

CHURCH OF ST THOMAS MORE
INTERIOR DESIGN TEAM
Minutes of the Meeting of May 12, 2009

Present: Father Michael Ratajczak, Robert Habiger, Phil Goscienski, Pat Goscienski, Douglas Lynn, Sondra Parks, Charlene Buhlert, Lorraine Doering, Anne Ericksson, Kathleen Quinn

Excused: Mario Diaz, Diana Diaz, Chris Smith, Mary Lou Castle

The meeting opened with the Prayer of Dedication at 7:05 PM. Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

The document under review and discussion is Robert Habiger's Liturgical Program, DRAFT Version 4, December 30, 2008, Project Number: 08-0017:001.

The discussion began where we left off at the last meeting as we addressed the items on Page 33: processional cross and wedding kneelers.

We discussed the matter of having the corpus on the permanent backdrop and we agreed that this is a requirement. We can have the corpus on the processional cross as well or not. We agreed that the items regarding the cross under Program Considerations are now Program Requirements.

Further on Page 33, we discussed wedding kneelers. We prefer to have four separate kneelers rather than two, each of the four accommodating one person. We recalled the design of the kneelers at St. Vincent Church in San Diego. That design is an option, no decision was reached.

A new ossuary will be designed and constructed. Two tables will be made to hold the ossuary, one for the entry and the second for the altar area.

On Page 34 we discussed the matter of repose for the Book of the Gospels. While we do not presently have a ceremonial moving of the book from the ambo to the place of repose, we may want to incorporate such a ceremony in the new church. As outlined under Program Considerations we could have a wall niche or a separate table/stand for the book. This space could be used for the Book of the Dead during November or the Book of the Elect during the Lenten RCIA rites. We decided to leave this matter open for further discussion when we know how much space will be available in the altar area.

On Page 35, Daily Mass Chapel Furnishings, we agreed with the text with one addition - the requirement for flexible seating. It was felt that this would provide flexibility for various celebrations in the daily chapel. The two program considerations are now requirements. Douglas Lynn emphasized that we need to have room for a choir in the chapel.

Phil Goscienski asked about the tabernacle in the chapel. We had decided earlier to have it free-standing. Pat Goscienski reminded us that we want to have the bell tower overhead so as to provide a “tower of light” over the tabernacle. We referred back to Page 32 regarding the design of the tabernacle.

We discussed seating as outlined on Page 35. Sondra Parks said we should not have very long pews as this leads to confusion as people enter the pews after Communion. Robert Habiger told us the code calls for a maximum of 24 people per pew but he considers 13-14 per pew to be optimum. While the code allows for 18 inches per person for easy egress, he prefers 21 or 22 inches per person. He told us that the companies that design and manufacture pews know how to accommodate people and they do consider bigger people as well.

Pat Goscienski asked if we were to have padded seats; we agree that we will not. Robert Habiger brought up the topic of pneumatic devices for kneelers. He said preliminary information he received informed him that these devices are no longer being manufactured. Douglas Lynn said he thought that Renzo had designed another such device. Robert Habiger will contact Renzo and do further research. We decided to remove the word “pneumatic” on Page 36 and to add the requirement of padded kneelers.

Under Appointments on Page 37, we confirmed that we require four chairs for the altar servers. We discussed the advent wreath. Father Mike told us they are not being displayed as predominately as in the past. Such a wreath requires a special stand which can be designed or purchased from a catalog. Douglas Lynn said we should decide now on the wreath stand so that we can have a compatible one for the chapel.

On Page 37, we discussed the ambry for the holy oils. We changed the word “considerations” to “requirements”. We discussed the matter of how to plan for earthquakes. Robert Habiger told us the manufacturers know how to handle that problem and it will be taken into consideration.

Further to the matter of the ambry and holy oils on page 38, we changed the wording from “generally” to “to be” so the sentence will read “The ambry is *to be* placed in close proximity to the baptismal font...”

The third bullet point regarding the ambry on page 38 is now considered to be “optional”, not a requirement. To be clear: Bullet points 1-3 for the ambry are now “requirements”; bullet point 4 beginning with “Two primary options...” is now an option.

On Page 38 we discussed the Paschal Candle Stand. Our present candle measures four inches by 60 inches. The one for the new church must be at least that big. Lorraine Doering asked if we could have a portable stand so the candle

can be safely and easily moved. Perhaps there is a design that incorporates hidden casters with a locking device. This idea did not receive enthusiastic agreement. Douglas Lynn asked if we could have two stands. No decision was reached. The items listed as “considerations” are now “requirements”.

The matter of the Eternal Lamp as described on Page 39 is to be decided at a later date. Robert Habiger told us the design using “cracked clear glass” has become popular as the flame is easily seen and the light is reflected off all the surfaces in the room. The use of a red lamp is not a liturgical requirement.

On Page 40 we discussed candlesticks and changed the word “considerations” to “requirements”. In addition we mentioned having stands for the processional candles so that they can be stored or displayed at the back of the church with the processional cross.

Further on Page 40 we talked about Dedication Crosses and decided that four such crosses would be sufficient (as many as 12 could be incorporated in the design). On Page 41 we changed the wording of the first bullet point, which is now a requirement, to read “*The use of 4 dedication crosses and candles should be provided.*” The reference to cathedrals and other churches was deleted. In addition it was noted that the brackets holding these candles on the wall may not extend more than four inches from the wall, nor can they be placed lower than 84 inches from the floor.

We addressed the matter of the Reconciliation Screen and decided that we do not wish to have a screen attached to a kneeler. We deleted the wording regarding fabric selected for the screen to be stretched or hanging tight. We prefer to have a floor to ceiling loosely draped cloth. In addition to the kneeler, three chairs will be available in the reconciliation chapel: one for the priest and two for the penitent so that he/she has the option of sitting either face to face with the priest or sitting anonymously behind the hanging fabric.

Under Seasonal Decorations on Page 42, we changed the word “considerations” to “requirements”.

The matter of the Christmas crèche was not included in the list and it has now been added. We informed Robert Habiger of the size and extent of our Christmas crèche which covers the entire stage when displayed. We have no ideas as to how we could display it in the new church as it takes up a great deal of space. We do not wish to sell or discard the statues and are not sure if they can be displayed outdoors. We provided a photograph of the crèche setup to Robert Habiger for further consideration.

On Page 43 we discussed the Easter Fire and agreed the considerations are now requirements. The design must accommodate the prevailing wind which comes from the West. We will not have a water feature because of the wind and

drought conditions. We could have a place for the fire that will be filled with annual flowers when not in use. Charlene Buhlert envisions a large metal bowl (like a “wok”) that would hold the fire. Another idea would be large blocks of stone or concrete that would support containers of flowers and plants. These ideas and others will be considered by the designer at the proper time. We did not decide whether the fire feature should be in the interior plaza or the space near the parking lot. It would seem more desirable to have it in the interior plaza because of the wind.

Douglas Lynn asked Robert Habiger if the proposed pipe organ is considered to be equipment. The response was that it is equipment as well as a musical instrument. Douglas said space for the organ must be included in the architect’s plans. With pre-planning much of the electronics and mechanical equipment can be placed vertically. The important thing to remember is to provide space for the required conduits in the foundation. Robert Habiger will get the necessary information.

Robert Habiger remarked that with the new developments in electronics, wireless microphones will be available where needed, for example at the ambo. The need for outlets for microphones could be minimalized. The only equipment in the sanctuary that requires an electrical outlet is the font.

1. The font is not actually in the sanctuary as currently envisioned, rather at the narthex end of the aisle leading from the narthex to the sanctuary.

2. If the last sentence is to read “the only equipment in the Eucharistic Hall...” then we have left off the significant electrical needs in the music ministry space, including for the organ and for the band instruments.

3. Also, wouldn’t the font be hard wired and not connected to an outlet? I don’t envision a cord coming from an outlet to the font pump motor. There seems to be more exactness needed here.

The plans call for seating for 1,200 people. That number encompasses 980 people in the pews, 220 movable chairs with an additional 10 chairs for the Blessed Sacrament area.

Phil Goscienski asked about proposed costs for various items on Pages 46 and 47. For example, \$8,000 seems to be a great deal of expense for an ossuary. The silk banners – three banners, each 14 feet by 3 feet – are estimated to cost \$26,000. The statue of Mary may cost \$50,000 and this is considered to be mid-range. All final costs will be determined by the design and the artists.

Sondra Parks brought up the topic of memorial gifts. Parishioners may agree to donate such a gift and will want to know how the money is spent. For example, is the entire memorial gift spent on the item they request or is extra money returned to them? The donation for specific memorial items is a gift and, at this point, there is no way to determine the actual cost of the item. It is understood that the choosing of a memorial item may or may not entirely pay for that item. The notion that should be considered is that the gift is helping to build the church.

Since we do not have memorial gifts for mundane items like bathroom fixtures, these gifts are to be considered gifts for the whole church building. We will not place the names of donors on windows, statues and the like. They will be acknowledged in one special location, the memorial garden where all gifts will be recognized.

Phil Goscienski asked if there is a way we can share the document we have been working on after it has been finalized with the parish community. That way people can know what decisions have been made and how the interior of the church will appear. Robert Habiger said he could provide some preliminary graphics to give an idea of how things will look, but Renzo needs our input and he needs to know we have the finances to go forward. Phil Goscienski said he would like to have tables set up on the plaza with members of the team sharing our progress. This would be a public relations effort to get a resurgence of interest in the building of the new church. Father Mike said this would work only if we have preliminary drawings, not just sketches.

Robert Habiger said he could create some basic graphics, for example a diagram of the music ministry. However, there can be no layout without Renzo's input.

Father Mike told us we will renew the Capital Campaign in January, 2010. We will not have 3D drawings at that time, only graphics.

Robert Habiger will submit to us his final version of the liturgical program in the next few weeks. We are to review it in June/July and we will accept and formalize it in August.

Our team will meet again on August 11.

The meeting closed with prayer at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Quinn

