

Dear Parish Family-

The week of July 19 was an exciting week when workers from Atelier FAS of Philadelphia began work on the historic Altar donated to our parish from the parish of Calvary Episcopal Church (now closed) in Conshohocken Pennsylvania. Watching these large carved stones being brought into the building, unloading of equipment and doing the mathematical calculations for the foundation was interesting.

This Limestone Altar was the principal Altar at Calvary, here it will serve as the Altar of Repose for the Blessed Sacrament. The work began on Monday with the building of a form to create a foundation on which the Altar would rest. The Limestone Altar is the same height as our Marble Altar so it had to be raised 12 inches for visibility. On Tuesday workers began lifting and securing the Limestone panels to put the Altar back together at our site.

Atelier put me in contact with the current Rector of the three merged parishes and he informed me the Limestone for the Altar came from the Commonwealth of Virginia from a quarry owned by President George Washington and was chosen by the congregation because of its association with the first President, himself an Episcopalian.

The Mensa (table top) stone weighed nearly 2000 pounds, the face of the Mensa is carved with a Eucharistic motif of grape clusters and grape vines and leaves representing the Blood of Christ and the left and right side is carved with the images of the four Evangelists; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and match our Ambo (pulpit). The front Face Panel has IHS (monogram of Greek letters indicating the Holy Name 'Jesus Christ') carved into the Front.

The foreman related to me that when the Altar was being removed an elderly grandmother, a lifelong member of that Parish, sat in the last pew of the Church and wept to see the Altar being removed. He called her to let her know it was once again in sacred use in our Church and she was overjoyed. By God's providence it came into sacred use the weekend our Holy Father Pope Francis declared World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, a truly wonderful, divine and serendipitous moment.

The Blessing and Dedication will be on Saturday October 2, 2021 at 5pm Mass with our Bishop The Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M. presiding, all are welcome!

The use of Gonzaga Hall as a temporary worship space last week worked out nicely. We tried to make the space look like a Church again. The only fly in the ointment was the Live Stream which Fr. Jim was able to rig up for the temporary situation. It was not perfect but it worked the short amount of time we needed it to work.

Peace and Good – Fr. Bambrick