

On Problems to be solved with our New Building I

All parishioners should have some idea about the many problems we face with our current buildings. They are rather old, and we are at a juncture where major problems will begin within a year or two; though right now we have a major problem with our roof. Here is an incomplete list of what we need to address fairly soon:

1. We have insufficient space, even with three Masses each Sunday and an additional Mass in Ft. Collins. There are a number of people who have told me that the reason they do not come to our church is because if they do not arrive well before Mass, there is no place to sit. There are other problems with space, which should become clear as you read on. Our present church will hold about 190 people, where as our new church will hold about 400.

2. Style of architecture. Everything should flow from the Sacrifice of the Mass, and in particular the High Mass. The High Mass is the paradigm for everything in our church; it is the high point of all the activities of the parish. So the altar we selected determines the style of the church. Since the altar is gothic, the church should be constructed to match it. Our present church is not identifiable as Catholic on the outside, and thus has no value as an icon for the Lord. In fact, many are surprised it is a church when they drive by it.

3. The façade of our present church is ugly, and needs to be corrected. You will see from the drawings that the new church will be very traditional looking with a traditional door in the center and will have a bell tower. We have a certain duty to give beauty to the world, since exterior ugliness detracts from the mission of the church and beauty attracts. Our current façade attracts no one.

4. A safety engineer has determined that the only thing in our roof which is effectively keeping out the water is the felt pad. Most likely there will be extensive rot beneath the composition shakes. But there is no reason to do anything presently, since the whole roof needs to be replaced.

5. In the sanctuary there are a number of problems to be corrected:

a. We lack side altars now, and have no room to put them. Our new altars will all match, and will fit nicely into the space provided.

b. We have no direct access to the sanctuary from the sacristy. The new plan gives us good access to it. This will correct a real problem we have during the High Mass, when the altar boys must walk into the nave in order to renew the coals in the thurible or to get the torches.

c. We have insufficient votive candle stands. The new stands will be placed near each of the side altars, and will have three sizes of candles. Currently we have only one very small stand which will accommodate only the two-hour candles.

d. The lack of harmony with the altar furnishings (such as candlesticks) has begun to be addressed already.

e. The pulpit is now outside of the communion rail, but in the new church it will be in its proper place, which is the sanctuary. The pulpit, sedile (the bench the celebrant sits upon during the High Mass), communion rails and Stations of the Cross and new confessionals will all match the pews we have; white oak and in the gothic style to match the altars.

f. The new Stations will be about six times larger, with very clear pictures. Our current Stations are so small that the faithful cannot see what

they represent.

g. The new communion rails will have gates, which we currently lack, and there will be access to both sides of the sanctuary for lighting devotional candles. The pulpit is in the way for this at present.

h. We lack a fire exit on the epistle side of the church presently, and have only two ways to exit the church in case of fire...the one in the sacristy is insufficient. The new church will have exits on both sides of the sanctuary, and three exits at the rear.

i. We lack an ambulatory for the processions, especially for inclement weather. But the new church will have a good ambulatory all the way around.

j. Neither of our confessionals is adequate. They need better ventilation and more space and they are not handicap accessible. The new church will have two spacious, better-lit and handicap accessible confessionals in the back of the nave. They will also come equipped with a device for those who are hard of hearing.

k. The faithful must currently stand at the back of the church in front of the choir, making movement difficult for that part of the church, when they want to go to confession during Sunday Mass. In our new church they will be able to stand in line facing the altar, but have more

privacy and much better freedom of movement.

l. We have almost no natural light, which is the best for the Mass especially in the morning. The new church will have a good deal of natural light, a key component of the gothic.

Having good natural light will also help reduce our electric bill.

m. Our present cooling system cannot keep up with the crowds on Sunday, and it is quite loud. The ventilation is insufficient too, since there are vents in only two places in the church. The new system will adequately heat and cool, and will not be noisy.

n. There is no insulation in either the walls or the roof of the present church. The new church will have both. This will help the heating and cooling systems maintain a regular temperature, which we cannot do at present.

o. To have good acoustics in a church, you need height, which we do not have. The present roof is at twenty feet, the new roof will be at least thirty six feet. Ideally it will be forty feet tall at the apex, if the City grants this.