

Office of The Bishop

DIOCESE OF WINONA
Pastoral Center

Dear Friends in Christ,

In the Diocese of Winona, we are fortunate to have parish churches and buildings in which to gather, to pray, and to celebrate our lives as Catholics. Our ancestors were careful to provide buildings that would last forever so that we may concern ourselves with the spiritual formation of our families. It is our responsibility to continue to build on their vision. We must attend to the maintenance of our parish buildings with gratitude for what our ancestors provided.

The building used for worship is called ***Domus Ecclesiae***, the house for the church. The primary function of the church building is to accommodate the assembled worshiping community in the celebration of the liturgy. The major objective of construction or renovation is to create a unified space for the assembly around the Word and Sacrament, ambo and altar. These principal focal points reflect our cherished Catholic belief in the presence of Christ in the Word proclaimed and the Eucharist celebrated by the full, conscious, and active participation of the worshiping community with spiritual direction of their pastor and presider.

I have consulted with parish leaders who have recently lead their parishes in renovation and building. I have asked our Diocesan Liturgical Commission to study the documents published by the Roman Curia and the Catholic Conference of Bishops relating to renovation and building. Our Office of Liturgy has researched guidelines from other diocese to study the components of an effective document to guide the care of parish buildings. I have consulted pastors and parish directors.

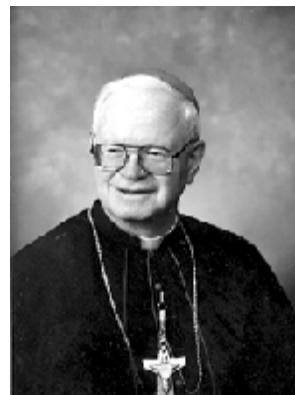
Now, I am asking parish leaders to consider the wisdom of experienced colleagues, the Bishop's Conference, and the Roman Curia and follow our diocesan *Guidelines for Building and Remodeling Churches or Chapels in the Diocese of Winona*.

These guidelines are for parish committees discerning a building or remodeling project in the church buildings in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. Please take the time to study the guidelines and know them well before you begin a renovation or building project. Our Diocesan Director of the Office of Liturgy is available to you for consultation and assistance in implementing these guidelines as you begin a building or renovation project. May the Holy Spirit guide you and bless you with the spirit of unity in faith.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Bernard J. Harrington
Bishop of Winona

Issued on 1 July 1992, first revision 1 January 1997,
second revision 1 July, 2002.



**GUIDELINES FOR
BUILDING AND REMODELING CHURCHES OR CHAPELS
IN THE DIOCESE OF WINONA**

You form a building which rises on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is fitted together and takes shape as a holy temple in the Lord; in him you are being built into this temple, to become a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2: 19:22)

Your parish is about to begin an experience that can cause conversion and deeper commitment to the mission of Jesus. The process of building or renovating a church can be the most important component of building or renovating because **the process engages people in relationships** that will require charity, love, compassion, understanding, and care. The parish leader guides parishioners in the journey of building and renovating common property and reminds them always to treat one another with the same dignity and respect as they would Christ himself. (See Acts 3: 42-47).

Parishioners inherit common property (the church). They are responsible for the care of it for the sake of their children's children. A building or renovation project can be a powerful experience for a parish. In some cases, the health of parish relationships in the process is more important than the finished project. The project is the task. The **process is an evangelizing event** both for the parish and the township. A leader will be thoughtful of the way the local township or city dwellers experience the Catholic community through this parish community and the process of building and renovating.

Every action of the universal and local Catholic Church begins with PRINCIPLES to guide

ministry. When we think about renovating or

**STEP ONE
PASTOR/PARISH DIRECTOR
STUDIES**

building a church, we begin with the assembly, the Body of Christ for the world. In its wisdom, the Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy once asserted that in order to begin a discussion of renovation or building for Catholic worship, we have to begin with who we are, that is, the Church, the baptized, the initiated, the assembly of believers.

The **assembly of believers is one of many symbols** in the liturgy since, “In the liturgical assembly, Christ’s presence is realized in all the baptized who gather in his name, . . .” (GIRM2000, #27 and BLS, #22). “The celebration of the Eucharist, like the entire Liturgy, involves the use of outward signs that foster, strengthen, and express faith. Thus, the utmost care must be taken to choose and arrange those forms and elements provided by the Church that, in view of the circumstances of the people and the place, will more effectively **foster active and full participation** and more properly serve the spiritual well-being of the faithful.” (GIRM2000, #20)

The baptized assembly of believers needs room to process, to stand, to sit, to sing, and to gesture. Through these movements, the Church actively prays. Our Pope, Cardinals, and Bishops have told us that the “full and active participation by all the people is **the goal to be considered before all else**.

For it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit . . . “ (CSL, #14)

The primary **function of the church building** is to be a skin for the Church who gathers to proclaim the word of God and to celebrate the sacraments. “Every church building is a gathering place for the assembly, a resting place, a place of encounter with God, as well as a point of departure on the Church’s unfinished journey in the reign of God.” (BLS #17)

A building must exude quality and appropriateness for the liturgy. The building must be of quality materials with quality art and it must be appropriately designed for the liturgy. (See, BLS, #147,148)

Furnishings in the worship space should be arranged to assist the assembly to be active participants. Thoughtful placement of altar, ambo, Eucharistic chapel, presider’s chair can help the understanding of the many ways Christ is present. “In the liturgical assembly, Christ’s presence is realized in all the baptized who gather in his name, in the word of God proclaimed in the assembly, in the person of the priest through whom Christ offers himself to the Father and gathers the assembly, in sacramental celebrations, and especially, in the sacrament of his Body and Blood.” (GIRM2000, #27 and BLS #22) For this reason, Christ’s promise applies supremely to such a local gathering together of the Church

Acoustical design should promote full and active participation of the assembly in the celebration of the liturgy. The parish leader must be aware that the church needs some reverberation for effective and supportive singing in the assembly. The **people are the primary choir** in the sung liturgy. The pastor and committee members pay careful

attention to the balance of acoustics for the sung liturgy in the Catholic church. A mixture of flooring materials can help to achieve this balance. No matter the size of the church, there should be a balance of hard surfaced flooring, wall surfaces and minimal to no carpeting or soft tiles. Amplification in a worship environment requires the experience of experts who must understand the demands of a sung liturgy. Their advice should be sought when the church is full of a singing assembly.

The ministers of music, musicians (choirs), organist, pianist, and other musical instruments, should be an extension of the assembly. They should be placed so they are visible to the assembly. The people should be able to clearly see the cantor. Each musician needs room to move, to place books and music, and to set down musical instruments. A good architect will design a music space that can be flexible for a mixed choir, a folk ensemble, or simply a cantor. Plan for music storage, instrument storage, and discreet places for microphones and cords during the liturgy.

A gathering space for the community provides the opportunity for hospitality and creates a sense of belonging for all who assemble for worship. The worshiper entering the church should know that Christ is the host graciously awaiting the guests. The size of the gathering area should be ample. Some have suggested that the gathering area be at least one-third the area of the worship space.

The shape of the worship space reveals to each person what is required of them in expressing their faith. Construction or liturgical renovation should reflect the requirements of liturgical celebrations as outlined in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Sacramental spirituality today requires all people to be involved in the action of sacramental celebrations. The spirituality

of the worship area needs to be expressed in an atmosphere that is aesthetically appropriate for the active participation of many people.

Liturgical renovation must respect the best qualities of the original structure, today's requirements of worship, and the needs of the worshiping community of the future. Therefore, construction or liturgical renovation should create a unified space around the twin tables of Word and Sacrament with the acting assembly as the focal point.

The **baptistry and font** with its flowing water is one of the main symbols in our worship space. We now think of the baptismal font not as a piece of furniture but as a place we call the baptistry. Therefore, the font has a permanent place in the church and is not moveable. The prominence of the flowing water is a visual reminder of our life and ministry through the sacrament of Baptism. Our common ministry flows from the font to the table. We know who we are because of what we celebrate at the font, table and ambo. In the construction of the baptistry, care should be taken that the sacrament of Baptism is clearly apparent and that the place is suitable for the community celebration of the sacrament. "The water used in baptism should be true water and, both for the sake of authentic sacramental symbolism and for hygienic reasons, should be pure and clean. If the climate requires, provision should be made for the water to be heated . . ." (RCIA, #18, 20) To be formative for the life of the community, "the font . . . should have living waters and be ample enough to allow for the pouring of water over an adult." (*Shaping a House for the Church*. Marchita Mauch, Chapter 4). The committee should consider the special needs of those to be baptized. The **dismissal of catechumens** from the Liturgy of the Word requires a **space** to which the group may go for

liturgical catechesis. The committee will need to plan a space near the worship space for the catechumenate. Our bishops have also reminded us that, "With the restoration of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults that culminates in baptism at the Easter Vigil, churches need **private spaces where the newly baptized can go immediately after their baptism to be clothed** in their white garments and to prepare for the completion of initiation in the Eucharist." (BLS, #69, 6)

While the major **space of a church** is **designed for the action** of the eucharistic celebration, the church has had an ancient tradition of reserving the eucharistic bread. "Every encouragement should be given to the practice of **eucharistic reservation in a chapel** suited to the people's private adoration and prayer." (GIRM, #276)

If the **tabernacle** is placed near the sanctuary, it should not compete with the twin tables of altar and ambo as the main focus of attention. (See, BLS, #250). The document, *Built of Living Stones* reminds us, "In renovating a church designed in another time period, a parish has an opportunity to consider other locations for the tabernacle. . . . The place for eucharistic reservation and its furnishing should never be temporary, makeshift, or difficult to find." (#249). Consequently, efforts should be made to locate the tabernacle at a prominent, permanent, and properly assigned place.

Special consideration should be given to the arrangement and design of the area for the celebration of the Sacrament of **Reconciliation**. A spacial relationship to the baptismal font can help the penitent celebrate the connection between baptism and reconciliation.

Options for **assembly seating** should include pews with kneelers, chairs with kneelers or a combination

of both.

Hospitality requires that we consider the needs of our brothers and sisters who are **physically challenged** so that they may enter and participate as a result of their own energy and resources. The gathering space should be accessible to physically challenged persons. The church should offer more than one barrier-free option for seating to the physically challenged. The sanctuary should be barrier-free and completely accessible. Consideration should be given to accessibility for the entire church building and extended rooms.

Devotional art of **Mary** enriches the spiritual life of the community. A fine work of art can transform the community. As a result, the committee should work with a well trained liturgical artist to commission a fitting work for the parish. (BLS, #151 and #153) If the parish is in need of a work representing a patron saint or other saints, the liturgical consultant can assist the committee with the appropriate design and placement of addition devotional art. (See, BLS, #157, 159, and 160).

STEP TWO PROCEDURES

1. **CALL THE LITURGY OFFICE** when renovation involves a worship space or significant redecoration or renovation to the worship space, especially the sanctuary. Please call or email the Office of Liturgy and the Office of Finance of the diocese before entering into a contract and when a project is expected to exceed \$10,000.
2. **SELECT A PARISH BUILDING OR RENOVATION COMMITTEE** comprised of the pastor and other persons who best represent the

assembly's interests. This committee is accountable to the pastor and the parish pastoral and finance councils. The committee will select a chair and record keeper.

3. TEACH THE COMMITTEE HOW TO OPERATE WITH THE CONSENSUS MODEL The community's adoption of any plan for building or renovation is based on a consensus of the members of the building or renovation committee. (Decisions are not put up for a vote.) If such consensus is impossible, it falls to the pastor, in consultation with the parish pastoral and finance councils, to recommend how the project will proceed. The committee uses the consensus model of decision making.

4. THE PASTOR WITH THE COMMITTEE CHAIR SENDS A LETTER OF NOTIFICATION TO THE BISHOP BEFORE hiring a liturgical consultant and/or architect informing the bishop that the parish is considering either the building or renovation of its liturgical space.

5. INTERVIEW LITURGICAL CONSULTANTS AND CHOOSE one before considering the architect. The consultant will assist the committee through the following steps. The Liturgy Office has a list of recommended trained consultants.

6. The chairperson contacts the Liturgy for a LIST OF READING MATERIALS for the committee and the pastor to study as a group. The committee must know the content of the documents from the Bishops, *Built of Living Stones* and *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship* well. These contents help the committee know how to proceed with the project. The committee will **study these materials** so they can outline the values of the

Church the parish will use for liturgical worship spaces in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

7. The committee members **MEET WITH OTHER PARISH COMMITTEES TO EDUCATE** members of the contents of the above documents and this guideline: the parish pastoral council, parish standing committees and other established parish organizations. Share insights from the study of present and future needs of the community and inform parish committee members about the initial plans for the project.

8. The committee, with the help of the liturgical consultant, outlines a plan with a timeline to **INFORM AND EDUCATE THE ENTIRE PARISH** about the liturgical principles in *Built of Living Stones* and *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*. In these sessions with the assembly, the committee incorporates these principles in the discussion of the present and future needs of the worshiping community.

9. **CONTACT THE OFFICE OF LITURGY FOR A LIST OF RECOMMENDED ARCHITECTS** who are knowledgeable about the work of the documents of the Second Vatican Council: the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, and *Built of Living Stones*. The Liturgical Consultant can also assist the committee with this task.

10. The liturgical consultant helps the committee to **INVITE THREE ARCHITECTS TO INTERVIEW** for the project. The committee chooses an architect. That architect meets with the building or renovation committee to be informed about the perceived needs of the community and about its history, culture and traditions.

11. **ENGAGE THE ARCHITECT** to make a complete study of the building site or existing

structure, develop a proposal and present it to the committee.

12. After working with the liturgical consultant and architect, the committee **CONTACTS THE LITURGY OFFICE TO MAKE A PRESENTATION TO THE COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS AND THE BISHOP**. This presentation includes the parish master plan, vision or needs statement, a time line for the projected completion of the project and the financial arrangements whereby it will be funded. The office of liturgy will inform the appropriate diocesan bodies of the project.

13. The pastor, the renovating or building committee, finance committee, and the parish council initiate fund-raising efforts in the parish. For building a new church building, the diocese recommends that the committee engage the parish in a **FEASIBILITY STUDY** to research the potential of donors in the parish. This study helps the committee to know the actual financial capabilities the parish has for the project. Contact the Office of Stewardship for detailed information.

STEP THREE

BEFORE GROUND BREAKING

PRESENTATION TO THE PARISH: The committee oversees the parish's opportunity to reflect upon the proposal, respond to it, discuss it, pray about it, and arrive at a consensus. After consensus has been reached, the committee draws up a detailed written description of the project, including an estimate of its cost and the methods of financing it, which it presents to the parish pastoral and finance councils.

FINAL DRAWINGS: The architect, in collaboration with the liturgical consultant, completes final drawings.

SECOND PRESENTATION TO THE COLLEGE OF

CONSULTORS AND THE BISHOP: Representatives of the committee present the final drawings together with the written description of the project and the financing plan to the College of Consultors and the Bishop for approval.

CONTRACTORS: After the bishop and the diocesan bodies have approved the plan, contractors are requested to submit bids. In accord with the diocesan guidelines for parish finance councils, all acts of extraordinary importance, that is, acts of \$10,000 or more or requests for a loan, are to have the **proxies** of the bishop and vicar general. When the parish receives this required approval from the Bishop, contracts are awarded and construction begins. **Any contracts executed without proper diocesan authorizations and signatures will be considered civilly invalid.**

THIRD PRESENTATION TO THE COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS AND THE BISHOP: At this point, the final plan, copies of bids the community wishes to accept, a final estimate of the cost of the project, and a description of the plan for financing the project are submitted for final approval.

CONSIDERATIONS: Parishes follow state and federal laws regarding asbestos removal in worship space interiors (and for any public space) as the liturgical renovation process proceeds. As an act of justice, the design should include access for the handicapped to the ambo and choir/cantor areas.

STEP FOUR

GROUND-BREAKING

When the community is ready for ground-breaking, contact the Office of Liturgy for the appropriate **liturgical rite** to mark the ceremony. The pastor should arrange a calendar date with the Bishop to

celebrate the Rite of Dedication of a New Church in the parish.

The parish community, the planning committee, the liturgical consultant and architect, and the diocese are united in the process of building or renovating a "house for the Church" which stands as a witness to the worship of God and to the service of humankind.

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SEE the following documents:

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Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass, Pontificate of Paul VI, Vatican City, Rome, 1973. Pontificate of John Paul II, Vatican City, Rome, 2000.

CLARIFICATIONS AND TERMS

Parish assessment. Diocesan Policy is that each parish is assessed 6% on all parish income for Diocesan expenses. An exception of this policy is granted for money collected in a parish specifically for projects determined to be liturgical renovation or additions to the worship space, but only with the explicit approval of the bishop. Without this approval, the assessment formula remains the same.

An oratory is a church building which does not have parish status but may be used for weddings, funerals, private prayer and Masses on feast days proper to the oratory. Upkeep of an oratory which exceeds \$5000 requires diocesan approval.

Consensus is not a vote by the committee, parish pastoral council or parish at large. It is rather an affirmation by the parish of which decision or plan each member, representing the parish, can work with and live with. Consensus to an idea or plan means all members will support the idea or plan publically even though an individual may not necessarily agree totally with all parts.