacity to work with the leaders and people of the local community and within the frameworks established by the universal Church if they are to have the opportunity to use their talents to fashion beautiful objects that will enliven the worship of the community.

Artists who collaborate with architects and liturgical consultants need to make an honest assessment of several key elements, attending to the way the objects will be placed within the building, how the works will be integrated with the architecture of the church and with its local setting, and the ways the Christian community moves within its space.

Attention should also be given to the way artistic objects influence acoustics and other functional elements within the building and, at the same time, to the ways in which various elements, especially lighting, may affect the objects. In addition, consideration must be given to how easily an object can be cleaned and maintained.

**Materials of the Artist:** Artists bridge the worlds of the visible and the mysterious invisible. They focus upon items with specific shapes, sizes, weights, densities, colors, forms, and textures. At the same time, they utilize materials that struggle to express ideas and concepts, visions, and imaginative constructions. Even as they nourish the senses with beauty, they also disclose the "transcendent value" and the "aura of mystery" in the Christian message.<sup>174</sup>

Artists choose materials with integrity because they will endure from generation to generation, because they are noble enough for holy actions, and because they express what is most respected and beautiful in the lives and cultures of the community. Materials, colors, shapes, and designs that are of short-lived popularity are unworthy. In addition to eliminating unsuitable materials, artists and communities should be cautious and discerning about promoting features closely identified with the values and attitudes of any class, ethnic, or age group to the exclusion of others in the community.

Similarly, artworks consisting of technological and interactive media, such as video and other electronically fabricated images, may also be appropriate for sacred purposes. Subject to the same criteria of suitability as other sacred art, technologically produced works of art can point toward sacred realities even though they do not possess the more enduring form, color, texture, weight, and density found in more traditional sacred art.

**Vessels and Vestments Suitable for the Liturgy:** As in the case of styles of architecture, there is no particular style for sacred furnishings for the liturgy.<sup>175</sup> Sacred vessels may be in "a shape that is in keeping with the culture of each region, provided each type of vessel is suited to the intended liturgical



use and is clearly distinguished from [utensils] for every day use."<sup>176</sup> Materials used for sacred vessels such as the chalice and paten should be worthy, solid, and durable, and should not break easily. Chalices and cups used for the distribution of the Precious Blood should have bowls made of nonabsorbent material. Vessels made from metal are gilded on the inside if the metal ordinarily rusts. The vestments worn by ministers symbolize the ministers' functions and add beauty to the celebration of the rites. "In addition to traditional materials, natural fabrics proper to the [local area] may be used for making vestments; . . . The beauty and nobility of a vestment arises from its material and design rather than from lavish ornamentation."<sup>177</sup>

Conferences of bishops may make further determinations regarding the appropriate style and material for sacred vessels and vestments to be used in the celebration of the liturgy.<sup>178</sup> Likewise, the diocesan bishop can make further determinations regarding the suitability of the materials or the design for vessels and vestments, and, in cases of doubt, he is the judge of what is appropriate in this regard.<sup>179</sup>

### **The Disposition of Works of Art No Longer Needed for Sacred Use**

Sacred art that is no longer useful or needed or that is simply worn out and beyond restoration deserves to be treated with respect. To insure the protection of worn or used sanctuary furnishings, vessels, vesture, and other liturgical artifacts, many diocesan bishops have issued directives about their proper disposition when they are no longer suitable for worship. In addition, with the closing or merging of parishes, vessels and vestments can be available for the use of other parishes and missions. In disposing of such artifacts pastors should consult the diocesan worship office or chancery to learn what directives or procedures are in effect.

In addition, bishops have exercised their responsibility as stewards of the Church's artistic resources by encouraging pastors and diocesan personnel to consult with experts and to create an inventory of historic churches and of objects in any church that have artistic or historical value. Such inventories are most helpful when they carefully itemize and list each entry's value and note any changes to the objects since they were acquired.<sup>180</sup> Usually two copies are made so that one can be kept at the local parish and the other in the diocesan curia, both as an historical record and for insurance purposes. In some cases, copies are sent to the Vatican library if this is appropriate.

Objects of great artistic or historical value or those donated to the Church through a vow may not to be sold without special permission of the Holy See.<sup>181</sup> When such objects are not to be sold but disposed of in some other way, the diocesan bishop should be contacted so that the concerns of donors and the requirements of canon law are fulfilled.

Every community knows that if its house of prayer is to radiate the beauty of divine presence, effort and sacrifice will be required. Besides appropriate remuneration for the work of its artists, the community must show its respect for these works by maintaining and preserving them as the years pass. In doing so, they encourage those with artistic aptitudes to continue to serve the community and in this way build up and support a local community of artists worthy of liturgical work. A covenant is established linking artists and congregations, an "alliance between art and the life of religion" through which may be heard an artistic voice "that love inspires and that inspires love."<sup>182</sup>



## Chapter Four

### Building a Church: Practical Considerations

Having reflected upon the nature and purpose of a church, having reviewed the activities that take place within the worship space, and having considered the role and importance of the arts as part of the act of worship, we here address the actual task of building. This chapter examines the practical considerations such as who should collaborate in building the church, how to develop a master plan, what kind of educational process will be most helpful for parishes, and how to work with the relevant professionals.

Churches are built to be legacies to a community's faith. Every parish community hopes that its space for worship will endure long after those who now pray there have joined the Messianic Banquet. Liturgical education is primary in the development of any parish's plans for the future, since the building is an embodiment of the Church's transmission of the Gospel. If built wisely and well, the building itself will evangelize the descendants of its builders.

#### **The Master Plan**

As part of its stewardship efforts, each parish should have a master plan for the current and future allocation and augmentation of its resources. The master plan contains the statement of the parish vision and priorities, the long-range general plan for parish buildings and properties, and the outline for the allocation of financial and personnel resources.

The parish mission statement and its list of priorities can serve as the basis for making decisions about resources and projects. In addition to the mission statement, the master plan includes a current inventory of buildings and property; a site plan; an analysis of the current condition of significant items that impact budget, plans, and priorities; and regularly updated reports on the parish's financial assets and projections for future growth, or the amortization of debts as well as maintenance and replacement data on major items such as furnaces, roofs, elevators, and other items of capital outlay.

Since planning is affected by many events, a regularly updated report on area demographics, population trends, and planned growth and development by the municipality's planning office that could affect parish property and the surrounding area is an important part of the data in the plan. The assessment of potential items of major liability or sources of income are also part of this long-range plan. The decision to build a church or to renovate an existing worship space is made within the framework of the master plan.

#### **Beginning the Process**

The construction or renovation of a church building is a complex task that demands prayer and reflection, technical expertise and study. A building or renovation project is not the work of the pastor alone, nor is it that of a building committee. Rather, it is an act of faith that belongs to and engages the

entire community. To be successful, a building project must be rooted in a proper understanding of the Church and of worship that becomes the point of reference for all future decision making. Creating and articulating this shared vision is a key element of the process.

Deepening a sense of ownership for the project involves taking the time to educate the parish, to listen to the people's concerns, and to discuss the vision and values at stake in such a project. The time devoted to communication and education will help make the later stages of the process move more smoothly and will ensure that the relationships among parish members are strengthened rather than strained by the project.

Since no single pastor or parish possesses the totality of expertise or vision required to execute a project of such great scope, the congregation and clergy will need to recognize the areas of their own competence, the role of the diocesan bishop and diocesan personnel, and their limits beyond which the assistance of experts will be required. Respect and appreciation for the competence of others in their respective fields is essential for good teamwork.

### **The Role of the Apostolic See and the Diocesan Church**

The Apostolic See has provided guidance for designing places of worship that is necessary and invaluable for the local community. In the work of constructing or renewing a place of worship, "primary authority and responsibility for the nature and quality of the church building rests with the local bishop."<sup>183</sup> As the *Code of Canon Law* states, "No church is to be built without the express written consent of the diocesan bishop. . . . after having heard the presbyteral council and the rectors of the neighboring churches."<sup>184</sup> Therefore, the building or renovation of a place for worship is a project that belongs to the local parish and the whole diocesan Church.<sup>185</sup> Care must be exercised by the pastor and parish to consult with diocesan personnel from the earliest stages of the discernment process through the completion of the work. The diocesan liturgical commission or diocesan commission on liturgy and art assists with liturgical education and the development of the liturgical and artistic components of the building's design. Some dioceses have additional building offices or similar agencies to help parishes with the selection of architects, engineers, and building contractors, and to provide valuable information about those who have successfully served the Church in the past. In the early stages of the project, the parish needs to be in communication with the appropriate diocesan office or commission in developing the budget for the project and the financial plan, since these require the approval of the bishop and his financial advisors. This document is designed to assist diocesan bishops in developing local norms and procedures to guide parishes in church design and construction and to provide knowledgeable advisors for the local parish, especially in the complex areas of engineering and construction.

In some dioceses the first step in any building or renovation process is a meeting of the pastor, the architect, and possibly, the liturgical consultant with the diocesan bishop or his representative to discuss any diocesan parameters. Such early consultation can prevent confusion and unrealistic expectations or diversions later.

### **The Role of the Parish Community**

**The Assessment of Need:** The entire parish is an integral part of the needs assessment and the development of priorities, which are the first steps of a process that will lead to a decision about building, renovating, and expending parish resources. While some decisions in the process will be made by committees, the decision and the design should never become the exclusive project of a small select group.

When a parish is determining the need for a new church or for the renovation of an existing church, a thorough self-study and educational program is part of the needs assessment process. In that study the parish community reflects upon what it is, and what it hopes for in a new or renovated church. This is essential to enable the community to give direction to the architect and other professionals who will design the building.

## **Roles Within the Parish**

**The Pastor:** The pastor is vital to the building or renovation of a parish church. The pastor shepherds the community through the various and often lengthy stages of discernment and planning and works with the finance committee in fulfilling his responsibility for the fiscal dimensions of the project. He must open channels of communication with the entire parish so that all voices may be heard. A clear initial presentation on the scope of the project and frequent updates on the progress of the work, especially any alterations to initial plans, coupled with displays of the architect's renderings, floor plans, and scale models help to involve parishioners as part of the project from beginning to end. With the help of the staff and others in the parish, the pastor arranges for the parish self-study, the liturgical education of parishioners, and the preparation of the building committee as it begins discernment. The pastor is also the connection and communication link with the diocese throughout the process. In the final analysis, decisions concerning every facet of the building program from beginning to end remain with the pastor, in conformity with diocesan regulations. Wisdom, however, requires that the pastor consult broadly with the congregation, the parish staff, the parish pastoral council, the parish liturgy committee, and the parish finance council, as well as with liturgical and architectural experts and experienced diocesan personnel.

**The Parish Building Committee:** Depending on the organization of the parish, a building committee will be formed that will have significant responsibility for the consultation and educational components as well as for the oversight of the actual building or renovation process. In selecting this committee, the pastor will search for parishioners whose skills and knowledge will contribute to the project. Engineers, architects, artists, interior designers, contractors, and individuals with experience in construction can be of great assistance in overseeing the work to be done. As professionals who have a vested interest in the life of the parish but who are not financially or materially engaged in the process, they can assist with the development of realistic plans and can also provide an ongoing objective evaluation of the work as it progresses.

In addition to having professionals and people with a broad range of experience on the committee, the pastor will want to insure that the committee is representative of the parish by choosing members of various ages and viewpoints and some liaisons from key parish committees. When all views are heard in the discussion phases, better decisions are likely to be made and a greater sense of ownership will result.

**The Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Worship Committee, and the Finance Council:** Each of the key parish committees oversees the various aspects of parish life and continues to work during this major parish activity. As the building or renovation project progresses, these parishioners contribute to its development through membership on existing parish committees or on newly formed committees entrusted with specific tasks. The parish pastoral council can assist the pastor with the general oversight of pastoral activity in the parish and represents the concerns of the parishioners. The parish worship committee can contribute its expertise in keeping the liturgical needs in the forefront of the discussion. The finance council has a significant role with regard to sources and limits of funding, debt amortization and financial campaigns. Areas that might be addressed by other committees include furnishings, seating arrangements, the chapel of reservation, devotional items, interior and exterior artwork, and landscaping design.

However, it is essential that members of these committees approach their tasks from an informed perspective and stay in constant communication with other committees to insure a well informed team and a coordinated project. While the professional experience of people related to a building project is valuable, care must be taken that these professionals familiarize themselves with the special requirements of the liturgy related to their area of competence. In many instances, the initial work of the committees will be to gain knowledge of the church's liturgical practices as they relate to their task. As the project develops, these committees may be called upon to provide an ongoing informed review of plans from their areas of expertise.

**The Parish Self-Study:** By their design and construction, church buildings serve the rites of the Church and the devotion of the people, fostering their encounter with God who dwells in all holiness,<sup>186</sup> and reflecting the faith of the people and the culture in which they live. Ideally the church building will be designed so that it also responds to the local environment. While the church building belongs to the Church, its visual aspects belong to its neighbors. In addition, there must be a concern for the impact of the building on its natural surroundings; that is, the site on which it will be located and the resources available there.

Parishioners may have some sense of the history of the parish, but it is helpful to sharpen the common knowledge of church members at the beginning of the project. This review can consider the origins of the parish; its evolving identity within the local community; and the social, political, economic, and religious elements that have shaped its life. Among other things, the parish will want to reflect on the cultures represented in its members, the geographical and historical factors that have contributed to its development, significant aspects of the community's liturgical and devotional life, and changes that have already taken place in the building in which its members worship.

During the study it may be helpful to invite parishioners to contribute photographs of weddings, first communions, baptisms, and other sacramental and seasonal events. These photos, arranged chronologically, can provide graphic evidence of the changes that the church building has already undergone. The archives of local and diocesan newspapers also can provide material that will help in piecing together the story of the parish over the years.

**Liturgical Education:** As part of the self-study, the parish will want to develop a process for liturgical education. While the actual content will vary from one parish to another, parishioners need to learn more about the liturgy, which is the heart of the Church's life, and about their participation in the liturgy, which is the "primary and indispensable source" of the "true Christian spirit."<sup>187</sup> In addition, they need to understand the intrinsic relationships between the Eucharist and the other sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, the liturgical year, and the building that houses these celebrations. After reflecting on the basics of liturgy, the assembly can learn about the ways in which architectural elements, the placement and design of liturgical objects, and the choice of floor plans can encourage, control, or hinder liturgical actions. Full and active participation will be greatly affected by the appropriate architectural expression of faith for a particular community. The liturgical consultant chosen by the parish often develops and directs this education process. In other instances diocesan offices can provide assistance and resources in this area.

**Priorities and Stewardship of Resources:** Since the building of a place of worship has serious financial implications, wise stewardship of resources demands that the parish establish liturgical, spiritual, artistic, and social priorities upon which financial decisions rest. However, the cost of an item is not the only consideration in planning for construction and renovation. Every faith community, even the financially poorest, is called to use all the powers of human ingenuity at its disposal to provide beautiful, uplifting, and enriching places of worship that also serve basic human needs.

Building a beautiful church is itself an act of worship because beauty is a reflection of God and "a call to transcendence."<sup>188</sup> All church buildings and their contents should mirror divine beauty, which is not to be confused with lavish display. Whatever the style of architecture adopted, extravagant expenditures on the construction of a church should be avoided in light of the obligation to share the resources of the earth in an equitable manner. However, compromises in cost should not compromise the durability, stability, and structural soundness of the building. Balancing the social needs of the local faith community with their duty to worship God through beauty affects the equation of design and execution. Beauty also can be found in simplicity of shape; in humble, honest materials; in the creative use of light, water, and sound; in elegant design; and in worthy religious art.

**Surveying Existing Churches:** Before people make architectural and liturgical decisions, they need some experience of the broad spectrum of architectural designs already in new and renovated churches. People's preferences are often determined by things with which they are familiar. Visits to a variety of churches can help them to develop a store of images that they can evaluate and consider as potential options for the building project in their own parish.

Although the visits should not be confined to the work of architects or liturgical consultants under consideration for their project, people will want to visit churches that demonstrate the candidates' work. Gaining knowledge of a professional's previous work, whether religious or secular, is indispensable to the process of selecting the architect.

When actual site visits are not possible, slides, videos, and other visual aids can expand the experience of those preparing for the building or renovation of a church. Liturgical and construction offices within the diocese also can be invaluable resources in advising parish building committees of recent or exemplary projects in the local area.

### **The Role of Professionals**

In deciding to employ professionals, and in hiring specific people, the parish must be aware of any diocesan directives and requirements for contracts and licenses and is encouraged to utilize the expertise of diocesan staff with experience in this area. Doing so can help to avert serious financial and legal difficulties for the parish and major time delays. Because the architect is the contracted professional responsible for the development of the building's design, it is appropriate that other professionals serve as consultants to the architect. It is also crucial that all professionals chosen have the expertise to fulfill the particular tasks needed and that a clear description of their roles and responsibilities be developed and agreed upon before they actually begin the work.

Normally, engaging the skills of professionals with experience in the lighting of churches, acoustical design and sound transmission, and design is preferable to selecting vendors of equipment or accepting the "good will" services of individuals who may have some knowledge but who lack the requisite qualifications to design and install elements suitable for a church. Both the scale of the building and the demands of the liturgy require varied solutions that differ from those suitable for domestic or smaller scale projects.

**The Architect:** The architect, the primary agent of design, has an essential role in the building or renovation project. In choosing an architect, the parish will look for someone whose designs will embody the mysteries of the faith expressed and lived in the liturgical assembly. In addition to having the skills and exercising the appropriate standard of care required of a professional architect, those chosen to design church buildings should be able to

1. *Create an environment by the use of space, sound, and visual aspects that will facilitate and encourage liturgical celebrations and the active participation of the faithful.*<sup>189</sup>
2. *Give visual expression to aspects of doctrine and spirituality that words alone cannot adequately express, employing in their own designs, and requiring in those of others hired by them, the highest artistic standards for the inspiration, devotion, and religious formation of believers.*<sup>190</sup>
3. *Draw attention to and protect the significant treasures of the Church's architectural and artistic heritage, whenever possible.*
4. *Be collaborative and willing to participate in the dialogue essential to the development of a building program that will fulfill the needs of the local Church.*
5. *Be sensitive to the financial realities of the parish and work within its budget.*

**The Liturgical Consultants:** The construction of a church building cannot be undertaken without proper professionals in a variety of fields. When a parish begins to undertake the building or renovation of a liturgical space, the parish building committee should obtain the services of specialists in liturgical design. It is the responsibility of the liturgical consultant to assist the pastor, the staff, and the entire parish with continuing education about the importance, role, and value of worship, and the impact of the church building upon worship.

The liturgical consultant also works with the architect. Some architects are *liturgical* architects. They possess, in addition to their architectural credentials, artistic insights and formal liturgical education that equip them to engage in liturgical design. However, this is not always the case. The liturgical consultant(s) selected by the parish work with the architect and other members of the design team from the earliest stages of the process to help them apply the principles and norms of liturgical design to the practical and liturgical needs of the parish being served. This includes an examination of the acoustics, the flow and movement for processions, appropriate styles for liturgical celebrations, the interrelationships within the Eucharist as well as the relationship of the Eucharist with the other sacraments, and all the elements required by the Church's liturgy. In addition, the consultant may have expertise in design and can help to coordinate the design and fabrication of appropriate furniture and other objects to be used during liturgical services, as well as the liturgical art to be placed within the church.

**The Contractor:** Parishes will search for contractors who exhibit skills appropriate to the scope and significance of the project and who are properly licensed and insured. Candidates should demonstrate their ability to finance and to fulfill their commitments completely and on time and should exhibit skills in the areas of management, supervision, building technology, and construction methods and procedures. They also should have a record of good labor relations supported by positive benefit practices that are consonant with and reflective of the Church's teachings on social justice. Most dioceses keep careful records of the competence, working methods, completion practices, and fiscal responsibility of the contractors who have worked on church buildings in the diocese to assist parishes with the competitive bidding process. This information can be readily available to the pastor and the parish building committee.

**Compensation and Professional Standards:** Excellent designs can be brought to beautiful completion only by competent and trustworthy professionals. These professionals have a right to compensation that matches the expectations of the outstanding competence and expertise demanded of them. A major and continuing educational effort is required among believers in order to restore respect for competence and expertise in all the arts and to cultivate a desire for their best use in public worship. The Church needs in its service professional people with the appropriate qualifications. The community must be willing to budget and expend resources for appropriate professionals so that the criteria for good liturgical art and sound building practices can be met.

The architects, liturgical consultants, artists, contractors, and all others engaged in the project should be held to a high professional standard of care and to the observance of the social teaching of the Church. Because they are, in part, responsible for the stewardship of the resources of the parish, all who are engaged in the project must be worthy of the trust of the community.

Volunteers and donors of contributed services and in-kind gifts are valuable assets in any parish building project. However, these individuals and their contributions must be held to the same standard of skill, quality, and appropriateness that is required of services and objects procured through conventional methods. As a parish utilizes contributed services, it will be important to work with diocesan personnel to ensure that all legal and insurance requirements are met.

**Collaboration:** Collaboration is essential to every architectural project, but it is even more so in architecture at the service of liturgy, for cooperation reflects the very nature of the Body of Christ. The members of the parish community along with their pastor, the liturgical consultant, the artist, the architect, and the contractor are all called to a collaborative effort, whose goal is to summon forth the finest expressions of faith within their means. Mutual trust and openness are central components of the collaborative effort. The parish, represented by its pastor and committees, the architect and liturgical design consultant, the artist, and the contractors should strive to listen to each other with careful attention so that a place of sacred beauty will emerge from their mutual dialogue.

## **The Design of the Church and Its Surroundings: Special Concerns**

**The Site Plan:** The unity of God's people is both expressed and brought about in the gathering of the eucharistic assembly.<sup>191</sup> Since the church building is fundamentally a place where God and his gathered people meet, care should be exercised in designing the entire complex of site and church building so that it will serve this *gathering* of the faithful that is essential to liturgical worship.<sup>192</sup>

The design of the area surrounding the church can integrate trees, shrubs, and flowers with places for outdoor gathering and for quiet meditation. While there is no maintenance-free landscaping, it is possible to keep landscape care at a manageable level by using indigenous and low-maintenance plants that can withstand dry conditions without requiring excessive watering.

The outdoor paths that lead to the church building should be welcoming and free of barriers, especially to persons with disabilities. In the design of these paths, consideration should be given not only to groups and individuals coming to Sunday Eucharist but also to the arrival and departure of special groups such as the wedding party or the mourners who accompany the deceased's body at a funeral.

In suburban and rural parishes, the building approach must ordinarily provide access for pedestrians as well as for those who arrive by automobile. The building site can be designed so that all who approach are helped to make the transition from everyday life to the celebration of the mysteries of faith. Parking lots and passenger drop-off areas can be convenient yet unobtrusive. Sensitive design of vehicular approaches, parking sites and walkways coupled with appropriate landscaping make it possible to accommodate the automobile without allowing it to dominate the site. Weather considerations will influence the arrangement and the choices made by the local parish.

Paths provided for those approaching on foot, especially paths that lead to the principal gathering space outside the building, should receive special attention. The space at which these paths converge should be welcoming and hospitable, drawing together those who assemble for worship and providing for those who wish to linger in conversation with one another after liturgical services. Pavement patterns, borders, and configurations; shrines containing images in sculpture, mosaic, or other art media; as well as planters and outdoor benches help with the passage from the mundane to the sacred action of worship.



**Accessibility:** Every person should be welcomed into the worshiping assembly with respect and care. It was the prophet Isaiah who announced the Lord's message: "For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."<sup>193</sup> The bishops of the United States have stated that "it is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to persons with disabilities, since these forms are the essence of the spiritual tie that binds the Christian community together."<sup>194</sup> Further direction is given by Pope John Paul II, who has called the Church to the full integration of persons with disabilities into family, community, and Church, and to overcome "the tendency to isolate, segregate and marginalize [those with disabilities]."<sup>195</sup> When buildings present barriers to the full and active participation of all, the Body of Christ is harmed.

Special attention should be given to individuals with visual or hearing impairments, to those who have difficulty walking or who are in wheelchairs, and to the elderly with frailties. In addition to ramps, elevators, braille signs, and special sound systems that can be accessed by those who need assistance, staircases should have at least one railing. If the sanctuary is elevated by steps, an unobtrusively placed ramp with a hand rail should be provided to make it possible for everyone to have access to the sanctuary.<sup>196</sup>

The planning process should include consultation with persons with various disabilities and the use of an accessibility inventory<sup>197</sup> to ensure a careful review of potential or existing architectural barriers. All new construction and renovation work must fully integrate the demands of the liturgy with current laws, codes, and ordinances for persons with disabilities.

Older places of worship can be especially challenging because of the obstacles they present to persons with disabilities. In the renovation of older buildings, special provisions must be made to harmonize the requirements for accessibility with the architectural integrity of the building and with the norms for the proper celebration of liturgy. Adaptations to existing buildings can be expensive, but failure to make the community's places of worship accessible will exact a far more costly human and ecclesial toll. The goal is always to make the entire church building accessible to all of God's People.

**The Choice of Building Materials:** A church building is a lasting expression of a faith community's life. Because the church building is destined to endure, parishes and the professionals who assist them should ensure that the components of the building, especially the building materials, are sturdy and substantial enough to stand the test of time. While traditional building materials have served the Church well in the past, more recently developed materials and building techniques might better serve a contemporary structure. In all instances, the building that is designed for an extended life will need fine, durable materials. The use of materials available locally and of designs that are expressive of local culture can be an advantage to parishes.

Faithful stewardship of the earth's resources demands that the Church be a partner in the development of a sustainable architecture. Materials, construction methods, and procedures that are toxic to the environment or that are wasteful of the earth's resources should be avoided. Providing heating, ventilating, air conditioning, and lighting systems that are energy-efficient is financially sound practice and, at the same time, environmentally responsible. It is an exercise in parish stewardship.

**Change Orders and Modifications:** During the construction phase of the process, the pastor and building committee may find the need to modify the original plan. Because modifications involve additional costs, parishes will want to anticipate as many situations as possible before plans are finalized and contracts are signed.

If the need for modifications becomes apparent at a later stage, the procedures should be clear to all involved. It is helpful to specify

1. that the pastor communicate any change orders to the architect, who acknowledges them in writing;
2. that the acknowledgment state the additional cost involved;
3. that the pastor or someone specifically authorized by the pastor be the only one(s) designated to sign the change orders approving the additional expenditure; and
4. that the architect be responsible for communicating with the contractor or subcontractors regarding the changes.

**Building Maintenance:** The design process will include planning for the long-term and short-term maintenance of the new or renovated building. The beauty and utility of a place of worship can be sustained only by an ongoing, careful attention to its upkeep through regular maintenance. Therefore, funds for both general maintenance and capital improvements should be anticipated in every future parish budget.

Durability and maintenance expenses are critical factors in the selection of building materials and of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. Decisions made on the basis of short-term economy can be very costly when viewed from the perspective of long-term expenses. A well-thought-out plan for maintenance that includes a financial component is necessary in the case of existing structures. In addition, special attention may be needed when the maintenance of historical buildings is at issue.

**Sound in the Place of Worship:** Silence is the ground of all prayer. From contemplative silence emerge the sung and spoken prayer of the entire assembly and the prayers and proclamations of the various ministers. Liturgical celebrations call for the clear transmission of the sung and spoken responses of the liturgical assembly, as well as of the words of the individual ministers such as the priest celebrant, the deacon, the readers, and the cantor and leader of song. In addition, the space should provide an environment for instrumental music that supports the assembly's song and worship.

The first consideration in providing quality sound transmission is the acoustic design of the building. The interior surfaces such as the walls, the floor, and the ceiling affect the transmission of sound, as do design features like the ceiling height, the shape and construction of rooms, and the mechanical systems such as heating and cooling units and lighting fixtures. The sound-deadening tiles so vital to noise reduction in gymnasiums and other public buildings will be used rarely in a church and only with professional advice to reduce or eliminate outside noise. Soft surfaces such as carpets, rugs, and large fabric wall hangings absorb sound, while hard surfaces such as stone, tile, glass, and metals reflect it. A combination of sound-absorbing and sound-reflecting surfaces properly applied and used in correct proportion provides the kind of system needed for a worship space.

Acoustical engineers can help parishes design a building capable of the natural transmission of sound; they also can be of great assistance in the renovation of existing buildings.

Another aspect of an effective audio environment is the electronic amplification system, which can augment the natural acoustics and can help to remedy problems that cannot be solved in other ways. Planners also should consider provisions for sound in the nave, in the sanctuary, and in adjacent spaces such as the gathering area and the space around the baptismal font. Accommodations should be made for people with special hearing needs.

Providing for the amplification of the proclaimed and sung word and for instrumental and choral music is a complex task that demands the skills and experience of experts in the field of acoustical design. Choosing local vendors who do not possess the requisite skills to understand the complex needs of the liturgical assembly may prove to be a serious, even costly liability.

**The Placement of the Organ and Other Musical Instruments:** Musical instruments, especially the pipe organ, have long added to the beauty and prayerfulness of Catholic worship.<sup>198</sup> 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.

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.

**Lighting the Place of Worship:** Light is a powerful symbol for the followers of Christ who is the "light shining in the darkness" and whose image is seen in the sun and in the paschal candle whose flame is "divided but undimmed."<sup>199</sup> In addition to its theological symbolism, light takes on pastoral, aesthetic, and practical import in the construction of churches. Careful planning enables parishes to choose options that make maximum use of the natural light, which can be supplemented by artificial sources.

Professionals can make planners aware of the ways in which fixtures shield glare, of the manner in which specific lamp types render color, and of the noise level of ballasts in some fixtures. If a church building is to foster the worship of those who gather there, it must first meet minimum standards of hospitality, which means that those gathered for worship will be able to see as well as to hear one another. In the design of the lighting scheme for a church, the highest priority should be given to the ability of the worshipers to see both the faces of those with whom they gather as the Body of Christ and the faces of those who minister to them.

In addition, lighting can aesthetically enhance the architectural and artistic components of the building and its appointments. Lighting for Sunday Mass differs from lighting required for a baptism or for times when the church is open for private prayer. What is appropriate for the chapel of reservation may not be effective in the nave, and what works in the sanctuary at the priest celebrant's chair may not be helpful for the reader or the priest at the altar. Lighting engineers can suggest appropriate options to ensure the light production that will best serve the liturgy. Additional practical considerations include cost and efficiency of various types of lamping, ease or difficulty of replacing burnt-out bulbs, possible computerization, and ease of use and flexibility of the system to meet the needs of a variety of liturgical situations.<sup>200</sup>

Planning the building's lighting includes both the exterior and the interior of the building. Illumination of pathways and entries is not only a matter of safety, but also of aesthetic enhancement. In keeping with good stewardship, using lighting generated by solar power is ecologically responsible, and it is an effective form of exterior lighting to be considered.

Building codes require that exit signs, fire alarm strobes, fire alarm pull boxes, annunciator panels, and fire extinguisher cabinets be located in "conspicuous places." Timely planning can help to reconcile these required elements with liturgical, devotional, and artistic focal points. It is the responsibility of the architect to work with all design and engineering consultants to ensure that conflicts are avoided and that smoke-detecting devices are calibrated so that candle smoke and incense do not set off fire alarms.<sup>201</sup>

Provision for electronic media should be incorporated into the initial design of a new building. These should fit into the architectural design and should be made inconspicuous. Consideration should be given to the effect of light on projected images.

**Sacristies:** Well designed, well equipped, and well organized sacristies contribute to the smooth function of the liturgy and to the maintenance and preservation of vesture, vessels, linens, and other liturgical appointments. Since the Second Vatican Council, most new churches and some renovated structures provide a vesting sacristy near the entrance to the church adjacent to the gathering space so that the entrance procession can proceed directly from the sacristy into the gathering space and down the aisle to the altar. The vesting sacristy provides storage space for vestments as well as a place where the vestments of the day can be arranged by the sacristan. A restroom, or at least a wash basin with running water, and a full-length mirror can be helpful additions to this area. If the vesting sacristy is located in the rear of the church, it is helpful to have an additional work sacristy that offers easy access to the altar located near the sanctuary. This sacristy would contain the *sacrarium* (see below) and another basin deep enough to fill tall vases with water. It could contain locked cabinets for items of special value and storage for sacred vessels, altar cloths and other linens, candles and candle stands, and vases, containers, and plant stands. In addition, the work sacristy should be equipped for the laundering and care of church linens. If fabric art in the form of hangings or banners is used in the church, it will be desirable to include a storage area with rods over which these fabrics can be hung so that they do not become wrinkled or damaged from improper storage.

**Security Issues:** Distressing though it may be, the contemporary reality compels the Church to be mindful also of security issues for the church building. This is appropriate not only for the sake of securing items and treasures within the church building, but also equally important for the safety of the faithful. It is unfortunate that so many churches today must be locked, thus preventing the faithful from entering for prayer and meditation except for specific times. Investigation should be made regarding the possibility of securing the items inside the church in such a way as to allow the faithful greater access to this house of prayer.

**The Sacrarium:** The sacristy near the sanctuary will usually contain the *sacrarium*, the special sink used for the reverent disposal of sacred substances. This sink has a cover, a basin, and a special pipe and drain that empty directly into the earth, rather than into the sewer system. After Mass, when the vessels are rinsed and cleansed, the water is poured into the sacrarium so that any remaining particles that might be left will not be poured into the sewer but will go directly into the earth. When the purificators and corporals are rinsed before being washed, the water is disposed of in the sacrarium. The sacrarium also can be used to discard old baptismal water, left-over ashes, and the previous year's oils, if they are not burned.

In addition, if any of the Precious Blood is accidentally spilled during Mass, it is carefully wiped up and the area is washed. The water from this process also should be poured down the sacrarium. Reverence for sacred things continues even after they are no longer useful in the liturgy.

### **Special Issues in the Renovation of Churches**

When a parish constructs a new building, there are many options available for responding to the liturgical needs and balancing the values involved. When a parish is renovating an existing worship space, the building itself may limit some of the design possibilities and constrain the parish to choose between options that are less than ideal. In making compromises demanded by the limits of the existing space, it is important for the parish to continue to work with professionals to consider all the possible options and to make the choice that will best serve the requirements of the liturgy and the other parish priorities.

**Alteration of Historic Structures:** Over time, as public expressions of worship change, there is a consequent shift in the demands on the physical space used for the Church's liturgy. In accord with the norms of the liturgical reform, it is sometimes necessary to alter historic structures that pose a

challenge.<sup>202</sup> In projects of this kind, a delicate balance can be achieved through a selection of designs and appointments that respect and protect the Church's ancient artistic heritage and, at the same time, effectively serve the requirements of contemporary worship.

**Renovation of Churches:** When renovation of a church is to be undertaken or when it becomes necessary to raze an old church, special care is needed. A church that has served its people over many years will not easily be relinquished, especially by those with deep roots in the parish. In this type of project, parish involvement in the assessment of need and in subsequent planning is especially critical. Although consultation allows opposition to emerge more quickly than it otherwise might, in the final analysis it is better that all points of view be heard and dealt with in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration than that they be left unvoiced to fester for the future.

There will always be some members of a community who will find it difficult, if not impossible, to relinquish their past church, but an open assessment of the local needs, coupled with education about the liturgical rites, can go far toward drawing a parish together in support of the work to be done. In principle, the community deserves to hear how the renovation will enhance their ability to pray with solemnity, beauty, and dignity.

It is also important in situations such as these for respect to be shown for the existing building and its appointments so as to preserve as much of the original worthy fabric as possible. When the project involves a renovation, materials such as marble and wood paneling, as well as other artifacts or furnishings, often can be refurbished and incorporated into the new design, provided they are of requisite quality. Informing the parish of the efforts being made in this regard may make the adjustment to the new worship space less difficult, if not more appealing.

There are times, however, when the materials are no longer suitable, either because they are worn or because they no longer serve the needs of the liturgy. In such cases, pastors and committees need to consult with the diocesan worship office or the chancery regarding any policies governing the disposal of such items. In recent years there have been examples of religious artifacts and sacred vessels appearing at auctions and on websites for purchase with seemingly no consideration of their purpose or significance.

Finally, when a church interior is to be gutted or torn down, celebrating a final Mass to mark the closing of the church building is appropriate. Perhaps the most appropriate ritual would be the final celebration of Mass in the church, followed by a procession in which the people journey to either the new place of worship or to the place that will serve them temporarily until the necessary work on the new or renewed space for worship is finished.

**The Altar:** In the construction of new churches, there should be only one altar to signify the one Eucharist and the one Lord, Jesus Christ, who gathers the community at the one Table of his Body and Blood. However, in renovating an existing church, when the position of the old altar hinders the people's participation, or if "it is impossible to move it without detriment to its artistic value, then another fixed altar may be erected" in the church. This new altar is the one on which the liturgy should be celebrated.<sup>203</sup>

It is usually better to avoid attaching individual names to specific appointments, furnishings or works of art within the church. While allowing people to pay for these objects may be an easy fund-raising solution, it can lead to future problems when there may be need to remove or alter the memorialized object.

**The Space for the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament:** In an earlier chapter, the issue of the location of the tabernacle was covered. The structure of the existing building will determine some of the

options the parish is able to consider. In exercising his responsibility for the liturgical life of the diocese, the diocesan bishop may issue specific directives regarding the reservation of the Eucharist and the placement of the tabernacle. Again, the pastor, the parish pastoral council, and the building committee will need to review all existing diocesan norms and then carefully examine the principles that underlie each of the options, weigh the liturgical advantages of each possibility, and reflect upon the customs and piety of the parishioners before making a recommendation on the placement of the tabernacle. The location also should allow for easy access by people in wheelchairs and by those who have other disabilities. Diocesan worship offices can assist parishes by facilitating the study and discussion process regarding the placement of the tabernacle and other significant issues involved in the renovation of a church. This is an area where liturgical consultants also can be of great assistance to the parish.

In most churches built before 1969, the tabernacle was situated on the main altar. At the close of the Second Vatican Council, when parishes were able to celebrate the liturgy facing the congregation, many pastors installed movable altars somewhere in front of the existing altar, and they used the former altar as the place for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

In renovating a church designed in another time period, a parish has an opportunity to consider other locations for the tabernacle. Care must be taken to ensure that the area set aside for the reservation of the Eucharist is worthy and distinguished. The place for eucharistic reservation and its furnishings should never be temporary, makeshift, or difficult to find.

In some renovated churches it is possible to remove older altars and tabernacles. When there are good reasons for not removing the altar, an alternate site for the tabernacle may still be considered. In some churches an area that previously housed a side altar or some devotional space might be an appropriate space for reservation, assuming that it meets the other requirements set forth in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. In other situations, the only appropriate place for reservation will be in the sanctuary itself and on the former main altar. In these instances, a balance must be sought so that the placement of the tabernacle does not draw the attention of the faithful away from the eucharistic celebration and its components.<sup>204</sup> On the other hand, the location must provide for a focus on the tabernacle during those periods of quiet prayer outside the celebration of the Eucharist.

Ordinarily, there should be 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.

When a place is chosen for the tabernacle and the former tabernacle can be removed from an existing altar without damaging the altar or the setting, this will be beneficial and will help to prevent confusion among the faithful.

**Preservation of the Artistic Heritage of the Church:** The coexistence of past and present called for in renovating and restoring church art and architecture is not without rich, multilayered and successful precedent. "The Church is intent on keeping the works of art and the treasures handed down from the past and, when necessary, on adapting them to new needs."<sup>205</sup> In many parishes, even those whose churches are not considered historically, architecturally or artistically significant, it is possible to find worthy works of art such as art glass, furnishings, wood and marble structures, and musical instruments that are of aesthetic and artistic value. Parishes, therefore, are encouraged to undertake an assessment of their artistic works and furnishings to determine their value. The architect, artist, and liturgical consultant, as well as diocesan personnel, are indispensable collaborators in discerning works that are considered part of the sacred heritage of the Church's art. "Many people have made unwarranted changes in places of worship under the pretext of carrying out the reform of the liturgy and have thus

caused the disfigurement or loss of priceless works of art."<sup>206</sup>

"Care should be taken against destroying the treasures of sacred art in the course of remodeling churches." When it is necessary to relocate or remove artistic pieces in the interest of the liturgical reform, they can be appropriately cared for and placed in a location "befitting and worthy of the works themselves."<sup>207</sup> Sacred art that at one time appropriately served liturgy and devotion but that is less capable of functioning in that capacity must still be accorded respect and never be put to secular or "profane use."<sup>208</sup>

Each diocese is strongly encouraged to record and protect the cultural heritage of the faithful. Where possible, a diocesan repository or museum can properly preserve and make available the rich heritage of the local Church. Every renovation project should include a careful photographic and videographic documentation of the building as it evolves.

As custodians of the Church's sacred heritage, architects, artists, and clergy must be educated in the appreciation of sacred art and in its purposes within liturgy. The priests' leadership often will provide the initial inspiration to communities seeking to build new churches, to design new liturgical art, or to renovate existing worship spaces. The Second Vatican Council was particularly clear in its teaching on this issue: "Clerics are to be taught about the history and development of sacred art and about the sound principles on which the productions of its works must be grounded. In consequence they will be able to appreciate and preserve the Church's treasured monuments and be in a position to offer good advice to artists who are engaged in producing works of art."<sup>209</sup>



## Conclusion

Church architecture embodies the Gospel and awakens true liturgical piety in all believers, drawing them into the life of the Triune God.<sup>210</sup> The eucharistic piety around which churches are built is always Trinitarian, Christological, Scriptural, and communal, and builds upon the Church's liturgical tradition *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Without such well-grounded liturgical piety, the church building will lack the essentials for which it was constructed. The most technically brilliant architecture can lack a Christian soul if it does not house a community with the mind and heart of Christ.

Decisions about what is considered appropriate Christian art, while they should be informed by expert taste and opinion, are best made after consultation with the whole liturgical assembly under the leadership of the pastor. When the Church's buildings and artworks engender a contemplative attitude toward God's creation, toward Christ's redemption of history, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they proclaim her faith in visible signs and evangelize the neighborhood, the city and the nation. Non-believers point to them as stunning examples of art as well as mysterious, public symbols of Christian piety. Without a meditative dimension, Christian architecture risks reducing the mystery of divine presence to either social action or to a comfortable domesticity.

Prayer and liturgy both arise from communities of faith and, at the same time, help to create those communities. The eucharistic assembly enters into a dialogue initiated by God and continued among brothers and sisters. Without a commitment to the building of community, a parish may create a church building that is architecturally refined but stark and oppressively distant.

The process of building a church calls the People of God to the unfinished business of the community; it alerts the eucharistic assembly to the fact that complacency is destructive and that Christ's redemption of the universe is incomplete until God is truly all in all. Without the prophetic challenge of the Holy Spirit, church buildings could be merely triumphalistic monuments, a confirmation of comfortable opinions. The Spirit's prophetic gift reminds the assembly of the poor in the midst of plenty, of the homeless living on the streets, and of the abused and battered whose faces can be so easily avoided. These members of the Communion of Saints must be welcome at the Table of the Lord, and their concerns and needs must guide all building decisions. "What makes a church different from any other building is not its form or shape but rather how it facilitates for a particular community of believers a regular unfolding of the Christian mystery, the eternal divine plan for humanity as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ."<sup>211</sup> Eucharistic assemblies, housed in church buildings, have Jesus Christ at their center. He is the Word spoken by divine mystery, the beloved Son of the Father, the head of the community of believers, and the prophet who challenges and inspires them to live for God and neighbor. Every church built for the People of God unfolds his presence.

A characteristic of Christians is how they love one another even while they meet the challenge of building a new place for worship. It may be difficult and the fabric of the assembly may fray and even tear. But the Spirit's work in the assembly of God's People encourages cooperation so that each can perform a task for the building up of the Body of Christ. During a building process, the community



works together with the diocese and with the universal Church as another way of building up the Church with the "living stones" from which God's assembly is made. If the community looks upon its work with the eyes of faith, then it can be assured that God will bring the good work to completion.



## Notes

1. Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* [SC] (December 4, 1963), nos. 45-46: "Likewise, by way of advancing the liturgical apostolate, every diocese is to have a commission on the sacred liturgy under the direction of the bishop. Sometimes it may be expedient for several dioceses to form between them one single commission which will be able to promote the liturgy by common consultation.

"Besides the commission on the sacred liturgy, every diocese, as far as possible, should have commissions for sacred music and sacred art. These three commissions must harmonize their activities. Indeed it will frequently be advisable to fuse the three of them into a single commission."

2. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* [LG] (November 21, 1964), no. 17: "Whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, is not only saved from destruction but is also healed, ennobled, and perfected unto the glory of God, the confusion of the devil, and the happiness of man."

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy* [IRL] (1994), no. 18: "So the Liturgy of the church must not be foreign to any country, people or individual, and at the same time it should transcend the particularity of race and nation. It must be capable of expressing itself in every human culture, all the while maintaining its identity through fidelity to the tradition which comes to it from the Lord."

3. SC, no. 25: "The liturgical books are to be revised as soon as possible; from various parts of the world, experts are to be employed and bishops are to be consulted."
4. SC, no. 128: "Along with the revision of the liturgical books, as laid down in Article 25, there is to be an early revision of the canons and ecclesiastical statutes which govern the disposition of material things involved in sacred worship. These laws refer especially to the worthy and well-planned construction of sacred buildings, the shape and construction of altars, the nobility, location, and security of the Eucharistic tabernacle, the suitability and dignity of the baptistery, the proper use of sacred images, embellishments, and vestments. Laws which seem less suited to the reformed liturgy are to be brought into harmony with it, or else abolished; and any which are helpful are to be retained if already in use, and introduced where they are lacking. According to the norm of Article 22 of the Constitution, the territorial bodies of bishops are empowered to adapt matters to the needs and customs of their different regions; this applies especially to the material and form of sacred furnishings and vestments."
5. Cf. the Circular Letter *Opera Artis: On the Care of the Church's Historical and Artistic Heritage* [OA] (April 11, 1971), from the Congregation for the Clergy to presidents of the episcopal conferences; the decree *Domus Dei* (1968) on the norms for minor basilicas, from the Congregation of Rites (Consilium); the *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar* [RDCA] (1977) from the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship; the Instruction *Pontificalis Ritus* (1968) on the simplification of pontifical rites and insignia, from the Congregation of Rites; the Instruction *Ut Sive Sollicite* (1969) on vesture, from the Vatican's Secretariat of State; the Motu Proprio *Inter Eximia Episcopalis* (1978) on the use of the pallium, from Pope Paul VI; and Pope John Paul II's *Letter to Artists* [LA] (April 4, 1999).

6. National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship* [EACW] (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1978).
7. United States Catholic Conference-Libreria Editrice Vaticana, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] (2000), no. 760.
8. LG, 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)."
13. 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."
14. 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.
15. 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."
16. 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."
17. 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."
18. 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)."

19. 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.

20. *Ibid.*, no. 1069: "The word 'liturgy' originally meant a 'public work' or a 'service in the name of/on behalf of the people.' In Christian tradition it means the participation of the People of God in 'the work of God' (cf. Jn 17:4). Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church."

The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful, indeed by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist.

21. SC, no. 7: "Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of man is manifested by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which is proper to each of these signs; in the liturgy full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members."  
Cf. CIC, c. 834.

22. The *Catechism of Catholic Church*, no. 2567, speaks of God's revelation and prayer as a "covenant drama" that engages the heart and unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation.

23. Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini: Observing and Celebrating the Day of the Lord* [DD] (May 31, 1998), no. 68: "In order that rest may not degenerate into emptiness or boredom, it must offer spiritual enrichment, greater freedom, opportunities for contemplation and fraternal communion. Therefore, among the forms of culture and entertainment which society offers, the faithful should choose those which are most in keeping with a life lived in obedience to the precepts of the Gospel. Sunday rest then becomes 'prophetic,' affirming not only the absolute primacy of God, but also the primacy and dignity of the person with respect to the demands of social and economic life, and anticipating in a certain sense the 'new heavens' and the 'new earth,' in which liberation from slavery to needs will be final and complete. In short, the Lord's Day thus becomes in the truest sense the day of man as well."

24. SC, no. 10: "Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows."

25. Cf. Lk 1:23; Acts 13:2; Rom 15:16, 27:2; and Phil 2:14-17, 25, 30.

26. no. 7: "From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others."

CCC, no. 1070: "In the New Testament the word 'liturgy' refers not only to the celebration of divine worship but also the proclamation of the Gospel and to active charity. In all of these situations it is a question of the service of God and neighbor. In a liturgical celebration, the Church is servant in the image of her Lord, the one 'leitourgos'; she shares in Christ's priesthood (worship), which is both prophetic (proclamation) and kingly service (service of charity)."

27. From the creation of the world, God's presence has been mediated through the very works of his hands (Rom 1:20). With the people of Israel, that presence was seen more clearly and even localized at first in the Tent of Meeting and later in the Temple. These were understood as the place or epiphany of God's glory (the *Shekinah*) (Ex 40:34-35). In the New Testament, Christ comes to be seen as the complete and definitive epiphany of God's glory (Jn 1:4; Heb 1:3, 10:5-7). The Church, the People of God, is the

continued sacramental presence of Christ, and the new church building is the privileged place of this continued epiphany in the ongoing history of salvation.

28. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM] (2000), no. 27: "At Mass or the Lord's Supper, the people of God are called into unity, with a priest presiding and acting in the person of Christ, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord or Eucharistic sacrifice. For this reason Christ's promise applies supremely to such a local gathering together of the Church: 'Where two or three come together in my name, there am I in their midst' (Matthew 18:20). For at the celebration of Mass, which perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross, Christ is really present in the assembly gathered in his name; he is present in the person of the minister, in his own word, and indeed substantially and permanently under the eucharistic elements."
29. Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei: On the Doctrine and Worship of the Eucharist* [MF] (September 3, 1965), no. 39 (DOL 176, no. 1183): "This presence is called the *real presence* not to exclude the other kinds as though they were not real, but because it is real par excellence, since it is substantial, in the sense that Christ whole and entire, God and man, becomes present."
30. Cf. CCC, no. 1146: "In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gestures, and actions. The same holds true for his relationship with God."  
  
Cf. GIRM, no. 288: "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."
31. Cf. CCC, no. 1151: "In his preaching the Lord Jesus often makes use of the signs of creation to make known the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. He performs healings and illustrates his preaching with physical signs or symbolic gestures."
32. Cf. CCC, no. 1148; cf. no. 1152: "Since Pentecost, it is through the sacramental signs of his Church that the Holy Spirit carries on the work of sanctification. The sacraments of the Church do not abolish but purify and integrate all the richness of the signs and symbols of the cosmos and of social life. Further, they fulfill the types and figures of the Old Covenant, signify and make actively present the salvation wrought by Christ, and prefigure and anticipate the glory of heaven."
33. Cf. SC, no. 59; CCC, no. 1075: "Liturgical catechesis aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ (It is 'mystagogy.') by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the 'sacraments' to the 'mysteries.'"
34. Cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Music in Catholic Worship* [MCW] (1983), nos. 6-7.
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. GIRM, no. 294: "The people of God assembled at Mass possess an organic and hierarchical structure, expressed by the various ministries and actions for each part of the celebration. The general plan of the sacred building should be such that in some way it conveys the image of the gathered assembly. Thus it should also allow the participants to take the place most appropriate to them and assist all to carry out their individual functions properly.

"The faithful and the choir should have a place that facilitates their active participation.

"The priest celebrant, the deacon and other ministers have their place in the sanctuary. At the same time, seats for the concelebrants should be prepared. If there is truly a great number of concelebrants, then seats should be arranged in another part of the church, but near the altar.

"Even though all these elements must express a hierarchical arrangement and the diversity of functions, they should at the same time form a deep and organic unity, clearly expressive of the unity of the entire holy people. The character and beauty of the place and all its appointments should foster devotion and show the holiness of the mysteries celebrated there."

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.

43. GIRM, no. 95: "In the celebration of Mass the faithful are a holy people, a chosen people, a royal priesthood: they give thanks to God and offer the Victim not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him and learn to offer themselves. They should endeavor to make this clear by their deep sense of reverence for God and their charity toward brothers and sisters who share with them in the celebration."

44. CIC, c. 835 § 1: "The bishops in the first place exercise the sanctifying function; they are the high priests, the principal dispensers of the mysteries of God, and the directors, promoters, and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the church entrusted to them."

Ibid, c. 838 § 4: "Within the limits of his competence, it pertains to the diocesan bishop in the Church entrusted to him to issue liturgical norms which bind everyone."

45. Cf. GIRM, no. 22; LG, nos. 26 and 28; SC, no. 42: "Because it is impossible for the bishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his church, he cannot do other than establish lesser groupings of the faithful. Among these, parishes set up locally under a pastor who takes the place of the bishop are the most important: for in a certain way they represent the visible Church as it is established throughout the world.

"Therefore the liturgical life of the parish and its relationship to the bishop must be fostered in the thinking of and practice of both laity and clergy; efforts also must be made to encourage a sense of community within the parish, above all in the common celebration of the Sunday Mass."

46. CIC, c. 1215 §§ 1 and 2: "No church is to be built without the express written consent of the diocesan bishop.

"The diocesan bishop is not to give consent unless, after having heard the presbyteral council and the rectors of the neighboring churches, he judges that the new church can serve the good of souls and that the means necessary for building the church and for divine worship will not be lacking."

47. Ibid., c. 835 § 2: "Presbyters also exercise this function [the sanctifying function]; sharing in the priesthood of Christ and as his ministers under the authority of the bishop, they are consecrated to celebrate divine worship and to sanctify the people."
48. GIRM, no. 93: "Within the Church the priest also possesses the power of Holy Orders to offer sacrifice in the person of Christ. He therefore stands at the head of the faithful people gathered together, presides over its prayer, proclaims the message of salvation, joins the people to himself in offering the sacrifice to God the Father through Christ in the Spirit, gives his brothers and sisters the bread of eternal life, and shares in it with them. At the Eucharist he should, then, serve God and the people with dignity and humility; by his bearing and by the way he recites the words of the liturgy he should communicate to the faithful a sense of the living presence of Christ."
49. Ibid., no. 94: "After the priest, in virtue of the sacred ordination he has received, the deacon has first place among those who minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. For the sacred Order of the diaconate has been held in high honor in the Church since the time of the Apostles. At Mass the deacon proclaims the gospel reading, sometimes preaches God's word, announces the intentions of the general intercessions, ministers to the priest, prepares the altar and serves the celebration of the sacrifice, distributes the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the species of wine, and from time to time gives directions regarding the people's gestures and posture."
50. LG, nos. 26 and 28.
51. GIRM, no. 294: "The people of God assembled at Mass possess an organic and hierarchical structure, expressed by the various ministries and actions for each part of the celebration."  
  
Cf. GIRM, no. 5: "In addition, the nature of the ministerial priesthood puts into its proper light another reality of which much should be made, namely, the royal priesthood of believers. Through the ministry of priests, the people's spiritual sacrifice is brought to completeness in union with the sacrifice of Christ, our one and only Mediator. For the celebration of the Eucharist is the action of the whole Church; in it all should do only, but all of, those parts that belong to them in virtue of their place within the people of God."
52. SC, no. 28: "In liturgical celebrations, whether as a minister or as one of the faithful, each person should perform his role by doing solely and totally what the nature of the things and liturgical norms require of him."
53. SC, nos. 37 and 119; CCC, no. 1158: "The harmony of signs (song, music, words, and actions) is all the more expressive and fruitful when expressed in the *cultural richness* of the People of God who celebrate."
54. Cf. Mk 14:15; Acts 2:42 and 17:16-34.
55. Cf. SC, no. 123; GIRM, no. 289: "At all times, therefore, the Church seeks out the noble support of the arts and welcomes the artistic expressions of all peoples and regions. Even more, the Church is intent on keeping the works of art and the treasures handed down from the past and, when necessary, on adapting them to new needs. It strives as well to promote new works of art that appeal to the contemporary mentality.

"In commissioning artists and choosing works of art that are to become part of a church, the highest artistic standard is therefore to be set, in order that art may aid faith and devotion and be true to the reality it is to symbolize and the purpose it is to serve."

56. Cf. CCC, nos. 1201-1206; Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae: On Catechesis in Our Time* [CT] (October 16, 1979), no. 53.

57. Cf. CT, no. 53: "The term 'acculturation' or 'inculturation' may be a neologism, but it expresses very well one factor of the great mystery of the Incarnation". We can say of catechesis, as well as of evangelization in general, that it is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. For this purpose, catechesis will seek to know these cultures and their essential components; it will learn their most significant expressions; it will respect their particular values and riches. In this manner it will be able to offer these cultures the knowledge of the hidden mystery and help them to bring forth from their own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought. Two things must however be kept in mind.

"On the one hand the Gospel message cannot be purely and simply isolated from the culture in which it was first inserted (the Biblical world or, more concretely, the cultural milieu in which Jesus of Nazareth lived), nor, without serious loss, from the cultures in which it has already been expressed down the centuries; it does not spring spontaneously from any cultural soil; it has always been transmitted by means of an apostolic dialogue which inevitably becomes part of a certain dialogue of cultures.

"On the other hand, the power of the Gospel everywhere transforms and regenerates. When that power enters into a culture, it is no surprise that it rectifies many of its elements. There would be no catechesis if it were the Gospel that had to change when it came into contact with the cultures.

"To forget this would simply amount to what Saint Paul very forcefully calls 'emptying the cross of Christ of its power' (1 Cor 1:17).

"It is a different matter to take, with wise discernment, certain elements, religious or otherwise, that form part of the cultural heritage of a human group and use them to help its members to understand better the whole of the Christian mystery. Genuine catechists know that catechesis 'takes flesh' in the various cultures and milieux: one has only to think of the peoples with their great differences, of modern youth, of the great variety of circumstances in which people find themselves today. But they refuse to accept an impoverishment of catechesis through a renunciation or obscuring of its message, by adaptations, even in language, that would endanger the 'precious deposit' of the faith, or by concessions in matters of faith or morals. They are convinced that true catechesis eventually enriches these cultures by helping them to go beyond the defective or even inhuman features in them, and by communicating to their legitimate values the fullness of Christ."

58. Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi: On Evangelization in the Modern World* (December 8, 1975), no. 42; CT, no. 53; Irish Episcopal Commission for Liturgy, *The Place of Worship: Pastoral Directory on the Building and Reordering of Churches* [PW] (1994), no. 3.7.

59. CCC, nos. 1157-1158; cf. SC, no. 119.

60. Cf. LA, no. 6: "Every genuine artistic intuition goes beyond what the senses perceive and, reaching beneath reality's surface, strives to interpret its hidden mystery. The intuition itself springs from the depths of the human soul, where the desire to give meaning to one's own life is joined by the fleeting vision of beauty and of the mysterious unity of things. All artists experience the unbridgeable gap which lies between the work of their hands, however successful it may be, and the dazzling perfection of the beauty glimpsed in the ardor of the creative moment: What they manage to express in their painting, their sculpting, their creating is no more than a glimmer of the splendor which flared for a moment before the eyes of their spirit. . . .

"Every genuine art form in its own way is a path to the inmost reality of man and of the world. It is therefore a wholly valid approach to the realm of faith, which gives human experience its ultimate meaning. That is why the Gospel fullness of truth was bound from the beginning to stir the interest of artists, who by their very nature are alert to every 'epiphany' of the inner beauty of things."



61. Cf. SC, nos. 123 and 129; Congregation of Rites, *Eucharisticum Mysterium: On Worship of the Eucharist* [EM] (May 25, 1967), no. 24 (DOL 179, no. 1253).

62. Cf. SC, no. 124: "When churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful."

Cf. GIRM, no. 292: "Church decor should seek to achieve noble simplicity rather than ostentation. The choice of materials for church appointments must be marked by concern for genuineness and by the intent to foster instruction of the faithful and the dignity of the place of worship."

Cf. GIRM, nos. 295, 306, and 311-312.

63. Pope Paul VI, *Laudis Canticum* (November 1, 1970) (DOL 424, no. 3427): "The life of Christ in his Mystical Body also perfects and elevates for each member of the faithful his own personal life, any conflict between the prayer of the Church and personal prayer must be entirely rejected, and the relationship between them strengthened and enlarged. . . . If the prayer of the Divine Office becomes genuine personal prayer, the relation between the liturgy and the whole Christian life also becomes clearer. The whole life of the faithful, hour by hour during the day and night, is a kind of *leitourgia* or public service, in which the faithful give themselves over to the ministry of love toward God and men, identifying themselves with the action of Christ, who by his life and self-offering sanctified the life of all mankind."

64. SC, nos. 12 and 13: "The spiritual life, however, is not confined solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is assuredly called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father in secret (cf. Mt. 6:6); indeed, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul, he should pray without ceasing (cf. 1 Th. 5:17). . . .

"Popular devotions of the Christian people are warmly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church. Such is especially the case with devotions called for by the Apostolic See. . . . Nevertheless these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead people to it, since the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them."

65. SC, no. 10: "Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper."

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. GIRM, no. 294: "The people of God assembled at Mass possess an organic and hierarchical structure, expressed by the various ministries and actions for each part of the celebration. The general plan of the sacred building should be such that in some way it conveys the image of the gathered assembly. Thus it should also allow the participants to take the place most appropriate to them and assist all to carry out their individual functions properly.

"The faithful and the choir should have a place that facilitates their active participation."

68. Ibid.: "Even though all these elements must express a hierarchical arrangement and the diversity of functions, they should at the same time form a deep and organic unity, clearly expressive of the unity of the entire holy people. The character and beauty of the place and all its appointments should foster devotion and show the holiness of the mysteries celebrated there."
69. Ibid., no. 295: "The sanctuary is the place where the altar stands, the word of God is proclaimed, and the priest, deacon and other ministers exercise their offices. It should clearly be marked off from the body of the church either by being somewhat elevated or by its distinctive design and appointments. It should be large enough to allow for the proper celebration of the Eucharist which should be easily seen."
70. 1 Cor 11:26; cf. Rev 19:9.
71. GIRM, no. 296: "At the altar the sacrifice of the cross is made present under sacramental signs. It is also the table of the Lord, and the people of God are called together to share in it. The altar is, as well, the center of the thanksgiving that the Eucharist accomplishes."
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. GIRM, no. 303: "In the building of new churches, it is especially important that a single altar be erected which signifies to the assembly of the faithful the one Christ and the one Eucharist of the Church.

"However, in churches already built, when an old altar is already so positioned that it makes the participation of the people difficult, or it is impossible to move it without detriment to its artistic value, then another fixed altar may be erected. It should be artfully made and dedicated according to the rite. The sacred celebrations should be performed upon it alone; and 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."

75. Ibid., no. 299: "In every church there should ordinarily be a fixed, dedicated altar, which should be freestanding to allow the ministers to walk around it easily and Mass to be celebrated facing the people, which is desirable whenever possible. The altar should occupy its place so that it is truly the center on which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally focuses. As a rule, the altar is fixed and dedicated."
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. GIRM, no. 301: "The pedestal or base of the table may be of any sort of material, as long as it is becoming and solid."

Cf. CIC, c. 1236.

78. GIRM, no. 301: "According to the Church's traditional practice and the altar's symbolism, the table of a fixed altar should be of stone and indeed of natural stone. But at the discretion of the Conference of Bishops some other solid, becoming, and well-crafted material may be used. The pedestal or base of the table may be made of any sort of material, as long as it is becoming and solid."

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."
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.
85. GIRM, no. 310: "The priest celebrant's chair ought to stand as a symbol of his function of presiding over the assembly and of directing prayer. Thus the best 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 are an obstacle, for example, if too great a distance would interfere with communication between the priest and the gathered assembly, or if the tabernacle is positioned medially behind the altar. However, anything resembling a throne is to be avoided."
- "The seat for the deacon should be placed near that of the celebrant. However the seats for the other ministers should be arranged so that they are clearly distinguished from the seats for clergy and, so that the lay ministers are easily able to fulfill the office assigned to them."
86. Ibid.
87. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 47.
88. GIRM, no. 310.
89. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA] (1988), General Introduction, no. 25: "The baptistery or the area where the baptismal font is located should be reserved for the sacrament of baptism and should be worthy to serve as the place where Christians are reborn in water and the Holy Spirit. 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."

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."

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."

98. GIRM, no. 315: "It is more in keeping with its meaning as a sign, that the tabernacle in which the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved not be on the altar on which Mass is celebrated.

Moreover, the tabernacle should be placed, according to the judgment of the diocesan Bishop:

- a. either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, in the most suitable form and place, not excluding on an old altar which is no longer used for celebration;
- b. or even in another chapel suitable for adoration and the private prayer of the faithful, and which is integrally connected with the church and is conspicuous to the faithful.

99. There has been a shift in directives about the placement of the tabernacle over time. The latest edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2000) alters the earlier directive in GIRM, no. 276, which gave a clear preference for reservation in a separate chapel. GIRM, no. 315, now directs the diocesan bishop to determine the appropriate placement either in the sanctuary (including on the old altar which is no longer used for celebration) or in a separate chapel. It may not be reserved on the altar at which the Eucharist is celebrated.

100. GIRM, no. 315.

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."

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."

103. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts* [PCEF] (January 16, 1988), no. 49: "For the reservation of Blessed Sacrament, a place should be prepared and adorned in such a way as to be conducive to prayer and meditation; that sobriety appropriate to the liturgy of these days is enjoined, to the avoidance or suppression of all abuses."

104. *Ibid.*, no. 68: "For veneration of the cross, let a cross be used that is of appropriate size and beauty, and let one or the other of the forms of this rite as found in the *Roman Missal* be followed."

105. PCEF, no. 82: "Insofar as possible, a suitable place should be prepared outside the church for the blessing of the new fire, whose flames should be such that they genuinely dispel the darkness and light up the night."

106. GIRM, no. 294: "The people of God assembled at Mass possess an organic and hierarchical structure, expressed by the various ministries and actions for each part of the celebration. The general plan of the sacred building should be such that in some way it conveys the image of the gathered assembly. Thus it should also allow the participants to take the place most appropriate to them and assist all to carry out their individual functions properly.

"The faithful and the choir should have a place that facilitates their active participation.

"The priest celebrant, the deacon and other ministers have their place in the sanctuary. At the same time, seats for the concelebrants should be prepared. If there is truly a great number of concelebrants, then seats should be arranged in another part of the church, but near the altar.

"Even though all these elements must express a hierarchical arrangement and the diversity of functions, they should at the same time form a deep and organic unity, clearly expressive of the unity of the entire

holy people. The character and beauty of the place and all its appointments should foster devotion and show the holiness of the mysteries celebrated there."

107. Ibid., no. 311: "The places for the faithful should be arranged with care so that they are able to take their rightful part in the celebration visually and mentally. As a rule, there should be benches or chairs for their use. But the custom of reserving seats for private persons must be abolished. Especially in newly built churches, however, benches or chairs should be set up in such a way that the people can easily take the postures required during various parts of the celebration and have unimpeded access to receive communion."
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 worshipping 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. GIRM, no. 294: "The people of God assembled at Mass possess an organic and hierarchical structure, expressed by the various ministries and actions for each part of the celebration. The general plan of the sacred building should be such that in some way it conveys the image of the gathered assembly. Thus it should also allow the participants to take the place most appropriate to them and assist all to carry out their individual functions properly.
- "The faithful and the choir should have a place that facilitates their active participation."
- Ibid., no. 312: "In relation to the design of each church, the *schola cantorum* should be so placed that its character as a part of the assembly of the faithful that has a special function stands out clearly. The location should also assist the exercise of the duties of the *schola cantorum* and allow each member of the choir complete, that is, sacramental participation in the Mass."
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."
113. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Book of Blessings* [BB] (1988), no. 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."
114. GIRM, no. 308: "There is also to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, positioned either on the altar or near it, and which is clearly visible to the people gathered together. It is fitting that a cross of this kind, recalling for the faithful the saving passion of the Lord, remain near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations."
115. Cf. GIRM, no. 122: "The cross adorned with the figure of Christ crucified and which has been carried in procession, is placed near the altar so that it may become the altar cross, which ought then to be the only cross used; otherwise it is set aside."
116. GIRM, no. 307: "Candles are to be used at every liturgical service as a sign of reverence and of the festiveness of the celebration. The candlesticks are to be placed either on or around the altar in a way

suiting to the design of the altar and the sanctuary. Everything is to be well balanced and must not interfere with the faithful's clear view of what takes place on at the altar or is placed on it."

117. 1 Pt 2:9.

118. GIRM, no. 117: "The altar is to be covered with at least one white colored cloth. On or even next to the altar are to be candlesticks with lighted candles, at least two in every celebration, or even four or six, especially if a Sunday Mass or Mass for a holy day of obligation is celebrated, or if the Bishop of the diocese celebrates, then seven candles should be used. There is also to be a cross on or near the altar, with a figure of Christ crucified. However, the candles and the cross adorned with the figure of Christ crucified may be carried in the entrance procession. The *Book of the Gospels*, if distinct from the book of other readings, may be placed on the altar, unless it is carried in the entrance procession."

119. DOL 208, p. 519, note R47, quoting the newsletter of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments *Notitiae* 10:80 (1974), no. 4: "Query: Must the lighted candles that are to be placed in candlesticks for the celebration of Mass consist in part of beeswax, olive oil, or other vegetable oil? Reply: The GIRM prescribes candles for Mass 'as a sign of reverence and festiveness' (nos. 79, 269). But it makes no further determination regarding the material of their composition, except in the case of the sanctuary lamp, the fuel for which must be oil or wax (see *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, Introduction no. 11). The faculty that the conferences of bishops possess to choose suitable materials for sacred furnishings applies therefore to the candles for Mass. The faculty is limited only by the condition that in the estimation of the people the materials are valued and worthy and that they are appropriate for sacred use. Candles intended for liturgical use should be made of material that can provide a living flame without being smoky or noxious and that does not stain the altar cloths or coverings. Electric bulbs are banned in the interest of safeguarding authenticity and the full symbolism of light."

120. Congregation for Divine Worship, *The Sacramentary [The Roman Missal]* (1973, 1985), The Easter Vigil, no. 12.

121. PCEF, no. 99: "In the celebration of funerals, the paschal candle should be placed near the coffin to indicate that the death of a Christian is one's own passover. The paschal candle should not otherwise be lit or placed in the sanctuary outside the Easter season."

122. BB, no. 1229.

123. *Ibid.*, no. 1216: "It is proper, then, that in construction, design, and decoration church doors should stand as a symbol of Christ, who said, 'I am the door, whoever enters through me will be safe,' and of those who have followed the path of holiness that leads to the dwelling place of God."

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."
129. Cf. additional sections in this document on accessibility, pp. 38, 40, and 81ff. **[check with final copy]**
130. Congregation for Divine Worship, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *Order of Christian Funerals* [OCF] (1985, 1989), no. 42: "Processions continue to have special significance in funeral celebrations, as in Christian Rome where funeral rites consisted of three "stages" or "stations" joined by two processions. Christians accompanied the body on its last journey. From the home of the deceased the Christian community proceed to the church singing psalms. When the service in the church concluded, the body was carried in solemn procession to the grave or tomb. During the final procession the congregation sang psalms praising the God of mercy and redemption and antiphons entrusting the deceased to the care of the angels and saints. The funeral liturgy mirrored the journey of human life, the Christian pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem.
131. Ibid., no. 131: "Since the church is the place where the community of faith assembles for worship, the rite of reception of the body at the church has great significance. The church is the place where the Christian life is begotten in baptism, nourished in the eucharist, and where the community gathers to commend one of its deceased members to the Father. The church is at once a symbol of the community and of the heavenly liturgy that the celebration of the liturgy anticipates. In the act of receiving the body, the members of the community acknowledge the deceased as one of their own, as one who was welcomed in baptism and who held a place in the assembly. Through the use of various baptismal symbols the community shows the reverence due to the body, the temple of the Spirit, and in this way prepares for the funeral liturgy in which it asks for a share in the heavenly banquet promised to the deceased and to all who have been washed in the waters of rebirth and marked with the sign of faith."
132. Ibid.
133. Cf. OCF, Appendix 2, regarding the indult for the United States and the ritual directives governing the presence of the cremated remains at the funeral Mass, and the reverent disposition of the cremated remains.
134. OCF, no. 55: "The vigil may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, parlor or chapel of rest, or in some other suitable place. It may also be celebrated in the church, but at a time well before the funeral liturgy, so that the funeral liturgy will not be lengthy and the liturgy of the word repetitious."
135. Congregation for Divine Worship, *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* (February 2, 1971), no. 20 (DOL 426, no. 3450): "The liturgy of the hours, like other liturgical services, is not a private matter but belongs to the whole Body of the Church, whose life it both expresses and affects."
136. Cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest: Leader's Edition* (1993), no. 14: "It is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop, after having received the advice of the diocesan presbyteral council and, if appropriate, other consultative bodies, to decide whether Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest should be held on an occasional or regular basis in his diocese. He is to set out general and particular norms for such celebrations. They are to be held only when and where approved by the bishop and only under the pastoral ministry of a priest who has the responsibility for the particular community."
137. Ibid., no. 19: "When a deacon presides at a Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest, he acts in the usual manner in regard to the greetings, the prayers, the gospel reading and homily, the giving of communion, and the dismissal and blessing. He wears the vestments proper to his ministry, that is, the alb with stole, and, as circumstances suggest, the dalmatic. He uses the presidential chair."



138. Ibid., no. 24: "The layperson wears vesture that is suitable for his or her function or the vesture prescribed by the bishop. A layperson does not use the presidential chair."

Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* (1988), no. 40.

139. BB, no. 1125: "The oils used for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, holy orders, and the anointing of the sick according to ancient tradition are reverently reserved in a special place in the church. This repository should be secure and be protected by a lock."

140. CIC, c. 847 § 2: "The pastor is to obtain the holy oils from his own bishop and is to preserve them diligently with proper care."

141. RDCA, ch. 5, no. 1 (DOL 547, no. 4428): "Since sacred edifices, that is, churches, are permanently set aside for the celebration of the divine mysteries, it is right for them to receive a dedication to God. This is done according to the rite in chapters two and three [of the *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*] for dedicating a church, a rite impressive for its striking ceremonies and symbols.

"Private oratories, chapels, or other sacred edifices set aside only temporarily for divine worship because of special conditions, more properly receive a blessing, according to the rite [found in chapter 5 of the *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*]."

142. RDCA, ch. 1, no. 1 (DOL 547, no. 4361): "When the building of a new church begins, it is desirable to celebrate a rite to ask God's blessing for the success of the work and to remind the people that the structure built of stone will be a visible sign of the living Church, God's building that is formed of the people themselves."

143. Ibid., ch. 2, no. 2 (DOL 547, no. 4370): "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."

144. Ibid., ch. 2, no. 15 (DOL 547, no. 4383): "The celebration of the eucharist is the most important and the one necessary rite for the dedication of a church."

145. Ibid., ch. 3, no. 1 (DOL 547, no. 4396): "In order to bring out fully the symbolism and the significance of the rite, the opening of a new church and its dedication should take place at one and the same time. For this reason, as was said before, care should be taken that, as far as possible, Mass is not celebrated in a new church before it is dedicated (see chapter two, 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 must be used."

Cf. RDCA, ch. 4, no. 13 (DOL 547, no. 4410): "Since an altar becomes sacred principally by the celebration of the Eucharist, in fidelity to this truth the celebration of Mass on a new altar before it has been dedicated is to be carefully avoided, so that the Mass of dedication may also be the first eucharist celebrated on the altar."

146. Ibid., ch. 2, no. 33: "At the threshold of the church the procession comes to a halt. Representatives of those who have been involved in the building of the church (members of the parish or of the diocese, contributors, architects, workers) hand over the building to the bishop, offering him according to place and circumstances either the legal documents for possession of the building, or the keys, or the plan of the building, or the book in which the progress of the work is described and the names of those in charge of it and the names of the workers are recorded."

147. Ibid., ch. 2, no. 22 (DOL 547, no. 4390): "Beneath each cross a small bracket should be fitted and in it a small candlestick is placed, with a candle to be lighted."

148. SC, no. 102: "Holy Mother Church is conscious that she must celebrate the saving work of her divine spouse by devoutly recalling it on certain days throughout the course of the year. Every week, on the day which she has called the Lord's Day, she keeps the memory of His resurrection. In the supreme solemnity of Easter she also makes an annual commemoration of the resurrection, along with the Lord's blessed passion.
- "Within the cycle of a year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, not only from his incarnation and birth until his ascension, but also as reflected in the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of a blessed hoped-for return of the Lord.
- "Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of the Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present at all times, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold of them and become filled with saving grace."
149. Cf. BB, no. 1512.
150. Ibid., no. 1544.
151. Congregation for Bishops, *Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (1974), no. 91: "A healthy zeal for promoting liturgical life carries with it the desire to preserve, foster and even spread those exercises of piety which express and nourish the spirit of prayer. This is especially true if they are redolent of holy scripture and the sacred liturgy, have originated in the hearts of saints or have for a long time witnessed to the traditional faith and piety."
152. SC, no. 13: "Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be warmly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church. Such is especially the case with devotions called for by the Apostolic See.
- "Devotions proper to individual churches also have a special dignity if they are conducted by mandate of the bishops in accord with customs or books lawfully approved.
- "Nevertheless these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them."
153. Often churches have images as well as the crosses that mark the fourteen or fifteen stations. While the depictions of the passion are desirable, only the crosses are needed. The images that accompany the crosses are optional.
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."
157. Wis 13:5; cf. 13:3.

158. CCC, no. 2502; cf. CCC, nos. 1156-1162; SC, no. 122: "The fine arts are considered to rank among the noblest expressions of human genius. This judgment applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, which is sacred art. By their very nature, both of the latter are oriented to God's boundless beauty, for this is the reality which these human efforts are trying to express in some way. To the extent that these works aim exclusively at turning men's thoughts to God persuasively and devoutly, they are dedicated to the cause of His greater honor and glory."
159. Pope Paul VI, Address to the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art in Italy (December 17, 1969) (DOL 540, no. 4324).
160. Cf. CCC, nos. 2500-2503, 2513.
161. SC, no. 122: "The fine arts are considered to rank among the noblest expressions of human genius. This judgment applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, which is sacred art. By their very nature, both of the latter are oriented to God's boundless beauty, for this is the reality which these human efforts are trying to express in some way. To the extent that these works aim exclusively at turning men's thoughts to God persuasively and devoutly, they are dedicated to the cause of His greater honor and glory."
162. OA, no. 1 (DOL 541, no. 4327): "Works of art, the most exalted expressions of the human spirit, bring us closer and closer to the divine Artisan and with good reason are regarded as the heritage of the entire human family.
- "The Church has always held the ministry of the arts in the highest esteem and has striven to see that 'all things set apart for use in divine worship are truly worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of the supernatural world.' The Church through the centuries has also safeguarded the artistic treasures belonging to it."
163. LA, no. 1: "God therefore called man into existence, committing to him the craftsman's task. Through his 'artistic creativity' man appears more than ever 'in the image of God,' and he accomplishes this task above all in shaping the wondrous 'material' of his own humanity and then exercising creative dominion over the universe which surrounds him. With loving regard, the divine Artist passes on to the human artist a spark of his own surpassing wisdom, calling him to share in his creative power. Obviously, this is a sharing which leaves intact the infinite distance between the Creator and the creature, as Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa made clear: 'Creative art, which it is the soul's good fortune to entertain, is not to be identified with that essential art which is God himself, but is only a communication of it and a share in it.'"
164. Ibid., no. 6: "Every genuine artistic intuition goes beyond what the senses perceive and, reaching beneath reality's surface, strives to interpret its hidden mystery. The intuition itself springs from the depths of the human soul, where the desire to give meaning to one's own life is joined by the fleeting vision of beauty and of the mysterious unity of things. All artists experience the unbridgeable gap which lies between the work of their hands, however successful it may be, and the dazzling perfection of the beauty glimpsed in the ardour of the creative moment: What they manage to express in their painting, their sculpting, their creating is no more than a glimmer of the splendor which flared for a moment before the eyes of their spirit."
165. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (December 7, 1965), no. 62: "Literature and the arts are also, in their own way, of great importance to the life of the Church. For they strive to probe the unique nature of man, his problems, his experiences as he struggles to know and perfect both himself and the world. . . .

"Let the Church also acknowledge new forms of art which are adapted to our age and are in keeping with the characteristics of various nations and regions. Adjusted in their mode of expression and conformed to liturgical requirements, they may be introduced into the sanctuary when they raise the mind to God.

"In this way the knowledge of God can be better revealed. Also, the preaching of the gospel can become clearer to man's mind and show its relevance to the conditions of human life."

166. LA, no. 4: "The particular vocation of individual artists decides the arena in which they serve and points as well to the tasks they must assume, the hard work they must endure and the responsibility they must accept. Artists who are conscious of all this know too that they must labor without allowing themselves to be driven by the search for empty glory or the craving for cheap popularity, and still less by the calculation of some possible profit for themselves. There is therefore an ethic, even a 'spirituality' of artistic service, which contributes in its way to the life and renewal of a people. It is precisely this to which Cyprian Norwid seems to allude in declaring that 'beauty is to enthuse us for work, and work is to raise us up.'"

167. Ibid., no. 10.

168. Ibid., no. 13: "The church therefore needs art. But can it also be said that art needs the church? The question may seem like a provocation. Yet, rightly understood, it is both legitimate and profound. Artists are constantly in search of the hidden meaning of things, and their torment is to succeed in expressing the world of the ineffable. How then can we fail to see what a great source of inspiration is offered by that kind of homeland of the soul that is religion? Is it not perhaps within the realm of religion that the most vital personal questions are posed, and answers both concrete and definitive are sought?"

"In fact, the religious theme has been among those most frequently treated by artists in every age. The church has always appealed to their creative powers in interpreting the Gospel message and discerning its precise application in the life of the Christian community. This partnership has been a source of mutual spiritual enrichment. Ultimately, it has been a great boon for an understanding of man, of the authentic image and truth of the person.

"The special bond between art and Christian revelation has also become evident.

... It remains true, however, that because of its central doctrine of the incarnation of the Word of God, Christianity offers artists a horizon especially rich in inspiration. What an impoverishment it would be for art to abandon the inexhaustible mine of the Gospel!"

169. SC, no. 127.

170. Ibid., no. 13.

171. Pope Paul VI, Address to participants in a national congress of diocesan liturgical commissions of Italy (January 4, 1967) (DOL 539, no. 4319).

172. LG, no. 66. "The Church has endorsed many forms of piety toward the Mother of God, provided they were within the limits of sound and orthodox doctrine. These forms have varied according to the circumstances of time and place and have reflected the diversity of native characteristics and temperament among the faithful. While honoring Christ's Mother, these devotions cause her Son to be rightly known, loved, and glorified, and all His commands observed."

173. Ibid., no. 68: "In the bodily and spiritual glory which she possesses in heaven, the Mother of Jesus continues in this present world as the image and first flowering of the Church as she is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise, Mary shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10), as a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim People of God."

174. LA, no. 12: "In order to communicate the message entrusted to her by Christ, the church needs art. 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.

"The church has need especially of those who can do this on the literary and figurative level, using the endless possibilities of images and their symbolic force. Christ himself made extensive use of images in his preaching, fully in keeping with his willingness to become, in the incarnation, the icon of the unseen God.

"The church also needs musicians. How many sacred works have been composed through the centuries by people deeply imbued with the sense of the mystery! The faith of countless believers has been nourished by melodies flowing from the hearts of other believers, either introduced into the liturgy or used as an aid to dignified worship. In song, faith is experienced as vibrant joy, love and confident expectation of the saving intervention of God.

"The church needs architects, because she needs spaces to bring the Christian people together and celebrate the mysteries of salvation. After the terrible destruction of the last world war and the growth of great cities, a new generation of architects showed themselves adept at responding to the exigencies of Christian worship, confirming that the religious theme can still inspire architectural design in our own day. Not infrequently these architects have constructed churches which are both places of prayer and true works of art."

175. GIRM, no. 325: "As in the case of the building of churches, the Church welcomes the artistic style of every region for all sacred furnishings and accepts adaptations in keeping with the genius and traditions of each people, provided they fit the purpose for which the sacred furnishings are intended.

"In this matter as well, the concern is to be for the noble simplicity that is the perfect companion of genuine art."

176. Ibid., no. 332: "The artist may fashion the sacred vessels in a shape that is in keeping with the culture of each region, provided each type of vessel is suited to the intended liturgical use and is clearly distinguished from those designed for every day use."

177. Ibid., nos. 343-344: "In addition to the traditional materials, natural fabrics proper to the region may be used for making vestments; artificial fabrics that are in keeping with the dignity of the liturgical service and the person wearing them may also be used. The Conference of Bishops will be the judge in this matter.

"The beauty and nobility of a vestment should derive from its material and design rather than from lavish ornamentation. Representations on vestments should consist only of symbols, images, or pictures portraying the sacred. Anything out of keeping with the sacred is to be avoided."

178. Ibid., no. 329: "In accord with the judgment of the Conference of Bishops, in acts confirmed by the Apostolic See, sacred vessels may be made even from other solid materials which, in the common estimation of the region are regarded as noble e.g., ebony or other hard woods as long as such materials are suited to sacred use. In such cases, preference is always to be given to materials that do not break easily or deteriorate. Materials intended for all vessels which hold the Eucharistic bread such as the plate, ciborium, theca, monstrance or others of this kind should be likewise suitable to sacred use."

Cf. SC, no. 128.

179. Cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Appendix to the General Instruction for the Dioceses of the United States* (1975), nos. 288 and 305.

180. OA, no. 3 (DOL 541, no. 4330): "Each diocesan curia is responsible for measures to ensure that, in conformity with the norms set by the local Ordinary, rectors of churches, after consultation with experts, prepare an inventory of places of worship and of the contents that are of artistic or historical importance. This is to be an itemized inventory that lists the value of each entry. Two copies are to be drawn up, one to be kept by the church and the other by the diocesan curia. It would be well for another copy to be sent by the curia to the Vatican Library. This inventory should include notations on changes

that have taken place in the course of time."

"Since the publication of *Opera Artis*, the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Goods of the Church was established in 1993 to oversee the artistic and historic patrimony of the Church. The current president is Archbishop Francesco Marchisano.

181. CIC, c. 1292 § 2: "The permission of the Holy See is also required for the valid alienation of goods whose value exceeds the maximum amount, goods given to the Church by vow, or goods precious for artistic or historical reasons."

182. Pope Paul VI, Address to the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art in Italy (December 17, 1969) (DOL 540, no. 4326): "This leads us to conclude by encouraging you to act in such a way that, under the aegis of the liturgy, that is, divine worship, a bond of union, an alliance, will be reestablished between modern art and the life of religion. This should contribute to restore to art its two greatest and most characteristic values. The first is beauty, perceptible beauty (*id quod visum placet*: a beauty grasped in the integrity, proportion, and purity of the work of art; ST 1a, 39.1). The second is that indefinable but vibrant value, the artistic spirit, the lyrical experience in the artist that is reflected in his work. The alliance between art and the life of religion will also succeed in giving again to the Church, the Bride of Christ, a voice that love inspires and that inspires love.

"There is a second concluding point to which Vatican Council II attributes particular importance. Before anticipating a new epiphany for sacred art, as though it could spontaneously give itself a new birth and new creativity, we must take pains with the formation of artists. As always we must begin with the education of the person (see SC art. 127)."

183. Cf. SC, no. 124: "Ordinaries, by the encouragement and favor they show to art which is truly sacred, should strive after noble beauty rather than mere extravagance. This principle is to apply also in the matter of sacred vestments and appointments.

"Let bishops carefully exclude from the house of God and from other sacred places those works of artists which are repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by distortion of forms or by lack of artistic worth, by mediocrity or by pretense.

"When churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful."

184. CIC, c. 1215 §§ 1 and 2.

185. GIRM, no. 291: "All who are involved in the construction, restoration, and remodeling of churches are to consult the diocesan commission on liturgy and liturgical art. However, the diocesan Bishop is to use 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 issues."

186. SC, no. 122: "Very rightly the fine arts are considered to rank among the noblest expressions of human genius. This judgment applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, which is sacred art. By their very nature both of the latter are related to God's boundless beauty, for this is the reality which these human efforts are trying to express in some way. To the extent that these works aim exclusively at turning men's thoughts to God persuasively and devoutly, they are dedicated to God and to the cause of His greater honor and glory.

"Holy Mother Church has therefore always been the friend of the fine arts and has continuously sought their noble ministry with the special aim that all things set apart for use in divine worship should be truly worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of heavenly realities. For this purpose, too, she has trained artists. In fact, the Church has, with good reason, always reserved the right to pass judgment upon the arts, deciding which of the works of artists are in accordance with faith, piety, and cherished traditional laws, and thereby suited to sacred use.

"The Church has been particularly careful to see that sacred furnishings worthily and beautifully serve the dignity of worship, and has welcomed those changes in materials, style, or ornamentation which the progress of the technical arts has brought with the passage of time.

"Therefore it has pleased the Fathers to issue the following decrees on these matters."

187. Ibid., no. 14: "In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit. Therefore, through the needed program of instruction, pastors must zealously strive to achieve in it all their pastoral work.

"Yet it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this goal unless the pastors themselves, to begin with, become thoroughly penetrated with the spirit and power of the liturgy, and become masters of it. It is vitally necessary, therefore, that attention be directed, above all, to the liturgical instruction of the clergy. Therefore this most sacred Council has decided to enact as follows."

188. 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!'

"Artists of the world, may your many different paths all lead to that infinite Ocean of beauty where wonder becomes awe, exhilaration, unspeakable joy."

189. 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."

190. Ibid., no. 289; SC, no. 127: "All artists who, in view of their talents, desire to serve God's glory in holy Church, should ever bear in mind that they are engaged in a kind of sacred imitation of God the Creator and are concerned with works destined for use in Catholic worship and for the edification, devotion, and religious instruction of the faithful."

191. LG, no. 11: "Strengthened anew at the holy table by the Body of Christ, they manifest in a practical way that unity of God's People which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most awesome sacrament."

192. SC, no. 10: "Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper."

193. Is 56:7.

194. United States Catholic Conference, *Pastoral Statement of the U. S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities* (1978), p. 6.

195. Pope John Paul II, *Devoted to the Handicapped* (March 4, 1981), I, 4. In *The Pope Speaks* 26:2 (Summer 1981), p. 160.

196. In addition to eliminating architectural barriers, other forms of assistance should be available to persons with disabilities (for example, providing listening devices, providing places for signing/interpretation, using printed texts and captioned audiovisual materials, installing visual emergency alarms, and making available special telephones for use by persons with hearing difficulties).

197. Cf. *Accessibility Inventory* from the National Office of Persons with Disabilities. This is available also in the January 2000 *Environment and Art Newsletter* from Liturgy Training Publications.
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."
199. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *The Sacramentary [The Roman Missal]* (1973, 1985), Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*).
200. A dimmer can provide for flexibility of the lighting fixtures and can help to reduce energy consumption.
201. As with the case of selecting professionals to design and install sound systems, normally the skills of a professional with experience in the lighting of churches should be preferred over the "good will" services of someone who may have some knowledge of electricity and domestic lighting but who lacks the requisite qualifications to design and install lighting suitable for a church.
202. OA, no. 4 (DOL 541, no. 4331): "Mindful of the legislation of Vatican Council II and of the directives in the documents of the Holy See, bishops are to exercise unflinching vigilance to ensure that the remodeling of places of worship by reason of the reform of the liturgy is carried out with the utmost caution. Any alterations must always be in keeping with the norms of the liturgical reform and may never proceed without the approval of the commissions on sacred art, on liturgy, and, when applicable, on music, or without prior consultation with experts. The civil laws of the various countries protecting valuable works of art are also to be taken into account."
203. GIRM, no. 303: "However, in churches already built, when an old altar is already so positioned that it makes the participation of the people difficult, or it is impossible to move it without detriment to its artistic value, then another fixed altar may be erected. It should be artfully made and dedicated according to the rite. The sacred celebrations should be performed upon it alone; and 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."
204. 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. That presence is the effect of the consecration and should appear as such."
205. GIRM, no. 289: "The Church is intent on keeping the works of art and the treasures handed down from the past and, when necessary, on adapting them to new needs. It strives as well to promote new works of art that appeal to the contemporary mentality.
- "In commissioning artists and choosing works of art that are to become part of a church, the highest artistic standard is therefore to be set, in order that art may aid faith and devotion and be true to the reality it is to symbolize and the purpose it is to serve."
206. OA, no. 5 (DOL 541, no. 4327).
207. EM, no. 24 (DOL 179, no. 1253): "Care should be taken against destroying treasures of sacred art in the course of remodeling churches. On the judgment of the local Ordinary, after consulting experts and, when applicable, with the consent of other concerned parties, the decision may be made to relocate some of these treasures in the interest of the liturgical reform. In such a case this should be done with good



sense and in such a way that even in their new locations they will be set up in a manner befitting and worthy of the works themselves."

208. OA, no. 6 (DOL 541, no. 4333): "When it is judged that any such works are no longer suited to divine worship, they are never to be given over to profane use. Rather they are to be set up in a fitting place, namely, in a diocesan or interdiocesan museum, so that they are accessible to all who wish to look at them. Similarly, ecclesiastical buildings graced by art are not to be treated with neglect even when they no longer are used for their original purpose. If they must be sold, buyers who can take proper care of them are to be given preference (see CIC 1187)."
209. Congregation for Seminaries and Universities, *Doctrina et Exemplo* (December 25, 1965), no. 60 (DOL 332, no. 2731), quoting SC, no. 129.
210. Cf. CCC, nos. 1079-1109.
211. PW, Introduction.

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