

New John Paul II chapel at Chicago seminary

Robert McClory | Feb. 24, 2014 NCR Today

While Pope Francis calls for "a church of the poor and for the poor," those preparing for the priesthood at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary near Chicago will soon have a radically redecorated chapel dedicated to the memory and teachings of Pope John Paul II.

The project, "spearheaded by our rector Father Robert Barron," will help form "an evangelical spirit amongst the seminarians and faculty," according to an article in the fall and winter issue of the seminary's publication, *The Bridge*. The article also noted: "In every way, it will be a chapel of the New Evangelization."

Within the article, Barron said, "I would like it to be a physical representation of some of the changes I want to make institutionally and philosophically." According to the article, The John Paul II Chapel will have many architectural elements meant "to signal the subliminal beauty of the place."

Among the elements described are 19 custom-made stained-glass windows portraying people John Paul personally "admired studied or beatified," including Thomas Aquinas and Sts. Katharine Drexel, Padre Pio and Maximilian Kolbe. Two shrines are planned: one on the right dedicated to John Paul with a custom portrait of the pope "which looks like a heavenly figure in another dimension"; the other, on the left, will be dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Above the sanctuary will be two exhortations in Latin favored by John Paul: "*Nolite Timere* (Don't be Afraid) and *Duc in Altum* (Cast out into the deep)."

Barron, who has been rector for less than two years, said he wants the chapel to be a "powerhouse" and "incubator" for the new evangelization with its "concentrated symbolic expression available" for generations to come, according to the article.

Barron himself was not available for comment.

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