

# St. Basil the Great Catholic Church

## Meaning of the Mass

2018-12-9

### The Sanctuary

The first time the word *sanctuary* is mentioned in the Bible is in the Book of Exodus, and in Exodus 25:8, God says to Moses: “*Let [the people of Israel] make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.*” The Sanctuary is the abode of the Lord - God’s house.

So the sanctuary is a place, and every Catholic Church has one. Here at St. Basil’s, the sanctuary is the entire area up on steps. It is elevated not just to make it easier to see, but to set it apart from the rest of the Church. The word *sacred* means “set apart”. The word *sanctuary* comes from the same root as *sanctus*, which is the Latin word for holy. During every Mass we say, “Holy Holy Holy”. In Latin, that is “Sanctus Sanctus Sanctus”. The sanctuary is holy and set apart. It is not your normal, everyday, run-of-the-mill area. This is actually the holiest place in Brecksville because of what happens here and Who lives here.

This floorplan is a microcosm of the entire Christian story. We had separation. Heaven there, earth here. God there, humanity here. Sanctuary there, pews here. In the Incarnation, it’s as if the Second Person of the Holy Trinity stepped out of Heaven and came down here to earth to meet us and save us. The same thing happens at Mass: Jesus in the Eucharist comes out of the holy sanctuary to meet us where we are. He bridges the gap. He comes into our pews, into our world, into our mess, to be with us - to enter our souls and save us. First separation, then union. It’s the story of our faith and the story of our personal lives.