

# DIOCESE OF ORANGE



MEDIA CONTACT  
RYAN LILYENGREN  
714-282-3075  
RYANL@RCBO.ORG

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**ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA'S EXTENSIVE REMODEL  
EMPHASIZES ARCHITECTURAL AND ARTISTIC SYMBOLISM**  
The Newly Designed Chapel Incorporates Windows and Artwork Designed by  
Many Prominent Local Artists

**LAGUNA BEACH, Calif., (June 29, 2005)** - The newly renovated St. Catherine of Siena parish Church in Laguna Beach is set to be rededicated July 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:30pm. The remodeled church incorporates design elements from throughout the parish and community. Pastor of St. Catherine of Siena, Rev. Eamon O’Gorman worked with the design team which included many local artists and parish laity to incorporate inspiring stylistic points that enhance one’s spiritual experience. “Our new chapel complements our parish and our community through its use of symbolism and artwork created by local artists,” said Fr. O’Gorman. The chapel’s clear art glass windows were designed by acclaimed Laguna Beach artists, Jos and Dirk Maes. The beautiful paintings behind the altar and around the archways were completed by Laguna Beach Art Commissioner, Mike Tauber. “The artistic elements that have gone into this new church truly represent the spirit and creativity of this parish and Laguna Beach as a whole,” said Commissioner Tauber.

The general design of the worship space is centered on the celebration of the Eucharist. Therefore, the altar around which the Eucharist is celebrated is the primary focal point, or “pillar” of the worship space, with the baptismal font being the other. All other symbols and ritual spaces are arranged around the axis of the

baptismal font and altar. The comprehensive architectural plan - building, ceiling, interior design, thematic art and central aisle flooring brings together and emphasizes the spiritual relationship between baptism and the celebration of the Eucharist.

The baptismal font is located in the rear of the chapel directly opposite the altar which is at the front of the church. The stone floor pattern from the font toward the altar visually connects these liturgical focal points. The font and altar are of marble and granite sourced from the American Midwest and Italy. The color of the marble resonates with the color in the sanctuary walls and again connects the font and altar.

The design of the altar is specific to the parish of St. Catherine of Siena. At its construction over 70 years ago, the church tower quickly became an important part of Laguna's pictorial identity. The tower became a "beacon" to people on-shore and for those at sea. To integrate and underscore this historic community presence the new altar design reflects the top of the church tower.

Interior statues of Mary, John the Blessed Apostle and the Body of Christ were made by artisans in Madrid, Spain specifically for St. Catherine of Siena Church. The murals were originally painted in 1947 and have been restored by Balboa Art Conservancy of San Diego. Commissioner Mike Tauber worked to combine the original artwork with the new art he designed for the archways.

The Sanctuary's clear art glass windows and those throughout the church were designed and crafted in Laguna Beach by Jos and Dirk Maes. The clarity of the clear glass allows for maximum light to enhance the nave. Each of the seven windows high in the walls of the nave represent the seven sacraments. The four windows surrounding and adjacent to the Baptismal Font, the ambry and the Church entrance, represent the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Two windows near the ceiling of the sanctuary represent God the Father and the Holy Spirit, completing a symbol of the Trinity with Christ crucified at the center. The

smaller windows along the aisles of the nave are traditional symbols associated with St. Catherine of Siena; while an additional two windows at the doors to the elevator and church patio represent Ruth and Naomi, two women of hospitality found in the Old Testament. A final window found in the interior of the stairwell depicts Jacob's ladder. Two remaining windows in the reconciliation chapels represent the parables of The Prodigal Son and The Good Shepard. The remaining sacristy window represents the Christ's example as he washed the feet of his disciples and encouraged them to do likewise.

The ambry (cabinet) contains holy oils and is located adjacent to the chapel entrance. These are the oil of the infirmed, for anointing the sick; oil of the catechumens, for use in the rites of Christian initiation, and the sacred chrism, for anointing at baptism and confirmation. Unique vessels for the holy oils were created by renowned Laguna Beach glass artist, John Barber. Visible within the ambry the precious oils remind congregants to recognize that they, as the people of God, have been anointed to "go out and spread the good news."

For more information about St. Catherine of Siena's architecture and artwork please contact Luella Vasquez at 949-494-9701, or visit [www.stcathlagunabeach.org](http://www.stcathlagunabeach.org).

THE MARYWOOD CENTER  
2811 E. VILLA REAL DRIVE  
P. O. BOX 14195  
ORANGE, CALIFORNIA 92863-1595  
PHONE: (714) 282-3000  
FAX: (714) 282-3029