

Worship Space



An Annotated Bibliography

by
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for the
Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

SAMPLE

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Artwork by Rod Teissere Stephens.

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Foreword

This publication intends to be an aid to parish and religious communities contemplating the renovation or new building of a worship space. It is an annotated bibliography of printed material. To make it more useful, the citations are organized following one possible model of process that a community might observe. There are certainly other models which may better suit a particular community. The order is developed chronologically starting with issues concerning a master plan of the entire complex through the dedication of the worship space and its appropriation by the community. Although this bibliography cites material specific to Roman Catholic Liturgy, the recent ecumenical convergence of liturgical practice among Christian denominations allows this work to be useful to a wider audience.

Thirty years after the reforms of the liturgy in the Roman Catholic church, there is much to learn from the mixed successes in worship spaces that have been built. The articles and books catalogued here include critiques of these first years after the reforms as well as cautionary tales about projects that might have followed a different course. Very few communities will need to address these concerns more than once in a generation, and there is much to consider carefully if the result is a worthy building which serves the worshipping community. Such a building has a profound and formative effect on the people who use it. Properly designed, the worship space will be a hospitable and inspiring home for the community; a house for the people of God who act in blessing, sharing, breaking, joining, mourning, proclaiming, witnessing, welcoming, gathering and sending forth.

The process that a community follows will be a product in itself; there are opportunities for 1) the study of the liturgy, 2) a reflection on the community's present worship life and 3) a worthwhile exploration of the community's self-identity as the Body of Christ. Even if the building of a worship space is delayed, the process may help the parish or religious community address the fundamental issues. A beautiful building, hastily built with little community involvement is not worth a fractured and angry community. The more difficult building is often at the level of human connections.

N.B. The FDLC wishes to maintain this bibliography as a complete and up-to-date resource and welcomes suggestions from readers of other resources for inclusion in future editions.

I. Master Plan

More and more communities begin the process of a new worship space with an overall master plan that follows from a mission statement. Seemingly unrelated concerns will come into clearer focus when the priorities of the parish are laid on the table. A master plan helps in cost containment by avoiding future duplication of efforts and costly revisions. It is a sign of responsible stewardship and is a more honest way to begin.

Brockman, Marilyn. "Planning for Church Preservation and Renovation." *Faith and Form*. Vol. 24 No. 3 (Fall 1990) 16–19.

Brockman outlines the essential ingredients in a careful renovation process. She emphasizes the need for a Master Plan from which program, design and budget follow. Three case studies illustrate her ideas.

Buscemi, John. "Stone, Glass and Wood: There's an Art to Making a Church Holy." *US Catholic* (Interview) Vol. 57 No. 12 (December 1992) 6–13.

In question and answer format, Buscemi responds to many of the most practical and controversial questions regarding the reform of Roman Catholic worship spaces. He urges all involved in the process to listen openly, and study carefully the full history of Christian worship. Practical questions include: the placement of the altar, font and tabernacle; the use of kneelers; the longing for a sense of the sacred; and the value of commissioned art.

Seasoltz, R. Kevin. "Living Stones Built on Christ." *Worship*. Vol. 57 No. 2 (March 1983) 98–122.

Seasoltz examines three carefully conceived renovation projects whose original ante-bellum churches now serve the needs of their twentieth century communities and a reformed liturgy. He not only describes the finished products, which are successful on many levels, but also the painful processes which were required to bring them about. He likens the anxiety inherent in projects such as these to the pains of life when people move into an uncertain future in so many other aspects of living. It is a dying and rising with Christ that makes these communities living stones and in the end the most important building.

Thiesen, Jerome. "Images of the Church and the Eucharist." *Worship*. Vol. 58 No. 2 (March 1984) 118–129.

The images Thiesen speaks of are not the visual images depicted by artists. He argues that we cannot understand the eucharist without first exploring what the church understands itself to be, the church's self-image. A community about to embark on the difficult process that culminates in a new worship space must answer the questions that Thiesen poses here. His conclusions could be the source of inspiration for artists who wish to render in poetic or visual form an ecclesiology that regards the church as the community gathered around the table of the Lord.

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