



The liturgical furniture of Saint-Ferréol Church: a biblical journey

(The full text is available in French at the reception desk)

The new furniture is the result of several years of reflection by *Fr. Steves Babooram SJ*, rector of Saint-Ferréol (2017-2025), the pastoral animation team and the sanctuary's economic council. They were designed by architect *Mariam Saad* and crafted by cabinetmaker *Paul Hoffmann*. The furniture was handcrafted from natural oak from the forests of Allier and installed on 30 October 2025. The originality of the furniture undoubtedly lies in the biblical verses engraved on the armrests of the pews and those cut into lace on the ambo and the presidential seats.

1. Central aisle

Starting from the entrance to the church, we retrace the history of Salvation between God and his people through the Old Testament and, walking up the central aisle, the New Testament. As with the stained-glass windows on either side of a cathedral nave, we move step by step from Creation to the revelation of Christ Jesus, through his birth, public life, death and resurrection.

The phrases echo each other from left to right on the pews, like the singing of psalms in monasteries. They are therefore to be read and meditated upon in pairs. They are evocations, inviting the visitor to open the Bible and read the entire texts.

The path is punctuated with references to the sea. They recall the *Mare Nostrum*, the Mediterranean Sea. The Church of Saint-Ferréol is located on the Old Port and opens onto the sea.

1st pews : Creation (Genesis 1,1 - 2,3)
"Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures." (Genesis 1, 20)

"God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1, 21).

2nd pews : Abraham (Genesis 12-25)
"Go forth to a land that I will show you." (Genesis 12, 1)

"I will maintain my covenant between you and me." (Genesis 17, 7)

3rd pews : Moses (Exodus 1-40)

"I have witnessed the affliction of my people." (Exodus 3, 7)

"They entered into the midst of the sea on dry land." (Exodus 14, 22)

4th pews : The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah (Is 53, 1-12 / Jer 31, 31-34)

"My servant, the just one, shall justify the many." (Isaiah 53, 11)

"I will write my law on their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jeremiah 31, 33).

5th pews : Psalm 139 (138)

"If I take the wings of dawn and dwell beyond the sea." (Psalm 138, 9)

"Even there your hand guides me, your right hand holds me fast." (Ps 138, 10)

6th pews : The time of advent

(Isaiah 9, 1-6)

"The people walked in darkness."

(Isaiah 9, 1)

"They have seen a great light." (Is 9, 1)

7th pews : Visitation (Luke 1, 39-45) and Nativity (John 1, 1-14)

"Blessed are you who believed."

(Luke 1, 45)

"And the word became flesh."

(John 1, 14)

8th pews : The blessings (Matt 5, 1-12)

"Blessed are the peacemakers."

"For they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5, 9)

9th pews : Jesus heals and teaches.

(Mark 10, 46-52 / Matthew 13-16)

"Go your way; your faith has saved you." (Mark 10, 52)

"You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world." (Matt 5, 13-14)

10th pews : Jesus calms the storm.

(Mark 4, 35-41 ; 6, 45-52)

"Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!"

(Mark 6, 50)

"Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?" (Mark 4, 41)

11th pews : The last supper (Jn 13, 1-30)

"Jesus, who loved his own, loved them to the end." (John 13, 1)

"He began to wash the feet of his disciples." (John 13, 5)

12th pews : Jesus dies on the cross.

(John 19)

"It is accomplished." (John 19, 30)

"Bowing his head, he gave up his spirit." (John 19,30)

13th pews : Christ is risen ! (Luke 24)

"Why do you seek the living one among the dead ?" (Luke 24, 5)

"Peace be with you !" (Luke 24, 35)

14th pews : Come, you who are blessed by my Father. (Matthew 25, 31-43)

"I was hungry and you gave me food." (Matthew 25, 35)

"Come, you who are blessed by my Father." (Matthew 25, 34)

The phrases we meditated on reminded us of God's faithful love for his people, for each and every one of us. Confident that we are 'blessed by the Father,' we can walk in faith and put it into practice by serving our brothers and sisters.

2. Side aisle

Let us now go back to the entrance of the church and look at the side aisles: there are six phrases from the New Testament. They invite us to become pilgrims of hope, to form a community, to form together the body of Christ in our celebrations as well as in our commitments to a more just and fraternal world. These phrases are translated into the 14 languages of the Mediterranean region. It was around the *Mare Nostrum* that Christianity spread in the first century AD, at the time when these texts were written.

Languages:

French, Hebrew, Slovenian, Albanian, Italian, Maltese, Spanish (Castilian), Catalan, Croatian, English, Armenian, Arabic, Turkish and Greek.

"Hope does not disappoint us."

(Letter of St Paul to the Romans 5, 5)

"Love never fails."

(1st letter of Paul to the Corinthians 13, 8)

"Rejoice in the Lord always."

(Letter of St Paul to the Philippians 4, 4)

"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts of the Apostles 2, 4)

"God is greater than our hearts."

(1st letter of St John 3, 20)

"You are the body of Christ."

(1st letter to the Corinthians 12, 27)

3. Ambo

In the sanctuary on the left is the ambo. This is where the Word of God is read or proclaimed. The selected quotations are intended to help us enter the mystery of the Word. Listening to the Word is like standing at the feet of Jesus, as a disciple.

The quotations are to be read from top to bottom, one line at a time. Words relating to the Word have been interspersed.

Facing the ambo, left side

“If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples.” (John 8, 31)

Interspersed words evoking the Word :
Light, Hope, Earth, Good News, Message, Grace, Freedom, Father, Son, Spirit, Peace, Joy, Oracle.

Facing the ambo, right side

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road ?” (Luke 24, 32)

Interspersed words evoking the Word:
Joy, Prophecy, Love, Servant, Charity, Wisdom, Oracle, Forgiveness, Justice, Peace, Body, Heart, Law, Gift, Life, Faith.

On the reader's side, rear left

“Your Word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path.” (Psalm 118, 105)

Interspersed words evoking the Word:
Goodness, Wisdom, Charity, Grace, oracle, Love, Joy, Verb, Earth, Faith, Arch, Forgiveness, Peace, Joy.

On the reader's side, rear right

“Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4, 21)

Interspersed words evoking the Word:
Message, Freedom, Forgiveness, Justice, Body, Charity, Father, Son, Spirit, Heart, Oracle, Way, Law, Life, IHS.

4. Presidency

Let us now move to the right of the sanctuary. We see the three chairs reserved for those presiding. The biblical quotations illustrate the role of the priest as a shepherd or ‘fisher of men’, his calling and his mission.

PRESIDENT – Central chair

Right armrest

“Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep.”

(John 21, 15-16)

“In good pastures I will pasture my sheep. There they will lie down on good grazing ground.” (Ezekiel 34, 14)

“When he finds his lost sheep, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy.”

(Luke 15, 5)

“Do you love me? Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”

(John 21, 17)

Lower part, right hand side

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.” (Matthew 5, 6)

Left armrest

“The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack. In green pastures he makes me lie down.” (Psalm 22, 1-2)

“The true shepherd, the sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” (Jn 10, 2-3)

“I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10, 14-15)

Lower part, left hand side

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” (Matthew 5, 7)

ASSISTANT 1 – To the right of the president

Right armrest

“Jesus summoned those whom he wanted and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they be with him and he might send them forth to preach.” (Mark 3, 13-14)

“The Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs.” (Luke 10, 1)

“As you go, make this proclamation: ‘the kingdom of heaven is near at hand.’”

(Matthew 10, 7)

Lower part, right hand side

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

(Matthew 5, 3)

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (Matthew 5, 4)

Left armrest

“When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.” (Luke 5, 11)

“See, I place my words in your mouth.”

(Jeremiah 1, 9)

“As the Father has sent me, I send you.” (John 20, 21)

“Without cost you received; without cost you are to give.” (Matthew 10, 8)

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.”

(Mark 16, 15)

Lower part, left hand side

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.” (Matthew 5, 5)

ASSISTANT 2 – Left of the president

Right armrest

“Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, ‘What are you looking for?’ They said to him: ‘Teacher, where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come, and you will see.’ So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.” (John 1, 38-39)

“Come! Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus.” (Matthew 14, 29)

Lower part, right hand side

“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.” (Matthew 5, 8)

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5, 9)

Left armrest

“Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” (Luke 5, 4)

“Master, at your command I will lower the nets.” (Luke 5, 5)

“They caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing.” (Luke 5, 6)

“When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.” (Luke 5, 11)

“Come after me and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4, 19)

Lower part, left hand side

“Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5, 10)

Frieze of the Fraternity

(2nd chapel right)

“Come and see”

(John 1, 49)

The frieze in the Chapel of the Fraternity welcomes and honours the mother tongues of our brothers and sisters, just as we do -by using the languages of the Mediterranean region on the benches in the side aisles of our church. The choice of these languages is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. They were chosen based on a survey which took place in our church and which lasted 15 days from Pentecost 2025.