

## DESIGNING THE INTERIOR OF A CHURCH

As part of the restoration of the Cathedral there may be an opportunity to make some changes to the inside of the building. Over the coming weeks, the Bulletin will feature some essential internal aspects of the Cathedral including the liturgical furniture. This week the focus is on the Priest's Chair and the Bishop's Cathedra.

### The Priest's Chair

(also called the Presider's Chair or the Presidential Chair)

*A chair is more than a piece of furniture. It can also symbolize the person who sits there. In many homes a family member has a preferred chair, and others won't sit there out of respect. In offices, in boardrooms and even at the dining room table, some seats are just sacred.*

*At church the presider's chair is more than a chair. It symbolizes the priest. He doesn't just sit there. He stands there to lead the assembly in prayer. The Priest who presides at Mass stands at the chair for the opening rites, sits in the chair for the Scripture readings and may stand at the chair again for the communion prayer and concluding rites. He may also preach from the chair if he wishes.*

In our church, the presider's chair is usually placed to the left of the altar, in front of the pillar, however its location can change during the Christmas Season to accommodate the crib, and at other times depending on the liturgical season.

The presider's chair is different from the Bishop's Chair, called the **Cathedra**. The Cathedra is the chair at the cathedral where the bishop sits when he presides for worship. The word "cathedral" comes from the word "Cathedra".

*The Cathedra is reserved seating. Only the diocesan bishop may sit there. If another bishop presides for worship, he sits*

*elsewhere unless the diocesan bishop permits him to use the Cathedra. Everyone else sits in other chairs. Whenever a priest presides for Mass at the cathedral, he sits in a different presider's chair and not the Cathedra. If other bishops are present for a cathedral service at which the diocesan bishop presides, they sit in other chairs.*

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In our Cathedral, the Cathedra is located on a raised section of the Sanctuary behind the altar. The design of the Cathedra is different to the presider's chair and the other chairs on the sanctuary, to distinguish it as a special chair, used only by the Bishop. The current Cathedra has been used by bishops since 1983. Prior to then, the Cathedra was made from a dark wood with a high back and was located on the sanctuary facing Keppel Street.