

Blessed Sacrament Chapel

IN THIS PLACE we remember the dying and nourish them for the journey home with Holy Viaticum, the Body and Blood of Christ. Here we pray for the sick and from the Lord's Table we carry to them his body and blood, that Christ's healing love may embrace them in the holy communion of love. Here we reverence Christ's presence among us in the bread and wine which comes from heaven—food and drink for the People of God. THIS IS A PLACE OF QUIET PRAYER, a testament to our faith, and the faith of the whole Church, in the enduring presence of the risen Christ in the bread and wine of the Eucharistic celebration.



St. Stephan, Omaha, Nebraska



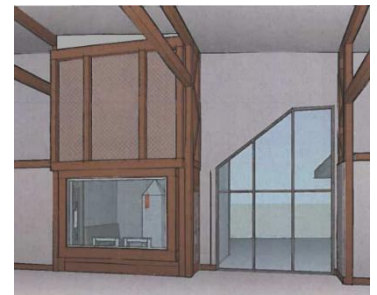
Saint Mary, Helena, Montana



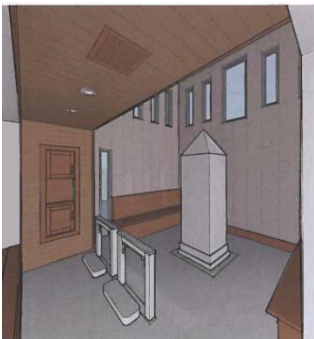
Saint Henry, Nashville, Tennessee

As we prepare to begin **PHASE ONE** of our **renovation project**, the first step will be construction of a new **CHAPEL FOR THE BLESSED SACRAMENT CHAPEL**, to be located in the worship space, on the west wall next to the windows (opposite the organ location.) Construction will begin soon.

Reservation of the Eucharist



We believe deep in our Catholic heart and spirit that Christ is really present in the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist. A presence we believe, feel, and honor. A special chapel for the



reservation of the Eucharist has been integral to the Blessed Trinity House for the Church, since the beginning of both Pope John XXIII parish and Holy Family Parish. This has been our custom (for over 50 years!), in accord with the Tradition and official teaching of the Church. As we began to discern the needs of our building and worship space, we came to realize that the current location of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel is not central or even noticeable. As a result, we had determined to construct a new chapel in the main worship space, so its location would be clearly noted and accessible for quiet prayer and meditation. *Note rendering above right.* The interior of the Chapel, *as shown in rendering to the left*, will house the tabernacle in the center, likely to be a tower tabernacle, with benches and places for prayer. The ceiling will be high with windows for light. Ideally the windows would eventually be art glass. The interior of the chapel will be visible from the main worship space.

For the last 30 years, Catholics have grown accustomed to hearing much more of the Word of God proclaimed than they had for centuries. Until the reforms of the recent past, Roman Catholic liturgy had focused on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, while Protestant liturgies placed more emphasis on the Word of God and its interpretation. The most obvious architectural symbol of the contrast between these two poles was the central and unmistakable presence of a tabernacle in most Roman Catholic worship spaces. For many, its very presence within the sanctuary was a statement of the particular and defining belief of the Catholic Church.

The Second Vatican Council emphasized the belief

of the Church that Christ is present in a number of ways when we gather for worship. While the central teaching of the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species remains unchanged, we are also taught to recognize Christ in the proclamation of the Word, in the person of the presiding priest, and, in the very assembly of believers.

Another recovery that has enriched our liturgical life is the understanding of the Eucharist as an act. The word Eucharist comes from the Greek, meaning "a giving thanks." It is in the very act of taking, blessing, breaking and sharing that is the heart of Jesus' command to "Do this in memory of me." This fuller understanding of the liturgy urges us to unite ourselves with the Christ in a perfect offering to God. The restoration of more frequent reception of communion that has occurred in the last century is

yet another return to a much earlier tradition, when all who were present would partake of the meal.

History of Eucharistic Reservation In the early church, when believers were unable to join their brothers and sisters in the Eucharist because of sickness, a portion of eucharistic bread was taken from the celebration to their homes so they could be united with the community in their thanksgiving. It gradually became the custom to store a small amount of the remaining Eucharist for those expected to die. This became known as *viaticum*—food for their journey. The place where the Eucharist was stored gradually gained in prominence from simple cupboards in rooms outside the main worship space to more prominent, even elaborate tabernacles. By the 17th century the tabernacle was commonly found on the central altar. The exceptions were found in cathedrals and basilicas, where tabernacles have often been placed on side altars or in separate chapels.

In recent years, in order to emphasize the importance of the action of the whole assembly gathered around the altar and the presiding priest, the tabernacle has been removed from the altar table. The discipline of the Church requires that the tabernacle be truly prominent in our worship spaces, but never in such a way that it obscures the focus of the principal activity of the celebration of the Eucharist. In some churches, it is located in a separate chapel designed for prayer, meditation and adoration. It may also be set in the main worship space but at some distance or separation from the altar.

Today the reservation of the Eucharist in the tabernacle still serves the needs of the ministry to the sick and dying and other situations when Communion is given outside Mass. It is also the place for the adoration of Christ in the reserved Eucharistic bread. *It is not to be seen as a storage of consecrated bread for future Masses, except in the case of unexpected numbers of communicants.*



Excerpts from Built of Living Stones

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The reservation of the Eucharist was originally intended for the communion of the sick, for those unable to attend the Sunday celebration, and as *Viaticum* for the dying. (CIC) As the appreciation of Christ's presence in the eucharistic species became more developed, Christians desired through prayer to show reverence for Christ's continuing presence in their midst. [70]

The *Code of Canon Law* directs that the Eucharist be reserved in a part of the church that is "distinguished, 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. [72]

There are a number of possible spaces suitable for eucharistic reservation. The revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal states that it is more appropriate that the tabernacle in which the "Blessed Sacrament is reserved not be on the altar on which Mass is celebrated." The bishop is to determine where the tabernacle will be placed and to give further direction. The bishop may decide that the tabernacle be placed in the sanctuary apart from the altar of celebration or in a separate chapel suitable for adoration and for the private prayer of the faithful. In making his determination, the bishop will consider the importance of the assembly's ability to focus on the eucharistic action, the piety of the people, and the custom of the area. The location also should allow for easy access by people in wheelchairs and by those who have other disabilities. [74]

Environment for Catholic Worship: Part 5 of 12, Page 2
Author/Thomas V. Stehle, Liturgical Design Consultant ©2003 FDLC 415
Michigan Avenue, NE, Suite 70, Washington, DC 20017. Phone: 202.635.6990;
web: www.fdlc.org; email: publications@fdlc.org
Built of Living Stones © 2000, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.