



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

Incarnate Word Chapel at St. Gabriel School Austin, TX



OVERVIEW

Liturgical Designer Rolf Rohn of Rohn & Associates worked with school leadership at St. Gabriel School in Austin, TX, to develop a design plan for their new Incarnate Word Chapel that properly espouses the teachings of the school and the profound mystery of the chapel dedicated to the Incarnate Word. A common question asked about such projects is: how does one convert an empty room into a sacred space that will inspire people—in this instance, children? That’s precisely what a liturgical designer does. They listen to what their client wants, they assess the space and develop a plan that is in accordance with Canon Law using sacred words and drawings to transform a concept into a vision that reflects scripture, faith and space requirements—all within a given budget. Rolf is an expert at opening the hearts and senses of all parties to the Holy Spirit and translating that into a holistic harmony of space, prayer and liturgy that is both challenging and faith-affirming. This process is precisely what occurred at St. Gabriel School.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rohn team developed and executed a complete liturgical design plan that nurtures spiritual, personal and academic growth of children of the Catholic faith through prayer and Christ-like service, including space formation, lighting, liturgical furniture, art glass, a crucifix, Stations of the Cross, murals, statuary, tabernacle and appointments.

PROJECT EXECUTION

- 22’ x 20’ transparent jeweled and leaded glass windows on both sides of and above the entry doors depict the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel, inviting Mary to become the Mother of God, the Incarnate Word. This story is found in scripture and is recalled in Angelus Prayer from the early Church dating around 1000 AD. This tall entrance glass allows the image of the young crucified Christ to penetrate the great tidings that Archangel Gabriel brought forth to the young Mary: her sorrow will give her and all of us eternal life in His death.
- The Chapel represents the City of God and the doors are gates to the city. The symbols on the doors depict the rivers of the Water of Life that, together with the Word of God, flow into our minds and hearts to cleanse and sanctify us and to welcome us into this heavenly city of knowledge and faith. This truth is confirmed when we bless ourselves with holy water.
- The side walls of the Chapel are adorned with saints throughout the ages relating to youth and families, including St. Pius X, Saints Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia, St. George, St. Philomena, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Kateri Tekakwitha, St. Bakhita, St. John Bosco, St. Dominic Savio, St. Bernadette, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Augustine, St. Monica, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Joan of Arc, St. Jose Sanchez del Rio, St. Paul Miki, St. Francis, St. Clare and St. Therese de Lisieux.



- Custom-designed Stations of the Cross depict the Passion of Christ. Christ is young, as his mother, and the images are relatable to the youth and pilgrims who wish to walk the Stations and learn their prayers.
- A 22' x 20' crucifixion window behind the altar area features the authors of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—represented as they were in the Book of Revelation by St. Jerome as a having the winged head of a man, lion, ox and eagle, all in Italian art glass. The Gospels are the inspired Word of God that bring light to the world through the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. These lovely winged beings appear as if they are presenting the sign of our professed faith to all who enter.
- An 8' hand-carved youthful crucified Christ on the cross—a live Christ with eyes open—represents an unbloodied Sacrifice of the Mass and a willingness to share his invitation to eternal life.
- Rolf also designed four consecration crosses, an ambo, tabernacle and an altar that speak about how the students will be future participants in their prayers and liturgy.
- At the rear of the chapel are beautiful hand-carved statues of Mary, Our Lady, Undoer of Knots, representing the promise of reconciliation and peace (a favorite devotion of Pope Francis), and Joseph, holding the child Jesus, with the Lamb of God at his side, protecting and advocating for all families. They are at a height that allows children to touch and know that Mary and Joseph were as human as they are.

COMPLETED PROJECT

The team at Rohn & Associates designed and delivered an environment that will encourage students to grow in grace and understanding of Christian values that they will use in every aspect of their lives. There is no question that this awe-inspiring chapel will positively impact children for generations to come.



ARTISTIC VISION



