St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Renovation and Modernization

The Mid-Century Modern movement in the U.S was organic in form and characterized by clean simplicity and integration with nature. This style emphasized creating structures with ample windows and open floor plans, with the intention of opening up interior spaces and bringing the outdoors in. Many Mid-century buildings utilized then-groundbreaking post and beam architectural design that eliminated thick support walls in favor of walls seemingly made of glass.

St John’s is a classic example of Mid Century Modern. The new work within the sanctuary of the church respects and celebrates the history and function of the building while adding elements to provide current liturgical and technology requirements of a 21st century worship space. The changes to the layout for clearer functionality and a much stronger relationship to the church entry and gathering space will make attending church a delight for parishioners.

The relocated chancel capped with a new baldacchino, a ceremonial canopy over the tabernacle table and decorated with a gold leaf stenciled interior, incorporates classical Catholic Church design elements in a streamlined, timeless application. The new stained-glass rose window embodying the Holy Spirit is centered on the baldacchino. Molding details bind the lectern, altar and reredos screen walls. This blending of classical design language with a modern vocabulary is very much in keeping with the intent of the Mid-Century Modern aesthetic and ensuring a timeless classical appearance.

The existing terrazzo floor has been retained through the nave and patched as needed. In the area of the new Baptismal Font we are using materials that have been selected for low maintenance, slip resistance and complement the existing finishes.

The existing concrete columns will be steam cleaned to remove years of oils and dirt and resealed. In keeping with the original design, the columns work with the heavy timber structural roof to give the space the sense that the roof is floating over the walls, binding the interior to the exterior.

The new stained-glass windows provided by the great artisans at Gaytee Palmer Glass unfold the story in nine panels of St. John and will be the extraordinary element that completes the space. The artist assigned the task of creating the new stained-glass windows has studied many Catholic Churches and has rendered the windows for St. John’s in a traditional & powerful way. Beautifully detailed faces and background will evoke a deeper spiritual understanding of the life of St John the Baptist.

St. John the Baptist Church will provide a warm and welcoming home for its congregation and the care with which the professional design/project team and Father Carlson have moved through the project ensure that it will be a space that will provide modern function, beauty and a timeless style that the congregation will be proud of and love for decades to come.

In His service,

Thomas P. Wasmoen, AIA,CID, NCARB

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