

# The Nave Sanctuary

The Nave Sanctuary was constructed in 2005 in response to the renewal of the Church's Liturgy which had been developing for over 30 years. At the centre of the Sanctuary is the altar, positioned so as to allow the priest to face the people, rather than to have his back to them, as he celebrates the Eucharist – the Mass, or Holy Communion – in which Jesus fulfils his promise to come to us, and to spiritually feed us with himself. In this main service of the Christian Church, the people rightly gather together – one Body in Christ – and listen to the words of scripture, proclaimed from a lectern which stands nearby, and to celebrate the Lord's life, passion, death and resurrection as he commended us to do, in the offering of the bread and wine of the eucharist. We hear again the words of Jesus himself – This is my Body; This is my Blood – and are reassured of his continuing presence and life within his Church.

Although the Eucharist is not a 'performance' it is in every sense a drama; prior to the Reformation our churches would be used for all sorts of things apart from services. Notable instances would be the Passion Plays and the Mystery Plays, many of which have been revived in recent decades.

For this reason, the Nave Sanctuary can also be completely cleared of furniture so that it can serve as a performance dais, or platform, for concerts and plays which take place here in St Mary's. These can be splendid professional or semi-professional performances, or much simpler productions, such as our Junior Church's annual Nativity play at Christmas. Local schools also use it often for concerts and similar events.