

MBS Rebuild Planning Committee Reports

June – October 2021

The Most Blessed Sacrament Church Rebuilding Committee has met regularly over the past five months (June through October). Their work was reported regularly in the parish bulletin, and on the MBS Facebook pages. The complete text of each of those reports, in chronological order, has been compiled into this single document for easy reference.

July 18, 2021

Six weeks ago, we announced that the Rebuilding Committee, in conjunction with our architectural team, was ready to move on to the second phase of planning which “will involve generating a more detailed description of both the interior and exterior designs for the new building.” Since that time, much has been happening.

The Rebuild Committee met with our architectural teams from Foresight Architects and LAN Associates via Zoom in mid-June, and in person for the first time since the start of the pandemic, on Wednesday, July 7.



Here is an update on the work that has been done during the past six weeks.

LAN Associates has been actively working with the township of Franklin Lakes to confirm the procedures for the review and approval of all building plans by the town and state. The project’s landscape architects were on site on Wednesday, June 30 to walk the campus and prepare its initial construction proposals. The civil engineering team has been actively looking at site drainage, and coordinating with the landscape architects. The project’s structural engineer has been working on lighting, ceiling design and structural column placement.

During the June Zoom meeting, the floor plans and dimensions of the kitchen, storage areas, community gathering space and mechanical equipment room were all discussed. As a result of that feedback, the design was revised to provide more kitchen and storage space.

At July’s meeting, consideration was given to audio-visual concerns, specifically plans for the integration of projection systems, live-stream technology and security monitoring in the new church, chapel and community center, all of which factor into design planning.

There was also a presentation on the status of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing plans, especially the heating and HVAC systems. The current plan is to create five “zones” for heat and AC: two coordinated systems for the main church, one for the daily chapel area, one for the Narthex and community room, and a smaller system for the music room and storage area behind the altar. The HVAC equipment would most likely be located on the flat space along the narthex roof, hidden by screens as depicted in the renderings shared on December 21.

The Liturgical Art Committee made a presentation on considerations regarding the interior of the church, differentiating between “decoration” (that is, those elements that will be used to beautify the structural columns and beams) and “ornamentation” (that is, stained glass, art,

statuary that will enhance both community worship and the aesthetic beauty of the church). Consideration was given to incorporating various design elements to emphasize the altar and tabernacle as the focal point of the church, how to incorporate the pipe organ into the design without it becoming the predominant element, and possible flooring options (marble, slate, terrazzo, porcelain) with consideration given to both cost and maintenance concerns.

Finally, there was a discussion of special devotional areas, of which there are several in the current design, and different options for creating them, such as murals, specially designed wall coverings and or mosaic tile designs.

The Committee will be meeting again at the end of July, though individual committees, both from the parish and the architectural planners, are taking place weekly.

“We have benefitted greatly from the contributions of our various committees,” noted Frank Bivona, who chairs the Rebuilding project. “This is truly a team effort comprised of dozens of parishioners who will be able to recognize their input when the project is complete.”

“We have been running two parallel courses during these weeks of the summer,” Father John said. “One course is fine-tuning the design of the new church, discerning the liturgical art for both its interior and exterior, and preparing the necessary materials so that we can go out to bid. The other is enhancing, restoring and maintaining the parish’s buildings and grounds, projects which we have been covering in the weekly bulletin. It is a very exciting time in the history of Most Blessed Sacrament. Let’s rely on God’s wisdom and grace to motivate and encourage us as we move forward.”

August 8, 2021

In addition to the General Rebuilding Committee, there are also various sub-committees assigned to specific tasks and responsibilities. One of these is the Liturgical Art Sub-committee.



This committee is charged with making recommendations to our general building committee concerning the art program for the new church, and in helping select the artists who will create it. Committee members see this as a real opportunity to ensure that the art in the new church will play a significant role in making people feel a sense of welcome and belonging when they come to worship.

The stained glass windows, sculptures/statuary (both inside and outside of the church building), paintings, ornamentation and the liturgical furnishings (particularly the altar, ambo, and baptismal font) comprise the worship ambience, and they are a very important part of the design process.

The Liturgical Art Subcommittee held its third meeting (and first in person one) on Thursday, July 29th. Pictured with committee members is James Hundt of Foresight Architects facilitating a theological reflection session to assist the committee in offering their recommendations.

August 29, 2021

Another element of the planning process for the new church is the work of the Liturgical Art Committee. This group was established by Father John to provide input about artwork that will fill the new worship space, from altar design to organ selection and from statuary to stained glass.

The Committee has met four times to date, and has another meeting scheduled in September, after which the group will present its ideas to the larger Rebuilding Committee.

Committee member Mary Anne Clark (pictured at right with Sun Ju Valenta of LAN Associates) said “The focus of our meetings initially was on the design of the baptismal font, altar, and ambo. We were then introduced to the process known as Theological Reflection, in which we were guided by liturgical reflection of scripture, scholarly material from theologians, as well as the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in developing a master plan for the overall art design. It is all very interesting and inspiring, and we are making good progress.”



Karyn Mucks, another member of the Committee, agreed, adding “It’s wonderful working with our group as we all want to create in our new worship space a feeling of ‘being included’ for our parish family and beyond. We are working through the types of materials for the altar, the baptismal font and the various other pieces for a sense of continuity that will ultimately be reflected in the stained glass windows, statues and art.”

Clark continued: “Going forward, we will be making decisions on color and materials, floor design, statuary and stained glass. There are so many good things happening but it takes time. We will be working more with our design consultant, Sun Ju, on furniture and materials.”

Throughout everything, the group’s guiding principles have been drawn from the “Built of Living Stones” document that served as the foundation of the rebuilding process, as well as the feedback received from the parish surveys collected last fall.

“We are focusing on reflecting our Parish Mission Statement, and, of course, our namesake, “Most Blessed Sacrament” as a major art theme,” said Clark.

On August 18, the larger Rebuilding Committee met again with the design team from LAN Associates. The focus of that meeting was the development of the interior design of the main worship space, particularly the church ceiling and the columns that will support it and the combination of wood and colors throughout the interior. The group also discussed the color and texture of the flooring in the sanctuary and throughout the worship space. The group will meet again in early September.

September 12, 2021

Another major decision that must be made in the rebuilding process concerns the type of pipe organ that will be the “best fit” for the new church. As we have done in other components of the rebuild, we first turn to the guidance of the teachings of the Church.

The Church Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, in the 1963 document *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*, affirmed that the Church's musical tradition is a "treasure of inestimable value." For more than a thousand years, the pipe organ has been the foundation of this musical tradition. In that same document, they state:

(SC 120) In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.

Over 40 years later, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a document in 2007 entitled, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. It has this to say about organs in churches:

87. Among all other instruments which are suitable for divine worship, the organ is "accorded pride of place" because of its capacity to sustain the singing of a large gathered assembly, due to both its size and its ability to give "resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation." Likewise, "the manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the immensity and the magnificence of God."

88. In addition to its ability to lead and sustain congregational singing, the sound of the pipe organ is most suited for solo playing of sacred music in the Liturgy at appropriate moments. Pipe organs also play an important evangelical role in the church's outreach to the wider community in sacred concerts, music series and other musical and cultural programs. For all of these reasons, the place of the organ should be taken into account from the outset in the planning process for the building or renovation of churches.

With this guidance in mind and given that this decision will have an impact on our worship for decades to come, Father John formed an Organ Selection Sub-Committee.

At its first meeting on August 24th, the Sub-Committee met with the Peragallo Pipe Organ Company which is located in Paterson, NJ. The 1981 organ that was part of our former church was built by the Peragallo Company. The instrument included 13 ranks of pipework with some 860 pipes.

Peragallo (as represented by Frank Peragallo, John Peragallo III, and John Peragallo IV) led us in a presentation of how a pipe organ is the most complex musical instrument in the world. It combines mechanical, electrical, and acoustical engineering, wood working, metal working, and architecture, with artistic concepts to create a musical instrument that can last for generations. A quality organ has lasting value by utilizing time honored materials and techniques comingled with current technological advances.

Peragallo is now in conversation with our church architects, and they will be making a proposal to us concerning the best instrument for our new church. Items to be considered include: assessment of scale of the building, acoustical and liturgical considerations, the location of the organ console, and the potential placement of the pipes. The Company will also guide us in terms of whether the new instrument will be a classic pipe organ or one that is a "hybrid," i.e., a combination of pipes and digital technology.

Indeed, the selection of an organ for our new church is both an art and a science. On the day of its blessing, we will pray these words: “Lord God...we present this organ for your blessing: grant that its music may lead us to express our prayer and praise in melodies that are pleasing to you. Amen.”

The words of this prayer will be “music to our ears.”

October 24, 2021

The MBS Church Rebuilding Committee met on October 13 to recap the progress that has been made since its September 1 meeting, and to wrap up the “design development” phase of planning.

During the past six weeks, a series of meetings have taken place to coordinate the work and input of structural and civil engineers, architects and landscape designers, as well as the acoustical engineers working on this project. It has also included meetings of the Liturgical Art Committee, as well as a meeting with the Peragallo Organ Company regarding the technical elements of the design of the new church organ, which will be a hybrid of traditional physical pipes and additional digital controls.

The next step will be the “construction document phase”, one that will assist in completing three different, but related, goals. First, LAN Associates and Foresight Architects are in the process of preparing the documents necessary for MBS’s application to the Franklin Lakes Planning Board. This work is expected to be done by mid-November.

Second, detailed construction documents will be analyzed by Trophy Point, the parish’s cost estimator, who will provide a revised, detailed budget based on the changes that have been made to the site design and the myriad of specific details finalized over the past ten months. This should be ready by the end of October.

The final step will be the creation of the final plans that will be made available to the contractors bidding on the project.

“We’ve made a great deal of progress over these past few weeks,” said Father John. “Things are moving quickly now as we prepare to make our presentation to the Planning Board. I am grateful to both our architects and the rebuilding committee for all the great work they have done to get us to this point.”