

BUILT OF LIVING STONES

Art, Architecture, and Worship

I. The Church Building (#16 – 18).

A. House of God on earth – *domus Dei*.

B. House fit for the prayer of the saints – *domus ecclesiae*.

1. Place for celebration of the Eucharist.
2. Place for adoration and reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.
3. Sign of the pilgrim Church on earth.
4. Reflection of the Church dwelling in heaven.
5. Place of “gathering”, “resting”, “encounter” and “departure”.
6. Must be suited to sacred celebrations.
 - a. Dignified – ennobling and uplifting.
 - b. Beautiful – intrinsically excellent.
7. Inspire/reflect the community’s prayer and its inner life of grace.

II. Liturgical Principles for Building or Renovating Churches (#27 – 45).

A. The Church offers no universal blueprint or style.

B. Principles are drawn from the decrees/documents of Vatican II/

1. Harmony with Church law and the needs of the liturgy.
 - a. General Instruction of the Roman Missal – Chapter 5.
 - b. Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar.
 - c. Code of Canon Law.
2. Fosters full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy.
 - a. Internal – heart and mind.
 - b. External – voice and body.
3. Reflects the various roles of the participants – assembly, priest, etc.
4. Issues of “inculturation” (#41 – 45).

III. The Church Building and the Sacred Rites Celebrated There (#46 – 149).

A. Primacy and centrality of the Sunday Eucharist.

B. Place for the Liturgical Assembly Gathered as One Body in Christ.

1. The area for the congregation – *nave* (#51 – 53).

- a. Must be able to accommodate a variety of ritual actions.
- b. Different from the space designed for an audience.
- c. Various parts organized as a unified and integrated whole.

2. Sanctuary (#54 – 55).

- a. Place for altar, ambo and priest's chair.
- b. Place from which various ministries are carried out.
- c. Distinctiveness of design, furnishing and/or elevation.
- d. Distinct from but organically related to the nave.
- e. Able to accommodate the various rites and movements.

3. The Altar (#56 – 60).

- a. The point around which the various rites are arrayed.
- b. Both a place of sacrifice and of banquet.
- c. Reflects the nobility, beauty, strength and simplicity of Christ.
- d. In new Churches there is to be only one altar.
- e. Shape and size should be in proportion to the church.
- f. Visibility without visual or symbolic division.
- g. Accessible to those with disabilities.
- h. Relics of saints – permitted but not required (#60).

4. The Ambo (#61 – 62).

- a. Reflects the dignity and importance of God's Word.
- b. Space to allow the gospel procession and its ministers.
- c. Design should be in harmony with the altar.
- d. Accessible to those with disabilities.
- e. Displaying the Book of the Gospels before/after the celebration.

5. The Chair for the Priest Celebrant (#63 – 65).

- a. Visible to all in the congregation.
- b. Reflects dignity of office, without being remote or grandiose.
- c. Placed in the sanctuary and turned toward the people.
- d. Not used by lay presiders.

6. The Baptistry (#66 – 69).

- a. Baptism requires a prominent place for celebration.
- b. Baptism (font) starts a journey that leads to Eucharist (altar).
- c. Integral relationship between font and altar should be visible.
- d. Font should be visible/accessible to all who enter the church.
- e. Symbolism: womb/tomb, dying/rising, eighth day of eternity.
- f. Font should accommodate baptism of both infants and adults.
- g. Large enough to supply ample amounts of water.
- h. Fonts permitting both immersion and pouring are encouraged.
- i. Location of the font and baptisms relation to other sacraments.

7. The Reservation of the Eucharist (#70 – 80).

- a. The tabernacle may be located in a **chapel of reservation**.
- b. The chapel should be integrally connected with the church.
- c. The chapel should be conspicuous to the faithful.
- d. The tabernacle may be placed in **the sanctuary**.
- e. It must not draw focus away from the celebration of the Mass.
- f. Use of distance, lighting and/or architectural devices.
- g. Tabernacle's visibility when the Mass is not being celebrated.