

FAQs – RCC Renovation Project

December 06, 2021

1. Why do we need a renovation project?

Resurrection Catholic Church (RCC) has not had any significant renovation or refurbishing for over 20 years. The church's physical plant and infrastructure, including HVAC, roofing, flooring, lighting, and office space require replacement and/or modernization both for efficiency and for safety purposes.

As part of its renovation project, RCC also has critical need to implement changes that will improve the worship experience for its parishioners. The highest priority changes are expansion of the sanctuary/altar space and installation of sound controlled separation between the church's worship and non-worship areas (a) to allow for undisturbed meditation, prayer, and liturgical services in the sanctuary and nave, and (b) to facilitate fellowship activities in the narthex prior to and after Mass.

Finally, the design, arrangement and ornamentation of the church and worship space need to be brought into compliance with the directives stipulated by the "GIRM" (*General Instruction for the Roman Missal*), Canon Law, and "Construction and Renovation Policy" of the Diocese of Richmond.

2. What are the goals to be achieved under the renovation plan?

The goals of RCC's renovation project are, as follows: (a) improve the worship experience for RCC parishioners, (b) to repair and refurbish our church in those infrastructure areas that require attention, and (c) to reconfigure the main floor of the church to better facilitate safe entry/exit, improve staff office space, and separate worship from non-worship areas.

Our church architecture should ultimately demonstrate that it is a special place where parishioners assemble to worship our glorious and splendiferous God, the creator of the universe. And, our sanctuary and altar must appropriately visually acknowledge at every Mass that this is a place where the "City of God" meets the "city of man" in the actual presence of Jesus Christ.

3. Why is the Richmond Diocese's approval required for RCC's proposed renovation project?

The Catholic Church organizes itself under the *Code of Canon Law*, which can be found on the Vatican website. When our church was established as a mission church and subsequently as a full-fledged parish, its charter specified that it would be fully subject to and operate in accordance with the *Code of Canon Law*. Canon Law specifies that all parishes will administer their property (temporal goods) as governed by the requirements of canon law. Under canon law, the Bishop has full authority concerning the purchase, administration, or sale of church property within his diocese. Hence, in our diocese any building and renovation projects over \$25,000 or any project that involves changes to the sanctuary/worship space must be approved by the Richmond Diocese.

4. What is the specific source for rules and regulations that govern the administration of church property and configuration of our church's worship space?

All Roman Catholic Churches worldwide are subject to the instructions presented in the *Code of Canon Law* and the *Roman Missal*. In the United States, the provisos of the *Roman Missal* are further elucidated in the *General Instruction for the Roman Missal*, Third Edition.

Under the *Code of Canon Law*, canons 1254-1310 regulate the purchase, ownership, administration, and sale of temporal goods—i.e., all church property. (See Vatican website)

General Instruction for the Roman Missal (“GIRM”), Third Edition, as introduced by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2011, presents English language instructions for celebration of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Dioceses of the United States. Chapter V of the “GIRM” sets forth precepts and guidelines (“Instructions”) for “The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for Celebration of the Eucharist.” The RCC renovation project must be compliant with these requirements. (See website: www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal)

5. What is the role of the Richmond Diocese's Building and Renovation Committee (“BARC”)?

Acting under the authority of the Bishop of the Richmond Diocese, the “BARC” is responsible for reviewing and approving any building and/or renovation project involving liturgical space, regardless of its scope and size in accordance with the diocese's “Construction and Renovation Policy” manual. The “BARC” enforces “Limits of Authority” (guidelines for approvals required to implement a building or renovation project based on the estimated monetary value of the project), and it oversees and administers a seven-phase review and approval process for project implementation. As the Bishop's delegate, the “BARC” makes decisions and operates in accordance with the *Code of Canon Law* and the “GIRM.”

6. Why does the installation of kneelers need to be part of the RCC renovation project?

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond requires that its member churches have kneelers installed to facilitate the celebration of the Eucharist in accordance with the “GIRM” and the instructions of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Since RCC did not provide for kneelers during its initial construction, the “BARC” now stipulates that priority be accorded to installing kneelers as part of any building and renovation project. This applies to all churches in the Richmond Diocese.

According to the “GIRM”, Chapter II, Instruction 43, throughout the Dioceses of the United States the faithful “should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) until after the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer, except when prevented on occasion of ill health, or for reasons of lack of space, of the large number of people present, or for another reasonable cause.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (“Praying with Body, Mind, and Voice” – 2010) underscored that prayer during Mass “is expressed by our bodies well,” and affirmed “that the bishops of this country have chosen the posture of kneeling for the entire Eucharistic Prayer.”

Once kneelers are installed at RCC, each parishioner will have the choice to either kneel or sit depending on her/his personal physical considerations during the Eucharistic Prayer.

7. Why has the tabernacle been moved to the altar area under RCC's renovation project?

According to the "*GIRM*," Chapter V, Article 314: "...the Most Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is truly noble, prominent, conspicuous, worthily decorated, and suitable for prayer." The majority of the churches that comprise the Diocese of Richmond, therefore, locate the tabernacle upon the altar.

Prior to the imposition of COVID restrictions, RCC's tabernacle was located in RCC's chapel. This made sense at that time because the worship space was not segregated from other areas of the church (e.g., the commons) and could not guarantee quiet, intimate space for prayer. During the COVID-lockdown phase in the Richmond Diocese, due to social distancing concerns in our small chapel and because chapel placement of the tabernacle was not "prominent or conspicuous," our previous Pastor decided that the tabernacle should be moved to the back center of the altar.

Under the proposed renovation plan, the tabernacle will remain positioned in the sanctuary behind the altar table, consistent with "*GIRM*" precepts, as it is now. There is no provision for a separate chapel in the renovation design due to lack of sufficient space. (Note: Within church architecture, separate chapels were and are more typically provided for in large, cathedral-style churches.)

8. Why is the "Risen Christ" depiction on the altar being replaced with a Christ Crucified rendering?

The "Risen Christ" depiction authored by Joe Bisso is recognized by virtually all parishioners as a signature symbol of Resurrection Catholic Church. It represents our congregation's dedication to our Lord Jesus Christ, RCC's welcoming disposition to all who wish to join us in worshiping God and Jesus Christ according to Roman Catholic beliefs and tenets, and it is the cornerstone for the foundation of our parish.

The RCC Renovation Committee believes that the "Risen Christ" should be prominently featured in our church. However, the Committee is also cognizant that "Instruction 308" of the "*GIRM*" specifies that there is always to be a cross with the figure of Christ crucified upon it "either on the altar or near it, where it is clearly visible to the assembled congregation." From a theological perspective, the focus or apex of the Roman Catholic mass is the commemoration of Jesus' passion and sacrifice for all humanity. During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we, the congregants, are direct participants and witnesses to Jesus' sacrifice. For this reason, the renovation plan incorporates a depiction of Christ crucified as the dominant focus overlooking the altar.

Under the renovation plan, the "Risen Christ" depiction will be relocated for prominent display in the narthex, as the emblem of our parish. It will be the first major piece of the religious art that greets worshippers as they enter Resurrection Catholic Church. Its placement in the narthex will present the theme of our parish and underscore the welcoming atmosphere of fellowship that we believe should define our parish and pervade our church.

9. Why does the narthex need to be physically separated from the nave?

Under our church's current configuration, the nave and commons area present one contiguous space. It is not possible to hold church services or for parishioners in the worship area to meditate and pray either prior to, during, or after church services without noise interference from conversations in the commons or office areas. It is also problematic to preserve the requisite sanctity of the worship space with the tabernacle present on the altar.

By installing a noise-control partition to separate the nave from the commons, worship can take place without disturbance for those engaged in prayer, fellowship activities will not be hindered, and business office affairs can be conducted without concern for noise level. Having the narthex physically separated from the nave will provide necessary space and opportunity for parishioners to gather and "catch up" before and after mass without worry that they may be interfering with prayer/worship activities.

10. Why is reorientation of the choir being incorporated into RCC's renovation project?

As the choir is currently situated, choir members do not have the opportunity for full participation in the Mass, which is a requirement for all congregants. Choir members do not have a direct view of the altar and the priest as Mass is being celebrated. The proposed reorientation of the choir will afford the choir the opportunity to fulfill its liturgical role and allow each member full, sacramental participation in the mass.

An additional concern regarding the choir's current placement is that its location alongside the altar/sanctuary diverts worshipers' attention from the liturgical activities taking place on the altar and lends the perception that choir members are performers apart from the congregation.

According to the "GIRM," Chapter V, Instruction 312: "The choir should be positioned with respect to the design of each church so as to make evident its character as a part of the gathered community of the faithful fulfilling a specific function. The location should also assist the choir to exercise its function more easily and conveniently to allow each choir member full, sacramental participation in the Mass."

Therefore, the choir ideally should not be located at the front of the church alongside the altar. The choir is being moved to the nave area in order (a) to provide choir members with the opportunity for full participation in the liturgy, (b) to be positioned so as not to detract the attention of the congregation from the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and (c) to facilitate and confirm choir members fulfilling their musical functions as sister and brother congregants, rather than separate musical performers. The pianist location will be finalized during the project's final design phase, such that the pianist will have sightlines to both the altar and the choir.

11. Why does the flooring have to be replaced on the altar and in the nave?

RCC's altar flooring needs to be repaired and replaced, and the sanctuary/altar area needs to be expanded.

Repair of the sanctuary/altar floor is necessary because there is significant weakness in the under-flooring which should be reconstructed and reinforced for safety reasons, and to eliminate floor creaking that interferes with celebration of the Mass.

The altar's current carpeted surface needs to be replaced with either a stone, tile, or hardwood surface to permit recovery of the Most Holy Eucharist in case of accidental dropping or spillage.

The altar needs to be enlarged because with the number of Eucharistic Ministers that participate in Mass celebration there is significant crowding on the altar that impairs movement of the celebrant and makes it unsafe for those standing at either side of the altar while the Eucharist is being celebrated.

The carpeting in the nave is quite worn after more than 20 years of service. It needs to be replaced with a different flooring, such as tile, new carpeting, or a combination thereof.

12. Why does the original parishioner-made altar furniture have to be replaced?

Foremost, RCC needs to upgrade its altar furniture to bring our church in compliance with the "GIRM" requirements. The altar table top should be made of stone or, alternatively, of solid wood and permanently fixed to the altar floor—ours currently is not. The ambo also needs to be upgraded to be a stationary fixture as complement to the altar table. (See "GIRM," Chapter V)

In general, our altar furniture is worn, dated and in need of repair or replacement. The tables, chairs, and candle holders are more than 20 years old and should be replaced in the context of the renovation project, consistent with a uniform design that will be finalized during the upcoming detailed design project phase.

13. Where will the baptismal font be placed?

The baptismal font is currently planned to be located in the center of the narthex. This is permissible under GIRM guidelines. Sight-lines to the baptismal font from the nave during funeral services and baptisms will be facilitated by opening of three sets of double doors in the partition separating the nave from the narthex.

During the final project design phase, if an efficient way can be found to place the font within the nave area, then the font may be relocated.

14. What will happen to RCC's existing stained glass windows?

Most of RCC's stained existing glass windows will be preserved and used in the renovation design.

The "Lake Window" currently installed over the altar will be moved and mounted over the main entrance doors to the church. It will be the first thing seen by worshipers as they drive up to the church and when they approach on foot to enter the main entry doors.

The stained glass windows on either side of the nave will remain in the same place where they are now located.

The stained glass window now centered in the chapel will be relocated in the redesign, but the precise new location has not yet been selected.

The two stained glass pattern windows on either side of the sanctuary are not planned to be incorporated into the renovation project.

15. Why is the ramp to the altar placed on the back wall of the sanctuary?

The wheel chair ramp has been moved to the back of the altar for two reasons.

One of the main aims for sanctuary renovation is to expand the width of the altar floor space. Having a ramp in front will cut in to the planned altar enlargement.

Second, placing the ramp at the back of the altar will allow for a longer “runway.” This results in less incline to traverse for those using walkers or wheelchairs. This ramp location will also allow for installation of a hand rail for the ramp’s full length as an added safety feature.

16. Why is the current chair style seating being replaced by pews?

A key objective of the proposed church renovation design for the nave worship space is to create a more reverent and intimate setting for prayer and meditation for parishioners. The Renovation Committee believes that the installation of pews in the nave underscores that this space is singularly and permanently dedicated to prayer and worship, as is traditional in most Catholic churches.

The use of chairs for nave seating leaves the suggestion that this space is not devoted solely to prayer/worship, but can be regularly reconfigured and used for non-worship functions. Based on comments received from RCC parishioners, most are in favor of pew seating in the worship area.

The Committee recognizes that the new pew seating must be comfortable. Therefore, this will be an important consideration for the pew style that is selected in the final design. Options for padded pew benches or movable seat cushions will be given consideration. All kneelers installed with the new pews will be padded.

17. What is the new seating capacity under the renovation program?

The current seating capacity of our church is approximately 500. Under the renovation project the seating capacity will be reduced to 360 in the worship area. This reduction is the result of (a) an expansion of the narthex to accommodate fellowship activity, and (b) a decision to expand pew spacing to 18 inches from the standard 16 inches (back of pew to bench front) to make it easier for parishioners to navigate through the pew rows. Also, included in the seating plan are 4 pew cutouts to accommodate wheelchairs.

The reduction in seating capacity will not significantly affect worship activities for the foreseeable future. The number of registered parish families has declined slightly over the last several years, and during holiday overflow Masses the narthex partition doors can be opened so that additional seating can be added in the narthex space. Also, when necessary, Masses can be livestreamed into Morrow Hall, which can be configured with chair seating.

The demographic projections for Bedford and Franklin Counties do not anticipate significant growth in population in our area for the near and medium term. Also, due to COVID concerns some parishioners are continuing to avoid in-person Mass participation and limit participation to live-stream Masses. However, if in the future in-person Mass participation increases dramatically for whatever reason, RCC should be able to schedule an additional Mass time for regular weekend Masses.

18. With the tabernacle on the altar, will the nave/worship area of the church be available for use for non-worship activities?

Use of the worship area for non-worship activity will be decided by the Pastor on a case-by-case basis consistent with "GIRM" and Richmond Diocese guidelines.

19. Where will the library be located after the renovation program is completed?

The final decision on the location of the library has not yet been made. It will either be placed in the main floor conference room or in one of the lower level classrooms.

20. In the renovated worship space design rendering, why are wood beams added to the ceiling along with wood crosshatch on the sanctuary wall?

The wood beams and crosshatch are part of the design recommendation formulated by Nic Charbonneau, who is the renovation project architect from the firm Harrison Design. The Renovation Committee discerned from the start of its planning that the renovation design should wherever possible highlight the theme that RCC is a "lake church." Thus, most of the renovation design and artistic depictions draw upon scripture passages that are in some manner tied to water (e.g., Jesus' Baptism at the Jordan River, Jesus in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus standing at the shore of the Sea of Galilee).

In keeping with the "lake church" theme, Harrison Design developed the wood beam design to give the suggestion that upon entering the worship space worshipers were boarding an ark or ship that would carry them to their final destination of eternal life with Jesus. As we celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the sanctuary presents itself to us as a "living water" pathway to heaven.

21. Does the renovation plan take into consideration and comply with all relevant considerations for safe entry-exit and emergency evacuation?

In preparing schematic design for RCC's renovation, the architectural design firm of Harrison Design has taken into account all applicable building code requirements, ADA (American Disability Act) provisos, and requisite safety requirements. In addition, the Parish Safety Committee has reviewed and approved the proposed schematic design floor plan.

22. Where will we hold mass during implementation of the 18 month renovation program?

During the construction period when the worship space is physically unavailable to hold Mass, weekly Masses will be held temporarily either in Morrow Hall or at a neighboring church with whom an accommodation agreement would need to be negotiated. With respect to the latter, one option might be to negotiate an agreement with Trinity Ecumenical.

23. Rather than spend for a renovation project, shouldn't available funds be given to the poor?

As a church, we have been and will continue to be generous in our outreach programs to help those in need. We certainly are and should be active in supporting and participating in anti-poverty programs together with various agencies and non-governmental organizations operating in our locale.

However, our church structure's main purpose for "being" is to be "a house of prayer" (Luke 19:45-47) and, thereby, to facilitate worship for our parishioners. As such, our church primarily exists (a) to celebrate the glory and splendor of God, (b) to commemorate Jesus' passion and sacrifice on behalf of humanity, and (c) to serve as a portal/gateway to guide worshipers to life everlasting with Jesus in heaven. The elements of our renovation program strive to address these criteria.

24. How will the renovation project be funded and how much money will I be asked to contribute?

The renovation project will be funded through three financial components. The first part will be from parish reserves. The second tranche will be from a project-specific capital campaign that will be organized with the assistance of the Richmond Diocese's Catholic Community Foundation. The remaining balance outstanding will be funded by a 15-year construction loan arranged under a line-of-credit secured by the Richmond Diocese. The precise funding allocation under each of these headings is not known at this time.

The total cost of the renovation project is currently estimated to be approximately \$2.7 million. All of the funding will ultimately come from parishioner donations. Reserves represent past donations; capital campaign pledges represent current and future donations, and loan principal repayments from parish operating income will commence once the project is completed.

As far as how much one should contribute to the renovation project, the answer is that this a personal decision for each of our parishioner families. "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)