

St. Francis de Sales: Church Tour

Church: The people of God and the building where the people of God come together to worship.

Gathering Space: (front and side) the gathering space is right inside the doors. It is where we prepare to enter God's house.

Holy Water Fonts are put near the doors of churches. When you enter and leave the church, you can bless yourself with holy water to remember your own baptism. You are a member of God's family through your baptism.

Baptismal Font: The pool of water used for infant baptism is called a baptismal font. Water is used to remind us of new life. The tall candle is called the Easter candle. It is lit during baptism to remind us of Jesus.

Ambry: The case that holds the sacred oils used for anointing. The three oils are, Oil of Salvation (used in Baptism), Oil of Infirmity (used in anointing of the sick), and the Sacred Chrism (used in Confirmation, Ordination and any consecrating of a Church, Altar or other Sacred object)

Assembly: This is where God's people gather for Mass. You can see the altar at the end of the aisle. The pews are the seats where the people sit to listen to God's Word and pray.

Crucifix: This is the crucifix you see hanging above the altar. Not all crucifixes are the same. The crucifix reminds us that Jesus died and rose again to new life. It is different from a cross in the fact that it has the body of Christ on it.

Ambo: Here you can see the ambo. This is where people read God's word to us during Mass. The lector is the person who reads the first and second readings during Mass. Then the priest or a deacon reads the gospel.

Lectionary: The Lectionary is the book of readings from the Bible that we hear at Mass. We use this instead of the entire Bible, because it follows the cycle of readings that we use in a year. It is carried to the ambo at the beginning of Mass. We listen to these readings during the first part of Mass.

Altar: (Table) This is the altar. It is the table where the priest celebrates the Eucharist. The word Eucharist means "to give thanks." We bring our gifts of bread and wine to the altar. They become Jesus' body and blood. This is what we receive when we receive Communion. We receive Jesus' body and blood.

Tabernacle: (Means little tent) The tabernacle is where the Eucharist is kept. The candle next to the tabernacle is always lit when the Eucharist is present in it. That means Jesus is present there in the Eucharist. When you see the candle is lit, you can bow your head or genuflect to show your love and respect for Jesus.

Sacristy: The sacristy is where the priest prepares for Mass. Here, he puts on his vestments. Vestments are the clothes he wears during Mass. The altar servers, lectors and Eucharistic ministers meet in the sacristy before Mass. Here they get ready to celebrate, also.

Confessional/Reconciliation Room: Churches are not only used for Mass. They are used for other reasons, too. Many sacraments are celebrated at church. The sacrament of penance is celebrated in the Church and the confessional. Some churches have what is called a Reconciliation room. Reconciliation is our chance to tell God that we are sorry.

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are hanging on this wall. They show the things that happened to Jesus the day he died. Many parishes pray the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, the day Jesus died.

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Statues: Many churches have statues of saints. Almost every church has a statue of Mary. Sometimes it is at a side altar with seats so you can sit and pray. Other times, it is on the wall near the front of the church. We also had a statue of St. Anne, Mary's mother, a statue of St. Francis de Sales the patron of our parish, St. Joseph, Pieta, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Infant of Prague

Candles and Votive Candles: Candles remind us of God's presence. Jesus came as the light of the world and so candles bring us light and connect us to that image. Votive candles are for us to say a prayer and light a candle that is lit for a week so that the whole Church continues the prayer.

Gifts Table: Where the bread and wine sit before they are brought forward at the offertory

Alpha and Omega: the beginning and the end...

Relics: Bones, clothing, journals, etc... that belonged to a Saint. It seems "creepy" to some people, but think about how we hold on to items that belonged to someone who we loved that has died. Grandma's dishes, a friend's jewelry, a special blanket, etc...

Chapel: Some churches have small chapels in them. These are places where people can come to pray quietly. Some chapels have altars and statues of saints. Often they also have a tabernacle.