



# THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

**CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER**  
46 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street, New York NY 10011  
Email: [pastoralcouncil@sfxavier.org](mailto:pastoralcouncil@sfxavier.org)

## **SOLICITATION OF INTEREST IN THE INSTALLATION OF NEW ART IN OUR CHURCH**

### **I. OVERVIEW**

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The Church of St. Francis Xavier is committed to pursuing racial and social justice in our community. Among many other initiatives, we would like to commission new art work for the church that more reflects the diversity of our community and the values we profess.

#### **Community Mission Statement**

The Church of St. Francis Xavier, a Roman Catholic parish in the Jesuit tradition, strives to be a prophetic, welcoming community, and an inclusive witness to the presence of Christ Jesus in our midst. Mindful of our utter reliance on God, and need for God's grace, we rejoice together in our celebration of the sacraments and proclamation of the Gospel. As a people of hope, we commit ourselves through prayers and creative discernment to respond to God in our time by: being a respectful community where seekers and their questions are welcomed, where injustice is challenged, where the poor, the alienated and the marginalized find a home, and where people are refreshed, reconciled and renewed.

#### **A Snapshot of Our Community**

As Community, we bear witness to our faith and celebrate the diversity of the 2,436 parishioners who come from all walks of life and from all areas through Metropolitan New York. Our shared faith is the foundation of our Community, but its life is based on the myriad ministries and service that we provide to all those who need them.

## History of Our Parish

In 1847, a Jesuit priest, John Larkin, was charged with founding a church to serve the faithful in New York City. With only 50 cents and an abundance of faith, he left Fordham and headed for Manhattan—a full day’s travel at that time – beginning the great journey that led to the founding of our Community. At a Mass offered the day after he received the assignment, a Frenchman attended who had just immigrated to America with his family. He wanted to give thanks to God for their safe journey. Afterwards, he sought advice from Fr. Larkin about how to keep his money safe in his new country, because he had heard that the banks were not reliable. The amount: \$5,000.

Larkin had heard of a Protestant church between Bowery and Elizabeth Streets that had just suffered a great schism and found it necessary to put the building up for sale. The price: \$18,000, a substantial amount of money in 1847, but the sellers were willing to take a down payment of \$5,000.

Recognizing God’s intervention when he saw it, Fr. Larkin offered the French immigrant security for his money in return for a mortgage on the Protestant church. And so began our Community, St. Francis Xavier. The first test of that Community’s strength occurred shortly afterward when the church burned in a terrible fire. Facing failure and being summoned by his superiors to give up and return to Fordham, Larkin and parishioners instead summoned their courage to renew, renovate and restore their Church and parish.

At dinner one day shortly after the fire, well inspired by what had happened earlier in the day, Fr. Larkin drew from his pocket two rosy apples and recounted this story . . .

*“I was passing through the Bowery to-day . . . when I was accosted by an apple-woman, who began her salutation with a ‘Well, Father Larkin, so your church is burnt; the Lord be praised!’*

*‘The Lord be praised!’ I repeated; ‘are you then glad of it?’*

*‘Oh, God forbid!’ she replied, ‘but then we must give God glory for everything.’ I acknowledged in my heart the truth of the remark, and resolved to profit by the lesson she gave me.*

*‘Ah, Father,’ she continued, ‘if I only had some money to give you! Alas, I am a poor widow wit five children, that I must support by my apples; but something I can give, and I hope it will have all the blessings of the widow’s mite. You must take the two finest apples in my basket.’*

*She then offered me these two apples, which I was forced to accept; but she positively refused to tell me her name.”*

And in that moment of conversion, Larkin and our community resolved to “give God glory for everything.”

Another test of faith occurred when the new church, which was built in 1850, soon proved inadequate for the number of faithful who flocked here to worship. So, in May 1878, with 5,000 people in attendance, the cornerstone was laid for our current magnificent church designed by the famous architect, Patrick C. Keely.

Since its founding, St. Francis Xavier has been serving the spiritual and physical needs of the community through ministry and service. As each new wave of immigrants arrived, the parish, like St. Francis Xavier himself, adapted to the changing needs. That tradition continues today. As we move forward into our future may we, as in our past, continue to recognize God's sustaining hand by giving God for everything.

## **II. THE PROJECT**

As part of our racial and social justice initiatives we hope to commission art project(s) that reflect our mission and community. To that end, we have formed a committee of parishioners to explore what this art project could be. It is possible that more than one work of art will be commissioned.

The Committee has put together a list of ideas and subjects that artist applicants should use as a starting point when conceiving their proposal. The committee has also provided a list of places within the Church where new artwork could be accommodated. (See Appendix for photos.) Please note the Committee is open to subject and location suggestions that artist applicants may have.

Applicants who are not familiar with the Church of St. Francis Xavier are encouraged to visit the site to understand the building's potentials and limitations.

### **Subject Ideas**

Our ideas for the project include and are not limited to:

- Art that depicts Jesus as a Black, Indigenous, Person of Color, so as to represent groups historically excluded, marginalized or exploited in the United States including but not limited to African Americans, Native Americans and migrants from Latin America.
- Art that features individual saints of various races/culture/nationalities. For example, and not limited to: Josephine Bakhita, Charles Lwanga, Oscar Romero, Kateri Tekakwitha, Andrew Kim Taegon, Lorenzo Ruiz, and The Martyr Saints of China. Also, Blesseds Augustus Tolton, Pierre Toussaint, Sr. Thea Bowman and Julia Greeley.
- Art that depicts and honors heroes in the arena of racial and social injustice. For example, and not limited to: Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman, John Lewis, Julia Greeley, Bayard Rustin and Fannie Lou Hamer. This could also include some local heroes who volunteer at the Xavier Mission Welcome Table, Shelter, etc.

- Possible themes depicting social/racial justice might be the parallel of Jesus on the cross with lynched African Americans hung from a tree or images of African American mothers grieving their children near the Pieta statue.

### **Art Form and Medium Ideas**

The form or medium for the art may be painting, mural, mosaic, sculpture, tapestry, stained glass or something else. The work will be a permanent installation and should possess durability in a space that is heavily trafficked. Also, the work should not require a great deal of maintenance.

The current artwork in the Church is almost exclusively figurative. It is important that the artist applicants consider whether additional figurative artwork best accomplishes the stated goals of this commission, or whether a non-figurative approach would better reflect our goals in a powerful and impactful way. Said another way, the presentation of historically accurate representations and abstract, non-objective, and conceptual artwork are encouraged.

### **Location Ideas**

The Committee has identified that following areas in the Church that may be appropriate for the installation of new art. (See Appendix for photos.)

- Vaulted ceiling in narthex (outer entry area)
- Vaulted ceiling in inner entry area
- Side walls proximate to the ascending stairs of entry area
- Light Fixtures for hanging art
- Side marble panels between Stations of the Cross
- Wall behind Pieta Statue
- Side panels around Sacred Heart Statue
- Side panels around Boys Altar
- Sides of Tiffany Glass Windows
- Side sections of Choir Storage Area

Click here for a virtual tour of our Church:

<https://sfxavier.org/documents/2014/11/Entire-Tour-Guide-Reduced.pdf>

### **III. SUBMISSION OF PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS**

#### **A) Interested Artist's Application – Project Proposal**

An artist interested in this project should submit a preliminary proposal (PDF) for the work that includes a presentation of visual mock-ups, and material and color samples. In addition, a draft timeline for the various steps to be undertaken from preliminary discussions regarding the commission through installation.

#### **B) Interested Artist's Application – Professional Information**

Please complete the attached PDF.

#### **Project Budget and Contract**

Discussions regarding the commission fee, budget and contract will occur once the scope of the commission(s) is refined.

#### **St. Francis Xavier Contact Information**

The Committee encourages inquiries regarding this project. In addition, arrangements to visit the Church can be made through the Committee. Inquiries and the submission of a preliminary proposal can be made to [pastoralcouncil@sfxavier.org](mailto:pastoralcouncil@sfxavier.org).

**The deadline for the submissions is March 1, 2021**



# THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

## IIIB – INTERESTED ARTIST APPLICATION PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ WEBSITE \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORIES THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOUR CREATIVE APPROACH

- |  |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PAINTING          | <input type="checkbox"/> GLASS       | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PHOTOGRAPHY       | <input type="checkbox"/> WOOD        | <input type="checkbox"/> WEAVING (FABRIC/OTHER) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DRAWING           | <input type="checkbox"/> CALLIGRAPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> METAL WORKS            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PAPER/MIXED MEDIA | <input type="checkbox"/> CERAMICS    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____            |

LIST OF COMMISSIONED PROJECTS OR PERMANENT PUBLIC INSTALLATIONS, PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY

YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS AND PHILOSOPHY (MAXIMUM 650 WORDS)

WHY YOU'RE INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING A PROJECT IN ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, AND HOW THIS COMMISSION WILL ENRICH YOUR WORK AS WELL AS OUR COMMUNITY

PLEASE SPECIFY HOW THIS PROJECT ADDRESSES OUR MISSION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE ICONOGRAPHY WITHIN ST. FRANCIS XAVIER. (MAXIMUM 650 WORDS)

OTHER INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER

ATTACH YOUR CURRENT CV INCLUDING EDUCATION, ARTIST IN RESIDENCE, EXHIBITIONS, PRESS AND OTHER QUALIFICATIONS THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE PROJECT

PROVIDE (PDF) 6 EXAMPLES OF RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS (WITHIN THE PAST 6 YEARS) OR THOSE CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS AND UP TO 3 IMAGES OF YOUR PROPOSED IDEA

**DUE DATE MARCH 1, 2021**



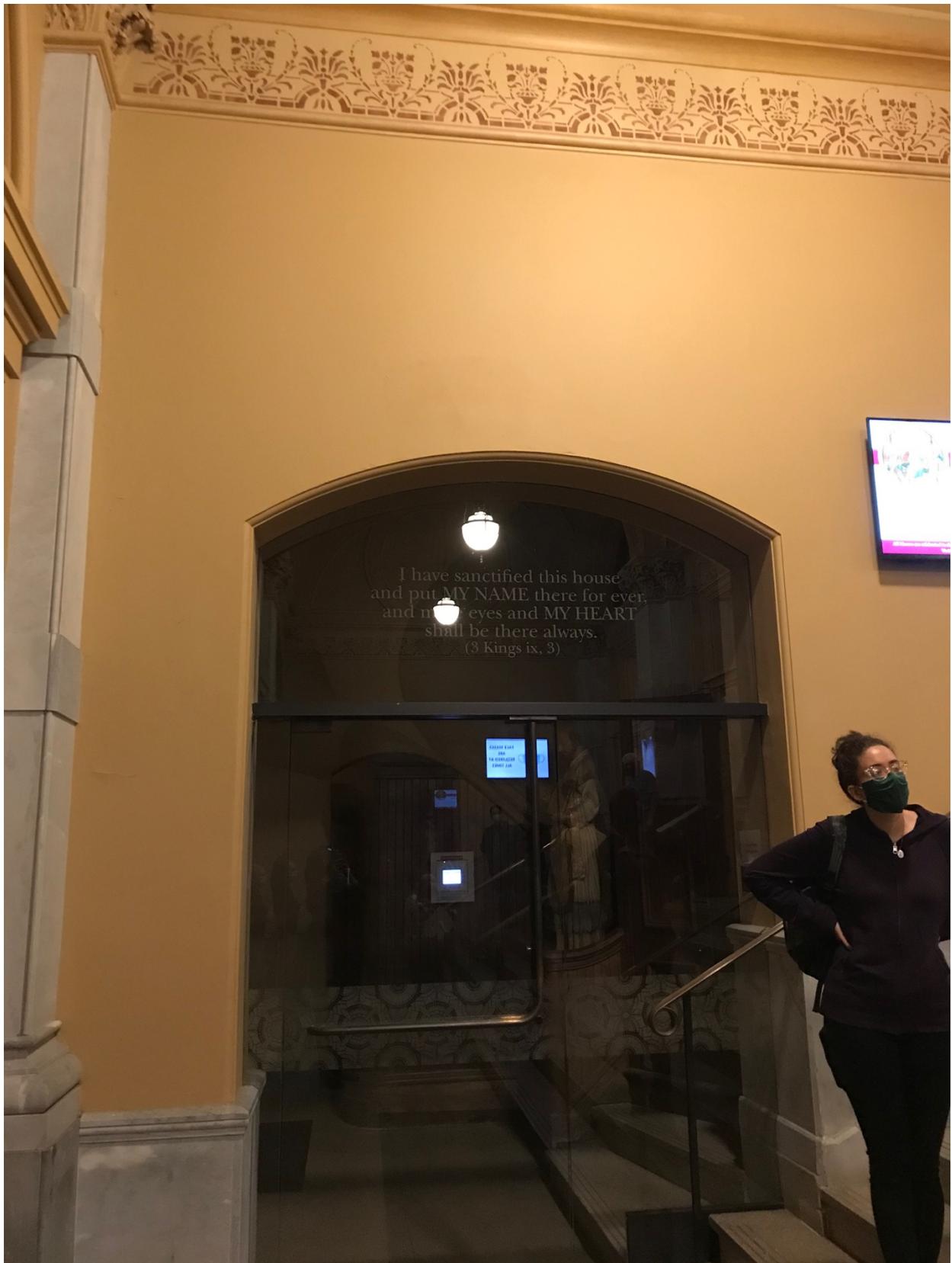
# THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

## APPENDIX

1. VAULTED CEILING IN NARTHEX (ENTRY AREA)
2. SIDE WALL OF ENTRY AREA
3. SIDE WALL OF ENTRY AREA
4. VAULTED CEILING IN INNER ENTRY AREA
5. LIGHT FIXTURES FOR HANGING ART
6. GLASS PANELS OVER INNER ENTRY DOORS
7. SIDE MARBLE PANELS BETWEEN STATIONS OF THE CROSS
8. WALL BEHIND PIETA STATUE
9. SIDE PANELS AROUND SACRED HEART STATUE
10. SIDE PANEL AROUND BOYS ALTAR
11. SIDES OF TIFFANY WINDOWS
12. SIDES OF TIFFANY WINDOWS
13. SIDE SECTIONS OF CHOIR STORAGE AREA



**1. VAULTED CEILING IN NARTHEX (ENTRY AREA)**



**2. SIDES OF ENTRY AREA**



**3. SIDES OF ENTRY AREA**



**4. VAULTED CEILING IN INNER ENTRY AREA**



**5. LIGHT FIXTURES FOR HANGING ART**



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