

**Policies for Building/Renovating Worship Spaces
as related to
*Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship***

Archdiocese of Dubuque
January 15, 2003

Preface

1. *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship* serves as a basis for diocesan bishops to issue further guidelines and directives for their dioceses. Where the document quotes or reiterates norms from liturgical books and the *Code of Canon Law*, those prescriptions are binding on local communities and dioceses. (*Built of Living Stones*, #10)
2. In the Archdiocese of Dubuque the archbishop issues further guidelines and directives through consultation with the regional vicars, the Church Design and Renovation Commission, the Archdiocesan Building Commission and the Finance Commission.

**Chapter One
The Living Church**

3. 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. (BLS#46)

In the Archdiocese of Dubuque, the archbishop, as guardian of the liturgical life of the Church, determines the process and procedures for the building of new churches and major renovation projects. This is done in consultation with the regional vicars, the Church Design and Renovation Commission, the Archdiocesan Building Commission and the Finance Commission.

4. The Gospel requires that particular care be taken to welcome into the Church's assembly those often discarded by society — the socially and economically marginalized, the elderly, the sick, those with disabilities, and those with special needs. In building a church, every diocese and parish must wrestle with these and other complex questions raised by the Church's mission to evangelize contemporary cultures. (BLS #42)

In the Archdiocese of Dubuque faithful attention should be given to rural, Hispanic, and ecumenical cultures and environments that are part of our parish communities and local neighborhoods.

Chapter Two The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There

The Altar

5. Ordinarily altars should be fixed. (BLS #57) In the Archdiocese of Dubuque, altars which do not have a base affixed to the floor, must be constructed of materials which are substantial and weighty. An altar is a symbol of Christ and always expresses a sense of permanence. It should never be designed with wheels and/or castors. An altar should not appear to be movable.
6. The altar is “a place of sacrifice and the table around which Christ gathers the community to nourish them.” (BLS #58)
 - A. While designs of altars include a variety of shapes, excessively elongated designs are not appropriate.
 - B. The altar can be constructed of wood, stone, and other worthy solid materials. (BLS #57) Worthy materials do not include veneers, plastic laminates, acrylics, or paneling.
 - C. The proportion and design of the altar should be in harmony with the scale of the building and other major sanctuary furnishings.(BLS #58)
7. Relics of saints are only placed *beneath* an altar when of a sufficient size and undoubted authenticity. Relics are no longer placed on the altar or set into the mensa in an altar stone. New altars are never to be designed utilizing an altar stone. Altars that are being modified are to have altar stones removed. (BLS #60)
8. When it is impossible to remove an old altar (reredos and side altars) due to historical and structural factors in older churches, attempts should be made to lessen its prominence. This can be achieved by modifying its structure, attention to lighting, creating distance from the altar, and by removing unnecessary decoration. (BLS #245)

The Font

9. New church buildings and worship space will be designed with a baptismal font which allows for immersion of adults and infants. (BLS #69.1)
10. Renovated spaces should be designed with fonts which allow for the immersion of adults, but must provide for at least the immersion of infants in the celebration of baptism.

Procedures:
 1. In new construction, renovation or designing of new fonts, renovation committees should contact the Office of Worship for specifications in developing preliminary plans.
 2. Designs for all new fonts must be approved by the Church Design and Renovation Commission.
(Archdiocese of Dubuque Sacraments of Initiation Policy 14, June 1, 1999)
11. In new churches a room suitable for vesting for the newly baptized should be provided in close proximity to the font. (BLS #69.6)

The Reservation of the Eucharist

12. The purpose of reserving the Eucharist is for taking Holy Communion to the sick, for viaticum, and for adoration and private prayer of the faithful. (BLS #70)

There is to be “only one tabernacle in the church.” The tabernacle must be secure, solid, immovable, opaque and locked. (BLS #72)
13. In the Archdiocese of Dubuque, the tabernacle may be placed either in a separate chapel suitable for adoration and for the private prayer of the faithful or it may be placed in the sanctuary apart from the altar of celebration. (BLS #74)
14. Pastors and other parish leaders are to consider the liturgical advantages of both options for the placement of the tabernacle. This would include both reflecting upon the assembly’s ability to focus on the eucharistic action during Mass and respecting the customs and piety of the parishioners. Liturgical consultants can be of assistance to parishes in the study and discussion process. (BLS #76, #247)
15. The location of the tabernacle should allow for easy access by people in wheelchairs and by those who have other disabilities. (BLS #74)

The Chapel of Reservation

16. A separate chapel of reservation allows for reservation and adoration without interfering with liturgical celebrations and other activities of the parish which take place in the worship space. (BLS #78)
 - A. When reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is in a chapel separate from the nave and sanctuary, the chapel should be “integrally connected with the church” and “conspicuous to the faithful.” (BLS #77)
 - B. Placement and design of the chapel should foster reverence and quiet for personal prayer and should provide kneelers and chairs for those who come to pray.(BLS #77)
 - C. The chapel of reservation should be accessible from inside and outside of the church building. This allows the opportunity for prayer and adoration even when the church is locked.
 - D. This sacred space for the Blessed Sacrament should never to be used for any other purpose, i.e. as a storage area, rehearsal space, or cry room.

The Tabernacle in the Sanctuary

17. When the tabernacle is located in the sanctuary careful planning should insure that the attention of the faithful is not drawn away from the eucharistic celebration and its components (BLS #79). The tabernacle should not compete with the significance of the primary symbols for dominance in the sanctuary.

When the tabernacle is located behind the altar, there should ordinarily be a sufficient distance to separate the tabernacle and the altar. This can be achieved through lighting or some other architectural element that separates the area of reservation during Mass, but allows the tabernacle to be visible when the liturgy is not being celebrated.(BLS #80, #251)

Daily Mass Chapel

18. A daily Mass chapel, when incorporated in a master plan, should be designed to accommodate an adequate number of people for daily Mass.
19. A daily Mass chapel can be used for morning and evening prayer, weddings, and funeral vigils.
20. A daily Mass chapel should never be used for storage or a cry room.

Seating

21. In the Archdiocese of Dubuque, a combination of fixed and flexible seating may be used within the worship space to facilitate various liturgical rites. (BLS #87)
22. Parishes should offer seating for special needs throughout the assembly. Free space for persons in wheelchairs is also appropriate. (BLS #86)
23. Kneelers sufficient for the entire congregation should be provided in new constructions and renovations. (BLS #86)

Chapter Three The Work of Our Hands: Art and Artists Assisting the Church at Prayer

Sacred Vessels

24. Parishes and institutions in the Archdiocese of Dubuque are permitted to use glass or pottery vessels during the Eucharist, with special care given to avoid breakage. All vessels must be of the finest quality. (BLS #164 and 165)

Parish Treasures: Disposition of Works of Art

25. If, in your parish, there is an article of historic or artistic value which we would not want to have lost to the patrimony of the Archdiocese, please send a notice of that fact to the Archives Office so it can be recorded and kept on file. (BLS #167, #255)
26. Parishes that are clustering, merging, or closing should make items available for use in other parishes or missions.

“Prior to the sale of an oratory building, those items of a sacred nature are to be removed. If appropriate these items pass to the parent/supervising parish of the former oratory. If this is unwarranted, the Archdiocesan Office of Worship is to be consulted prior to sale or disposition of the sacred goods.”

Archdiocese of Dubuque, Oratory Guidelines, General Information, II-5, pg. 4.

27. Religious objects and works of art that are no longer used, particularly, chalices, ciboria, monstrances, and tabernacles because of their close relation to the Holy Eucharist, should not be sold or gifted to private or individual collectors without consulting first with the chancellor or the Office of Worship. Reverence for sacred things continues even after they are no longer useful in the liturgy.

28. Some religious objects and works of art are no longer useful, needed, or are worn out and beyond restoration. Parishes should contact the chancellor or the Office of Worship for assistance in determining how to dispose of these items. (BLS #166)

Chapter Four

Building a Church: Practical Considerations

Master Plan

29. In the Archdiocese of Dubuque, as a part of stewardship efforts, each parish is encouraged to have a Master Pastoral Plan for the current and future allocation and augmentation of its resources. The Master Pastoral Plan contains the statement of parish vision and priorities, a long-range plan for parish programs, buildings, and properties, and a brief outline for allocation of financial and personal resources. A general articulation and review of this Master Pastoral Plan, Site Plan and Facilities Plan, as well as preliminary and construction plans by local and archdiocesan leaders is called for prior to new construction or major renovation.
30. According to archdiocesan policies and the Sequence of Events, final plans are subject to the approval of the Church Design and Renovation Commission, the Building Commission, and the Finance Commission.

Office of Worship

31. The Office of Worship provides various Church documents, education and assessment materials and resource persons to assist parishes in new construction or renovation of worship spaces. The following materials and services are available through the Office of Worship:
- A. Church Documents
 - *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*
 - *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship*
 - Policies and procedures specific to the Archdiocese of Dubuque
 - Other liturgical documents important for various circumstances e.g. the *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar, Music in Catholic Worship*
 - B. Education and Assessment Materials
 - Checklist of considerations for building or renovating worship spaces
 - An assessment of the parish worship space
 - Texts and bulletin inserts for educating the building committee and the parish
 - Database of vendors, i.e. artists liturgical consultants, furnishings, lighting, sound/acoustics, vessels, vestments etc.
 - Information on how to select artists and purchase liturgical art
 - C. Resource Persons

The Office of Worship can arrange to provide archdiocesan resource persons who will provide a preliminary assessment of existing worship spaces, and assist with parish education.

Liturgical Consultants

32. In the Archdiocese of Dubuque, a parish engaging in the process of building a new worship space or a major renovation of an existing space should obtain the services of specialists in liturgical design in conjunction with other professionals, i.e. architect, contractor. Information is available from the Office of Worship on how to define the task and select a professional liturgical consultant. (BLS #177, #199-200)
33. Professional design consultants/artists should be hired to assist in determining the design of a new altar, ambo, baptismal font, tabernacle or other furnishings.
34. Anyone in a consultant role should be compensated accordingly for their service and travel expenses. It is recommended that the parish determine the scope of the consultant's level of involvement and appropriate compensation. An agreement should be signed by both parties.
35. Consultants must be familiar with and follow archdiocesan policies and directives.

Project Conclusion and Evaluation

36. Parishes concluding projects will be asked by the archdiocese to identify and evaluate contractors, architects, and sub-contractors in terms of competence, working methods, craftsmanship, completion practices, and fiscal responsibility. (BLS #201)
37. Information from the archdiocese is available to assist parishes in bid-letting and selecting contractors. (BLS #201)

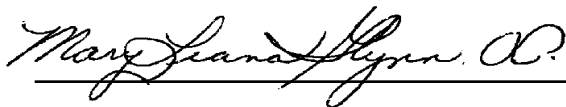
Accessibility

38. All plans for new construction and major renovations must accommodate access for persons with disabilities not only in the sanctuary but to all areas of the worship space. (BLS #211)

Promulgated by Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B., on this 15 day of January, 2003.



Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B.
Archbishop of Dubuque



Attest: Sr. Liana Glynn, O.P., J.C.L.
Chancellor