

**Parish Guide for
Commissioning, Purchasing, or Accepting Donations of Religious Art
for the Worship Space**

1. Read and Study Built of Living Stones (*BLS*).
2. New artwork should be aesthetically consistent with the church's architecture.
3. New artwork should complement and not overwhelm or detract from the actions of worship and liturgy.
4. Be aware of the distinction between religious art and fine art and between personal taste and religious/liturgical art values. (see *BLS*)
5. When purchasing an existing piece of art be cautious of ordering art from a catalog. "The integrity and energy of a piece of art produced individually by the labor of an artist is always to be preferred above objects that are mass produced." (*BLS* ¶147)
6. Be committed to the equitable treatment of artists:
 - Do not expect artists to do work for free during the design stage.
 - Be prepared to pay for work and design as well as for finished pieces of art.
 - Follow the "Parish Process for Commissioning Religious/Liturgical Art"
7. When considering the acceptance of donations of religious art be clear that the art must meet certain criteria for religious/liturgical art such as the criteria identified in *BLS*.
 - Write and publish a parish policy regarding art donations.
 - Be wary of donations with "strings attached."
 - Make clear that once art donations are accepted they become the property of the church to be used as the church determines.
 - It is also the church that determines the current or future disposition of the item.
8. If a donation of artwork appears to be of historic value locate and contact someone who can offer guidance for the restoration, display, protection, and registration of historic art pieces.
9. The Art & Environment Subcommittee and the Office of Liturgy will help with questions in choosing religious/liturgical art for the worship space.

* *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship* is the most recent statement on art and architecture for churches, chapels, and oratories in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States.

Parish Process for Commissioning Religious/Liturgical Art

1. Form a parish liturgical art review committee that includes the pastor, the donor (if there is one), and artistically and liturgically knowledgeable parishioners. Ask them to read *Built of Living Stones*, especially Chapter Three.
2. Develop a list of artist candidates.
 - Consider local and regional artists.
 - The Art & Environment Subcommittee and the Office of Liturgy will help with questions and recommendations.
 - Look at religious/liturgical artwork in publications such as *Environment & Art Newsletter*, *Ministry and Liturgy*, *Faith and Form*, *Christianity and the Arts.*, and on artists' web sites.
 - Ask for recommendations from your church architect and liturgical design consultant.
 - Visit local parishes who have recently commissioned and installed religious/liturgical art.
3. Send out letters to potential candidates requesting resumés, brochures, portfolios, references, etc.
4. Review information submitted (resumés, brochures, portfolios, references, etc.) and visit churches where their artwork is located.
5. Narrow down the choices and set-up interviews and presentations of work.
6. Interview and view presentations (usually in the form of slides of work) from selected candidates. Consider qualifications, spirituality/theology, artwork, references, design process, and “fit” with your parish.
7. Select the artist and sign a contract or letter of agreement.
 - The contract should include how much will be paid, when and what will be done if the committee rejects artwork in the design process.
 - Secure the right to graphic reproduction of the artwork for parish use.
8. Artist begins design work.
 - Artist visits parish and meets with liturgical art review committee; participates in Sunday worship/liturgy.
 - Artist understands parish culture, needs, budget, time-line, etc.
9. Review approve modify or reject artist's model, sketch, rendering, and/or mock-up of commissioned artwork.
10. Repeat previous steps as many times as needed.
11. Bless or dedicate artwork in the worship space.