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Photo courtesy of Father Vosko

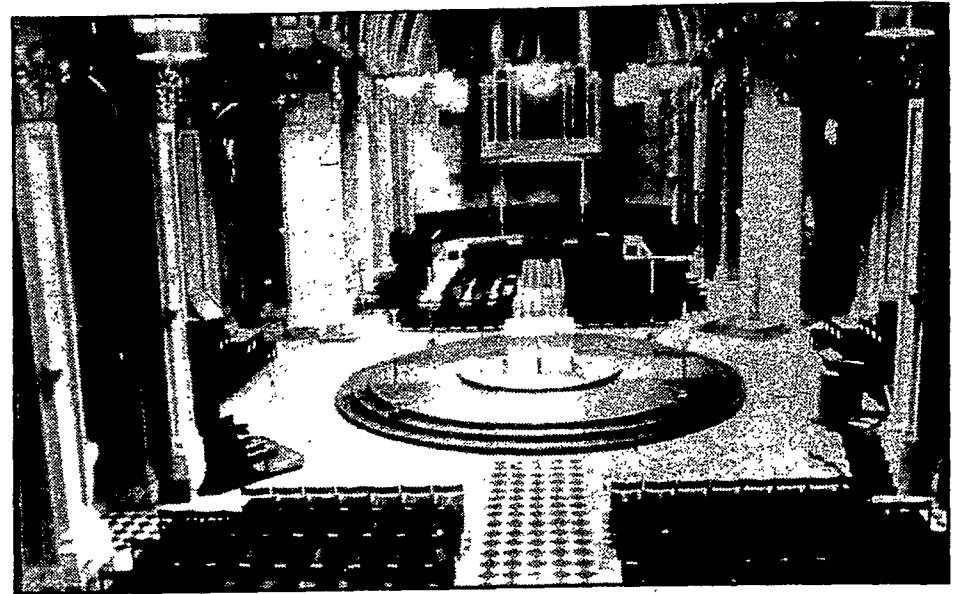
St. James Cathedral, Seattle *before*

Photo courtesy of Father Vosko

St. James Cathedral, Seattle *after*

Vosko

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question-and-answer sessions. His nightly themes will be: May 7 — history of Christian places of worship; May 8 — the appearance of a modern-day cathedral; May 9 — music and art in a cathedral.

The consultant also conducted a seminar with diocesan pastoral leaders April 25, at the annual priests' convocation in Auburn.

Father Vosko said it is vital that he promote a greater understanding of what goes into a cathedral renovation. Too often, he said, dissent and misconceptions arise because Catholic adults lack sufficient knowledge to fully understand the scriptural, aesthetic and liturgical ramifications of a renovation.

"Catholics are very loyal. But we're not very educated in terms of our own religion," Father Vosko said.

Characterizing most Catholics' knowledge of their faith as "a broad brush stroke" he asked, "How many could sit down with their children and talk about church history?"

Worship, social matters

According to Workmaster, Father Vosko first met with diocesan and parish officials in April 1999 and was hired in February 2000 to begin formulating strategy for the Sacred Heart renovation. The diocese formally announced plans for the project last



fall. The renovation is set to honor and coincide with Bishop Matthew H. Clark's 25th anniversary as diocesan bishop in 2004. Diocesan and parish officials have selected an out-of-state firm as chief architect for the project, which will be publicly announced during Father Vosko's May 7-9 visit. The chief architect will collaborate with an on-site architect, not yet selected, from the Rochester area.

Father Vosko noted that other experts — such as acoustical and lighting consultants — may come on board at later dates.

All the consultants will work in conjunction with a 19-member core committee comprising Sacred Heart parishioners, people from other diocesan parishes and diocesan officials in ex officio capacities.

The group, announced in early March, is divided into seven subcommittees: architect selection/construction review; arts and furnishings; music and instruments; prayer and worship; hospitality and logistics; publicity and communications; and fundraising.

Using guidelines from a handbook issued by Father Vosko, committee members already are examining each part of the cathedral in detail, taking numerous photographs.

"It's a very, very thorough approach to the project," said Father John Mulligan, Sacred Heart's pastor and diocesan vicar general. Father Mulligan added that Father Vosko "has pushed us to really understand what's in the cathedral, where did it come from, what is its value."

Father Mulligan said it's too early to pinpoint an exact starting or completion date for the project, or whether Masses and other liturgies might be relocated to an alternative site during portions of the renovation.

"We're anxious to get more definitive deadlines, to get a better window," Father Mulligan said.

These lengthy preparation efforts speak to the project's massive scope: This stands to be the largest renovation in Sacred Heart's 74-year-old history. The building has served as the official diocesan cathedral since 1952.

Father Vosko said he has visited Sacred Heart five times with what he terms "a critical eye."

Though he declared the building to be structurally sound, several changes are being examined. They involve improvements in lighting and acoustics; creation of a gathering area; creation of a baptismal font in the main church; creation of a tabernacle chapel; improved access for the handicapped; and upgrades to the altar, penance areas, bathrooms, bishop's chair, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and floor plan.

Though the changes would be many, Fa-

ther Vosko said people should not worry that the cathedral will be totally done over.

"The question on everyone's mind is, 'What will happen to our beautiful cathedral?' There are lots of worries. We want to enhance worship without destroying its innate beauty," Father Vosko said.

"Will there be kneelers? Of course, yes. Will statues be taken out? No. Some buildings are wiped out but that is not our intent (with Sacred Heart)."

Father Vosko's vision goes beyond the church interior. He has requested a master plan that would encompass the Sacred Heart campus, which also includes two houses and a rectory, school and convent.

His vision is to create a social hub that goes beyond worship and also includes improvements to an existing senior-citizen day-care center, as well as the introduction of music and other fine arts.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if every day during Lent, people could come to a noon-day concert with a brown-bag lunch? It happens in Europe," Father Vosko said.

On the other hand, he said, people in the United States "go to theme parks and malls now. They don't hang around cathedrals like they did in the Middle Ages."

Workmaster added that for many centuries cathedrals were seen as a focus for sacred arts. "Gradually, that's been taken over by secular facilities such as concert halls. Anything to return to that is a step in the right direction," she said.

To accommodate these public events, Workmaster said, pews might be replaced

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