

CHURCH OF ST THOMAS MORE
Interior Design Team
Minutes of the Meeting of January 13, 2009

Attending: Father Mike Ratajczak, Phil Goscienski, Pat Goscienski, Mary Castle, Ann Ericksson, Diana Diaz, Charlene Buhlert, Lorraine Doering, Chris Smith, Douglas Lynn, Kathy Quinn and Consultant Robert Habiger

Absent: Mario Diaz, Sondra Parks

The meeting opened with the reading of the Prayer of Dedication at 7:05 PM.

Phil Goscienski welcomed our Liturgical Consultant, Robert Habiger, to our meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Robert Habiger's Liturgical Program, Version 4. All members of the committee had been sent copies for their review. Typographical errors were noted and set aside. They will be corrected later so that we can be assured the documents are as accurate as possible.

Father Mike gave us an update on the parish's financial situation. The weekly offertory is less than in the past but this was anticipated. We are counting on the Golf Classic in May to add needed funds. The financial update was presented to the parish last Sunday and Father Mike said he had heard no negative comments from parishioners; they seem to understand the situation. Our parish income now is \$54,000 a month. This income is not sufficient to request the loan needed to build the church. Also, we are close but we do not have one-third of the project cost on deposit with the diocese. As stated before, we are working under a "fund line" not a "time line".

In the discussion of Version 4 of the Liturgical Program, Pat Goscienski said that on Page 7, paragraph 1, we should change the wording from "desert like" to "xeric" to be consistent and accurate. This led to a discussion of how we need to know what the City of Oceanside and San Diego County water authorities require and/or recommend.

Regarding page 8, Phil Goscienski asked about the capacity of the plaza area. The church will hold 1,100 people; will the plaza accommodate that many? Robert Habiger commented that people standing require about three square feet per person. One consideration is where the architect will place the Easter fire. If it is off to one side, the capacity is limited. If it is centered, more people can be accommodated. Douglas asked if we will have one plaza or two. That has yet to be determined.

We discussed Page 9, "children friendly". This is not meant so much to be a matter of safety but rather something welcoming to children. A model for us

would be the children's area at the Los Angeles Cathedral which offers a liturgical experience with symbols and images. Robert Habiger said he would include this in our considerations. Douglas Lynn said he did not think people would use the present plaza. Robert Habiger commented that numbers drive the design.

In a discussion of the Meditation Garden, no decision has been made yet about the Stations of the Cross. We are not sure if we want a set outdoors as well as in the church.

Phil Goscienski asked about the Narthex as described on page 10. Robert Habiger said we should not consider the "ceremonial" door as the exit door. Phil Goscienski said most people will use the ceremonial door, thus avoiding the ministerial tables set up in the plaza. This led to a discussion of how the people will move from entry to exit. Most likely they will enter through the ceremonial door and exit from side doors which open to the plaza. We must consider the design of the parking lot and the transition space from parking lot to the door.

Robert Habiger said he needs a good idea of what we want when thinking of how the people will leave the church and linger at the ministerial tables. There could be as many ten or eleven tables at any one time; usually there are four or five. Chris Smith commented that these tables are a vital part of the parish; this is where people meet, linger and become involved in parish activities. Robert Habiger commented that this is now a recommendation, not just a suggestion. Pat Goscienski said she recalls Renzo saying the side doors would be used for people exiting the church, leading to a natural flow of the crowd. Father Mike said this would be natural flow to the plaza.

On page 10, under "Program Considerations", the first bullet point will be changed to reflect the idea of the narthex being a transitional space. The second bullet point will be eliminated or it will be mentioned that no activities will take place in the narthex. We are considering using the narthex for families with disruptive children. Phil Goscienski said that having the unhappy children in the narthex is not less disruptive unless we have glass doors or a barrier between the narthex and the Eucharistic hall. We will plan doors and speakers in the narthex.

On Page 11, the second bullet point regarding the provision for a place for disruptive children is moved from "consideration" to "requirement". In the fourth bullet point regarding "exterior covered porch", the word "porch" is changed to "area". Under Program Requirements, the second bullet point stating the narthex is not a place to set up ministry tables is deleted.

After a short break, we turned our attention to Page 11, Eucharistic Hall. There was a discussion of movable chairs. Kathy Quinn asked how kneelers could be

incorporated into these chairs. There are designs that provide for kneelers. We could have as many as ten percent of all seating to be movable.

On Page 12 we had a discussion regarding the slope of the floor. This is an important part of the design as we anticipate not having the altar raised above the floor. Such a design will accommodate more musicians and provide easier access for people with wheelchairs, canes and walkers. We changed the floor slope from 1:20 to 1:30 and deleted the second bullet point.

On Page 13 we asked to have the words “reduced to zero” deleted from the first bullet point so that the sentence would read “Extraneous sounds from buzzing lights, alarm systems...etc. shall be reduced as much as possible.”

Pat Goscienski asked about the mention of “untrained voices in the assembly” in bullet point 3. We learned that when people singing in the assembly do not hear their own voices, they sing more willingly. They feel part of the congregation, rather than as a soloist.

We asked if the acoustical consultant has been hired. The process is ongoing.

On Page 14 in a discussion of the sanctuary, Pat Goscienski stated that she is uncomfortable with having the people higher than the altar. We are accustomed to having the altar on a platform. Robert Habiger told us we can learn to accept the lower level as it is widely customary. One thing to keep in mind is that from our higher vantage point we can more readily see the bread and wine and the expression on the celebrant’s face. He said some people will be 55 or 60 feet from the altar. He and Renzo will be doing 3D modeling to more easily understand and convey how the design will work.

Father Mike said he is willing to have the altar on the floor with no platform. This makes more room for musicians and choir members. We can use the floor design to delineate the space.

Chris Smith asked how many more people can be accommodated when the altar is not on a platform. Robert Habiger said this would be determined; he cannot say at this time.

Regarding Page 15, Douglas Lynn asked for clarification as there are references to both the Daily Mass Chapel and the Tabernacle Reservation Chapel. Actually they are one and the same. Since we do not anticipate finishing the chapel until after the church is built, a place for a tabernacle must be planned. Father Mike said in some cases, we can have the tabernacle visible behind the altar. The bishop will give such permission but it is not preferable. Robert Habiger said they can design a temporary space near the future chapel for the tabernacle. In the final design, the tabernacle will be visible from the chapel and the sanctuary.

With regard to the stained glass windows for the chapel, bullet point 7 on page 15, Kathy Quinn asked if we might have clear glass windows while we wait for funding for the stained glass. Is there a security consideration? Robert Habiger explained that since we plan on having stained glass windows in the future, the necessary hardware would be installed at the time of construction. Glass windows can be translucent and they will be as secure as stained glass windows.

We discussed the Reconciliation Chapel as described on pages 16 and 17. We were not clear on how the candle and door and window would function. There will not be a door closure, which means the door will not automatically close by itself. The door could be latched from the inside to provide privacy. The penitent would be asked to leave the door open when he/she leaves the room. The lit candle will signal that the priest is available for the sacrament of penance. There will be an etched glass window in the door. There should be no more than three chairs. We talked about having an icon and/or a crucifix on the wall. The room can be decorated with green plants or, perhaps, there will be a window showing a small garden. Charlene Buhlert asked why there would be two kneelers. Robert Habiger said one would have a fabric screen for privacy, the other would not. Father Mike asked why there would be room for three chairs. Robert Habiger responded that one chair is for the confessor, one chair for the penitent who chooses to confess anonymously, and a chair for the penitent who chooses to confess face to face.

Douglas Lynn brought up the topic of real candles. We had a discussion of electric candles, oil candles and beeswax candles. We need to check with the City of Oceanside regarding the fire code.

Our next meeting will take place on February 10. Subsequent meetings are scheduled for April 14 and May 12.

The meeting closed with prayer led by Father Mike at 9:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Quinn