What is the architectural corollary of Saint Francis of Assisi’s “holy poverty”? Is it the shantytowns of the third world or the stylish minimalism of first-world condominiums? When we build churches, schools, and soup kitchens, should they be cheap or at least look cheap? Not if the Franciscans of the past built them. In fact, history teaches how we should build through the example of the great philanthropists, religious orders, bishops, and saints. From the geometrical harmony of the Servites’ Foundling Hospital in Florence to Saint John Bosco’s house for boys in Torino, there is a type of Catholic building that is built to last with a sense of beauty. Some would question why we should spend great sums of money on architecture, when what the poor really need are buildings that meet their functional needs. And yet, following Mother Theresa and other great saints, to serve the poor means serving not only their material needs but their spiritual needs as well. Good architecture does both: it provides buildings and rooms for people to live in, study in, and work in while doing it in a way that can inspire.

Do the poor need beauty? Yes, maybe even more than other people do. The poor need beauty to ennoble them, to raise them up out of the morass of this fallen world. For many, their existing surroundings may not inspire them, so beautiful, durable architecture can have a salutary effect. We see the desire for beauty and tradition expressed in the parishes and schools built by poor immigrants in previous centuries. Their own houses may have been simple, but their communal home sought to be a work of art, full of iconography and richness. It is true that the rich and the middle class can afford many distractions: artwork, books, museums, travel, and entertainment where they oftentimes come in contact with beauty, serenity, and even the divine. Yet for those less well-off, where do they find the richness of culture and the majesty of nature but in the dome of a cathedral or the stained glass of a church?

Some years ago, my students designed and built a house for Habitat for Humanity. One of the leaders of the organization visited the house and was shocked to see brickwork below the front porch (matching the older houses in the neighborhood). “You can’t make this house nicer than the other Habitat homes—you will make the other owners jealous.” In his view, the poor deserved only the lowest common denominator. The house was meant not so much to beautify or dignify the occupants but only to provide for their material needs. In a small way I would like to think these students were unwittingly imitating Dorothy Day, who once gave a diamond ring to a bag lady. Upon being questioned by the staff on whether it would have been better to sell the ring and use the money for the poor, she said, “Do you suppose that God created diamonds only for the rich?”

Do the poor need a different or lesser architecture than other Americans? They too can feel the solidity of brickwork, the human scale of baseboard and cornice, and the quality of natural materials. Likewise, they too are affected by mechanistic facades and oppressive interiors that do not elevate the spirit. When we welcome them to the homeless shelter, the school, the soup kitchen, the medical clinic, the pregnancy center, or the unwed mothers’ home, we welcome them to our house. Nothing less than the best is acceptable. We roll out the red carpet for them, since we believe “as you did it to the least of My brethren, you did it to Me.”

Duncan Stroik
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An interior renovation of Saint Paul the First Hermit Cathedral in San Pablo City in the Philippines included a new 16½-foot-wide altar, new retablo, new choir loft, repairs to the dome, and raising and repainting the ceiling. Much of the work was carried out by local craftsmen, including hammered-silver panels on the front and back of the altar depicting a pelican and decorative patterns, and the carved-marble lions flanking the cathedral.

The stained-glass windows in the apse of Holy Name Cathedral in Mumbai were removed during World War II for safekeeping, and reinstalled afterwards in the historic 1905 cathedral.

The Archdiocese of Bombay, India, held a seminar last September on the beauty of stained-glass windows in local parishes, entitled “Windows of Faith.” The day-long seminar featured a talk by Swati Chandgadkar, a renowned restorer of stained glass, and is part of a larger effort in the archdiocese with several aims: to educate priests and lay people in the importance of the Church’s role as patron of the arts, to inspire a revival of beautiful Christian art in India, and to halt the trend of renovating historic churches without preserving the heritage of their original structure and works of art.

The Benedict XVI Institute for Sacred Music and Divine Worship has recently been established by Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone at Saint Patrick’s University and Seminary in Menlo Park, California, in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Fr. Samuel Weber, O.S.B., a renowned chant expert, will help run the institute, whose goal is to support pastors in their efforts to form lay people for liturgical ministries, including music directors, parish musicians, acolytes, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

Two architecture firms have been chosen to collaborate on the renovation of the former Crystal Cathedral into a Catholic cathedral for the Diocese of Orange in California. Johnson Fain and Rios Clementi Hale Studios, both of Los Angeles, “see this important work as more than a renovation project, but as a reflection of God and His people on earth,” stated Bishop Kevin Vann while announcing their selection. In 2012 the Orange County diocese launched a diocesan-wide fundraising campaign with a $100 million goal, of which $53 million will go toward the cathedral renovation. Cindy Bobruk, executive director of the Orange Catholic Foundation, reports that support for the campaign has been high, especially among clergy: the bishop and over one hundred priests have given combined gifts totaling over $700,000. When the new altar is dedicated, likely in 2015 or 2016, it will be “given and named in honor of all our priests in our diocese,” Bobruk said.

A new Serbian Orthodox cathedral was completed in Podgorica, Montenegro, after twenty years of construction. The 14,000 sq. ft. Cathedral of the Resurrection was designed by Dr. Predrag Ristic, an Orthodox architect who has designed almost one hundred churches in his career. The cathedral has seven rooftop crosses and seventeen bells, one of which weighs eleven tons and is the largest of its kind in the Balkans.

The Hagia Sophia in Istanbul could be converted back into a mosque in the near future if new legislation introduced by officials in Turkey is approved. Built in the sixth century by the emperor Justinian, the grand, domed structure was an Orthodox cathedral until 1453, when the city fell to the Ottoman Empire and the building was converted into a mosque, which it remained until 1931, when it became a museum under the secularist government. Much restoration work on the Christian iconography of the former cathedral has been carried out since then, which preservationists fear would be lost if it reopens as a mosque.

The Magnificat Day of Faith on November 4, 2013, was the first major Catholic event held in Christ Cathedral in the Diocese of Orange, California.

The Deesis mosaic in the Hagia Sophia dates from around the year 1260. It was uncovered from a plaster coating and restored in the late 1930s.
October 2013 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Patrons of the Arts, an international community of benefactors to the Vatican Museums. The Patrons of the Arts donate to finance major undertakings (e.g., the restoration of the Pauline and Nicolene Chapels, the fifteenth-century papal apartments of Pope Alexander IV, and the “Stories of the Life of Christ and Moses” in the Sistine Chapel), in addition to such projects as the careful examination and research of individual works from the papal collection.

Restoration of the Hall of the Mysteries of Faith in the Borgia Apartments was one of the many projects funded by the Vatican Museums’ Patrons of the Arts since their founding thirty years ago.

Receiving members of the Patrons of the Arts in audience during the celebration of the organization’s thirtieth anniversary, Pope Francis commented on the importance of art in the Church, stating, “in every age the Church has called upon the arts to give expression to the beauty of her faith and to proclaim the Gospel message of the grandeur of God’s creation, the dignity of human beings made in His image and likeness, and the power of Christ’s death and resurrection to bring redemption and rebirth to a world touched by the tragedy of sin and death. The Vatican Museums, with their unique and rich history, make it possible for countless pilgrims and visitors to Rome to encounter this message through works of art which bear witness to the spiritual aspirations of humanity, the sublime mysteries of the Christian faith, and the quest of that supreme beauty which has its source and fulfillment in God.”

The Church of Saint John Cantius in Chicago held a dedication ceremony and inaugural sacred music concert last October when the installation of a refurbished organ was complete. The twenty-three-ton Casavant organ had previously been located in the now-shuttered Saint James United Methodist Church in Chicago. The $2 million restoration included strengthening the choir loft at Saint John Cantius to support the organ, which replaced the three-ton original organ of the church. The restoration was a joint project between Casavant Frères and Jeff Weiler of J.L. Weiler, Inc.

The city of Washington, D.C., ruled to allow the I.M. Pei Brutalist-style Third Church of Christ Scientist, located downtown, to be demolished at the request of the congregation, reversing an earlier ruling that had placed the building under protection for reasons of historic preservation. A permit to construct a nine-story office building in its place was issued in February. The new, 140,000 sq. ft. building will consist of offices and ground-floor retail, as well as space for the Church of Christ Scientist. Robert A.M. Stern is the design architect for the project, and Cooper Carry of Washington, D.C., is the architect of record.

Bishop Robert Lynch of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg, Florida, and Fr. Joseph Waters, rector of Saint Jude the Apostle Cathedral, commissioned the Italian studio Ferdinand Stuflesser to create handcrafted, custom works of art for the cathedral, including a statue of the Pietà, Stations of the Cross, and gold-leafed medallions of the Four Evangelists.

The west window of the new Bishop Baraga Chapel in the Cathedral of Saint Peter, Marquette, depicts the Venerable Baraga holding the Ikkitowini Masinaigan, the Ojibwe Language dictionary written by the bishop.

A refurbished twenty-three-ton Casavant pipe organ was installed in Saint John Cantius Church in Chicago.

Construction of a new chapel attached to the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Marquette, Michigan, is underway. Built to house the remains of the Venerable Bishop Frederic Baraga, the diocese’s first bishop, the chapel includes custom stained-glass windows fabricated and installed by Conrad Schmitt Studios. Construction of the $500,000 project is being carried out by Gundlach Champion Construction.
A new Carrara marble statue of Santa Maria la Antigua, patroness of Panama, was added to the Vatican Gardens in a dedication ceremony attended by the Panamanian president Ricardo Martinelli, Archbishop José Domingo Ulloa Mendieta, O.S.A., and Archbishop Emeritus José Dímás Cedeño Delgado, both of Panama. The six-foot-tall statue was fabricated by Cuellar Arquitectura.

A wooden chapel to be built for the Belarusian diaspora community in the UK by Spheron Architects commemorates the victims of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Located in northern London, the small, 750 sq. ft., forty-seat chapel has staggered vertical slats composing the exterior walls, and also includes more traditional elements of Belarusian churches, such as an onion-domed spire and timber-shingle roof. Work is scheduled to begin in 2014 and cost £400,000 ($667,000).

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Bishop Michael Burbidge of the Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina, dedicated a new Saint Catherine of Siena Church in Wake Forest on November 23, 2013. Designed by O’Brien and Keane Architects, the 29,800 sq. ft., $9 million church seats 1,380 with room for another 350 in overflow areas. It replaces the former church of 450 seats, which had become too small for the parish’s 10,600 members. In his homily, Bishop Burbidge prayed, “May Jesus Christ, the Church’s one foundation, hold you up and sustain you so that your faith will remain strong and zeal for His house will always consume you, today and forever.”

Icons at the historic Saint Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Philadelphia remained intact after a fire destroyed much of the building in October.
Santiago Calatrava: The Metamorphosis of Space, an exhibition of the Spanish architect’s work, was displayed in the Braccio Carlo Magno in the colonnade of Saint Peter’s Square from December 2013 through February 2014. The exhibit, which was organized by the Vatican Museums and the Pontifical Council for Culture, included around 140 pieces of various media, such as architectural models, preparatory sketches, watercolor paintings, and sculptures. A model of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York and a large model of the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas, located at Ground Zero, were among the items displayed.

A magnificent carpet woven between 1825 and 1833 by the famous Savonnerie factory for the choir of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris was on display in the nave of the cathedral last January. Also on display were the rich liturgical vestments given to the cathedral in the nineteenth century by Kings Charles X and Louis-Philippe, and Emperor Napoléon III.

The largest Corinthian column capital known to date was recently unearthed at the site of the Kyzikos Hadrian Temple in Turkey. Atatürk University’s archeology team discovered the intact ancient Roman capital, which measures 6’-3” in diameter and 8’-3” in height.

A sanctuary renovation at Maria Immaculada Eucaristica in Guayaquil, Ecuador, included a new brass altar cross, the installation of an altar rail, and side altars with statues of Santa Clara and Santa Narcisa, patroness of Ecuador.

The Notre Dame Center for Liturgy’s Summer 2014 Symposium, “Liturgy as Healing,” will feature lectures on sacred architecture by Dr. Denis McNamara and Prof. Duncan Stroik. For more information please visit liturgy.nd.edu.

Pope Francis made an unannounced visit to the tomb of Saint John Paul II in the Saint Sebastian Chapel of St. Peter’s Basilica on October 31, 2013. He celebrated the regular weekly mass held there.

The Vatican’s Congregation for the Clergy recently ruled on an appeal from parishioners of Saint Ann’s Church in Buffalo, New York, which had been slated for demolition. Citing the $10–$12 million needed for a full restoration of the building, Bishop Richard Malone of Buffalo had planned to tear down the church, but the Vatican decision stated that high restoration costs do not qualify as the “grave cause” necessary in canon law for a church to be relegated to secular status or demolished. The law equates grave cause to catastrophic physical damage, such as a tornado or earthquake. Parishioners have already collected $2 million in pledges to carry out the most urgent structural repairs, such as restoring the masonry on the 1,200-seat Gothic church, which was built in 1886. Declining attendance, combined with safety concerns about the old building, led to the suspension of all activity in the church in 2012, but local preservationists as well as the Catholic faithful are intent on preserving the historic building. Some proposals have suggested saving it for use as something other than a church, but the Vatican decree forbids any non-religious use. The Diocese of Buffalo is expected to appeal this decree.

St. Ann’s Church in Buffalo, New York
A newly excavated portion of the Necropolis of the Via Triumphalis on the Vatican Hill will reopen to the public next year. The Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities of the Vatican Museums carried out the work, which investigated the central area of the Necropolis and united two previously divided sections of the one-thousand-square-meter area containing tombs, mosaics, moldings, and frescoes dating from the first century BC to the fourth century AD. The new display will include walkways where visitors can view the excavated work and see further excavations as they are being carried out.

A second freestanding altar installed after Vatican II in Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, New York, was removed during the recent restorations to the cathedral.

The church of Saint-Pierre-aux-Liens in Geste, France, completed in 1870, was demolished in 2013. The local municipal council cited its deteriorating condition and budget concerns over high projected upkeep costs. The Neo-Gothic church will be replaced with a building more affordable to maintain. This is a pattern that is not unique to Geste and has been occurring in villages across France for several years.

Inscriptions in the frieze of the new altarpiece in the Saint John Paul II Chapel at Mundelein Seminary read “Nolite timere” (Be not afraid), and “Duc in altum” (Put out into the deep).

A large outdoor series of the Stations of the Cross was recently installed at Thomas Aquinas College in California. Donated by Robert Barbera, a member of the college’s Board of Governors, the fourteen station pavilions stand along a wooded drive on the lower portion of the campus. The statues were fabricated from new molds created by King Richard’s Religious Artifacts in Alpharetta, Georgia, based on a set of stations once located at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Kansas City, Missouri. The stations were dedicated by Rev. Joseph Illo, head chaplain of the college, on March 7, 2014.

A recent renovation at Holy Innocents Church in Long Beach, California, included returning to the use of an ad orientem altar, refinishing the sanctuary, and adding an altar rail.

Several historic churches were damaged in a 7.2-magnitude earthquake that struck the island of Bohol, south of Manila, last fall. The churches of Loboc and Baclayon, both from the early eighteenth century and two of the oldest churches in the Philippines, sustained the worst damage. Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, urged Catholics of the area to rebuild the churches, echoing the words of Christ to Saint Francis to “rebuild my Church.”
The Romanian Orthodox Cathedral for the Salvation of Romanian People, under construction in Bucharest, is scheduled for completion in 2016. With a planned length of 449 feet, overall height of 417 feet, and seating capacity of 5,500, it will be the largest Orthodox church in the world. Construction of the €200 million ($277 million) cathedral is part of an ongoing surge of church building in Romania to repair and replace those that were destroyed under the Communist regime, which fell in 1989.

“The Face of Jesus: From that Gaze, the Human Person” was the title of an exhibit that presented a collection of the most ancient portraits of Christ (called acheiropoietos, “not made by human hands”), focusing in particular on the Veil of Manoppello. Sean Cardinal O’Malley of Boston gave an address to open the exhibit, which took place in Manhattan as part of the New York Encounter festival of January 17–19, 2014. He noted, “I pray that this exhibit of the face of Christ will draw those who look upon it to discover in it the face of love and mercy, the face of the one who calls us to follow Him.”

During routine excavation work for construction of a new neighborhood in southern Israel, remnants of a 1,500-year-old church were discovered. Thirty-nine feet wide and seventy-two feet long, the ancient three-aisled basilica included colorful mosaics and a dedicatory inscription in Greek, containing the names of Jesus and Mary. Dr. Daniel Varga directed the excavations, which were undertaken by the Israeli Antiquities Authority.

An anonymous donation of $2.8 million to the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Hartford, Connecticut, will fund the construction of an addition to the 1962 cathedral, including a handicapped-accessible entrance and accessible restroom facilities. An ongoing capital campaign in the Archdiocese, called “Our Gift for Tomorrow,” has been raising money since 2012 to preserve and restore the cathedral and an archdiocesan center, both of which “embody the history and faith of the archdiocese and are in need of extensive repair,” according to Robert McTiernan, director of development for the Archdiocese of Hartford.

In Montreal, more than fifty Catholic churches and other religious buildings have been sold by the archdiocese in the last fifteen years, and most of these have been converted into condominiums, galleries, art spaces, libraries, or even workout facilities. Last year the archdiocese placed a halt on any further sales in order to assess “where we are now,” according to a spokesperson from the archdiocese.

A virtual tour of the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome is now available on Google Maps.

Frescoes from the Catacombs of Priscilla and the Ipogeo di Via Dino Compagni in Rome are among the latest additions to the Street View function of Google Maps. From the comfort of home, virtual tourists can now view portions of the eight miles of the Priscilla complex that are open to the public, as well as the catacombs on the Via Dino Compagni, which are not open to the public. These additions are part of Google’s ongoing efforts to document UNESCO World Heritage Sites and natural marvels.
When the Catholic priest and architect Leon Battista Alberti (AD 1404–1472) wrote of the ideal church, he asserted: “I would deck it out in every part so that anyone who entered it would start with awe for his admiration at all the noble things, and could scarcely restrain himself from exclaiming that what he saw was a place undoubtedly worthy of God.”\(^1\)

And when the ancient Chinese poet Qu Yuan (343–278 BC) described an architectural space that could “summon a soul,” he wrote: “The ceilings and floors are vermillion, the chambers of polished stone... Overhead you behold carved rafters, painted with dragons.”\(^2\) China and the West have shared the historical belief that to stir the human soul sacred architecture must be, as Leland Roth phrased it, “architecture for the senses.”\(^3\) In the context of Chinese architecture, sacred spaces have historically been constructed according to an understanding that heaven (\(\text{tian}\) 天), earth (\(\text{di}\) 地), and humanity (\(\text{ren}\) 人) all exist within a correlative cosmology; the physical alignment and proportion of buildings is believed to be directly related to the spiritual alignment of humans. So when Catholic missionaries first began constructing churches in China, the cosmological liturgical orientation of the design was familiar to Chinese Christians, for the correlations of space and worship were already taken for granted in their own indigenous religious architecture.

A problem that Western architects confronted in China’s early tradition of church architecture was the question of cultural style. Should Christian churches in China recall the Western tastes of the European missionaries, or should church structures follow purely Chinese forms of sacred architecture, forms that were already represented in Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist shrines and temples? Our research suggests that despite some attempts to “indigenize” church architecture in the late nineteenth century, and efforts to “modernize” Catholic design in the 1970s and 1980s, Chinese Catholics have consistently preferred to build churches in traditional Western styles. In fact, with very few exceptions, Chinese Christians have primarily chosen to build their churches in either Gothic, Baroque, or Romanesque revival styles, which were, not surprisingly, the principal styles employed by Western missionary architects who first designed churches in China.

Church Architecture in China: Early Influences and Architects

China is a culture of tradition, and ever since Confucius (551–479 BC) described himself as “fond of antiquity,” China’s sensibilities have, until recently, decidedly leaned toward continuity with, and conservation of, the past.\(^4\) Once European missionary architects, such as Alphonse De Moerloose, C.I.C.M. (1858–1932), and Alphonse Favier, C.M. (1837–1905), had introduced traditional Western styles of Christian architecture to Chinese Catholics, the local preference for these styles was quickly entrenched. There were many other priest-architects who built in China, such as the Franciscan Barnabas Meistermann, O.F.M. (1850–1923), but the works of Moerloose and Favier are perhaps the most representative examples of church design and construction. Western architects largely preferred to build in Gothic Revival and Romanesque styles until Archbishop Celso Constantini (1876–1958), the first apostolic delegate to China, promoted the use of indigenous Chinese church architecture during his time in China, from 1922 to 1933.

Despite Constantini’s recommendations, China has retained its preference for traditional Western styles. For example, the Belgian Scheut missionary Alphonse De Moerloose studied architecture at Saint Luke’s School in Ghent, where his architecture courses favored the ideals of Augustus Pugin (1812–1852), whose promotion of the Gothic Revival movement influenced John Ruskin (1819–1900).\(^5\) Moerloose’s church commissions in China favored a Gothic style for its organic appropriateness with Catholic liturgy, though he also relied on Romanesque-inspired design because of its structural durability, comparative ease in construction, and historic connection to Rome, the center of Roman Catholicism.

Among Moerloose’s most famous commissions in China is his church in Xuanhua, located in Hebei, 170 kilometers from Beijing. In their description of the “Gothic character” of the church,
Thomas Coomans and Luo Wei note Moerloose’s “traditional plan, with a nave of five bays flanked with aisles, a large transept with square arms on both sides of a square crossing.” The church retains the Western Latin cross layout, which as Steven Schloeder recalls, alludes to the Cross and the Body of Christ: “the transepts are his extended arms; his torso and legs form the nave, since the gathered faithful are his body.” In keeping with his preference for a Gothic style and adhering to the preferred Latin cross design, Moerloose ornamented the Xuanhua church with Gothic tracery windows with quatrefoils, lancets, and transoms, and ordered the vaults painted with stenciled motifs. Moerloose’s design was so successful that he was later commissioned to design the chapel of the Trappist Abbey church at Yanjiaping, dedicated to Our Lady of Consolation, as well as the Jesuit pilgrimage church at Sheshan, which was designed with an early Romanesque-style interior and a late Gothic-style exterior. It remains his most famous work in China today.

Beijing’s late-imperial French bishop Alphonse Favier was also an architect of note in China, and his North Church—formerly North Cathedral—is perhaps the most famous church in China, often featured on Chinese book covers and calendars. Favier’s successful relationship with China’s imperial court facilitated his negotiations for the construction of several churches and French diplomatic buildings under his design supervision. In this way, he participated in France’s political mission civilisatrice, or the colonial impulse to “civilize” China through social, devotional, and architectural conventions based firmly on Western models. As Richard Madsen describes the overall French missionary approach, the Lazarists, Jesuits, Missions Étrangères de Paris, and Marists “saw themselves as propagating a faith that was intimately linked with what they considered the essence of French life. They built Gothic cathedrals that were named after French saints and adorned with French-style iconography.”

One result of the mission civilisatrice was that Favier’s designs consciously represented an overall French caractère, or innate “Frenchness” in Catholic church design, in the intellectual vein of the Beaux Arts tradition. The outcome of this ideal was his North Church, built in Gothic Revival style and boasting an elaborate façade and a richly ornamented Gothic interior. One notable characteristic of Favier’s design, however, was that he supplemented the church grounds with the placement of two Chinese-style pavilions (tingzi 停子) that flank the façade. Balustrades installed on the entrance steps were carved in a Chinese style from local white marble. The final effect is a synthesis of a Western church building, accented at the entrance with Chinese pavilions that cover two grand memorial steles. While Favier shared the general attitude of the mission civilisatrice, he nonetheless made efforts to honor China’s native culture in his design program.

In the footsteps of missionary architects such as Moerloose and Favier, other Western architects designed churches in China after the ideals of...
Augustus Pugin, John Ruskin, and the exponent of French Gothic Revival, Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879). One of China’s enduring examples of Gothic Revival church design is Saint Ignatius Church in the center of Shanghai’s Xujiahui district, formerly owned by the Jesuit mission and administered by French Jesuits. This monumental Gothic Revival structure, completed in 1910, was designed by the Scottish architect William Dowdall (b. 1842), and is celebrated as one of Shanghai’s most-visited and photographed historic buildings. Dowdall’s design responded to the aspirations of the French Jesuits in Shanghai, who wanted the church—named after the founder of their order, Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556)—to exemplify a Gothic order of hierarchies.

Catholic architecture in China, especially church construction designed by French missionaries, sought to exemplify the sentiments of Abbot Suger (ca. 1081–1151), who envisioned the Gothic church as a celestial city on earth, “a spectacle in which heaven and earth, the angelic hosts in heaven and the human community in the sanctuary, seemed to merge.” Perhaps one of the more striking French Gothic Revival churches in China is the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Guangzhou. With funds provided by Napoleon III (1808–1873), the cathedral church was designed by Léon Vautrin (1820–1884) with a monumental façade modeled after Paris’s famous Basilique Sainte-Clotilde. With the exception of this one example, all church buildings discussed here were envisioned and designed in China, then constructed by local laborers. These Gothic Revival churches punctuating China’s Catholic landscape have retained their aesthetic appeal, as present-day Chinese architects continue to build churches after the French Gothic style.

China in Church Architecture: The Question of a “Local” Style

China’s Christian architecture is not all modeled after the West; some church designers have consciously accommodated more indigenous tastes. In his encyclical, *Maximum Illud* (On the Propagation of the Faith Throughout the World), Pope Benedict XV (1854–1922) asserted, “The Catholic Church is not an intruder in any country; nor is she alien to any people.” His desire was that Catholic missions grow sensitive to non-Western sensibilities. The Pope’s encyclical translated into a new movement in the Catholic Church that considered how Christianity could be grafted, rather than imposed, onto Chinese society. Responding to this proposal, Celso Constantini, apostolic delegate to China, published an essay in the *Bulletin of the Catholic University of Peking*, requesting that Western missionaries develop a “Sino-Christian Architecture” that would appeal to Chinese tastes. Constantini encouraged architects to employ Chinese rather than Gothic or other Western styles, and some French architects made strong attempts to employ this new ideal. Perhaps the most famous example of a Catholic church built in an entirely Chinese style is the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Yunnan Province, at Dali, designed by a French missionary and built by experienced local contractors who understood Chinese architectural forms. This church was erected in 1938 and features spectacular, Chinese-style sweeping curved roofs supported by brightly painted and elaborate bracket systems.

There were, however, a few rare ex-
amples of Chinese-style churches built before Constantini’s 1927 essay; Guiyang’s Saint Joseph Cathedral, built in 1849, for example, followed the style of southern Chinese ancestral temples. Its grand clock tower (zhonglou 鐘樓)—in China clock towers replace bell towers—was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), but was restored to original specifications in 2004. In Western churches, the aspiration for heaven was often symbolized by a stretching vertical tower, and since the nearest Chinese equivalent was the pagoda, the resulting form of Saint Joseph’s Cathedral would have appeared as a logical synthesis. Today, this popular church is frequently photographed.

In 1924, Constantini assembled China’s first nation-wide synod of Catholic bishops to discuss *Maximum Illud*, which met (similar to council gatherings) in the Gothic Revival nave of Saint Ignatius Church in Shanghai.14 During the synod, Constantini determined to commission a Chinese-style church at Sheshan, but Alphonse De Moerloose, as noted above, designed the basilica in an admixture of Gothic Revival and Romanesque styles; the church was decidedly Western. In one essay, Celso Constantini complained that “it is a mistake to import [to China] European styles such as Romanesque and Gothic,” but these styles were already so popular with both local Chinese and Western missionaries that Constantini, despite his disagreements, presented Moerloose with the celebrated Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (For Church and Pope) cross award in 1928.15 The debates among European missionaries regarding whether China’s sacred architecture should be Gothic Revival, Romanesque, or “Sino-Christian” disappeared after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, when all Western missionaries were expelled from China in the turbulent 1950s. The future of sacred architecture in China was then entirely in the hands of the Chinese, either the state or the Christians who used these churches for worship.

Sacred Architecture during Mao: An Era of Church Destruction

The history of Christianity in China changed radically after 1949, and so did the history of church architecture. China’s new communist government under the leadership of Mao Zedong (1893–1976) was decidedly anti-Church, though it did ostensibly allow for religious freedom as long as it functioned openly under the supervision of the State Administration of Religious Affairs. On June 28, 1949, the general secretary for publications of the YMCA in China, Y. T. Wu (Wu Yaozong, 1890–1979), was appointed mediator between the Communist Party and the National Christian Council. Wu urged all China’s Christians to openly support the communist movement, and he promoted the separation of Chinese churches from foreign involvement. This was disastrous for Catholic Christians, who viewed this as an act of disobedience to the Pope; Mao and his fellow cadres, on their part, insisted that Catholics, like Protestants, conform to the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. All Chinese Christians were expected to be self-promoting, self-governing, and self-supporting. The end result was that after 1957, Roman Catholic worship was expected to be conducted in state-approved church structures overseen by the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. Catholic edifices, old and new, were now controlled by the state. As Mao’s anti-Church policies grew more aggressive, the prospects for church buildings in China became more uncertain. Throughout the subsequent Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), sacred architecture in China was openly attacked;
splendid examples of Christian church architecture were closed, demolished, or confiscated by state authorities for government secular uses.

Once Mao had launched his Cultural Revolution in 1966, radical Red Guard youth organized demolition parties to attack China’s most monumental churches. In Beijing, Alphonse Favier’s famous Gothic Revival North Church was besieged; its crosses were pulled down, the interior was gutted, and from 1966 to 1976 it served as a middle school. The Baroque-style South Church, where the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) had lived and constructed his modest chapel during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), was seized by Red Guards and used as a toy factory. Beijing’s famous East Church, built in a dramatic Romanesque style, was similarly attacked and converted into the Wangfujing Primary School, where children studied Maoist thought under classically inspired Corinthian capitals. Shanghai’s Gothic Revival Saint Ignatius Church, designed by William Dowdall, was victim to a particularly dramatic attack in 1966. Red Guards tore down its two spires, smashed all the stained glass windows, demolished the stunning high altar, and destroyed all the sacred art and furnishings. For the next decade, Shanghai’s architectural Gothic gem housed a state-operated warehouse. It was reopened as a Catholic church in 1979, and the spires were rebuilt according to Dowdall’s original vision in 1980.

One of the more tragic accounts of church destruction in China during the Cultural Revolution was the Red Guard attack on Saint Joseph Cathedral in Tianjin, also called the Xikai Cathedral. Using brick shipped to China from France, construction for Tianjin’s Romanesque Revival building was begun in 1913, and by 1917 the French Lazarist, Bishop Paul-Marie Dumond, C.M. (1864–1944), consecrated it as the new cathedral church of Tianjin. Beneath the cathedral’s three large domes, each surfaced with green copper, the church’s interior clearly displayed French tastes; the nave, with its fourteen square piers that led to an octagonal dome, was adorned with Western-style murals depicting biblical stories. In August 1966, Tianjin’s “Destroy the Four Olds Movement,” a state-supported campaign to wipe out “Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas,” was inaugurated in the city’s commercial district, near Saint Joseph Cathedral. As Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao describe the first moments of the movement, “drums, gongs, and firecrackers sounded from morning to night,” and the signs of streets, shops, and schools were all changed to “revolutionary names.”

When the Red Guard crowds in Tianjin turned their attention toward Saint Joseph’s, the movement had grown into a massive incident. Jiang Jiehong recounts what happened:

In the summer of 1966, this Roman-styled building was seen as a symbol of imperialist and colonial power and was besieged by thousands of Red Guards. Believers were criticized publically and church properties were assembled and burned in front of the cathedral. A couplet (dúlián 寫聯) was placed on both sides of the west façade, ‘Smash old thoughts, bomb the black church,’ while a portrait of Mao hung from the center of its arches.

In a series of photographs taken during the attack, Red Guards are seen destroying the high altar, which had been removed to the main steps of the church, and the three green domes were demolished. Xikai Cathedral was restored in the 1980s and is presently one of the most popular historic attractions in the city.

By 1976, the year of Mao’s death, China’s remaining Christian churches were in terrible disrepair; those that had survived the Red Guard attacks and seizures of the “Destroy the Four Olds Movement” were being reused as state warehouses, schools, factories, or restaurants. Their towers and spires had been removed, their interiors had been gutted of any vestige of sacred use, and in many cases their façades had been reduced to a flat surface or were covered with temporary veneers that obscured their religious distinction. While buildings can be rebuilt, there was one profound difference—after open worship was once again legalized and churches were allowed to reopen in the 1980s, there were no longer any Western missionaries in China to oversee church construction. Chinese Catholics were free to choose
their own designs, and to restore and build churches according to their own tastes and sensibilities. What is perhaps most interesting about this era of reconstruction is that China’s unprecedented growth of Christian architecture turned decidedly toward traditional Western styles. The Gothic Revival, Romanesque, and Baroque styles that had been preferred by Western missionaries were the styles now favored by the Chinese who were rebuilding their sacred architecture out of the ashes.

Sacred Architecture after Mao: Looking to the Past and Building for the Future

Catholic architecture in modern China can be said to have passed through three historical stages: the pre-1930s, when churches were designed by Western missionaries, mostly French-speaking, who often sought to build in French Gothic Revival; the 1930s to 1950, when the apostolic delegate to China, Archbishop Celso Costantini, urged Catholic architects to design in a “Sino-Christian” style that reflected “Chinese aesthetic tastes”; and the post-Mao period of reconstruction from 1980 until the present, during which Chinese architects and builders have chosen to restore and build new churches in modified traditional Western styles. In preparation for this article, the authors visited several churches in Shanxi Province, where the Catholic population has grown steadily since the 1980s and church reconstruction has punctuated the vast plains of the province with soaring spires and towers. With the exception of a pilgrimage church at Dongergou Catholic village named after Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, and the Hall of Martyrs at the newly built church at Guchengying village, all of Shanxi’s church restoration and new church construction has been designed according to traditional Western architectural expressions. In an interview with the rector of Tianjin’s Xikai cathedral, Father Zhang Liang, we were told: “We Chinese Catholics prefer Western classical designs to highlight our connection with the Catholic and universal Church; to build only in a ‘Chinese style’ would make us feel even more disconnected from the rest of the Church, and even with the historical past of the Church.”

The Catholic clergy and larger community of Shanxi share Father Zhang’s attitude about the preservation of Western-origin ecclesial architectural forms in China. Notably, following the Maoist era of church seizure and destruction, the Chinese faithful were without the presence of embedded Western missionaries to influence their church planning, so they turned instead to the aesthetic desires of their congregations. For example, after the Red Guards seized the old Franciscan church in the Catholic village of Liuhe in 1966 and filled the nave with Maoist slogans on long, white
banners, the entire structure was demolished. When it was rebuilt in the 1980s, the local architect responded to three wishes of the village of more than nine thousand Catholics. The new structure had to accommodate three thousand people in attendance at each of the three Sunday Masses, it had to somehow reflect the Catholic connection to the Pope in Rome, and it had to satisfy the local expectation of what a “Catholic church should look like.” The outcome of these requirements is what Denis McNamara calls a massive “Eclectic Revival” church with an unusually long nave; the façade is Gothic Revival while the sanctuary is crowned with an enormous Baroque dome modeled after the dome of Saint Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City.19

Another example of a post-Maoist church reconstruction in Shanxi is the pilgrimage Portiuncula Church at Bansishan, north of the provincial capital city of Taiyuan, demolished in 1966 by the Red Guards. From the late nineteenth century, this Western-style Franciscan church had been the annual gathering place for thousands of Catholic pilgrims. Built in an agrarian area where constant threat of drought has plagued the population, the Portiuncula Church at Bansishan continues to serve as a popular pilgrimage site for Catholics praying for rain and a bountiful harvest.20 After Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997) restored freedom to China’s Catholics to rebuild their churches, local clergy settled on a Baroque-inspired plan for the reconstructed Portiuncula Church near the summit of Bansishan mountain. On May 17, 1988, Fathers Li Yuwen and Li Jiantang inaugurated the process of transporting the building materials from the base of the mountain to the location of the old church’s ruins; Catholics hand-carried most of the church materials on foot to the building site.21 By August the Neo-Baroque façade was largely complete, and framing of the nave was well underway. At present the Portiuncula Church at Bansishan hosts annual pilgrimages each August, with approximately twelve thousand Catholic pilgrims visiting the church for Mass and Confessions per day; new guesthouses are being built to accommodate the rising number of visitors.

Southwest of Taiyuan lies the village of Guchengying. Its newly rebuilt Catholic church, dedicated to Christ the King, now includes an attached Chinese-style structure dedicated to the martyr saints of the Boxer Uprising (1898–1900).22 This church, under reconstruction when the authors first visited the village in 2008, was rebuilt in a Neo-Baroque style, though with a Gothic-influenced pointed-arch portal. The Hall of the Martyrs, completed in 2010, features indigenous architectural design, a notable exception to the post-Maoist decision to build Catholic architecture in a Western style. Built to honor the martyrs of Shanxi’s local saints, the hall is topped with a Christian cross to identify its religious affiliation. From a Chinese-style colonnade at the front of the structure extends an elevated walkway with a white marble balustrade; this bridge passes through a *tīnzì* pavilion in which is installed a commemorative stele in the Chinese style, resting on a stone turtle. The setting of a Chinese-style pavilion next to a Western-style church is inspired by Beijing’s North Church, though in Guchengying there is also a Chinese hall that highlights China’s rich tradition of elaborate eave bracketing and overhanging roof design. Unlike the foreign-designed CCTV tower or National Theatre in Beijing, for example, these new church buildings are being conceived exclusively by local Chinese architectural firms and building contractors.

One of China’s dramatic examples of post-Mao Chinese-style church design is located on a tall hill next to the Shanxi Catholic village of Dongergou, approximately thirty kilometers south of Taiyuan. Dongergou claims to be the oldest Roman Catholic parish in the Diocese of Taiyuan, boasting a continuous history of worship for more than 220 years. The first church on top of the hill next to the village was erected in 1924 and dedicated to Our Lady of Seven Sorrows; today it is referred to as “Seven Sorrows Mountain” (*qíkushān* 七苦山, mentioned previously). In 1966, Red Guards razed the original church, and it remained a ruin until 1992, when...
Father Augustine Li Jianhua, S.V.D., received permission from the bishop to rebuild the church in a Chinese style. Father Li's vision to replace the previous Gothic Revival chapel with a grand Chinese-style church is striking. A wide, stone staircase now leads pilgrims through a monumental Chinese-roofed archway to the summit of the hill, where they first catch sight of an open-air altar beneath a massive baldachino, here modeled after the imperial Altar of Heaven, famously used in Beijing by historic emperors to make annual offerings to heaven (tian 天). The Dongergou baldachino consists of three ascending, circular roofs, tiled in imperial yellow. Behind the Chinese-style baldachino is a monumental church designed to resemble the Forbidden City’s Hall of Supreme Harmony, where the emperors of China’s last two dynasties held their enthronement and wedding ceremonies. Flanking the roof of this church are two golden dragons facing a large, centralized cross; the two dragons, which symbolize China, represent China turning toward Christianity.

Overwhelmingly, however, Shanxi’s recent trend in sacred architecture is to emulate Western-style church construction, and to reproduce as closely as possible the hallowed examples of Catholic design in the West. One of the most ambitious recent commissions in China is the red brick replica of the celebrated Sacré-Coeur Basilica on Montmartre, Paris, built in a Roman-Byzantine style. While the French original, completed in 1914, was built using white travertine quarried in Château-Landon, the Chinese reproduction was constructed with red brick, making it a towering landmark on a vast, flat plain. Local Chinese architects not only desire their church architecture to assert a continuity with traditional Catholic design in the West, but they are also increasingly interested in producing direct analogues. And while the local government often provides seed money to help fund the construction of such churches, most of the capital for Shanxi’s Sacred Heart church was provided by local peasants. As Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801–1890) once wrote, Christians will lay out their resources not only to feed the hungry or clothe the naked, but also “to build and decorate the visible House of God.”

In his book Images of Hope, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) reminds us that a church is a “building in which God and man desire to meet: a house that unites us, in which we are attracted to God, and being with God unites us to one another.” As trans-
lations of Ratzinger’s writings began to appear in Chinese church bookstores, China’s clergy and faithful grew more confident in their impulse to build churches in which “we are attracted to God.” They held more firmly that the revered Gothic and Romanesque Revival styles not only succeed in this aim, but also provide aesthetic evidence of a “hermeneutic of continuity.” In this view, such Western styles call attention to the cathoic nature of the Catholic Church, and thus the present trend in church design in China is encouraged to imitate as closely as possible the monumental churches of the West. China’s sense of architectural space has always affirmed the connection between our environment and our senses. Winston Churchill expressed this well in 1943, when before the House of Commons he said, “We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us.”28

Quoting a little-known article by Lewis Mumford, Lelad Roth wrote of the American architects McKim, Mead and White: they “made their buildings monumental in the sense that Mumford used the term—‘buildings of permanent value, enriching the eye, sustaining and White: they “made their buildings..."28


Different beliefs and practices between Roman Catholics and Protestants have created divergent views regarding sacred art and architecture. Protestants seem to lack an appreciation, if not a category, for sacred aesthetics. By contrast, the Roman Catholic Church actively emphasizes aesthetics. Taken to extremes, both approaches can lead one away from the true worship of God—Protestants can retreat into worldly pragmatism, and Roman Catholics into ornamentation and ritualism. Architecture by itself has nothing to say about the heart of a worshipper.

But as a Protestant, I want to investigate the reason why we tend to place a low value on sacred architecture—resulting in generally poor modern churches—and why we often view Roman Catholic sacred aesthetics as impractical (if not idolatrous). Some of this goes back to the Reformation itself, or even beyond to the long history of iconoclasm in the Church. But there are a number of present-day, interlinked worldview elements in contemporary Protestantism, particularly Evangelical Protestantism, that contribute to what we see architecturally. I will explore these for their impact on aesthetics, with the caveat that I am not intending to write a theological treatise.

1. Low view of the church and place.

   The Roman Catholic tradition emphasizes the big-C Church—the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of the creeds—with the local church as a mostly standardized operating subsidiary. By contrast, most Protestants emphasize the small-c church, their local congregation. This is truer than ever, as demonstrated by the rise of non-denominational churches.

   This produces a system with no theology of place. Protestants feel a sense of duty to the place and community where they personally live. But if the majority of church members move, say, from the city to the suburbs, then a new church building can be constructed, the old building sold, and the duty transferred to the new place where the members now reside. The original building only served a pragmatic purpose as meetinghouse for the members.

   The Roman Catholic Church views its remit as covering the entire globe. So when there is population change in a locale, the church is not relieved of responsibility for it. The church building is an outpost of Christianity in a particular place (the parish concept), not just to a group of people. In short, Protestants see place as ephemeral, while Roman Catholics see it as permanent.

2. Dualistic view of spiritual and physical.

   Modern Protestantism tends to see the spiritual as distinct from the physical, with the true Christian life being inward and spiritual. But in the historic orthodox view, spirituality is embodied, just like Christ. This is generally under-appreciated in Protestantism, which can take a vaguely Gnostic view of the physical. We can treat physical aspects of reality as unimportant or potentially even taboo. This is evident, for example, in the near-practical elimination of the Eucharist in post-Reformation sectarian groups that have broken off from the mainstream Lutheran, Anglican, and Reformed traditions.

   The debate over the relationship of the physical and spiritual emerged early in the church. Second-century Church Father Irenaeus strongly maintained that the Church was a physical entity in the real world—Christianity was not merely a set of cognitive beliefs that were intellectually agreed to. Since the time of Augustine, who built upon Irenaeus, the Western Christian tradition has had a deeply rooted theology of participation. Put simply, while God is not the creation (pantheism), He is intimately tied to and involved in it (omnipresent). In Western Christianity, there is a “sacramental” quality to the entire creation—yes, even in buildings.

   If spirituality is not seen as embodied, but instead the physical is separate from and inferior to the spiritual, then sacred architecture becomes unimportant, and an excessive focus on it can be seen as outright worldly, much like the pursuit of riches.

3. A theology of “immanence.”

   Many contemporary Protestants hold to a dispensationalist premillennial-
ist eschatology. In this view, God’s covenant with the nation of Israel is distinct from that with the Church. Old Testament prophecies must be fulfilled, specifically regarding the Jewish people. The reestablishment of the state of Israel in 1948 produced fervor about the end times because it seemed those prophecies were indeed being fulfilled. While this view has been somewhat in decline, a general obsession remains. For example, the “Left Behind” series of novels, which describes the world after the Rapture, has sold over sixty million copies.

The danger of an excessive eschatological focus has been known since at least the time of Paul (2 Thessalonians). He links this to a neglect of the physical, such as people giving up work in anticipation of the return of Christ. The Thessalonians are strongly rebuked for both this excessive focus and physical neglect (e.g., “If any would not work, neither should he eat.”).

This same effect is evident in contemporary Protestant church buildings, whose low quality and aesthetic neglect have been described as “immanent architecture.” The idea is that these churches were built as if their members believe Christ will return shortly. If you are expecting an imminent Second Coming, you certainly are not going to build for the ages. This is especially true in the dispensationalist view, which interprets scripture as saying this world will be physically destroyed and the new heavens and earth created ex nihilo.

4. A lack of connection to the transcendent. In the dualistic worldview, the transcendent is experienced through spiritual activities such as prayer or charismata, not physical means. But the entire concept of the transcendent—that is, connecting to something beyond or bigger than ourselves, our surroundings, and our present existence—is increasingly missing, not just in Protestantism, but in America at large.

Sociologists Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton surveyed American youth regarding their spiritual beliefs. They discovered that teenagers believe God exists, wants them to be good, and wants them to be happy and fulfilled, but is largely distant from and uninvolved in the world. They labeled this view “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” It is prevalent among adults as well. The absence of the experience of God in this worldview unmoors its adherents from the transcendent. So too a focus on personal self-fulfillment in the now, which is practically the definitive opposite of transcendence.

When a connection to the transcendent is unvalued or is of a purely spiritual nature, clearly a core function of sacred architecture is lost. The great cathedrals of Europe, for example, almost literally draw one’s eyes towards heaven. Their scale suggests the immensity of God and the Church of which we are a part. The consistent use of Gothic architecture through the centuries suggests a connection to a Church that transcends time. Their very design (e.g., stories in stained glass) proclaims the telos of creation—namely, the Gospel. With functions like these no longer seen as important, sacred architecture necessarily suffers.

5. Cultural adaptation—rationalism. Evangelical Protestantism has also heavily adapted itself to modern culture, often intentionally for mission purposes. Contemporary culture is rationalistic, industrialized, pragmatic, consumer-oriented, leveling, and informal.

Rationalism today tilts towards philosophical materialism and denying the existence of the spiritual. This actually reinforces belief in spiritual-physical dualism precisely because atheistic materialism says there is no possibility of embodied spirituality.

Rationalism also tends to devalue primal spiritual needs, such as that for sacred space, as relics of a more primitive era. It is a modern conceit that our civilization stands at the apex of human evolution intellectually, economically, politically, socially, and morally. The need for truly special sacred space is rejected because it is perceived to be ancient, obsolete thinking. The modern disconnect from the past and refusal to see ourselves as a link in a chain of humanity extending forward and backward in time is itself an anti-transcendent viewpoint. While modern Protestantism largely rejects the idea of man’s moral evolution, the rest of this has been adopted wholesale.
phasize the church, the physical, place, and the transcendent while adapting to contemporary culture and heavily focusing on the return of Christ. Unsurprisingly, this has led to low-quality sacred architecture. Some of these affect the Roman Catholic Church as well, but its sacralization of tradition and the requirements of its liturgy have preserved architectural practices that might otherwise have faded. This has not stopped its loss of adherents in the United States, however, which can suggest to Protestants that traditional sacred architecture is not attractive.

In a society that is increasingly abandoning faith, architecture may not be the top concern. But as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.” That call is to glorify God in all that we do, not just through special spiritual practices. I hope that we Protestants will rediscover how to glorify Him in our buildings, recognizing them as an integral part of our worship. Let us do that without neglecting to glorify Him in our hearts, actions, and every other aspect of life as well.

6. Cultural adaptation—consumerism, pragmatism and industrialization. Modern culture pragmatically values catering to personal needs through uniform, mass-produced products that are functional and low cost. This is evident from, for example, our tract homes and strip malls. Style and design are valued mostly to the extent that they enhance personal status (e.g., luxury brands).

Modern Protestantism, especially Evangelicalism, has adapted to this culture. This manifests itself through items such as high production values, contemporary music, and satisfying the desire for programs. These churches can partially be seen as vendors providing an array of popular services. Some of this has been an explicit strategy intended to attract the unchurched.

Our consumer-oriented society eagerly buys industrialized, secular products and services from vendors housed in low-grade architecture. Building a high quality church would require doing something different and potentially spending extra to do so. Why would a consumer-oriented church do this if the market does not demand it? It will not. Many such churches are thriving with the status quo, so they have no impetus for change. That is doubly true when many churches with traditional sacred architecture, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, are shutting down, and many of their buildings are either being demolished or converted to non-religious use.

7. Cultural adaptation—leveling. Alexis de Tocqueville contrasted the democratic social state in America with the aristocratic one in France, noting that while the average condition in America was better, its culture had a leveling effect that pulled down the peaks of human accomplishment, including artistic ones. Our society has tended to erase distinctions (especially between high and low as categories), treating everything as common. The message of the Gospel has an even more radical unity of man and erasing of distinctions in Christ. But while our culture has not gone far enough in mimicking the unity of the church, it has gone too far in eliminating legitimate distinctions, including those of sacred architecture. Protestantism has tended to embrace this more than Roman Catholicism, possibly because the latter has a stronger conception of things set apart for God, such as the unique role of its priesthood.

8. Cultural adaptation—informal liturgies. The Roman Catholic Mass employs a standardized, stylized, and formulaic liturgy that has effectively become integrated with an architecture that evolved to support it. Some Protestant churches use a traditional liturgy, but many do not. Modern churches often employ contemporary, informal liturgies oriented around the musicians and preacher, where liturgical needs are well served by a simple auditorium that does not distract from the people on stage.

Conclusion

All of the above items are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Modern Protestantism tends to de-emphazise the church, the physical, place, and the transcendent while adapting to contemporary culture and heavily focusing on the return of Christ. Unsurprisingly, this has led to low-quality sacred architecture. Some of these affect the Roman Catholic Church as well, but its sacralization of tradition and the requirements of its liturgy have preserved architectural practices that might otherwise have faded. This has not stopped its loss of adherents in the United States, however, which can suggest to Protestants that traditional sacred architecture is not attractive.

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A few years ago—more than a century after the laying of the first stone—the Sagrada Familia Church in Barcelona was consecrated. It is probably the most famous example of sacred modern architecture in Europe, but it is not the only church to have been built at the end of the nineteenth century. Many other churches and some cathedrals were built in that century, a period that is incorrectly considered lacking in religious feeling as a result of the Enlightenment. One of these buildings is the Cathedral of Saint Bavo in Haarlem in the Netherlands. This paper reviews the most important construction phases and describes the symbolism of the building, which is inspired by the final chapters of the Book of Revelation.

Architect Joseph T. Cuypers was just thirty-two years old when he took on the most important assignment of his life: to design the new Catholic cathedral of the Haarlem-Amsterdam diocese. He was the son of one of the most famous architects in the Netherlands; his father, Pierre, designed the imposing train station of Amsterdam. Probably Joseph Cuypers was conscious that his professional life was going to be dominated by this project. For the following thirty years he would take care of this new and majestic building. It was destined to pass through the biggest events of the twentieth century.

He graduated in the first Faculty of Architecture of his country, the Bouwkunde Faculteit of the Delft Technische Universiteit. His design is reminiscent of the famous magistri of the Middle Age cathedrals but is also deeply influenced by the modern architectural
movements of the nineteenth century.

Joseph Cuypers’s personal life became entwined with the cathedral and, from a wider point of view, with the history of Catholic Church. The decision to build such an important construction was a consequence of the restoration of the Catholic Diocese of Haarlem by Pope Pius IX in 1853. The apostolic succession had been interrupted during the bloody conflict against Calvinists. During the night of May 29, 1578, Calvinists occupied the fourteenth-century Cathedral of Saint Bavo in the old city center (which is still under their protection), and they obliged many Catholics to convert to Protestantism. The reborn Dutch Church needed to reassert its power and presence in the territory not only symbolically, but practically.

In 1893, under the leadership of Bishop Bottemanne, the decision to build the new cathedral was reached. In order to retain continuity with local history and popular devotion, the cathedral was also dedicated to Saint Bavo. From then on, in Haarlem there were two churches dedicated to this saint: de Oude Bavo (the Old Saint Bavo), the Calvinist church, and de Nieuwe Sint Bavo (the New Saint Bavo), the cathedral by Joseph Cuypers.

Together with Monsignor Bottemanne and his most trusted assistant and future successor Monsignor Callier, Cuypers did what is now more and more difficult for contemporary architects: he joined tradition and modernity—the unchanging message of the Church and new building techniques.

Fortunately, many project drawings by Cuypers are now collected in the Netherlands Institute of Architecture in Rotterdam, and the building history of Saint Bavo Cathedral can be easily retraced. The symbolic and technical choices of the architect are evident from the numerous drawings.

Approaching the New Saint Bavo, one seems to be in front of a big Gothic cathedral and to meet the numerous anonymous people who built this sacred jewel of European architecture. In the numerous pictures taken between 1893 and 1930, we can still observe the faved faces of the craftsmen who built the cathedral. What a strange feeling: to admire the building yard of the majestic cathedral that seems to come from the Middle Ages, portrayed with such a modern technique.

Cuypers did not overlook anything; meticulous care is displayed in every detail.

Probably under the supervision of Monsignor Callier, Cuypers created the symbolic system of the cathedral: sixteen pillars specifically dedicated to the Apostles, the Evangelists, Saint Paul, and Saint Barnabas. The drawings by the architect assign every pillar a specific name. The eight pillars of the presbytery are symbols of the Cardinal and Theological Virtues (Caritas is repeated twice, meaning the love for both God and human kind). Each virtue is inscribed on its pillar both in Latin and by a symbol (e.g., Temperantia is represented by a camel, and Fortitudo by a lion, etc.).

Every structural element of the cathedral was built with yellow brick masonry, and decorated with yellow glazed tiles depicting roses in relief. These were designed by Cuypers as a symbol of the Holy Spirit descending on the faithful. They evoke a ceremony that is now rarely celebrated. During the Whit Sunday liturgy, roses and cotton balls on fire are dropped from the gallery in the main nave. For this reason, Pentecost is also called Pasqua Rossata, “Rose Easter.” During this ceremony, the hymn Veni Creator was sung, the first lines of which are written in the apse of the church, surrounding the bishop’s altar. The New Saint Bavo was designed with two altars: one facing East, the so-called “bishop’s altar,” and one facing the faithful, the “people’s altar.”

The presbytery area is rich with symbols. Every capital of the twelve columns in the choir gallery is sculpted with a different kind of tree or fruit, to represent trees in the Garden of Eden. The bases of the columns feature horrific animals, representing sins against God.

The big, conic dome, copper-coated and about sixty meters high, is visible from kilometers away. Seen from the nave, the dome reveals itself as a book transformed into architecture. Not just a simple book at that, but the last book of the New Testament: Revelation. Each symbol is sculpted in the material that the dome is made of.

Unfortunately, visitors cannot see from the nave the extreme care Cuypers used in planning out the dome. It has not been designed to be seen just from below, by the faithful. Every architectural detail and decoration in glazed tiles is equally accurate in the external areas that are invisible from the nave, and therefore seen only by God, who looks on the cathedral from the sky. The dome—also from the structural point of view—is the Heavenly Jerusalem, as described in the Revelation.
“four living creatures” (Rev. 4:6–7) are the pillars that support the dome, each one dedicated to one of the Evangelists. Moreover, there are the “twenty-four other thrones on which twenty-four elders sat” (Rev. 4:4), represented by as many stylized faces at the base of the drum. They are surmounted by twelve arches: the “twelve gates where twelve angels were stationed” (Rev. 21:12). Angels statues have never been created, but their bases are evident.

Above there is “the river of life-giving water, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1); and higher, in the summit of the dome, “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:3) – the monogram of Christ between the Alpha and the Omega, drawn in a golden sun.

Originally, in the pavement of the nave corresponding to the dome, the zodiac symbols were represented. This place is, in fact, a little piece of sky, because it is near the altar. The place where the Heavenly Jerusalem comes down from the sky is seen from above, so the zodiac was put in the floor. God the Father, from His throne, looks at the sky (represented by the zodiac) coming down on the earth, which is the place where His project of salvation has already begun in the sacrifice of His Son, renewed in the Eucharist celebrated on the altar.

Everything in Saint Bavo Cathedral has a specific symbolic meaning, which makes every element – following the example of other majestic cathedrals – a catechism for the faithful.

A questionable liturgical restoration — completed at the end of the twentieth century — resulted in the demolition of the zodiac symbols on the floor and the creation of a modern altar and a new ambo in the presbytery. In spite of this, the cathedral preserved all its symbolic and theological meanings. We hope all these changes to the presbytery area will be soon repaired, not in order to bring the building back to its first condition, but to recreate the message that using symbols brings the faithful close to God.

Even if he used a less innovative architectural and artistic language compared to that found in Gaudi’s famous Sagrada Familia, Cuypers made the Saint Bavo Cathedral exactly how Monsignor Bottemanne wanted it for his diocese. He wrote his purpose in his own episcopal crest: Sicut Sponsa Ornata, “as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2). Here every stone predicts His imminent return to meet His bride.

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Care for God’s Creation:
Theological Implications of HVAC Maintenance

Jerry W. Lawson

America’s diverse faith traditions and their teachings are expressed through both soaring and humble architecture, in prayer and liturgy, in song and art, through financial support, and through gifts of time and talent. Given the fundamental role of the physical facility in the life of the congregation, it follows that facility management tasks subsequent to design and construction—which may seem mundane and repetitious—are integral to the success of the church mission. Skilled, professional operation and maintenance (O&M) not only drive and protect the facility, but also help realize and enhance the mission of the sacred space.

While the traditional pulpit and altar are both symbolic and functional, an efficiently operating heating/air-conditioning or lighting system hardly comes to members’ minds as woven into the church mission. However, facility managers understand how dependent we have become on energy-consuming buildings and equipment to achieve much of what we define as the work of the church. It is easy for facility managers to imagine reactions to the soup kitchen without refrigeration or cooking equipment; to church services, counseling, or community meetings without lighting or automation; or to congregating at whatever temperature and humidity the local weather dictated.

But does energy efficiency not require expensive, state-of-the-art, fully automated Energy Management Systems, expensive LED lighting, SEER 16 HVAC, argon gas-filled windows, and solar cells on the rectory? No, not at all. Every site is different, but it all starts with smart O&M and no-cost, low-cost, common-sense efficiency. Then, based on “return-on-investment,” you can leverage savings into costlier capital upgrades with higher savings.

Worship facilities—historic and new, small and large—are using energy efficiency to steward financial and natural resources in service to their faith. Here are a few examples.

Saint Frances Cabrini Church, West Point, Wisconsin

Saint Frances Cabrini Catholic Church of West Bend, Wisconsin, is the first Catholic church to achieve national ENERGY STAR® certification, and in November 2013 it was one of forty-two such U.S. worship facilities receiving commendation letters from President Obama. Certification indicates energy efficiency that is in the upper 25 percent for American worship facilities, as verified by a licensed professional architect or engineer.

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monroe, Michigan

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe, Michigan, is a past national ENERGY STAR award winner. This religious order was founded in 1885. Their 376,000-square-foot motherhouse was solidly built in 1932, but by the mid-1990s, many of the building’s systems had outlived their usefulness. However, the facility was still home for approximately 240 retired sisters, and was administrative headquarters for the congregation. The sisters considered constructing a new building but concluded it was more environmentally sound and consistent with their values to refurbish and upgrade the existing structure. The sisters reinstalled 800 restored windows, 500 refurbished doors, over 100 historic light fixtures retrofitted for CFLs, and a new geothermal system that provides heating and cooling. The sisters estimate they are saving nearly $180,000 in energy costs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by over four million pounds annually.
Swarthmore Presbyterian Church, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Swarthmore Presbyterian Church (SPC) in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, won the national ENERGY STAR congregations award for two consecutive years, with savings reaching 54 percent from their baseline year. SPC credits ongoing improvements, disciplined O&M practices, and use of ENERGY STAR tools and information.

From their first building in 1896, subsequent buildings connect around a central quadrangle, and the facility now totals 28,000 square feet. Nearly 35 percent of the present facility is a full-time nursery day school, and a staff of twelve serves approximately 900 members, with average attendance of 350 at Sunday services.

Swarthmore’s first ENERGY STAR award represented a 40 percent savings from baseline, but the church did not stop there. Savings from an initial HVAC upgrade helped replace one of two 440,000 Btu hydronic boilers with one ENERGY STAR-qualified, 195,000 Btu condensing boiler rated 95 percent efficient. The new boiler serves three heating zones controlled with programmable thermostats. An older water heater was replaced with a storage tank supplied by the new boiler. The remaining older boiler heats the least-used area, so was not a cost effective upgrade at the time.

Rezoning the central air conditioning into six zones controlled by dampers and programmable thermostats significantly increased comfort in administrative offices. A new roof over the office area included radiant-barrier rigid foam applied to the roof decking, and a white roof membrane for the flat section of the roof. Swarthmore Presbyterian Church estimates that they are saving more than $8,000 annually in energy costs.

First Baptist Church, Springdale, Arkansas

First Baptist Church and Shiloh Christian School of Springdale, Arkansas, is a past national ENERGY STAR award winner that began in 1870 as Landmark Liberty Baptist Church in the home of one of its thirteen members. Fast-forward to a worship center and two educational buildings built in 1979, followed since by regular renovations, repurposing, and new additions (including three different HVAC systems)—with a very large utility bill. By 2010, over a fourteen-month period, the church began saving $250,000 annually with no major overhaul or equipment replacement in its 330,000-square-foot facility. The energy manager credits monitoring energy use and patterns, as well as education and training of staff and members on how to better use energy, based on ENERGY STAR guidelines and working with an ENERGY STAR service and product provider.

ENERGY STAR-certified Green Castle Baptist Church of Louisville, Kentucky, was organized in July 1869 after word of the Emancipation Proclamation spread, and the church began prayer meetings in an old cabin along the banks of the Ohio River. After 127 years, incremental remodeling and expansion resulted in overcrowding that in 1996 led members to begin planning a new church. After a successful capital campaign, in 2005 the church began construction of an efficient new facility northeast of Louisville, Kentucky. In 2007, Green Castle Church held its first worship service in the new facility, which employed CFLs throughout, a tight building envelope with double-wrap ductwork, efficient windows...
with film to reduce solar heat gain, and computerized controls for zoned HVAC. The air handler unit (AHU) has separate coils for chilled and hot—each side being well insulated. The AHU monitors indoor and outdoor temperatures, pulling in fresh outdoor air as appropriate. Sixteen fan-powered terminal (FPT) units and five variable air volume (VAV) units are networked and computer controlled to optimize temperatures based on occupancy.

Conclusion

These ENERGY STAR congregations believe that good stewardship does not allow for wasting a third of their congregational energy budget, so they took action. They knew that money wasted on inefficient, unnecessary energy use directly takes away from the needs of the ministry, while also withholding nonrenewable natural resources from our children and their children. They understand that wasted energy unnecessarily generates toxic emissions that threaten human life and health globally as well as locally.

Fortunately, the reverse is also true, and saving money by saving energy reduces pollution that is particularly dangerous to the already ill, the elderly, the vulnerable poor, and those in the womb. Professionals who design, build, and maintain our sacred places have a special opportunity—arguably a responsibility—to achieve a cost-effective level of energy efficiency. In achieving an energy-efficient church, we are also helping care for God’s creation and for future generations.

The EPA’s ENERGY STAR

EPA’s primary mission is the protection of human life and health, as well as the natural resources and ecosystems that sustain us. In asserting with the faith community this common concern for human health, Administrator Gina McCarthy quotes President Obama, who said America must lead the transition toward a sustainable energy future to “preserve our planet, commanded to our care by God.”

EPA initiated ENERGY STAR to help Americans reduce energy waste through cost-effective strategies for more efficient products and buildings where we live, work, learn, shop—and worship. In 2012 alone, Americans—with the help of ENERGY STAR—saved $24 billion on energy costs and prevented 242 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), providing over $5.8 billion in additional benefits to society by reducing damages from climate change. Over the past twenty years, nearly 20,000 organizations have partnered with ENERGY STAR to cumulatively save over $230 billion on utility bills, while preventing more than 1.8 billion metric tons of GHG emissions.

The Conference for Catholic Facility Management (CCFM) has reinvigorated its Energy and Environment Committee and is working with ENERGY STAR to educate CCFM members. While more than twenty-five Catholic hospitals have achieved ENERGY STAR certification, only one Catholic church has earned the ENERGY STAR. However, discussions with CCFM and the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change indicate that many Catholic churches are striving to cut energy costs.

ENERGY STAR Strategic Energy Management

ENERGY STAR helps congregations with objective informational webinars and tech support, as well as two powerful tools for facility design and management: Portfolio Manager provides EPA’s 1–100 ENERGY STAR score for existing buildings, and Designed to Earn the Energy Star is for new construction—supported by ENERGY STAR’s staff architect. More than 70,000 individual account holders are tracking energy performance for over 350,000 commercial facilities in the free, online Portfolio Manager. Learn more at www.energystar.gov/benchmark and www.energystar.gov/CommercialBuilding-Design, and find more resources for church energy efficiency at www.energystar.gov/congregations.

Jerry W. Lawson is the National Manager for U.S. EPA’s ENERGY STAR congregations program. He previously served as Executive Director for Conservation, Customer Service, Rates and Forecasting at the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), a central Texas regional utility. Prior to LCRA, Lawson headed energy and water management for the City of Austin, Texas as Director for Resource Management. A native Arkansan, Lawson also served as Deputy Director for Conservation and Renewable Resources at the Arkansas state energy department.
Archer Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B.—the founder of Saint Vincent Archabbeby in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and “Patriarch” of the Benedictine Order in America—believed that it was the duty of monasteries to bring culture to America. In 1849, he wrote to his patron, King Ludwig I of Bavaria: “I have determined that our monasteries should not be simply schools for religion and learning, but should also serve as custodians of the fine arts and thus foster greater appreciation for culture…”

Artists and artisans were needed as part of Wimmer’s plan to spread the Benedictine Order across the continent. One of the most successful of these was Brother Cosmas Wolf, O.S.B. He was born Johann in Bavarian Swabia on June 20, 1821, and was educated to at least the age of fifteen. In addition, he apparently had art training before coming to the United States to become a Benedictine lay-brother at Saint Vincent Archabbeby in 1853.

Shortly after receiving his monastic training and making vows, Brother Cosmas went back to Bavaria in 1857 to study sculpture under the church designer Johann N. Petz. He returned to America in 1862, and became the founding director of the Covington Altar Building Stock Company in Kentucky. It was a prolific studio that fulfilled the needs of Catholic German-Americans throughout what is called the “German Triangle,” creating and designing everything from altars, paintings, pulpits, and church windows to altar sets, croziers, and sacred vessels.

Brother Cosmas assembled some of the best church artists of the nineteenth century to assist him, including the painters Johann Schmitt and Wilhelm Lamprecht, and he took on an apprentice by the name of Frank Duvencek, who later became one of the most important artists and teachers in the American Impressionism movement.

From 1862 to 1868, the studio worked on projects for as many as nineteen churches in seven different states. Some of the more important projects were altars for Saint Francis Xavier Church and Saint Francis Seraph Church, both in Cincinnati, Ohio; Saint Joseph Church, Covington, Kentucky; Saint Boniface Church in Quincy, Illinois; and Saint Mary’s Abbey Church in Newark, New Jersey. Unfortunately, none of those projects—except most of the sculptures from the altars in Newark—exist today. This is also the case for many of the studio’s other projects. Some have been destroyed by tragic fires, tornadoes, and floods; some have been razed; others were dismantled due to changing liturgical...
tastes. However, many of these works can still be known by studying Brother Cosmas’s original design drawings, of which there are more than eighty in the Saint Vincent Art Collections.

By 1868, Brother Cosmas relocated his studio to Saint Vincent Archabbey, where he expanded his talents to include architecture. He designed multiple churches, monasteries, and schools, as well as at least one house. Some of these buildings have been identified as corresponding to ones at Saint Mary’s Abbey in Newark, New Jersey, and Saint Benedict’s Abbey in Atchison, Kansas. Although he has been credited with the planning and execution of many of the buildings at Saint Vincent between 1862 and 1894, no corroborating drawings have yet been found.

Brother Cosmas remained active, continuing to design buildings, altars, and other church furnishings until his death in 1894. Although his life has been relatively uncelebrated, his art has touched the lives of thousands of people through his altars, designs, and buildings in dozens of churches and religious communities spanning ten different states.

The Saint Vincent Gallery at Saint Vincent College recently had a retrospective exhibition on Brother Cosmas and his work. There is a catalog available.

Architectural plan for a chapel, 1875. It is not known if this proposal was for an actual project, and if it was built.

Front elevation for a large Neo-Gothic church, 1889. Although not identified, it is believed that this drawing was a proposal for a new abbey church at Saint Vincent, which was being planned at that time.

Brother Nathan Cochran, O.S.B., is a monk of Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. He is the Curator of the Saint Vincent Art Collections, Director of the Saint Vincent Gallery, and Chair of the Department of Visual Arts at Saint Vincent College.
His Grace, Archbishop Alexander K. Sample gave the following homily at the Solemn Dedication and Consecration of Shepherd of the Valley Catholic Church, Central Point, Oregon on October 13, 2013:

What a glorious day for this faith community of the Shepherd of the Valley! As your new archbishop, I could not be more overjoyed that my first visit to this part of the archdiocese is to dedicate this church, which you have built to the glory of God and for the salvation of souls in this part of God’s vineyard. You, my dear friends, are to be sincerely congratulated. You have done something wonderful here, and I hope you realize that. To realize this is the first of two churches that I will dedicate just in my first several months here brings me great joy.

But this day is yours. This day is for you to celebrate what you as a community have been able to do, under the leadership of your pastor, Father Walker. You have built a beautiful church, and you and your descendants will spend many, many years worshipping and being nourished by God’s Word and the Sacraments in this church. Congratulations. I have only been here a short time, so maybe it sounds out of place for me to say this, but I am so proud of you and what you have done.

I thought a good way to reflect on the meaning of this day is to reflect on the rite, the ritual that we have already begun and that will continue throughout the rest of this dedication Mass.

Sprinkling of the Church

The next thing we did was bless holy water, and we sprinkled both you and the walls of this church with it. Why?

First of all, to remind us of our baptism, when we became members of the Body of Christ—when we were incorporated into Christ’s saving Death and Resurrection for the first time. We are the baptized. And therefore we are the living temple of God, the living temple of the Holy Spirit. As beautiful as this church was before you came in, it is all the more beautiful now that the living temple has gathered. Yes, this house of worship is gorgeous and it is a fitting place of worship that you have raised up to the glory of God, and I do not want to take anything away from this beautiful building. But you are the real temple. You, the People of God in whom dwells the Holy Spirit.

I also sprinkled the walls of this church and the soon-to-be altar because we are consecrating this building, we are setting this building aside for one purpose—for divine worship. This building will be used for nothing else. You are not going to rent this building out as a movie theater or as a hall to have a dinner. This house belongs to God, and we dedicate it to God today.

I sprinkled the walls of this church to bless it, but also to ward off all the power of evil from this place. Holy water, wherever it is sprinkled, causes Satan and his demons to flee. We want to, in a certain sense, exorcise these materials that have been used to build this church. As Pope Francis reminds us, Satan is real, and when we sprinkle ourselves or objects—including this church—with holy water, we banish him. He does not belong here.

Then, of course, we heard the Word of God. What is coming next?

Litany of the Saints

The next thing we are going to do is call upon the saints to come, to join us, because we are part of the Communion of Saints. Some of you with a little more gray hair might remember us talking about the Communion of Saints as being composed of the Church Triumphant, those who have already gone to heaven; the Church Suffering, those in purgatory who undergo that final purification to be brought into the pres-
ence of the Lord; and the Church Militant, the “Church us,” still on this earth working out our salvation. We will join with all the saints as we invite them in prayer to come to be with us, to protect us, to intercede for us.

**Depositing of the Relic**
Then I will deposit in this altar, underneath the mensa, the relic of a saint, Saint John Neumann. This is to remind us again that we are always united to the saints at the altar, but also to remind us that in the earliest days of the Church, the Church under persecution, the early Christians used to gather in the catacombs and celebrate the holy Mass over the tombs of the martyrs. We remember that solemnly two thousand years later—that we still are united to the saints; we are still connected to those first Christians.

**Prayer of Dedication**
Then we will solemnly dedicate this church and this altar. I will say a solemn prayer of dedication, setting aside this house of worship for God, for listening to His Word and for celebrating His Sacraments. I will say a prayer dedicating this altar to the service of God as the place to offer sacrifice.

**Anointing the Altar**
And then I will anoint this altar. Anoint it. Just as you were anointed on the day of your baptism as a temple of the Holy Spirit, and in Confirmation you were anointed with the sacred chrism as you received the Holy Spirit. We are going to use that same oil, chrism, the Christ oil, to anoint the top of this altar, consecrating it as a place to offer sacrifice. And brothers and sisters, please be aware that we are dedicating an altar, and an altar is always a place where sacrifice is offered. Yes, the Eucharist is also a sacred banquet and in an analogous way we can speak of this as a table of the Lord from which we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, but it is always first and foremost an altar, a place where sacrifice is offered.

The sacrifice that is offered here is the once-for-all sacrifice that Jesus offered on the altar of the Cross, when He gave Himself into our hands, nailed our sins to the Cross, conquered death and sin forever, and opened for us the way to eternal life. In every Mass we make present again that same sacrifice. Jesus comes to us under the appearance of bread and wine at the altar. We unite the sacrifice of our life with His here as He offers Himself in a sacramental, unbloody manner once again to the Father for our salvation.

This is an altar, and a place of sacrifice. That is why it is solid. This altar is not going anywhere. It is the central focal point of our worship.

It also represents Christ: that is why it will be anointed; that is why we bow to it; that is why we kiss it—because it represents Christ in our midst. It will be wholly dedicated to Him and His sacrifice.

**Anointing the Walls of the Church**
Then I will also anoint in four places the walls of the church, because this house also is to be anointed and dedicated as a place set aside for divine worship.

**Incensing, Covering, and Lighting the Altar**
Then, we will come back to the altar. You will see us light a flaming brazier and place incense on it. In a way that you will never see again, incense will rise from this altar. Those are your prayers rising up to Heaven. We read in the Book of Revelation that the incense rising from the church are the prayers of God’s people. When you gather and unite your prayers at this altar, they too are offered to our Heavenly Father.

We will incense the altar itself and you in the church, to give honor and blessing. We will honor this altar now because it will have been dedicated, consecrated, and anointed to the service of Christ.

Then, we will dress it, vest the altar, make it beautiful, and we will place lights at the altar. We will solemnly light the candles of this altar for the first time. That reminds us that Christ the Light is present.

We light those candles also to remind us that you are the light of the world. You are the light in this community of Central Point and the surrounding area. You are called to be the light of the world, piercing the darkness that so many live in. This church must not be just for you. It must be a beacon of hope, and a light to others so that they too will come to see by your lives and by your witness the love and the mercy of Christ.

**Celebration of the Eucharist**
Then, of course, we will offer on this altar for the first time the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Jesus Christ in His holy Eucharist will become present for us for the first time. After Holy Communion we will reserve the Blessed Sacrament—our Lord, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity—in the tabernacle, and He will dwell with you. He will be present here in the sanctuary. He comes to live with you.

This is a very important day for all of you, and I am so pleased and happy to be able to share it with you.

The Most Reverend Alexander K. Sample was born in Montana in 1960, and studied at the Pontifical College Josephinum Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, before being ordained a priest for the Diocese of Marquette, Michigan, in 1990. His Excellency was ordained as Bishop of Marquette in 2006 and in 2013 was appointed the eleventh Archbishop of Portland, Oregon.
“Touchstone exemplifies, in my mind, true ecumenical conversation and cooperation. I look forward to receiving each issue and usually find myself reading each issue in its entirety. Certainly, Touchstone has helped me to think more deeply about many aspects of the Christian faith and of its practice in a pervasively secularized society.”

— Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, Cardinal Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura
BOOK REVIEW

BEAUTY OFFERED ON THE ALTAR


Reviewed by Julio Bermudez

What initially seems to be “only” an introductory book about the foundations of Catholic worship places soon reveals itself as a source of not only useful information but also, more significantly, profound insights and provocative meditation. As a result, The Church: Unlocking the Secrets of the Places Catholics Call Home will prove helpful and inspiring for those interested in deepening or widening their understanding of sacred space and art in general—and Catholic churches in particular—no matter how much they know already. Going through this pleasantly written book means to consider every material aspect of Catholic worship through a rich and engaging commentary using a wide variety of historical sources, some dating back to the Early Church Fathers. This returning to young Christianity serves to remind the reader of the original sacred intention behind a particular physical manifestation, be it form, space, furnishing, imagery, etc. This is necessary because, the authors tell us, “as Christians are drawn into doctrinal and theological reflections, they can lose touch with the original and ordinary meanings.” Such honest and refreshing meditation on elemental issues is one of the most attractive qualities of this intelligent and sensitive book. Certainly, it brings life and understanding to intelligent and sensitive book. Certainly, it brings life and understanding to

surprisingly, we find Cardinal Wuerl and Aquilina often pointing at the natural and basic role that beauty needs to play in inviting, affirming, and celebrating the sense of awe, grace, and love associated with the presence of God. In fact, this book’s high regard for aesthetics, along with its contemplative interest in fundamental issues, provides the necessary fodder for great architectural design meditations. For example, the discussion on doors is something that every architecture professor could bring into the design studio to illuminate the issue of entry, passage, or threshold (in this case, between the holy and the mundane). The chapter on the tabernacle is as fascinating as it is moving, with far-reaching implications (architectural and otherwise) when we come to terms with Jesus Christ’s presence or dwelling in the world as (etymologically speaking) “tabernacling.” And who would know of the remarkable mutation that takes place in the sacristy and how little most architects and artists have looked into its incredible potential for expression and support? In these as in other occasions, the book does unlock the secrets behind Catholic churches, as its subtitle promises us. These revelations, often emerging from revisiting Catholic beginnings, not only remind the faithful of the reasons for doing what they do today but also, most provocatively, encourage potential new vistas of other, perhaps more loving, truthful ways for bringing forth the faith. This incredible gift to human creativity does not miss the forest for the trees, however. While consciously avoiding dictating a particular manner by which to pursue sacred art and architecture, Cardinal Wuerl and Aquilina are quite clear about the absolute centrality that the experience of the Eucharist—the Mass—must play in the conception, design, detailing, and construction of every church. Hence, they keep on emphasizing that Catholic churches are built out of love, to tell the love story, Christ’s sacrifice, and to extend an unending invitation to partake in that love. And it is in the love story of the Word Incarnate where we find the “sacramental principle,” that uniquely and identifiably Catholic seal that explains the important role that buildings and other material expressions play in supporting and advancing the faith. This Catholic conviction that matter “may mediate God’s presence in the world” provides anyone related to building churches with the inspiration and duty to do their best aesthetic work in a manner whereby beauty “is offered on the altar, not made an end in itself.” As the authors put it, in the architects’ effort “we see their love of beauty, but their greater love for God.”

The search for architectural excellence is thus not about someone’s ego, institutional power, or cultural manipulation but rather a humble, principled, and heartfelt service to the love story that the Church must keep ever alive and share with the whole world. The respect and earnest pursuit of this mission is what has allowed the Catholic Church to be responsible for, arguably, the best architecture and art that the Western world has produced over the past two millennia.

In short, The Church is a straightforward, insightful, and fast-reading book that is full of valuable information, down-to-earth scholarship, practical advice, inspirational contemplation, and design and artistic opportunities. Anyone interested in sacred architecture in general—but certainly those concerned with Catholic churches—should get a copy of this wonderful manuscript. Perusing it will no doubt rejuvenate existing understanding, inspire the purest imagination, invigorate the trust of beauty, and deepen one’s faith.

Dr. Julio Bermudez is an Associate Professor who directs the Sacred Space and Cultural Studies graduate concentration at the Catholic University of America School of Architecture and Planning. He co-founded the Forum for Architecture, Culture and Spirituality in 2007 (www.acsforum.org).

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Few authors have considered the built environment in terms of Christianity. In his book *The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment*, Eric Jacobsen does just that. His discussion of an ambitious list of urban issues ranges from more utilitarian issues, such as the relationship of houses to streets and sustainability, to the more spiritual issues of the role of the Church in the built environment and its acknowledgement of the dignity of the poor. Using biblical references, the insight of major urban movements, and his own experiences, Jacobsen inspires readers to reconsider how the built form of their surroundings may inhibit their ability to lead a full Christian life.

Jacobsen artfully weaves together the linear progression of the story of redemption, which starts in the Garden and ends in the Heavenly City, with our understanding of the urban environment. He states that in our place and time we are not yet in the Heavenly City; however, we can and should work toward it.

As Jacobsen argues, our nature is flawed and our built environments are also, but to believe that either is intrinsically bad because of these flaws is to reject the truth, beauty, and goodness of being in the image and likeness of God. These flaws are a result of sin; thus, we are called to live out and work toward our collective redemption. As we encounter sin along the path of redemption, Jacobsen writes that there are three responses: *nostalgia*, *revolution*, and *redemption*.

Nostalgia, or the turning back to the way things were, is a reverting back to the Garden and is epitomized by aspects of the historical preservation movement as well as the romanticizing of rural life that pervades American sensibilities. Nostalgia ignores the fact that creation is not only meant to be preserved, but also cultivated and built upon for the ultimate good.

Revolution erases the memory of all prior knowledge and starts over. For example, the Urban Renewal movement revolted against the complexity of a traditional city, replacing it with repetitive groups of large buildings that denied the dignity of individuals living within the buildings. Revolution ignores the wisdom of the past and places all hope in itself.

On the contrary, redemption uses memory as a starting point and places its hope in God as it strives for higher levels of goodness in a community and culture. Jacobsen states, “To reject our placement within the flow of salvation history by nostalgically longing for an earlier time or trying to erase the past increases our sense of control or reduces our anxiety in exchange for a replacement...marked by banality and ugliness.”

Jacobsen goes on to discuss redemption and the role of the Church in the city by contrasting the embedded church (churches built directly adjacent to other buildings with their main façade and entrance on the street) with the insular church (churches built back from the roads and largely surrounded by parking lots). He argues that the embedded church bears direct witness of faith to the surrounding community in simple but profound ways, such as the flow of the faithful walking by as they gather for worship. In this way, the embedded church communicates with, attracts, and welcomes pedestrians into the church from the street.

Meanwhile, the insular church is entirely isolated, and the only outward sign of the faithful gathering for worship is the full parking lot. At best there may be a large sign placed out on the road in lieu of the traditional open doors with a threshold that artfully communicates the crossing over to the sacred.

Jacobsen goes on to contrast the experiences of the faithful as they are dismissed. In the case of the embedded church, the faithful would exit through the sacred threshold, spilling out down the stairs and dispersing gradually into the surrounding community, with ample opportunity to love and serve the Lord along the way. Conversely, in the insular church, the faithful abruptly leave the “sacred space” to enter their private vehicles, drive for a distance, pull into their garage, and enter their house with virtually no interaction with the outside world.

Readers of all backgrounds have much to glean from Eric Jacobsen’s thought-provoking commentary regarding the built environment and its interplay with the Christian life.


Through a series of topical chapters supported by personal stories of their fellow members in the Christian Community Development Association, they argue that communities are developed largely on a personal level. The authors advocate their “three Rs” of community development: *relocation*, *reconciliation*, and *redistribution*. Since the cultural and political associations with these terms can be problematic, the authors work to redefine these terms.

Gordon and Perkins write that relocation is for the purpose of being physically present within the community that you are trying to help, rather than working from the outside to impose solutions. Reconciliation involves working to achieve understanding rather than to eliminate conflicts, and it requires the intervention of God.
Redistribution is more about providing equal opportunity and less about taking from the wealthy to give to the poor, although the authors agree that we are to be stewards of the portion given to us and understand it in terms of the Bible verse: “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared all they had” (Acts 4:32).

Both books provide clear examples of how we as Christians can work toward building the City of God in our interaction with those around us, and in shaping our built environment.

CLAIMING CIVIC SPACE


Reviewed by William L. Portier

On a hill in the Brookland neighborhood of Northeast Washington, D.C., on the campus of Catholic University, stands the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. To the task of writing the Shrine’s history, Thomas Tweed brings all the methodological resources of contemporary religious studies, from material history and ethnography to old-fashioned work with archives and census records.

The story of the Shrine begins in the mind of its “chief source of inspiration” (29), Bishop Thomas J. Shahan, a patristic scholar and rector of Catholic University. In a 1913 audience, Shahan gained Pope Pius X’s approval. Cardinal Gibbons laid the foundation stone in 1920. By 1931 the Shrine’s lower level with the Crypt Church and its Mary altar was completed. The Great Depression and World War II stalled progress on the building. Some denounced it as a “Hall of Disappointment” or “shapeless bit of masonry” (42–43). The Marian year of 1954 provided impetus, and in 1959 the building was finally dedicated.

Tweed names the period from 1913 to 1959 an age of consolidation characterized by what he aptly describes as a “triumphalist Americanism” and a “selective counter-modernism.” He organizes the book’s six chapters around six “clerical aims” characteristic of the age and a corresponding piece of material culture associated with each aim: institution building (the 1920 foundation stone), mobilizing women (the Mary altar), engaging children (a comic book image from Treasure Chest), contesting Protestants (the Crypt Church), claiming civic space (the Great Dome), and incorporating immigrants (the chapel to Our Lady of Antipolo in the Philippines). Though these are “clerical” aims, Tweed shows that the Shrine is not “just about bishops.” With the exception of absent African Americans and Amerindians, he explores the presence and agency of the Shrine’s donors and users, as well as its makers. Tweed highlights the shared devotion to Mary that united its diverse constituents and made the Shrine work, a fact that easily slipped from view in the polarized age of fragmentation that followed the 1960s.

Though not as large as Saint Peter’s in Rome or the Episcopal Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City, the Shrine is a massive building, “the largest Roman Catholic worship space in North America and one of the ten largest churches in the world” (23). At 459 feet, the Shrine is not as long as Washington National Cathedral, located in a more fashionable Northwest Washington neighborhood, but the combined square footage of the upper and lower churches is larger (289n1). The design of the lower level and especially of the Crypt Church expressed Shahan’s intent to replicate the feel and the religious art of the recently excavated Roman catacombs, and thereby to “transport visitors to the narrow subterranean burial chambers of Rome” (150), with their sense of God’s closeness. Ceramic artist Mary Chase Stratton modeled the ceramic art of the Crypt Church on catacomb art, especially representations of Mary.

The Shrine’s Byzantine-Romanesque style contrasts with the Gothic of the Washington National Cathedral. Its distinguishing architectural features are the imposing 329-foot tower, donated by the Knights of Columbus, and, in the words of a Washington Post reporter Tweed quotes, a “brilliant multi-colored dome … high on its northeast hill” (189). Though the tower falls short of the 555-foot Washington Monument, its elevated location makes it, along with the polychromatic dome set atop the crossing of the nave and the transepts, visible from all over the city of Washington. The dome parallels Saint Mark’s in Venice, a Byzantine basilica in turn modeled on Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. It both evokes the style of the U.S. Capitol (within sight at the southern end of North Capitol Street) and distinguishes the Shrine from the National Cathedral. Over the years, the Shrine’s distinctive features have largely achieved its makers’ aim of claiming civic space and becoming a landmark in the capital city.

Based on years of research and Tweed’s dazzling, interdisciplinary methodological sophistication, America’s Church is a landmark study that deserves to be widely read by specialists in architecture and American religious history, as well as by people who simply want to learn about Mary’s shrine in Washington.

Kalinda Gathinji, RA, AIA, is a Project Architect currently working on mixed-use multifamily residential buildings in Bethesda, MD. Experienced in liturgical architecture, she takes a special interest in the art, architecture, and theology of the Church in the city.

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William L. Portier serves as the Mary Ann Spearin Chair of Catholic Theology in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Dayton. His most recent book is Divided Friends, Portraits of the Roman Catholic Modernist Crisis in the United States (CUA Press, 2013).
IDEAL NUDE OR BEAUTY EXCITING TO LUST?

Reviewed by Duncan Stroik

Common wisdom has been that the Counter-Reformation sought to undo Renaissance achievements and to enforce a narrow and prurient view of art. This fine set of essays offers a more nuanced view of the debates that accompanied the reform of art during this time. Among the protagonists are bishops, authors, popes, and two saints.

Archbishop Paleotti of Bologna sought to create a list of criteria for religious art, yet others in the Church hierarchy disagreed and the list was never promulgated (for a review of Paleotti’s book see Sacred Architecture, Issue 24). The bishops and the theologians who attended the Council of Trent from 1545 to 1563 did not treat the issue of sacred images until the last minute only due to the late participation of the French. As Pope Pius IV and other bishops implemented Trent’s decree on images, they reflected two theological traditions: the Augustinian emphasis on the Fall and Redemption and the emphasis on being created in God’s image. The Council of Trent’s decrees reaffirmed the principle of reaching the invisible through the visible but also criticized lasciviousness and superstition in art.

Beginning in the early Renaissance, it was believed that carnality could express spiritual truths. Inspired by Neo-Platonism, beautiful bodies were understood as expressive of sanctity. Beauty could lead the soul to contemplation and to a higher realm. Nudity, even of Christ, could be acceptable, as seen in crucifixes. As religious reform gathered steam, nudity in art, once generally acceptable, became hotly debated. The centrality of the nude body in Florentine art had been prominent. People remarked first on the bodies rather than on the religious meaning. Raffaello Borghini’s Il Riposo of 1584 offers a variety of perspectives on the question of the ideal nude in both secular and religious art. One character admires Bronzino’s Christ in Limbo but admits it might be more appropriate for a house than a church.

Michelangelo’s Last Judgment (1536-41) is the most notorious of Tridentine modifications. On January 21, 1564, shortly after Trent, the Sistine fresco was censured for its lack of decorum, and it was decreed that the nude figures should be draped. Aretino and Ludovico Dolce characterized the nudes as an offense to Saint Peter and the chapel’s visitors. In his Dialogue on the Abuse of History, Gilio criticized the artist of “error in his portrayal of sacred history by nudity and by contorting the body so it appears in a dance rather than in contemplation.” The additions of clothing and the repainting of Saints Catherine and Blaise began in 1564 and continued over the next two centuries.

Paleotti in his Discorso of 1582 divided the audience for art into four types: painters, spirituals, educated, and uneducated (the majority). In their Trattato of 1652, Ottonelli and Pietro da Cortona define “immodest images” as those which cause impure thoughts, while Rosignoli in the Pittura of 1696 writes that nude Venuses can “pervert the imprudent and those with poor dispositions.” If an image was obscene, it could be destroyed, but better would be una spirituale transformatione whereby a painter could add clothing and turn a nude Venus into a penitent Magdalene.

One response to Trent’s rulings was Pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini’s visitation of twenty-eight churches in Rome from 1592 to 1596, which resulted in a number of spiritual transformations. While the main emphasis was the morality and piety of the clergy, art was also treated. The pope made the visits with an entourage that included priests from the circles of Saint Philip Neri and Saint Charles Borromeo, resulting in instructions for repair and ornamentation of the churches. In their review of sacred art, the pope and his committee had a desire for decorum and historical accuracy and requested the removal of profane or pagan imagery. At Saint Peter’s Basilica, Clement ordered that the partly nude allegories on Pope Paul III’s funerary monument “be moved or more decently covered up.” In San Pietro in Vincoli he ordered that a less decent image of the Magdalene be removed from the prior’s cell and be sold. Not surprisingly, the instructions were often met with resistance from the religious community and the patrons. At the Gesu, Clement condemned Pulzone’s Lamentation altarpiece due to the way that the Magdalene was caressing the feet of Christ, but the painting was never modified.

Saint Charles Borromeo, reforming archbishop of Milan (1564–84), promoted the use of a wooden partition down the nave of a church to divide the sexes for greater modesty and devotion. While he allowed benches for sitting and kneeling on the north (or women’s) side, he ordered men to stand or kneel. Borromeo was also likely the inventor of the closed confessional, so that confessor and penitent could not see or touch one another. The first built-in confessional is found in Tibaldi’s drawing for San Fedele of 1567.

Saint Philip Neri (1515–95) believed that the senses lead the viewer from mundane beauty to divine glory. Philip would sit for hours in front of a crucifix or Barocci’s Visitation in Chiesa Nuova and go into ecstasy. His canonization proceedings are full of episodes where Christ or the Virgin appeared to him. He saw painting as a language in which the artists spoke not to men’s ears but to their souls. While Saint Ignatius valued interior revelations, Philip believed that exterior manifestations were a necessary means of bringing the human and divine into contact. At Chiesa Nuova, it was Philip’s idea to turn the mysteries of the life of the Virgin into fourteen side altarpieces, where they became silent homilies to move the senses.

Duncan Stroik is the Editor of Sacred Architecture.

Reviewed by Father C. John McCloskey, III

The distinguished team of papal biographer George Weigel, his photographer-son Stephen (who handles the illustrations), and well-known art and architecture historian, professor, author, and tour guide resident in Rome Elizabeth Lev have collaborated to produce The Station Churches of Rome.

At first glance this work might be dismissed as yet another expensive coffee table book, but it is much more. Indeed it could variously be classified under the headings of Church history, architecture, archaeology, liturgy, art, tour guide, or spiritual reading. Let us just say that this is a magnificent book about religion and in particular about a religious practice—pilgrimage—that predates both Rome and Christianity. In particular, the book chronicles an ancient Roman pilgrimage to the Station Churches during the connected liturgical Seasons of Lent and Easter.

Christians adopted the practice of pilgrimage from their spiritual forbear, the ancient Israelites, when Christianity ceased to be a persecuted Church of the catacombs after Constantine’s Edict of Milan brought her out from illegality and persecution. This particular pilgrimage has experienced a revival in recent years, particularly with the beginning of the new millennium in 2000 that was so gloriously celebrated in the lands of Christianity and especially in Rome. The timing argues that at least part of the credit should go to the influence of our newly canonized Saint John Paul II, who was surely the greatest pilgrim in history. His frequent flyer miles alone would have brought him to Heaven regardless of his sanctity.

John Paul explained the dynamic of pilgrimage in his own words in 1999, in his letter on pilgrimage:

To go in a spirit of prayer from one place to another ... helps us not only live our lives as a journey, but also gives us a vivid sense of a God who has gone before us and leads us on, who himself set out on man’s path, a God who does not look down on us from on high, but who has become our traveling companion.

The revival of this private practice of weekday visits to the designated ancient Stational Churches began in the mid-1970s when the American seminarians and student priests began walking the pilgrims’ road through Rome before dawn in order to celebrate a Lenten Mass at 7:00 a.m. The practice became very popular with English-speaking members of the Curia, and then it exploded in popularity among the many hundreds of people coming to Rome from all over the world during the holy liturgical season leading up to Easter.

For readers less interested in piety, liturgical practices, Catholic history, and Church architecture and more interested in the remnants of an even older Rome, well, as it happens these churches are located right in the heart of ancient Rome and are surrounded by impressive signs of her faded glory. Along the Stations, one passes artifacts and ruins that jog the cultural memory with considerable frequency: the Forum, for example, where Cicero and others argued for the superiority of law over brute force in the governing of states and peoples; the Coliseum, reminder of the perennial human attraction to sport—and the perennial human attraction to cruelty; the arches of Titus, who despoiled the Temple of Jerusalem, and of Constantine, who initiated the troubled relationship between Christianity and state power from which some Christian countries have only just begun to extract themselves in the past two centuries; the tale of Saturn and La Bocca della Verità, reminders of the paganism and superstition still underlying the surface of modern Roman life; and the Baths of Caracalla, once a different kind of naked public square, and now a venue for opera.

Reading and studying this book carefully over time would be the equivalent of a one-quarter college course in religion, art and architecture, history of Rome, liturgy, painting, iconography, fundamentals of the Catholic Church, and of course pilgrimages.

The passion for pilgrimages continues to grow with globalization and affordable international air travel. Millions of Catholics make pilgrimages to Marian shrines such as Lourdes, Fatima, and Guadalupe each year. And of course Muslims in the millions make the Hajj to Mecca. Jews are able for the first time in centuries to flock to the Western Wall of Herod’s Temple, some from all over the world. Tens of millions of Hindus participate in pilgrimage every twelve years to the Ganges River to worship their gods.

But Rome is, well, Rome! The foundation of Western thought and culture and the city from which Christianity spread throughout the world. The only experience that would improve on reading this book is to make the trip to Rome and visit the Station Churches with this book in hand.

Father C. John McCloskey, III, STD is a priest of the Prelature of Opus Dei. He currently is a Research Fellow of the Faith and Reason Institute in Washington, D.C.

In this compelling narrative account of the mid-1900s archaeological discovery of the bones of Saint Peter in the grottoes beneath Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome, Thomas Craughwell conveys the suspense of the discovery. He also explains the life of Saint Peter and the history of the various structures built over his tomb, from a simple *tropaion* to the grand sixteenth-century basilica.


This pamphlet-length addition to the *Deeper Christianity Series* of the Catholic Truth Society provides a concise introduction and overview of sacred architecture. Steven Schroeder explains the purpose of a church by grounding it in sacramental theology and Scriptural imagery of the Body of Christ, the Temple, and the Heavenly City.


The medieval Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim commissioned many works of art, including an illustrated manuscript of the Gospels that he presented to the monks of Saint Michael’s Abbey near Hildesheim as a founding gift to the monastery around the year 1015. In this book, Jennifer Kingsley analyzes the program of illustrations, focusing on its miniatures both individually and as a whole, while also exploring what the pictorial cycle conveys about the bishop’s role in the Church and how he wanted that role to be perceived. The book includes several black and white images and a section of color plates.


A collection of the papers given at a conference of the same title, the theme of these essays is Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj’s contributions to art in the Late Baroque period in Rome, both through commissions and by acquiring a large personal and family collection. With contributions in both English and Italian, this book covers the interdisciplinary interests of the Cardinal, including music, poetry, theology, art, and architecture.
“Interspersing his text with quotes from Church documents on architecture and liturgy, as well as voices of past architects and popes, Stroik weaves a rich tapestry of tradition in continuity, a conception of design that takes the Eucharist as its center.”
- Amanda Clark, The Catholic World Report

“Stroik unpacks the scriptural images of the Church and shows how they can be incarnated in the church building...he marshals Sacred Scripture and Tradition to show that the church is to be a sign of heavenly realities, a foretaste of Paradise and therefore elegant, beautiful, monumental, and as splendid as the local church can afford.” - Father Giles Dimock, OP

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