

Introduction

- As houses of God, church buildings are meant to represent the heavenly kingdom; they should lift our minds and hearts to heavenly realities – leading us to meditate on our Lord.
- Thus, church buildings should be marked by a certain sense of grandeur, and they should be built with an eye toward beauty, symmetry, proportion, and a verticality that draws us upward.
- *A church building should in some way make present the mysteries of our faith.*
- Much of our church architecture finds its roots in the architecture of the Jewish Temple. The Holy of Holies, which is represented in Catholic architecture by our sanctuary, is the most important part of the Temple. The various transitions that we find as we move from the profane to this most sacred part of the church are reminiscent of the various precincts found within the Jewish Temple that also built this hierarchy of spaces.
- Moreover, the particular sections or portions of churches should be built with a certain hierarchy, climaxing with the sanctuary [NB: the sanctuary, properly defined, is only the area around the altar that contains the pulpit, tabernacle, and presider's chair – and does not include the nave (where the pews are)].
- The finishes and materials used in each section of the church should reflect their relative importance as compared to the sanctuary. Thus, the richest finishes in the church are in the sanctuary.
- Moreover, Catholic churches are not meant to be innovative, but should draw upon the architectural history and

tradition of our faith. Thus, many Catholic churches incorporate architectural elements that were incorporated in the principal churches of our Faith (major basilicas in Rome, etc.), or in the Jewish Temple.

Outside

- Fountain (yet to be purchased): This is a reminder of our baptism; originally baptisteries were located outside the main doors of the church as baptism symbolizes our entrance into the Church. As a more practical matter, fountains were used by pilgrims to cleanse their hands and feet prior to entering the house of God.
- Statue niches: will be for St. Peter and St. Paul, the “Princes of the Apostles”
- Plaza area outside: 1st transitional space: where we begin our journey toward Heaven. Historically, the plazas outside of civic buildings have served as public gathering places.
- 3 arches: common for Catholic churches; represents Constantine's Arch in Rome, which was built as a symbol of victory. In Catholic churches, arches like this represent the victory of Jesus over sin and death; they also symbolize hands clasped in prayer. Just as armies of old marched underneath these arches to symbolize their victory over a foe, so too do we now enter the church through the arches in order to proclaim Christ's victory over sin and death.
- Porch: This semi-public space marks the first formal transition from the public plaza and the profane world into the private space and the heavenly world of the building.

- Doors: Massive and made of fine materials to illustrate the importance of the place. The doors are solid to protect the contents inside and opaque to maintain the mystery of the pilgrim's journey to the sanctuary.

Narthex/Cry Rooms

- Another transitional space from the profane. Notice the use of nice terrazzo tile to underscore the importance of this space. This room is meant to help us ready ourselves. The nice fixtures and finishes remind us that we're moving toward the heavenly realities.
- Green walls: the color of life and another symbol of the triumph of life over death (just as the green of spring triumphs over winter).
- Arches are again used here to remind us of Christ's victory and to draw our minds to prayer.
- Statues of St. Ann and St. Joseph will eventually move to the chapel.
- We have an image of the Divine Mercy to remind us once again of the great mercy of God that is to be found in His presence.
- Cry Rooms: Spaces set aside for those with crying children.

Nave

- This is the central area of the church where worshippers are seated. It's another transition from the profane to the heavenly reality, so again the finishes here are of good quality [e.g., terrazzo floor (original to the church), solid oak pews, etc.]
- The central aisle represents a Christian's journey through life toward God. Notice,

as well, the use of arches again in the stained glass windows and niches that will eventually contain statues of various saints.

- The Baptismal font is the first feature. It's located near the door of the church (and near the central aisle) because it is the sacrament that opens the Church to us. It is through baptism that we become members of the Church, which is Christ's Body, and thereby begin our journey toward God. It is 8-sided as a reminder that baptism makes us a new creation and prepares us for eternity (Our Lord created the world in 7 days, and the 8th day of creation is eternity). 8-sided fonts are also a connection to the fact that Jews circumcised their sons on the 8th day, marking the formation of a covenant with the Lord.
- The Baptismal font is made of the same marble as the altar to highlight the connection between these two sacraments. Both of them along, with Confirmation, are sacraments of initiation. And we can only participate at the altar once we have been baptized.
- Confessionals are near the back of the nave, too, reminding us that we must reconcile with God and one another before approaching the altar. The confessionals are painted gray because gray is the color of ashes and symbolizes the death of the body, repentance and humility.
- Statues of St. Jude (Patron Saint of Lost Causes) & St. Therese (Patroness of Missions)
- Paintings in the Confessionals are Rembrandt's *Prodigal Son* and Bouguereau's *Pieta*

- Holy Water stoups remind us of our baptism as we enter the church. We mark ourselves with the sign of the cross knowing that it is through the cross that we are saved.
- Pews are relatively new in church history, only coming after the Protestant revolution. It used to be that people would stand or sit near columns. Pews were installed when Protestants began emphasizing the importance of sermons, and were meant to help people rest so they could concentrate.
- The nave is flanked by columns, which draw us upward but also draw our eyes forward toward the altar. In Catholic tradition they often represent the saints, most especially the apostles, who are the foundation upon which the Church is built. There are 3 main types of Greek columns: Doric (most simple), Ionic (scrolled), and Corinthian (most ornate; often used in churches dedicated to Mary). Our nave columns are Doric, symbolizing strength.
- Ceiling is coffered and painted blue to symbolize the sky. Because our church is dedicated to St. Ann, the Mother of Mary, our parish has a Marian character. Blue is the color associated with our Lady; it also symbolizes heavenly love. Blue ceilings in the south are often thought to drive away evil spirits (and mosquitoes).
- The walls are painted gold and white. Both of these colors represent purity and innocence, and as such they are a reminder of our call to strive to be pure of heart.

Stained Glass

- Our windows were created by the Emil Frei Co. and originally installed in Holy Rosary Slovak Catholic Church in Ashley, PA. That church closed in 2007, and we purchased them. They represent various saints and moments in the life of Jesus and Mary. It is believed that they were created in St. Louis.
- Stained glass has a couple of purposes. In addition to providing beauty, they refract and change sunlight entering into the church, giving it more of a celestial feel. Stained glass has also been used to teach the mysteries of the faith, sort of a “catechism by art.” In times when many people were illiterate, churches used their stained glass windows as a way to teach them about the Faith.
- Stained glass also drowns out the outside world so that worshippers can better focus on the things of Heaven!
- From the back of the nave on the left side of the church, and going clockwise around, the windows are:
 - Holy Rosary (Jesus seated on Mary’s lap; they are handing the rosary to St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena).
 - The Annunciation (Archangel Gabriel appearing to Mary to tell her she will become the Mother of God).
 - St. Cyril and St. Methodius (dedicated to all the immigrants that have come to St. Ann’s over the years, as Cyril and Methodius both left home to spread the Gospel).
 - Mother of Sorrows (dedicated to the victims of abortion)

- Resurrection
- Ecce Homo (“Behold the man” – the Latin words used by Pontius Pilate to present Jesus, crowned with thorns, to the angry mob after He had been scourged.)
- The Holy Family in Nazareth
- The Birth of Jesus
- St. Ann and Mary (as a little girl)
- Suffer Not the Children
- The Apparition of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, revealing His Sacred Heart.
- St. Mary Magdalene embracing the Crucifix with St. Vincent de Paul in the background
- St. Ann
- The Assumption of Mary
- St. Andrew
- St. Joseph
- The Baptism of Jesus
- St. Martha and St. Mary with Jesus

Choir Loft

- Choirs have traditionally sung in choir lofts in order to maximize a church's natural acoustics. In recent years some choirs have moved into the sanctuary of the Church, but the sanctuary is really meant to be reserved for the ministers, i.e., bishop, priest, deacon, altar servers and lectors. Moreover, having the choir in the loft cuts down on the amount of distraction they might cause the congregation, and having them in the loft also helps to create a heavenly effect with liturgical music, as if it is being sung by angels.

- The round stained glass window in the choir loft is of St. Cecilia, the patroness of music.

Sanctuary

- This is the “Holy of Holies,” the most sacred and important place of the entire church, for it is here that the sacrifice of the Mass takes place, and it is here that our Lord dwells in the tabernacle.
- In the Jewish temple, the Holy of Holies was set off by a massive veil. That veil was a 60 foot tall, 4 inch thick piece of material that hung as a barrier between the Holy of Holies, which was the dwelling place of God, and the rest of the Temple, the place where man dwelt. It was made in such a way that two horses tied on either end of it and running in opposite directions could not pull it apart. The veil was meant not only to demarcate the holiest place of the Temple, but also, in a sense, to symbolically demonstrate the utter separateness between God and man – that sinful man was unfit for the presence of God. Thus the veil was the symbol of man’s separation from God because of sin. And only the high priest was permitted to pass beyond the temple veil on behalf of all Jews in order to make atonement for their sins – and this only once a year.
- We don’t set off the sanctuary, our “Holy of Holies” with a veil, but we do demarcate it from the nave. This is done here by steps, a change of materials, and the altar rail.
- The altar rail is the Catholic representation of the veil that separated the profane world from the Holy of

Holies in the Jewish Temple. The altar rail not only demarcates the area of the sanctuary, but it also reminds us very clearly that sanctuary, because it is the very dwelling place of God, is not a place that we should feel free to enter. We should only enter it if we have reason to do so.

- The marble in the sanctuary is Jerusalem Marble.
- The central aspect of the sanctuary is the altar. The altar is constructed of Vermont marble, the same marble used throughout the Supreme Court Building in Washington. The altar mosaic also includes a field of blue with stars to remind us of both heaven and indirectly, our Lady and shows a cross, overlaid with an alpha and omega symbol and a Eucharistic Host. The five wounds of Christ are also be represented.
- The pulpit's size at nearly 8 feet in length and beautiful design is meant to convey the great reverence we have for the word of God. Its "commanding" or authoritative presence reminds us that we are to be commanded by the word of God.
- Altars carry many symbolic meanings, and as they are the heart of any Catholic church, it is important that they be well constructed and of the finest materials. In the first place, the altar is an altar of sacrifice. In Jesus' day the Jews performed animal sacrifice as a means of atoning for sin. In our Catholic tradition we know that Jesus became the paschal lamb, perfect and without blemish, who became the victim for our sins. It is upon the altar that the sacrifice of the Mass occurs. The altar is also the table for a communal

meal, remembering and repeating the Last Supper. Our altar has been constructed so that it is representative of an altar of sacrifice, a meal table, as well as a tomb.

- Catholic altars historically have had relics of saints placed within them. Our altar will contain relics of Pope St. Pius X (who was especially devoted to the Eucharist) and St. Rita of Cascia (known as the Patroness of the Impossible).
- Our pulpit was originally constructed in England in the mid-1700s. It is solid oak and is hand-carved with an arch motif that is reminiscent of the other archways in the church building. It stands 81" tall.
- The rounded apse in the back of the sanctuary, traditionally speaking, symbolizes an opening in the Kingdom of God. In churches apses are richly decorated with scenes of Heaven, or depictions of our Lord reigning in splendor. In ancient times, large church buildings were modeled after a type of Roman public building that had such a wall. We hope to install a work of art in the archways of the apse in the future. Our arches are set off by ionic columns (as a symbol of feminine grace and beauty).
- Situated in the middle of the apse is the crucifix, which is directly above the place where the tabernacle will be. The crucifix was purchased by Msgr. Allen in Oberramergau, Germany, the site of the Passion Play that is held every 10 years. The tabernacle is the original tabernacle for the parish.

Priest Sacristy

- The hallway from the sanctuary to the priest sacristy preserves the original brick

walls of the building. The floor is covered with wood planks from an oak tree that had to cut down during the renovation. The stairs leading to the mechanical rooms will eventually be re-covered with terrazzo tile.

- The priest's sacristy is the place where the priest prayerfully prepares himself for Mass. While this is the place where he puts on his vestments, it serves very much like a chapel. It has the same terrazzo floor as the nave, underscoring the importance of this room. The cabinets and the coffers in the ceiling are made out of cherry wood. The coffered ceiling associates this room with the coffered ceiling of the nave, reminding us that this room is primarily a place of prayer.
- However, a darker blue paint has been used on the ceiling to match the color of the ceiling in the confessionals. Moreover, the walls of the sacristy are the same gray color as the confessionals to remind the priest preparing for Mass that he must seek to be truly contrite for his sins and ask for the Lord's mercy before going to the altar.
- The brass crucifix standing on the vestment table is 18th c. French baroque. The large painting on the wall is of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Ann's Parish was founded on the Solemnity of Our Lady of the Assumption (August 15) in 1955.

Other Sacristies

- The long hall-like room is the sacristy for the altar servers. It also has the same terrazzo floor and gray walls, marking this room as a place for humble preparation

for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The vestments and books used for Mass are found in this room.

- The final sacristy is the working sacristy. This is where the vessels and other items needed for Mass are prepared and stored. As this is strictly a workspace, the floor is a simple tile rather than terrazzo.

Other Interesting Facts

Previous Capacity: 483

Current Seating (with Cry Rooms): 570

Original Ceiling Height: 12 ft

Current Ceiling Height: 27 ft

