

# Sacred Space

## THE CASE FOR RAISING THE ROOF !

What does “Sacred Space” mean? Quiet. Beauty. A place of welcome, comfort. A place for prayer, both beseeching and thanks-giving. A holy place for finding peace, inspiration. Much of “sacred” evokes deep, inward-looking feelings and a strong response to surroundings. “Sacred space” were the words Msgr. Brennan used when he first spoke to all of us about his hopes for our church.

In a Catholic Church, the altar is the first place we look for all the above. Jesus is there in the tabernacle. Is it a beautiful place for Him to be? The choir area to the altar’s left is home to piano, organ, sound equipment, microphones, wires, cords, music stands and chairs – all necessary but in a tight, highly visible area. To the right, the location of the baptismal font uses space needed for additional pews as south entrance becomes our handicap drop-off and a greater number of parishioners begin arriving thru that entrance.

What if we built a choir loft, above the back part of the gathering area and the entry part of the nave? (with the traditional baptismal font below, at the start of the center aisle, as befits our first Sacrament.) The choir would have the joy of performing facing the altar, sending their beautiful hymns toward Him for whom they were written. Their music would waft over the congregation without visual distraction and the sound itself would be greatly enhanced via its resonance from the rear and a long-needed new sound system. There will be ample room for choir, equipment, storage; and the space will be designed to suit.



Aha! We maintain the basic footprint of our church so as not to incur the much greater expense of a tear-down and complete re-do. But, raising the roof for the choir loft allows other sacred space elements to happen that were only wished for before:

- 1) The choir and baptismal font are relocated. The altar becomes the focus it should be. The chance to surround Jesus with beauty and elegance becomes a reality.
- 2) Cleared space to left and right of altar allows additional pews, bringing parishioners on those sides closer to the altar with no interfering view. Also, the front of the church becomes more visually symmetrical.
- 3) The wall to left of altar is opened up to become a handsome shrine to St. Joseph.
- 4) The chapel to right of altar becomes a lovely tribute to Our Lady. The confessionals remain in their present perfect location. “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.”
- 5) The original Our Lady, Star of the Sea window, highlighted in last week’s column, regains her former place above the altar and crucifix.
- 6) The front elevation of our church carries the distinctive elegance of the Spanish Mission style with the large arched front doors and cross, the circular stained-glass windows and side arches. The new front roof line will echo and enhance the overall look as it slants upward and back from the arches to set off the soft curves.
- 7) Inside the church, the roof portion directly above the center aisle and front cross aisles (⊥) will be raised to house hurricane-strength windows, flooding the nave with natural light. No more darkness from on high!
- 8) And finally, unbeknownst to many, a portion of our current roof is flat (even though inside it looks peaked). Rainwater pools and sometimes causes the leaks that in the past have created a bucket line-up along the north side of the nave, amongst the pews. The entire new roof will be “pitched.”



At Our Lady Star of the Sea, our Lord deserves a beautiful home,  
“sacred space.”

“You shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength.” “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The two commandments that matter most to Jesus.

Our church is a vital part of our beaches community, providing help to our neighbors in need, thru generous monetary gifts, multiple service ministries and parishioners’ own personal commitments. We’re a stewardship parish, in word and deed. But that shouldn’t mean that we can’t have a beautiful church as well. We can do both. We should do both. For our Lord. And for our Catholic faith.