

CHURCH OF ST THOMAS MORE
Interior Design Team Meeting
Discussion of Tabernacle, Artists
February 14, 2012

Present: Robert Habiger, Liturgical Consultant; Kathy Arciero, Charlene Buhlert, Diana Diaz, Mario Diaz, Lorraine Doering, Ann Eriksson, Pat Goscienski, Phil Goscienski, Sondra Parks, Chris Smith, Kathleen Quinn.

Absent: Father Mike Ratajczak, Mary Castle, Douglas Lynn

The meeting opened with Prayer of Dedication at 7:05 PM. Phil Goscienski asked if there were any remarks/changes to the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes have been posted on the parish website; no further remarks were noted. He then asked for our impressions and opinions regarding the presentation given to us by Elizabeth Deveraux at our last meeting. He asked if we wish to interview other artists and told us that Bob Wong had recommended Brian Canfield (beraglas.com) as a possible stained glass artist. Kathy Quinn said she believes he made the stained glass doors for the tabernacle in our chapel. We were asked to go to his website for further information.

In discussing the work of Elizabeth Deveraux we remarked that she does only windows; she does not work in cast glass. For that we may approach Patrick Blythe for the Stations of the Cross or other artwork. Pat Goscienski suggested we look again at the glass artist Claire Wing who received seven votes from our members while Elizabeth Deveraux received eight votes. We need to see Claire Wing's portfolio. Robert Habiger said he worked with Claire Wing before. She also does carved glass – a difficult task; she has unique talent. Robert Habiger told us the two artists, Wing and Deveraux, have different approaches to the work. He cautioned us to not to expect to tell the artists about the ideas of other artists that we especially like, rather let them come up with their own ideas.

Sondra Parks remarked that these artists live a long distance from us. How do they transport the large glass pieces they create in their studios? Robert Habiger admitted he does not know exactly how it is done; the artists hire a special crew to haul the glass and install it under supervision of the artist and in cooperation with the architect. We must choose someone now so they can work with the drawings which may need some changes. Pat Goscienski asked for more information about carved glass; where would it be used? Robert Habiger said it could be in the Mary shrine or for the St. Thomas More shrine. He reminded us that Elizabeth Deveraux works only in stained glass, not carved glass.

Pat Goscienski said we should look at the websites of Claire Wing and Brian Canfield to see if we want to pursue them further; we need to do research before we choose. Robert Habiger noted there are new techniques like fused glass for windows that don't use leaded canes. Pat Goscienski said we need to request Claire Wing's portfolio and add Brian to the mix. Also,

where is the shrine for St. Thomas More and will it be made of glass or wood? We must choose the artist now as it will affect the architectural plans.

Robert Habiger told us that as a committee, we need to know the “drop dead” dates for some of these decisions as Renzo needs to know our decisions. We must choose the glass artist now and then Renzo can submit drawings to both committees: ours and the New Construction Committee. Phil Goscienski said we should have decisions ready in the month of March and we know that contract changes can be expensive. Discussion on the Reservation Chapel does not come up before May. Robert Habiger said that is OK; furnishings and appointments can wait.

Robert Habiger remarked that we should not make decisions based on cost as all artists will work within our budget. He told us that we may want to use the glass artist Patrick Blythe for the Stations of the Cross. Blythe does cast glass.

Robert Habiger told us he wants to get a sense from us on what we prefer for the tabernacle. He showed us slides of various designs that are now in place. He told us the emphasis should be on the Eucharist, not on the decorations. He showed us designs that place the tabernacle in a niche; others are free standing. His preference is for a free standing tower. We need to keep in mind the capacity of the tabernacle; how many ciborium (ciboria) will it hold. Is there a shelf where the ciborium can be placed while the tabernacle door is being unlocked and opened? Other considerations for the Reservation Chapel: candles that can be lit by visitors, artwork, a worthy stand for the monstrance that may double as a floral display table.

The committee voted and decided on a free-standing tabernacle.

We discussed the special ritual on Holy Thursday for a place of repose for the Eucharist. We will not usually have more than 50 hosts set aside. For the First Friday exhibition, one host in the monstrance will be seen. We discussed how our present tabernacle has outer and inner doors. The inner door has an “oculus” in place which holds a host when needed. The monstrance we have now is used for special rituals for youth groups, retreats and novenas. We expressed our opinion that the present monstrance should be used in the new sanctuary and chapel.

In further discussion of the tabernacle, we talked about materials. Kathy Arciero mentioned that she liked Stephen Hirt’s design. We talked about using him to design the ambo, altar, font and tabernacle from bronze, wood and stone. We agreed that he is a good designer. We talked about the colors of the walls in the chapel. Renzo has incorporated white or neutral tones and wood. Robert Habiger said he is thinking of a dark stone and told us that Stephen Hirt prefers to use a stone called “olivine” – a dark blue/green stone. He showed us samples of the stone and told us it appears to change from dark blue to green to blue according to the light in which it is placed.

Mario Diaz asked if the Reservation Chapel design is complete. We were told that Renzo has left space in the design for the tabernacle. In addition the chairs will be movable. We talked about having a different chair design for the two chapels and decided that the same design would be

best as it gives us more options for placing the chairs. We expressed our need to see the three dimensions of the design. We are not clear on the height of the walls or from where the natural light will appear. This is the unknown element for the Mary shrine as well.

In further discussion of the tabernacle, Robert Habiger told us that a free standing tabernacle will not usually be more than 42 inches high or not usually taller than the average person. The sanctuary lamp will be placed in the corner to be seen from the sanctuary. We should place the tabernacle against the wall. He told us that Renzo is thinking of “cascading” light. There is an issue to be determined and that is if and where candles will be placed in the Reservation Chapel.

In discussing details of the tabernacle, Mario Diaz asked if we can incorporate glass and we were told it can be used as a design element. How can we communicate the sense of what we want to the artist? Items to consider: verticality; locking mechanism; tabernacle and the base to be all one unit.

Further discussion of using Stephen Hirt as the artist for all four units: tabernacle, ambo, altar and font. Phil Goscienski told us we need to set the process in motion and we all agreed this is the time to do so. Stephen Hirt may be in town in mid-March when he will be meeting a shipment of stone coming from China into the Port of Los Angeles. He will then take the stone to Washington State for sculpture and processing. We wish to begin contract negotiations with Stephen Hirt now.

At our next meeting we will discuss the sense of “nobleness” and “beauty” that we envision.

Charlene Buhlert brought up the subject of how the interior walls in the sanctuary are to appear. She is concerned that they may appear like the exterior walls on our present building. Robert Habiger told us this is a subject for the New Construction Committee to address. Brian Leahy is aware that we do not want the walls to appear “raw”. We will address this issue in cooperation with the New Construction Committee.

Robert Habiger told us he will be away on March 13 when we have a meeting scheduled so he will not be with us. This is when we plan to discuss the large crucifix. Kathy Arciero asked if we should have Stephen Hirt do the design of the crucifix. Robert Habiger advised us to use a different artist for that task. The larger question is will we have one cross or three crosses? Or will we have a scene of Calvary? Robert Habiger suggests we ask three different artists before we choose one. He does not recommend a painting as it would suggest a museum piece. Phil Goscienski asked if we could incorporate only a shadow of a cross. It could be done; it needs further discussion.

The meeting closed at 9:20 PM with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Quinn