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by portable chairs with attached kneelers. No budget has been announced for the Sacred Heart renovation. However, this project is going forward after two attempts in recent years were scuttled due to lack of funds.

Sacred Heart is located at 296 Flower City Park, on the city's northwest side. Prior to committing to this project, Workmaster said, the diocese and parish discussed — and dropped — the possibility of building a cathedral in the Rochester suburbs and creating a new cathedral parish.

"The diocese has made a decision to stay in the city and honor that neighborhood. The cathedral offers a tremendous amount of stability there," Workmaster said.

She said some of Sacred Heart's challenges stem from the fact that it was not originally built as a cathedral. And, it was constructed prior to the Second Vatican Council, after which numerous liturgical-design norms were updated.

Chief among these revisions is the emphasis on full participation by the laity. For instance, Father Vosko said, he would like to shorten the distance between Sacred Heart's altar and back row of pews.

Workmaster hopes the cathedral project will inspire some diocesan churches to follow suit.

"One of the comments I get is, 'When I see the cathedral like this, then I'll think about it,'" she acknowledged.

Indeed, Father Vosko said, "The cathedral should be the model for parish churches."

Workmaster emphasized that these renovations would be worth the cost involved. "The way we worship has a lot to do with what we say about ourselves as Catholics," she said.

Lengthy résumé

Apparently, many dioceses agree with Father Vosko's views. His architectural awards include work on St. James Cathedral in Seattle, Wash., and the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Nashville, Tenn. He is currently involved in cathedral projects at: Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles; St. Mary's, Colorado Springs; San Fernando, San Antonio; Immaculate Conception, Memphis; St. John the Evangelist, Milwaukee; Christ the King Cathedral, Superior, Wis.; and St. Jude, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Father Vosko still resides in Albany, assisting on weekends at St. Vincent DePaul Parish. The rest of the week, he said, "I go to work just like everyone else."

And he goes all over, as evidenced by a lengthy list of past projects, including Catholic and Jewish worship sites. Workmaster, who has known Father Vosko since the 1980s, first suggested the priest to head up Sacred Heart's renovation.

Asked what makes his work stand out, Father Vosko stated, "The quality factor. I do not stand for ersatz productions. I'm tough."

"Where it's going to show is in the quality of what's done. I'm impressed with perceptiveness the man has, the attention to detail," commented Father Mulligan, an ex officio member of the renovation committee.

Father Vosko holds a doctorate in adult education and master of fine arts degree, both from Syracuse University; a master's in liturgy from the University of Notre Dame; a master's in divinity from Christ the King Seminary; and bachelor of arts from St. Bonaventure University. Along with his academic background, Workmaster said, Father Vosko's big drawing cards are his strong reverence for liturgy and his sensitivity to the needs of a community.

"The key to everything is that he has a gentle care and concern for the people who will be the assembly for that church," Workmaster said.

Along those lines, Father Vosko will pass out questionnaires during his May 7-9 appearances in Rochester, asking participants what they most want to keep at the cathedral and what they most want to see changed.

Ultimately, Father Vosko said, his final



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

An interior view from the choir loft at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Flower City Park in Rochester April 27.

recommendations are the result of many peoples' input and must be approved by the diocesan bishop. He said he occasionally encounters the mistaken impression that "I'm the one who makes all the decisions, when in fact I'm not."

In all cases but one, Father Vosko's projects have gone through successfully. The only exception, he said, was in 1999 in Guelph, Ontario, where he was paid his consulting fee — but the renovation of Church of Our Lady was halted before it began.

"The people weren't ready, not ready to accept the changes," Father Vosko commented.

Detractors

The Rochester Diocese, also, is home to some people who are not ready for change at Sacred Heart — and are upset that Father Vosko is involved in the project.

A group known as the Sacred Heart Cathedral Preservation Committee has enacted demonstrations and petitions in recent months, claiming the project is too costly and would not conform to Catholic Church guidelines. The group, as well as other factions around the country, refer to Father Vosko as a New Age manipulator and "deconstructionist." They also take issue with his public wardrobe — usually a

business suit rather than clerical garb.

Father Vosko answered his critics by saying, "There are a lot of people in different denominations who are very fundamental and going to attack their own. You know, the Scriptures call us to a never-ending metamorphosis. The most staunch traditionalists are those who never respond to that call."

Neither are they accurate in many cases, he said. For instance, Father Vosko cited one of the dissenters' main recurring gripes — the relocation of the tabernacle from the altar to its own chapel.

The Ceremonial of Bishops, Chapter 3, No. 49 states: "It is recommended that the tabernacle, in accordance with a very ancient tradition in cathedral churches, should be located in a chapel separate from the main body of the church."

The Ceremonial of Bishops, Father Vosko noted, is a set of liturgical guidelines published in 1984 by the Congregation for Divine Worship, under the authority of Pope John Paul II. "The church has answers for that, not answers I made up," Father Vosko commented. "There's a difference between traditions and habits. When we claim traditions, we've got to be very careful of what we talk about."

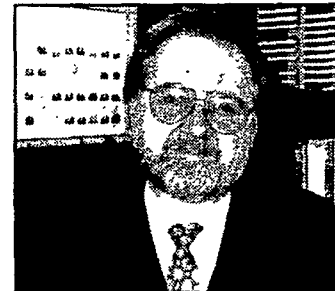
Father Vosko said it hasn't been uncommon for him to encounter dissenters in other cities, but that renovation opponents generally are a small group of the population. He prefers not to dwell on them in media interviews.

Workmaster added that she doesn't find a lot of what his critics purport to even be grounded in reality.

"There isn't a New Age bone in Dick's body," Workmaster remarked. "He is as Roman Catholic as you can be. Would somebody who doesn't have a love for the church be invited by that many bishops to their dioceses? I mean, give me a break."

"We all need to face this project with open minds," she added, "and a willingness to hear all parts of the story."

Thoughts to Consider



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