

Next Month

For February, please read *Chapter Two: The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There* (pages 19 – 33) A summary page will be distributed on February 4-5, 2023. Featured topics will include:

- The Eucharist
- The Baptistry The Reservation of the Eucharist
- Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum
- Accommodating the Liturgical Postures of the Congregation.

Chapter Two Photo Glossary



Celebrant's Chair (Sedilia)



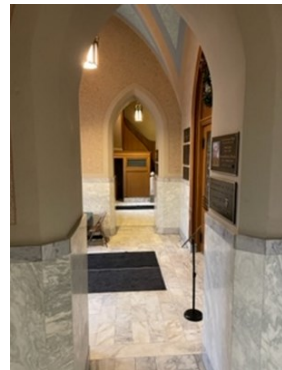
Sanctuary Lamp (Light)



Former Ambo



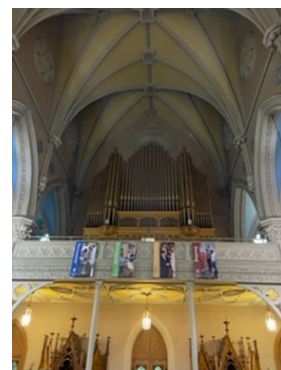
Current Ambo



Narthex / Front Entrance



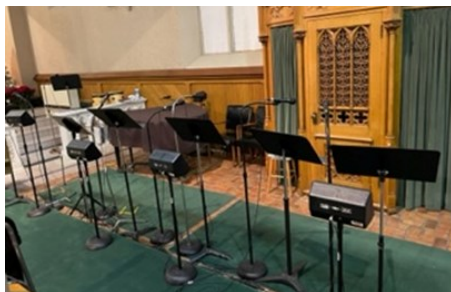
Sanctuary



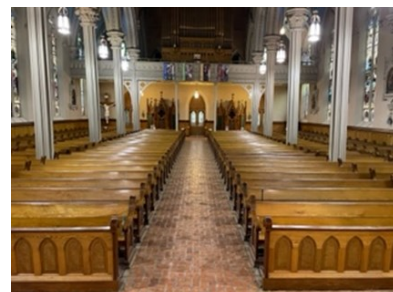
Choir Loft



Tabernacle



Musicians' Section



Congregational Seating / Nave



Altar



Baptismal Font



St. Patrick Parish

Built of Living Stones (BOLS)

A Year-Long Reflection on Our Sacred Space - 2023

January 2023: Beginning Our Reflection on Art, Architecture, and Worship

Fr. Michael Gurnick, Pastor

This past November a letter was distributed to parishioners explaining that the sanctuary appointments (specifically the Altar, Ambo, and Celebrant's Chair) would be returning to the lower platform which had become the customary location for the past 50+ years. This temporary relocation was due to our ongoing window restoration and the repairs being made to the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph shrines. While many voiced concern about the remoteness of the altar and ambo during this time, others expressed a preference for the relocation. Conversations also included remarks about the church building as a whole, from sound and lighting, seating and flooring, to accessibility and safety.

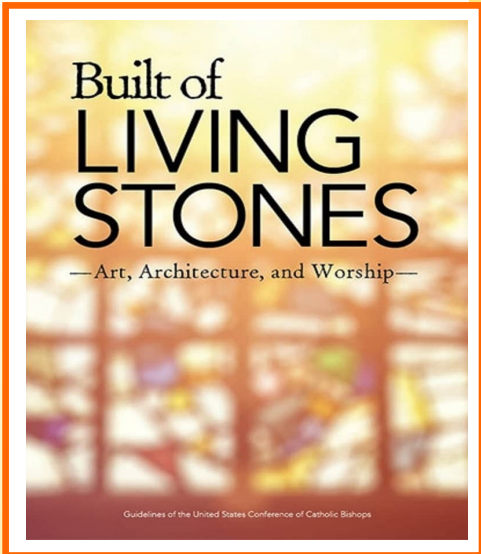
For these reasons, we have initiated a year-long reflection on our sacred space throughout 2023. You are invited to join in these reflections as we use the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops' document, *Built of Living Stones*, to guide us. We will also invoke other official documents to assist our time of reflection.

We begin this month with the Preface and Chapter One for our reflection.

Join us in reading and reflecting while taking notes for future reference. If you'd prefer to read the original document, just scan the QR code on this page. Each insert will also highlight the following month's focus. Finally, stay tuned for some gatherings every few months.

As we appreciate the rich history of this beautiful and historic building may we continuing to grow in our awareness of sacred worship in the 21st Century and how our sacred space enables us to gather for these central celebrations.

Thank you for your participation as we continue to carry on the work of our parish - a community built of living stones – now celebrating its 170th Anniversary.



As we reflect together on *Built of Living Stones*, the United States Catholic Conference's document for art, architecture, and worship, this handout will contain summaries of each chapter along with questions for reflection and discussion. New pages will be added as the study progresses.

SCAN to read a digital version of *Built of Living Stones* online from the US Catholic Conference of Bishops



Preface (pages 1-4)

Summary

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

- This process of decision-making and education can assist the parishioners to deepen their sense of Catholic identity.
- Parish history is shaped by the particular parish, its relationship to other parishes in the diocese, and by its relationship to the entire Roman Catholic Church.
- *BOLS* is presented as a resource for anyone involved in church building or renovations.
- These guidelines serve as a basis, but are not exhaustive.
- Catholics in the 21st Century worship the same in essentials, but do so differently than other generations (e.g. language, style, form). This is important to note as these changes involve necessary considerations of the actual worship space.
- In order to assess and make any recommendations, parish members need to understand the nature of the liturgy, the space it requires, and ways in which the physical building can help or hinder the worship.
- This document begins with a theological foundation for 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 creates the basis.

Chapter One: The Living Church (pages 5-17)

Summary

God created the universe so that all might have a part in his divine life and be joined in communion to him. Thus did he call forth light from darkness, beauty from chaos, and life from the formless void. When all was in readiness, he fashioned Adam and Eve in the divine image and breathed life into them 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."

Despite the sin of Adam, God's call to communion continued. Gradually, he revealed his wish to save humanity "not as individuals without any mutual bonds, but a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness. With Abraham and his descendants, God entered into an everlasting covenant by way of preparation of a covenant ratified in Christ. The new covenant, Christ's blood, called a people made up of Jew and Gentile, making them one, not according to the flesh but in the Spirit.

From the altar of the Cross, Christ accomplished our redemption forming a holy people, a "temple of God built of living stones, where the Father is worshipped in spirit and in truth." The hymn of praise that Christ places on the hearts and 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.

The same hymn is sung 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...the sacred liturgy is a window to eternity and a glimpse of what God calls us to be.

- While we understand Church to be the living temple, God's people, the term *church* also describes the proper place to worship, especially the Eucharist on Sunday.
- Liturgy is the participation of the People of God in the work of God and the exercise of the priestly office of Jesus in which God is worshiped and adored and people are made holy. While it is a transcendent experience, liturgy is always done in actual time and space.
- The liturgy is the perfect expression of the Church, the summit toward which all activity is directed and the source of all her power. 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.
- Christ's presence is concretely expressed in *Sign* and *Symbol*. He is present in all the baptized, the Word of God proclaimed in the assembly, in the person of the priest, in the sacramental celebrations, and especially in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.
- Gestures, language, and actions are the physical, visible, and public expressions by which human beings understand and manifest their inner life. As humans we live in a physical world and experience it through speech, song, movement, and celebration. We express and deepen our relationship to God through them.
- Jesus used signs to manifest his union with the Father and reveal his mission to the world. He was baptized in the Jordan, he fed with bread, healed the sick with touch, and forgave sinners. He was anointed with oil, he shared Passover, and he surrendered his body on the cross. He, through his incarnation, used material signs to show humanity the visible God.
- As Christ leads his Church today, he continues to use material signs to continue revealing his union with the Father. Effective liturgical signs have a teaching function and encourage full, conscious, and active participation, they express and strengthen faith, and lead people to God. These liturgical signs also touch and move a person to conversion of heart and not to simply enlighten the mind.
- The basic liturgical principles for designing and renovating churches today are drawn from the Second Vatican Council and the documents that implemented its decrees. These principles are important because they will insure that from the beginning, the ritual requirements will receive the priority they deserve in the design process.
- Therefore, the church building is designed in harmony with church laws and serves the needs of the liturgy. The church building is a house of prayer to celebrate the Eucharist and other sacraments, to reserve the Blessed Sacrament, to accommodate the assembly, to worship Christ. It must be worthy of prayer as it applies to these encounters and gatherings. The building must be able to foster participation in the liturgy.
- This section also describes the roles of membership in the assembly as Church. Bishops, Priests, and a variety of ministries all serve the assembly at the liturgy and whenever the Church – God's holy people – gather.
- The church building respects the culture of every time and place. Each church will be different in style in accord with local communities. Every building must be able to sustain liturgy within the present age and in compliance with norms.
- The church building's beauty should be balanced with its primary function to gather and accommodate the assembly for sacred worship. Art and architecture help the present age to transcend the limitations of one culture, region, or period of time. Form is never limited to the past but has organically grown from a rich heritage of artistic expression.

Chapter 1 Reflection Questions:

- 1) Regarding our church building, what are the features of this space that appeal to your sense of connecting with God?
- 2) What is it about the church building that connects you to others while participating in liturgy and other celebrations?
- 3) What does our parish church building have in common with other Catholic churches? What would you consider unique features of our church building?
- 4) Continuing along these lines, what have you seen or experienced in other church spaces that connects you to the liturgical celebration?