Venice has a problem. Not only do the rising tides threaten to destroy this world heritage site, but the lack of Venetians living there threatens to turn the whole city into a museum. From 1966 the number of residents has dropped in half from 121,000 to 62,000. The Serenissima lives off of the great art and architecture of its past, and survives on tourism. The city also relies on events such as the Venice Biennale, a large scale contemporary art exhibition which draws in well-heeled art tourists from around the globe.

In recent years, not content to remain isolated in the Arsenale, the Biennale has begun to spread out across the city with exhibitions in palaces and churches. There are hundreds of beautiful churches in Venice and they are expensive to maintain. Many of the scuole, or religious fraternities, have become museums and concert halls where you can gaze on Tintoretto’s religious masterpieces while listening to the Four Seasons 365 days a year. It can be worse, however, much worse. At the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria delle Misericordie, an installation by Flemish artist Jan Fabre features a raised bronze platform with four giant marbleish artist Jan Fabre features a raised bronze platform with four giant marbleish artist Jan Fabre features a raised bronze platform with four giant marbleish artist Jan Fabre features a raised bronze platform with four giant marbleish artist JanFabre features a raised bronze platform with four giant marble

Another version of the war of images can be found in one of the most prominent churches in Venice. Seen directly across the bacino from piazza San Marco is the historic Benedictine foundation of San Giorgio Maggiore. One of the last works of architect Andrea Palladio, this church is one of the great masterpieces of Renaissance architecture with its central pediment and two half-pediments. Among its artistic features are two large Eucharistic paintings by Tintoretto placed on either side of the high altar and multiple side altars, which include paintings by the Bassanos, Ricci, and Piazzetta. For those who love art and architecture this installation is a painful sign of disrespect, and for people of faith it is much more serious: a new type of iconoclasm in which religious art is belittled and temporarily disfigured.

Interrupting the serenity and perfection of the architecture is a large round drum placed at the center of the church. It emits a column of smoke. A giant mechanical duct that protrudes into the center of the dome draws the smoke upwards in a variety of shapes while art tourists sit in reverent awe. The misty movement and the sound of numerous fans allow the installation to steal the focus from the church and its sacred art. San Giorgio is no longer a vessel for liturgy or prayer, but rather a backdrop for an experiment in physics. In some way, art that is disruptive can have the effect of removing the sense of the sacred, resulting in an implied deconsecration. The artist has entitled the work Ascension, and explains, “what interests me is the idea of immateriality becoming an object, which is exactly what happens in ascension: the smoke becomes a column. Also present in this work is the idea of Moses following a column of smoke, a column of light, in the desert...” Really? Is this a thoughtful reinterpretation of religious belief or merely a witty joke at the Church’s expense? The fact that the installation was created for an art gallery in Italy and previously exhibited in a bank in Rio and a gallery in Beijing makes any religious explanations suspect. The Los Angeles Times cited Ascension as a contemporary-art emperor wearing no clothes. Or is there something more subversive going on? If churches are seen as irrelevant for modern man, except as artifacts of cultural history, they naturally become sites for experimentation. It is not surprising that the organizers of the Biennale would relish this use of a prominent church as a venue for contemporary art, but the fact that its use was agreed to by the Benedictines and the Archdiocese is sad. On the other hand, the artist could not be happier. His rising smoke benefits by being seen within the majestic space of San Giorgio, and gives back emptiness, one of the stated aims of the contemporary artist’s work.

Duncan Stroik
Notre Dame, Fall 2011
Sacred Architecture

Issue 20 2011

Contents

Editorial
2 ✦ Editorial .......................................................... Duncan Stroik

News & Letters
4 ✦ Catholic Artists Society holds its inaugural meeting in New York ✦ USC builds new Catholic Center ✦
✦ Christchurch Cathedral ruined in New Zealand earthquake ✦ Knights purchase John Paul II Cultural Center ✦
✦ Apostle Philip's tomb found in Turkey ✦ Poor Clares dedicate their new chapel in Phoenix ✦
✦ Cathedral of Lugano undergoing sanctuary wreckovation ✦ Diocese of Raleigh plans a new cathedral ✦

Articles
9 ✦ The Perennial Value of the Traditional Confessional .................................. John J. Coughlin
12 ✦ Leonard Porter’s Stations of the Cross .......................................................... John Varriano
14 ✦ Ecclesiastical Sprawl Repair: Two Proposals for the Church to Restore the Urban Fabric .... William Dowdy
18 ✦ An Architectural and Theological Interface: The Dominican Complex at Magnanapoli ... Christopher Longhurst
22 ✦ A Faceless Santo Volto: Mario Botta’s Conference Room Tomb ......................... Matthew Alderman

Documentation
24 ✦ The Splendor of Truth, the Beauty of Love: The Exhibition .......................... His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI

Books
26 ✦ Worship Space Acoustics by Kleiner, Klepper & Torres ................................ reviewed by Dennis Fleisher
28 ✦ Ravenna in Late Antiquity by Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis ........................ reviewed by Nikolaos Karydis
29 ✦ How To Read Churches by Denis McNamara ................................................. reviewed by Thomas Dietz
30 ✦ Majestic Shrines and Graceful Sanctuaries by Brendan Grimes ........................ reviewed by Thomas Stroka

32 ✦ From the Publishing Houses: a Selection of Recent Books .............................. compiled by Sacred Architecture

WWW.SACREDARCHITECTURE.ORG

Journal of the Institute for Sacred Architecture

The Institute for Sacred Architecture is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization made up of architects, clergy, educators and others interested in the discussion of significant issues related to contemporary Catholic architecture.

Sacred Architecture is published twice annually for $9.95.
©2011 The Institute for Sacred Architecture.

Address manuscripts and letters to the Editor:
Editor, Duncan Stroik
P.O. Box 556
Notre Dame, IN 46556
voice: (574) 232-1783
email: editor@sacredarchitecture.org

PRODUCTION
Thomas Stroka

ADVISORY BOARD
Dr. Melinda Nielsen
John Burgee, FAIA
Caroline Cole
Thomas Dietz
Rev. Cassian Folsom, OSB
Jamie LaCourt
Thomas Gordon Smith, AIA
Forest Walton
Sacred Architecture News

Pope Benedict XVI received scale replicas of six churches that have been significant in his life to mark the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, celebrated June 29, 2011. Built by members of the Equestrian Union of Upper Bavaria, the 9-foot-tall replicas include the Cathedrals of Munich and Freising, and the churches of Altötting, Birkenstein, Aschau and Saint Georg von Traunstein, and Bad Tolz. These replicas were transported by forty-two horses from Benedict’s homeland of Bavaria, Germany, and were presented to the Holy Father in Saint Peter’s Square on June 12.

Belmont Abbey College broke ground on June 20 for a campus pregnancy and aftercare maternity home. Organizers of the project say it is the first college-based maternity center in the nation. Room at the Inn is located on four acres of land donated by the Benedictine monks of Belmont Abbey, and will provide pregnant college women with room and board and the opportunity to continue their education. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, Fr. Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, described the center as “a witness to the entire church about what we need to do as a church.”

The Greek Orthodox Church in England consecrated a new basilica on April 9, 2011. The Basilica of Saint Panteleimon is located in Kenton, in North West London, on the former site of an Anglican parish. The Anglican and Greek Orthodox churches had been sharing worship space in a building on the site until the Anglicans sold it to the Orthodox parish. The existing structure was demolished and construction began on the new basilica in July 2009. The basilica was designed by Papa Architects Ltd in London.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles is constructing a new 20,000 square foot chapel and Catholic Center at the University of Southern California. The 400-seat chapel was designed by Liturgical Environs, PC, Design Architect Elkus Manfredi, and Architect of Record Perkowitz & Ruth. It is slated for completion and dedication in 2012.

The Catholic Artists Society hosted an inaugural event and Mass of the Holy Spirit for Artists on Sunday, May 15, at the Church of Our Savior in New York City. An estimated 450 people attended, filling the church to capacity. Fr. George Rutler celebrated the extraordinary form of the liturgy. Mass was followed by a reception and lecture by Fr. Joseph Koterski, SJ, entitled, “Ignatian Prayer and the Work of the Artist.” The Catholic Artists Society, formed in 2009, holds regular evenings of recollection, hosts lectures, and plans to continue the annual mass. An advisory board is being assembled to help lead the apostolate.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church celebrated the dedication of its new church eight blocks from the state capitol in Columbia, SC this past Spring. Architect Chris J. Kamages of CJK Design Group in San Rafael, CA designed the church, which seats 500 worshipers under the 60 foot high dome painted with Christ as Pantokrator, the Major Prophets and the Four Evangelists.
The Vatican celebrated Pope Benedict XVI’s sixtieth anniversary of priestly ordination with an exhibition featuring work by sixty artists from around the world. The exhibition, entitled “The Splendor of Truth, the Beauty of Love,” was organized by Cardinal Gionfranco Ravasi of the Pontifical Council for Culture, and located in the Aula Paolo VI. A wide range of art forms were represented, including painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, and music. Church designs were presented by architects such as Mario Botta, Renzo Piano, Santiago Calatrava, Paolo Portoghese, and Oscar Niemeyer.

After being severely damaged in an earthquake last February, the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch, New Zealand, was hit by another wave of earthquakes in June. No lives were lost in the two major earthquakes of June 13, but arches supporting the dome of the cathedral were damaged, causing restoration work from the earlier February earthquake to be delayed.

The new Cathedral of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta was dedicated in Pristina, Kosovo, on the occasion of the one-hundredth anniversary of Mother Teresa’s birth. When construction is completed on the cathedral next year, the Catholic Diocese of Kosovo will move its headquarters from the city of Prizren to the capital city Pristina. The architect, Sterlicchio Livio, drew from the traditions of Romanesque and Byzantine architecture in his design for the cathedral.

The Knights of Columbus announced on August 2 their intent to purchase the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C. The Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist in Ann Arbor, MI, had previously planned to buy the center but withdrew due to lack of funding. Supreme Knight Carl Anderson said the Knights will work closely with His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl of the Archdiocese of Washington and Archbishop Allen Vigneron of Detroit to establish a national center, permanent museum, and Shrine of Blessed John Paul II on the site.

William Heyer Architect completed a renovation of Saint Stephen the Martyr chapel in Columbus, Ohio. The renovation began in 2007 and included a new sanctuary, flooring, ceiling, and lighting, as well as restored confessionals, organ, and Stations of the Cross.

A new ambo has been installed for papal liturgies in the Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican. First used on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul on July 29, the front of the large wooden ambo shows a relief of the Annunciation with the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden in the background. The sides of the ambo have reliefs of St. Peter and St. Paul.
Saint Mary Church in Joplin, MO, was destroyed by a deadly tornado that hit the town on May 22, 2011. Its pastor, Fr. Justin Monaghan escaped unharmed by taking shelter in his bathtub. He was later dug out by parishioners. The parish and attached elementary school are fundraising and hope to rebuild as soon as possible.

Archaeologists have confirmed the location of the Apostle Philip’s tomb in Pamukkale, formerly Hierapolis, in Western Anatolia. It is believed St. Philip died in this city after preaching in Greece and Asia Minor. Francesco D’Andria of the University of Salento led the international archeological team that made the discovery. He reports finding a fifth-century basilica with three naves built around a first-century Roman tomb, which “evidently enjoyed the highest consideration, if the decision was made later to build a basilica around it.” This archaeological evidence confirms the faith of pilgrims who have venerated the site as the tomb of St. Philip for centuries.

Saint Mary Church in Kinglake, Australia was dedicated in December, 2010. The architects Kavellaris Urban Design donated their services for the $6 million project in order to replace a parish that had been burned down during the wildfires in the outskirts of the Melbourne Diocese.

A full-scale replica of Noah’s ark is being constructed by Johan Huibers in Dordrecht, Netherlands. The biblically-accurate ship is four-stories-tall and the length of a football field. Huibers has been working on the ark for three years and plans to have it ready for display at the London Olympics in 2012.

The Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration of Our Lady of Solitude Monastery in Tonopah in the Archdiocese of Phoenix dedicated their new chapel on May 7, 2011. Bishop Olmsted presided at the dedication. The building was designed by SPS+ Architects of Phoenix. The chapel is part of a projected 42,000-square-foot monastery building project.

Saint Mary Church in Norton Commons, a planned town in Kentucky, broke ground for a new church on May 15. Formed by a merger of two parishes in 2008, Saint Bernadette currently serves 1,460 families. The new church will seat 1,250 with the ability to expand to 1,600. The cost of the 34,000-square-foot project will be 7.3 million dollars. Construction is expected to last approximately sixteen months. Saint Mary’s Academy, a regional elementary school that shares property with Saint Bernadette, opened in 2009 along with Saint Bernadette’s parish center. This is the first new church in the Archdiocese of Louisville in twenty years.

The new Saint Bernadette church is designed by Voelker, Blackburn and Niehoff Architects.

An ancient fresco of St. Paul was discovered in the catacombs of St. Gennaro in Naples, Italy. The image dates from the early sixth century and was uncovered during restorations organized by the Pontifical Council of Sacred Archeology. Its discovery enriches understanding of the iconographic evolution of this great saint. St. Paul is turned towards one of the deceased in acclamation, and his facial expression is similar to Roman representations of philosophers from the same period.
**The National September 11 Memorial**

The National September 11 Memorial was dedicated on the tenth anniversary of the attacks. This tribute of remembrance and honor to victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, features waterfalls and reflecting pools in the footprints where the World Trade Center twin towers once stood. The names of the nearly 3,000 who died in the attacks are inscribed into bronze panels surrounding the memorial pools. The memorial, museum, and memorial plaza were designed by architect Michael Arad of Handel Architects in New York and landscape architect Peter Walker and Partners in California, following a design competition held in 2003. The combined cost of the memorial and museum is an estimated 700 million dollars.

---

**The Timber Framers Guild of North America**

The Timber Framers Guild of North America is working on a reconstruction of the Gwozdziec Synagogue for the Jewish Museum in Warsaw, Poland. The project includes converting 200 Silver Fir logs into 450 timbers entirely by hand, to be used in multiple courses of scribed log wall, an unusual timber frame roof, and a compound curved cupola dovetailing inside the log walls and timber frame. Before World War II, magnificent wooden synagogues such as in Gwozdziec were found throughout Poland, but during the Nazi invasion more than 200 synagogues were completely destroyed and are now known only through photographs and drawings.

---

**Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Gainesville, VA**

Franco Pessina, architect, is working on a renovation of the Cathedral of Saint Lorenzo in Lugano, Switzerland. While the main altar may remain, the proposed cathedra, ambo, and freestanding altar recall the brutalist style found in many American church renovations in the 1960s.

---

**Agrell Architectural Carving provides bespoke, high quality architectural woodcarving, consultation and design services.**

Wood carving: With offices in the UK, New York and San Francisco and a capacity of over 50,000 hours of hand carving a year, we proudly stand by our reputation for producing high quality woodcarving on time and within budget, regardless of project size or location.

Consultation and Design: With over 50 years expertise in woodcarving and design, Ian Agrell provides a unique service that if utilised during the planning stages can result in significant time and monetary savings.

Contact:
New York and SF: (415) 457 4422
UK: (01233) 500252
www.agrellcarving.com

---

**“The quality of the carving your company has provided for Bishop Sherlock’s Room is, by common consent, simply outstanding. The craftsmanship on display is extraordinary and the appearance of the room is remarkable as a result.”**

Dr. Scott Cooper, Director, Fulham Palace

---

**The Human Touch**

The quality of the carving your company has provided for Bishop Sherlock’s Room is, by common consent, simply outstanding. The craftsmanship on display is extraordinary and the appearance of the room is remarkable as a result.”

Dr. Scott Cooper, Director, Fulham Palace

---

**New liturgical elements are proposed for the historic sanctuary of San Lorenzo Cathedral in Lugano, Switzerland.**
On June 28, UNESCO created seven new World Heritage Sites in Italy under the collective title, “The Longobards, Places of Power.” The new sites include groups of monasteries, churches, and fortresses throughout the Italian Peninsula, and are said to embody the finest examples of Lombard architecture. They demonstrate the Lombard’s ability to synthesize various architectural styles, drawing on the heritage of Ancient Rome, Christian and Byzantine spirituality, and Germanic Europe. The seven sites include:

1. The Gastaldaga area and the Episcopal complex in Cividale del Friuli in northeast Italy
2. The monastic complex of San Salvatore-Santa Giulia in Brescia, northern Italy
3. The castrum with the Torba Tower and the church outside the walls, Santa Maria foris portas, near Milan
4. The Basilica of San Salvatore in Spoleto in central Italy
5. The Tempietto del Clitunno, a small paleochristian church in Umbria
6. The Santa Sofia complex near Naples
7. The Sanctuary of San Michele, also known as the Sanctuary of Monte Sant’Angelo sul Gargano, in Foggia, southeast Italy.

A sixteen foot bronze modernist statue of the recently beatified Pope John Paul II was unveiled outside Rome’s main train station on May 18. According to its sculptor Oliviero Rainaldi, the pontiff is shown opening his cloak to embrace the faithful. Following public outcry by the Roman people for the sculpture’s crudeness, the artist agreed in August to make “minimal” changes to the work.

Polish Church officials consecrated a gigantic statue of Christ the King in November 2010 in the presence of hundreds of Polish faithful. Claimed to be the world’s tallest statue of Jesus, it overlooks a plain in the western Polish town of Swiebodzin. The Reverend Sylwester Zawadzki, promoter of the statue, said the concrete figure itself is 33-meters-tall: one meter for each year of Christ’s life. The golden crown and mound underneath bring the total height to 72 meters. By comparison, the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro is 30-meters-tall without its pedestal.

The government of Ireland has asked religious congregations implicated in the 2009 Ryan Report on abuse at Irish institutions to transfer properties worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the state as part of a revised package to compensate victims. Education Minister Ruairi Quinn stated that if the eighteen congregations were not able to meet the expected monetary payments, they should transfer the ownership of many of their schools to the state. Quinn will seek a meeting with the religious congregations to assess their views.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Diocese of Raleigh announced the planned construction of a new $75 to 90 million Cathedral Campus in the city of Raleigh. The proposed 2,000-seat Cathedral will be dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus and will be the fifth largest cathedral in the United States in its seating capacity. The Catholic population of the Diocese has increased forty-two percent in the last ten years to more than 200,000 registered Catholics. The existing Sacred Heart Cathedral in the historic downtown is currently the smallest cathedral in the country, and will be retained for the sacramental life of the diocese. The new Cathedral will be designed by McCrery Architects of Washington, DC, and groundbreaking is scheduled for the year 2013.

Bishop Frederick F. Campbell of the Diocese of Columbus dedicated Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Westerville, OH, on June 29, 2011. The new 1,400-seat church is part of a larger project that includes an activity center and athletic fields, and costs an estimated 21.5 million dollars. David Meleca designed the 38,000-square-foot church, drawing from the Romanesque and Richardsonian traditions.
From at least the time of the Council of Trent, the usual venue for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance has been the confessional situated in a church or oratory. In the traditional confessional, the priest and the penitent remain in separate compartments and they speak to each other through a grill, screen, or lattice which is often covered by a veil. In many confessional, the confessor sits between two compartments, each of which has a kneeler for a penitent. The priest is able to close off one of the penitent’s compartments with a sliding screen so that only one penitent will be confessing at a time. The confessional admits of a variety of styles from simple and austere to magnificently carved wooden structures. It may be designed with or without doors and with or without curtains. In all of its design variations, the confessional is essentially intended to afford anonymity to the penitent. It also serves to protect both the penitent and the priest from unchaste touch and from false accusations. The traditional confessional box nonetheless permits a kind of sacred intimacy in which the penitent confesses sins to God through the priest who acts in persona Christi. While the proper place for hearing confessions is a church or oratory, canon law foresees that for a just cause confessions may be heard in a wide variety of places outside of a confessional located in a church or oratory. For example, confessions are routinely heard in hospitals, rectories, and, in military situations, even on the field of battle. The plentiful opportunity for sacramental confession permitted by canon law is grounded on the principle of the salvation of souls which is the supreme law of the Church (salus animarum est suprema lex).

The essential design of the traditional confessional reflects long established concerns of the Church for individual dignity and the good of the community. In her wisdom developed over the many centuries, the Church has distinguished between the internal and external fora. The internal forum pertains to matters of conscience, and it involves confidentiality in both sacramental and non-sacramental communications. In contrast, the external forum involves all matters, such as an act of governance, which are public and verifiable. The confession of sin belongs to the internal forum while the question of guilt of an ecclesiastical crime is generally suitable to the external forum of a canonical trial. The traditional distinction between the internal and external fora reflects a balance between the common good and an individual human being’s right to privacy and good reputation. Even during the early historical development of the Sacrament of Penance, which was characterized by public and communal acts of penance, there is reason to believe that specific sins confessed to a priest remained part of the secrecy of the internal forum. In addition to protecting a person’s rights to privacy and good reputation, the Sacrament of Penance developed in the Church with the wisdom gained from extensive experience that the secret auricular confession of sins helped to avoid unnecessary and damaging scandal in the community. The traditional confessional has long served to enhance these goals.

Canon 909 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law stipulated that the confessional must have a thin, fixed, and perforated screen between the penitent and the confessor. Vatican II called for the revision of the rites for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance in accord with the social, communal, and ecclesial dimensions of the sacrament’s historical development. During the post-conciliar years in the implementation of the revision, the opportunity for face to face confession was often emphasized. It remains true that many penitents prefer this method of confessing one’s sins. The face to face approach has been described as more personal, less formal, and less frightening for those who seek a conversation with the priest. Section 2 of Canon 964 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law leaves it to national conferences of bishops to establish norms for the confessional, but requires that “there are always confessors with a fixed grate between the penitent and the confessor in an open place so that the faithful who wish to can use them freely.” The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for a “small chapel or rooms of reconciliation” that permit penitents to choose between the traditional ano-
nimity of confessing through a screen or the opportunity for a “face to face encounter” with the confessor.

However, recent developments in the Church’s experience suggest that a retrieval of the important values served by the traditional confessional may be in order. It may well be time to reconsider whether the reconciliation room presents more problems than advantages. The sexual abuse crisis has painfully reminded all of us of the reality that priests are human beings like all others who, as a result of original sin and their own personal limitations, sometimes may fall in violations of the sixth and ninth commandments of the Decalogue. The separation of the penitent and confessor in the traditional confessional tends to create a sacred space that militates against the commission of sin. One reason for this is that the parties cannot see or touch each other. Chastity in sight and touch are, of course, essential to that deeper purity which is to characterize the imitation of Christ by both priest and penitent. Another reason is that the traditional confessional facilitates an intimacy that is nonetheless ordered to the matter of the Sacrament of Penance. The modern reconciliation room often encourages a wide-ranging conversation more akin to pastoral counselling or spiritual direction. In contrast, the traditional confessional suggests to the parties that the purpose of this sacred space is specific to the confession of sins, expression of contrition, resolve to sin no more, performance of penance, and the administration of absolution.

Recent developments also suggest that the traditional confessional may advance important legal and societal functions. The traditional confessional assists in protecting the priest from false accusations. In churches and oratories which are open to the general public, anyone may enter a reconciliation room and subsequently bring an accusation against a confessor. The sexual abuse crisis has resulted in an atmosphere in which the presumption of innocence of a criminal act is often abrogated. A priest accused of sexual abuse may be viewed as guilty once the accusation has been brought against him. When a priest is alone with another person, especially if that person is a minor, the priest is vulnerable. The physical separation of the traditional confessional renders accusations of inappropriate touching or looking highly dubious. Priests need to be fearless in the offer of their humble service to the faithful, but they also need to be prudent to avoid any situation that might cause scandal.

Additionally, the sexual abuse crisis has raised questions about the value of secrecy. Generally, state law protects confessors and other religious ministers from being compelled to divulge information that is communicated to them by a penitent. More than a few persons in secular society have been inclined to question any exemption that a confessor might enjoy under state law. They ask if a priest hears about some criminal matter in the Sacrament of Penance why he should be exempt from reporting requirements adopted by the state. The anonymity of the traditional confessional means that the priest often does not know who is confessing. Although it is sometimes possible to know a person through voice, the reality remains that in the separate compartment and behind the veil of the traditional confessional, the confessor most often may simply have no idea of the identity of the penitent. If the priest does not know the identity of the penitent or if he has a lack of certainty about a penitent’s identity, he cannot justly be held to state report-

The traditional confessional thus serves to safeguard the inviolability of the seal of the Sacrament of Penance. The seal of the Sacrament functions to ensure the faithful that they may freely confess their sins and receive God’s forgiveness without the danger of public revelation by the confessor. Finally, the traditional confessional conveys an important message to the Church and society as a whole. It communicates that the Sacrament of Penance is a sacred and privileged place, which is not susceptible to the further commission of sin but is a source of the divine healing that comes from the reception of God’s forgiveness. In the design of a new church or oratory and in the restoration of an already existing structure, ecclesiastical architects may wish to use their skills to affirm the perennial values protected by the traditional confessional.

Rev. John J. Coughlin, O.F.M., serves as Professor of Law and Theology at the University of Notre Dame. He received his doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and his J.D. from Harvard University. His latest book, Law, Person and Community will be published by Oxford University Press in late 2011.
Church Interiors
Adoration and celebration altars, mensas, ambos, pulpits, baptisteries, entire presbyteral areas, stations of the cross.

Statues
Saints, blessed, copies of antique statues, relief figures, carved portraits.

Restorations
Cleaning, renewal of interiors, renovation of statues, integrative and conservative restoration.

WOOD – BRONZE – MARBLE
The 2011 Venice Biennale was flooded with non-representational works that were, as The New York Times reviewer put it, engaged in “an unforgiving contest between the memorable and the forgettable.” As an art historian, my own response to the exhibition was to wonder why contemporary art has detached itself so thoroughly from the precepts of Western aesthetics that have persisted for more than two millennia, precepts that have privileged recognizable form and narration over all other types of visual expression. One exception to this somewhat dispiriting trend was a single work in a collateral exhibition at the Biennale by the New York artist, Leonard Porter. This painting, on display at the Abbazia di San Gregorio in the exhibition “Future Pass,” offered an eloquent and memorable interpretation of the myth of “Tai-Yu Burying the Flower Petals,” a subject taken from an eighteenth-century Chinese novel.

Readers of Sacred Architecture now have the opportunity to see an even more ambitious effort by Porter permanently installed in a Catholic church in New Vernon, New Jersey. The church is Christ the King, and the paintings represent the Fourteen Stations of the Cross, each marking a significant moment in the Passion of Christ that began with Christ before Pilate and ended with his Entombment. During the Middle Ages, the venerable Via Crucis or Via Dolorosa, as it was originally known, was reenacted in actual pilgrimages to Jerusalem during the Lenten season. By the fifteenth century, as the Holy Land became increasingly inhospitable to pilgrims, a number of outdoor shrines were constructed in Europe as guides for the faithful who wished to undertake the spiritual journey alone. The devotion to the “Stations”—as the imaginary pilgrimage came to be called—was initiated by the Franciscan Order, and it was only under their patronage in the late seventeenth century that the practice was moved indoors. Half a century later, Clement XII both extended the privilege to all churches, and, true to the spirit of the Enlightenment, fixed the number of Stations—which previously had fluctuated between eleven and thirty—to the fourteen that remain conventional today.

Few sacred narratives have been the subject of so unswerving an iconography. Individual scenes of the Passion proliferated in medieval devotional imagery, but only in the early fourteenth century did the hand of Giotto transform the highly stylized icons of Byzantine art into more naturalistic depictions of human events. And it was not until 1747—sixteen years after Clement XII’s decree—that a major artist undertook the depiction the Stations as a coherent set. The artist was Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo and his series can still be seen in the church of San Polo in Venice. Apart from Matisse, modern painters have rarely been moved to take up the challenge. Porter’s aesthetic instincts are uncompromisingly classical. Compositions recede in parallel planes as if on a stage; in each case with a shallow foreground, the principal action in the near middle distance, with, in some instances, a backdrop of classical architecture. Despite the dramatic potential of the subject matter, the artist embraces neither the visceral realism of Caravaggio nor the operatic bravura of Rubens. The body and soul of these paintings aspire more to the idealized legacy of Raphael.

The fourteen canvases, each measuring 16 x 12 inches and installed in aedicular frames of the artist’s own design, are hung on the nave walls, seven to a side. Chronologically, the sequence begins with Christ before Pilate which is located at the front of the church just to the left of the altar. From there the narrative unfolds from right to left with Christ taking up the cross in II and bearing his burden through IX. Station IV, Christ Meeting his Mother and Mary Magdalene typifies the eventful journey with Christ Falling the Second Time (VII) being the final representation on the left side of the nave. The story then crosses to the right wall with...
Sacred Architecture  Issue 20  2011

Christ Meeting the Women of Jerusalem (VIII) and returns in the direction of the altar with Station XIV, The Entombment concluding the series. Although Porter’s paintings constitute independent vignettes in a continuous narrative, the individual depictions are related to one another in a variety of ingenious ways.

Following the age-old tradition of commissions calling for works to be viewed in situ (that is, in predetermined locations), Porter’s Stations were conceived as site-specific. Their small scale and relatively high placement above the floor precluded—as a purely practical matter—the unification of the viewer’s sightlines with the pictorial perspectives, but the illumination and purposeful directionality of the compositions engage the devotee compellingly. Light has always carried a metaphysical meaning in the sacred art of the West, whether conflated with the natural illumination of the church or as a purely spiritual force emanating from an altar. Porter chose the latter in New Vernon, for the illumination of the seven Stations on the left aisle enters from the right while those on the right aisle come from the left.

The directional impulses begin at Station I with Pilate’s sharp left-ward gesture energizing the symmetrical composition, and they continue moving to the left with the angling of both Christ and the cross in II-VII. At VII and VIII—the juncture between the two aisles—the centurion’s agitated horse redirects our attention across the nave. The progression then continues the leftward path until, in Christ’s final hours at X-XIV, it regains a symmetrical stasis. The expressive energy rises and falls in keeping with the dramatic intensity of the individual vignettes. Thus the cruelest moments of the Passion are marked by the most excited gestures while the Crucifixion (XII) and Entombment (XIV) are the calmest.

The artist’s use of color brings focus to the movement of his compositions. Christ is depicted in the first Station wearing a claret-colored tunic that visually defers to Pilate’s white robe. After this initial appearance, he then appears in vivid red and blue vestments that stand out sharply against the dark setting and earthy-toned accessory figures. From X-XIII, he appears in a white loincloth and has a lighter complexion than do his adversaries. Finally in Station XIV, he is fully wrapped in a luminous white shroud while his extended right arm echoes Pilate’s gesture in Station I but points now toward the high altar, the source of the illumination for the entire cycle. Color also plays a role in drawing our attention to the Virgin Mary—garbed in dark blue in IV, XIII, and XIV—and Mary Magdalene—in red, yellow, and green in IV, XII, and XIII. Finally, the color of the sky reflects the accelerating sense of tumult and tragedy as it turns from blue to partially cloudy, to darkly stormy, before concluding with the blackness that attends the Crucifixion, Deposition, and Entombment (XII-XIV).

Viewed altogether, Porter’s Stations are characterized by a rational and disciplined energy that, on the one hand, couples an empirical eye—capable, for example, of capturing the increasing graininess of the cross as it weathers abuses of its own—and on the other, a predisposition to long-standing principles of classical art that include the quotation of earlier works of architecture and sculpture. The artist’s style has strong affinities to the late Renaissance and early seventeenth-century expressive mode known to an earlier generation of art historians as the Classic-Baroque. Porter’s work is certainly historically informed, but it is neither mindlessly derivative nor sentimentally nostalgic. His Stations breathe new life into a seemingly forgotten idiom, and do so with a unique sense of thoughtful and spirited grandeur.

John Varriano is Emeritus Professor of Art History at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA.
Now in the midst of Advent, it is time to prepare for a new round of clashes between Church and State. From crèches to Christmas trees, even to Santa Claus, a city official or district judge will decide that the right to religious freedom necessitates the immediate removal of all display of cultural celebration. And it’s not just Christmas. Concerns about school prayer and courtrooms’ Decalogues perpetuate this controversy throughout the year.

Frustrated Christians ask how this has come to be. Not only did our society once tolerate these practices, but she celebrated them! Churches once were recognized as pillars of the community, a distinction manifested in the pride of place granted to the church buildings: from simple white churches on village greens to grand cathedrals on city plazas, the church was integral to civic life.

Much effort has been put into fixing the sorry state of sacred architecture, but the relationship between a church and its surrounding environment is only beginning to receive the attention it deserves. While creating a beautiful edifice is a significant achievement in today’s world, the architecture will always be incomplete if the church stands in a sprawl of parking lots and strip malls. The traditional placing of the church on the public square is important as a symbolic gesture and as a practical means of evangelization. A church is an image of our spiritual nature, transcending the hustle and bustle of daily life, and when the church faces a courthouse, city hall, or bank, it reminds everyone that there is no profit in gaining the whole world at the expense of one’s soul. Moreover, when a congregation climbs the front steps of a prominently located church, they stand in witness to the whole community, for “a city on a hill cannot be hid.” In contrast to this are the many suburban churches with a barrier of parking and landscaping isolating the church, and decreasing the odds that a curious passerby will drop in on a whim.

Despite the importance of being on the public square, it is typically the churches themselves that have chosen to locate elsewhere. Changes in demographics, real estate values, and parking demands are just a few of the causes that have enticed churches to the suburbs. These are serious motives, not to be casually dismissed, but nevertheless, churches need to recognize that there are consequences for their actions. As churches have relocated to follow their parishioners, they have alienated their former neighbors. As churches have moved to remote destinations to allow for large parking lots, they have made it difficult for the careless youth, elderly, and poor to reach them. And as churches have sequestered themselves geographically, their communities have sequestered the church from daily life.

Would a return to the public square cause an immediate restoration of the Church’s cultural prestige? Not likely, but it would be a start. Unfortunately, many congregations are deeply invested in their current locations and a return to the public square would tax their finances as well as the good will of the congregation. How can a suburban church continue to minister to its parishioners and maintain its current facilities, while repositioning itself as a truly civic institution?

This question was recently explored in two architectural studies, one by Grenfell Architecture, PLLC, and the other by Daniel DeGreve. Grenfell Architecture began with the recognition that hundreds of suburban churches and schools burden the Catholic Church in America today with large, under-utilized lots and aesthetically unsatisfying, liturgically problematic, programmatically obsolete architecture. These properties are increasingly costly to operate and maintain at a time when parish finances are already stretched. In response to these inadequacies, Grenfell Architecture explored how a church property in a typical first ring suburb, such as in Northern Virginia might be rebuilt over time to both create a sustainable community and generate revenue to fund the construction of better buildings. With four blocks of new housing and commercial space proposed, as well as a new school and rectory, the parish could gain a valuable source of revenue while establishing a civic character for their church, now commanding its hilltop square.

Grenfell Architecture understood that for a plan like this to be practical,
it needed to address two concerns: the financial burden must be gradual, and the development must not interfere with the continuous operation of the church and school. By phasing their plan, they reduced the initial capital requirement, allowing the project to use revenue from the first phase to fund subsequent development. Ultimately, the project could pay for itself, including the cost of the new school and church, thus saving the congregation from a lengthy fundraising campaign. The first step is to create a block structure with an appropriately scaled street grid that connects to adjacent existing streets, responds to the site, and furnishes on-street parking. Combined with new parking at the block interiors, the on-street spaces will be able to handle all the current parking needs, leaving the existing buildings intact and freeing the former parking lots to be the initial development sites. Church and school can seamlessly transition to the new facilities when they are finally built, and the old buildings can be demolished.

Daniel DeGreve’s project investigated how churches could use their property to become the seedbeds of traditional neighborhoods in suburbia. The study, “Generating an Urban Pattern in Suburbia: The Écclesia Parochialis,” began as a graduate thesis at the University of Notre Dame, and ultimately won a first place prize in the design competition at the 2010 Living Presence Symposium at Catholic University of America. Like Grenfell Architecture’s church masterplan, DeGreve began with an existing suburban church campus and explored the level of development that the site could easily accommodate—quite a lot, as it turns out. DeGreve designed a vibrant neighborhood with church, school, shops, offices, houses, greens, plazas, and community gardens.

Where the project is most provocative is in the way it explicitly engages the surrounding land by extending the urbanity of the site into the neighboring suburban sprawl. By creating one side of the beautiful perimeter streets, DeGreve leads neighboring land owners by example, encouraging them to participate in the good work he has begun. This invitation is not an appeal to philanthropy; it is an argument built on sound business principles. By demonstrating how a successful project boasts a significant increase in yield per acre, the church gives the other land owners a good real estate comparable for appraisers, bankers, and developers, and allows them to share in the added value of the project.

In many ways, this new interest in churches as the anchor of the neighborhood is a return to the historic role of the Church as a founder of cities. From European monasteries to California missions, churches often have nurtured
civilization under their protective mantle. Instead of finding this a distraction from their spiritual vocation, these churches recognized that the dual emphases on corporal and spiritual works of mercy were complementary. Western civilization grew out of the foundation of security and education provided by the Church.

If we take time to observe the streets and buildings of the modern American landscape, what do they tell us about the importance of our faith? Do our churches stand proud, engaged in the public as well as private lives of the people, or do they cower between Jiffy Lubes and AutoZones? The built environment suffers from a soullessness similar to that which enervates our society, and our churches are in a unique position to restore both. Though congregations have long been fighting the spiritual battles, it is time for a renewed infusion of the Church into society by reasserting the church building on to the public square.

The work of Grenfell Architecture and Daniel DeGreve stands as an overture by architects towards reinventing suburban churches as community centers. Though other architects need to expand and refine these ideas, it is the churches themselves—congregations, pastors, and bishops—that must embrace this vision for their property if it is ever to become a reality. With the confluence of the recession-fueled demand for rental housing and the financial distress of many churches and dioceses, the opportunity has never been better for ecclesiastical sprawl repair. And as churches reconnect with the physical centers of society, they position themselves to restore their connection with society’s spiritual center.

Will Dowdy is an associate with Anderson | Kim Architecture+Urban Design. He lives with his wife and two daughters in Chico, California.
dixoncatalog.com
church interiors & appointments
The Dominican Complex at Magnanapoli, Rome, is an architectural composite from the mid sixteenth century in the heart of the ancient city currently housing the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Angelicum, along with the adjacent monastery, convent and adjoining gardens, and the church of Saints Dominic and Sixtus. Looking purposefully at the Magnanapoli complex and recognizing within it the spiritual impetus of architecture in light of the Thomistic aesthetic theory will demonstrate how architecture can provide a simultaneously theological and aesthetic reading. It will also demonstrate how sound architectural development and organization is, in essence, always inspired by the desire to find a solution to the most important questions of purpose and fulfillment in life.

The Aesthetic Theory of St. Thomas Aquinas

In the thought of St. Thomas it seems that beauty is primarily a transcendent quality, that is, there must be a metaphysical ground for its existence. St. Thomas’ *Summa Theologica* expounds his definition of beauty in an expression that has become the essence of his aesthetic theory: “Ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur: Primo quidem integritas sive perfectio: quae enim diminuta sunt, hoc ipso turpia sunt. Et debita proportio sive consonantia. Et iterum claritas.”¹ These three properties—integrity, due proportion, and clarity—are therefore the qualities that make an object beautiful. St. Thomas explicates, however, that he is not referring to mere abstractions, or what is known simply on the conceptual level, or disconnected from experience, but rather to the physical world around him and to his empirical experience in and of that world. St. Thomas’ beauty, therefore, does not exist by any theoretical means only. It is a quality of being that is transcendent yet it pertains to things in the world, to created things.

One of the key concepts in his aesthetic theory is the idea of form. St. Thomas explains that the form of an object is in fact its beauty—that which “properly belongs to the nature of a formal cause.”² In the mind of St. Thomas form also is not something static or crystallized but rather coextensive with being. It is the structural principle in things and when it is experienced on account of the subsisting properties of integrity, due proportion and clarity, then the object is said to be beautiful.

Despite such an over-simplification of St. Thomas’ aesthetic theory it suffices to say that the beauty of any existent thing is based on the vital reality of its form. In architecture, according to this theory, the beauty of a building, or composite of buildings, is determined by the complete realization of what the work should be—the proper organization of material, a correspondence among all its parts, and the consequent splendor formae (splendor of form)—as St. Thomas would call it.³ The Magnanapoli site is an ideal example of architectural beauty according to Thomistic system of ideas because it presents an array of architectural elements, planning, design and construction processes and results that all contribute to the complex’s overall splendor formae.

![Image of Santi Domenico e Sisto, Rome, part of the Angelicum complex](https://example.com/image-url)
except for in the choir. This architectural austerity, which often went as far as the suppression of capitals on columns and panels under windows, gave great lightness and elegance to the new style of Dominican churches.

Dominican architecture also acquired its distinction from the aspirations of the members’ foundational communities who turned away from the cloistered regula of early monasticism and embarked upon a more active apostolate of preaching and parochial work. Their verve thus extended outside the monastic center and impacted the social and urban currents of its time. The Dominican style of building came to reflect the community’s socio-religious ideals and fundamental values. Subsequently, on account of the Dominicans’ active apostolate and establishment in large urban areas, a practice that significantly influenced the cultural milieu of the time, and also on account of the rise of churches and convents known as opus sumptuosum, the Dominican attitude towards suppressing richness of expression in its architectural designs subsided. In the chief towns throughout Italy, by the end of the thirteenth century the Dominicans were in possession of the most splendid religious buildings, magnificent monasteries and some of the finest churches with exquisite artworks. This was undoubtedly a consequence of the Order’s increasing importance in the socio-political arena at the time. In point of fact, in the past as in the present-day the Dominicans have occupied some of the finest and most important church buildings and religious spaces across the world.

The Dominicans projected their apostolic zeal and theological erudition into transforming buildings in their possession into structures to accommodate serious scholarship and even to inspire, thereby creating a fusion of aesthetic qualities and religious ideals in a certain architectural type. Such a practice was typical of the Dominicans in general throughout the course of their history. They adopted various styles of architecture and assisted in their diffusion and assimilation for new means and ends. The Order even accepted the style of the Renaissance when it had supplanted the medieval forms and incorporated it into its own. Every architectural medium capable of giving expression to religious beauty was used by the Dominicans to further the ends and needs of their apostolate, for the motto of the Dominican Order is Veritas and as their Angelic Doctor explains, truth and beauty are exchangeable and analogous terms.⁴ Aspects of the Dominican apostolate, which is characterized by dedication to preaching, the study of theology, the safeguarding of Christian doctrine, and the profession of total fidelity to tradition, conjure a conviction that is concretely expressed in the abstract values of truthfulness, beauty, apostolicity, magnificence, splendor and love. These values become tangible in the physical manifestations of unity, spatial economy, order, grandiosity, practicality, hospitality and even solemn ceremony in the liturgical expression of the Dominican Rite.

Dominican architecture may be described as theocentric, contemplative, monastic and didactic. The last two qualities set it apart from the architecture of almost any other kind as Dominican architecture has a strong overture of almost any other kind as Dominican architecture has a strong overture of truthfulness, beauty, apostolicity, magnificence, splendor and love. These values become tangible in the physical manifestations of unity, spatial economy, order, grandiosity, practicality, hospitality and even solemn ceremony in the liturgical expression of the Dominican Rite.

It is no coincidence that Blessed Pope John Paul II writes in his Letter to Artists: “[…] where theology produced the Summa of Saint Thomas, church art molded matter in a way which led to adoration of the mystery.”⁵ Conforming to the principal idea of categorization of St. Thomas’ theological discourse on God, man and nature, the Magnanapoli complex is an architectural manifestation of the Thomistic system of ideas by extension of those same categories into its external architectural designs. In the words of the Pope: “the functional is always wedded to the creative impulse inspired by a sense of the beautiful and an intuition of the mystery.”⁶ The architectural arrangement of the Magnanapoli complex is therefore designed towards creating a single environment conducive to both religious life through prayer and community, and to academic scholarship through study and education. The two modes of human activity—to praise God and love Him and each other in the spirit of Christian charity, and to know God and understand Him through the truths of the Christian faith—are characteristics of one spirit.
To achieve these goals in architecture the Magnanapoli complex is unified, in proportion, and above all directional, that is, it has purpose: making space holy—building to uplift the mind and the heart to spiritual matters.

Like the scope of both the Order’s theological purpose and academic goals, the architecture of this complex does not conform to any one particular age or style but rather unites the legitimate styles of its respective ages into a comprehensive whole. On account of the Dominican friars’ capacity to unify diverse architectural designs to supplement religious ends and ideals, the complex comprises an interplay of architectural morphemes that combine into more inclusive forms. While the Magnanapoli complex can be used for a variety of purposes such as communal living, religious formation, and educational development, the unified composite surpasses each one of these purposes. It thus expresses a correlation in time and space of the physical, intellectual and spiritual strengths of what it means to be fully human. One may describe it as a microcosm of the *civitatis Dei*—the peaceful dwelling place of all believers.

The Magnanapoli complex also achieves its purpose by a harmonious relationship with the natural surroundings of its physical environs. It conforms architecture to nature by taking nature as its inspiration, or rather, as its solution to the complexity of its building projects. In nature the Dominicans find the answers to life in general and from a translation of the language of nature they find value in architectural designs. In fact the emulation of nature is the goal of Dominican architecture, for from nature is taken the material and from nature is learned the systems, processes and aesthetics by which the buildings are integrated to create a sound and healthy environment. Nature reveals an underlying order and the entire aesthetic theory of St. Thomas is said to be based on the principles of nature which display an ordered hierarchy of structures. In architecture, as the Dominican architectural typology displays, this order is combined with functional properties and aesthetic expressions, a kind of reliance on self-assembly, fitting form to function.

The architecture of the Magnanapoli complex not only reveals the character of a spiritual force, it also elicits a reaction to this force. Prescinding from St. Thomas’ system of ideas, the complex demonstrates how the human intellect perceives the attributes of form, in this case an architectural composite, which satisfies the senses upon being seen due to its inherent properties of integrity, due proportion and clarity constituting the *splendor formae* contained within. The faculties of the human mind then sense the quality of these properties and the observer is drawn into the space by the beauty of the integral structure. This process is achieved by the aesthetic appeal of the building being appreciated upon being perceived and its image impressed upon the external sensory receptors of the observer. The properties intuited by the mind then arouse visual appreciation that is passed to the interior intellectual senses. The observer subsequently enjoys their reception in the internal sensory faculties and this is why the human spirit finds itself simultaneously at peace and inspired in such a space.

The entire environment becomes fully enjoyable, and one in which thought, feeling, and the transcendence of the human spirit is expressed. Thus St. Thomas’s definition of beauty as “*pulchra dicuntur quae visa placent*” is fulfilled. This experience approaches a movement which is both natural and supernatural. An emergent and interconnected encounter between material and nonmaterial properties is experienced. Moreover, given the unifying characteristics of this Magnanapoli complex, it is no surprise that one feels at peace in this environment for peace is “the tranquility of order” as St. Augustine expressed.

The Dominican complex at Magnanapoli is also an example of the *splendor veri* in architecture. *Splendor veri* is a platonic term referring to the relational qualities among material things. It was revisited by the Schoolmen and upheld by St. Thomas in his goal of presenting a methodology to consider the relationships among all things, however, primarily between form and matter on the one hand, and idea and truth on the other. In relation to the Magnanapoli complex, beyond the exterior appearances of its buildings the concepts of truth and beauty united with knowledge and space are brought together through an intimate association between architecture and theology. Behind its walls these two disciplines transcend the rational confines of the human mind penetrating to the sensitive and emotional appetites of the human soul. A spiritual and material communication is achieved through the converging and interacting of architecture and theology, an experiencing of how both depend substantially on the deeper meanings of a reality envisioned in and above the material limitations of physical space and the immaterial limitations of the human mind. The Magnanapoli complex thus possesses the conditions of beauty that make it...
attract the observer when attention is concentrated on the complex’s formal structure. The architecture itself does not “create” this beauty, for the objective conditions of beauty really only subsist in things, though it is reasonable to confirm that it manifests beauty on account of the equilibrium between a formal perfection and the intellect’s apprehension of its physical forms.

The undergirding theological impetus of the architecture is founded in a mind-based knowledge of God, a rationalistic logic, and in the human person “ad imaginem Dei” as the center of human existence. This impresses upon the physical surroundings the criterion for a religious ideal, incorporating into the environs architectural homogeneity of form and matter where the characteristics of order and unity dominate over variety. It thereby offers a source of architectural wealth and organization that is relevant in the context of a religious vision.

Scholastic and monastic activity are so well unified in a reciprocal relationship of studying and learning on the one hand and sanctification and preaching on the other, that one does not exist without the other. In this harmony a material, intellectual and spiritual formation unfolds, exposing an insightful occupation with the notions of beauty, order, unity and integrity. In the architecture, beauty is experienced in the congruency of buildings and their parts, and through the perception of order and unity, while in the theology beauty is seen through the radiance of the truth on its subject matter. In both contexts, unity is upheld in the cohesion of the relational quality of practical and theoretical contexts, that is, in the form and matter, while integrity is maintained through the uncompromising adherence of each discipline to the values of their respective canons. Each of these properties—beauty, order, unity and integrity, become inseparable and, while remaining interdependent, form unique manifestations of the dynamism of one spirit.

The Magnanapoli complex thus serves as a prototype to respond to questions about the spiritual vitality of architecture, and to understand architecture’s structural methods as a model for, or conformity with, sound theological principles. It is the ideal form of architecture functioning for theological purposes and of theology providing the language for the structural design of its buildings; thereby it affords a profoundly religious and architectural interface. What can be seen here is how architecture “lives” in a religious body and how its religious message is incarnate in masonry. As such, the Magnanapoli complex is an example of an encounter between the science of theology and the art of architecture, and a theological ideal inspiring an architectural design. This is the embodiment of the Dominican ideal of truth and beauty simultaneously identifying the one subject.

The integral structure, from the potency of its architectural forms to the dynamism of its pedagogical and religious functions, inspires not only those who live within its walls and the students who partake of the instruction afforded by its professors, but even the ordinary passer-by who has the opportunity to see the beauty of its buildings with magnificent panoramas, or walk within its halls and gardens. The grandness of scale, the harmony of layout, the attractiveness of the grounds, and the overall sense of relational order, with an integration of the visible and invisible, the spiritual and material, generate a sense of assimilation into both the natural and supernatural spheres.

Conclusion

Characterized by an emphasis on cohesive unity among variety, the Magnanapoli complex achieves a harmony between form and matter in which they are brought together in spatial relationships and striking sensory effects to contribute in a meaningful way to the overall message of a theological dialogue with contemporary culture. It is a remarkable testimony to how architecture reflects theology and how theology inspires architectural beauty. In the end this complex celebrates the evidence of a tradition and a history of faith that points to the conviction that the human person is a partaker of something grand, engaged, as it were, in a dialogue between creation and the divine, and this dialogue is well seen in an encounter between theology and architecture. The Dominican Complex at Magnanapoli Rome provides that encounter.

Christopher Evan Longhurst, born in New Zealand, received his doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Angelicum University (Rome), with a specialization in theological aesthetics. He writes on the intersections of art and religion and works as a docent at the papal art galleries of the Vatican Museums.

(Endnotes)
1 Summa Theologica, I, 39, 8
2 Ibid, I, 5, 4, ad 1
3 Cf. Umberto Eco, The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas, 1988, pp 45, 234
4 Summa Theologica, I, 12, 4
5 John Paul II, Letter to Artists (1999), 8
6 Ibid.
That churches are still being built in Italy, a nation where regular mass-goers make up less than 30 percent of the population and that possesses a birthrate that would make your Sicilian grandmother weep, is news not unlike Dr. Johnson’s comment about a dog walking on its hind legs: one is surprised it is being done at all, never mind questions about quality. Yet Mario Botta’s 2006 Chiesa del Santo Volto, dedicated to the Holy Face of Christ, is, at first glance, at least interesting, if austerely modernistic.

Built at a cost of 5 million euro in a former industrial neighborhood of Turin with the Frank Herbert-ish name of Spina 3 (literally, “Thorn 3”), it adjoins an office complex for the archdiocesan curia. It is the centerpiece of a larger town center complex repurposing the buildings of an abandoned set of steel mills—a heartening and humane urban gesture—and the church uses a number of recycled elements as well. As a consequence, a disconcertingly industrial feeling pervades the design. Botta has described the plan as reminiscent of a mechanical cog-wheel. The shaft-like central volume of the church is formed by an assemblage of seven towers, surrounded by a lower circle of fourteen further volumes, described as “nail-heads” by the architect. The massing, while vigorous, is relieved by any humanizing ornament to give a sense of scale save a diagrammatic cross, with the only real relief coming from the tops of periscope-like light-wells and the interplay of shadow on blank walls. The church’s campanile, a repurposed factory chimney, is crowned with an eminently legible cross. A filigree coil running round its shaft seems comparatively whimsical until one discovers it to be a spiral of metal thorns. The topsy-turvydom continues upon the discovery that the bells are mounted at the bottom of the chimney and not the top.

The interior, which seats 700, is not without a certain blank majesty, and the immense stone holy water fonts are striking, inset in large stone port-holes at the entrance. The massive altar is white marble, the sanctuary paving a glossy black, and the abstract-looking presider’s chair has an almost Pharaonic gravity to it. Yet, as with other modernistic churches, the architect seems to be shocked into an arid silence in the presence of the divine. This is, in some ways, a start—initum sapientiae timor Domini, and an improvement on the Gentle Jesus of beige wall-to-wall carpeting—but it is hardly enough. Unlike churches of past ages that hid symphonic interiors within a simple shell, the interior is little more than ominous Philip Glass background music in a narrow spectrum of browns and beiges. The only icons appear to be a pixilatedly abstract interpretation of the face of the Turin Shroud inset into the back wall and a slim cross of light hovering far overhead. Both are almost invisible to the casual viewer.
In an English description of the church, the translation speaks of “a conference room tomb” under the main level—presumably a crypt-level parish hall, but the Freudian slip nonetheless accurately describes the entire project. The industrial aesthetic that pervades the project is partially justified by the site’s history. Such tropes, if they are insisted upon, can be worked into sacred buildings without traumatizing the faithful too much. Edward Schulte’s mid-century modern-traditional cathedral at Salina, Kansas, draws on the Hollywood Midwest cliché of grain elevators in its design. It helps that the interior is embellished with genuine iconography and built on an authentic liturgical plan. The result is, nonetheless, not without problems. While something like this can be done, it ought not to be done often. The Great Plains are more than grain elevators, and presumably the good Christians of Thorn 3 are more than their Bogaro steel mills. Do people who live in an industrial park need to be so thoroughly reminded of the fact?

Such an endless litany of cogwheels, smokestacks, and bare walls suggests a retrograde nostalgia for the heroic worker. Coming from a culture that spends its time behind a computer screen, the nostalgia is as sentimentalized as a china shepherdess, and less psychologically healthy. It is no wonder that the Italian factory-workers who scraped and saved their pennies to pay for the gaudy churches of Chicago did not build sanctuaries that looked like places that churned out shoes, beef, or steel. While often caricatures of the Old Country, they were cartoons of something good, true, and beautiful. Here, we have strayed into a bleak cityscape unworthy of de Chirico at his most cryptic.

Everywhere one turns there appears a blank wall or a corner sharp enough to draw blood. It is a church dedicated to Christ in the tomb, but there must be room for Easter. It is a curiously bland evocation of Good Friday, lacking the splattery, operatic grandeur of Sicilian holy week or the black baroque gloom of the home of the genuine Holy Face, Guarini’s Holy Shroud Chapel, equal parts passion-flower and passion-nail.

None of that here: God is dead, move along, don’t make a scene. It is all very tasteful. I am reminded, on reflection, of a recent essay by Dante scholar Anthony Esolen, who encapsulated everything wrong with the peculiarly epicene culture of post-modernity with the acerbic title, “When Drab is a Favorite Color.” This is the Passion for people for whom “oatmeal” and “eggshell” are favorite colors, or even colors at all. But Christ’s death was horrendously tacky. Nature cries out at the death of her Creator: the sun turns black, the moon turns to blood, earthquakes shake the world, and old men rise from their graves.

Matthew Alderman is an architect who lives and works in Concord, MA.
His Holiness Benedict XVI gave the following address at the inauguration of the exhibition “Splendor of Truth, the Beauty of Love,” a tribute of artists to the Holy Father on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of his priestly ordination. The address was given at the Paul VI Audience Hall in the Vatican on July 4, 2011.

Your Eminences, Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood, Dear Friends,

It is a great joy for me to meet you and to receive your creative and multiform tribute on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. I am sincerely grateful for your closeness on this anniversary, which is so significant and important to me. During the Eucharistic Celebration of 29 June, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, I thanked the Lord for the gift of my priestly vocation. Today, I thank you for the friendship and kindness which you have shown me. I cordially greet Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture who, together with his colleagues, has organized this unique artistic exhibition and I thank him for his courteous words addressed to me. I also extend my greeting to everyone present, especially you, dear artists, who have accepted the invitation to present one of your creations in this Exhibition.

Our meeting today, at which I have the joy and the curiosity to admire your works, is meant as a new step in which a journey of friendship and dialogue that began on 21 November, 2009 in the Sistine Chapel; an event which I still hold dear in my heart. The Church and artists once again encounter each other, to speak together and sustain a conversation which should and must become ever more intense and articulate, so that it also may offer to culture, or rather the cultures of our times, an eloquent example of fruitful and effective dialogue, aimed at making this, our world, more human and more beautiful. Today, you present me with the fruit of your creativity, of your reflection, of your talent, expressions of the various artistic environments which you represent: painting, sculpture, architecture, goldsmithery, cinema, music, literature and poetry. Before I admire them together with you, allow me to stop for a moment and reflect on the evocative title of this Exhibition: “Lo splendore della verità, la bellezza della carità” (“The Splendor of Truth, the Beauty of Love”). Precisely in the homily of the Mass pro eligendo Pontifice, I commented on the beautiful expression of St Paul in the Letter to the Ephesians, “veritatem facientes in caritate” (4:15), and I said that to “make truth in love” was a fundamental formula for Christian existence. I added, “Truth and love coincide in Christ. To the extent that we draw close to Christ, in our own
lives too, truth and love are blended. Love without truth would be blind; truth without love would be like “a clanging cymbal” (I Cor 13:1). It is precisely from union, I would like to say from the symphony of perfect harmony between truth and love that an authentic beauty emanates, capable of eliciting admiration, wonder and true joy in human hearts. The world in which we live needs the truth to shine brightly and not to be obscured by lies or banality; it needs love that enfames and that is not overwhelmed by pride and egotism. We need the beauty of truth and love to strike us in the intimacy of our hearts and make us more human.

Dear friends, I wish to renew to you and all artists a friendly and passionate appeal: do not ever separate artistic creativity from truth and from love, do not ever search for beauty far from truth and love, but with the richness of your genius, of your creative leanings, be always, courageously, seekers of the truth and witnesses to love; let truth shine brightly in your works and make their beauty elicit in the gaze and in the hearts of those who admire them, the desire and need to make their existence beautiful and true, every existence, enriching it with that treasure which is never lacking, which makes life a work of art and every man an extraordinary artist: charity, love. May the Holy Spirit, author of every beauty that is in the world, always illuminate you and guide you towards the final and lasting Beauty, that which warms our minds and our hearts and for which we wait, one day, to be able to contemplate in all its splendor. Once again, thank you for your friendship, for your presence here and for bringing a ray of this Beauty, which is God, to the world. Truly from my heart, I impart to all of you and to your loved ones and to the entire world of art, my Apostolic Blessing.
Worship space acoustics is a branch of architectural acoustics which deals with the audible effects imparted to sounds produced within architectural spaces. These effects—the most familiar being reverberation and echo—are brought about by the size, shape, and finish materials of enclosed spaces and are physical consequences of these architectural elements. These audible phenomena have, therefore, existed for as long as we have had buildings.

Architectural acoustics as an engineering discipline is, by comparison, a relatively new field, emerging in the early twentieth century when Wallace Clement Sabine, a Harvard physics professor, was called upon to correct speech intelligibility problems in a lecture hall in the Fogg Museum on Harvard’s campus. Considered the father of architectural acoustics, Sabine was the first to develop a scientific basis to quantify and predict acoustical characteristics; because of this he was hired as the acoustical consultant for Boston’s Symphony Hall, the first concert hall designed using quantitative acoustics. Given these historical beginnings and the importance of sound quality in music performance halls, architectural acoustics has focused primarily on concert halls, where most of the research and scientific design developments have occurred.

In concert halls, acoustics is usually the top priority, and the best concert halls are often cited to evoke images of acoustical excellence, such as Carnegie Hall. Although acoustics is also a major priority in worship spaces, it is often compromised by liturgical and architectural imperatives, budgets, and aesthetics.

It is significant that the authors of Worship Space Acoustics state, on the first page, a key motivating factor: “Although concert halls have been a primary subject of room-acoustics research, worship spaces are used more frequently and by more people, thus calling for a book of this nature.”

The authors possess exceptional levels of education, experience, and interdisciplinary perspectives in acoustics, architecture, engineering, music, and liturgy. Their past and present endeavors have extraordinary breadth and diversity; beyond their strong technical credentials, one author is a priest, another a rabbinical student. This interdisciplinary foundation is significant because in practice, worship space acoustics involves a multiplicity of perspectives and priorities. Most, perhaps all, of these priorities are brought to the table in this book.

The introduction lists prospective readers as “architects and students of architectural acoustics, building consultants, contractors and suppliers, administrators, clergy, organists and organ builders, students and faculty of religious educational institutions, and laypersons with interests in religion and architecture.” The authors are comfortable with terminology from all these areas. (Given the roots of architectural acoustics in the concert arena, the use of “stage” and “audience” is almost unavoidable, but the authors generally put such terms in proper context and perspective.)

The book is divided into two parts. Part I is a textbook-like survey of the basic elements of architectural acoustics:

1. Fundamentals: Nature of Sound
2. Hearing
3. Room Acoustics Fundamentals
4. Sound-Absorbing Materials
5. Metrics for Room Acoustics
6. Simulation and Prediction
7. Planning for Good Room Acoustics
8. Quiet
9. Sound Isolation and Other Noise Issues
10. Sound Systems for Clarity and Reverberation

Photos and sketches of churches and synagogues illustrate particular subjects, clearly relating these standard acoustical topics to worship spaces.

In a significant departure from other books on acoustics, Part II includes three separate chapters on Jewish synagogues, Christian churches, and Muslim mosques. In addition to this ecumenical perspective, the authors’ interdisciplinary backgrounds allow them to write knowledgeably about music (citing specific compositions and styles), church documents on liturgy, and a broad range of worship styles such as “liturgical,” “evangelical,” “blended,” etc. This suggests that “optimal” acoustics is not strictly a matter of objective criteria, but rather...
highly dependent on specific styles of worship and the nature of the sound sources involved. For speech, this means making allowances for trained orators and lay readers; for music, it includes everything from a cappella chant to amplified instrumental and vocal ensembles.

Graphs, tables, and equations supplement and support the principles discussed, together with useful references ranging from acoustics textbooks and engineering journals to publications of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. I was fortunate to contribute to the book as well by providing photos, commentary, and an editorial review of drafts for this publication. The authors’ personal experience and interests in the worship spaces they mention make the notes particularly intriguing: the three-and-a-half-page endnote S.15 (“S” for synagogue) about Hearth Israel, the New York City home of North America’s oldest Jewish congregation, offers an invitation to attend a service there, along with explanations of elements of Jewish services likely to be unknown or unfamiliar to visitors of other faith traditions.

The authors’ goal in writing for such a broad range of readers is ambitious. Most readers of Sacred Architecture should find the book a useful reference. The availability of downloadable supplements, errata, and updates from the publisher will keep the book’s material fresh and current, and offer more detailed coverage of areas not included in the original book. Less than a year after its publication date, there are seven downloads (approximately 4MB) including an errata sheet and new topics such as “Choosing an Organ,” a detailed summary of HVAC noise calculations, and case studies. Worship Space Acoustics is a useful resource and should be an ever-renewing source of information.

A native of Rochester, NY, Dennis Fleisher has served as an acoustics consultant and a designer of spaces for worship, music performance, and education since 1981. The majority of his work has been in liturgical spaces including over 250 churches and chapels and 30 cathedrals. Dennis@musonics.org

Franz Mayer of Munich
Stained Glass, Architectural Art Glass and Mosaic

Established 1847
Appointed 1882
„Royal Bavarian Art Est.“

Mayer of Munich
Seidlstrasse 25
80335 Munich, Germany
Phone: 1-888-661 1694
www.mayer-of-munich.com

Reviewed by Nikolaos D. Karydis

The preservation in Ravenna of more than twelve churches from the fifth or sixth century offers a rare opportunity to study the history of a major urban center of the Late Antique period. The famous early Christian and Byzantine churches of this city, most of them restored drastically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, display a wide variety of sophisticated architectural forms, alongside countless examples of mosaic decoration, fresco, and polychromous marble revetment. This precious heritage, correctly interpreted with the help of written records and inscriptions, has the potential to shed light on the complex artistic and cultural developments that marked the transition from the last centuries of Antiquity to the Middle Ages. This subject has been repeatedly explored in the past. The standard works of F. W. Deichmann, as well as numerous scholarly publications investigate individual monuments and illuminate particular aspects of the history of Late Antique Ravenna. The recent book by Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis constitutes the latest contribution to this field. Skillfully interweaving the evidence of written testimonies with the interpretation of architectural forms, frescoes, and mosaics, this publication seeks to recount, for the first time in English, the history of Ravenna from the Roman times to the end of the Byzantine era.

This survey organizes this vast subject chronologically in five main chapters. It starts with an attempt to visualize the city during the Roman period, when it gradually became a major military and naval base. Although the evidence is limited, the author assembles all the information available to present a sketchy overview of the Roman city. Chapter Three outlines the conditions in which early fifth-century Ravenna—occupying a site considered defensible, well connected to Constantinople, easily provisioned, and lacking a strong pagan establishment—became the capital of the Western Roman Empire. The meticulous surveys of monuments such as Santa Croce and the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia form the core of this section. These surveys combine the careful analysis of architectural forms and structures with the description and interpretation of the surviving mosaics.

The following two chapters treat one of the most interesting phases in Ravenna’s history, the period from AD 489 to 540, during which the city was the capital of the Ostrogothic kingdom. The survival of a series of churches securely known to have been used by the Ostrogoths, who were Arians, makes Ravenna the best site to study Arian sacred art and architecture. The author carefully surveys major churches such as Sant’Apollinare Nuovo, but also draws attention to lesser known monuments such as the Capella Archivesco- vile, describing them thoroughly and reviewing them within their broad cultural framework. Deliyannis also pays particular attention to the iconography of this period and its symbolism, refers to the theories concerning Arian and Orthodox stylistic concepts, but avoids making a clear-cut distinction between the two.

Chapter Six is dedicated to early Byzantine Ravenna, tracing the history of the city from the Byzantine reconquest to the end of the sixth century. This section includes surveys of the churches of San Vitale and Sant’Apollinare in Classe. As usual, the reader is impressed by the multifaceted nature of the approach. Based on the careful consideration of all available sources, the author pays equal attention to architectural forms, structures, and iconography. The book ends with a short chapter on the history of the city as capital of the Byzantine Exarchate (AD 600 – 850). This refers to a period whose cultural, political, and economic establishments are radically different from the ones of Late Antiquity. Still, the author explains how essential parts of the Late Antique city kept being maintained, admired, and recorded throughout the Middle Ages. It is partly in this period of maintenance that the keys to the survival of Ravenna’s Late Antique monumental fabric are to be found.

It is difficult to do justice to the high quality and wide scope of this book. Its approach to the history of early Christian and Byzantine Ravenna stimulates reflection by combining evidence from buildings and archaeological records with information from written testimonies. Embodying all the latest research, the book allows typically inaccessible information to be used and understood. On the other hand, the reader may register a few limitations. For instance, more numerous and varied illustrations (such as graphic reconstructions and three dimensional drawings) would help to capture the most complex and opaque aspects of Ravenna’s architecture and urban forms. More importantly, the fact that almost all the surviving monuments are churches makes for a treatment that tends to emphasize the study of ecclesiastical art and architecture. Still, these points do not detract from the great merit of this work once its scope and limits are realized. The wealth of information in this book organized into a coherent picture makes it an invaluable resource for all students of Ravenna’s history, art, and architecture.

Nikolaos Karydis studied architecture at the National Technical University of Athens and received his Ph.D in the Conservation of Historic Buildings at the University of Bath. His next book on Early Byzantine Architecture will be published by the British Archeological Reports.
This book is self-described as a “pocket primer for decoding the structure and purpose of ecclesiastical buildings.” One would expect this to be a rather daunting task for any author to tackle, as buildings of this typology are perhaps the most symbolically infused, stylistically diverse, and programatically varied structures of the western tradition. Yet this book—the second in a series of architectural ‘crash course’ pocket guides released under the premier architectural publishing imprint Rizzoli New York—manages to address the issues in question with economy and precision.

As with any book, one must understand the purpose of the material and the author’s target audience. Those seeking a didactic discourse on the finer points of ecclesiastical theology may well be disappointed, as this book is far removed from the barrage of academic inquiries that spurred the recent renewal in liturgical studies. Indeed, this book intentionally avoids the more complex, multifaceted and deep-seated concerns that directed the evolution of ecclesiastical design through history. Instead, the selected material is intended to be a strictly visual guide, a reduction of a genre—with all its complex forms and myriad components—into a handy tome made accessible to those who either lack a grounding in the subject matter or who wish to synthesize their already nebulous knowledge of the material through the author’s bullet-point exactitude.

And so this book is highly effective for its intended purpose: that is, as a field guide, heavily illustrated with short paragraph entries on a variety of subjects organized into a recognizable progression from encompassing concepts to constituent components. Such parameters, however, do not mean the material is superficial or of no interest to professionals. While most of the author’s selections are well within the realm of ordinary architectural discourse, even longtime practitioners will be tasked with obscure entries on topics ranging from the ‘rundbogenstil’ and ‘misericord’ to ‘fictive shingles’ and ‘billet moldings.’ Admittedly, some of the author’s terminology is of his own invention, and hardly any topic is addressed comprehensively. After all, one could hardly expect the author to distill sweeping topics with much debated boundaries—topics like ‘Neoclassical Architecture’ or ‘Centralized Plans’—into a two-page entry containing roughly six paragraphs and five illustrations, without consciously embracing the required reduction in the subject matter’s complexity. Yet nothing in recent years comes close to synthesizing the full breadth of ecclesiastical architecture so effectively.

To achieve his objective the author follows a logical progression from large themes to specific examples. Organized into clear categories, the author begins with thematic concepts pertaining to building type, transitioning into church type and style before moving into an analysis of building materials and a formalist consideration of floor plans. The book is then subdivided into compositional categories, beginning with spatial considerations pertaining to the nave, apses, sanctuaries, choirs, and stalls. Specifically structural components next enter into consideration, providing a survey of vaulting and buttresses, domes and cupolas, and facades and portals. The guide ultimately concludes with a variety of headings pertaining to furnishings, accompanying structures, decorations, and iconography. Each of these categories is then subdivided into whatever topics the author feels are worthy of deeper illumination, with a handful of examples provided to flush out the subject matter in each case. Each heading is described through a two-page introduction, with each specific subcategory assigned its own two-page section. The result is a straightforward and intuitive organization of material easily navigated by virtually anyone. As the written material is fully illustrated, this guide is especially accessible to younger readers and perhaps most appropriate for those developing a nascent interest in ecclesiastical design and theology.

Those seeking a book for themselves, a friend, or a loved one—especially those with limited knowledge of the subject—will find this to be an effective and charming introduction that would do well to find itself in a traveler’s luggage, particularly when en route to Europe.

A chimera is different than a gargoyle in that it does not channel water.
Architectural historians might easily overlook the Emerald Isle as a source of classical innovation, especially during a century scourged by the Great Potato Famine and mass emigration. Instead, author Brendan Grimes unearths one of Ireland’s most accomplished church architects and his built work in this new book published by the Irish Academic Press. The nineteenth-century architect Patrick Byrne lived during a golden age of growth for Catholicism in Ireland and designed eighteen large churches.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Catholic civil rights in Ireland were almost fully restored and the Roman church was permitted a more public presence by Protestant legislators. After the Potato Famine of 1846, Ireland’s economy began to surge and both public and private funds flowed toward new church building campaigns. Church attendance grew rapidly in the second half of the century, from 40 percent of Catholics attending Mass in 1840 to 90 percent by 1900. The faithful also began to expect more beautiful houses of worship, calling forth the sentiment: “Let all our churches be so constructed, that no Catholic may pass them without an act of reverence, and no Protestant without a look of admiration.”1 Architect Patrick Byrne of Dublin designed an array of new church buildings in and around Dublin during this flowering of the Faith.

Patrick Byrne studied at the Dublin Society’s School of Architectural Drawing and was educated by two prominent Neo-Classicists, James Gandon (architect of the Customs House and Four Courts) and Henry Aaron Baker. Byrne worked for Baker and Francis Johnston before beginning his own architecture firm. He was working for the Wide Street Commissioners of the City of Dublin as an architect, when in 1835 he received his first ecclesiastical commission for Saint Paul Church, in Arran Quay, Dublin. After this successful design, Byrne became the pre-eminent architect of Catholic churches in Ireland for the next twenty-six years.

Byrne’s designs were in imitation of great classical churches and monuments of Antiquity and the Renaissance. For example, the ornamented tower at Saint Paul’s in Dublin is evocative of the Athenian Monument to Lysicrates, while the thermal windows and barrel-vaulted nave at Saint Auden’s are reminiscent of the churches of Rome. Byrne also incorporated the iconographic tradition of Ireland into his churches. For example, at Rathgar in Dublin, he provided three niches above the main altar for the patron saints of Ireland: St. Brigid, St. Patrick, and St. Columba.

Byrne succeeded in designing a few Gothic churches around Dublin after Augustus Welby Pugin’s The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture was published in 1841. Byrne agreed with Pugin on the importance of the tower as a beacon to the faithful and the use of natural materials, yet designed churches in both classical and Gothic forms.

One of the greatest stories about Patrick Byrne is his collaboration with the Reverend William Meagher of Our Lady of Refuge in Rathmines, Dublin. Meagher was a generous priest-patron with an acute enthusiasm for a more Roman architecture, in opposition to the “mania” for Gothic architecture of the time. Replacing a church only eighteen years old, the new church of Our Lady of Refuge was a Greek cross plan with Corinthian pilasters and a dome over the crossing. The patron, Rev. Meagher, believed that beautiful architecture can bring heaven to earth when he wrote to his parishioners: “Think, dearest friends, whether it will not be an additional joy to look down from amidst the beatitudes of eternity upon this paradise restored, through God’s ineffable bounty, by our hands.”2

The book by Grimes tells the story of a talented architect and the wider narrative of an optimistic age of the Irish Church. The beauty of Byrne’s architecture reflects the enthusiasm and generosity of the faithful in an extraordinary age of church-building on the Emerald Isle. Additionally, the book’s appendices include a list of the eighteen principal churches designed by Byrne, along with their location; comparative floor plans of sixteen of Byrne’s churches; and a list of titles from Byrne’s architectural library which were sold at auction after his death.

Thomas D. Stroka received his Master of Architecture degree from the University of Notre Dame and is an architectural designer in Indiana.

1 Edward McPartland, Public Works of Architecture, 223
2 Grimes 114

Reviewed by Thomas D. Stroka


**Our Lady of Refuge, Rathmines, Dublin**

Our Lady of Refuge in Rathmines, Dublin, with an acute enthusiasm for a more Roman architecture, in opposition to the “mania” for Gothic architecture of the time. Replacing a church only eighteen years old, the new church of Our Lady of Refuge was a Greek cross plan with Corinthian pilasters and a dome over the crossing. The patron, Rev. Meagher, believed that beautiful architecture can bring heaven to earth when he wrote to his parishioners: “Think, dearest friends, whether it will not be an additional joy to look down from amidst the beatitudes of eternity upon this paradise restored, through God’s ineffable bounty, by our hands.”

The book by Grimes tells the story of a talented architect and the wider narrative of an optimistic age of the Irish Church. The beauty of Byrne’s architecture reflects the enthusiasm and generosity of the faithful in an extraordinary age of church-building on the Emerald Isle. Additionally, the book’s appendices include a list of the eighteen principal churches designed by Byrne, along with their location; comparative floor plans of sixteen of Byrne’s churches; and a list of titles from Byrne’s architectural library which were sold at auction after his death.

Thomas D. Stroka received his Master of Architecture degree from the University of Notre Dame and is an architectural designer in Indiana.

1 Edward McPartland, Public Works of Architecture, 223
2 Grimes 114

---

**The interior of Our Lady of Refuge**
Call for Papers

Logos seeks a readership that extends beyond the academy and is especially interested in receiving submissions in art, photography, architecture and music. Articles should demonstrate a clear exploration of themes related to the intersection of these subjects and Catholic thought and culture.
This is a faithful reproduction of W.F. Pocock’s book of 1819 and is a major landmark in the publication of architectural facsimiles. It is probably the most important Georgian pattern book not previously reprinted and is of fundamental importance in understanding the dynamic story of church and chapel design in the period after Waterloo. It is the only book produced on this subject before 1836.

The 44 model designs were enthusiastically copied, especially by Nonconformists, and the letterpress provided practical suggestions for those contemplating building.

It also had enormous influence in North America where countless buildings can be traced back to Pocock’s manual—a compelling chapter in the story of transatlantic architectural history.

Olsen demonstrates that religion can and should play a role in restoring a cultural openness to transcendence. He considers such questions as how we should understand God’s presence in the universe, what form religion should take in the public square, what role liturgy plays in orienting us toward God in the universe, and what it means for religion to be in but not of the world.

Olsen examines proposals for recovering an adequate sense of transcendence for the future. These range from an appreciation of certain forms of contemporary art and music specifically concerned with transcendence, to discussion of the forms of Christian life and worship most likely to prosper in and shape the modern world. He proposes a contemporary way of expressing the ideas that God is to be found in all things and that all is to be done for the glory of God.

Michael Camille recounts and reinterprets Eugene Viollet-le-Duc’s restoration of Notre Dame from 1843-64, when the gargoyles were designed, sculpted by Victor Pyanet, and installed. Camille argues that these gargoyles symbolize an imagined past, and explores their place in the twentieth century imagination. He covers interpretations of gargoyles by everyone from Winslow Homer to the Walt Disney Company. The book contains black and white illustrations of the carved gargoyles themselves but little of the rest of Notre Dame.

The kings of Aksum formally became Christian during the second quarter of the fourth century, making Ethiopia the second country in the world (after Armenia) to officially adopt the new faith. This book is the first to integrate historical, archaeological, and art history evidence to provide a comprehensive account of Ethiopian Christian civilization and its churches—both built and rock-hewn—from the Aksumite period to the thirteenth century.

David W. Phillipson situates the churches within the development of Ethiopian society, illuminating the exceptional continuity of the country’s Christian civilization. He offers the most detailed treatment of the rock-hewn churches at Lalibela World Heritage Site ever published.

Comprising forty-two selections from primary source materials, the collection illustrates the religious cycles, rituals and experiences that gave meaning to medieval Christian individuals and communities. This volume assembles sources reflecting different genres, regions, and styles, including prayer books, chronicles, diaries, liturgical books, sermons, hagiography, and handbooks for the laity and clergy. The texts explore such life-cycle events as birth, confirmation, marriage sickness, death, and burial. The texts also document religious practices related to themes of work, parish life, and devotions. The book gives students and general readers the necessary background for an appreciation of the creativity and multiplicity of medieval Christian religious culture.


The task of building a new worship space for a community is both overwhelming and sacred. It is a time of change that presents the opportunity for enrichment and catechesis. Using his experience of working with a steering committee to build a new church, Father James Healy in this volume takes a daunting task and makes it manageable. He provides ideas for involving the parish community in decision making and for ensuring that the process of building a new church is a prayerful and sacred time. The practical appendices are available online only, and are downloadable free at www.litpress.org/new_church.


This book showcases thirteen of the historic churches of New Orleans, revealing scenic treasures that lie beyond the well-worn tourist paths. The earliest of the thirteen, St. Louis Cathedral, traces its origin to 1727. The most recent, Immaculate Conception, was built in 1930 but modeled after its mid-nineteenth century predecessor. The author, Charles Nolan, offers commentary about each edifice, its congregation, and the rich variety of art forms assembled over the years: architecture, stained glass, statuary, mosaics, paintings, and more.

Franz Mayer of Munich and F.X. Zettler (est. 1847 & 1870 resp.) Historic List of Stained Glass Windows and Mosaics in Cathedrals and Churches USA. 2010. 76 pp. (info@mayer-of-munich.com)

The lists of windows and mosaics by Franz Mayer of Munich and affiliated stained glass studio F.X. Zettler have been assembled here in this booklet printed by Mayer’sche Hofkunstanstalt GmbH. The American churches in which the windows are located are organized by state and city. Stained glass windows supplied before 1888 are not included, and some of the names of the churches may have changed or they may no longer exist. Additional research work can be offered through archivist Wilfried Jaekel, jaekel@mayer-of-munich.com.


The colonnaded porch on the second story of the Apostolic Palace is one of Raphael’s last and greatest achievements. The decoration of its thirteen vaults, between 1517-19, each contain four frescoes of scenes from the Bible, from the Creation to the Last Supper. The gallery is also decorated with stucco bas-reliefs, trompe-l’œil festoons of fruit and flowers, and frescoed grotesques. It contains two hundred illustrations, mostly in full color.
Christian churches erected in Mexico during the early colonial era represented the triumph of European conquest and religious domination. Or did they? Building on recent research that questions the “cultural” conquest of Mesoamerica, Eleanor Wake shows that colonial Mexican churches also reflected the beliefs of the indigenous communities that built them.

European authorities failed to recognize that the meaning of the edifices they so admired was being challenged: pre-Columbian iconography integrated into Christian imagery, altars oriented toward indigenous sacred landmarks, and carefully recycled masonry. In Framing the Sacred, Wake examines how the art and architecture of Mexico’s religious structures reveals the indigenous people’s own decisions regarding the conversion program and their accommodation of the Christian message.

As Wake shows, native peoples selected aspects of the invading culture to secure their own culture’s survival. In focusing on anomalies present in indigenous art and their relationship to orthodox Christian iconography, she draws on a wide geographical sampling across various forms of Indian artistic expression, including religious sculpture and painting, innovative architectural detail, cartography, and devotional poetry. She also offers a detailed analysis of documented native ritual practices that—she argues—assist in the interpretation of the imagery.

With more than 200 illustrations, including 24 in color, Framing the Sacred is the most extensive study to date of the indigenous aspects of these churches and fosters a more complete understanding of Christianity’s influence on Mexican peoples.

Christian visual art and culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the Holy Land have received little scholarly attention, if at all. This book studies, analyzes, and presents major artistic creations of diverse Christian communities during this period. Furthermore, it also offers an extensive corpus of visual images never photographed and published previously. The book is devoted to aspects of the visual art of the Greek-Orthodox and Armenian churches of Jerusalem, and to the—mainly twentieth century—artistic endeavors of the Latin Church. Iconographic investigations and analysis of meanings embodied in the Greek and Armenian paintings and the architecture and painting cycles of the Latin Visitation Church in Ain Karim and the Latin Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth attempt to decipher this art as an expression of the attitudes and intentions of the diverse Christian communities of the Holy Land.

This 12 x 18 book is a coffee table book that will break your coffee table. Spirituality, the sacred and the profane, liturgy and space have interacted for more than 1500 years. Portals and capitols, altars and altarpieces, murals and stained glass, tabernacles and baptismal fonts, rood screens and pulpits, choirs and confessionals, as well as books and liturgical accoutrements such as chalices and patens, monstrances and crosses, vestments and paraments are part of this tradition.

Ars Sacra presents the development and interaction of these various elements from the early third century to the present day—from the Early Christian murals in the catacombs to Gerhard Richter’s church windows in Cologne Cathedral. This twenty-five pound book is the largest and most impressive collection of photos of churches and sacred elements in recent history.
“In light of the present Pontiff’s emphasis on beauty, the return to tradition, and the experience of transcendence, this journal encourages me, feeds me and gives me excellent photographs to contemplate. I enthusiastically support its mission and hope you will as well.”

- Rev. Giles R. Dimock, OP
Prior, Dominican House of Studies

Donations of $35 or more to Sacred Architecture will receive the new book by Dr. Denis R. McNamara, How to Read Churches: A Crash Course in Ecclesiastical Architecture.

Visit www.sacredarchitecture.org or fill out the enclosed card to subscribe or make a donation.

For more information, telephone (574) 232-1783, fax (574) 232-1792 or e-mail editor@sacredarchitecture.org.
St. John Seminary Chapel Restoration  
*Brighton, MA*

It was Cardinal William O’Connell, who commissioned the Roman artist Gonippo Raggi to decorate the interior of the chapel in 1908.

Rohn Design and Associates is now privileged to restore the original colors and forms which have, through time and previous restorations, lost much of their original brilliance and detail.