

Welcome to the St. Xavier Parish Center!

This renovation project has been in the works for a long time. A great deal of care and effort went into design, detailing and selection phases to ensure that the result would not only improve the physical office and ministry spaces but also express certain ideals and reference elements of our parish history and the legacy of the Jesuits and our patron: St Francis Xavier.

Facility

As you explore the new Parish Center, you may notice the completed project has increased the amount of daylight in the space, repaired structural damage, corrected the cause of repeated flooding and updated the facilities which were last renovated more than three decades ago. You may notice that the design appears spare without much added ornament; however, the ornament in this space is supplied in part by the color, texture, and warmth of the materials which surround you.

History

Exposing some of the existing beams, stone and brick contribute to making the space as unique as the parish itself. In addition to reflecting the physical history of the church building, these elements coupled with new materials, such as teak, bamboo and cherry, as well as other design decisions also speak to larger ideals such as authenticity, care of the Creator, and stewardship and care for our common home.

Authenticity

There are no faux materials in this project. Each material's outward appearance expresses its true nature or identity. Likewise, we are called to live our lives in a manner which outwardly expresses our true Christian identity.

Fidelity

We are made in the image and likeness of God; he created us with care because he loves us. We were each created with deliberate care and as unique individuals. While humans are not perfect, as God is, we are tasked with being the best person we can be and offering our best efforts in all aspects of our lives. Likewise much care and consideration was devoted to creating a special place for all who come to this parish center and while the space is new, and well suited to serve this community for years to come, it is neither uniform nor perfect. So, if you stumble upon some aspect of the new space which reveals this imperfection, consider it a meditation that only God is perfect, and that we struggle to reverence and praise Him as best we can, as faulted humans.

Responsibility

Recognizing our responsibility to be good stewards, many of the materials, finishes and furnishings were selected because they were produced using rapidly renewable materials. They included recycled content and were manufactured by companies with commitments to sustainable manufacturing practices. Our selections were also guided by responsible consumption of resources such as energy and water. Additionally, the construction process itself made efforts to minimize its environmental impact: for example, the demolition of the old space generated approximately 197 tons of debris yet nearly 88% of this material was diverted from the landfill.

SYCAMORE STREET ENTRANCE

Founders Monument / Screen Wall

- ❖ Clad in sandstone, the outer walls share same material as the front façade of the church and the bell tower.
- ❖ The large 3-sided pylon is inscribed with the names of the founding companions of the Society of Jesus: St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Peter Faber, James Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón, Nicolas Bobadilla, and Simon Rodrigues.
- ❖ The east side of the Screen Wall bears significant dates in the history of the Jesuits, the parish, and this building. These dates are:

- ♦ 1540 - Pope Paul III grants official approval of the Society of Jesus.
- ♦ 1819 - Cincinnati Catholics build their first church, a small wooden structure at Liberty and Vine. Bishop Fenwick relocates the parish and its small wooden structure to Sycamore Street in 1823.
- ♦ 1831 - Bishop Fenwick establishes on Sycamore Street the Athenaeum (the predecessor institution to St. Xavier High School and Xavier University)
- ♦ 1840 - At the request of Bishop Purcell, the Jesuits arrive in Cincinnati to assume the education of students at the Athenaeum. The school is then renamed St. Francis Xavier College.
- ♦ 1859 - Construction of the present St. Xavier Church building is begun.
- ♦ 1882 - On the evening of April 7, a fire destroys the interior of St. Xavier Church; inside you can glimpse some of the charred beams. The new Church is rebuilt within a year.
- ♦ 2015 - This renovated parish center is completed in September.
- ♦ Additional Inscription – AMDG - *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam / For the greater glory of God.* This Jesuit motto is often quoted in the writing of St Ignatius Loyola, including his letters to Francis Xavier. As it was in the 16th century, this is still the guiding principle for Jesuit ministries.

North Entrance Pavilion

- ❖ Once you enter the new pavilion doorway, you are greeted as if on the deck of an ocean vessel. The design influence is that of a Carrack – a three or four masted ocean-going ship widely used by 15th century maritime powers. The Portuguese and Spanish used them to travel and explore the world. This is the type of vessel used by Francis Xavier from Europe to Goa, India, to Japan and beyond.
- ❖ The function of a ship is forward motion. The pavilion contains the stairs and elevator and allows people to move up and down. It serves to transport parishioners from the secular to the sacred. You'll notice the wire-tension railings up the stairs are reminiscent of the guard rails of a ship.
- ❖ *Ite Inflammate Omnia* – This Latin motto means “Go and set the world on Fire.” This was the prime directive St Ignatius Loyola gave to Francis Xavier as he set out on his mission. Those words remind each of us that, as we leave St. Xavier Church and head back out into the world, we too are charged with the grand mission of setting the world aflame with the Gospel message of love.
- ❖ The wood and teak materials used in this entrance pavilion also tell the narrative of journey and the mission of Francis Xavier. The stairs and entrance to the Parish Center are clad with FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified reclaimed teak. This is a dense durable wood native to southeast Asia – the area in which Francis Xavier served. Teak is also used for the exterior benches.
- ❖ The Spirit Flame lighting fixture above you in the pavilion will be a visual reminder of the fire of the Holy Spirit, the inflamed missionary zeal of Francis Xavier, and the command of each person to set the world aflame with acts of charity.

PARISH CENTER

Reception Area

- ❖ The reception desk and partition wall are clad with wood milled from the huge sugar pine beam which used to support the entire length of the main aisle of the church. This beam was removed in the renovation to create a larger unobstructed space in the event rooms below (Marquette and Regis rooms). A new steel beam with a larger span replaced the removed beam.
 - ♦ The darker wood was milled from the exposed sides of the beam.
 - ♦ The lighter wood was milled from the interior of the beam.
 - ♦ Other pieces of the beam went to form the large Cross further down the gallery.

Francis Xavier Offices

- ❖ The suite of parish offices is named for our patron, St. Francis Xavier. Xavier second among the founding members of the Society of Jesus and a renowned missionary to India, Southeast Asia and Japan. The five main offices spaces are named for the key geographical centers of his mission: Rome, Goa, Malacca, Japan, and China.

- ❖ Once inside the office area, you will notice several details of our building's structural foundation, details which also hearken to the foundational aspect of Xavier and his mission. The responsible use of materials echoes the frugal and careful use of resources as one might employ on mission.
 - ◆ Exposed rubble wall which supports the bell tower above
 - ◆ Existing cast iron support columns
 - ◆ Exposed original joists some with visible damage from the 1882 fire
 - ◆ Modular carpet tiles are easier and less expensive to repair/replace if an area is damaged or stained. They are made from recycled content of 51% materials and recyclable again by the manufacturer at end of its lifecycle.
 - ◆ Office furniture is manufactured in the United States by American companies committed to sustainable manufacturing practices. Furnishings include recycled content and are Greenguard certified. At end of the lifecycle, these materials the manufacturer will recycle.
 - ◆ The long concave blue glass wall separates the office area from the event rooms. This blue boundary reminds us of the frontiers of the deep blue sea crossed by Francis Xavier and many other missionaries, once they were well-founded and educated in the Gospel mission. Beyond this blue sea are the event rooms, named after five significant missionaries to various countries and continents (see below).

Loyola and Faber Galleries

- ❖ The two north and south lengthwise halls are named for St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus and for St. Peter Faber, the first Jesuit priest and one of the first Companions.
- ❖ The features of the gallery spaces include:
 - ◆ Porcelain tile manufactured in Tennessee by Crossville, Inc. (the first manufacturer to earn Green Squared certification, the highest sustainability standard in the industry). The tile contains a minimum of 4% recycled content, and it is recyclable by the manufacturer.
 - ◆ Wood finishes include real bamboo ceiling tiles. This material is a rapidly renewable resource. Bamboo is also a material native to Asia, the area in which Francis Xavier served as missionary. The wainscot and window seats are FSC cherry, providing both natural color and warmth to the space.
 - ◆ Increased daylight in the space is due to the excavation of the north courtyard area and addition of pavilions on the north and south sides of building. You may notice also the use of LED (Light-emitting diodes) lighting. These produce visible light when an electrical current passes through them. Benefits include more energy efficiency than other types of lighting, a longer lasting life, and they contain no hazardous materials.
 - ◆ A large wooden Cross re-milled and constructed by refashioning a section of the long sugar pine beam that once supported the main aisle of our Church above. The supporting "wood of the Cross" now adds to the edification of our souls in the Parish Center.

Event Room Spaces

- ❖ All five of the new event rooms are named for Jesuit missionaries: Arrupe, Claver, Marquette, Regis, and Zipoli. Two of these missionaries are also pictured in the large mural behind the main altar of the church upstairs. See if you can find out which two!
- ❖ **The Arrupe Room** is a classroom or small meeting room named for Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. (1907-1981), the 28th Superior General of the Jesuits during Vatican II. Arrupe was missioned to serve in Japan in 1938 and was living outside Hiroshima in 1945 when the atomic bomb was dropped. He ministered to thousands and focused on the Jesuit commitment to serve the poor. His belief in justice informed his view of the purpose of Jesuit education: *To form men-and-women-for others; men and women who will live not for themselves but for God and his Christ.*
- ❖ **The Claver Room** is named for St. Peter Claver, S.J. (1581-1654) and Spanish Jesuit who arrived in Cartagena, Colombia and ministered to the physical and spiritual needs of the 10,000 African slaves who arrived each year to South America. He is the patron of African missions and interracial justice as a result of his work in Colombia.

- ❖ **The Marquette Room** is named for Pere Jacques Marquette, S.J. (1637-1668), a French Jesuit missionary and explorer who was assigned to New France (Canada) in 1666 as missionary to the native people of the Americas. He founded the first European settlement in Michigan in 1668, and explored and mapped the northern portion of the Mississippi River.
- ❖ **The Regis Room** is named for Jean-Baptiste Régis, S.J. (1663-1738), a French Jesuit missionary who was sent to the missions in Imperial China in 1698. With the blessing of the Chinese Emperor, Regis was instrumental in creating accurate maps of the Chinese Empire.
- ❖ **The Zipoli Room** is named for Domenico Zipoli, S.J. (1688-1726) an Italian Baroque composer of music who worked and died in Argentina. He joined the Jesuits to work in the Reductions missions of Paraguay where his musical expertise contributed to develop the natural musical talents of the Guarani. You may have seen his kind in the movie “The Mission.” He is remembered as the most accomplished musician among Jesuit missionaries. The Zipoli room will be used by the parish choir.

The Courtyard

- ❖ Outside the door to the north brings you to the courtyard. Grounded on permeable pavers, the floor allows water to filter back down into the water table and away from the interior of the Parish Center. The courtyard has been graded so that water will travel away from the building.
- ❖ The teak benches and furniture use authentic wood for durability and simplicity.
- ❖ Surrounding plantings and a future water feature will provide a tranquil space for reflection.

The Twelve Exposed Masonry Piers

- ❖ The 12 large columns of brick and stone receive the load from the church columns above, which in turn support the roof of the church. The materials used in the construction of the piers is mostly brick, added with stone and concrete in various spots. No two are exactly the same, and the number twelve hearkens to the patriarchs and the Apostles. The entire structure serves as metaphor for our Christian identity and mission:
 - We are created as unique individuals but share a common role in Christ
 - We are not perfect but that does not diminish our worth
 - We are called to live authentic lives, exposed, not hidden of talent
 - We support the parish in prayer and action
 - Each of us adds to the upholding of the Word and worship of Jesus above

Gratitude

In conclusion, while the clean lines, natural materials and blending of the old and new may give the new parish center an air of simplicity, its construction was complicated and details numerous. For all the help we received to reach this conclusion, the Jesuits, the staff, the architects and construction employees extend deep gratitude to you, the parishioner, for prayerful and financial support.

The conception and construction of this unique Parish Center would not have been possible without the talents and dedication of many people including our architectural team from **Glaserworks**, particularly Paul Duffy and Adam Luginbill, who served not only as architects but also as advocates and guides along the way. We also owe a great thanks to our general contractor, **R.J. Beischel**, in particular our project foreman Tim Metcalf and project manager Rob Lewis, who made our plans a reality even if it was challenging at times.

The roles played by the pastors of St. Xavier Church during this period must also be recognized. Our former pastor, Eric J. Knapp, recognized the necessity for a renovation and initiated the process while the efforts of our current pastor, Patrick A. Fairbanks, shepherded the project from drawing board to a successful completion.

Finally, sincere gratitude must be expressed to all those whose financial contributions paid for this renovation. St. Xavier Church has a long history of serving the spiritual, social, and physical needs of its community, which includes both registered parishioners and members of the downtown community. The completed renovations have secured our building’s foundation and provided updated spaces for our offices and ministries, ensuring that St. X will continue to serve the needs of this diverse community for decades to come.

• AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM •