



Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

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**GUIDELINES and PROTOCOLS**  
for the  
**DESIGN and RENOVATION**  
of  
**CHURCHES and CHAPELS**



First Sunday of Advent  
December 1, 2013  
Catholic Diocese of Saginaw  
Office of Liturgy

The Office of Liturgy for the Diocese of Saginaw has prepared this set of guidelines and protocols to be used in conjunction with those outlined in *Built of Living Stones*.

This diocesan document attempts to give clearer direction to those areas that *Built of Living Stones* leaves open to particular diocesan recommendations and directives.

All those involved in any design for new construction or renovation project of a church or chapel in the Diocese of Saginaw should be familiar with these guidelines and protocols and ensure that their intent is incorporated into any proposed design.

## **Guidelines and Protocols for the Design And Renovation of Churches and Chapels**

Text 2009, Diocese of Saginaw, Office of Liturgy. Latest Revision Date: December 1, 2013.

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Printed in the United States of America

*For you have made the whole world a temple of your glory,  
that your name might everywhere be extolled,  
yet you allow us to consecrate to you apt places for the divine mysteries.  
And so, we dedicate joyfully to your majesty this house of prayer,  
built by human labor.*

*Here is foreshadowed the mystery of the true Temple,  
here is prefigured the heavenly Jerusalem.*

*For you made the Body of your Son, born of the tender Virgin,  
the Temple consecrated to you,*

*in which the fullness of the Godhead might dwell.*

*You also established the Church as a holy city,  
built upon the foundation of the Apostles,*

*with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone:*

*a city to be built of chosen stones, given life by the Spirit and bounded  
by charity, where for endless ages you will be all in all and the light of*

*Christ will shine undimmed forever.*

*Through him, O Lord, with all the Angels and Saints, we give you  
thanks, as in exultation we acclaim:*

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts ...*



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

5800 Weiss Street | Saginaw, Michigan 48603-2762  
Phone: (989) 797-6615 | FAX: (989) 799-7912

Dear Friends in Christ,

During a diocesan pilgrimage to the city of Rome, after visiting a number of famous and little known churches throughout the city, our group of pilgrims came to the Basilica of St. Peter. No matter how often I visit St. Peter's, I am always in awe of the beauty and magnitude of this historic church. On this particular occasion, I stood at the doorway in order to view the reaction of the pilgrims as they entered the Basilica for the first time. Almost to a person, their immediate reaction was to look deep into the church...slowly look around and up to the ceiling...and, in a quiet whisper, utter the word "Wow!"

The architects of St. Peter's Basilica, and many other churches built in the past, desired to give people a sense of the transcendent, to raise their hearts and minds to the realities of God and His heavenly Kingdom. Realizing that people were all too familiar with the passing world in which they lived, these visionaries wished to provide an opportunity for them - and for us today - to imagine ourselves in a spiritual realm.

The architecture of many of these buildings can be overwhelming. However, through their stained glass windows, stations of the cross, statuary and other art forms, these churches "teach the faith." They create for the faithful a "textbook" - as it were - of salvation history and a remembrance of those holy people who gave witness to their faith throughout generations.

Central to these churches was the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, which not only teaches us the way of discipleship but also nourishes us to rise to that call.

More modern concepts of church architecture are founded in the principle that church buildings are gathering places for the faithful to come together in love and worship. The art forms are more contemporary, smaller in scale and simpler in design. The spirituality of such designs teaches that the People of God, the faithful who worship in these churches, provide the beauty and art which inspires one another to commit themselves to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ.

Three principles are important to keep in mind: churches are holy places; balance is important; and not everyone has the talent and expertise necessary for the artistic and engineering demands required in such construction and renovation.

We are pleased to publish this document of guiding principles and protocols for the erection and renovation of churches and chapels within the Diocese of Saginaw.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ Bishop Cistone*

Most Reverend Joseph R. Cistone, D.D.  
Bishop of Saginaw

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# Church Art and Architecture

## Statement of Purpose

The design or renovation of a church or chapel is a project that belongs not only to the local parish, institution or pastor/administrator but also to the whole diocesan Church.<sup>1</sup> When a worship space is constructed or renewed, “*it is the bishop who, in his role of fostering and governing the liturgy, must assume primary responsibility and authority for the regulation and direction of such projects*”.<sup>2</sup>

The *Office of Liturgy* is the primary review body and resource for the construction, renovation and restoration of churches and chapels in the Diocese of Saginaw whether on the part of a parish or any other entity or institution which has received permission from the bishop to erect a worship space. The bishop has also charged this same *Office* with oversight of such projects from the early discernment process to the completion and dedication of the work. The *Office* is established to serve the liturgy of the Church by helping to create appropriate spaces for Catholic worship, in keeping with the current Church documents and directives at the universal, national and diocesan levels. This *Office* assists the local bishop in his role as director, promoter and guardian of the liturgical life of the local Church.<sup>3</sup>

To this end, the diocesan bishop charges the *Office* with these responsibilities:

- to establish and communicate norms for the construction and renovation of churches and chapels in the Diocese;
- to ensure a clear liturgical vision is articulated throughout the planning, design and construction process;

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<sup>1</sup> *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship* [BLS] #178

<sup>2</sup> BLS #178

<sup>3</sup> Codex Iuris Canonici: Code of Canon Law [CIC] c.835, #1; see also BLS #34

- to assist with liturgical education;<sup>4</sup>
- to review/recommend changes and to approve proposed concepts and plans for liturgical and artistic components of a church's or chapel's design in restoration, renovation and/or new building;<sup>5</sup> and
- to advise and support the diocesan bishop.

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<sup>4</sup> BLS #178

<sup>5</sup> BLS #178; see also *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM] #291



## Introduction

Giving shape to a new church or chapel, or making changes to an existing worship space, is a challenging time for a parish or local community and the diocesan Church. The smallest project can be an opportunity to enhance worship. The entire process requires careful thought, teamwork, and skillful preparation on the part of all. The involvement of the congregation, designation of a building committee and compliance with diocesan directives are essential.

“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.” [BLS #191]

In 1963, the bishops at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) issued *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, which set out the general principles for the reform and promotion of the sacred liturgy. In addition to mandating that liturgical books and rites be revised,<sup>6</sup> the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* called for the revision of legislation governing the material elements for 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 decorations.<sup>7</sup>

In 1977, the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship issued the provisional rite for the *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*. In 1978, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy published *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*. This document was to “provide principles for those involved in preparing liturgical space for the worship of the Christian assembly.”

In November 2000, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship*. This document regarding

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<sup>6</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [SC] #25

<sup>7</sup> SC #128

churches and architecture “*builds on and replaces Environment and Art in Catholic Worship and addresses the needs of the next generation of parishes engaged in the building and renovating of churches*”.<sup>8</sup> The bishops state: “[*This document*] reflects our understanding of 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”.<sup>9</sup> It is for use by the Latin Church of the United States in the building or renovation of churches, chapels and oratories. Architects, liturgical consultants, artists, contractors and other professionals engaged in the design or construction of churches, chapels and oratories must be familiar with the guidelines of *Built of Living Stones*.<sup>10</sup> In 2002, the third edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* was approved for use by the universal Church. The directives of Chapter V – “The Arrangement and Furnishing of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharistic” – apply to all building and renovation projects.

*Built of Living Stones* is the document that supports the Catholic community when a new worship space is created or an existing space is renovated. While there are many professional and technical considerations in undertaking such a process, the work is guided by values based on the disciplines of liturgy, theology and ecclesiology. These values give shape to basic principles that guide Catholic communities in forming beautiful<sup>11</sup> spaces, worthy of the worship that takes place in them. It is the ‘Church’ that gives shape to a ‘church’.

All aspects of the church building should serve the people and deepen their faith. A church building or worship space should be designed to enable the Christians who gather there to clearly understand that they come as a community, uniting to

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<sup>8</sup> BLS #9

<sup>9</sup> BLS #9

<sup>10</sup> Chapter One offers theological reflections on the liturgy and on liturgical art and architecture. Chapter Two outlines the liturgical principles for parish communities to apply when building or renovating liturgical space. Chapter Three offers suggestions for including art in places of worship and for choosing artists and artistic consultants. Chapter Four describes the practical elements involved in the building and renovation process.

<sup>11</sup> GIRM #292; BLS #18, 29, 44 and 215; *Rite and Dedication of a Church and an Altar* [RDCA] ch 2, no 3.

worship God. Authentic worship leads to loving service. If worshippers are active participants in the liturgy, they are more likely to be active in the mission of the Church outside the building. Liturgical space should be designed to enhance communal celebration and our understanding of God’s call to corporate faith and action.

A worship space that mirrors divine beauty will embody a noble simplicity,<sup>12</sup> make use of honest materials, and be a home for works of art that are worthy expressions of faith. Whatever the style of architecture adopted, lavish or ostentatious displays are to be avoided in favor of creative, elegant design. The use of genuine materials and use of renewable resources emphasizes our responsibility to be good stewards of God’s creation.<sup>13</sup>

Every effort should be made to see that churches in the Diocese of Saginaw are always clean and in good order. This includes the maintenance of not only the sanctuary, but vesting rooms, sacristies, vestibules, and other areas.

While the suggestions and guidelines within *Built of Living Stones* and the chapter in the 2002 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* have been carefully prepared, they are not exhaustive of the subject matter. *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. These documents present guidelines that can serve as the basis for diocesan bishops to issue further guidelines and directives for their respective dioceses.

*Directives for New Construction or Renovation of Churches and Chapels* is the fruit of widespread consultation and the collective wisdom of our own Diocese and of practices of other dioceses throughout the United States. It is intended to support and enable construction and renovation. Further, it is intended to address the key issues related to the construction, renovation or restoration of a

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<sup>12</sup> GIRM #292

<sup>13</sup> See BLS #192 for a further discussion of design parameters; see also SC #34; BLS #18, 29, 44 and 215.

worship space in light of current Church documents. The practical considerations and directives contained in this document will assist communities in undertaking and completing the important process of building and renovating a church, their house of prayer.

In addition to this document and guidelines contained in *Built of Living Stones* and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, parish and institution committees, as well as consultants and design professionals should be familiar with other church documents that apply to the design and use of churches (see Appendix E: Documents of the Church).

Among the greatest challenges facing pastors and administrators are the organizational and administrative responsibilities of their respective entities. Particularly challenging is the maintenance, renovation and occasional expansion of facilities. Because buildings are part of the “background” infrastructure of the parish or institution, their presence and upkeep can often be taken for granted and become a low priority for funding. Therefore, it is critical that the pastor or administrator carefully oversee day-to-day operation and maintenance of the facilities and manage capital projects as they arise.

## **Section I: Practical Considerations**

*Appendix A: Policies and Required Procedures* contains the policies and procedures which parishes/institutions are to follow in their discussions with and presentation to the Diocesan *Office of Liturgy*.

### ***Permission to Build***

Within the process of building or renovating a church or chapel, 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>14</sup>

In the Diocese of Saginaw, the bishop exercises his authority personally and through the guidelines, procedures and processes established by the *Diocesan Building Commission* and the *Office of Liturgy*. Parishes and institutions are required to consult with and involve these two groups and adhere to all directives, guidelines, procedures and processes, as outlined in the *Scope of Projects* section below.

### ***Scope of Projects and Diocesan Process/Competency***

All proposed construction projects involving renovation, addition or new construction of a liturgical space (including churches or chapels) within the Diocese of Saginaw, regardless of scope and cost, must be presented by the pastor or administrator for the review and approval of the *Office of Liturgy*.

The word “chapel” refers to all public places of worship in the Diocese where liturgy is usually celebrated. These include chapels in educational institutions, health care settings and retreat centers. It does not include chapels in the residences of religious communities.

<sup>14</sup> BLS #34 and 46. CIC #1215, nn. 1, 2.

Examples of these projects include, but are not limited to:

- changes to the interior environment of the church/chapel that will affect the aesthetic and sacredness of the worship space, e.g. painting, installation of new color scheme, new interior finishes, new lighting, new audio/visual systems, etc.
- changes to or the movement of the primary liturgical elements, e.g. altar, ambo, baptismal font, etc.
- changes to the liturgical artwork, e.g. devotional statues, Stations of the Cross, crucifix, processional cross, etc.

In addition to the involvement of the *Office of Liturgy*, all projects must also follow the guidelines set out by the *Diocesan Building Commission*.

The Diocese of Saginaw has an excellent compendium of the procedures and policies that parishes and institutions must follow for all building projects. When a parish project involves the building of a new church/chapel or any renovation to an existing church, the *Office of Liturgy* is to be consulted early in the process and the *Office* will decide to what extent they will need to be involved. The specific procedures for this consultation are outlined in Appendix A: Policies and Required Procedures.

### ***Consultation and Collaboration***

Since no single parish or institution, pastor or administrator possesses the totality of expertise or vision required to execute a project of such great scope, everyone involved will need to recognize the areas of one's own competence, the role of the diocesan bishop and diocesan personnel, and their limits beyond which the assistance of experts will be required.

The parish or institution will find it helpful and sometimes necessary to consult with and engage the services of some or all of these professionals

A liturgical consultant can be helpful in assisting the parish with an education and formation program throughout the life of the project. The *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* can provide names of approved liturgical consultants and architects.

for various components of its project: liturgical consultants, architects, liturgical designers, artists, acoustical consultants, lighting consultants, music consultants, landscape architects and others.

An educational and formational component, on a parish/institution-wide basis, is integral to any building or renovation project. Not only does such instruction provide a solid base for general knowledge and awareness in regard to the various elements affected by the particular project, it also provides a unique opportunity for adult faith formation and renewal. Often this can lead to a renewed sense of the liturgy and a new vibrancy in the community's prayer life as it prepares to worship in its new space.

Specific components of an educational/formational process facilitated by a knowledgeable person, should include:

- a basic review of Catholic liturgy and worship, its tradition, theology and the components of ritual practice;
- a thorough review of pertinent Church documents;
- education and reflection on the various liturgical appointments and the importance of their arrangement for the celebration of liturgy, e.g. the altar, ambo, chair, font, tabernacle, etc., and the celebration of the sacraments;
- an overview of the various rites that are part of the Church's liturgical tradition;
- a presentation on the Church's liturgical year and the liturgies of each season;
- and, after the project is completed, an orientation to the new space for all liturgical ministers, and for the congregation.

## ***The Role of Professionals and Volunteers***

Church Document References<sup>15</sup>: BLS #196, 201, 203 and 204

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix E: Documents of the Church for a key to the abbreviations shown in the Church Document Reference listing throughout this document.

When employing professionals and hiring specific people to perform work, parishes and institutions must be aware of all diocesan directives and requirements for contracts and licenses and are encouraged to utilize diocesan staff with experience in this area (BLS #196). The Diocese of Saginaw has specific guidelines and requirements in matters dealing with union workers, contract conditions, insurance coverage, financial issues and other related areas. Parishes and institutions must contact the *Diocesan Building Commission* for this information.

Parishes and institutions should retain contractors who exhibit skills appropriate to the scope and significance of the project and who are properly licensed and insured (BLS #201). 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 (BLS #203). If a parish or institution utilizes volunteers, it will be necessary to consult with the *Diocesan Building Commission* to ensure that all legal and insurance requirements are met.

Designers and artists employed in the project need to have experience in and knowledge of the rich Catholic liturgical teachings.

### ***Initial Planning of the Project***

The pastor or administrator is ultimately responsible for recruiting and naming the project leader and the team overseeing the project. It is also the responsibility of the parish or institution to select qualified vendors, including the architect and contractor.

With wide input, any planning should begin by defining objectives, analyzing requirements, identifying needs, developing alternatives (including resource requirements, as well as risk and feasibility issues), and developing recommendations (including funding, initial budgets and case statements).



To avoid the pitfall of doing work that may need to be undone later, the first task of the parish or institution is to establish a formal process to discern the specific needs of the worshipping community,<sup>16</sup> in keeping with Church liturgical law and sacramental practice. When making even small changes to a worship space, good stewardship demands consideration of the larger picture of possibilities and long-range needs.

This part of the process would take the form of a preliminary inventory and needs analysis. Such an analysis is helpful when a new building is being contemplated or when renovations or major repairs are being considered, e.g. repainting, a new roof, windows, additions, etc. Even though an intended project may seem minor, it could significantly alter the environment for worship. Early in the process, it is vital for the pastor or administrator together with the worshipping community, to discern all the opportunities and consequences carefully.

A professional liturgical consultant can be invaluable in this early portion of the planning process.

For larger projects, planning should also include the hiring of an architect to lead the parish or institution in the formation of a master plan. Clear criteria should be established to select an architect as well as a contractor. A thorough checking of references is required. In choosing an architect and contractor, conflicts of interest are to be avoided. Such conflicts may arise when the architect or contractor is a parishioner. While it is the responsibility of the parish team to select the architects and contractors, it is the responsibility of the *Office of Liturgy*, in consultation with the *Diocesan Building Commission*, to authorize the interview of architects to develop a master plan.

*Appendix A: Policies and Required Procedures* contains the policies and procedures which parishes/institutions are to follow in their discussions with and presentation to the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy*.

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<sup>16</sup> See BLS #180-181.

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## **Section II: Liturgical Considerations**

### ***The Church Edifice***

Church Document References: GIRM #294

The external appearance of the church building must seek to convey that it is *“the dwelling of God with men reconciled and united in Christ”* (CCC #1180). The exterior should be easily identifiable as a church. Incorporation of a large, recognizable cross on the exterior is suggested. The visibility and beauty of the church’s entrance must reveal the importance of entering into communion with Christ and His members.

Use of electronic signs on the outside of the church should comply with all local zoning and directives. Care must be taken that the sign is placed in an appropriate location.

### ***Gathering Space or Narthex***

Church Document References: BLS #95 and 96

The Gathering Space or “narthex” is the place of welcome and a zone of transition between the place for the sacred rites and the world that the parish serves and ministers to. Parishioners and guests have the opportunity to be welcomed by greeters/ushers and to welcome each other as they continue the procession from their homes to gather with the community for prayer. It provides a place to connect with friends and to meet other parishioners. It is a special place where individuals become a community so they can become a spirit-filled assembly. A gathering space distinct from the worship space allows the worship space to become a place where a spirit of reverent silence may be fostered as appropriate. Providing hospitality in or near the gathering space after prayer provides a great opportunity for parishioners to build relationships and thus strengthen the community. Providing a place to hang coats and jackets helps foster a sense of gathering for a purpose. An adjacent kitchen space can facilitate fellowship and hospitality.

Important liturgical moments begin in the Gathering Space, such as the acceptance into the catechumenate, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Provisions should also be made to address the ongoing mission of the Church. Space for notices, handouts, sign-ups, etc. should not be an afterthought but integrated into the design. Coat rooms and bathrooms should be of appropriate size for the assembly's use. Both should be handicap accessible. A unisex or family bathroom with baby changing stations should be considered.

This space should be enhanced to complement the nave of the church. It should not look like a "public assembly" space. It should be large enough so that moveable chairs could be set up to expand the assembly space for special liturgies. The Gathering Space should be wired so that the sounds within the church can be heard within the space. Ideally, the Gathering Space should not be separated from the nave by a solid, opaque wall. A glass wall would allow the liturgical actions within the church to be seen from the Gathering Space.

Donation plaques and historic pictures of the parish belong in a different space on the parish campus and should not be placed in the Gathering Space.

### ***The Gathered Assembly Area or Nave***

Church Document References: BLS #51, #53, #86 and #87; GIRM #311

The nave, or the place where the assembly is gathered, must reflect that the assembly is a part of the People of God, called to participate actively in the Paschal Mystery of Christ made present in the celebration of the liturgy. The area must not resemble *"the audience's space in a theater or public arena because in the liturgical assembly, there is no audience"* (BLS #51).

There are no universal norms regarding fixed or flexible seating. Each parish/institution is encouraged to make its own decision in this matter following current norms. Seating is not to be in an antiphonal arrangement

(where the two main sections of seating face one another across an aisle). If the majority of the seating is fixed, some open areas should be incorporated to allow for flexible seating. Chairs or benches are to be arranged so that the faithful can easily take the posture required during various parts of the liturgical celebrations. All seating arrangements must provide for those in wheelchairs or with walkers. Ideally, these spaces should allow for special seating for the handicapped throughout the assembly area.

Seating arrangements must be in compliance with local governing agencies and building codes regarding egress requirements. Ample room is to be provided throughout the church for liturgical processions. Members of the congregation, including those in the music ministry, should not be seated behind the sanctuary.

Kneelers are to be installed for everyone, whether the seating is fixed or flexible.

## ***The Sanctuary***

Church Document References: BLS #54, #59 and #212; GIRM #295

The design of the sanctuary should convey the integral relationship between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. By the very nature of the ritual actions associated with the sanctuary, it has a unique “sense of place” within the overall plan of the church. To demonstrate the importance of the actions that take place in the sanctuary, actions that are at the heart of the Church’s life, it *“should be suitably marked off from the body of the church ... by it being somewhat elevated. It should be large enough to allow the Eucharist to be celebrated properly and easily seen”* (GIRM #295).

Ordinarily, the sanctuary should be comprised of a single elevated platform. The proportions of the sanctuary must accommodate the full celebration of the various liturgical rituals that are celebrated there. All elevated sanctuary platforms must be accessible for those with physical disabilities.

## **The Altar**

Church Document References: BLS #57 and #245; GIRM #303; RDCA IV-7; GIRM #301 and #303; CIC #1236

The main altar must stand at the center of the sanctuary. It should be freestanding and fixed to the floor, or be of such weight that it cannot be moved without great effort. The altar must appear as something more than a mere table. In new churches, there is to be only one altar so that *“in the one assembly of the people of God, the single altar signifies the one Savior Jesus Christ and the one Eucharist of the Church”* (RDCA IV-7).

The altar should be singly-purposed as the Table of the Eucharist and, therefore, should be undisturbed for other purposes, e.g. as a “housing” for the sound system, etc. It is recommended that the entire altar be made of natural stone rather than simply wood. If it is not possible to have the entire altar made of stone, at least the mensa (i.e. top of the altar) should be made of natural stone. The United States bishops have given permission for use of materials other than natural stone for a fixed altar, provided that these materials are worthy, solid, properly constructed and approved by the local bishop.

The altar must be of sufficient size to accommodate multiple chalices for distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful.

## **The Ambo**

Church Document References: Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass #32

The place from which the word of God is proclaimed must be *“somewhat elevated, handicap accessible, fixed and of 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 ... is placed before them”* (Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass #32). Because the table of the word is so closely related to the table of Christ’s body, the design and materials of the ambo ought to be in close relationship to that of the altar.

Because the ambo is the place for the proclamation of God's word and for prayer, announcements should not be made from the ambo.

### ***The Presider's Chair, Deacon's Chair and Servers' Chairs***

Signifying the priest's function in the person of Christ, the head of His Body, the Church, the Presider's Chair is to be distinct from those places occupied by the faithful and other liturgical ministers. Reserved for the presiding priest or deacon, the presider's chair ought to reflect the relationship between the ministerial priesthood, the word of God, and the Paschal sacrifice of Christ by its artistic and architectural connection to the ambo and the altar.

Although the presider's chair may be movable, it should be positioned within the sanctuary and not within the worship space of the faithful. The presider's chair should be conspicuously placed in the sanctuary so that it is visible to the whole nave. It should not appear to be a throne. Every effort should be made so that the chair is not placed in front of the tabernacle. It may be appropriate to place a small table adjacent to the chair. In this case, the table should be in proportion to its function and be aesthetically appropriate to the other furnishings in that space.

The deacon's chair should be positioned within the sanctuary, next to the presider's chair. A chair for the deacon should not have the same dimension or prominence as that of the priest.

The chairs for the altar servers may be positioned within the sanctuary or within the seating of the assembly. In either case, the position of the altar servers should be such that they are within close proximity to the liturgical actions.

### ***The Crucifix and Processional Cross***

Church Document References: GIRM #308; BB #1233; BLS #91

There is to be a crucifix with only one corpus, the image of the crucified Christ, placed near the altar. This crucifix may be permanent (suspended above the altar or fixed to a sanctuary wall are two approaches) or it may be a processional cross that is placed near the altar to serve as the altar crucifix. Whichever option is chosen, the cross is to be clearly visible to the assembly as a reminder of Christ's Paschal Mystery.

The use of the processional cross is to be retained, during the celebration of Eucharist. If the processional cross serves as the altar crucifix, it must have an image of the crucified Christ that is clearly visible to the assembly. Following its use in the procession, the processional cross is placed out of view of the assembly so as not to duplicate the image of the fixed crucifix. If there is a permanent cross with a corpus attached near the altar, the processional cross need not have a corpus. The size and weight of the cross should be such that it can be carried in procession and the corpus should be in proportion to the volume of the space that it occupies.

### ***The Tabernacle and Chapel of Reservation***

Church Document References: CIC #938 and 940; BLS #14, 71, 72, 73, 74, 77, 79, 80, 180, 247, 250 and 252; GIRM #314, 315 and 316. *Built of Living Stones* has a section titled "Special Issues in the Renovation of Churches" (BLS #238-256). In this section, there are helpful guidelines on the space for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament (BLS #247-252).

There has been a shift in directives about the placement of the tabernacle over time. The earlier directive indicated a preference for reservation in a separate chapel. More recently, the GIRM directs the diocesan bishop to determine the appropriate placement either in the sanctuary or in a separate chapel. In the Diocese of Saginaw, parish churches are at the same time places of liturgical action and places of public devotion. Ordinarily, the Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in the main body of the church, not in a separate chapel.

The tabernacle should be placed in the sanctuary or at least adjacent to it in a prominent, secure, immovable and conspicuous manner. It should be visible from the nave and closely associated with the altar and the ambo.



The craftsmanship of the tabernacle should be consistent with the craftsmanship of the altar so that the faithful can draw the connection between the Blessed Sacrament offered on the altar and the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. To facilitate adoration in parishes where there are large numbers of marriages and funerals, a chapel of reservation can be incorporated.

An appropriately sized table or space needs to be incorporated near the tabernacle as a place to set the vessels as they are taken out of or placed into the tabernacle. This could be a free standing table (not a part of the tabernacle pillar) or incorporated into the platform for the tabernacle.

The place for Eucharistic reservation should never be temporary, makeshift or difficult to find. The Eucharist must be reserved in a part of the church that is “*distinguished, conspicuous, beautifully decorated and suitable for prayer*” (CIC #938).

- *Distinguished* means that the part of the church for the tabernacle is particularly dedicated solely to Christ present in the Eucharist. In addition to providing a pedestal or shelf for the tabernacle, there might be room for kneelers for those who do not wish to remain in the pews when praying before the Blessed Sacrament. The tabernacle is to be prominently located in the place of reservation which is integral to the overall design of the church. If placed in the sanctuary, the tabernacle should be positioned apart from the altar of celebration so as to not dominate the sanctuary. It should be given appropriate distinction, a place of honor, and suitably adorned. In no way, however, should it compete with the altar for attention.
- *Conspicuous* means that the place of reservation is visible to the congregation. A special oil lamp or a vessel with a wax candle is located nearby so as to draw attention to this place and to honor the presence of Christ, the light of the world.
- *Beautifully decorated* means that the design and enhancement details of the place of reservation should be noble and worthy. This place of reservation is designed so that the attention of one praying there is drawn to the tabernacle that houses the presence of the

Lord. Liturgical art for this area can be chosen from the rich treasury of symbolism that is associated with the Eucharist.

- *Suitable for prayer* means that the place of reservation must be accessible for everyone. The location should allow for easy access by people in wheelchairs and by those who have other disabilities. If the tabernacle is located outside the sanctuary, furniture for kneeling and sitting should be provided. As much as possible, people should be able to pray before the Blessed Sacrament without the distractions of noise and movement(s).

The tabernacle is not to be placed on the altar at which Mass is celebrated. There should be only one tabernacle for reservation on a church campus, unless special permission is given by the Bishop. The tabernacle itself is to be made of solid and inviolable material that is not transparent. It is to be secured to a wall, pillar or the reservation altar, in order to make it difficult to move. It is to have the ability to be locked.

The space for the tabernacle should be dedicated solely to that purpose. Therefore, the space should not act as a passageway to another part of the church. The space should not be cluttered with items that do not enhance the space, e.g. gathering space, music ministry space, coat rack area, etc.

If the tabernacle is located in the area of the sanctuary or within the sanctuary itself, these guidelines are to be followed:

- The placement of the tabernacle should permit the actions and movement of all the liturgical rites.
- The placement of the tabernacle must allow for a focus on the tabernacle for those periods of quiet prayer outside the celebration of the Eucharist.
- There should be some distance between the tabernacle and the altar.
- If the tabernacle is located directly behind the altar, consideration should be given to using distance, lighting or some architectural device that separates the tabernacle and reservation area during Mass, though allowing the tabernacle to be visible at other times.

If, by exception in a parish church, the tabernacle is to be located in a separate chapel, it needs to be visible to the congregation. The design and location of the chapel is to be integrally connected with the church and conspicuous to the faithful. The space should be of sufficient size to allow several people to pray there.

## ***The Baptistry***

Church Document References: RCIA General Introduction, #25 and 213; BLS #66, 67, 68 and 69

The first of the sacraments of initiation, Baptism, has its own special requirements for celebration. Careful attention is to be paid to the location of the baptistry giving prominence to the integral relationship of Baptism to Eucharist and the other sacraments, while allowing for full participation of the entire assembly. The design, size and construction are to allow for the fullness of all forms of the rites of Baptism to be celebrated. Water is the key symbol of Baptism and the font is to accommodate enough water for the Baptism of adults and infants.

The preference for immersion of adult candidates for Baptism should be taken into consideration in the design of the font. Whenever a new church is built, provision must be made for a font that allows for the immersion of infants and adults. When a church is renovated, the font should be constructed to allow for the immersion of infants, at least, and for the immersion of adults, if possible.

The font should be visible and accessible to all who enter the church building. It should be positioned to reflect the Christian's journey through the waters of Baptism to the altar. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the baptismal font is to be fixed in place. Use of a movable font needs the written permission of the Bishop.

Consideration given to the font's size, placement and design should include the care of the holy water contained in the font. The preference is to

design the font in order to have water movement. However, care needs to be given that the sounds produced by the running water are not too distracting to the assembly or that the sounds do not impede other audio sounds, i.e. music, singing or the spoken word.

Plumbing for the font must be designed so that the font can be emptied and the holy water drained “to the earth” and not to any septic, sanitary or storm sewer systems.

## ***The Sacrament of Penance***

Church Document References: BLS #103 to 105

The celebration of the Sacrament of Penance is a time of prayer in which God forgives sins and restores broken relationships through the ministry of the Church. Every parish church is to have an appropriately designed place for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance. At least one special chapel for this sacrament provides an environment conducive to prayer. Proximity to the baptismal font helps to support the connection of Baptism and Penance.

The reconciliation chapel needs to be visible and accessible (including handicap accessibility) while providing for privacy. In compliance with VIRTUS guidelines in the Diocese of Saginaw, a window in the wall or door of the chapel should allow anyone outside the confessional to view the priest. The reconciliation chapel should contain provision for anonymous confession, such as a fixed grille, and allow for confession face-to-face for those who wish to do so.

The reconciliation chapel needs to be of sufficient size to accommodate the necessary furnishings for penitent and confessor. Furniture should include a chair for the priest and a kneeler and chair for the penitent. Sacred art that expresses the wonderful gift of God’s mercy or that depicts one of the many parables of Christ would be worthy enhancements of this space.

The reconciliation chapel should be reserved for nothing else, other than the Sacrament of Reconciliation. By all means, it should never be used for storage, e.g. chairs, collection baskets, bulletins, hymnals, etc.

## ***Space for Music Ministry***

Church Document References: BLS #88, 89, 90, 197 and 226

The design of the space for pastoral musicians must be carefully taken into consideration. In addition to prayerful thought and consideration, a qualified acoustical designer and a sound engineer should be employed in designing the music space. The preference is to have the space visibly connected to the gathered assembly.

Acoustical design (versus amplified sound design) is a priority for the music needs of the assembly. Music is integral to the liturgy. The design of the space must respect, support and enhance the sung prayer of the entire assembly, and should reflect the needs of the ministry, clearly showing that the pastoral musicians are part of the assembly.

At times, the choir and musicians have parts uniquely their own to carry out, while at other times they serve to lead the assembly in song. The choir's placement must allow for both functions. However, the choir must not be situated in the sanctuary itself.

Particular care must be taken when the space for musicians is placed near the sanctuary. The placement of the choir should respect the space of the other ministers in the sanctuary and should not distract from the liturgical action. In no way should the music area or the musicians in this area compete with the altar for attention. The choir should not be a "backdrop" to the altar as viewed from the assembly.

The music space should be designed with consideration for additional space requirements for instruments and choir members during special liturgies. The space should also be handicap accessible. If possible, a space to accommodate the kneeling of choir members should be provided.

The placement of the organ and other musical instruments is also of great importance. Sufficient space is required for the design and placement of any permanently installed instruments, such as the organ and its casework, as well as for other instruments and musicians. Provisions should be made for the placement of a piano of sufficient size to accompany the musical needs of the assembly.

All musical instruments must be chosen to reflect their use in a sacred space and be worthy of liturgical music. Selection of musical instruments must be made with the approval of the *Office of Liturgy*. The keyboard instruments of preference are a pipe organ and/or acoustical piano.

### ***The Sacristy***

Sacristies should be provided as serene and prayerful places to prepare for liturgy. Provisions should be made for the reverent care, purification and storage of sacred vessels, as well as vestments and other articles used in liturgy. They should have suitable and ample closets, counter tops, drawers and cabinets. The main sacristy must also contain a *sacrarium* (plumbed “to the earth”) for purification of the communion vessels, and a sink for washing those same vessels. The door(s) to the sacristy must be able to be locked. Also, if it is not feasible to install a safe, some cabinets are be able to be locked for storage of any precious vessels.

Some churches, because of their size, should have a working sacristy near the sanctuary and a vesting sacristy near the gathering space. In addition, there should be a space for music preparation and for liturgical environment enhancements.

### ***Vessels and Vesture***

Church Document References: BLS #164 and 165; GIRM #328 and 329

Great care should be given to the design and materials for all sacred vessels and vestments. Sacred vessels should be notable in nature and design, fashioned from materials that do not break easily or deteriorate. Their design should be aesthetically pleasing to see and touch. Domestic-type vessels (e.g., ordinary wine glasses used as chalices) are not to be used in liturgical celebrations.

### ***Liturgical Art, Iconography, Statues and Shrines***

Church Document References: BLS #131, 133, 135, 136, 137, 142 and 153 footnote; CCC #1156 to 1162 and #2502; SC #122

Sacred images to be used in the church/chapel or on the campus of a church or institution ought to reflect the architectural and aesthetic style of the church building and be appropriate in scale and size.

The placement of paintings, mosaics, statues, fibers or icons is not only required in devotional areas in the church, but the entire building must incorporate them to manifest that the church building itself is the tangible expression of the invisible Mystical Body of Christ. Artistically worthy images of Christ, Our Lady, the saints, as well as symbols and other liturgical art should adorn the church in such a way that they prepare the faithful for Mass, aid their participation in the liturgy, and foster a spirit of adoration and mission after liturgy.

Every parish church must have an image of the Blessed Mother and, if possible, one of Saint Joseph and the patron of the parish. The images of the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph need not necessarily be separate statues. They can be incorporated in a combined statue of the Holy Family.

Singular images within the church are preferred. Duplication of images dilutes or minimizes the importance of the saints represented. Other images that reflect the devotional practice(s) of the Church or express the ethnic tradition(s) of the parish community are also appropriate art forms in a church.

Careful attention should be given to the location of sacred art. Devotional areas, shrines and the like should be so designed that they encourage people to engage in prayer. The placement of sacred images may prove challenging. It must not be a haphazard collection of pictures and statues. Images and devotional spaces are never to draw attention from the altar and its space.

Strong liturgical art draws the assembly in with its appropriateness and bears the weight of mystery, awe and reverence. It moves the assembly to action. Effective liturgical art is the result of the careful collaboration between the artist and the church which the artistic expression will serve, fabricated with love and care from honest and genuine materials. Choosing mass produced items from a catalog may dilute the strength of the expression and denies a given community the opportunity to express its own unique spirituality.

Qualified liturgical artists can be found through the use of a Liturgical Design Consultant or by contacting the Diocesan Office of Liturgy.

### ***Stations of the Cross***

This rich devotional tradition is to be respectfully retained. The placement of the fourteen (or fifteen) stations may be interpreted differently depending on the cultural or local circumstance. Often, churches have images as well as crosses that mark the stations. While the depictions of the Passion are desirable, however, the crosses are needed. Traditionally, the stations have been arranged around the nave of the church or even the exterior of the church, marking the devotion as a true journey. The clustering of the stations in one place excludes processional movement from one station to the next and therefore, should be avoided.

### ***Projection and Recording Systems***

Projection systems can become obtrusive and take focus away from the actual liturgical events. Therefore, projection systems should not be incorporated in the nave of the church.



Cameras for video recording and equipment for audio recording can be incorporated into the church in order to capture special liturgies, homilies or musical selections, on video and/or audio media. The *Diocesan Office of Communications* must be consulted before designing and installing such equipment.

## ***Accessibility in Church***

Church Document References: BLS #42, 59, 61, 74, 212 and 247

The ministry of Jesus was compassionate and attentive to all. In building places of worship, we must emulate Christ's concern for all those who are members of His Body. All new building projects are to make every provision necessary to accommodate persons with disabilities.

In renovation projects, the need to make the different areas of an existing space accessible is a serious consideration. Every effort is to be made to incorporate accessibility into the design proposals. 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.

See *Appendix C: Resources* for additional sources of information.

Provisions for accessibility that affect the design and building of a place of worship include, but is in no way limited to:

- unimpeded access to the altar, ambo, music area, tabernacle, reconciliation room and baptistry
- mechanisms for assisting people with hearing difficulties
- adequate lighting for all approaches, passageways and public spaces.

Experience has shown that when parishes make such provisions for accessibility, persons with disabilities feel welcome enough to participate more actively and visibly in the midst of the worshipping assembly. Care

should be taken that accessibility does not take the form of segregation from the remainder of the assembly.

### ***Private Chapel in a Rectory***

Church Document References: CCC #1226

The Diocese of Saginaw may permit the creation of a private chapel in a parish rectory for the spiritual advantage of the priest(s). A request for permission to create a private chapel in a rectory must be submitted to the Bishop through the Chancellor, who will consult with the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy*. The request should include the reason(s) supporting the advantage of having a private chapel in a rectory. Permission must be obtained, in writing, before establishing such a chapel.

While it is preferred that priests pray before the Blessed Sacrament in the parish church, the Bishop may permit the reservation of the Holy Eucharist in a private chapel in a parish rectory for the spiritual advantage of the priest(s) and the faithful, provided that the chapel is accessible to the faithful.

The Bishop may permit the celebration of Mass and other sacred celebrations in a private chapel for the spiritual advantage of the priest(s) and the faithful, providing the chapel is accessible to the faithful. Norms pertaining to the sacred celebrations which are allowed in a private chapel, and directives regarding sacred furnishings, are to be assiduously followed.

The priest is responsible for the care of the Holy Eucharist and is to ensure that the Blessed Sacrament is diligently renewed.

A site in a rectory which has been approved for the creation of a private chapel is to be blessed according to the prescribed liturgical rites, as directed by the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy*.

The Chancery must be notified in the event the site is no longer to be used as a private chapel or is to be moved to another location.

## **Section III: Archive and Dedication**

### ***Documentation for Archival Purposes***

Church Document References: BLS #255

Parishes are strongly encouraged to create a careful photographic and video graphic documentation of the church building as it evolves. Future construction, renovation or repair work will be helped tremendously if the parish also retains an accurate set of “as-built” construction documents of the completed construction. A copy of these construction documents is to be submitted to the *Diocesan Facilities Director*.

### ***Dedication of the Church, Altar, Font and Ambo***

Church Document References: BLS #118 and 119

Liturgical rites are celebrated at several stages of the construction process. Chief among these is the dedication of the church and altar, which is celebrated upon completion of the project, with the bishop as the presiding celebrant. A primary consideration is the relationship between the first use of the space and the dedication date.

As a rule, the dedication celebration should be the first time the space is used for worship. The reality of weather, construction schedules, bishop’s schedule, and some renovation situations may make this difficult to achieve. However, the integrity of the rite calls for a good-faith effort to set and meet a date on which it is possible to dedicate the church on the occasion of its first use. Holding an open house for parishioners, ecumenical neighbors, people of the neighborhood and other guests shortly before the dedication celebration may be a good way to help them become familiar with the space before it is used for worship. Should it not be possible to wait until the dedication to use the newly constructed or renovated church, at the very least the new altar must not be used until it is consecrated at the dedication celebration, in which case, a temporary altar should be used.

If a current church is to be abandoned, a “leave taking” liturgy should be considered when moving from that space. This celebration should be a Liturgy of Thanksgiving for all the sacraments celebrated in this soon to be abandoned church.

### ***Disposal of Art and Furnishings***

Church Document References: BLS #167, 243 and 255

Objects of great historic or artistic value or those donated to the Church through a vow may not be sold without special permission of the Holy See. If these objects are to be disposed of in some other way, then the diocesan bishop should be contacted so that the concerns of the donors and the requirements of canon law are fulfilled.

There are times, however, when the materials are no longer suitable, either because they are worn or because they no longer serve liturgical needs. In such cases, pastors and administrators need to consult with the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* regarding any policies governing the disposal of such items.

Parishes are to contact the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* before disposing of any sacred vessels, liturgical furnishings or sacred works of art.

## **Appendix A: Policies and Required Procedures**

*The building or renovating of a church, chapel, or any place of worship is a unique opportunity for the renewal of faith and liturgical life of any Catholic community. It is more than an architectural solution to a spatial need, or an exercise in building maintenance. Accordingly, every building or renovation project must include a component of education and formation related to the Church's liturgical tradition and the needs of the reformed liturgy. For new construction and for projects involving a major renovation, the pastor/administrator must consult with the Diocesan Office of Liturgy at the outset and should consider engaging the services of a liturgical consultant.*

These policies and procedures are intended to assist parishes and other Catholic institutions in the construction of new churches or chapels, and in the renovation, restoration and care of existing churches and chapels in the Diocese of Saginaw.

All new construction and renovation projects are subject to the following policies and procedures:

### **POLICY and PROCEDURE: INITIAL CONTACT**

**As early as possible in the process, the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* is to be contacted on all construction projects within the scope detailed in Section I (Scope of Projects and Diocesan Process/Competency) of this document. In accordance with the mandate of the bishop, the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* shall review and approve all design proposals for new construction and renovation projects. [NOTE: This contact shall be made BEFORE signing any contract with a Liturgical Design Consultant and/or Liturgical Architect for completing the preliminary design.]**

- It is imperative and essential that the pastor/administrator contact the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* during the preliminary discussion stage of a project.
- With the consensus and approval of the parish leadership bodies (ie. Parish Pastoral Council, Administrative Committee, Parish Finance

Parish support must be documented in a letter to the <i>Diocesan Office of Liturgy</i> from members of the parish leadership bodies.
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Council, other relative bodies), this meeting with the *Office of Liturgy* should include: a full discussion of the reasons for and the anticipated scope of the project; liturgical considerations and/or implications of the project; a possible project schedule; initial plans for the liturgical formation of the parish; and professionals needed for the project, including the potential use of Liturgical Design Consultants and Architects necessary for the Preliminary Design steps.

- The parish/institution also has the option to make a fuller presentation to the *Office of Liturgy* at this time; or, the *Office of Liturgy* may also request such a presentation.

### **POLICY and PROCEDURE: SUBMISSION OF THE PRELIMINARY (SCHEMATIC) DESIGN**

**At the completion of a preliminary design, the parish or institution representatives will meet with the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* so that the *Office* may review the design proposal and provide comments and suggestions on the liturgical aspects of the design.**

- The intent of this meeting is to allow the *Office of Liturgy* to carefully review all aspects which relate to the liturgical dimension of the project.
- This meeting is an opportunity for the *Office of Liturgy* and the parish or institution representatives to review and discuss the components of the proposed schematic design of the building or renovation project. The pastor/administrator, representatives of the appropriate parish/institution committees, the liturgical consultant, and the project architect (or the design firm) are expected to be present for this meeting.
- The presentation is to include, but not be limited to: a statement describing the need or vision that initiated the design process; a description of the design process to date; information on the extent of the involvement of the parish or institution community in the project, (e.g. the education formation process); any information concerning furnishings, artifacts or design details that are historically significant; any additional information or resources related to the status of the project. For a renovation project, copies of the existing floor plan and

Detailed specifications should accompany the design plans of the project.
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of the proposed design and photos of those areas affected by the proposed renovation are to be included in the presentation. For all projects, a list of furnishings that are being newly designed or refurbished, the names of consultants and designers that have been engaged, preliminary information on materials and finishes, and a project schedule are to be submitted.

- If there are no serious concerns, the *Office of Liturgy* will recommend approval of this stage of the project to the bishop. An approval letter from the Bishop will be sent to the respective pastor or administrator. If the project includes architectural drawings, the parish or institution must present these to the *Diocesan Building Commission* before proceeding with the design development stage of the project.

### **POLICY and PROCEDURE: FINAL SUBMISSION**

**When the project's preliminary working drawings are complete, the parish or institution representatives meets with the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* for final review and approval of the proposed design. [NOTE: This meeting must take place BEFORE any further contracts are signed.]**

- This discussion between the parish/institution and the *Office of Liturgy* takes place at the completion of the design development stage.
- This presentation describes the design changes that have occurred since the previous submission.
- When available, the designs of the principal furnishings and art pieces are to be presented at this meeting. If these designs are not complete, they may be presented at a later date.
- If there are no outstanding concerns, the parish will receive approval for the design so that the project may proceed to the bidding stage in preparation for construction. This approval is preliminary to the required approvals from the *Diocesan Finance Council* and *Diocesan Building Commission*. This approval is given in writing to the parish from the bishop.
- The only CONTRACT documents (between engaged architects, engineers and contractors with the parish) to be used are those approved by the *Diocesan Building Commission*. These are available from the *Diocesan Chief Financial Officer*.

- Once the bids have been evaluated and a decision is made, approval to proceed with construction will be given in writing by the bishop.

**POLICY: If any changes in the design of the project occur due to budget constraints or other reasons, the proposed revisions must be reviewed again by the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy*. In some circumstances, the changes may have to be reviewed with the *Diocesan Building Commission* and the *Diocesan Finance Council*.**



## **Appendix B: Helpful Steps in the Planning and Implementation of New Construction or Renovation Projects**

Any building or renovation project needs to be in harmony with the overall strategic/master plan of the parish or institution. The strategic plan should articulate the present and future needs and aspirations of the parish/institution, including worship, education and Christian Service, as well as what resources are available to address these needs.

The following sets forth the steps to follow in the planning and implementation of building and renovation projects and may be a helpful process to follow:

**Step 1: Contact *Diocesan Office of Liturgy*.** A call or meeting should occur with the Director of the Diocesan Office of Liturgy to discuss the pending building or renovation project in light of the overall strategic/master plan of the parish or institution. See Appendix A: Policies and Required Procedures for more details.

**Step 2: Conduct a feasibility study.** Given the parish/institution strategic plan, decide what is possible to do now or in the near future. If the plans involve the possible construction or renovation of a church building or chapel, this is the time to retain a liturgical design consultant who can help the parish to articulate its worship needs and preferences so that they can be communicated accurately to an architect. This is also the time to retain an architect for preliminary consultation on a master plan and a general projection of costs, as well as to explore a working relationship between the liturgical design consultant and the architect. Those retained at this step in the process may or may not be the same as the ones who eventually work on the projects that arise from the feasibility study.

A liturgical design consultant can be helpful in assisting the parish with an education and formation program throughout the life of the project. The *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* can provide names of approved liturgical consultants and architects.

**Step 3: Establish a Parish/Institution Building Committee.** If the feasibility study results in a recommendation from the parish Pastoral Council or other parish/institution committees to move forward with a project, now is the time to

form a building committee that will oversee the project from start to finish. This committee will need to educate itself and the parish/institution about what is involved in the project before it can proceed with its work. Among its first tasks will be to interview liturgical design consultants and retain one who will work with the parish/institution for the remainder of the project. At this point, the consultant can assist the building committee in its task of self-education as well as formation of the entire community regarding its worship and how a new or renovated space will address its needs and aspirations. The consultant can also provide assistance in selecting the architect for the project.

A Building Committee should include people with the following expertise: finance, construction, liturgy, music, communications, prayer support and/or ministry formation.

**Step 4: Clarify consultation expectations and roles of the committee members.**

It is important for all involved to understand the roles of all participants in the project, from the pastor/administrator - to the building committee - to the parish or institution Pastoral Council - to the parish/institution staff - to the liturgical consultant. This is the time to establish clearly what is and is not expected of each participant.

**Step 5: Select your remaining partners.** The architect, appropriate consultants, and/or fundraising advisors need to be interviewed and chosen at this time. The earlier in the process they are selected, the more they can be involved in the formation process undertaken by the building committee, with the assistance of the liturgical design consultant, and the more conversant they will be with the vision of the parish/institution for its place of worship.

Appropriate consultants include, but are not limited to engineers knowledgeable in mechanical, electrical, structural, acoustical, lighting, civil, landscaping and sound.

**Step 6: Clarify ongoing communication efforts.** Communication is key to the success of such a project. A determination must be made as to the person who will be responsible to ensure that the entire community (the parish/institution at large, the local staff and advisory boards, parish Pastoral Council) all have the information they need when they need it.

**Step 7: Create a conceptual plan.** Now is the time to develop the master plan that first surfaced during the feasibility study. It will not be a design proposal. Rather it will establish in a general way what the spaces are that will be built and in what sequence, if it is to be a phased plan. It is vital that the architect, the liturgical design consultant, and all other consultants maintain frequent and open communication from beginning to end of the project. At this point, the liturgical design consultant takes on the additional role of advocate for the parish/institution's vision and the Church's liturgical requirements with the architect.

**Step 8: Obtain funding.** This can be done with the assistance of the fundraiser and will make use of the conceptual master plan.

**Step 9: Create design documents.** This is done by the architect in collaboration with the building committee, the liturgical design consultant, and all other consultants. Formation of the parish/institution continues along with consultation with parishioners and stakeholders regarding the direction and shape of the design. During this phase, meetings with the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* and the *Diocesan Building Commission* are required. See Appendix A: Policies and Required Procedures for more details.

**Step 10: Design furnishings and appointments.** In addition to building design, thought must go into the furnishings and appointments of the new place for worship. This is the time to develop designs for those as well, with the assistance of the liturgical design consultant, the architect, and any artisans that are retained for this aspect of the work. All designs should be submitted for review to the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy*.

**Step 11: Create construction documents.** The architect generates the documents and materials needed by the contractor to begin the work. The building committee and liturgical design consultant continue their oversight of the process. A subsequent meeting with the *Diocesan Office of Liturgy* and the *Diocesan Building Commission* is required. See Appendix A: Policies and Required Procedures for more details.

**Step 12: Solicit bids.** Written approval from the bishop is required BEFORE bidding begins. With written approval from the bishop and from the *Diocesan*

*Building Commission*, the parish/institution is to solicit bids. Contact the *Diocesan Building Commission* for details of policies and procedures.

**Step 13: Plan for groundbreaking and other ceremonies.** Throughout the building process, there will be opportunities for ritual celebration of the progress of the work. These are developed and prepared by the local worship committee in collaboration with the building committee and the liturgical design consultant.

**Step 14: Begin the construction.** During every stage of construction, communication with the parishioners and stakeholders about progress of the project is essential. This helps ensure their ownership of the process and the eventual new place of worship, as well as for successful fund raising. The building committee, construction partners, architect, appropriate consultants and liturgical design consultant must also continue to communicate with each other on a regular basis to ensure that it is the vision of the parish/institution realized in the bricks and mortar.

**Step 15: Set a date for the dedication.** This is also a good time to set the date for the dedication of the church building or blessing of the worship site, based on the construction schedule, the liturgical year, and the bishop and others' schedules.

**Step 16: Plan for dedication.** At this point, the worship committee can begin its preparations in earnest for the dedication rite, in consultation with the building committee and the liturgical design consultant. See Section III: Dedication of the Church, Altar, Font and Ambo for further details.

**Step 17: Learn how to pray in the new worship space.** It is likely that a new or renovated place of worship will have a different configuration, different furnishings, and different appointments than the former worship space. The worship committee and the parish will need time to become familiar with the new space and how to pray well there; therefore, planning should take place prior to using the new space. The liturgical design consultant can assist in this transition.

## **Appendix C: Resources**

- **Committee on Divine Worship:** a standing committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), having the responsibility for all matters relating to the Sacred Liturgy for Latin Rite Dioceses in the United States.

USCCB - Divine Worship  
3211 Fourth Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
Secretariat: 202-541-3060  
<http://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship>

- **National Catholic Partnership on Disability:** an agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities  
McCormick Pavilion  
415 Michigan Ave, NE  
Suite 95  
Washington, DC 20017-4501  
202-529-2933  
<http://www.ncpd.org>

- **EnVisionChurch:** a helpful site of the Georgetown Center for Liturgical Art which offers articles, artists, and resources in art, architecture, liturgy and spirituality in the Catholic tradition.

<http://centerforliturgy.georgetown.edu>

Examples:

- *Choosing a Liturgical Consultant – The Tasks of a Liturgical Consultant*
- *Visio Divina: Divine Seeing – The Practice of Meditating on Visual Images as a Source of Divine Insight and Inspiration*

- **Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship (BLS):** USCCB guidelines on liturgical art and architecture, based on a theological reflection on the nature of liturgy and the place of celebration.

<http://old.usccb.org/liturgy/livingstonesind.shtml>

- **Letter to Artists:** the beautiful letter of Pope John Paul II on art and beauty, inviting artists to use their creative gifts at the service of humanity.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_23041999\\_artists\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists_en.html)

## **Appendix D: Glossary**

**Accessibility** – barrier-free design ... physical, visual, hearing, etc.<sup>17</sup> All areas of the space meet the ADA (Americans with Disability Act) guidelines and requirements.

**Acoustician** – a member of the building design team who specializes in all aspects of sound in architectural spaces. In environments designed for liturgical worship, this includes speech, music, sound reinforcement and noise control.

**Acoustics** – the science of sound. In the context of a Catholic worship space, acoustics is the response of the architectural environment to all elements of sound that occur during liturgy, particularly the transmission and support of speech, music and the voice of the assembly.<sup>18</sup>

**Altar** – the consecrated table of the Eucharist within the sanctuary.<sup>19</sup>

**Architect, liturgical** – a professional who designs and supervises the construction of churches and chapels, having formal education and specific experience or knowledge of the architectural aspects of Catholic worship.

**Chapel** – a smaller space or building of worship.

**church** (lower case) – 1. the building housing the worship space of a parish or institution; 2. a parish.

**Church** (upper case) – 1. the people of God<sup>20</sup>; 2. the Catholic Church.

**Consultant** – member of the church design team or advisor to the parish, specializing in a particular aspect of building design. The designation ordinarily implies that the individual has no involvement or vested interest in the sale of any products that might be purchased for the project.

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<sup>17</sup> See BLS #211-214; see also #42, 59, 61, 74, 86, 105, 109, 208 and 247.

<sup>18</sup> See BLS #89, 221-225. This is affected by many elements, finishes and surfaces.

<sup>19</sup> See BLS #56-60. "Altar" is sometimes confused with "sanctuary".

<sup>20</sup> See BLS #14; RDCA chapter 2 #1.

**Consultant, liturgical design** – a professional with formal education in Catholic liturgical theology and design. This consultant’s roles may include: facilitating goal setting sessions; educating on principles of liturgy and liturgical design; collaborating with the architect in the development of conceptual design; designing liturgical furniture and appointments.<sup>21</sup>

**Design development** – the phase in which the design team refines the drawings begun in schematic design into more detailed and elaborate documents, resolves design issues and begins to finalize building materials.

**Diocesan building commission** – those persons at the diocesan level who are responsible for reviewing and approving the plans and designs of the project.

**Diocesan finance council** – those persons at the diocesan level who are responsible for reviewing and approving the capital expenditures of the project.

**Ecclesiology** – the branch of theology that is concerned with the nature, constitution and functions of a Church.

**Egress** – the path or opening by means of which one goes out; exit.

**Finishes** – a term used for the final material or appearance of an object or surface (e.g. paint, wall covering, tile, etc).<sup>22</sup>

**Furnishings, liturgical** – the furniture to be used in the worship space (e.g. altar, ambo, font, presider’s chair, cantor stand, credence table, gifts table, cross, candles/candlesticks, ambry and the chairs/pews and kneelers of the assembly).<sup>23</sup>

**Gathering space (narthex)** – the vestibule outside the doors to the worship space in which people gather for entry rites (baptisms, funerals, welcoming catechumens), processions, etc.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See BLS #199-200; also #177, 181, 182, 190, 203 and 205.

<sup>22</sup> See BLS #23, 55, 56 and 69-70.

<sup>23</sup> See BLS #56-65, 87, 91-94 and 117.

<sup>24</sup> See BLS #95-97; An Ever Holy Place, Diocese of Grand Rapids, MI



**Green (sustainable) architecture/building**<sup>25</sup> - a term used to describe economical, energy-saving, environmentally friendly, sustainable development; the practice of increasing the efficiency of buildings and their use of energy, water and materials, as well as reducing a building's impact on human health and the environment.

**Local building committee** – a group formed from members of the local worship community involved in building/renovation; this is the primary working body responsible for advising and overseeing the actual building or renovation process<sup>26</sup>. This building committee should include people with the following expertise: finance, construction, liturgy, music, communications, prayer support and/or ministry formation.

**Local representatives** - the pastor, architect, liturgical design consultant and members of the local building committee chosen to meet with the diocesan representatives.

**Materials** – examples include: stone, masonry, wood, glass, steel, fabrics, etc.

**Mission statement** – a statement that defines the core purpose of an organization, reflecting people's motivations for engaging in the organization's work.

**Music ministry area** – the space that is home to the musicians and instruments, choir, piano, organ console, including seating.<sup>27</sup>

**Schematic design** – the phase of the architect's services in which the architect ascertains the requirements of the project and prepares schematic design studies consisting of drawings and other documents illustrating the scale and relationships of the project components.

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<sup>25</sup> See BLS #187, 207 and 216.

<sup>26</sup> See BLS #183-184.

<sup>27</sup> This area should be identifiable as part of the assembly's seating area and designed to allow the musicians to be heard. See BLS #88-90; GIRM #294 and 312; MCW #23 and 38.

**Reconciliation chapel** – the place for the Sacrament of Penance, preferably sufficiently large and suitably designed.<sup>28</sup>

**Renovation** – any changes made to an existing building and/or worship space; may range from as simple as painting or changing the furnishings to structural changes to the building.

**Ritual movement** – movement of the people and ministers in the celebration of a liturgy.<sup>29</sup>

**Sanctuary area** – the usually raised area (altar platform) which includes the altar, ambo and presider's chair<sup>30</sup> (sometimes mistakenly referred to as the altar).

**Strategic planning** – a disciplined process of creating long-term plans based on the organization's overall vision and mission.<sup>31</sup>

**Vision statement** – a future oriented statement giving a broad, aspired-to image of the future that an organization is aiming to achieve.

**Worship space** – the body of the church or chapel which includes the nave and sanctuary; is connected to or encompasses the reservation chapel, the reconciliation chapel, baptistry and the gathering space.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See BLS #103-105; An Ever Holy Place

<sup>29</sup> For example, a communion procession, movement of the presider, altar servers, cantor, etc.

<sup>30</sup> See BLS #54-55.

<sup>31</sup> Essentially direction-setting, strategic planning typically reaches out five to ten years using planning methods that identifies assumptions, risks and environmental factors.

<sup>32</sup> See BLS #46, 50 and 53.

## **Appendix E: Documents of the Church**

BB	<i>Book of Blessings</i>
BLS	<i>Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship</i>
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonical: Code of Canon Law</i>
EACW	<i>Environment and Art in Catholic Worship</i>
GIRM	<i>General Instruction of the Roman Missal</i>
LA	<i>Letter to Artists</i>
MCW	<i>Music in Catholic Worship</i>
OA	<i>Opera Artis: On the Care of the Church's Historical and Artistic Heritage</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>

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## **Appendix F: Sources of Information**

The Diocese of Saginaw expresses their gratitude to the following dioceses that allowed us to use excerpts from similar publications:

Archdiocese of Chicago, Illinois (CHO)  
Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan (GRD)  
Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin (LAC)  
Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky (LEX)  
Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin (MIL)  
Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (PHL)  
Diocese of Seattle, Washington (SEA)

The following list exhibits the excerpts used in the sections of this document:

Statement of Purpose – GRD  
Introduction – CHO, GRD

Section I: Permission to Build – CHO  
Section I: Scope of Projects and Diocesan Process/Competency – CHO, SEA  
Section I: Consultation and Collaboration – CHO  
Section I: The Role of Professionals and Volunteers – CHO  
Section I: Initial Planning of the Project – CHO

Section II: The Church Edifice – CHO, LAC  
Section II: Gathering Space or Narthax – LAC, MIL  
Section II: The Gathered Assembly Area or Nave – CHO, LAC, MIL  
Section II: The Sanctuary – CHO, LAC  
Section II: The Altar – CHO, LAC, MIL  
Section II: The Ambo – LAC  
Section II: The Presider's Chair, Deacon's Chair and Servers' Chairs – LAC  
Section II: The Crucifix and Processional Cross – MIL  
Section II: The Tabernacle and Chapel of Reservation – CHO, LAC, MIL  
Section II: The Baptistry – CHO, LAC, MIL  
Section II: The Sacrament of Reconciliation – CHO, LAC, MIL  
Section II: Space for Music Ministry – LAC, MIL

Section II: The Sacristy

Section II: Vessel and Vesture – CHO, MIL

Section II: Liturgical Art, Iconography, Statues and Shrines – CHO, LAC, MIL

Section II: Stations of the Cross – LAC

Section II: Projection and Recording Systems

Section II: Accessibility in Church – CHO, MIL

Section II: Private Chapel in a Rectory - PHL

Section III: Documentation of Archival Purposes – MIL

Section III: Dedication of the Church, Altar, Font and Ambo – MIL

Section III: Disposal of Art and Furnishings – CHO

Appendix A: Policies and Required Procedures – CHO, GRD, MIL, SEA

Appendix B: Helpful Steps for New Construction/Renovation – MIL

Appendix C: Resources

Appendix D: Glossary – GRD

Appendix E: Documents of the Church

Appendix F: Sources of Information

## PRAYER FOR THE BUILDING/RENOVATION OF A CHURCH

Father in heaven, source of holiness and true purpose, it is right that we praise and glorify your name.

We come before you, to dedicate to your lasting service this house of prayer, this temple of worship, this home in which we are nourished by your word and your sacraments.

Here will be reflected the mystery of the Church.

The Church is fruitful, made holy by the blood of Christ: a bride made radiant with his glory, a virgin splendid in the wholeness of her faith, a mother blessed through the power of the Spirit.

The Church is holy, your chosen vineyard: its branches envelop the world, its tendrils, carried on the tree of the cross, reach up to the kingdom of heaven.

The Church is favored, the dwelling place of God on earth: a temple built of living stones, founded on the apostles with Jesus Christ its corner stone.

The Church is exalted, a city set on a mountain: a beacon to the whole world, bright with the glory of the Lamb, and echoing the prayers of her saints.

Lord, send your Spirit from heaven to make this church an ever-holy place, and this altar a ready table for the sacrifice of Christ.

Here may the waters of baptism overwhelm the shame of sin: here may your people die to sin and live again through grace as your children.

Here may your children, gathered around your altar, celebrate the memorial of the Paschal Lamb, and be fed at the table of Christ's word and Christ's body.

Here may prayer, the Church's banquet, resound through heaven and earth as a plea for the world's salvation.

Here may the poor find justice, the victims of oppression, true freedom.

From here may the whole world clothed in the dignity of the children of God, enter with gladness your city of peace.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever.

Amen

(Adapted from the Archdiocese of Chicago)