

## CONTINUED...

## Renovations

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basketballs, observed Father Norman Tanck, CSB, pastor. The new building never came to be, however.

Meanwhile, the church's roof needed work and parish leaders wanted to move the choir from the back to the front, among other changes.

"The decision was made if we were going to do it, we'd do it right," said Father Tanck, pastor for three years. This parish, too, held meetings and LaBella Associates was there to answer questions, he said.

Explaining that he was familiar with 25 dioceses in the United States and Canada because of his work on his order's general council, he remarked that "this diocese offers services you don't find" in many others. The Diocesan Building Commission and other departments have offered good suggestions, "not just a stamp," he said.

The commission helped the parish work out a compromise for a tabernacle chapel area, he said. Parishioners wanted to be able to see the tabernacle, yet the altar needed to be the focus.

"The celebration of the Eucharist is not to create the Blessed Sacrament," Father Tanck said. "It is to come together to celebrate the Eucharist."

So the tabernacle was placed in an alcove left of the altar, with chairs for devotion.

"We've got to remember this is sacred to people," he said of the church. "We've had people who were concerned. You always

have people nostalgic for the past. They were baptized here, raised here, celebrated the sacraments of life here. But it's not the space that's sacred...What makes it sacred is when the people are here."

Some pews have been slanted to better face the altar, chairs in front offer flexibility, and wheelchairs can fit in easily.

And all new lighting makes the "holy people" more visible to one another.

"We just love this new openness," said Mary Ann Obark, religious-education director. "It's a very welcoming hospitable parish to begin with. Now we have the kind of structure that goes with who we are."

The church can hold 700 to 800 worshippers. In the back is a new chapel for private prayer, or a crying room, with a mosaic icon of Mary and the baby Jesus.

Two side entrance doors were closed off, and now the parishioners enter through six glass front doors. "No one's complained about the extra 10 feet," Father Tanck said, adding that the new entranceway makes for a bright, airy, welcoming transition between church and the day-to-day world.

Area artists created the mahogany altar, and oak ambo and chairs; a ceramist created the baptismal bowl and tiles for a mahogany font near the church entrance.

The only cross was also made of mahogany, and bears the parish's 25-year-old corpus. It is set near the entranceway, then carried in procession, and set in place at the altar, which is simple and spacious.

On All Saints Day, Father Tanck told parishioners that the altar is where saints and their departed loved ones gather with them. "That's where they stand," he said.

## St. Theodore's

It was just a week before Christmas 1998 that parishioners at St. Theodore's moved back into their church, using folding chairs until the pews arrived. There was no question work needed to be done at St. Theodore's, said staff members.

"Aesthetically there was nothing beautiful about it," said Rita Manners, music coordinator.

"The entrance was dark and narrow," added Sister Cathy Pflieger, RSM, pastoral associate. "Plaster was falling off here and there."

The church dates to 1957 and had been renovated with a new sanctuary, carpeting and Stations. But little was done after fire struck the church just two years later in 1986; Manners said.

The women noted that the newest renovation basically turned the church sideways. The long rows of pews were halved. People sitting 29 pews away from the sanctuary are



Christ the King Church

now 12 rows away. Yet the church seats more than it did before, about 560.

"Our main purpose was liturgy," said Sister Mary Jean Smith, SSJ, administrative assistant. "It was not our main purpose to be prettier, but the renovation did do that."

"Of course some said do a paint job and carpeting, and that's all we need," Sister Smith noted. Instead, the parish embarked on planning-committee meetings and parish meetings with the architect, LaBella Associates. Weekly talks were given on the meaning of Mass.

Almost two dozen parishioners, many volunteers, helped plan the renovation.

"I have never enjoyed being on a committee so much," Sister Pflieger said, attributing much to the leadership of the pastor, Father Daniel Holland, and Sister Smith. "We never had an argument."

It could have been tough choosing a new statue of Mary they needed, she remarked. "There were probably 18 or 20 of us around this table," she recalled. "We were paging through a statuary catalog to pick out a statue of Our Lady. Betty DiPonzio said, 'Oh isn't she beautiful.' There was not a dissenting voice among us."

The Madonna with the Children of the World is in a pre-existing altar niche, to the right of a new font with running water.

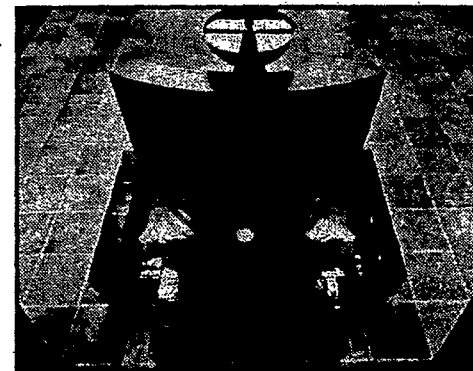
A Blessed Sacrament Chapel was built where the front door was, and features a broad window of stained glass. The old chapel was in the convent.

At the building's center, the sanctuary is done in cherry wood, including the altar, ambo, candlesticks and background paneling. A modern crucifix also of cherry is carried in procession and then set in place on the altar. Painted wood angels from Italy are on the walls at either side of the altar.

Costs for the renovation totaled about \$800,000. The parish raised about \$500,000 during a two-year pledge drive, according to the staff members. "We made the decision to tithe literally 10 percent of the money raised to give over five years to various causes," Sister Smith said, noting that \$10,000 per year is contributed.

While a number of people left the parish apparently due to the renovation, even more came to worship in the newly renovated church, they noted.

"It was because of the renovation party



but also the spirituality of the parish," Manners said.

## Queen of Peace

When Father James F. Slattery retired from Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brighton in 1986, he made it known that Queen of Peace faced three issues, recalled Sister Jacquelyn Reichart, RSM, now pastoral administrator. These were "to update the worship space, think about a parishwide census and a parish center."

The church dated to 1961 and had the traditional long aisle, with an altar railing between the congregation and sanctuary.

"We completely changed the whole interior in the design and the liturgical space was turned around," she said. "What we did was to switch into what is now a circular worship space."

Parishioners helped weave an altar runner for the tabernacle, take up the altar railing, smooth the floor with tiling and miter the pews. The renovation, designed by Monahan Associates Architects, was dedicated Dec. 8, 1993.

"All I can say is the people, even those concerned about losing the long traditional aisle, love it," Sister Reichart said.

The parish will now dedicate its parish center in honor of Father Slattery Dec. 17.

Miriam Norton, a charter member, said, "I knew they were doing it in other churches. I knew it was a big change, but I think because our church wasn't an older church like Blessed Sacrament, with stained glass windows, it was easier to accept for me."

Another parishioner, Alice Vogt, said, "I like being able to sit in sort of a round. I like to see people, the faith community, knowing they are there praying for me as I am praying for them."

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