

Habemus Morbus

Roger Sanchez March

Level Design Assignment 1

One Page Dungeon

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1. Introduction

Habemus Morbus is the name of this concept video game, relating the two main concepts in the plot of the game. It comes from the infamous sentence “**Habemus Papam**” said every time a pope is elected in the Papal Conclave also indicated by the ‘Fumata Bianca’.

The word ‘Morbus’ means disease or illness. The use of this concept as part of the argument has been inspired by the recent (2020) **Covid-19 Pandemia** all over the world.

Joining those two concepts made sense as in “We have a disease” and also looked cool, the stated words rhymed and sounded interesting. Also there is nothing ever named after this title.

2. Story and Character Arc

The game is set in the modern world, in actuality. The beginning of year **2020** has been everything but quiet and ordinary. A major event has occurred never been seen before, only imagined by science-fiction creators. The new Virus Covid-19 has spread all over the globe killing thousands of people and forced millions of people to stay confined in their homes.

One of the first countries in Europe to suffer from this dramatic change in day to day lifestyle, has been Italy and within it, the **Vatican City**. This is where our story is set.

2.1. Plot

The virus has reached and killed the pope days before the major confinement. A new one must be elected. **The College of Cardinals** has gathered together in order to elect the new representative of God on earth as soon as possible.

Hours after the cardinals have locked up themselves in the Sistine Chapel, the government has stated that everyone should stay at home within a period of a month and avoid social contacts for protection and medical safety.

Unaware of this, the cardinals remain isolated focused on their one and only goal: electing the new pope. Suddenly a major concern appears: Once the pope is elected, millions of faithful will lead unmistakably to the Vatican in order to greet and welcome the elected pope. This, is for them, above of the government safety concerns.

The **Conclave** must be stopped in order to avoid such a gathering of people as well as saving the enrisked lives of the Cardinals who at their age are vulnerable people to the virus.

The first minister of the Vatican City refuses the proposal of the **Italian Government**. ‘God is above all human life, and the pope must be elected. This is a matter than can’t wait for the confinement to end.’

Here the Italian government takes a decision: A man will be sent in order to get inside St. Peter's Basilica, force the Cardinals out and avoid the **Fumata Bianca (White Smoke)** being released. It is a time trial mission.

2.2. Characters

Here is where our main character is introduced: **Zarathustra Constantine**. He is a special agent, a man with absolutely no faith in God neither any religion. A complete atheist. A man born to serve the government and his country. Someone not caring and with no love in him.

He wears a mask for protection of the virus, has black long hair and is quite extravagant in his clothing style. He is not inclined for action but known for his steady negotiation skills.

The other characters are all **Santa Sede Employees**, the **Swiss Guard**, the **Cardinals** and the **New Elected Pope**.

2.3. Structure and Level Summary

There are, as usual, three acts: Introduction, Development and Resolution. Those will be reflected in three levels or scenarios each one of increasing intensity leading towards the climax.

In the **Introduction**, the player will be given all the setup information and his mission. This will take place right before entering the **St Peter's Square**. Once inside the big square, the player will get a sense of loneliness and start acknowledging what he will be facing when finding himself standing alone in front of the whole enormous cathedral.

The shape of the square will lead the player towards the **Egyptian Obelisk** where the player will learn to examine a zone. Passed that and before the stairs, the player will find his first enemy.

A first guard who won't let him in unless he gives his weapon away. That guard can be easily defeated. Finally in the entrance of the temple, the first act climax will take place. The encounter with the Basilica Door Two Guards who will take his weapons out or don't let him in. Also they will ask for money.

The player will have to get back to the **Two Fountains** standing next to the Egyptian Obelisk and get coins from inside to pay the guards so that those open the doors and let him in.

Once the player enters the chapel, the tension will be a bit released. The first plot point will be completed, there is no coming back. The player enters the second act: the conflict confrontation.

In the **Confrontation**, the player will find himself in a quiet and huge environment: a first-sight empty **St. Peter's Basilica**. The player will walk between the two rows of benches leading him towards the altar table with a map on top.

On the altar the player will find half a map that will lead him towards the **Tombs Room**, where over a 100 Popes from the past are buried. A cold, dark and creepy room. In there, after exploring the player will find the second half of the map.

Having a complete map the player will feel free to wander around and examine rooms. But as it is a matter of time, the player will preferably go directly to the highlighted room: **The Pope's office**.

There he will have a first revelation as well as finding a clue: an open bible. The player eyes will read on screen the verse highlighted in the page:

'Matthew 16:19': 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven'.

The player will know at the same time as the character what he is looking for: a key. This is the first small climax in the second act.

The player will then wander around looking for the key, this is a secure zone for the player to rest. When doing so, he may find a room guarded by a guard. Who won't let him in. The key must be in that room. The tension will slowly start to increase.

The player will look for and find a weapon to strike down the guard, there is no time to lose. This has to be reminded to the player, the clock is ticking. The second climax of the second act will be when the player finds the weapon in a small and hidden room and then strikes the guard down and gets into that room: **The Vatican Library**.

Then, inside the library he will have a calmed moment to examine the room and explore it looking for the key. He will look in all the chests, shelves and closets in the room until he finds a key. When the player has the key, the tension will increase, he is running out of time.

The player will find out there's an unexplored room, where he can improve the found weapon: The Praying Room. The key opens that door. There the player will experience his second revelation as an angel appears next to him when praying and with magic improves his weapon.

This will bring him to the third climax in the second act, getting to the doors of the Sistine Chapel. There, if the player has improved the weapon will be able to beat the two chapel guards and hack the padlock to get inside the infamous **Sistine Chapel**, where the Cardinals are electing the about to be Pope, as well as getting into the resolution of the story.

In the **Resolution**, he will kick out all the cardinals of the Sistine Chapel and walk towards the just elected pope, right on time.

The cardinals had just burned the papers and started the fumata but it will take some minutes to start to create that white smoke. The player and the pope will fight in a battle to death until the pope is defeated.

The player will then explore the room quickly to find a mechanism that will stop the smoke. A ray of light coming through the window will lead the player towards it.

When Zarathustra manages to stop the smoke, he will have won. But will collapse and on his knees, ask **God** why does he let such things happen to the world. To which the Pope with his eyes on pure white replies that it has nothing to do with himself but with his love: **Mother Nature**.

She is mad because of all the damage humans are doing to her and her place. It is a punishment and an attention call for humans to stop polluting so much and start caring about her a bit more.

Speechless, Mr. Constantine will pay his respects to the new Pope and start worshiping him. He will from that point on start believing in God. And as well, wanting to be a better person. Start giving more to others and try to make this world a little bit better.

The hero will have finished his transformation and will become a better man.

2.4. CCST

As explained in the Structure, the player will follow a **Skill Theme** of being inside a religious temple and trying not to kill anything if possible, remain quiet and try not to make unnecessary noises, find hidden objects, interpret symbols and codes and get through locked doors into **Mysterious Rooms**.

The player should feel a little bit like **Robert Langdon** (The DaVinci Code), a little bit like **Sam Fisher** (Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell) and a bit like **Guybrush Threepwood** (Monkey Island).

Each level will be separated by **Valves**, which won't let the player go back and limiting him to stay in that space. Each space will have different rooms or areas in which the player will be able to move freely, coming back and forward in order to use the items he's found elsewhere.

The three two valves in the game are the main **Basilica Door** and the **Sistine Chapel Door**. Those are also saving points and are followed by a **Rest Bubble Zone** where the player can rest for a while and see the next challenges he will be facing.

The player will go through the following **Three Challenge Branches**:

- **Facing Non-Player Characters**
 - Talking to NPC's
 - Fighting NPC's
- **Solving Puzzles to Get Items**
- **Exploring to Find Items**

The main idea of the game is to get through doors. The doors are either locked by Guards or by Missing items such as **Keys** or **Unsolved Maps**.

From start to end of the game the challenges are:

1st ACT

A. Talk to Allied Characters:

To give Info to the player as well as the character about the mission and set a starting point. It is the start of the level. Some of the info they give him is to throw some coins into the fountain for good luck. The main character replies with irony.

The Player learns to use the **Talk Mechanic**.

B. Cross St. Peter's Square and Inspect Egyptian Obelisk:

The player learns to move around freely around the map. The player is lead towards the Obelisk as it is right in the middle and can be seen from anywhere in the Square.

The player inspections it and learns the **Explore Mechanic**.

C. Talking to the first Guard:

Right after the Obelisk, a Guard asks the player to give him his weapons or will kick him out. Here the player has two options:

- Give The Weapon Away: The guard lets the player continue.
- Fight The Guard: The player learns that with his weapon can kill one Guard and get away with it. The player can kill the guard and continue.

D. Talking to the Two Guards:

Up the stairs, two Guards keep the entrance door to the Basilica secure. This is an expansion of the first guard talking challenge. When talking to them, the player has two options:

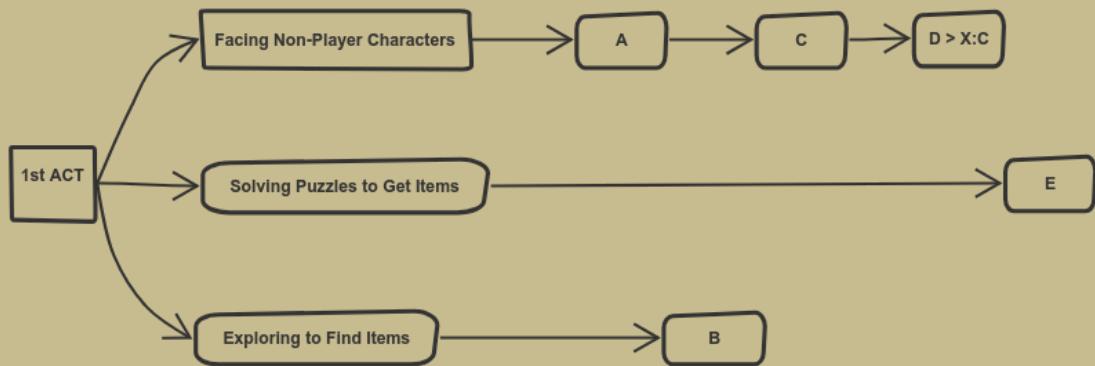
- Fight The Guards: The guards kick the player's ass and kick him out. The player learns that he can't beat two Guards with his weapon.
- Talk to The Guards: They tell him that if he wants to get through, he has to pay. The player has not enough money. He remembers the conversation with his allies and goes to the fountains to get coins.

E. Solving the fountain's Puzzle:

Once the player reaches the fountains, the first puzzle appears in order to get the coins. Once the player solves it, he gets enough coins to pay the Guards. The player learns the **Puzzle Mechanics**.

The player now knows the Three Challenge Branches at their basic level. When the player pays the Guards, those let him in and it is the end of the 1st ACT. The player gets to a safe spot.

1st ACT Cadence



2nd ACT

F. Get to the end of the Basilica.

The player gets to walk through all the level long and get a general view of the central room. He is lead towards the St. Peter's Baldachin in the centre-end of the room. He can use the paused moment to explore the main features of the room and the locate some locked doors.

G. Solving the First Half Map Puzzle on the Altar

On the altar, the player will find a codified map of the Basilica. This is an evolution of the first map. Once the map puzzle is solved the player will notice it is only the first half of the map but it is enough to get to a marked room: The Tombs Room.

H. Solving Second Half Map Puzzle in the Tombs Room

Once the player gets to the Tombs Room, which features a 100 tombs with past dead Popes. In there the player will find a evolution on the Puzzles Branch. Once it is solved, the second half of the map will complete the whole.

The player will then go to the Pope's Office, marked in the Second Half of the Map.

I. Explore the Pope's Office

The player will explore the shelves and desk of the pope until he finds a clue written in the Bible. '*Matthew 16:19*' as explained in the Level Summary above. This clue will suggest the existence of a key.

Knowing this and with the help of the map, the player will get to a less tense moment that will give him time to wander around and explore freely.

J. Find the Hidden Weapon

The player will continue exploring until he finds a small room. There the player will find both a knife and a rope.

K. Talk to the Library Guard

Sooner or later, the player will end up talking with the Guard in the Library. There the player will have to talk to the guard, there are two options then:

- If the player has found the weapon: The player threatens the guard and ties him down, then enters the library.
- If the player has NOT found the weapon: The Guard doesn't let him in. The player has to find a weapon.

L. Explore Library Searching for the Key

The player will have to examine all the library. In the build in Unreal, I turned the library into a labyrinth. It fits in the skill theme as the shelves of books are the walls that form it. This is an expansion of the previous exploration in the Pope's Office, as there are many more books to check. The player will there find the key. The player won't yet know which door it opens.

M. Find and get into the Praying Room

The player will now have to go to the Praying Room and unlock it to improve his weapon. This Room does not appear on the Player's map. He will need to find it by exploring. For this he will need to own the key. There the player will be able to improve the knife into a Sword.

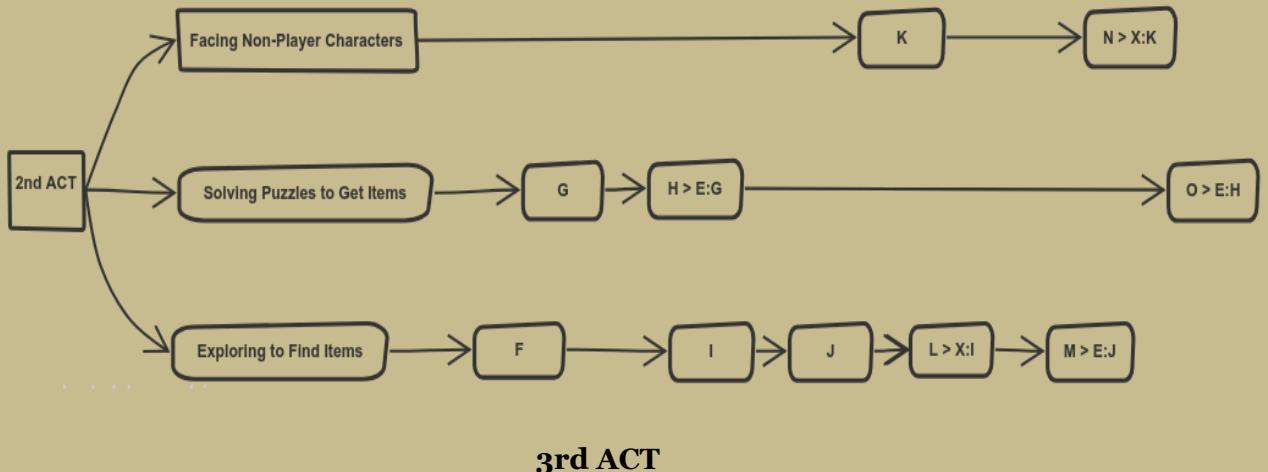
N. Fight the Sistine Chapel Guards

With the new Sword, the player will be able to beat the guards and get into the Final Room. If the player hasn't improved his weapon, the Guards will beat him and will go back to the beginning of Act 2.

The player knows it's not a good idea to face two guards at the same time with a common weapon. Once the player beats the Two Sistine Chapel Door Guards, it'll be the end of Act 2.

O. Door Lock Pad Puzzle

The player will have a short moment of rest before opening the doors, where with a simple puzzle he will hack the padlock and get in. This challenge which the player controls at that point of the game works as a small safe zone before the final Climax.



3rd ACT

P. Fighting the Pope (Climax)

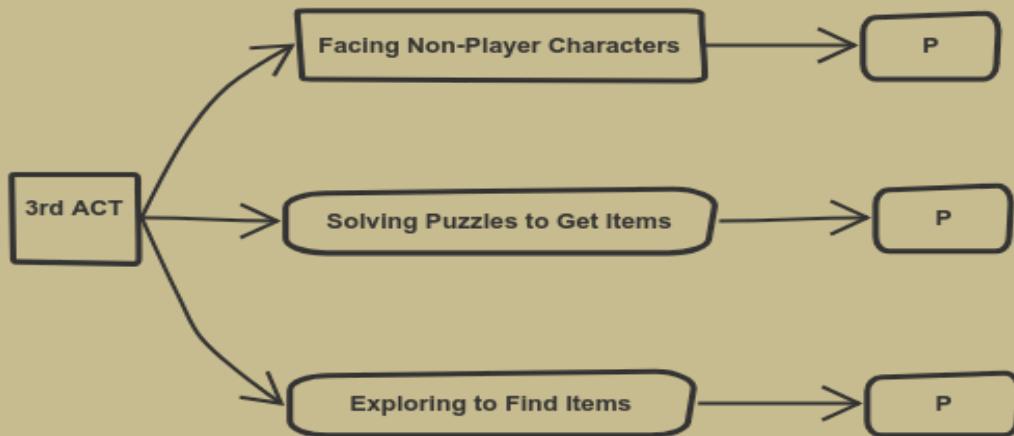
This challenge is the climax of the game. It will feature all the branches. They Had just elected a new pope and had just burned the papers with the right chemicals in order to create the White Smoke. A counter begins it is the time that the player will have to stop it from coming out of the chimney. The magical number: 3 minutes.

The player is left alone with the new Pope, who is decided to become so to the eyes of the world, when he threatens all the Cardinals with the sword and those run away. First, the fight until the player beats the Pope with the Sword. This will be the final battle or **Facing Non-Player Characters Branch**.

Then the player will have a quick run of **Exploration Branch** around the room until he finds a final **Puzzle Branch** Challenge evolution which stops the smoke.

If the player stops the smoke on time, he wins. If he doesn't, he will have to restart Act 3 a.k.a Final Challenge.

3rd ACT Cadence



3. Level Goals and Game Summary

3.1. Intrinsic Goals

The player will learn the mechanics of **Interacting With People** to find out what do they want.

Then the player will learn to find those things by **Checking The Environment** in order to find those things he needs.

The player will learn that his objectives are always behind a **Locked Door**.

Every act will increasingly introduce new objects and new characters. Once the players gets through the first act, he will know everything there's to know to get through the whole game.

3.2. Extrinsic Goals

As the game takes place under pressure, the player will learn **Rapid Thinking** and **Problem Solving**.

The player will learn to be **Patient** and to know when to **Please** others in order to get benefit from it.

He will learn that sometimes others come before the self-individual. This will be noticed with the main character presented to be so rude and having him fail until he decides pleasing others and **Giving** more than **Receiving**.

The game clearly has a **Social-Ecological** message behind in the message from God in the last climax. There is also a message of **Respect To Religion** as nowadays it is discredited so frequently without any intentions of even comprehending it.

The game offers a **High Rhythm**, it is a fast game to play as it doesn't have many levels and those are quite simple. But it would mimic a real life situation, where things happen much faster than in video games. The time the player takes to end the game might be similar to how much time the real life situation will take.

3.3. Soft Skills

- Communication and active listener: As the game goes by, the player starts to realize that violence is not always the way out of a situation and things can be talked out. This is accomplished by using dialogue choices and by having Talking as the only way out of some situations.
- Retrying: The game features a few situations where the player will be beaten up if fighting with two guards at the same time for instance. The player will have the chance to retry and figure out another way to solve that challenge.

- Time Management and decision making: As it is an under pressure quick game, the player has to think quickly and organize himself in order to apply what he learnt and use it as fast as he can.
- Perception of space and spatial scanning: This might be one of the strongest ones in the game, as the player has to manage to use the map to move around in a new environment and assign every real room to a drawing on the map which is also fragmented in two parts.

3.4. Moodboards





4. Constraints

4.1. The 4 T's

4.1.1. Theme

The genre of the game would be a **RPG Metroidvania, Point and Click Graphic Adventure in 3D** and with a **Third Person Camera**.

The whole game is set in **Reality** besides the end when God appears, where a little bit of **Fantasy** is used. (As long as science doesn't prove that God exists).

4.1.2. Time

The **External Time** of the video game is set in actuality, February/March 2020.

The **Internal Time** takes place in a few hours in both game and real world time.

There is a **Timer** to add pressure and intensity to the gameplay, this timer represented by the black smoke coming out of the chimney. As long as it is Black, the player still has time. Once it becomes White, the player loses.

4.1.3. Team and Development

The game described above is just a condensed version with just a level per act and can be done by a single developer. The whole game would take five designers, two focused on Level Designer and the other three as Storytelling, General Design, Character and Enemies Design and Evolution.

Then a bunch of programs and artists to make the game come to life with fitting artstyle and gameplay.

4.1.4. Tools

A template level has been created with **Unreal Engine** in order to simulate the look and feel of the environment of those levels described above.

The art style is reflected in the moodboards. It is a rather realistic style. The feel of the player has to be of loneliness in a ironically real apocalyptic world. The chosen engine fits perfectly the concept of a AAA game.

4.2. External Constraints

The game may have to face some social problems because of the main real-based concept of the Covid-19 Virus and the concept of having the Pope dying from it or some religious people get hurt. As well as the fact that the player is assaulting the Vatican. It is not the most politically correct concept indeed. If such thing could ever happen, the plot can be easily transformed into a more fantasy world with the virus being some kind of **Dark Magic** which could spread around the world and the Pope and the Cardinals some **Dark Evil Wizards**.

Also instead of having the story happen in Italy and the Vatican City it can be translated into an Imaginary World, leading to a more creative Level Design in the construction of the Basilica as well as an giving more freedom to the artists to make it a more dark dangerous temple.

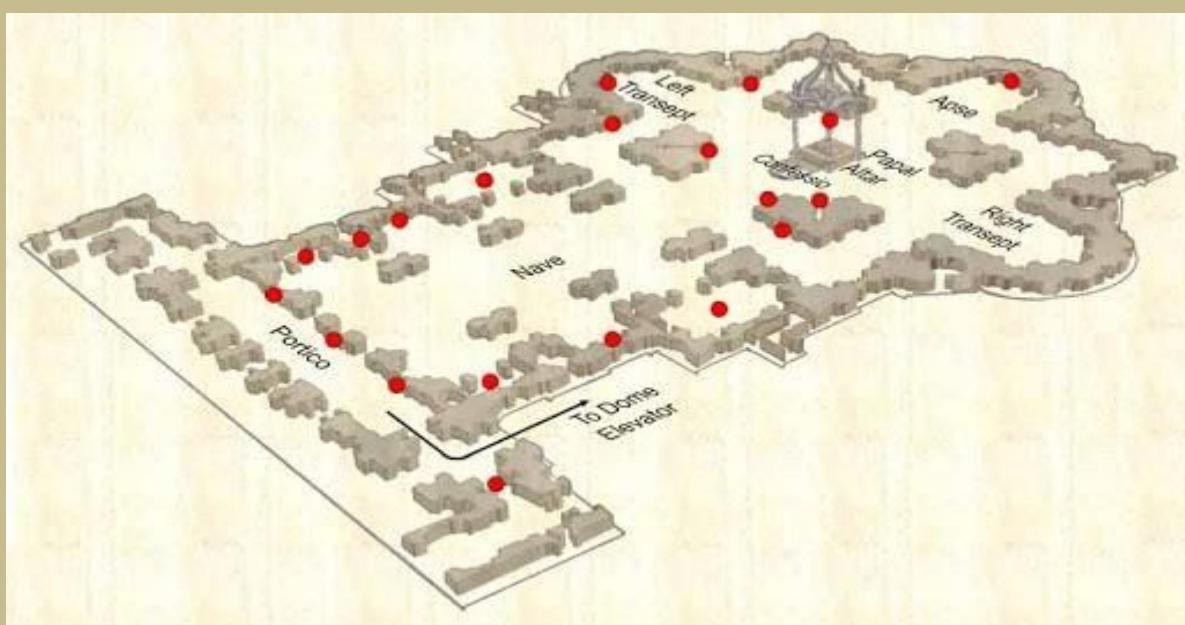
The main character can be also turned into a more experienced **Wizard Apprentice** or **Knight** who will found himself in a situation that because he is for some reason immune to that dark magic the only one able to face the wizards, and so his journey would begin.

Such as this, any other problems related with the plot can be easily adapted and turner into a more fictional idea to fit into the Politically Correct Shelf.

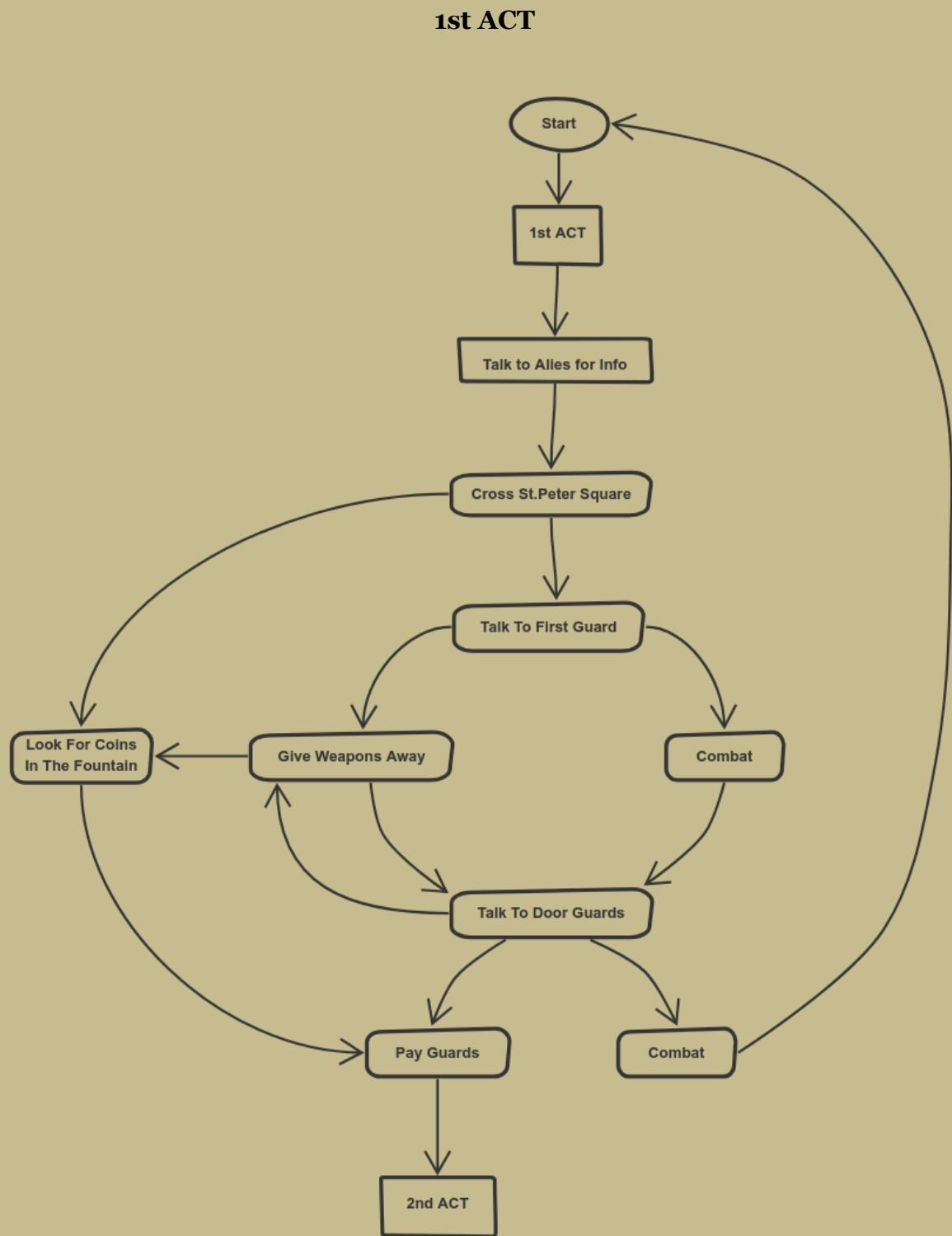
5. Graphical Overview

5.1. Research and References

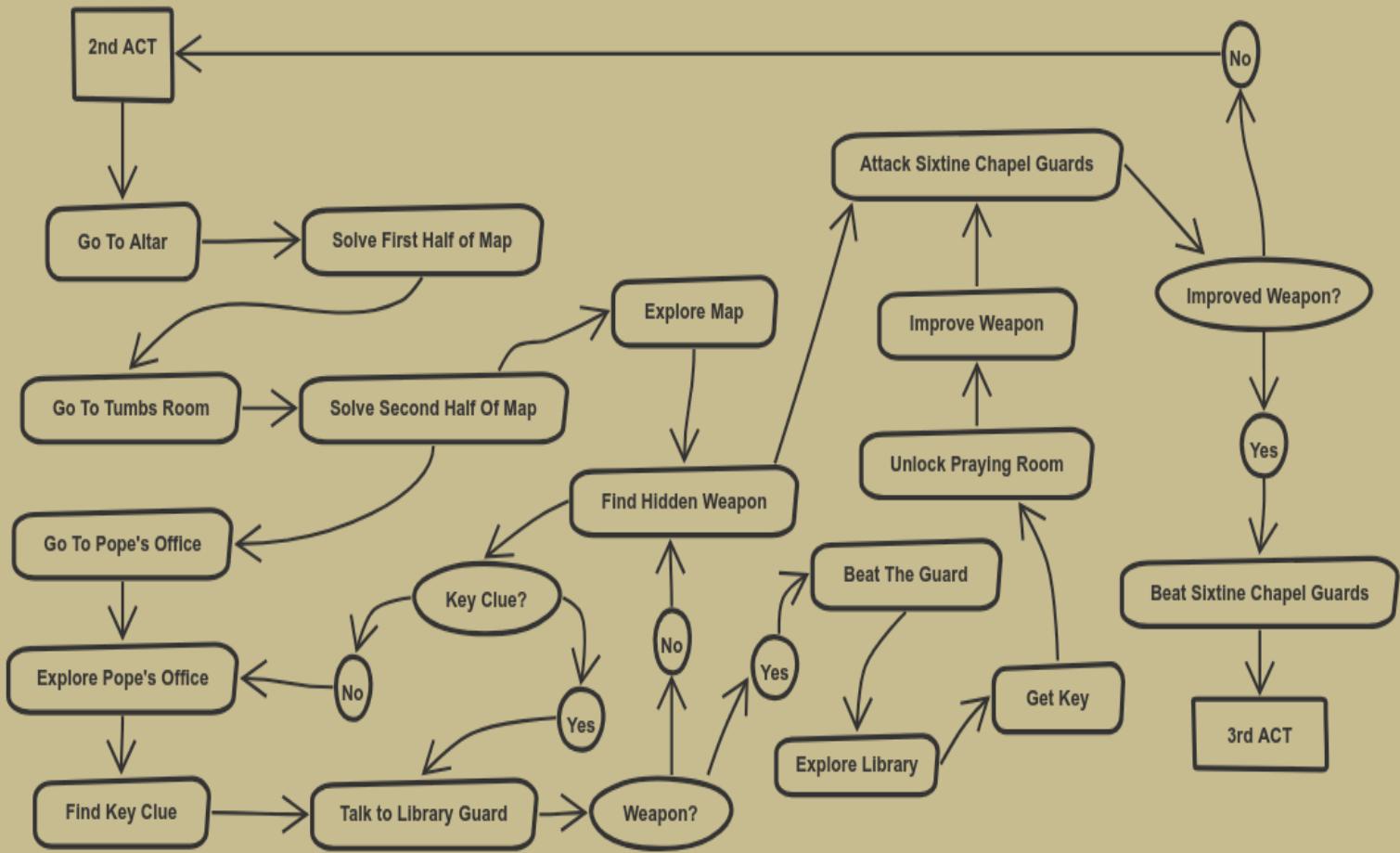




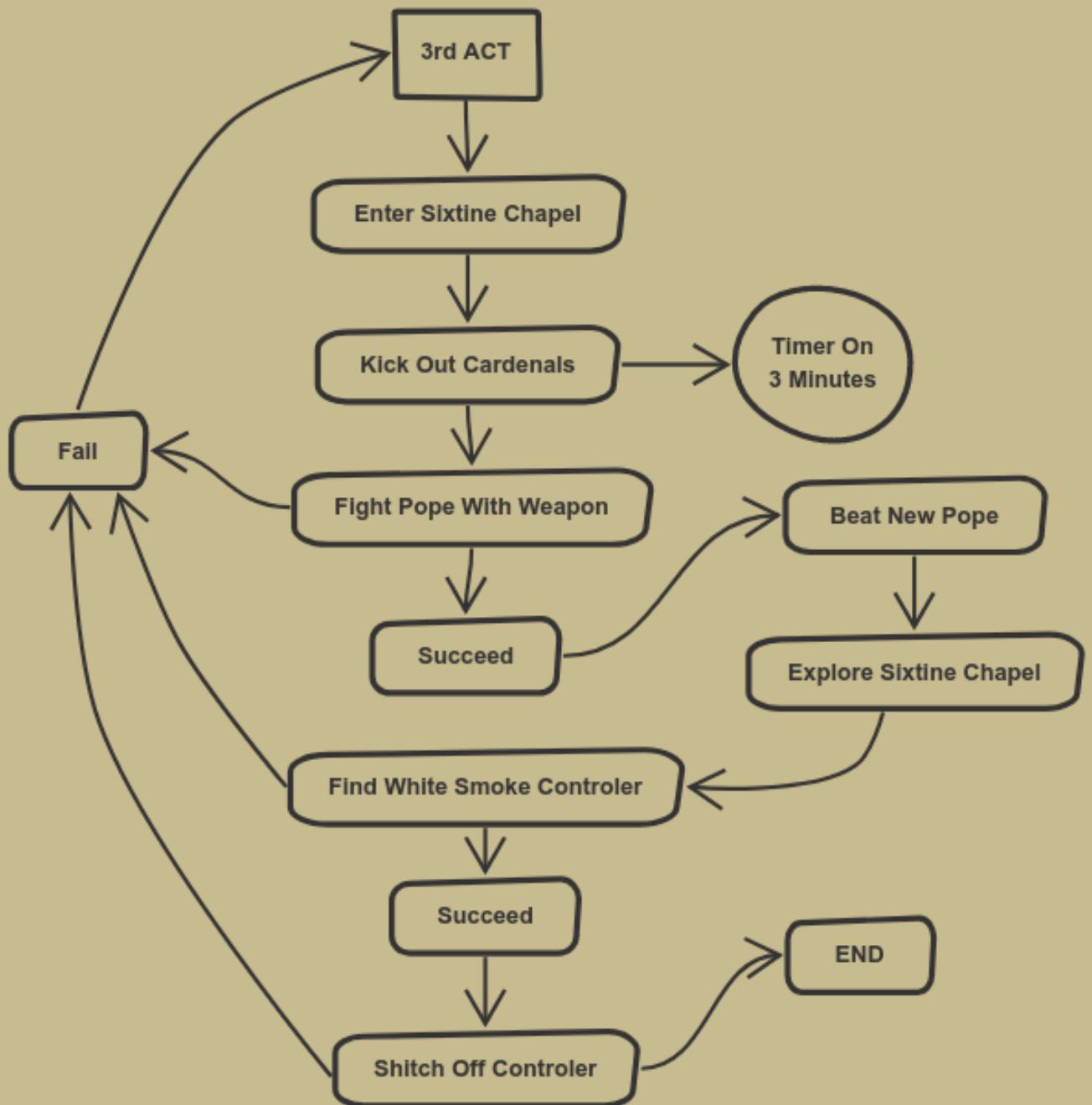
5.2. Flowcharts



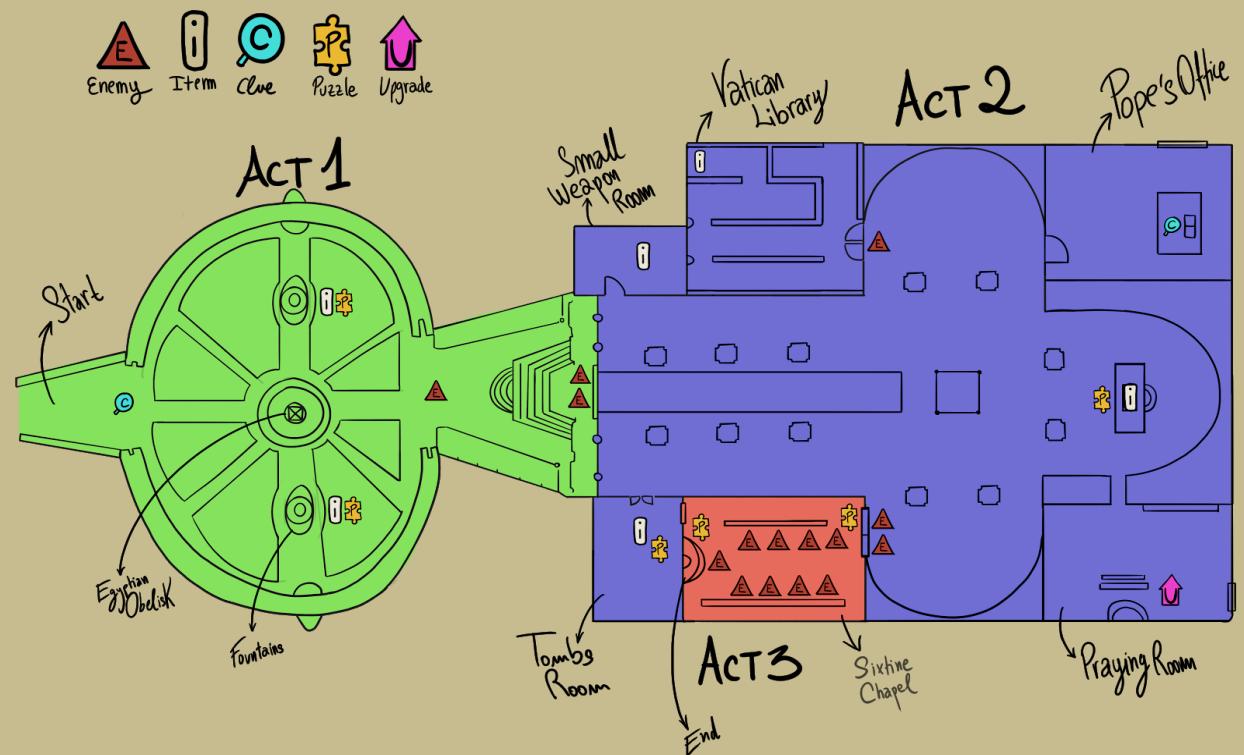
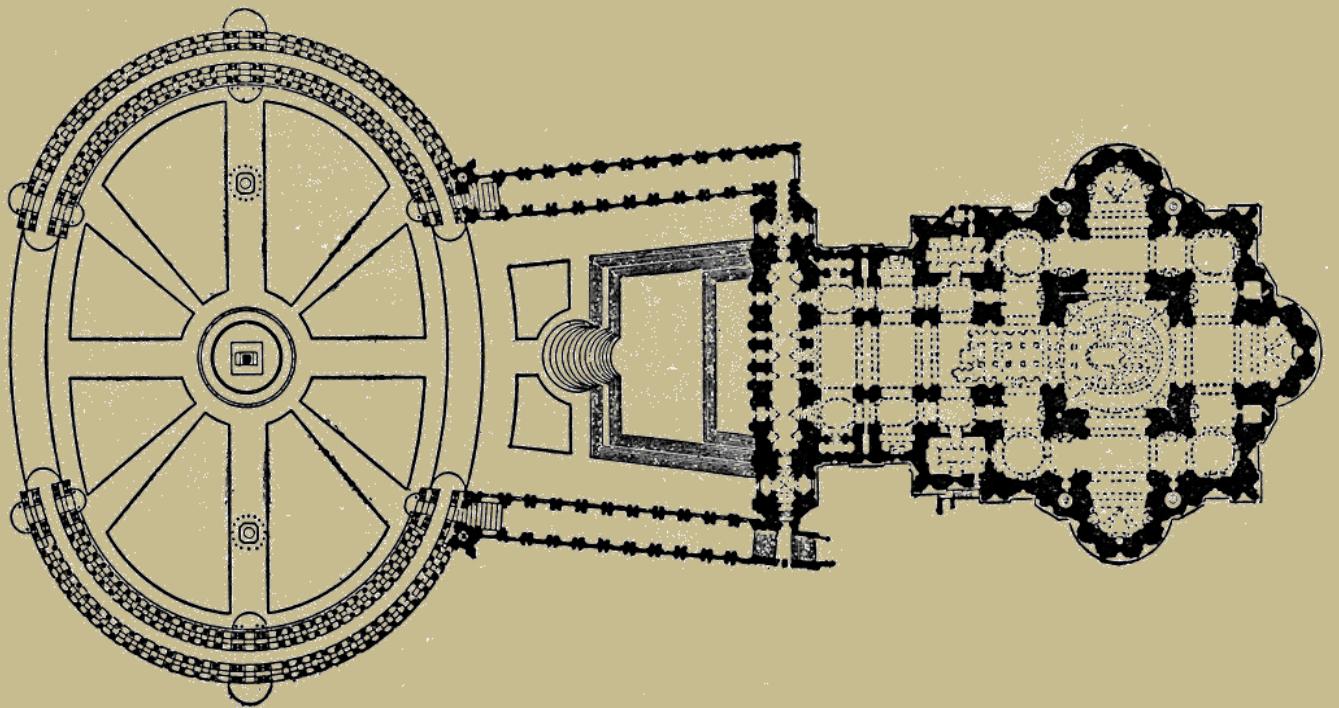
2nd ACT



3rd ACT

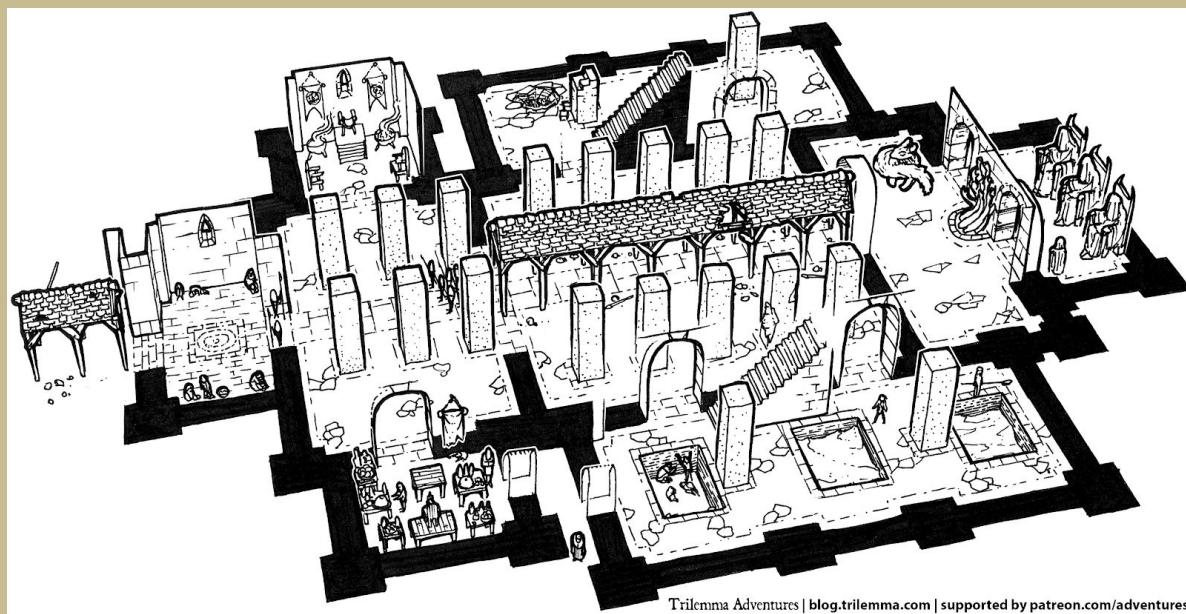
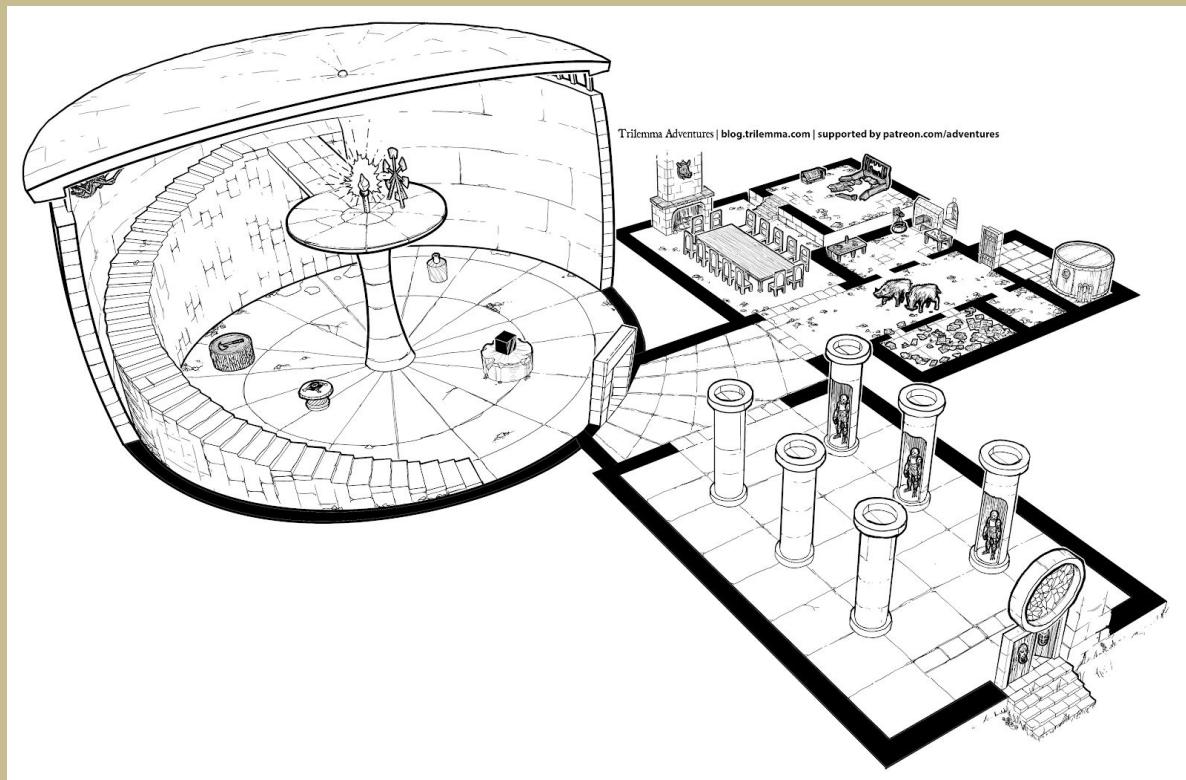


5.3. Maps

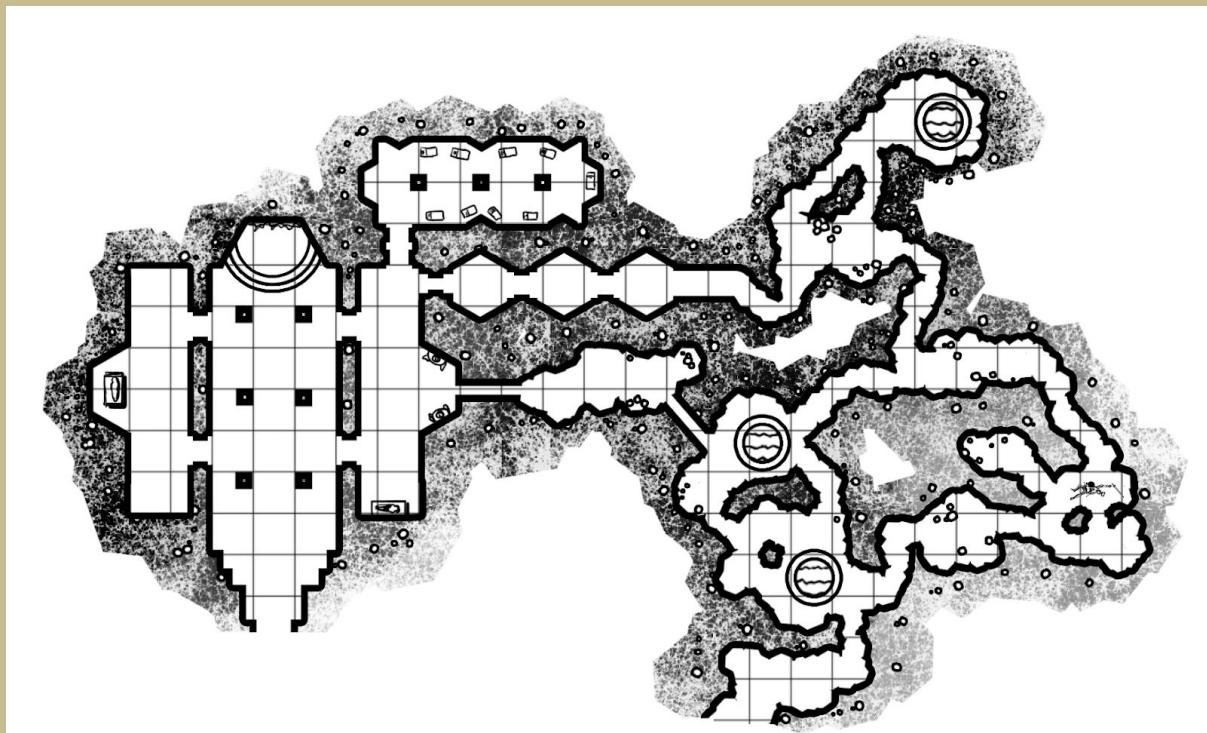


The idea of building up the Vatican as a One Page Dungeon came from initially trying to adapt the Dorcerer's Feast below. The entrance with the columns in this straight position leading the player to the end room.

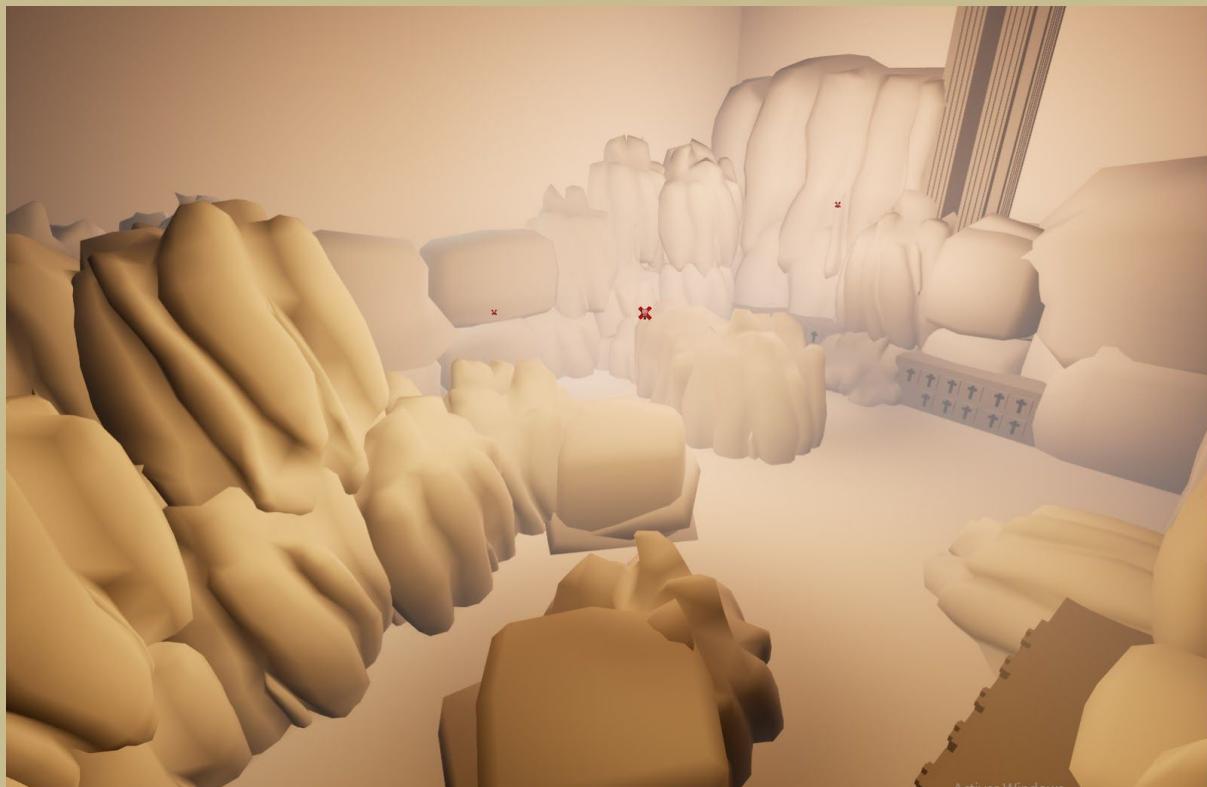
Then I also followed this design in creating the rooms attached to the central one. As seen on the right of both dungeons. Later on I gave each room a purpose in the story which came after the interpretation of the dungeons.



To create the Tombs room, I followed this Dungeon which gave thi impresion of a cavern coming from a building like the Vatican in this case. I didn't follow the entire design but took a general interpretation of the shapes of the rocks because of the lack of space.

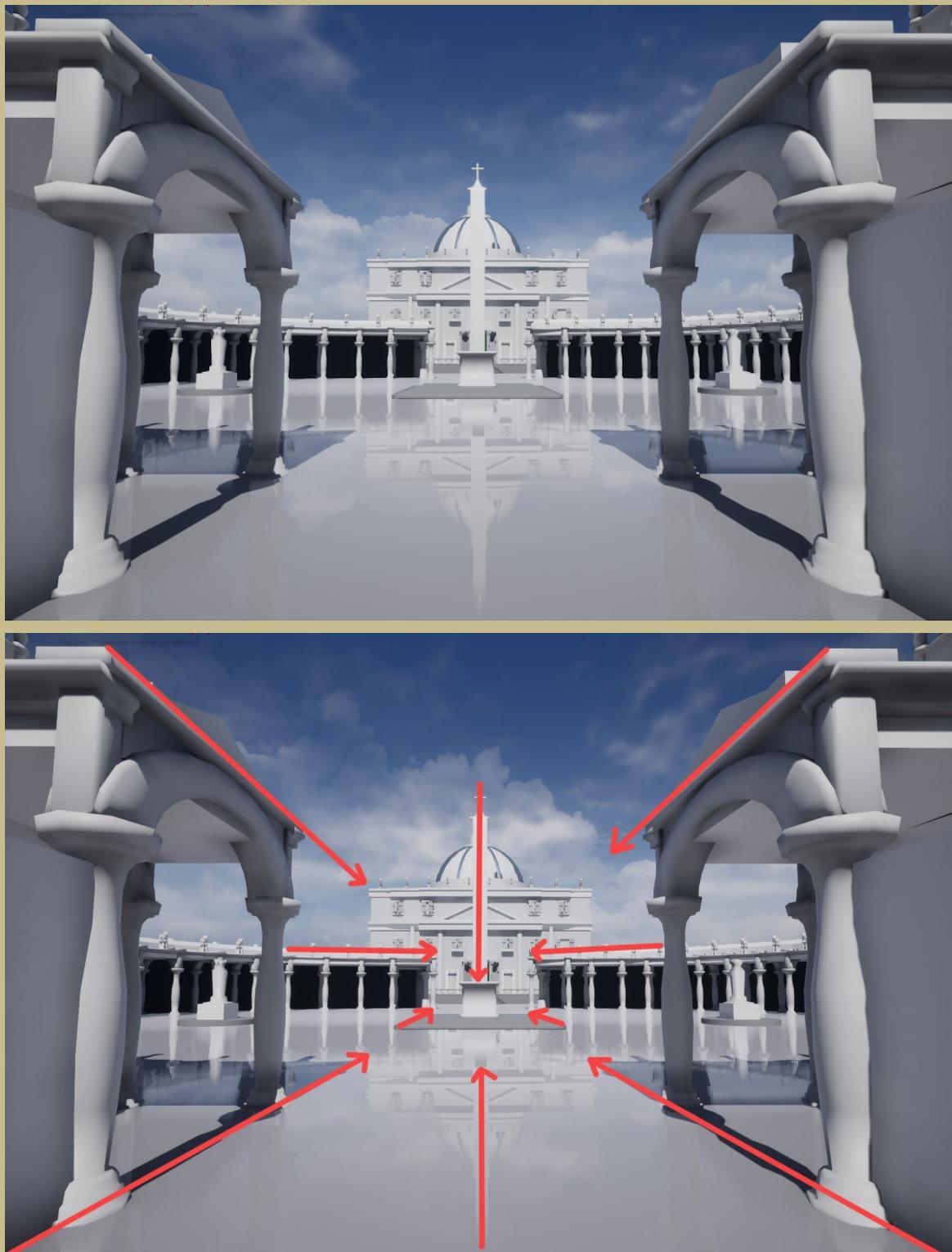


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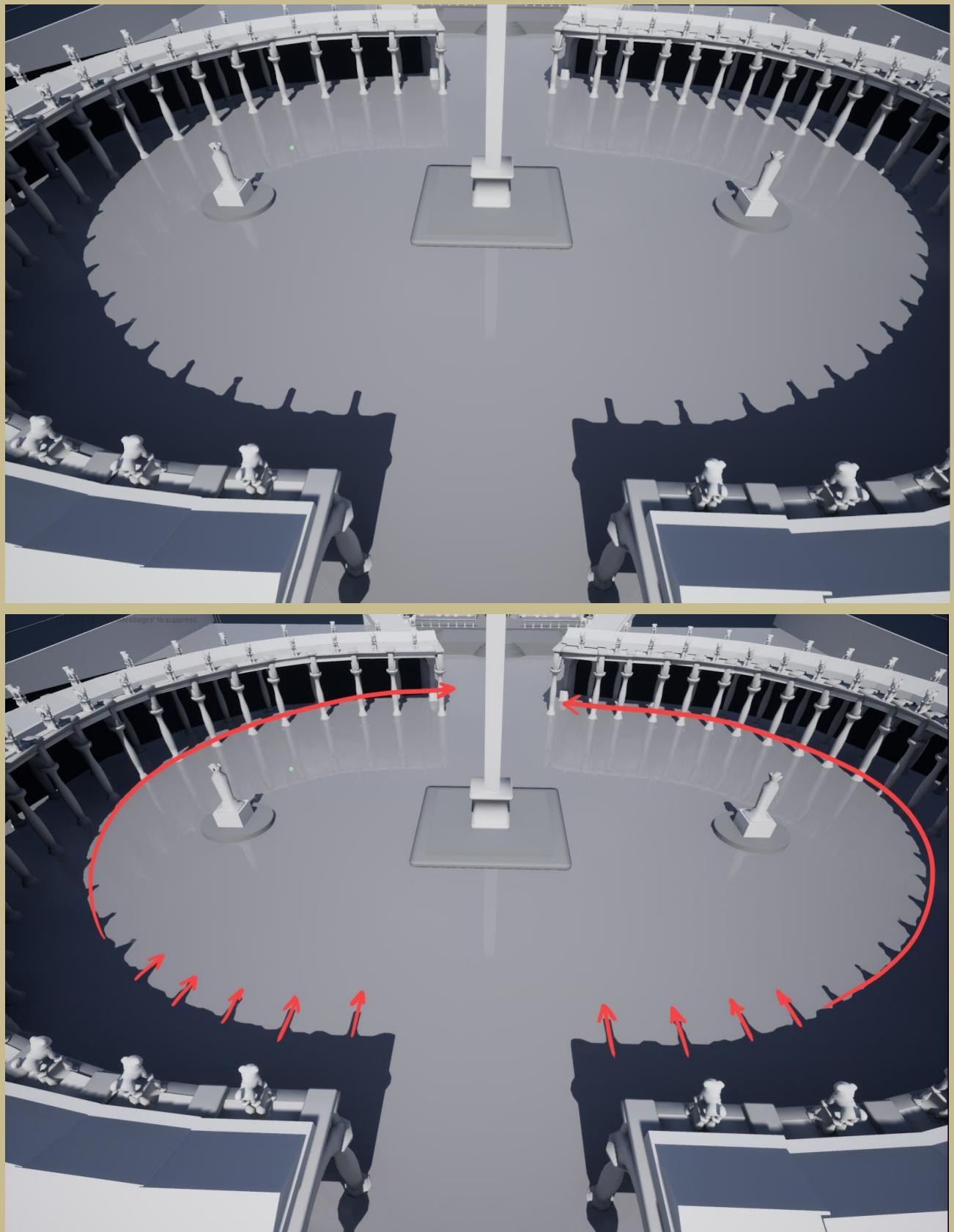


6. My Build in Unreal Engine

The first thing the player sees is a front view of St.Peter's Square. There's a clear target.



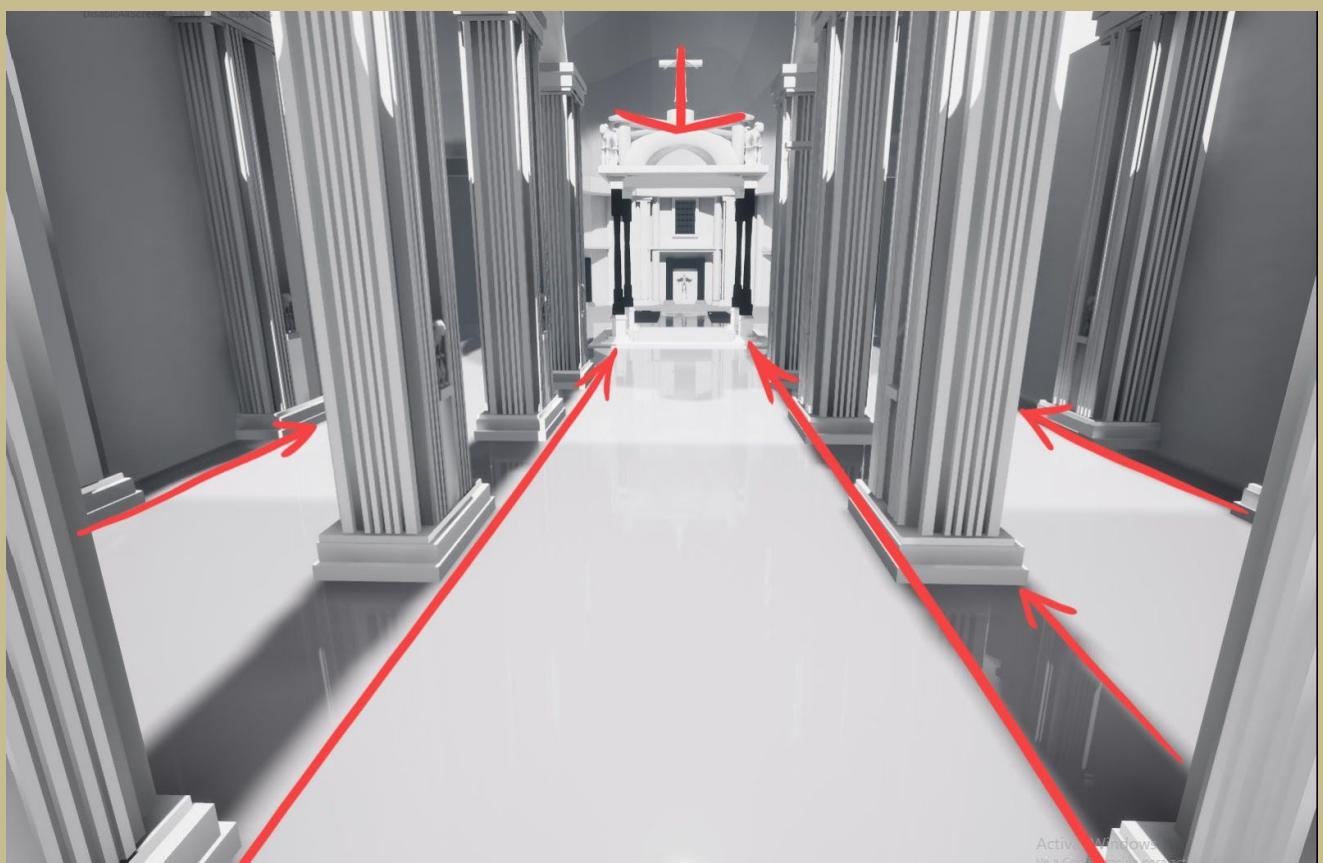
The circular nature of the environment leads the player to the exit. The shadows are placed in order to create extra lines that guide the player.



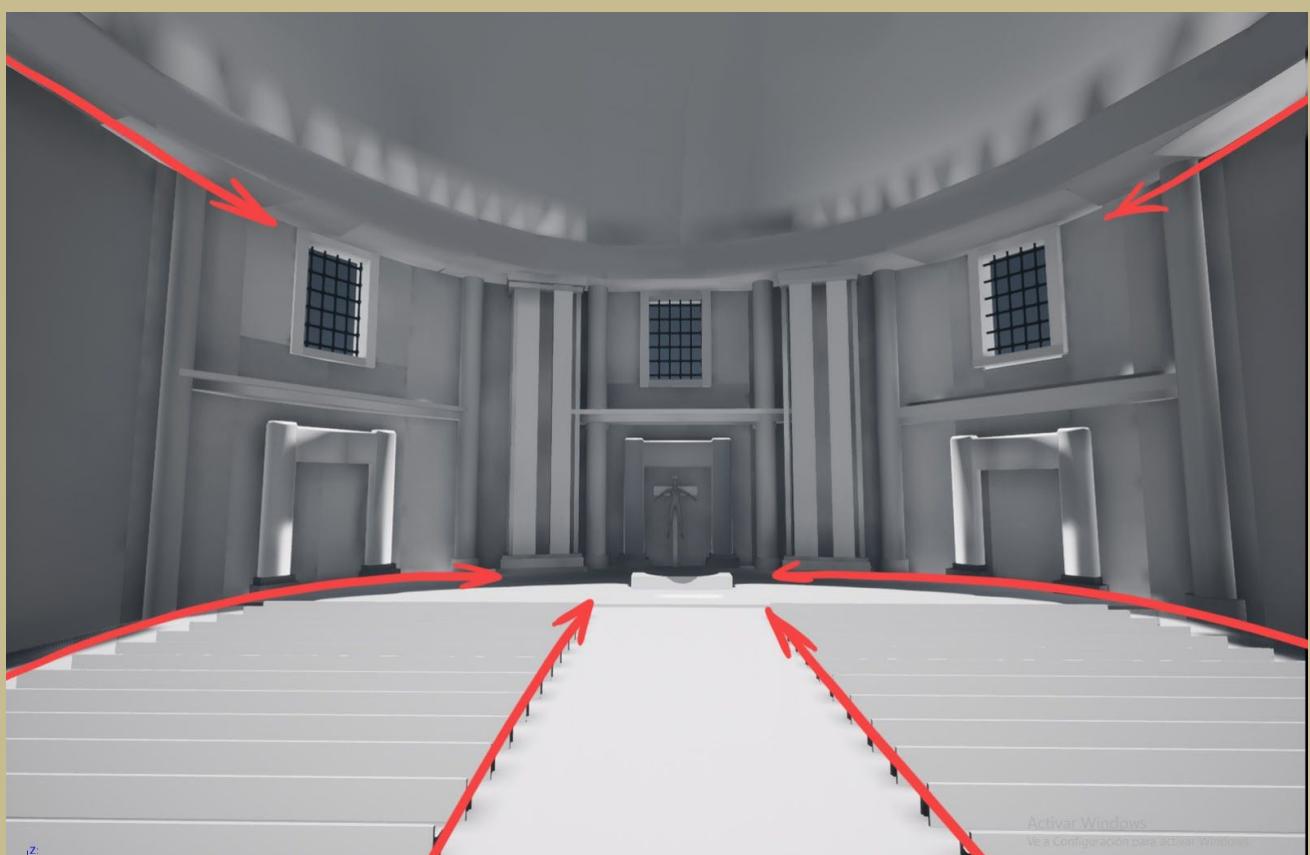
Here I added circular stairs and the horizontal railing in the front to create triangularity. All leading towards the dark door.



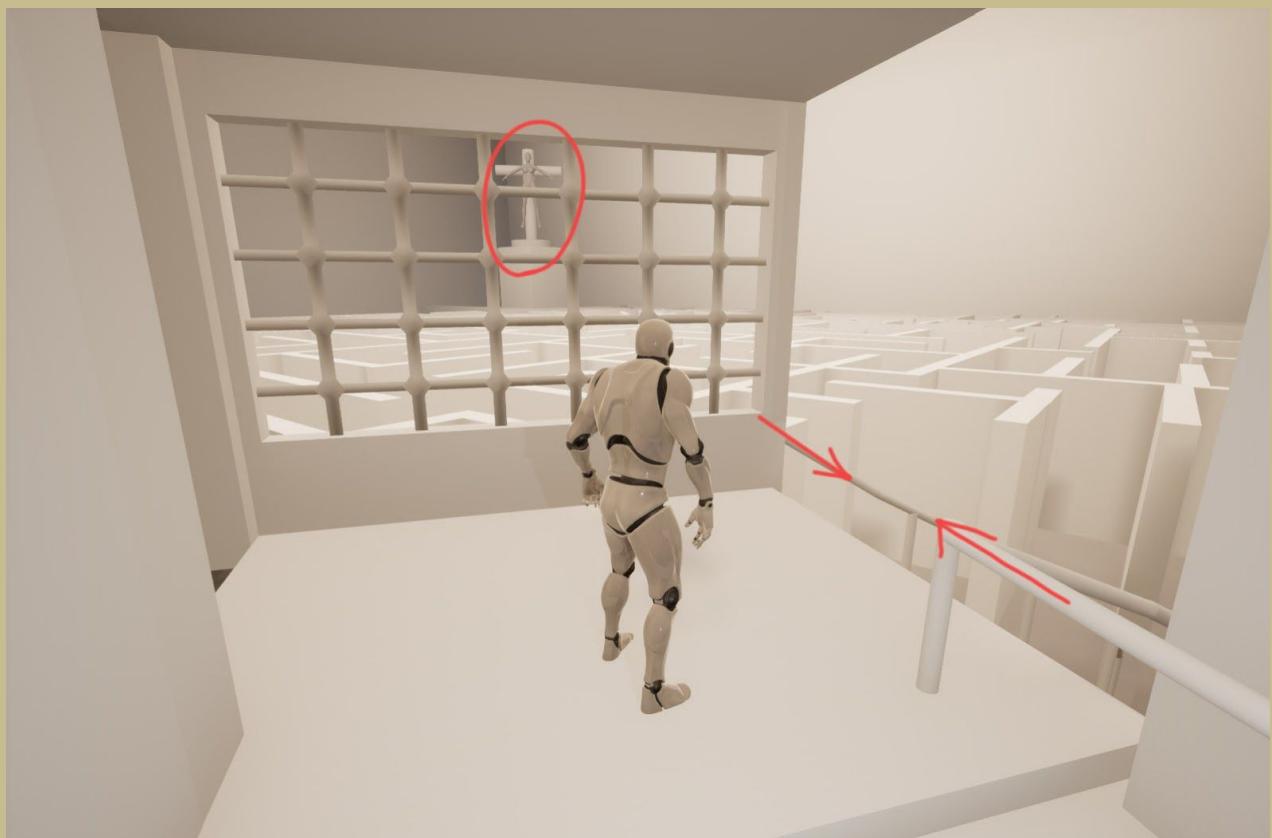
For the second act, the first thing the player sees are the columns leading him to the end of the Chapel. Shadows cross a perpendicular line with the columns leading to the focal point.



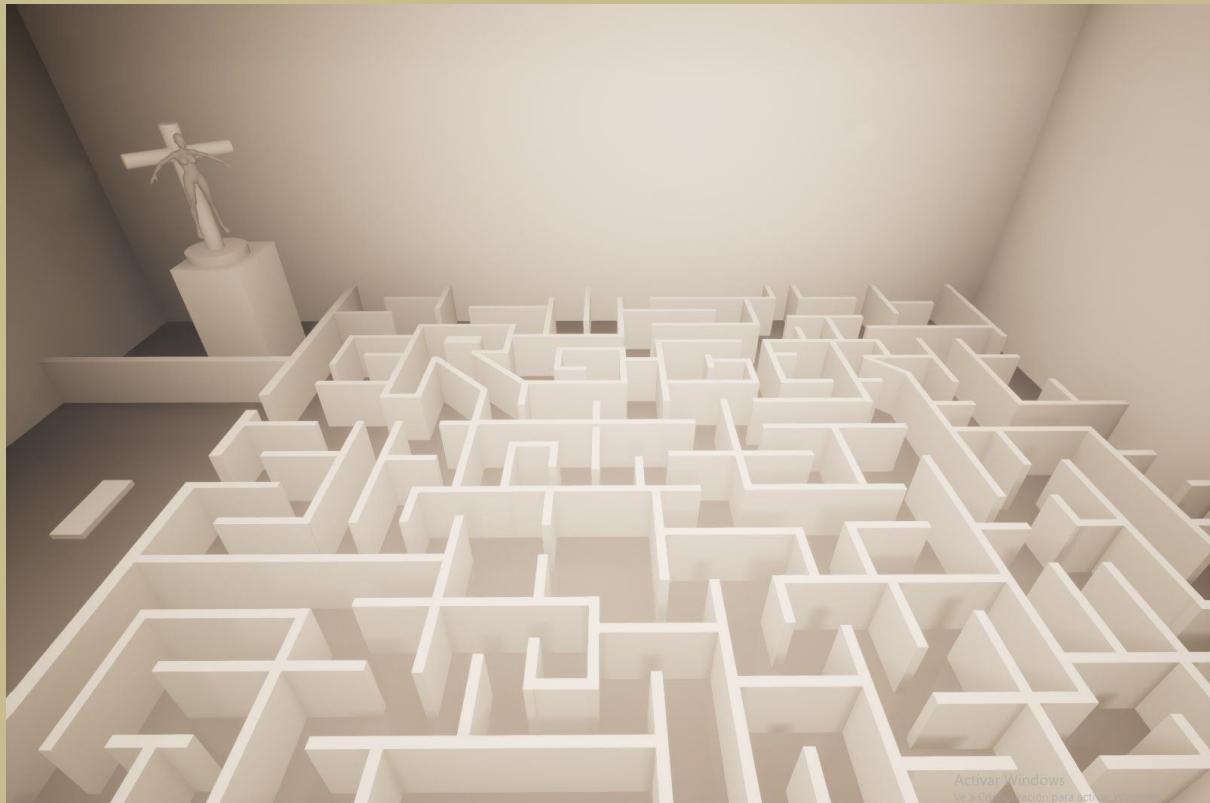
When the player gets to the end of the level, he gets into the “Church”. The rows of benches and shape of the room lead him towards the altar.



For the Library Room where the player has to explore, I built a labyrinth. From the start, there is way up a path of stairs that lead to a view point where the player can see his target.



As always I made a bit of joke when desining the labyrinth by signing with my name with the walls :)



I used some player Guidance tricks to lead the player towards the end of the level though it is tough to include such clues without being too exposed to the player as a designer. I used pipelines and yellow chests easily at sight.

