

Inside Christ Cathedral

Christ Cathedral is the spiritual home of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange and Orange County's 1.3 million Catholics. The Cathedral will become a place of pilgrimage for people of all faiths and a beacon of Christianity on the West Coast, serving as a place of not only worship, but faith formation, evangelization, charitable work, art and culture.

Since its completion in 1981, the iconic structure has been recognized as a historically significant architectural landmark and has undergone a five-year renovation to transform into a Catholic cathedral. Today, Christ Cathedral and its surrounding 34-acre campus serve as a place where Catholics and believers of all traditions throughout Southern California and across the globe can gather to express their faith.

The Diocese of Orange is proud to be a steward of Dr. Robert Schuller's vision that the cathedral serve as a beacon of faith and a platform to preach the power of unconditional love, hope and the idea that through belief in Jesus Christ, anything is possible.

The Diocese of Orange's commitment to being a good steward of Christ Cathedral ensures its future relevance as a center of worship. As the Most Rev. Bishop Kevin Vann once described Christ Cathedral: "This gift from God is not just for us but also for the ages to come."



Quatrefoils

Approximately 11,000 quatrefoils line the glass of Christ Cathedral. Made of aluminum, the triangle-shaped panels are perforated to allow for sunlight, while also deflecting ultraviolet rays and heat from the glass. The quatrefoils have a polycarbonate backing and fiber to improve acoustics for the Hazel Wright Organ, as well as the choirs when they sing.



Bishop's Seat

The bishop's seat, or cathedra, forms the central element of the bench on the north wall of the sanctuary. It can accommodate the deacon assistants to the bishop at stational liturgies as well as a place for the non-episcopal presider at a daily or Sunday liturgy. Above the cathedra will be the bishop's coat of arms fabricated in inlaid stone incorporating both the diocesan heraldic insignia and that of the current bishop.



Baptistry

Located in the west side of the cathedral near the Memorial Gardens, the baptistry is shaped like an octagon, for the 7 days of creation and the 8th for the "new creation". The cross-shaped baptismal font is made of stone matching that of the cathedral, altar and ambo. The floor of the baptismal font features black Chi-Rho, the christogram of Greek letters for Christ mosaic tile by Orange County artist Mia Tavonatti.



Altar and Relics

Commemorated by priests of the Diocese of Orange, the cathedral's 14,000-pound stone altar contains the interred physical remains of saints in its base. Among the holy relics interred beneath the altar is a bone from the hand of Vietnamese Catholic priest Andrew Dũng-Lạc, who was beheaded in 1839 for his faith. The altar also contains holy relics from Korean martyrs (St. Andrew Kim Taegon, martyr), Mexican martyrs (St. Atilano Cruz Alvarado and St. Justino Orona Madrigal), and North American martyrs (Saint John de Brébeuf, S.J., Saint Charles Garnier, S.J., Saint Gabriel Lalemant, S.J.), as well as St. Junipero Serra, Pope Saint John Paul II and St. Rafael Guizar Valencia.



Festal Doors

The artwork on the Cathedral's Festal Doors was created by sculptor Pablo Eduardo. The ornamental bronze band crosses blacked steel doors at the festal entrance into the Cathedral. The artwork depicts the creation of Adam and Eve, God walking with Adam in the garden. The halfway mark will be the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The other half of the story is the fall, Adam and Eve eating the fruit, being aware of their nakedness, and banishment from the garden.



Hazel Wright Organ

One of the largest pipe organs in the world, the famed Hazel Wright Organ was inaugurated in 1982 at Crystal Cathedral – the precursor to Christ Cathedral. In early 2014, the organ was dismantled as part of Christ Cathedral's renovation and shipped for restoration to Fratelli Ruffatti workshop in Padua, Italy. In early 2016, the Hazel Wright Organ was shipped back to California where it was temporarily stored in an Irvine warehouse before being reinstalled in Christ Cathedral. The organ currently comprises 270 ranks over fourteen divisions, and has more than 16,000 pipes. The console has five manuals.



Pantocrator

To the right of the sanctuary area and suspended from the architectural space frame is the monumental 16' x 30' tapestry of Christ seated in Glory as Lord of Creation (Pantocrator). The tapestry was created by Brother Martin Erspamer, OSB, and woven in Belgium. Four images, one in each corner, represent the four gospels. The two fingers represent Jesus being divine and human.



Ambo

The ambo, or place for the proclamation of the Word of God, is set back from the altar to accommodate clear visual sight lines for the entire assembly, both from the floor of the cathedral proper as well as from the balconies. The ambo is cut from the same stone as the altar. Similar to a pulpit with steps, it is prominently placed within the cathedral for reading scripture and homilies. Next to the ambo will be the stand for the Paschal candle, stylistically reminiscent of the ancient Roman Basilicas.



Crux Gemmata

Made from blackened steel and affixed with polished semi-precious gems, including a piece of crystal from the former Crystal Cathedral, the cross contains a bleached wood corpus of Christ, which was hand carved in Italy. The 1,000-pound Crux Gemmata, reminiscent of a Medieval precious cross, hangs from a metallic baldachin about 18ft. above worship level floor.



Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Located in the east end of the cathedral, entrance into the Blessed Sacrament Chapel will at times be possible outside of the regular opening hours of the Cathedral. Circular in shape, the chapel's centerpiece is the tabernacle, where the consecrated Eucharist is kept for the sick and the dying as well as prayer and adoration. The tabernacle was created by the celebrated German liturgical artist Eginio Wenert and features four painted panels depicting a scene from Jesus Christ's life and is visible from most areas on the cathedral's worship level. It sits on a five-sided bronze pedestal that features engravings giving a visual narrative of the life of Christ from his birth to his resurrection.



Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patroness of the Diocese of Orange, as well as the patroness of the Americas. Traditionally, churches have an image of their patron/patroness in a prominent place in the main body of the church. The mosaic by Valerio Lenarduzzi Studio in Fontanafredda, Italy, hangs in axial symmetry to the altar and cathedra on the south interior wall of the Cathedral.



Undercroft

In addition to providing support spaces for cathedral liturgies and other functions, this area beneath the sanctuary includes a large vesting room for the more than two hundred diocesan priests, sacristies, a choir practice room, restrooms, and bride-family rooms, a media broadcasting center and a number of other critical rooms. After a future phase of construction, the undercroft is foreseen to include the St. Callistus Chapel, named after the former home of the Christ Cathedral Parish, as well as cremation niches and bishops crypts that will be located beneath the worship level.



Coat of Arms

There are two coat of arms mosaics near the entrance of the Cathedral in the Narthex, one for Pope Francis as the standing Pope at the time of the Cathedral dedication, and another for Bishop Vann as the standing Bishop of Orange.

