

Diocese of Stockton  
Liturgical Commission  
and  
Office for Worship

**Process for Building and Renovation  
of Churches and Worship Spaces  
in the Diocese of Stockton\***

One of the most important tasks a parish or institution can undertake is to build or renovate a church. It offers the promise of real growth in the spiritual life of the community, in its understanding of liturgical prayer, and in its appreciation of its identity as Church. These norms, though not all-inclusive, outline the steps to be followed in a successful building or renovation program.

In addition to the resources provided through the Liturgical Commission and the Office for Worship, parishes and institutions are urged to make full use of the guidance available through the diocesan Building Committee and the Finance Officer as outlined in the Diocesan Building and Renovation Guidelines.

\*a companion document to the Diocese of Stockton  
Building and Renovation Guidelines

I. Preliminary Discussions at the Parish Level

A. Contact the Office for Worship

As soon as a pastor and his parish have decided to undertake the building of a new worship space or the renovation of an existing one, the Office for Worship should be contacted so that the community can formally begin the process outlined below.

B. Form parish exploratory committee.

It is advisable for this committee to include, in addition to the parish clergy, representatives of the pastoral staff, liturgy committee, Christian Initiation team, religious education staff, parish council, and finance council.

C. Schedule the Workshop on Worship Spaces.

The Office for Worship will meet with the parish exploratory committee to provide an overview of the building/renovation process and catechesis dealing with contemporary liturgical needs and expectations.

D. Prepare lists of parish needs, questions, possibilities, and hopes.

E. Prepare initial evaluation of the current and/or contemplated worship space.

F. Consider options for financing the project.

II. Preliminary Discussions at Diocesan Level

- A. Request permission from the Bishop of Stockton to begin the process preliminary to building or renovating the church or worship space.
- B. Contact the Finance Officer

The Finance Officer should be contacted for preliminary approval of a project for which parish funds are available and on deposit in the diocesan bank or to determine if a diocesan loan is required.

### III. First Stage of a Building/Renovation Process

- A. Form a Parish Building Committee

The parish exploratory committee can be expanded to become the parish building committee. It is advisable that members reflect the profile of the parish community in age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, etc.

- B. Select an approved Liturgical Consultant

The Liturgical Consultant will assist the parish in developing a comprehensive education program and in facilitating the design of a worship space that will suit the needs of the liturgy and the personality of the local community. The expertise of such a consultant is invaluable in working with architects, artists, and other professionals. This consultant remains with the project from inception to conclusion. The Office for Worship maintains a list of approved Liturgical Consultants.

- C. Design a comprehensive education program on the principles governing worship spaces.

With the help of the Liturgical Consultant, a comprehensive education program should be developed in order to make the building or renovation of a church a time of renewal in terms of the assembly's spiritual growth and appreciation of themselves as Church.

This program must address concretely:

- the needs of the contemporary liturgy;
- the impact of the environment on worship;
- the design and placement of the major furnishings of the building (e.g. altar, ambo, presidential chair, baptismal font, choir space, organ/piano, cantor stand, benches/chairs/pews, tabernacle/Eucharistic chapel, reconciliation chapel, etc.);
- the devotional needs of the community, especially in respect to racial and ethnic preferences;
- the need for a suitable gathering space within and outside the church building;
- the importance of quality art;
- the special needs of the physically challenged.

- D. Assemble a building/renovation team.

The team of professionals is to include an architect and licensed specialty consultants (an acoustician, lighting specialist, et al.). While the architect enters into agreement with the diocese the specialty consultants will generally enter into agreements directly with the architect. The diocesan Building Committee has a list of architects and contractors who

have provided services to the Diocese. The Office for Worship maintains a resource file of professional consultants. The parish building committee may add to these lists, if it desires.

- E. Develop a program of project design requirements based on a parish's preliminary discussions regarding needs and evaluations from I, D and E.

#### IV. Second Stage of a Building/Renovation Process

- A. Develop a Schematic Design acceptable to the Parish Building Committee.
- B. Present the Schematic Design including the site plan, floor plan (including the placement of the major liturgical furnishings), and exterior elevations to the diocesan Liturgical Commission.
- C. Refine the Schematic Design to incorporate the recommendations of the Liturgical Commission.
- D. Obtain the recommendation for approval of the Schematic Design from the Liturgical Commission to the Bishop of Stockton.

After hearing the Liturgical Commission, the Bishop approves the plans for the building/renovation of churches and worship spaces (c. 1216; GIRM, 256).

#### V. Third Stage of a Building/Renovation Process

- A. Select designers/artists for liturgical furnishings and art.

Résumés and portfolios of liturgical artists are on file at the Office for Worship. Recommendations of additional artists are welcomed.

- B. Present Design Development documents to the Liturgical Commission.

The Design Development documents are to include:

- liturgical furnishings and appointments
- lighting and acoustic/sound system designs
- major instrumentation (organ, piano)
- interior/exterior colors and finishes
- a liturgical furnishings cost estimate

- C. Refine the Design Development documents to incorporate the recommendations of the Liturgical Commission.

- D. Obtain the recommendation for approval of the Design Development documents from the Liturgical Commission to the Bishop of Stockton.

After hearing the Liturgical Commission, the Bishop approves the Design Development documents (cf. c. 1189).

#### VI. Contract Documents and Construction Phase

- A. Continue to maintain contact with the diocesan Building Committee to ensure that the progress is consistent with the approved concept.
- B. If, during the development of the Contract documents or during construction, changes are made after approval by the Bishop, the Office for Worship must be contacted before proceeding.
- C. Any proposed changes to the approved Design Development documents must be submitted to the Office for Worship.

VII. Final Stage of a Building/Renovation Process

- A. Contact the Office of the Bishop and Office for Worship to set the date and prepare the Rite of Dedication liturgy.
- B. Provide continuing education.

It is advisable to focus continuing education on the merits of the new design, on why changes were made in the former design, and how the new environment has improved the celebration of the liturgy.

- C. Preserve written records describing the rationale behind the design of the new or renovated church.
- D. Copies of the As-Built documents are to be filed with the Office for Worship and also kept on file in the parish archives.

Approved at Liturgical Commission meeting on January 10, 2000