

Installation Profile



ASHLY CONNECTS AT ST. PETERSBURG CATHOLIC DIOCESE CONFERENCE CENTER

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA – The Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg, Florida designed the Archbishop Favalora Conference Center in nearby Lutz, Florida to be more than just a sterile and cerebral place for meetings. Built on an idyllic little lake and part of the larger Bethany Center, the new building sets a spiritual and reflective tone for the Diocese and for the other groups that rent it. Its three large meeting rooms can be combined depending on the nature of the event, and its three smaller rooms accommodate breakout sessions. A wraparound porch encourages informal conversation and camaraderie. When the center's sound reinforcement and room combining system were not working correctly, it took the Diocese very little time to call in its audio engineering consultant of twenty years, Randi Crooks of **Magnum Audio Group** (Tampa, Florida), to gut and replace it. Crooks met their budgetary requirements while still delivering top-tier sound by using an Ashly ne24.24M DSP and an Ashly ne8250.70 eight-channel amplifier, together with Ashly's WR series of flexible, intuitive remote control panels.

The original sound system was fairly primitive using multiple 70-volt amplifiers that were switched via a toggle type control to combine rooms. Crooks, who has also served as the head audio engineer for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for the past eighteen years, removed the old system and started from scratch.

Into each of the three larger rooms and into one of the smaller rooms, Crooks installed an Ashly WR-5 programmable, wall-mount remote control that allows users to intuitively select inputs and route outputs, an elegance that the older system lacked. Movable walls separate the three larger rooms, and Crooks placed an Ashly WR-2 remote control in the equipment room to allow audio to be combined in all the ways that are sensible.

Also in the equipment room, an Ashly WR-8 remote control provides master levels for the eight ne8250.70 outputs. Three of the outputs send to the three large rooms, one sends to the three smaller rooms, and the remaining four go to the kitchen, the hallways, the wraparound porch, and the video feed. A modular Ashly ne24.24M outfitted with sixteen inputs and eight outputs provides all of the system's input conditioning, routing logic, and output conditioning.

"The Ashly units perform extremely well and are great with reliably," said Crooks. "But the most important reason I turn to Ashly is because I love its service. The folks at the factory are very helpful and are always easy to get a hold of. As for the ne24.24M and ne8250.70 combination, they speak to each other, which is wonderful, and together they take up a small fraction of the rack space that the old system required, despite the fact that they do so much more. Lastly, Ashly's WR series of remote controls affords flexible, but not overwhelming, control for the end user."