

Sacred Space

“Is your parish beautiful? Does that matter?”



by Fr. Robert McTeigue, SJ excerpted from Aleteia.org

Would you describe your parish church as beautiful? Breathtaking? Unforgettable? Do you wish you had more time to explore its treasures? If the answer is “No,” do you wish it could be “Yes”? More important: Does it really matter whether your parish church is beautiful?

A wise Jesuit told me, “The presence of Catholic art in the home doesn’t prove anything but it says a lot; the absence of Catholic art in the home doesn’t prove anything, but it says a lot.” That’s true of Catholic homes and it’s true of Catholic parishes. Yet beauty (or its absence) not only “says a lot” – it does a lot. Beautiful arts nourish the soul even as they prompt us to hunger for Heaven, where Beauty itself resides.

I think that our sick world and wounded Church are so because our need for beauty has been neglected.

Philosopher Roger Scruton observes: “Beauty is vanishing from our world because we live as though it did not matter.” Consequently, beautiful churches are rarely constructed and the ones we have are often forgotten: “The great French cathedrals, so full of beauty and interest, are now like whales washed up on an alien shore, the faith that built them a flickering light.” (Dr. James A. Patrick)

What are we to do? Let’s start by answering objections to the reacquisition of beauty in our churches. “Great churches cost money—money that could be used for caring for the poor!” True. But don’t the poor have a need for beauty also? Shall we feed bodies but not souls? And let’s not forget that in the United States, many of the great cathedrals were built with the pennies (and labor) of poor immigrants who wanted to translate the glories of their Catholic heritage from Europe to America. Were they wrong to be so generous?

What about the churches that we’ve built—especially recently? Would the art and architecture, music, furnishings, vestments, vessels—and especially our behavior—immediately inspire awe? Could you imagine a child entering your parish church for the first time, looking around in wide-eyed wonder, and gasping, “God lives here!”

True love demands that we offer our best to the beloved. Can we have a civil conversation about whether we are offering our best to God? And dare we have an examination of conscience about whether we are offering our best to God?

FINANCIAL UPDATE

The OLSS renovation cost is \$8.5 M.
As of 1/15/19 we have received pledges totaling \$3,462,820 from 216 families.
Of that pledged amount, we’ve received \$1,322,827 in cash.

The Diocese requires half, in our case \$4.25 M, in cash, on hand, before permission will be given to begin construction.

Pledge/payment options include cash, check, Faith Direct, appreciated stock, bequests, IRA distribution (70 ½ yrs.) and real estate. A 3-yr. payment plan is available. It is understood that this is a gift beyond that of the weekly offertory. As such, it is a sacrificial gift, deserving careful and prayerful consideration.

All gifts, no matter the size, are most appreciated and it is hoped that all in the parish will find a way to participate.

THANK YOU and may God bless our church as we move forward on this campaign.

TOTAL GOAL FOR ENTIRE RENOVATION \$8.5 MILLION

