

Message from Msgr. Benwell

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A traditional rule of thumb for new pastors is: change nothing but the candles and altar linens your first year. Now more than a year into my pastorate, I write to you about a change I have made to the sanctuary of our church. When you next come into our church, you will see that the tabernacle is now behind the altar, under the crucifix.

The reason for moving the tabernacle is above all practical. The Eucharist, the Second Vatican Council stated, is “the source and summit of the Christian life” (Lumen Gentium, no. 11). It is the greatest of the sources of grace God gives us to live as faithful disciples, and thus the Eucharistic celebration is the pinnacle, the summit, of what we do as a faith community. I felt that the Tabernacle’s previous placement—just outside our two sacristies and a storage room—resulted in too much traffic in front and behind it, so that the Real Presence of our Reserved Lord was often lost in all this activity. I made this decision only after consulting a number of parishioners and the diocesan Office of Worship and obtaining the permission of our bishop. Everyone I spoke or consulted with was in favor of the move. The move comes at no cost to the parish.

I want to thank Joe Ebler, woodworker extraordinaire, and his crew of heavy-lifters, for accomplishing the move.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote before becoming pope, “A church without the Eucharistic Presence is somehow dead, even when it invites people to pray. But a church in which the eternal light is burning before the tabernacle is always alive, is always more than a building made of stones. In this place the Lord is always waiting for [us], calling [us].” I pray this move will make our parishioners more aware than ever of the Real Presence of the Lord Jesus in our midst, the Lord who is always waiting for us, always calling us.