



Holy Spirit
Catholic Community



The Tabernacle

“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” John 1:14

The word tabernacle derives from the Latin tabernaculum (tent), and recalls the Jewish “meeting tent,” which housed the Ark of the Covenant and thus embodied the presence of God among the people. In Catholic churches today, the tabernacle houses communion bread that has been



consecrated at the liturgy. The practice of reserving the eucharist dates back in some places to the earliest days. In the second century, a small amount of consecrated communion bread was placed in an ambry or a pyx, often shaped like a casket or a dove. This vessel was small enough to be carried to the homes of those who were unable to attend the community’s eucharist. This was the only reason for reservation. Devotion to the reserved eucharist grew during the Middle Ages when the reception of communion declined. By the sixteenth century,

the custom of a fixed container for the reserved eucharist – the tabernacle as part of the main altar – was in place; in 1614 it became prescribed practice for most places.

The normative guidelines of the church today indicate that the tabernacle be placed elsewhere than on an altar, and never on the altar used for the liturgy. An appropriate setting would be in a chapel set apart from the main assembly area. Such a setting should also provide for the private devotion of the faithful. The tabernacle in its modern setting still recalls the ancient image of a house for the divine presence, and reminds the assembly of those in the parish who are confined to their households, waiting for the ministry of those who have celebrated the eucharist.

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Located in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, our tabernacle houses the consecrated Body of Christ. Out of reverence we genuflect when we approach the tabernacle. Our tabernacle is



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suspended as if floating in space in a floor to ceiling sheet of clear glass. It is made from a beautiful white oak wood with a simple off-set brass cross. Inset in our tabernacle is a single gold mosaic piece. This gold piece represents the presence of Christ. This gold inset matches the gold mosaic set in the floor at the center of our Worship Space. Both of these insets represent the presence of the Body of Christ. Christ's presence is in the tabernacle in sacramental form and at the center of the assembly, God's living presence exists in each one of us, the Church, the Body of Christ.