



TRUSTED LITURGICAL DESIGNERS,
ARTISTS AND ARTISANS FOR OVER HALF A CENTURY

Saint Agnes Cathedral

Rockville Centre, NY



OVERVIEW

The Rohn team consulted to develop a cohesive master plan that included proper space formation, liturgical furniture and appointments, and interior design that would give the assembly a clear sense of the sacred and uncluttered sightlines of the sanctuary and its actions—developing a sense of participation in the sacred liturgies and sacraments, and at the same time teaching about their ministries, iconography and providing a sense of quality and proportions that make it a Catholic environment.

CHALLENGE

After Vatican Council II, St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre, NY, was dehumanized with contemporary simplicity with the introduction of a whitewashed interior and the removal of many priceless carvings, reredos, and stone furnishings that had once graced the interior of the Cathedral. The Cathedral's interior lost its sense of sacredness and priorities of the altar, ambo, font and presider chair as the sign and symbol for “teaching”, with the reserved Eucharist removed from the sanctuary and placed into a side chapel. Five years ago, Most Reverend William Murphy, DD, STD, approached Liturgical Design Consultant Rolf Rohn of Rohn & Associates Design, Inc. to design, implement, and fabricate a new awe-inspiring environment, incorporating both new and existing pieces from the original design. His vision was that the renovation would make the Cathedral serve the nation's sixth-largest Catholic diocese once again as a stunning example of proper liturgical space, quality and beauty that is in harmony with the elegant architectural style.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rohn team consulted to develop a cohesive master plan that included proper space formation, liturgical furniture and appointments, and interior design that would give the assembly a clear sense of the sacred and uncluttered sightlines of the sanctuary and its actions—developing a sense of participation in the sacred liturgies and sacraments, and at the same time teaching about their ministries, iconography and providing a sense of quality and proportions that make it a Catholic environment.



PROJECT EXECUTION

Rolf, working closely with Most Reverend William Murphy, DD, STD; Reverend Monsignor William E. Koenig, Rector; and Eric Anderson, Manager of Construction and Renovation for the Diocese of Rockville Centre; developed a comprehensive master plan for the Cathedral and its chapel that included returning the tabernacle to the sanctuary within a new worthy setting for the sacrifice of mass, providing a foretaste of the true Holy of Holies, Heaven itself. The scope of work included:

Cathedral:

- A 26' x 18' x 18' baldachin intricately painted with contemporary saints on its columns and a tympanum with a mural of the symbolic evangelist and angels in rich fresco colors and a gold background allow the light to give a sense of the sacred. It brought inclusion of the reserved Eucharist and gracious harmony with the actions and liturgical celebrations.
- A newly designed 18-foot oak-carved sanctuary wainscot frames the marble-stepped reserved Eucharist and its baldachin-like tent. The painted white plywood backdrop was replaced with oak, subtly framing the massive sanctuary space and the hanging three-dimensional oak Holy Rood, with Christ, Blessed Mother Mary and St. John over the altar table. It was also stripped of its painted finish, and the resulting natural oak was highlighted with gold and soft skin tones so the details would be visible from the assembly.
- The ambo, baptismal font and tabernacle throne were repositioned in a new layout of the sanctuary, merging various levels into one harmonious and efficient setting. These pieces of furniture were placed and designed to be in harmony with the altar table. The flooring was designed to minimize the number of levels and eliminate steps to provide 30% more space for the Liturgy of the Eucharist celebration. It was capped with an exquisite inlaid marble pattern that accented the new marble Tudor oak carving and handsome reliquary set into the base. Under Rolf's direction, the floor was designed by Graphic Designer Maria Hubbard of Rohn & Associates Custom Studio—a subsidiary of Rohn Design dedicated to liturgical design.
- The existing 18' hand-carved wood statues of the Apostles were stripped of their white latex paint and restored to once again match the finishes of the reredos, the furnishings and existing oak trim of the Cathedral.
- The lighting and audiovisual systems will be updated to improve performance and allow for high definition and digital broadcasting.

Chapel:

- Rolf handpicked a marble high altar originally from old St. Ann's Armenian Cathedral in New York. The altar, found in a warehouse and dating from the 1890s, was installed to enrich what was originally a bland chapel. His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan donated the altar to the Cathedral, recognizing that it could not find a finer home. Local contractors restored and expanded the hand-carved woodwork, and executed the painting and decorating under the direction of the Rolf Rohn and Eric Anderson, Manager of Construction and Renovation for the Diocese of Rockville Centre.
- A hand-carved statue of the Pieta from Oberammergau, Germany, was restored by Rohn & Associates Custom Studio's artist Victoria Christina. The original wood sculpture had been repaired incorrectly many times and had several deep cracks. Victoria had to strip the existing finishes and used tight-grained German oak to fill the fissures. Once prepared, multiple coats of clear varnish were applied to restore the wood's original brilliance. The Pieta was installed in the chapel, framed by the Gothic-arched interior so that it could be viewed from the assembly.

COMPLETED PROJECT

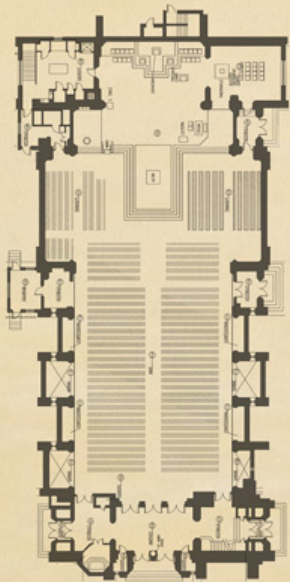
After converting Bishop Murphy's vision into meticulous liturgically correct plans, Rolf's designs to renovate St. Agnes Cathedral were executed and completed, meeting the Bishop's deadline for a public dedication prior to Holy Week 2016.

RECOGNITION FROM CATHEDRAL LEADERSHIP

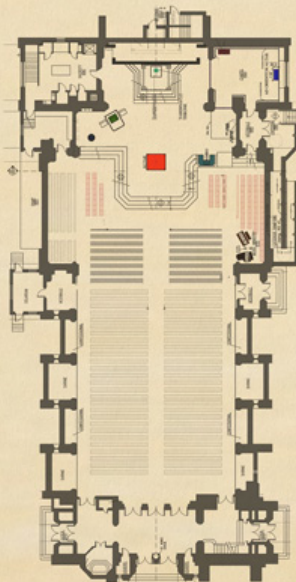
The praise for your vision is effusive. The Bishop was beaming through the entire re-dedication. From my perspective, the Cathedral is now a Cathedral. — Eric Anderson, A.I.A.

SAINT AGNES CATHEDRAL

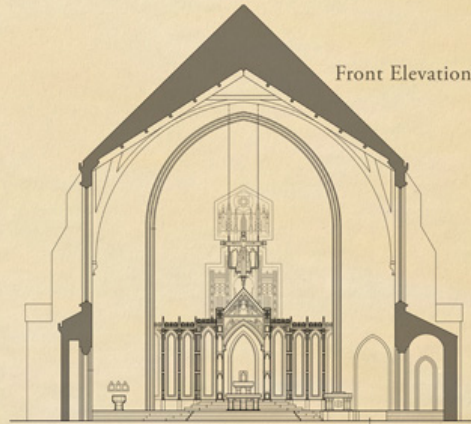
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT - FLOOR PLANS



Existing Condition



New Floor Plan



Front Elevation



EXISTING CONDITION



NEW SANCTUARY



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

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RENOVATION PROGRAM



LITURGICAL DESIGNERS, ARTISTS AND ARTISANS, SINCE 1952



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK



SAINT AGNES CATHEDRAL CHAPEL ARTISTIC VIEW - DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

MOST REVEREND WILLIAM MURPHY, D.D., S.T.D. BISHOP OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

MOST REV. WILLIAM F. MURPHY, D.D., S.T.D., PASTOR

PREPARED BY ROHN & ASSOCIATES DESIGN, INC.

Rolf Rohn

January 20, 2017



COMPLETED PROJECT