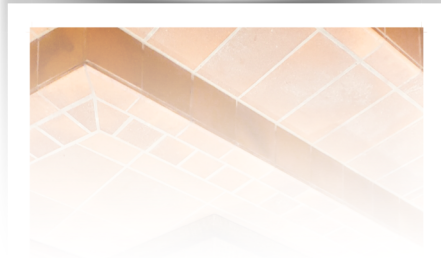




Interior of the Catholic Church





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

The church building is a sign and reminder of the immanence and transcendence of God—who chose to dwell among us and whose presence cannot be contained or limited to any single place. Worship is the loving response of God's People to the mystery of God who is with us and who is yet to come. "As visible constructions, churches are signs of the pilgrim church on earth; they are images that proclaim the heavenly Jerusalem, places in which are actualized the mystery of the communion between man and God." In addition, the church building manifests the baptismal unity of all who gather for the celebration of liturgy and "conveys the image of the gathered assembly." While various places "express a hierarchical arrangement and the diversity of functions," those places "should at the same time form a deep and organic unity, clearly expressive of the unity of the entire holy people.



The Celebration of the Holy Eucharist

The Eucharist

The celebration of the Eucharist is the center of the entire Christian life, both for the universal Church and for local faith communities. The other sacraments, like every other ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are linked with the Holy Eucharist and have it as their end. The celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is the appropriate starting point for understanding the demands of space, sound, and visibility made upon a church building. An analysis of these requirements will include attention to the place for the congregation, for the preaching of the word, and for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, with special care for the location of the altar, the ambo, and the chairs for the priest celebrant and deacon, as necessary. Considerations about the narthex and the environment of the building flow from the central action of the Eucharist. The celebration of the Easter Vigil and of the Sunday Eucharist are appropriate starting points. In addition, special consideration should be given to the place for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.



The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary: The elevated portion of the church where the clergy and other ministers perform their proper functions in the worship of God. The sanctuary symbolizes heaven

The sanctuary is the space where the altar and the ambo stand, and "where the priest, deacon and other ministers exercise their offices." The special character of the sanctuary is emphasized and enhanced by the distinctiveness of its design and furnishings, or by its elevation. The challenge to those responsible for its design is to convey the unique quality of the actions that take place in this area while at the same time expressing the organic relationship between those actions and the prayer and actions of the entire liturgical assembly. The sanctuary must be spacious enough to accommodate the full

celebration of the various rituals of word and Eucharist with their accompanying movement, as well as those of the other sacraments celebrated there.

The principal ritual furnishings within the sanctuary are the altar on which the eucharistic sacrifice is offered, the ambo from which God's word is proclaimed, and the chair of the priest celebrant. These furnishings should be constructed of substantial materials that express dignity and stability. Their placement and their design again make it clear that although they are distinct entities, they are related in the one eucharistic celebration.

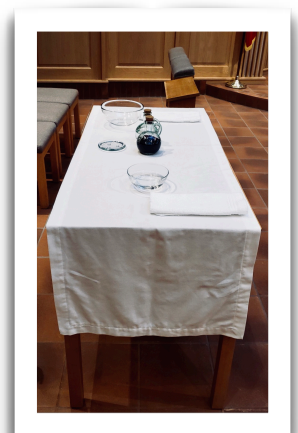
The Altar



At the Eucharist, the liturgical assembly celebrates the ritual sacrificial meal that recalls and makes present Christ's life, death, and resurrection, proclaiming "the death of the Lord until he comes." The altar is "the center of thanksgiving that the Eucharist accomplishes" and the point around which the other rites are in some manner arrayed. Since the Church teaches that "the altar is Christ," its composition should reflect the nobility, beauty, strength, and simplicity of the One it represents. In new churches there is to be only one altar so that it "signifies to the assembly of the faithful one Christ and the one Eucharist of the Church." The altar is the natural focal point of the sanctuary and is to be "freestanding to allow the [priest] to walk around it easily and Mass to be celebrated facing the people." Ordinarily, it should be fixed (with the base affixed to the floor) and with a table or mensa made of natural stone, since it represents Christ Jesus, the Living Stone (1 Pt 2:4). The pedestal or support for the table may be fashioned from "any sort of material, as long as it is becoming and solid. Parishes building new churches must follow the directives of the diocesan bishop regarding the kind of altar chosen and suitable materials for new altars. The altar should be centrally located in the sanctuary and the center of attention in the church.

Credence Table

The table to the left side of the Sanctuary on which is placed the Chalice, Cruets, Ciborium, Lavabo bowl and towel and communion patens etc.



The Tabernacle



The place of reservation should be a space that is dedicated to Christ present in the Eucharist and that is designed so that the attention of one praying there is drawn to the tabernacle that houses the presence of the Lord. The Code of Canon Law directs that the Eucharist be reserved "in a part of the church that is prominent, conspicuous, beautifully decorated and suitable for prayer." It directs that regularly there be "only one tabernacle" in the church. It should be worthy of the Blessed Sacrament—beautifully designed and in harmony with the overall decor of the rest of the church. To provide for the security of the Blessed Sacrament the tabernacle should be "solid," "immovable," "opaque," and "locked." The tabernacle may be situated on a fixed pillar or stand, or it may be attached to or embedded in one of the walls. A special oil lamp or a lamp with a wax candle burns continuously near the tabernacle as an indication of Christ's presence.

The Sanctuary Lamp : The Lamp of the Presence



The Ambo



The central focus of the area in which the word of God is proclaimed during the liturgy is the ambo. The design of the ambo and its prominent placement reflects the dignity and nobility of that saving word and draws the attention of those present to the proclamation of the word. Here the Christian community encounters the living Lord in the word of God and prepares itself for the "breaking of the bread" and the mission to live the word that will be proclaimed. An ample area around the ambo is needed to allow a Gospel procession with a full complement of ministers bearing candles and incense. The Introduction to the Lectionary recommends that the design of altar and ambo bear an "harmonious and close relationship" to one another in order to emphasize the close relationship between word and Eucharist. Since many people share in the ministry of the word, the ambo should be accessible to everyone, including those with physical disabilities.

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

“Presidential Chair”



The Chair for the Priest Celebrant: The chair of the priest celebrant stands "as a symbol of his office of presiding over the assembly and of directing prayer." An appropriate placement of the chair allows the priest celebrant to be visible to all in the congregation. The chair reflects the dignity of the one who leads the community in the person of Christ, but is never intended to be remote or grandiose. The priest celebrant's chair is distinguished from the seating for other ministers by its design and placement. "The seat for the deacon should be placed near that of the celebrant." In the cathedral, in addition to the bishop's chair or cathedra, which is permanent, an additional chair will be needed for use by the rector or priest celebrant.

“Baptistery and Paschal Candle”



The rites of baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation, require a prominent place for celebration. Initiation into the Church is entrance into a eucharistic community united in Jesus Christ. Because the rites of initiation of the Church begin with baptism and are completed by the reception of the Eucharist, the baptismal font and its location reflect the Christian's journey through the waters of baptism to the altar. This integral relationship between the baptismal font and the altar can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, such as placing the font and altar on the same architectural axis, using natural or artificial lighting, using the same floor patterns, and using common or similar materials and elements of design.

The location of the baptismal font, its design, and the materials used for its construction are important considerations in the planning and design of the building. It is customary to locate the baptismal font either in a special area within the main body of the church or in a separate baptistry. Through the waters of baptism the faithful enter the life of Christ. For this reason the font should be visible and accessible to all who enter the church building.

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

“The Cross”



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

“The Sacred Oils and Holy Water”



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

The Sacred Chrism: (Latin: Sacrum Chrisma) Olive oil, which has perfume mixed with it, consecrated by the bishop annually. Signifies strengthening in dedication to God. Used after baptism, for confirmation, in the ordination of priests, and in the consecration of bishops.

The Oil of the Sick: (Latin: Oleum Infirmorum) Olive oil blessed by the bishop annually. Signifies strengthening for healing. Used in the Anointing of the Sick (Jas. 5:14)

The Oil of Catechumens: (Latin: Oleum Catechumenorum) Olive oil blessed by the bishop annually. Signifies strengthening for repentance and turning away from evil. Used in preparation for baptism.



Holy water: Water that has been blessed, a reminder of baptism and of the supernatural life of God's grace.



“The Nave”



The Congregation's Area: The space within the church building for the faithful other than the priest celebrant and the ministers is sometimes called the nave. This space is critical in the overall plan because it accommodates a variety of ritual actions: processions during the Eucharist, the singing of the prayers, movement during baptismal rites, the sprinkling of the congregation with blessed water, the rites during the wedding and funeral liturgies, and personal devotion. This area is not comparable to the audience's space in a theater or public arena because in the liturgical assembly, there is no audience. Rather, the entire congregation acts. The ministers of music could also be located in the body of the church since they lead the entire assembly in song as well as by the example of their reverent attention and prayer.

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

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

“The Stations of the Cross”



The Stations of the Cross originated early in the history of the Church. It was the custom of the faithful to follow the way walked by Christ from Pilate's house in Jerusalem to Calvary. As time went on, pilgrims to the holy city desired to continue this devotion when they returned home. In the fourteenth century when the Franciscans were entrusted with the care of the holy places in Jerusalem they promoted the use of images depicting the Lord's Way of the Cross. Whether celebrated by a community or by individuals, the Stations of the Cross offer a way for the faithful to enter more fully into the passion and death of the Lord and to serve as another manifestation of the pilgrim Church on its homeward journey. Traditionally the stations have been arranged around the walls of the nave of the church, or, in some instances, around the gathering space or even the exterior of the church, marking the devotion as a true journey.

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

characterizes this devotion as a "way" of the cross.



“The Statues and Icons”



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

In choosing images and devotional art, parishes should be respectful of traditional iconography when it comes to the way sacred images are recognized and venerated by the faithful. However, they also should be mindful that the tradition is not limited to literal images. While Mary is the mother of Jesus, she is also an icon of the Church, a disciple of the Lord,

a liberated and liberating woman. Other symbols such as the crucifix, icons, or images of patron saints depicted in various ways can also draw us into the deeper realities of faith and hope as they connect us to the stories behind the image.

Restraint in the number and prominence of sacred images is encouraged to help people focus on the liturgical action that is celebrated in the church. It is particularly desirable that a significant image of the patron of the church be fittingly displayed, as well as an image of Mary, the Mother of God, as a fitting tribute to her unique role in the plan of salvation. As time passes and demographics change, saints who were once the object of veneration by many parishioners may at another time be venerated by only a few. When this happens, these images could be removed, provided sensitivity is shown with regard to the piety of the faithful and the impact on the building.

“The Confessional”

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

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

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



“The Choir”



The Place for the Pastoral Musicians: Music is integral to the liturgy. It unifies those gathered to worship, supports the song of the congregation, highlights significant parts of the liturgical action, and helps to set the tone for each celebration.

It is important to recognize that the building must support the music and song of the entire worshipping assembly. In addition, "some members of the community [have] special gifts [for] leading the [assembly in] musical praise and thanksgiving." The skills and talents of these pastoral musicians, choirs, and instrumentalists are especially valued by the Church. Because the roles of the choirs and cantors are exercised within the liturgical community, the space chosen for the musicians should clearly express that they are part of the assembly of worshipers. In addition, cantors and song leaders need visual contact with the music director while they themselves are visible to the rest of the congregation. Apart from the singing of the Responsorial Psalm, which normally occurs at the ambo, the stand for the cantor or song leader is distinct from the ambo, which is reserved for the proclamation of the word of God.

The directives concerning music found in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the guidance offered by *Music in Catholic Worship* and *Liturgical Music Today* can assist the parish in planning appropriate space for musicians. The placement and prayerful decorum of the choir members can help the rest of the community to focus on the liturgical action taking place at the ambo, the altar, and the chair. The ministers of music are most appropriately located in a place where they can be part of the assembly and have the ability to be heard. Occasions or physical situations may necessitate that the choir be placed in or near the sanctuary. In such circumstances, the placement of the choir should never crowd or overshadow the other ministers in the sanctuary nor should it distract from the liturgical action.

“The Sacristy”



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

“Narthex”



The Gathering Space or Narthex

The narthex is a place of welcome—a threshold space between the congregation's space and the outside environment. In the early days of the Church, it was a "waiting area" for catechumens and penitents. Today it serves as gathering space as well as the entrance and exit to the building. The gathering space helps believers to make the transition from everyday life to the celebration of the liturgy, and after the liturgy, it helps them return to daily life to live out the mystery that has been celebrated. In the gathering space, people come together to move in procession and to prepare for the celebration of the liturgy. It is in the gathering space that many important liturgical

moments occur: men and women participate in the Rite of Becoming a Catechumen as they move towards later, full initiation into the Church; parents, godparents, and infants are greeted for the celebration of baptism; and Christians are greeted for the last time as their mortal remains are received into the church building for the celebration of the funeral rites.

In addition to its religious functions, the gathering space may provide access to the vesting sacristy, rooms for choir rehearsal, storage areas, restrooms, and rooms for ushers and their equipment. Adequate space for other gatherings will be an important consideration in planning the narthex and other adjoining areas.

Worship In Time and Space

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

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

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

What is Liturgy?

The word "liturgy" originally meant a "public work" or a "service in the name of/on behalf of the people." In Christian tradition it means the participation of the People of God in "the work of God." Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1069

“No human tongue can enumerate the favors that trace back to the Sacrifice of the Mass. The sinner is reconciled with God; the just man becomes more upright; sins are wiped away; vices are uprooted; virtue and merit increases; and the devil’s schemes are frustrated.”

-St. Lawrence Justinian



*LET US ENTER GOD'S DWELLING; LET US WORSHIP
AT GOD'S FOOTSTOOL. PS.132 : 7*

North Thompson Catholic Parishes



Roman Catholic Diocese of Kamloops