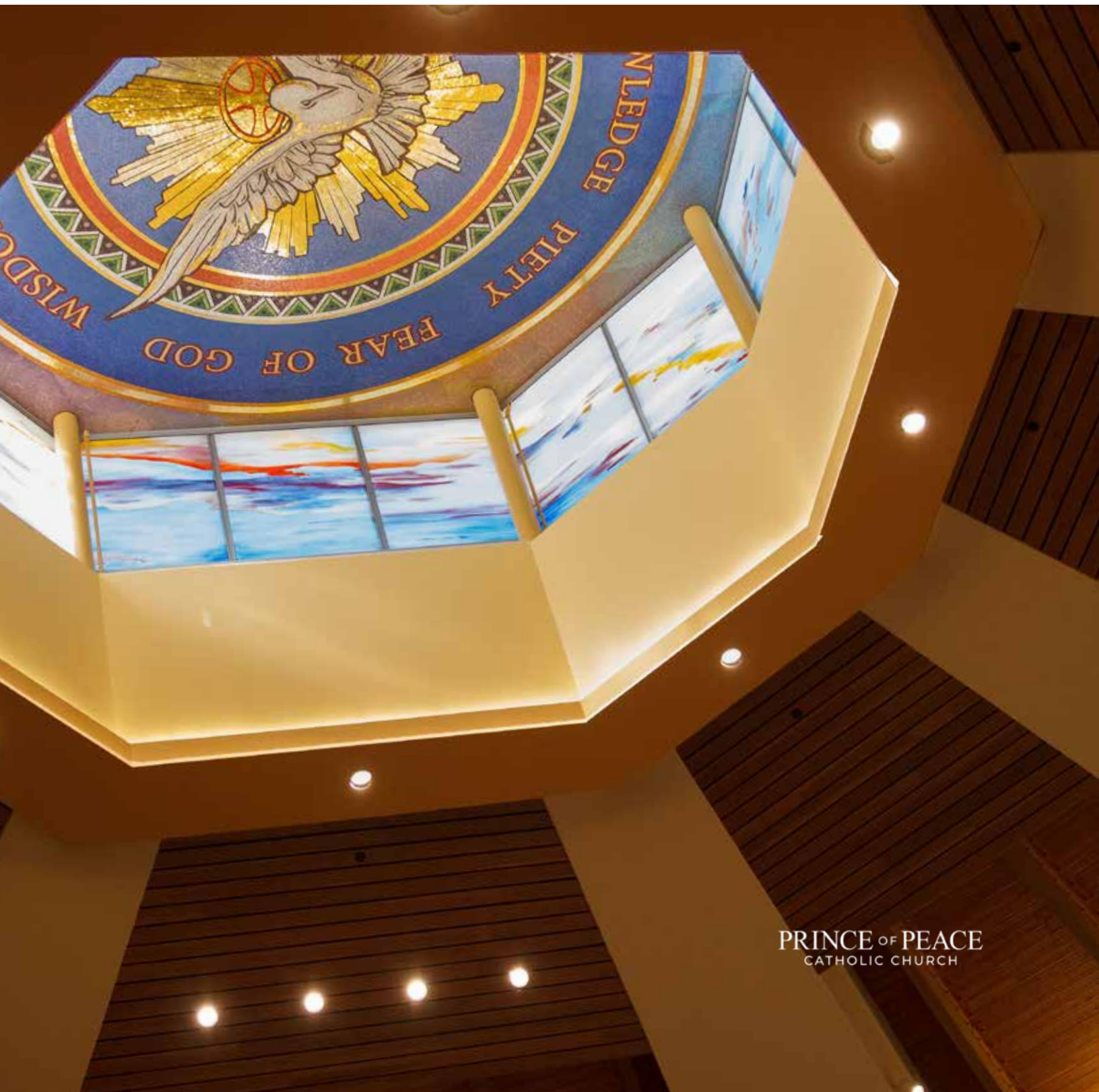


# O U R S T O R Y

EXPLORING OUR SACRED SPACE



PRINCE OF PEACE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

## OVERALL DESIGN OF THE WORSHIP SPACE

The design of this worship space reflects a significant commitment to preserving its original structure and the atmosphere it creates for worship. Notably, emphasis was placed on retaining the communal spirit embodied in the spacious narthex, the inclusive circular worship layout encouraging active participation in the Mass, and the vertical elements that evoke a sense of heavenly connection. Additionally, careful consideration was given to the selection and preservation of construction materials, maintaining the timeless beauty of brick and wood aesthetics.

### THE NARTHEX

The narthex, the gathering area of a church, is crucial for fostering a sense of community. Its size can influence the parishioners' ability to gather, interact, and create a welcoming atmosphere before and after the Mass. A spacious narthex allows for socializing, community-building, and a smooth transition into and out of the worship space.

The narthex, the first encounter with the church





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The Narthex as you walk into the church through the Main doors.



*A view of the Holy Water Font.*



*A close-up look at the mosaic feature behind the Holy Water Font*



*This semicircular walkway looks out over the Columbarium.*

worship area, is designed to provide ample time to begin to slow down, leaving the secular world behind as we enter the sacred. The layout prepares the worshiper to enter the circular worship space by accentuating the semicircular lighting above as well as the “wrap around” narthex leading to the bride’s room and choir rehearsal room toward the south and the columbarium toward the north. This allows the person to become acclimated to the semicircular pews and kneelers found in the Nave. In addition, alcoves were placed along the north narthex to allow parishioners to stop and gather in conversation.

#### THE NAVE ENTRANCE

**U**pon passing through the main doors from the narthex to the nave, one is immediately welcomed by the Holy Water Font, serving as a reminder of our baptism

and an invitation to bless ourselves with the consecrated water. It is encased in Carrara marble, the same material adorning the Altar, ambo, and baptismal font, creating a visual connection among these liturgical elements. Most notable is the placement in the marble of a relic of St. Bernadette of Lourdes, the patron saint of illnesses. We may venerate her relic as we seek her intercession for our health and well being.

Further enhancing this spiritual connection is a small mosaic positioned at this entrance, paralleling the mosaic above the baptismal font. This deliberate repetition links these two sacred water features, fostering a sense of continuity and significance. Notably, these mosaic designs extend beyond the entrance, gracing the stations of the cross that envelop the nave.

The intentional placement of these mosaics and blue colors creates a visual





*The vertical design drawing the eyes up towards the cupola.*



*A view of the Altar.*

narrative, symbolizing the flow of living water throughout the sacred space, uniting the worshippers in a shared spiritual journey.

### THE VERTICAL OR TRANSCENDENT EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE NAVE

The existing vertical design evokes a sense of connection to heaven. The upward direction symbolizes a spiritual ascent and transcendence, reminding parishioners of our journey on earth and our eternal life to come. The vertical movement emphasizes the sacred nature of the space.

The focal point is on the Altar as one steps through the nave. On axis with the main aisle is the Altar, Tabernacle, and Crucifix. The Altar, the Tabernacle, and the Crucifix share a profound spiritual

connection. Together they create a cohesive and meaningful tapestry of transcendent worship and reflection.

### THE ALTAR

At the heart of the Mass, the Altar commands attention, serving as the central focus of the liturgy. Positioned strategically in the direct line of sight upon entering the nave, its prominence draws worshippers towards its sacred presence.

### THE TABERNACLE

The journey of reverence continues as the gaze is guided beyond the Altar, leading to the elevated Tabernacle positioned just beyond it. Placed at the visual epicenter of the sanctuary, beneath the watchful gaze



*The Tabernacle and Crucifix are focal points within the Sanctuary.*



## THE CRUCIFIX

As our visual ascent persists, our eyes ascend further to the Crucifix. Crafted by the same skilled artist who fashioned the resurrected corpus now displayed in the Welcome Center, as well as the Daily Chapel Crucifix, this Crucifix establishes a visual and spiritual link. Furthermore, we are blessed to house a relic of The True Cross of Jesus Christ placed in a chamber on the back of our cross. The wooden cross holding the corpus bears additional significance, having supported the resurrected corpus before remodeling.

This continuity extends to the Daily Mass Chapel, where both the corpus and cross were crafted by the same artist. Here, a narrative unfolds, connecting three distinct presentations of Jesus: one depicting His last breath (the Chapel), another His expiration (the Church), and the third, His triumphant resurrection (the Welcome Center). This unity of craftsmanship and thematic portrayal creates a spiritual thread, weaving throughout the whole campus.



*Jesus is seen taking His last breath in the Chapel.*



*The Resurrected Jesus is visible in the Welcome Center*





*The Cupola Mosaic*

of the Crucifix, this intentional arrangement points to the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Here, the acknowledgment of His abiding presence among us becomes evident.

#### THE CUPOLA

The culminating point of the vertical visual journey within the sacred space is the Cupola, the crown of the nave. Here, a captivating mosaic unfolds, portraying the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove descending upon the worshipping community. This symbolic representation draws inspiration from Sacred Scripture, where the dove signifies peace after the Great Flood and serves as a sign of the Holy Spirit following the baptism of Jesus.

Adorning the sacred scene, enumerated around the Dove are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as detailed in Isaiah: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear

of the Lord. This mosaic not only encapsulates the spiritual aspirations of the congregation but also serves as a visual reminder of the divine attributes bestowed upon the faithful.

It's worth noting that this depiction of the Dove of the Holy Spirit finds inspiration from Bernini's masterpiece in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, adding a touch of artistic homage to the spiritual narrative. As one gazes upon this elevated mosaic it seamlessly merges with the stained-glass windows portraying a celestial sky, evoking a profound sense of the Holy Spirit descending from the heavens and enveloping us in its divine presence. The harmonious integration of these artistic elements creates a visual symphony that reinforces the sacred atmosphere, symbolizing the ethereal connection between the divine and the earthly realm. From the golden cupola, radiant rays extend into the body of the nave. These luminous beams gracefully reach down to the Crucifix, Tabernacle,

and Altar, seamlessly transforming back into a golden hue. This intentional design creates a visual connection, as if celestial light flows through the cupola, illuminating the sacred elements below and imparting a sense of divine presence throughout the entire space.

## THE NAVE MARBLE

The careful selection of Carrara marble from Italy and Azul Cielo from Argentina (translated as "Blue Sky" or "Blue Heaven") in the Nave Marble transcends mere aesthetics; it's a purposeful endeavor to fashion the spiritual home into a refuge of peace and tranquility.

Carrara marble, a clean white marble, serves as a canvas of purity, blending seamlessly with the Azul Cielo's blue marble to evoke a sense of serenity. Internationally acknowledged as the color for peace, the color blue has been strategically woven into the church's design. Together, the two marbles create a space that not only symbolizes peace but also embodies the purity of the spiritual life.

In the nurturing embrace of the blue the spiritual home becomes more than a physical space; it becomes a sanctuary for the soul. As worshippers enter, the serene ambiance created by the blue hues invites them into a tranquil realm, fostering a sense of calmness and harmony. The intentional use of the colors throughout the church is a visual reminder that this sacred space is designed not only for communal worship but also as a refuge—a place where one can find solace, contemplation, and a profound connection with the divine.

Just as Our Mother Mary is associated with the calming hue, the blue becomes



a conduit for a spiritual connection, offering a haven for those seeking peace within the sacred walls.



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Images of the Carrara marble blending with the Azul Cielo marble throughout the sanctuary space including the Baptistry, Altar, Ambo, Tabernacle, Sanctuary steps, and Holy Water Font.



## THE HORIZONTAL OR COMMUNAL EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE WORSHIP SPACE

A circular or semi-circular worship layout design was maintained to promote a sense of inclusivity and participation. It was important to capture the feeling of connection to one another, fostering a communal experience during the mass. It minimizes the sense of architectural hierarchy and creates a more intimate setting where everyone can actively participate in the worship.

### THE UPPER NAVE CIRCULAR BAND

The cupola serves as the vertical crown, symbolizing the divine realm and the heavenly perspective. The horizontal descent of the rays behind the dove and coming out of the cupola signifies God's reaching out to humanity, initiating a connection between the divine and the earthly. It echoes the idea of the Incarnation, where God took on human form in the person of Jesus Christ to bridge the gap between the sacred and the mundane.





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The cupola

The continuous ring enveloping the upper nave is the imitation of a wedding ring recalling the sacred bond between Christ and the Church. The soft yellow glow, reminiscent of a gold ring, emphasizes the warmth, purity, and enduring nature of the divine relationship. It symbolizes the covenant between God and the Church, akin to the vows exchanged in earthly marriages and holy orders. By using this architectural design element in the divine context, it underscores

the tangible and symbolic nature of the relationship between God and the Church.

## THE LOWER NAVE BAND

The Lower Nave Band unfolds as a visual journey, extending a profound invitation to accompany Jesus on His path of passion. The Via Dolorosa, the Sorrowful Way, traces the footsteps of Jesus from Pontius Pilate's praetorium to the moment of laying Him in the tomb. Mosaic depictions unfold seamlessly along the lower band, guiding the faithful through the fourteen traditional Stations of the Cross, intentionally beginning at the side of the Ambo concluding in progression at the baptistry.

At the Ambo the gospel is spoken proclaiming the life of Jesus Christ. The baptismal font embodies both meanings of tomb and womb, signifying death and new life.

Interwoven through the Stations of the Cross, a crown of golden thorns, twisted together, accentuates the visual narrative. The Stations serve as a spiritual pilgrimage, guiding the faithful through prayerful meditation on key scenes of Jesus' suffering and death. The meticulous attention to detail, including the depiction of Jesus' last drops of blood, resonates with the profound sacrifice made for humanity.

Particularly striking is the symbolic imagery of the bloody crown of thorns that wraps the lower band of the nave. This representation not only emphasizes Jesus' true kingship but also underscores the extraordinary lengths to which He was willing to go for the redemption of His people. The Lower Nave Band







*The Baptistry*

thus becomes a compelling testament to the depth of Christ's love and the transformative power of His sacrifice and serves as a symbolic crown placed upon the parish community gathered.

### THE BAPTISTRY

**P**urposefully designed, the baptismal font takes on the shape of an octagon. Baptism serves as the initiation of a Christian's path towards a life that will never end, symbolizing the eighth day—a perpetual celebration of Christ's reign of peace and justice, also represented in the eight-sided cupola as heaven. After Jesus was baptized, He emerged from the water and John the Baptist saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. From the time of our Baptism the Holy Spirit dwells within us.

In Christian tradition, the eighth day holds particular significance as Jesus rose from

the dead on a Sunday, often referred to as "the eighth day." This concept is further commemorated through the Octave of Christmas and the Octave of Easter, both featuring a consecutive eight days of Masses, elevating these transformative events within the Christian faith.

The Church's initiation rites commence with baptism and reach fulfillment in the reception of the Eucharist, portraying the Christian's progression from the waters of baptism to the sacred altar. The baptismal font, meticulously crafted from Carrara and Azul Cielo marble, creates a visual horizontal link between the font and the altar underscoring the seamless transition from the font to the altar. This intentional connection emphasizes the significance of the entire journey, from baptismal initiation to the sacred communion at the altar. We were dedicated to the Lord in Baptism; this was made possible by



*An artist rendering of our sanctuary area.*

the death of Jesus on the cross. We have been baptized into the Paschal mystery, Jesus' death and Resurrection.

Positioned on the Baptistry back wall, the Church employs three significant oils: the oil of the Infirm, the oil of the Catechumens, and the oil of holy Chrism. Symbolizing strength, these oils are utilized in anointing ceremonies, bestowing the Holy Spirit. This sacred anointing consecrates individuals, dedicating them to God's service.

## THE SANCTUARY AREA

The principle ritual furnishings in the Sanctuary Area include the Altar, where the eucharistic sacrifice is offered, the Ambo, from which God's word is proclaimed, and the Chair of the priest celebrant. Their arrangement is

purposefully aligned with the celebration of the Eucharist. Elevated on three steps, adorned with Azul Cielo marble nosing, the Sanctuary Area is designed to emphasize the distinctive nature of the sacred actions occurring in this space.

## THE ALTAR (PART II)

The Church's Altar is strategically positioned both horizontally and vertically. This intentional arrangement designates the Altar as the central focal point, where the congregation comes together horizontally in communal worship and connects vertically with the divine during the celebration of the Eucharist. The mensa (top) is made of an eight-inch-thick piece of Carrara marble representing Jesus Christ the Living Stone.

Horizontally, the altar serves as a



*Our Presider Chairs*



*The Ambo*

unifying element, aligning with the axis of the congregation and forming the crossbar of an "architectural" cross. This design symbolizes a convergence point where worshippers gather, emphasizing the communal aspect of the faith experience. It visually connects the entire congregation as they unite in worship and celebration

Vertically, the altar's prominence signifies its elevated spiritual importance. Positioned at the intersection of the divine and the earthly realms, it becomes the conduit for the liturgy of the Mass. The vertical orientation emphasizes the transcendent nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice, where Jesus is made present—body, blood, soul, and divinity—for the faithful.

#### THE AMBO

**F**rom the Ambo, the Word of God is proclaimed, fulfilling a vital role in the structure of the Mass. As one of the four main parts of the

liturgy—the Introductory Rite, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and Concluding Rites, the Ambo is where Jesus is made present in the Mass by the proclamation of the Word.

Referred to as the "table of the word," the ambo shares the same materials and table-like design as the altar, symbolizing the unity between the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist. The ambo serves as the focal point for the proclamation of the Word, embodying the presence of Christ as the Word made flesh. The ambo stands as a tangible reminder of the centrality of scripture within the liturgical life of the Church, inviting the faithful to encounter the Word of God and be transformed by its message.

#### THE PRESIDER'S CHAIR

**T**he chair of the priest celebrant is understood "as a symbol of his office of presiding over the assembly and





*Mary holding the infant Jesus*



*Joseph with the child Jesus*

directing prayer”. Our chair holds a symbol of the Agnus Dei, representing Christ’s sacrifice, emphasizing His role as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Likewise, Jesus is present in the Priest presiding in the person of Jesus as head of the assembly.

#### THE SHRINE STATUES

**A**nchoring each side of the Ambulatory stand statues representing the Holy Family, serving as poignant reminders of our roles as parents and guardians. Designed to evoke a sense of responsibility, these statues capture the essence of the family bond.

On the left of the nave (North) the Mary and infant Jesus statue is symbolic of motherhood and how an infant needs its mother. It speaks to the innate need for a mother’s care and protection, portraying the tender relationship that extends

beyond her. This imagery also serves as a powerful reminder of the sanctity of life, particularly emphasizing the importance of protecting the unborn. It underscores the divine recognition of each individual’s potential for greatness, even from the earliest stages of life. Jeremiah tells us that God knows us before we are conceived in our mother’s wombs. God knows and loves us at the moment of our conception. Moreover, He “consecrates” the unborn.

Conversely, to the right of the nave (South) the statue of St. Joseph with Jesus as an adolescent offers a unique portrayal tailored to our current world. St. Joseph’s posture, with his arms resting on Jesus’ shoulders, serves as a reminder of a father’s pivotal role in guiding and nurturing his child. It emphasizes the significance of a present and loving father figure, whose influence is indispensable in a child’s

upbringing, especially in a societal landscape where such figures may be lacking. This portrayal also underscores the importance of children honoring and respecting their parents, thus completing the cycle of family responsibility and care.

It is worth noting that the statues' marble, sourced from the Carrara mountains and sculpted in Italy, is the very same marble that adorned Michelangelo's masterpieces, lending an air of timelessness and artistic heritage to these representations of the Holy Family.

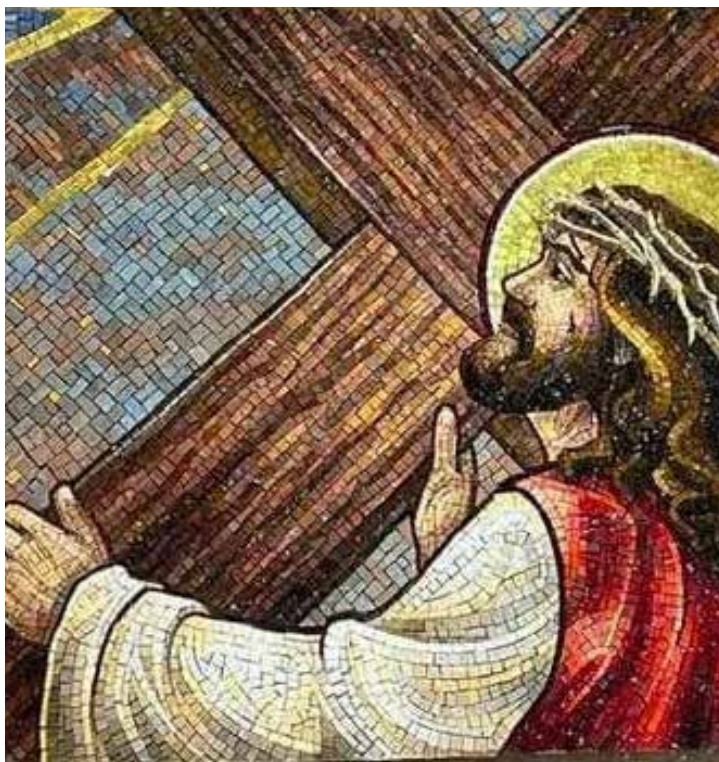
Quintessentially these statues remind us that our Lord was born into flesh, became incarnate, and became one of us in all ways but sin. After finding the young Jesus teaching in the temple, Mary and Joseph took Jesus back to Nazareth where he grew in wisdom and knowledge. These are profound reminders of the sacred bonds and responsibilities inherent in familial relationships, drawing inspiration from both timeless

artistic tradition and divine wisdom.

## THE MOSAICS

The Stations of the Cross, crafted by Mellini of Florence, Italy, stand as a testament to the studio's esteemed legacy of mosaic craftsmanship spanning generations. While Mellini has produced countless mosaics over the years, none are as unique as these. This unparalleled depiction of Jesus' Passion, presented in a continuous band of mosaics, stands as a singular achievement, unparalleled in its detail and artistry. Exceptional care was taken to faithfully translate the artist's renderings into vibrant, lifelike scenes. Every detail, from the agony etched on Jesus' face to the depiction of blood, breathes life into these sacred narratives.

The mosaic itself, composed of small tiles known as tesserae, incorporates a touch of Byzantine artistry with the use of 18-carat gold leaf diacritics, lending an



*An up-close look at the Stations of the Cross Mosaic*



*The Mosaics on display in the Main Sanctuary.*



*Deacon Bryce Baumann placing our sacred relics underneath the Altar.*



*The Reliquary buried underneath the Main Sanctuary Altar.*

aura of divine radiance to the imagery. The colors of the tiles were carefully chosen to harmonize seamlessly with the brick and wood elements of our nave, with some even specially made of multiple colors. The background hues echo the warm tones of our brickwork, while the incorporation of the different blues recalls the serene presence of needed peace.

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## THE RELIQUARIES

The reservation of relics of Saints is an ancient tradition within the Church, dating back to the early days when Masses were celebrated clandestinely in the catacombs of Rome. These sacred relics, often embedded within or beneath the altar, serve as tangible connections to the martyrs and saints of the Faith, invoking their intercession and honoring their sacrifices, a practice that endures to this day. While the tradition of possessing relics, such as small fragments of bone or clothing, experienced a decline after the Second Vatican Council, it was never officially abandoned or discouraged. In our parish, we uphold this venerable tradition by honoring several saints beneath our altars, each chosen for their relevance to our community and mission



***Under Our Main Church Altar:***

- St. Vincent de Paul, patron saint of charities and volunteers, symbolizes the spirit of service embodied by our SVDP outreach group, which provides essential assistance to those in need within our local community.
- St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles and commonly venerated as patron saint of architects, is a tribute to Fr. Tom Cloherty's leadership and vision in overseeing the remodeling of our parish and school campus.
- St. Pius X, a reformer of the Church and patron saint of Communicants and pilgrims, signifies our commitment to fostering spiritual growth and pilgrimage experiences, particularly through the sacrament of Holy Communion at an early age.
- St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of the environment, animals, and

peace, inspires us to be stewards of creation and advocates for harmony and reconciliation in our world.

- St. Bernadette of Lourdes, patron saint of illnesses and those ridiculed for their faith, serves as a beacon of hope and resilience for those facing physical and/or spiritual challenges.

***Under Our Daily Mass Chapel Altar:***

- St. James, patron saint of hatmakers, laborers, and rheumatoid sufferers, honors our founding pastor, Fr. Jim Balint, and symbolizes the hard work and perseverance of our parish community.
- St. Bartholomew, patron saint of various trades, including leatherworkers and bookbinders, recognizes the diverse talents and professions within our parish family.
- St. Paula, mother of St. Julia, patron saint of widows, represents



*An up-close look at our relic of St. Bernadette of Lourdes.*



*An up-close look at our relic of St. Pius X, O.P.*

our solidarity and support for parishioners who have experienced the loss of a spouse.

- St. Julia, whose patronage is not specified, is venerated alongside her mother, serving as a reminder of the strength and faithfulness found in family bonds.
- St. Katherine Drexel, patron saint of racial justice and philanthropists, embodies our commitment to social justice and equality, as we follow her example of advocating for marginalized communities.

These relics, carefully chosen and reverently preserved, serve as constant reminders of the communion of saints and the enduring presence of God's grace within our parish community.

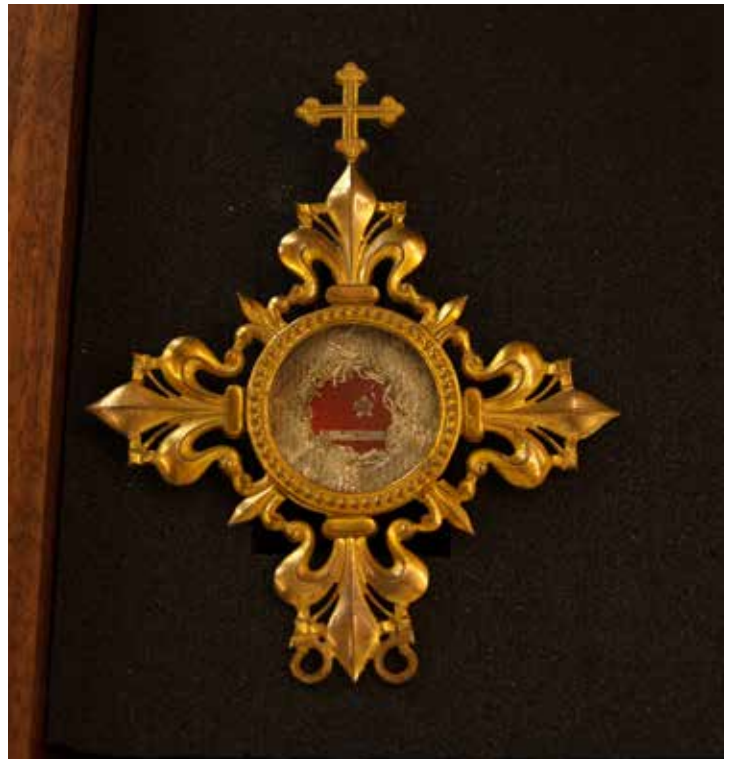
## SUMMARY

In our efforts to renovate our church, honoring the past and our traditions while preserving the sense of community that defines us was paramount. As we envision the remodeled worship space, we strive to strike a harmonious balance between honoring the transcendent nature of God and fostering the communal bonds that unite us.

At the heart of this transformation lies the altar, where the divine and the human intersect, symbolizing the convergence of heaven and earth. It serves as a focal point, drawing us into a sacred space where we can commune with the divine and with one another.



*An up-close look at our relic of St. Thomas the Apostle.*



*An up-close look at our relic of St. Francis of Assisi.*



*A relic of the True Cross hidden inside the Main Sanctuary Crucifix.*

Our ultimate aspiration is for all who enter this sacred space to encounter profound peace. In a world besieged by turmoil and uncertainty, we seek solace and tranquility—both externally and within our own hearts. May

this renovated worship space serve as a sanctuary where we can find rest from the chaos of the world and cultivate a sense of inner harmony and serenity.





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