

THE CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS MORE
Interior Design Team Minutes
October 11, 2011

Present: Father Mike Ratajczak, Pastor; Robert Habiger, Liturgical Consultant; Pat Goscienski, Interior Design Team Chairperson. Team Members: Kathy Arciero, Charlene Buhlert, Lorraine Doering, Mario Diaz, Diana Diaz, Anne Eriksson, Chris Smith, Kathleen Quinn

Team Members Absent: Mary Castle, Phil Goscienski, Douglas Lynn, Sondra Parks

The meeting opened with the Prayer of Dedication at 7:00 PM.

Robert Habiger reported on the meeting held with the Diocesan Committee and the architect Renzo Zechetto. Renzo focused on the quality of light and the quality of the proposed materials. He reviewed all the parts of the building from the parking lot to the font and to the center aisle. How the music ministry fits in the whole design. How the ministers and the people will move during the rituals. He explained some changes that had been made from the original design. Father Earl Eggleston was pleased with how the issues were addressed. Father Mike said he had spoken to Bishop Brom who is pleased with all we are doing so far. Pat Goscienski said that as questions came up Robert and Renzo answered them well.

Robert asked about parish involvement. Father Mike said Renzo is moving forward, working well with Brian Leahey.

Kathy Arciero brought up the subject of the grill covering the font. Robert Habiger said he is working on the design; it is not complete. He would like to incorporate biblical phrases, in particular Romans 6:3 and Matthew 3:16. The grill will be composed of laser-cut silicon bronze. It will incorporate the symbols of the dove and the broken circle – heaven and eternity. The steps down suggest death. The floor will rise gently toward the upper part of the font where people will approach to bless themselves. Issues of concern include the possibility of shoes being caught in the grill, perhaps glass can be installed beneath the grill. We were told that the font for blessing oneself will face the exterior doors. The “pool” side of the font, a semi-circle, will face the interior of the church. We looked at an illustration of the proposed font and were pleased with the design.

We had a discussion of the two shrines to be incorporated in the church: Mary and St. Thomas More.

The architect has set aside space under the tower where light will shine down. As people enter the church, they will see the shrine to their left. One idea for the design would be to have the statue in the center facing the people as they enter. Our concerns however are that there would be no place for private prayer, the recitation of the rosary. Space has been set aside for votive candles. We prefer to have the image of Mary in that space. Various images were discussed: bronze statue, one made entirely of sculpted glass, an image of a mature Mary, a young Mary holding her Child as if offering Him to us. A choice can be made when we interview some of the proposed artists.

The shrine for St. Thomas More may be made of sculpted wood, perhaps wood that is common in England. Robert Habiger told us that oak is not suitable for sculpting; he would recommend alder wood. We assume we will use the concept of “A Man for All Seasons” based on the play and movie by that name. However we need to be sure we are not infringing on copyright that may be held by the author of

the play, Robert Bolt. We reviewed the architectural drawings to be sure that we want the shrine in the place set aside for it. We are in agreement that this is the best space. We asked about the present image of St. Thomas More and Father Mike told us he would like to have it displayed in the parish offices.

In further discussions about the shrine for Mary, Robert Habiger mentioned again that the space will be flooded with natural light in the day time. He estimates the total floor space would be twelve feet by eighteen feet. We would prefer to have the image/statue in the niche now set aside for candles. Kathy Arciero told us about the sculpted glass image of Mary in a church in Kansas City. Lorraine Doering found the image on her laptop computer and showed it to us.

<http://www.kcgolddome.org/uploads/1201838717.jpg>

<http://www.kcgolddome.org/page.php?ID=72>

Robert Habiger asked us which “Mary” do we prefer? The young mother, the mature woman, Our Lady of the Rosary, Immaculate Conception? There are many from which to choose. He assured us that as we progress through the choices, the Holy Spirit will guide us. We should not try to control the process; it will unfold as we prayerfully consider our choices. He told us about a church in Albuquerque that had an image of a mature, older Mary placed in her shrine. At first the people did not like it but as the years went by, it was enthusiastically accepted. Some of the shrines with which he is familiar have “slots” that accept written prayers. At the end of each year, the prayers are removed and burned for the Ash Wednesday ritual. There are many ideas to be considered.

After a break we discussed other furnishings: the tabernacle, candles, crucifix, ambry, and Stations of the Cross. We reviewed the proposed budget for these items that appears on page 48 of the January 15, 2011 Liturgical Program. Robert Habiger showed us a sketch for the altar candles which shows a tall removable shaft topped by a removable torchiere. His design for the altar, ambo and tabernacle incorporates granite and stone. Perhaps the tabernacle will have “jewels” such as opal on the exterior. The ambry is still under consideration; perhaps it will be made of glass.

His design for the Stations of the Cross show bas relief cast glass for the interior stations – the first three. The rest of the stations will be placed in the outdoor area; free standing, material to be determined. He suggests we look at the Pentagon memorial for 9/11 victims. We are concerned about the cost of the design for free standing stations outdoors as the original design showed them on a wall. The design for the wall has changed and it is no longer suitable.

In a discussion of the crucifix, Father Mike said he would like to consider using a large painting of the crucifixion scene, one that would be reminiscent of the paintings in the English cathedrals. It would appeal to parishioners who do not like the modern, perhaps stark design of our new church. Father Mike said such old paintings are available. We were concerned about the size of a painting; can one be found that is big enough for that space? If we choose a free standing painting, the architect must make plans for how it can be affixed to the wall or to the ceiling.

In a discussion of stained glass, Chris Smith reminded us that we have two pledges of \$100,000 each for stained glass windows. Father Mike said this pledged money could be used for St. Thomas More’s shrine. We may have places for stained glass above the choir area and at the entry.

Pat Goscienski asked Robert Habiger if we are on track with the financials. He said we are but they are to be revised according to the materials we are planning to use.

Mario Diaz asked how many artists we may use. The answer is at least two, as many as three or four. Robert Habiger said he considers himself to be a designer, not an artist and so he would like to use an artist to help with the design of the font. We need artists for Mary's shrine and for St. Thomas More's shrine. The process of selection is thus: He will provide a list of artists. We can add names of any we may know. Our parishioner, Martin Zschoche sculpts in wood and he should be considered. We will send our list of proposed artists to Robert Habiger. In November we will send letters to artists asking for portfolios and inviting them to meet with us. We will use prayer and discernment to find the right persons. We will interview all of them on the same day. It is assumed that all the artists will have websites. We should receive Robert Habiger's list of artists within the next two weeks.

The next meeting of the Interior Design Team will take place on November 8 (the second Tuesday), followed by a meeting on December 13. On December 14 there will be a meeting for the entire parish at which time Robert Habiger will provide information about the plans for the new church.

The meeting closed with prayer at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Quinn