

November 14, 2004

To the good people of any parish in need of a liturgical artist,

It is an awesome responsibility, to undertake the renovation of a parish church. It is an act of balancing budget and time constraints with architectural and structural considerations; with historical appropriateness that remains open to the direction of the future; with personal and emotional responses; and most importantly, with the liturgical needs of the parish community and the rites of the Church. All these considerations that the parish renovation committee must balance for the overall project are encapsulated in the task set before the liturgical artist. He does not get a break from any of them. In plain English, he is charged with creating, on a fixed budget and by a specific (looming) deadline, a whole suite of beautiful liturgical furnishings befitting the church building and spirit of the parish, that everyone will like and that will make the community worship better together. A daunting task!

Yet that is what Steve Remmert has accomplished for the community of St. Mary's Church in Evanston, Illinois.

From processional candle stands and credence tables to the accessible ambo and powerful altar, Steve Remmert has created furnishings of which the entire community is proud. The hand of the artist is evident in each piece. The major furnishings: the altar, ambo, tabernacle, baptismal font, and the processional cross all bear a relationship to each other by the way Steve has chosen to use similar materials, technique, or design to connect one piece with the other. At the same time, each piece stands unique in its own right. There is a wholeness to our interior without having the sense that this is "a set."

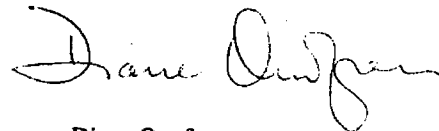
St. Mary's has long been proud of three of its building treasures: its stained-glass windows, oak pews, and pipe organ. Markedly absent from the list until now was the centerpiece of our liturgical action, the altar. No more. The altar that Steve has crafted is powerful, rich, and inspiring. One is drawn to it immediately upon entering the church. It is truly the Table of the Lord.

In Steve's work, St. Mary's Church has been blessed with new treasures that will endure the test time.

However, the glory of engaging Steve is not just for the quality and appropriateness of his finished work. It is a pleasure to work with Steve Remmert. He listens, he questions, he engages discussion, he makes suggestions. After early visits and discussions in which he asks about the history, the makeup, and the priorities of the people of the parish, Steve develops working designs and models based on his understanding of the needs of the community. His professionalism, patience, and good humor stand him in good stead throughout the development of the project as he freely subjects his models for review to a committee of well-meaning would-be artists.

Last but not least, there is a spirituality in Steve's actions and words that conveys his understanding of the deeply religious nature of his work. It is evident that he understands the elements of liturgy. And it is evident that prayer has gone into this work.

Respectfully,



Diane Onofrey  
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Furnishings Sub-Committee,  
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