

The Cathedral of Christ the Light Diocese of Oakland

In September of 2008 the Diocese of Oakland celebrates the opening of the Cathedral of Christ the Light. The new Cathedral, which replaced the Cathedral of St. Frances de Sales after it was damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, is located in downtown Oakland at the northern edge of Lake Merritt. The cathedral complex includes the public plaza, rectory (Bishops residence), chancery offices, conference center, a medical clinic, a bookstore as well as a café.

We are celebrating the creation of an excellent new resource. Part of the diocese' outreach includes explaining the cathedral to Catholic students throughout the diocese. Several educators have developed excellent materials for elementary school students, high school students and for ongoing adult education. In addition to reaching out through Catholic schools in the diocese, there are efforts underway to connect with non-Catholic school students through parish ministry.

The new cathedral is rich in symbolism, history and architectural intelligence. There are no formal requirements for how schools should teach about the cathedral, but there has been great deal of interest expressed by schools within the diocese for materials and information that teachers can use for classroom purposes.

After meeting with a variety of high school students, teachers and campus ministers from around the diocese, the following "class prep" was developed as an example of how the cathedral can be represented to high school students. Students who have toured the new cathedral have given extremely positive feedback regarding the symbolism, the architecture, and overall beauty of the building. At best there would be one day of class time reviewing the attached materials and another partial day for a trip to the cathedral where a docent would provide more detail about the entire complex.

The cathedral is dynamic and complex. In discussions with teachers from schools around the diocese, educators came to realize that several existing courses could incorporate lessons on the cathedral. These include The Catholic Experience, Church History, World Religions, Atheism and Faith, even courses in Scripture. The following material can be adapted to teach lower classes as well as juniors and seniors.

Block Scheduling – One 80 Minute Class

Prior to spending a day on the cathedral, teachers are encouraged to require a short and simple homework assignment where students provide a picture or a short paragraph that explains where they have seen the light of Christ in their lives.

- I. Short introductory Q&A session led by teacher
 - a. What do you know about the new cathedral?
 - b. What have you heard people say about it?
 - c. Have you seen it?
 - d. Does anyone remember the old cathedral of St. Frances de Sales?
 - e. Has anyone ever visited other cathedrals around the U.S., Latin America or Europe? What are cathedrals like?
 - f. What is the name of our new cathedral? Why?
 - g. What else is going on at the Cathedral site? Does anyone know what a chancery is?

- II. Introduction of a short video, Fiat Lux (Let There Be Light) showing some of the main elements of the Cathedral of Christ the Light which can be found at www.ctlcathedral.org. The video enables the students to participate in class presentations after it's done.
 - a. Video shows location, history, architecture, sacred art, major points of symbolism, and other important elements.

- III. Post video discussion. Discussion questions:
 - a. What impressed you most?
 - b. What symbols did you recognize?
 - c. Did you notice the materials used in making the cathedral?
 - d. Have you ever seen a building like it before?
 - e. How is it similar or dissimilar to other churches and cathedrals you may have seen?
 - f. Why do you think Catholics have cathedrals?
 - g. Was there anything you didn't like?
 - h. Does it seem to be an inspiring place to worship?
 - i. Would you ever go to mass there?
 - j. Do you think it's appealing to high school students?
 - k. Could it make you feel closer to God?
 - l. Did you recognize any historical references or connections?

- IV. Break-out groups. The Cathedral of Christ the Light allows for 3 separate groups. One to explore what cathedral means, the second to explore the relationship between Christ and cathedral, and the last group to look at the symbolism of light.

The class breaks into 3 groups and each group is given a short 2-3 page overview of their topic. Students read the summary, discuss it and then prepare a short presentation on their topic which is presented to the rest of the class. There are three appendices that explain Cathedral, Christ and Light.

- A. Cathedral – Questions that may help the group.
- B. Christ – Questions
- C. Light – Questions

Have each group read the short summary of their section and then discuss it. Each group makes a presentation to the rest of the class on their topic.

Guiding questions for students.

1. Why does Oakland need a cathedral?
2. Is it possible a cathedral can actually help people feel more closely connected to God and to one another?
3. Why have people, since the beginning of time, built special buildings where people could worship?
4. How could having a new cathedral possibly have any meaning for you as a high school student?
5. Why does it make sense to have so many historical and artistic references in the cathedral, and even in its design?
6. Do you think that the cathedral can help people become closer to God? How?
7. What role do the arts have in a building like our cathedral?
8. How does the cathedral represent more than just a place of worship?

V. Conclusion – Beyond the building itself.

The cathedral is the seat of the bishop. And the chancery is the administrative center of the diocese. The Catholic faith has always reached out to women, men and children in need. Likewise, Catholic academics have a long history of research, participation in ecumenism, artistic expression and social justice.

While the cathedral represents a place of worship, it's worth remembering some of the other key aspects of the campus of the Cathedral of Christ the Light. Here are some programs that deserve to be mentioned, all being a part of the efforts of the diocese of Oakland.

- A. Family Life Ministry (and Family Life Ministry for Latinos)
- B. Social Justice Resources
- C. Youth Ministry
- D. CYO (Catholic Youth Organization)
- E. The Department of Ethnic Pastoral Ministries
- F. Safe Environment for Children Project
- G. Catholic Scouting
- H. The Youth Retreat Center in Lafayette
- I. Catholic Charities of the East Bay
- J. Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- K. FACE (Family Aid Catholic Education)
- L. The Catholic Voice newspaper
- M. The Department of Canon Law.
- N. SPRED (SPecial Religious Education)

The Cathedral of Christ the Light includes the cathedral building. But the 2.5 acre campus is the center for all of these ministries and more.

What is a Cathedral?

The word “Cathedral” comes from the Latin word cathedra, which is the Bishop’s chair. The chair symbolizes his role as leader of the local church. The church that houses the cathedra is the cathedral church.

Some Cathedrals are imposing buildings, while others are more humble. Ultimately, a Cathedral is a Cathedral not because of its size or beauty, but because of the presence of the bishop and its role as the “mother church” for the faithful in a particular geographic area, known as a diocese.

In the earliest days of Catholicism, as the faith spread and churches were established throughout a diocese to meet the needs of believers, a portion of the bread consecrated by the Bishop during the celebration of the Eucharist in the Cathedral was carried to all other churches in the diocese. This was a sign that while the faithful of the diocese were not gathered together in the same location for worship, they all were unified; symbolically gathered with their Bishop at the table of the Eucharist, participating in a common ritual meal. The Cathedral today still symbolizes the unity of all the churches in a diocese.

A Cathedral in Oakland

The Diocese of Oakland has been without a Cathedral for almost 20 years, since the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake severely damaged the Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales. The Cathedral began its life as the home of the parish of St. Francis de Sales, which was founded in 1886. Services were initially held in what today would be called a “multi-purpose facility.” A large donation from parishioner Mary J. Canning allowed the founding pastor, Fr. Thomas McSweeney, to begin building a larger church in 1891. At that time, the city of Oakland was within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

St. Francis de Sales served as a parish church until 1962, when the rapidly growing population of the East Bay led Pope John XXIII to create the Diocese of Oakland from the eastern portion of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. St. Francis de Sales was designated as the Cathedral of the new diocese, which was to be led by Bishop Floyd Begin (d. 1977). At Bishop Begin’s direction, the Cathedral underwent extensive renovation to prepare for the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. In the wake of the Council, the Cathedral

became known for its innovative liturgies and social outreach ministries. Local newspapers called the Cathedral's music program as the "Oakland Cathedral Sound," which eventually garnered a national reputation. Time magazine profiled the Cathedral in 1971.

On October 17, 1989, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake jolted the Bay Area and severely damaged St. Frances de Sales Cathedral and Sacred Heart Church. In 1990, John S. Cummins, the second Bishop of Oakland, determined that neither structure would be repaired because of costs and issues of seismic safety. In November of 1993, Oakland's Cathedral was razed.

The Cathedral of Christ the Light

Over the last decade, the Diocese of Oakland has continued to grow and now stands at 560,000 Catholics organized in 84 parishes throughout Alameda and Contra Costa County. The need of the diocese for a visible symbol of unity and presence led Bishop Cummins to begin exploring the viability of a new Cathedral. This exploration included an important gathering of representative leaders from across the diocese at Holy Names University in 1999.

The consultation process led to the understanding that any new Cathedral must manifest the threefold office of Jesus Christ as "priest, prophet and king" that is the unique responsibility of the diocesan bishop. The Cathedral must be a place where God is worshiped, where the Christian faith is shared and taught, and where the poor and others in need are served. It should bring together spiritual, civic and cultural elements in an accessible urban environment.

With the purchase of 2.5 acres of land on the shores of Lake Merritt in Oakland, the Cathedral began to move from vision to reality. Oakland's third bishop, Allen H. Vigneron, broke ground for the Cathedral on May 23, 2004 at a gathering attended by Catholics from across the diocese. The Cathedral's new location evoked the history of the diocese, since it was on the shores of Lake Merritt that the first mass in the area was celebrated by Franciscan Fr. Juan Crespi in 1772.

The cathedral parish will blend the former parishes of St. Frances de Sales/St. Mary and St. Andrew/St. Joseph. In their new home, this community will welcome new parishioners who move into the Lake Merritt neighborhood as residential development continues at a rapid pace. As the "mother church" of the diocese, the cathedral will also be a home for all Catholics within the Diocese of Oakland.

Encountering the Cathedral: The Ascent

The Cathedral of Christ the Light is a striking addition to the skyline of the City of Oakland. Designed by award-winning architect Craig Hartman, it blends ancient and modern elements to create a structure that is rooted in the past while remaining open to the present and future.

The encounter with the Cathedral begins on 21st Street with a walkway known as the “Pilgrim’s Path” that rises from the street level to the top of the urban hill on which the cathedral rests.

The rising path evokes the route of pilgrims into the city of Jerusalem, which is situated on a plateau in the Judean Mountains. The psalms chanted by these pilgrims (Ps 120-134) as they approached the city are known as the “Psalms of Ascent.”

As the pilgrim ascends the path, the unique shape of the cathedral becomes clearer. There is a long tradition of cathedrals being built in the shape of a cross. Given the Cathedral’s proximity to water, the architects looked to reconcile our geography with an even more ancient symbol of Christian faith. The footprint of the Cathedral is a vesica piscis (“fish bladder” in Latin), a shape created by the intersection of two circles of the same radius, which calls to mind a fish. The first letters of the phrase “Jesus Christ Son of God Savior” in Greek can be used to spell out the word for fish: ΙΧΘΥΣ. For this reason, the fish shape was of great symbolic value to the earliest Christians. The use of the vesica piscis for the shape of the foundation conveys that it is “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior” who is the foundation of the Church. “We are living stones, laid upon the cornerstone that is Christ.”

At the top of the path, the pilgrim stands before the Cathedral doors. Built of Douglas fir, they interlock to form another vesica piscis, the symbol of Christ. The entrance is surmounted by a large cross, reminding us that the Christ we have come to encounter is always the Crucified One. His death stands as a judgment on human evil. It calls us to conversion, to enter the waters of baptism that lie within the Cathedral.

Questions for the group:

1. Has anyone ever thought about how historically important a cathedral is?
2. Do you think it makes sense for Catholics to have cathedrals?
3. What would you do if you were the bishop of Oakland and you wanted to help Catholics in the diocese make good use of the cathedral?
4. Has anyone ever seen a different cathedral, like the new one in L.A?
5. Does the amount of symbolism surprise you? Should there be more?
6. How do you think a cathedral today differs from a cathedral from 400 years ago?

Please prepare a short, 5 minute presentation to the rest of the class explaining what a cathedral is and outlining the key points from your work as a small group.

CHRIST: Encountering Jesus Christ in the Cathedral

The Cathedral of Christ the Light is meant to be a place of encounter between God and humanity. This happens in Jesus Christ and particularly in the great sacraments in which we are incorporated into the Body of Christ: Baptism and Eucharist. The symbols of the interior of the Cathedral allow us to walk a path of conversion, from the radical reorientation of our lives in Baptism to the gathering of God's people around the banquet table of the Eucharist.

The Baptistry: Reorienting us in Christ. Upon entering the Cathedral, the first thing the pilgrim encounters is the baptismal pool, which is constructed of jet mist granite and is nine feet in diameter. The placement of the pool at the entrance to the Cathedral reminds us that entry into the Church is through the sacrament of Baptism. It also recalls a time when freestanding baptisteries were built outside of Cathedrals. Catechumens (those seeking entry into the Church) would be brought to the baptistry at the Easter Vigil to be baptized and confirmed by the bishop. They would then process into the Cathedral to join their fellow Christians for the celebration of the Eucharist. After passing the pool, the pilgrim must turn roughly 45 degrees to begin walking down the axis or main aisle. This is a physical reminder that baptism radically re-orient us. It changes us and points us in the direction of Christ.

Once past the baptismal pool, the pilgrim enters the nave of the Cathedral, where the faithful gather for the celebration of the Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council declared that the Eucharist was the "source and summit" of Christian life and spoke of four ways that we encounter Christ in the Eucharist. Christ is present in the gathered assembly, in the holy scriptures, in the person of the minister, and most especially in the eucharistic species that is consecrated during the celebration. The symbols of the interior of the Cathedral illuminate these four encounters with Christ.

The Nave: Gathering Place of the Assembly – The nave of the Cathedral is surrounded by a large concrete wall known as the Reliquary Wall. A reliquary is a container that houses the remains or other relic of a saint and the use of the term here reminds those gathered within these walls that they are holy and precious to God. Rising up from the wall is a great vault composed of curved beams of Douglas fir 110 feet in height. The beams meet at the top of the vault, supporting a delicate ceiling window known as an oculus. Between the beams are 768 wooden louvers which are angled to admit light. The exterior of the vault is a sweeping veil of glass which will protect the wooden frame and also diffuse the light streaming into the Cathedral.

Wood is an important biblical image. Noah was commanded to “make yourself an ark of cypress wood” (Gn 6:14). The Book of Exodus describes how both the Ark of the Covenant and the Table for the Bread of the Presence were to be made of acacia wood (Ex 25:10; 23). In building the temple, Solomon “lined the walls of the house on the inside with boards of cedar” (1 Kgs 6:15). Wood has ever been used to protect and honor that which is precious to God.

The great vault shapes and orients the assembly as it prepares for worship. The curved beams suggest the outline of a ship, recalling the ark of Noah, the voyages of Jesus across the Sea of Galilee, and the later image of the Church as the Barque of Peter. Rather than being an enclosed space, however, the top of the vault is, in a sense, pulled apart by the outer glass walls, leaving the vault symbolically open to the heavens. This invites the assembly to “lift up your hearts” as they prepare to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

The Ambo: The Throne of the Word – The word “ambo” comes from an ancient Greek word meaning “mountain” or “elevation.” The image of the Word of God being read from a raised platform is an ancient one. In the Book of Nehemiah, the scribe Ezra “stands on a wooden platform” in order to read the “book of the law” to the people (Neh 8:5-8). Both Moses and Jesus taught from high up on a mountain. In the ambo, the Christian community “encounters the living Lord in the Word of God and prepares itself for the ‘breaking of the bread’ and the mission to live the word that will be proclaimed.”

Whether within the celebration of the Eucharist or outside of it, preaching has always played an important role in the life of the Church. In his Confessions, Saint Augustine writes of how he was led to a deeper understanding of the scriptures through the preaching of Ambrose, the 4th century Bishop of Milan. At Vatican II, the Council Fathers reaffirmed the importance of preaching by emphasizing the centrality of the homily in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Council’s Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests states that “it is the first task of priests as co-workers of the bishops to preach the Gospel of God to all.”

The ambo of the Cathedral of Christ the Light reflects the importance of this renewed emphasis on preaching. Sculpted of jet-black granite, the ambo is elevated and easily seen by the entire assembly. It is also located within the choir. To modern eyes this may seem strange, but this placement would be familiar to Catholics of the 5th through 10th centuries. At that time, the choir

was more directly involved in the proclamation of the Word, reading of the book of hours, and singing the psalms. This is still true today in the sung proclamation of the Responsorial Psalm.

The Cathedra: The Seat of the Bishop: In any Catholic church, there is a chair for the priest celebrant, which is a sign of “his office of presiding over the assembly and of directing prayer.” The ordained ministry makes the presence of Christ as head of the Church visible in the midst of the community of believers.

In a cathedral, this chair takes on a special importance and is known as the cathedra—the seat of the bishop—which is the root of the word cathedral. In addition to symbolizing the bishop’s particular ministry to the Diocese of Oakland, the cathedra is also a sign of the college of bishops who, in communion with their head the Roman Pontiff, preside in charity over the universal Church. The Church is “built on the foundation of the apostles” (Eph 2:20), and she continues to be taught, sanctified and guided by the apostles through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops.”

Questions for the group:

1. How does a cathedral help people connect to Christ? (Think sacraments.)
2. Do you think that gathering together to worship helps people meet Christ? How?
3. Does the historical evolution of architecture as a means of finding Christ make sense?
4. Do you think Christ would like cathedrals today? Explain why or why not.
5. Do you think that the temples mentioned in scriptures influenced the Christian tradition of building cathedrals? How?

Please prepare a short, 5 minute presentation to the rest of the class explaining how Christ and cathedral are connected, and outline the key points from your work as a small group.

LIGHT: Mystery and Hope

Like the great cathedrals of the past, the Cathedral of Christ the Light contains a multitude of symbols that convey the central mysteries of the Christian faith. The Cathedral's most striking visual symbol, however, is its use of light. This section will explore the meaning of light in the Christian tradition and how the Cathedral draws on that tradition. It will conclude with some reflections on how the Cathedral symbolizes our response to Christ's call to be a "light to the nations."

Light: A Symbol of the Mystery of God

Light has always been a symbol that points to the known-unknown mystery of both God and the world. Light is a physical reality that permeates the farthest known reaches of the universe. It can be seen and even measured. It allows plants and animals to grow and thrive.

Yet light always escapes our grasp. Only a small part of the light spectrum is directly visible to our human eyes. The "light year"—a unit of measurement—also represents an unimaginable distance, nearly six trillion miles! While the concept is central to much modern science fiction writing, most scientists believe it would be impossible for human beings to travel at the "speed of light." It thus represents a mysterious limit to our human powers.

Given these properties of light, it is not surprising that the biblical writers often returned to it as a metaphor for God's power and presence. The first words God speaks at the moment of creation are "let there be light" (Gen 1:3). Psalm 130 sees the coming of the morning light as a sign of God's promise: "My soul is waiting for the Lord more than the watchman for daybreak. Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord" (Ps 130:5-6).

The New Testament writers applied the symbolism of light to Jesus Christ. In the Canticle of Zechariah from the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is described as the "daybreak" who visits his people (Lk 1:78). The Gospel of John tells us that "what came to be through him was life and this life was the light of the human race. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (Jn: 3-5).

The Church's liturgy has regularly returned to the symbolism of light in its efforts to convey the mystery of Christ. At the great feast of Epiphany—the patronal feast of the Cathedral of Christ the Light—she intones an antiphon

taken from the Book of Isaiah: “Rise up in splendor Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance” (Is 60:1-3).

The great Easter Vigil, celebrated on the eve of Christ’s resurrection, makes use of the symbolism of light. It is a celebration of light shining in the darkness, of God’s salvation of life from the forces of death. Beginning after dusk outside the church at an open fire, the Easter candle is blessed and lit, carried into the darkened church, and used to light the candles of the faithful who have followed it into the church. Three times during that procession the celebrant sings, “Christ, our Light,” and the faithful respond: “Thanks be to God.” After the assembly enters the church, the deacon sings the Exsultet (“Rejoice”), a 4th century hymn which includes the line “The night will be as clear as day: it will become my light, my joy.”

The Use of Light in the Cathedral

Given the power of light as a natural symbol, and its centrality in scripture and the tradition of the Church, it is not surprising that churches have always tried to employ light to convey the mysteries of the faith. The Cathedral of Christ the Light draws on this tradition by using light to symbolize the movement of salvation history from the beginning of time to the renewal of all creation in Jesus Christ.

The Alpha Window: Rising one hundred feet above the entrance to the Cathedral is the Alpha Window, which recalls Christ’s words from the Book of Revelation: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Rev 22:13). Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet. The window symbolizes the moment of creation when God said “let there be light!” (Gen 1:3). Triangular aluminum panels angle inward, diffusing the light. They evoke the dynamic power of creation and the inability of human beings to look directly into the divine glory (Ex 33:20).

The Great Walls: One of the most striking innovations in the Cathedral’s use of light are its walls, which are constructed of 1028 panes of glass. The glass viewed from the outside has a mysterious quality, luring you to enter and experience the one who is the door to our salvation. The glass has been “fritted” with a pattern that diffuses the light, which also reduces heat. The light is further diffused through the interior wooden vault that encompasses the

nave of the Cathedral. As the sun crosses over from sunrise to sunset, from the beginning of time to time's fulfillment in Christ, the play between the glass and the wood generates different qualities of light through the day. Light is never static in the Cathedral, but swirling and moving, even guiding us as we walk through our life's pilgrimage. At night, the Cathedral becomes a beacon of light, a luminous lantern that is the soul of the city and the entire East Bay.

The Oculus: The soaring wooden beams of the vault terminate in a large almond shaped window known as an oculus, from the Latin word for "eye." The oculus—a circular or oval window set in the ceiling or high on a wall—is a feature of many older cathedrals. This window into the heavens allows the heavens to gaze upon the earth and the earth to gaze upon the heavens. The oculus of the Cathedral of Christ the Light is quite large, measuring 113 feet on its longer axis. It is covered with aluminum panels which both reveal and conceal light, reminding us that our celebration of the Eucharist is a fore-taste of the eternal banquet to come.

The Omega Window: The Cathedral's use of light to symbolize the movement of salvation history comes to a climax in the Omega Window, which rises 100 feet behind the sanctuary, facing the Alpha Window across the nave. The window depicts an image of Christ in majesty taken from the transept of Chartes Cathedral in France. The image is created by natural light passing through aluminum panels that have been pierced with 94,000 holes, generating a 90 foot image of Christ robed in glorious light. The Omega Window completes our journey from the beginning of time to the gathering of a renewed creation into Christ at the end of time
A Light to the Nations

Many medieval cathedrals featured wheel-shaped candelabra that hung down over the sanctuaries. They were built to evoke the image of the renewed Jerusalem of Revelation 21, including its 12 gates. Unlike medieval cities, whose gates were often locked at night for safety, the "gates" of these candelabra were always open, recalling the hope that, with Christ as its light, the city could be ever open to the world. While the Cathedral of Christ the Light will not have a candelabrum of this type, its presence can be seen as symbolizing similar hopes for the renewal of our own communities in Christ.

There are many ways in which the Cathedral of Christ the Light will be open to the surrounding community. That openness begins with the physical structure of the Cathedral campus, which is built to harmonize with its surroundings. The plaza is an extension of 22nd Street and its mall will create a public

thoroughfare from downtown Oakland to Lake Merritt. Much of the Plaza Level of the Cathedral Center will be beautifully landscaped public space for the community, neighbors and visitors to enjoy. There will also be a café and Cathedral Shop.

The Cathedral will become a center for learning and culture. With wonderful acoustics and a 5,298 pipe organ, the Cathedral will be a natural location for concerts. The Cathedral's conference center will host lectures and classes aimed at helping Christians grow in their faith as well as facilitating collaborative work among all people of good will to build a more just and sustainable society.

In keeping with the tradition of its predecessor, the Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales, the Cathedral will also be a place where the corporal works of mercy are poured out upon the surrounding community. In addition to providing a central location for the administration of the diocese's charitable works, the Cathedral campus will also feature a health services center operated by the Knights of Malta that will provide diagnostic care for people without health insurance.

A center for worship, a place for teaching and learning, and a refuge for those in need, the Cathedral of Christ the Light brings to life the Church's commitment to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ who is priest, prophet and king. At the Second Vatican Council, the gathered bishops invoked the image of "Christ the Light" in speaking of the mission of the Church:

Christ is the Light of nations. Because this is so, this Sacred Synod, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, to bring the light of Christ to all, a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church.

Joined together with Christ in Baptism, Catholics of the East Bay are called to bring the light of Christ to the communities in which we dwell. The presence of the Cathedral of Christ the Light is an opportunity to renew our commitment to this work.

Questions for the group:

1. Do you like the idea of Christ the Light as a name for our cathedral? Why?
2. Where in your life do you see light as a way of connecting to God?
3. How did the architects make use of light in the cathedral? How does the design play with light?
4. Does light symbolize hope and mystery? How?
5. Why does Christ symbolize light?

Please prepare a short, 5 minute presentation to the rest of the class explaining how light and Christ and cathedral are connected, and outline the key points from your work as a small group.