

PASTOR'S COLUMN

“The Assembly of Believers and Our Worship Space”

We presently worship in a multi-purpose room that allows for our Sunday Worship and many other community activities during the course of the week.

We do not worship in a gym. We worship in a space that eventually will become the gym for our parish and its school. The way in which we perceive this is important.

First and foremost is the attitude that we bring into the space. Secondly, there are things that we can do that “speak” a sense of sacred space.

As we arrive on the weekend for our Eucharistic Celebrations, we need to be mindful that we come into “sacred space.” We enter an area in which, through our ritual actions, we encounter our God and deepen our relationship with God in and through Jesus the Christ.

These sacred mysteries can become central in our consciousness through a number of community actions that we “do” as the Assembly of Believers.

The Church of St. Thomas More has a great sense of hospitality. We truly care about one another. This is evident as people gather in the Worship Space and interact with each other before the Eucharistic Celebration begins. But there comes a time before Mass, when the conversation should cease and quiet begins, in order for us to prepare to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries. We need to find a balance in terms of hospitality and readiness to celebrate the Eucharist.

In order to better achieve this, we will be moving the Announcements, which have been given by the Reader before Mass begins, to after the Communion Prayer and before the Final blessing. This placement of the Announcements is in keeping with the directions found in the newly revised and approved “General Instruction for the Roman Missal.”

The Announcements are an important part of the Dismissal Rite of the Mass. As the Celebrant sends us forth to “love and serve the Lord,” these announcements give us concrete ways in which we can serve the Lord in the midst of our community.

The Announcements are not “extraneous” to the Mass. Indeed, they are a part of our Worship that sends us forth to live the Faith in the course of the coming week.

Also, many of the Announcements, if they are to be given, will be given by people in the organization or event that is being announced. “Announcement Guidelines” are included in this weekend’s bulletin on page 6.

Before Mass, people are encouraged to converse with one another as we have in the past. But a few minutes before Mass begins, the Reader calls the Assembly to silence in preparation to begin the liturgy. If there is a musical prelude, it then begins. After the prelude, the Assembly is invited to stand and to sing the Opening Hymn. If there is no prelude, after a few moments of silence, the Assembly is invited to stand and sing the Opening Hymn.

This practice will begin next weekend, February 7/8. I ask everyone’s cooperation.

One other thought in this matter. In order to continue to cultivate a sense of sacred space, I would encourage everyone, as you enter our Worship Space, and before you take your seat, to reverence the altar with a deliberate and graceful bow. This reminds us that we gather together around the Lord’s Table on which the sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ takes place, and on which the Lord becomes present to us under the forms of bread and wine.

There are a number of other liturgical practices that will be addressed in the future. This catechesis will take place on the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, June 12/13. This Feast provides the proper context in which to talk about the Mass and liturgical practices.

F. Mike