We all know that the poor need food and clothing, decent education and good jobs. But what about their spiritual and cultural needs? Can a church building serve the poor spiritually through the material? It is an expensive proposition, but I would suggest the answer is yes. Which leads us to the question, how can we design a church for the poor?

First, consider what a church for the poor is not: it is not a church for ascetic monks, who take a vow of poverty, spend their days in prayer, and prefer the simple beauty of the cloister to the richness and chaos of the world. On the contrary, a church for the poor should be seen as a place for full-blooded laypeople who need to be drawn into the building through material and tactile means. It is a respite from the world that offers a glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem to those living in Nineveh.

A church for the poor does not have paintings of abstract or ugly figures but is full of beautiful images of holy men and women who overcame their sinfulness to draw close to God. Even more important, a church for the poor shows the poor their mother who comforts and their God Who forgives. A church for the poor is full of signs, symbols, and sacraments: outward signs of inward grace. It cannot be a place where the sacrament of salvation is hidden away, for it should be raised up like Christ on the cross offering His body for our healing.

A house for the poor should not be a modernist structure inspired by the machine, for the poor are surrounded and even enslaved by the machine and the technological. It is rather a building inspired by the human body, the New Adam, and the richness of His creation. Those whose lives may touch on angst and suffering do not need a contorted building exhibiting disharmony and atonality. Instead they need an architecture of healing, which through proportions, materials, and spiritual light brings joy to the heart. A church that is welcoming to those in the state of poverty should not be a theatre church where the visitor is forced to be on stage. Their dignity is respected by allowing them to sit where they want, even if that means in the back or in a side chapel. The lighting cannot be so bright that one’s deficiencies are revealed to others; there should be a place for prayerful shadow.

A church for the poor is not hidden away in the suburbs or on a highway where it may never be seen and is difficult to get to. It should be placed where the poor are—near the poor villages or the destitute city neighborhoods and in prominent places like downtowns or city parks where the poor sometimes travel. A church for the poor does not close its school just because it is under-enrolled or in financial difficulty. Caritas understands that service to those in need is not optional, nor is it meant to be cheap and easy. In the same way, dioceses should seek creative ways for inner-city parishes to remain open even when finances would argue otherwise. One thinks of Our Lady of the Angels and its school, located in a tough Chicago neighborhood and reopened by Cardinal George and Franciscan Bob Lombardo after being closed for fifteen years.

A church for the poor should not look impoverished. It is one of the few public buildings that those without status or money are always welcome to enter. The poor may not often visit the art museum, the symphony hall, or the stately hotel. However, a worthy church can give the poor the experience of art, fine music, and nobility that the rich and middle class are happy to pay for. And in this way the Church acknowledges that high culture should be even for those who have nothing. Bishop Suger probably had it right when he rebuilt Saint Denis and invested in beautiful vessels, altars, and statues to draw the gaze of the common folk towards the mysteries of the faith.

A church for the poor is not only for the poor, it is for all—both rich and poor, proud and humble. Are there iconographical elements that might draw the needy and inspire others to give? Perhaps images of poverty in the lives of holy saints such as Francis, Dominic, Mother Teresa, and many others. Along with these, a church for the poor should have murals, stained glass, and side altars portraying the centrality of poverty in the life of Christ: The King is born in a stable, and His family must immigrate to a foreign land to survive. He displays compassion for the poor, the leper, the widow, and the mother. He raises the dead. He lives as a mendicant, reliant on the generosity of others for food and lodging (from both priests and tax collectors). He introduces many parables—like the widow’s mite or the prodigal son—that speak powerfully to all those in hunger and poverty.

But can the poor or the uneducated understand these images or appreciate beauty? When the poor see beauty do they see God? Why? Because “beauty” is God’s middle name.

What building can better point the poor towards Christ than a church: a house of God that welcomes them, embraces them, and lifts them up.

Duncan Stroik
Notre Dame, October 2014
Sacred Architecture

Issue 26 2014

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Journal of the Institute for Sacred Architecture
The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth replaced 430 windows in their motherhouse in New Jersey, designed by Patrick Keely in the 1860s. Joseph DeMaria was the architect for the project and Parrett Windows & Doors fabricated the new windows in the same Second Empire Baroque style as the originals.

The Association for the Beatification of Antoni Gaudí traveled to Rome last Spring and had the opportunity to meet with Pope Francis, whom they presented with a sculpture of the late Spanish architect. The sculpture was created by Japanese artist Etsuro Sotoo and is a replica of a model made in 1926, shortly after Gaudí’s death. Sotoo is currently the chief sculptor on Gaudí’s still-unfinished masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia basilica in Barcelona, scheduled for completion in 2026.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha announced plans to build a new 76,000-square-foot Newman center adjacent to its south campus. Preliminary plans for the Saint John Paul II Newman Center include housing for 164 students, study and social spaces, a prayer garden, courtyard, rectory for two priests, and a chapel. The 3.5 acres of land for the new center were purchased by the Archdiocese of Omaha for $1.8 million, and it is hoped the $13 million project will break ground in spring 2015 to open in fall 2016. BVH Architects of Omaha created the site plan for the Newman Center.

A new catechetical video series called “Symbolon” presents an overview of the Catholic faith, including both doctrine and the rich tradition of the Church. Sacred art, architecture, and music are highlighted in each video as they pertain to the various topics addressed. The series contains twenty episodes and was created through a collaboration between the Augustine Institute in Denver, Ignatius Press, and Lighthouse Media.
The Future for Religious Heritage’s third international conference will take place in Halle, Germany from October 29 to November 1, 2014. The theme is “Sustaining Europe’s Rural Religious Heritage.” Presentations will focus on the subject of rural historic churches, synagogues, chapels, and other places of worship and their relevance to twenty-first-century communities.

A five-year project to restore Bernini’s colonnade in Saint Peter’s Square was completed in time for Holy Week 2014 and the canonization Mass of Popes John Paul II and John XXIII. Begun in 2008, the restoration included stabilizing the structure as well as a thorough cleaning of the 284 columns and 140 statues. The work was carried out by the Italian firm Navarra. About 14 million euro has been spent on this project and other recent renovations, including work on the two fountains in the square.

A parish church in Duisburg, Germany, was demolished in February 2014 after being sold by the Diocese of Essen to a land developer in 2009. Saint Matthias Church, founded in 1898, will be replaced by a complex of six apartment buildings for elderly housing.

The preserved ruins of a church in Saint Louis, Missouri, are being incorporated into an art park. The National Memorial Church of God in Christ was gutted by fire in 2001, leaving only the perimeter stone walls of the church remaining. Instead of rebuilding the church, a team of architects—including Gluckman Mayner Architects with Michael Van Valkenburgh of New York and local architects John C. Guenther and Powers Bowersox—was hired to ensure the ruins were structurally stable and could be incorporated into the arts and culture district of midtown Saint Louis. Architect Richard Gluckman sees many possibilities for the former church, calling it an “unusual combo of landscape architecture, architectural fragment, and artwork.”

A new fresco was recently blessed at the church of San Cresci in Tuscany. American artist David Mayernik created the fresco, which depicts the four companion martyrs of San Cresci: Panfila and her son Cernone, Ognone, and Enzio.

The Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C., celebrated its official designation as a national shrine with a series of events focused around the canonization of Saints John Paul II and John XXIII. The canonization Mass was shown live at the shrine, and an official renaming of the Saint John Paul II National Shrine and Mass of Thanksgiving were celebrated later that day. A relic of Saint John Paul II was displayed for veneration. The relic, a vial of John Paul II’s blood, will remain in the shrine. The current small chapel will be converted to a reliquary chapel, and the main floor of the building is undergoing renovation into a larger church. Both the chapel and the church will feature mosaics designed by Fr. Marko Ivan Rupnik. The Knights of Columbus purchased the building in 2011 and are overseeing the renovations.

Renderings for the transformation of the iconic Crystal Cathedral into the Catholic “Christ Cathedral” have been released by the Diocese of Orange, California. Highlights of the interior renovation, planned by Johnson Fain of Los Angeles, include: a raised altar in the center of the cathedral with pews facing it from two sides, a large metallic tester and crucifix suspended above the altar, and the addition of decorative triangular metal “sails” to the inside surface of the glass ceiling that can be adjusted to regulate the natural light coming in. The redesign of the exterior space around the cathedral is being done by Rios Clementi Hale Studios of Los Angeles and includes the creation of a rectangular plaza around the cathedral.
The Vatican City State participated in the 2014 Turin International Book Fair as the invited guest of honor. The Turin Book Fair, which has taken place annually since 1988, is the largest gathering of its kind in Italy and includes over one thousand exhibit stands as well as presentations and discussions among the authors, publishers, artists, and others who attend. The Holy See’s display included a model of Bramante’s design for the dome of Saint Peter’s Basilica, made out of books.

The city of Saint Louis, Missouri, celebrates a number of anniversaries in 2014. It is the 250th anniversary of the founding of the city, the 800th anniversary of the birth of King Saint Louis IX, and the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Saint Louis Cathedral Basilica. The archdiocese marked the feast of Saint Louis on August 25th with a Mass celebrated by Justin Cardinal Rigali, Papal Legate to the 250th Anniversary of the Founding of Saint Louis. Concelebrating at the Mass were The Most Rev. Carlo Maria Vigano, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, The Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of Saint Louis, and The Most Rev. Thierry Jordan, Archbishop of Reims, France. Prince Louis de Bourbon, a direct descendant of King Saint Louis, was also in attendance. The 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral Basilica was celebrated in October, and the sermon given by The Most Rev. John J. Glennon at the beginning of its construction appears as the Documentation feature of this issue.

The Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence, Rhode Island, celebrates its 125th anniversary this year. A series of events have marked the occasion, including concerts of sacred music and a solemn liturgy celebrated on June 29, the cathedral’s patronal feast day. In anticipation of the anniversary year, a $1.2 million renovation to the cathedral was completed in 2013. Repairs were done to the stained-glass windows, organ, and pews, and new lighting and flooring were installed.

A new set of Stations of the Cross by sculptor Ken Thompson was commissioned for Saint Mel’s Cathedral in Longford, Ireland. Each station is carved from solid Bath stone and measures 46 x 55 inches and 4 inches deep. The stations are part of a complete restoration of Saint Mel’s, which was gutted by fire on Christmas morning, 2009. The 30 million euro project is expected to be finished in time for Christmas 2014. FKP Architects, the Gem Group construction company, and Purcell Construction are collaborating on the renovation, leading a team of more than 125 craftsmen.

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Two new bronze plaques and a book that honors the benefactors of the Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel were dedicated this April at Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, California. Designed by alumnus Domiane Forte, the plaques list names of major donors to the chapel, and also memorialize the chapel’s patron Dr. Tom Dillon, former president of the college who was killed in a car accident shortly after the dedication of the chapel in 2009. Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles celebrated the blessing of the plaques, noting that “the college has the great benefit of a worthy temple...a chapel that teaches,’ and teaches the one thing necessary for man’s salvation: knowledge of God.”

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A memorial service for artist Rowan LeCompte was held in the Washington National Cathedral on July 21, 2014. LeCompte designed forty-two stained-glass windows for the National Cathedral, including the “Creation” west rose window and eighteen nave clerestory windows. He died in February at age eighty-eight.

The closed church of Saint John in Saint Paul, Minnesota, reopened in June as the Darul-Uloom Islamic Center. To prepare for the building’s new use, liturgical furnishings and iconography were taken out of the interior and donated to other parishes in the diocese, and a large cross was removed from the top of the façade.

The Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina, continues fundraising towards its $41 million goal to build a new cathedral. Renderings of the design for Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral by O’Brien and Keane Architects reflect the desire of the faithful for greater proximity to the altar and a building that is affordable. Bishop Burbidge of Raleigh hopes that “a hundred years from now we will look at Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral Campus with great affection, love, and gratitude, and even pride for what this generation has done to contribute to the Diocese of Raleigh.”

The Dominican Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary in Newark, New Jersey, is fundraising to build a 5,500-square-foot addition to the monastery. The project will also add handicapped accessibility to the chapel. The growing community of nuns hopes to raise 75 percent of their $4 million goal in time to break ground in 2016, the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Dominican Order.

A new Co-Cathedral for the Diocese of Brooklyn was dedicated last May. The hundred-year-old church of Saint Joseph, in need of extensive repairs just ten years ago, received an $18.3 million renovation and will now be the site of many large diocesan liturgies, such as the annual Chrism Mass and ordinations. The church is located in a fast-growing area of Brooklyn and has seen Mass attendance greatly increase over the past six years. The architect for the renovation was Acheson Doyle Partners, and EverGreene Architectural Arts carried out the new interior decoration. Twenty-one new murals were added, including depictions of Mary as patroness of various ethnic groups represented in Brooklyn and Queens, and a mural on the rear wall of the Cathedral showing American saints against a background of local landmarks, such as the Brooklyn Bridge. Additionally, the Cathedral’s Möller organ was refurbished by the Peragallo Pipe Organ Company. Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio rededicated the Co-Cathedral of Saint Joseph on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, noting that “there is always room for Mary in Joseph’s house.”

As part of an ongoing interior restoration of Saint Paul Church in Harvard Square, the tabernacle has been restored to the high altar. Work on the church also includes plaster and arch restoration.

A mosaic of Saint John Paul II was added to the Chapel of Our Lady of Czestochowa in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. John Paul II prayed in this chapel, dedicated to the patroness of his native Poland, on his apostolic visit to America in 1979.
Canon law should guide decisions about closing church buildings, Raymond Cardinal Burke said in a May 7 interview with the Catholic Review of Baltimore. Cardinal Burke, prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, said that following proper procedure helps ensure legitimate decisions. Dioceses need to be sure they are not operating under false suppositions, such as the notion that a parish cannot have more than one church building. His Eminence also noted that the “laity plays a key role in the health of churches. Especially in [the United States], the existence of churches depends on the generosity of the laity. If the laity aren’t contributing generously, these churches can’t continue.”

Bishop James D. Conley of Lincoln, Nebraska blessed four new cast-bronze bells for the Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church and Newman Center to be completed in Spring 2015 on the campus of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. The four bells are named for Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and have a combined weight of 1,900 pounds. Saint Matthew, the largest of the bells, has a 37-inch diameter and weighs 990 pounds.

The Vatican Museums are overseeing a restoration project at the Scala Sancta and Sancta Sanctorum chapel in Rome. Located near the Cathedral of Saint John Lateran, the Scala Sancta, or Holy Stairs, are believed to be the stairs where Christ was condemned to death in Jerusalem. The Sancta Sanctorum was the personal chapel of the early popes. A fresco cycle in the chapel commissioned by Pope Nicholas III in 1278 and other frescoes in the building will be restored to their original splendor in a five-year project funded by the Vatican Museums Patrons of the Arts. A similar project to restore the frescoes in the San Silvestro chapel, next to the Sancta Sanctorum, was completed in 2007 and funded by the Getty Foundation.

The new Mary Queen of Preachers Chapel for the Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province in Houston was dedicated in May 2014. Designed by HBL Architects, the 6,000-square-foot chapel seats 230 people and has a façade that references the church of Saint Dominic in Bologna, Italy. The Mary Immaculate Province traces its beginnings in the United States to seven Vietnamese Dominicans of Saint Catherine of Siena who fled Vietnam during the Fall of Saigon, eventually being welcomed to Houston, where the community has now grown to over one hundred members.

The façade of the Mary Queen of Preachers Dominican Chapel in Houston, Texas, is reminiscent of the church of Saint Dominic in Bologna, Italy, where the saint is buried.
A brick from the Holy Door of Saint Peter’s Basilica was donated by Pope Francis to be the cornerstone for a new cathedral in Bahrain. The $33 million proposal for the Cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia in the town of Awali calls for it to be the largest Catholic Church in the Persian Gulf, with 2,500 seats. It will serve Catholics from Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, as well as Bahrain. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain donated land for the cathedral and presented a scale model of the building to Pope Francis during his visit to the Vatican in May. In June the design proposal of Italian architect Matia Del Prete was chosen as the final design for the cathedral.

Diocesan offices of the Diocese of Madison will remain in the Bishop O’Connor Center, the former Holy Name Seminary. A plan was considered last year to move the offices and renovate the 232,000-square-foot building into ninety apartments. The new plan calls for the offices to remain and the building’s chapel to stay intact while turning part of the building into fifty-four apartments. The project is expected to cost $16 million and finish in 2015. Gorman & Company will oversee design and construction.

Steel beams salvaged from the stage built for Pope Benedict’s 2012 Mass in Santiago, Cuba, will be used in the construction of a new church in the Santiago archdiocese. The planned 600-seat Church of the Assumption will be the first church built in Cuba since the revolution in 1959. Reusing the metal from Pope Benedict’s visit is not only an economic decision but will also give the church special meaning. “Reusing the metal means keeping alive the memory of something good for us Catholics. It gives it new life, so it can serve future generations,” said Fausto Veloz, the engineer in charge of the project.

The Benedict XVI Retreat Centre, designed by Suttie Rofe Architects, was commissioned by George Cardinal Pell for the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. Set in bushland on the outskirts of Sydney, the 9 million AUD (8.4 million USD) project included the construction of nine new buildings with a chapel, conference space, and accommodation for 160 guests. The centre is designed as a cluster of buildings organized around a series of beautiful and functional courtyards. A classical chapel is located at the center of the development.

A manuscript of a Bible created in the 1470s for Federico da Montefeltro is among the documents in the Vatican Library collection that will be digitized in coming years. A Japanese information technology company and the Vatican Library have announced a joint project to make thousands of rare manuscripts from the Vatican accessible online. NTT DATA Corporation will assist the Vatican in producing high-definition digital records and placing them online, with the goal of having 15,000 manuscripts available free of charge by 2018.

Holy Name Church in Brooklyn was rededicated on May 18, 2014, following a $3 million renovation designed by Baker Liturgical Arts. A nineteenth-century altar designed by architect James Renwick, Jr. is the centerpiece of the renovation. The altar was originally built as a side altar for Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City but was relocated to Saint Vincent de Paul Church in Williamsburg in 1881, where it remained until the church closed five years ago. The renovation to Holy Name also included a new paint scheme and the addition of iconography depicting Saints John Paul II and John XXIII, as well as Venerable Solanus Casey, O.F.M. Cap.
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- Cathedral of Saint Patrick - NYC, NY
- Cathedral of St. Petersburg - St. Petersburg, FL
- Church of the Epiphany - Miami, FL
- Church of Saint Williams - Round Rock, TX
- Church of Saint Catherine of Siena - Wake Forest, NC
A private Catholic chapel recently erected next to a country house in North Britain is among the most remarkable new classical buildings in Britain. Designed by the award-winning architect Craig Hamilton, it was commissioned as a birthday present for the owner’s wife and is dedicated to Saint Rita of Cascia, an Italian fifteenth-century saint. It forms part of a group of estate buildings isolated in a seemingly untamed landscape of bare hills and moors.

Craig Hamilton is unusual among young British architects—most of whom are self-taught, “born again” traditionalists in the classical manner—in that he was trained in proper drawing as well as art history at architectural school in South Africa, where he was born and brought up, and where more “old-fashioned” educational standards then still prevailed than in Britain. He has some of the universal artistic personality of an Italian Renaissance master, painting in oils and carving in stone to a good standard, as well as designing buildings. His architecture also draws on an unusually wide range of scholarly sources, including ancient Greek and Roman architecture, the work of Palladio and Scamozzi and the Renaissance masters of Venice, the early Mannerism of Michelangelo in Florence, and especially the Neo-classicism of Northern Europe: Hansen’s Denmark, Schinkel’s Germany, and Georgian England. These sources and systems of proportions are synthesized and integrated in his work to produce organic and original works of art in a manner that recalls the early nineteenth-century designs of C.R. Cockerell at the Ashmolean in Oxford or the former University Library at Cambridge.

When he first arrived in England, Hamilton worked for the well-known conservation architect Michael Reardon, in whose office he had the practical opportunity to explore traditional English building crafts and techniques, including the use of lime, varied mortar mixes, brick bonds, and stone masonry. Since setting up an independent practice, in addition to conservation work, he has designed many new classical buildings of distinction and is currently working on a series of large country houses in different parts of the country: Shropshire, Northamptonshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire. He is also consultant architect to the Duchy of Cornwall and has carried out a comprehensive repair and rehabilitation of the derelict buildings on the duchy’s new estate at Harewood in Herefordshire.

This commission was for a small but monumental chapel which recalled the basilican architecture of Italy but met the liturgical requirements of the Second Vatican Council—for instance, in the furnishing of the sanctuary with a free-standing altar, celebrant’s chair, and lectern for the readings. This liturgical formula can often be an architectural disaster, especially when crudely applied to the “re-ordering” of historic chancels. Not least among the successes of this particular chapel is that the result looks timeless and has all the traditional richness inherited by the Catholic Church from the Temple at Jerusalem and the Roman Empire, and synthesized over centuries by some of the world’s greatest artists.

The architect’s aim was to design a
building like those one sees alongside the villas of the Veneto, with a plain, stuccoed exterior, pedimented west front with bellcote, and rich temple-like interior. The result is strikingly similar to the early nineteenth-century Catholic chapel designed by the Roman architect Agostino Giorgioli for the 10th Lord Herries at Everingham in Yorkshire. Interestingly, the Everingham chapel was unknown to Craig Hamilton and so did not in fact form a source for the design. The striking parallel is due to two architects using similar architectural language 150 years apart for parallel architectural commissions. The new chapel was begun at Easter 2005 and was completed and consecrated on the Solemnity of the Assumption in August 2006, though some of the works of art have been added subsequently.

The west front is dominated by a large stone doorcase which, with its scrolled ends and central bronze bust of the chapel’s patron, Saint Rita, makes reference to Venetian Renaissance doorcases with semi-circular pediments, such as the one on Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venice by the Lombardo family of architects. The bronze bust is by the distinguished contemporary Scottish Neo-classical sculptor Alexander Stoddart, whose work here represents one of his most complete groups of statuary, and is a remarkably generous piece of private artistic patronage. The semi-circular band of glass, or “fanlight,” has the effect of isolating the door as an architectural stele. The drooping cartouche above the door makes reference to Michelangelo’s architecture in Florence in the 1520s. The sides of the chapel are plain, apart from well-scaled, round-arched windows, and the east end is an austere Neo-classical apse. The stone cornice all round is derived from the lost Temple of the Ilissus in Athens, as recorded by Stuart and Revett in the mid-eighteenth century. The walls have lime-based stucco render, washed a rich ochre colour, while the architraves and other architectural details are of Stanton Moor stone from Derbyshire.

A striking feature of the chapel is the specially commissioned craftsmanship in wood, marble, and bronze, which enriches and enlivens the design. The west door is an introduction to this. It is of oak, with carved panels incorporating the Scottish thistle, the rose of Saint Rita, and acanthus leaves—the work of Houghtons of York, who were also the contractors for the internal joinery. The door handle in bronze with a stag’s head is a little reference to Plecnik’s twentieth-century architecture in Prague. It was modelled by Richard Eastland from Radnorshire, who was also responsible for much of the internal modelling and carving, including the pew ends and the ornaments of the sanctuary furniture. The principal contractors were the firm of Aneley’s of York, well-known for exciting, modern classical work—notably many of the buildings of the late Francis Johnson.

The interior is remarkably monumental, and the very well-managed proportions and scale give an impression of size which is illusory. The principal source and parallel is George Dance the Younger’s All Hallows, London Wall, with an attached colonnade supporting a coffered, segmental vault. The order employed here is the unfluted Greek Ionic of the Ilissus. The simple rectangular interior is given spatial complexity by being divided into three zones: a vestibule screened by Ionic columns, the nave with seating, and an apsidal chancel. This progression is reflected in the Roman barrel vault where the plaster coffers, executed by a firm in Leeds, diminish in size from west to east—large in the vestibule, smaller in the nave, and smallest in the apse. This trompe l’oeil effect also helps to exaggerate the scale. The plaster rosettes within the nave coffers are modelled on those of the Temple of Mars Ultor in Rome; those in the apse reflect the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli. They were cast from a clay prototype modelled by Dick Reid and his students.

The Ilissus Ionic columns are monoliths of Stanton Moor stone. The walls are lime-plastered, and in the vesti-
bule and nave there is a dado of polished walnut made by Houghtons. The panelling below each of the windows is treated to an individual tapering plinth. The pews, made at Whitney Saw Mills under the direction of Will Bullough, are of polished and carved walnut, and have needlework cushions and kneelers designed by the architect and made in Bulgaria under the supervision of the carpet-makers David and Sara Bamford of Presteigne. Much of the quality of the building comes from such unusual attention to detail, as well as the carefully balanced unity of the whole scheme. The altar silver, including chalice, ciborium, thurible, incense boat, and water and wine cruets, was also designed by the architect and draws inspiration from Roman silver found at Pompeii and Herculaneum in the eighteenth century. They were made by the leading contemporary Scottish silversmiths, Hamilton and Inches of Edinburgh.

The aura of a small Roman basilica is enhanced by the extensive use of marble, mainly carried out in Carrara under the direction of Maurizio Fontanilli. The floor is paved in a pattern of polished stones and marble. The three floor stones are Rosso Impero for the large panels and Hoptonwood from Derbyshire and Fossil Limestone from Ulverston for the banding, both of which were used as “English marbles” in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the west end, the holy water stoup is of Sicilian onyx and the font of Fiore de Pesca. In the chancel apse the central niche for the tabernacle is lined with Rosso Impero and is flanked by pedimented aedicules containing bas-reliefs, all of white Carrara marble with contrasting green-black Purbeck for the pilasters, to form a tripartite arrangement set off by surrounding panels of curved slabs of Giallo Antico. The clou is the tabernacle in the niche behind the altar. It takes the form of a little pedimented and domed tempietto, a fusion of Greek detailing with a Renaissance domed form. It is constructed of Bianco P white marble from Carrara, with pilasters and frieze of green porphyry, the pediment of red porphyry, and the little lantern in the dome of Lapis Lazuli. On the door is a gilt-bronze statuette of Saint John the Baptist by Alexander Stoddart.

This forms part of a programme of sculpture by Stoddart throughout the chapel, including life-size statues of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino and Saint Augustine of Hippo (as a Platonic philosopher) — the traditional attendants of Saint Rita, who was an Augustinian nun — in the vestibule, and the bas-relievos in the apse depicting the Annunciation and the Visitation.

Unlike Saint John the Baptist, which is cast in bronze, these were carved in Bianco P marble at Carrara by the Cerivietti workshops in Pietrasanta. Alexander Stoddart’s sculpture programme also includes a votive figure of Saint Rita, the Stations of the Cross in plaster, the corpus in silver and bronze on
the processional cross, and a painted bronze lunette of Saint Monica (mother of Saint Augustine) set into the inner tympanum of the west door. Stoddart was consulted by the architect early in the design process, and together they built up a programme of iconography for the sculptures that is closely integrated with the classical architecture of the chapel and reflects both its purpose and symbolism, as well as the dedication of the building to Saint Rita.

The sanctuary is divided from the nave in the traditional manner by low altar rails of gilt-bronze anthemia set into polished Ulverston surrounds. The anthemia were cast from a wooden prototype carved by Richard Eastland. The anthemion is of Greek origin, but the immediate inspiration was Schinkel's anthemion panels at Glienicke in Potsdam. The pair of large brass chandeliers, made by Durner & Hamlyn of Croydon to the architect's designs, also sport the anthemion and were likewise inspired by Schinkel. There are small branched candlesticks on the pew ends and round the walls below the consecration crosses modelled by Richard Eastland.

The architect's control also involved the fittings of the chancel: the altar, lectern, priest's chair, and servers' stools. These are of strongly archaeological inspiration, reminiscent of the Danish Neo-classical furniture of H.E. Freund and M.G. Bindesboll. The lectern is supported by a fluted Paestum Doric column. The altar is carved with an anthemion frieze, and the seat furniture has strong Herculaneum references. All were made in polished walnut at Whitney Saw Mills, with carving by Richard Eastland. The priest's chair is inlaid with pearwood and has cast-bronze arms in the form of rams' heads on Herculaneum supports. The fastidious design and unified quality of the fixtures and fittings are matched by the admirable quality of their execution and craftsmanship, which is worthy of comparison with the highest standards achieved in Europe in the nineteenth century.

Such perfect execution and unified control of design can lead to a hardness of finish which is difficult to lose. This is not the case with Craig Hamilton's chapel, partly because of its domestic scale and perfect proportions, and the views through the partially clear-glazed windows to the surrounding hilly landscape. Moreover the specially commissioned work is partnered with antique Baroque silver candlesticks on the altar and flanking the tabernacle, as well as some earlier Italian paintings and carvings, including the crucifix, giving something of the votive atmosphere of an old country chapel that is the much-loved spiritual focus of its family.
The work of Craig Hamilton, as exemplified in this beautiful chapel, ranks among the most accomplished and exciting modern classical designs currently being produced in England. Some commentators find it difficult to understand this type of work. The word *pastiche* is bandied around—a specifically musical term which should rarely be applied to architecture. Like figurative painting or tonal music, classical architecture is a valid alternative tradition which survived, and sometimes flourished, alongside “modern” experimentation throughout the twentieth century. Classical design is a system of proportions and an architectural language which is capable of almost infinite adaptation to produce new and original compositions. Craig Hamilton is one of the living artists who is able to do this. Though steeped in learned references and precedents, this chapel is completely original and *sui generis*. While the apse may look like an Italianate Renaissance basilica, it is entirely modern with a free-standing altar-table and the tabernacle in a wall niche behind, supported on an abstract, sarcophagus-shaped plinth. Large-scale anthemia, used by the Greeks for acroteria on the roofs of temples, are adapted for altar rails. The tapering pew ends are steles, based on Grecian gravestones transformed into furniture. All this is novel and not copied from anything in historic English architecture. The architecture of the chapel and its sculptural programme have a strong and coherent intellectual underpinning particular to this building. The words of its sculptor, Alexander Stoddart, concerning the sculptures, can be applied to the building as a whole: “Without disregarding function it puts beauty before function as its primary aim.”
A Rebirth of Romance:
The Infinite Desire for Beauty

Michael Enright

In a talk at Wheaton College a few years ago, Gil Bailie outlined the beginnings of our modern Western idea of romantic love. You might think that all cultures have always shared our ideas about romance and love, but this is not the case. Think of the arranged marriages of India, or marriages based on something like the need for a housekeeper or for someone to work the fields or to provide children. Somehow in our modern American culture we have a different idea about love. This idea came from somewhere. It has profoundly influenced our views on love, on beauty, on who we are, and on how we are put together.

Bailie traced the origins of our thinking to the troubadours. This movement began sometime around the year 1000. You might not have heard of these singers, but they began singing these tremendously romantic, over-the-top songs about their ladies. Imagine knights in armor, ladies in castles, princes and kings, and jousting over honor. Imagine King Arthur, Lady Guinevere, and young knights hopelessly in love—singing songs about maybe someday touching their lady’s handkerchief. That’s the picture! Bailie posits that this kind of thinking and feeling became possible only in a culture that had been influenced by the grace of Christ and knowledge of the Trinity. G.K. Chesterton thought that this movement was far more important to the development of Western culture than the Renaissance. He thought that compared to the tsunami of grace that moved the troubadours, the Renaissance was just a ripple in the pond. It is interesting to note that half the troubadours ended up becoming Cistercian monks! This thing was so far beyond the physical that they went off in the crazy hope that they could actually experience the indwelling of the Trinity in their bodies. And they did, and do even today. The reason these monks seem so happy and peaceful is that they are. In their prayer lives, they connect directly with God.

The Trinity is our Christian conception about the nature of God. We speak about the three Persons of the Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are some essential things we know about these three Persons. One is that they are continually giving and receiving love, one relating to another. They are also in heaven and totally full of joy and light. We also know we are made in the image and likeness of God; and so, somehow, the Trinity dwells in us. We have this infinite desire in us to give and receive love. And that is what makes us into romantics! Being made in God’s image and likeness enables us to be moved by music, to appreciate art and beauty, and to create culture.

Because we are made in God’s image, we have romance hard-wired in us. Married people experience this in their romantic love and even in their physical relations with each other. Saint John Paul II wrote about this in the Theology of the Body. Somehow married people in their physical lovemaking can touch the essence of who they are and go far, far beyond that. They can be touched by the presence of God. And this brings forth life, and so much more. Being that I am not married, I once asked some married people if they ever just start laughing out loud when they are intimate. They told me they did, once in a while. “Aha!” I thought—the joy of it! It made me want to get married!

And so, we are romantics. We see the sunset and stop in awe (some days!). We marvel at the wonders of God’s creation. Music moves us, beauty touches our hearts, and so on. We are romantics. Not everyone has those feelings. I was looking at a sunset a while ago and commented to a Tanzanian friend, “Look at that sunset. Isn’t it beautiful?” He answered, “You Americans are always going on about things like that.” He did not see what I saw. His eyes had not been opened and he could not see through the clouds into the beauty. Not everyone has experienced romance, not everyone perceives beauty, not everyone enjoys music. Some people have a kind of spiritual autism—nothing moves them. But many of us do have these experiences. And I think we ought to be missionaries, trying to help our brothers and sisters open their hearts to the joy of the romantic life of faith!

Bailie thinks we have arrived at this place in human history because of the influence of the grace of God. I agree. The Kingdom of God is being formed all over the world. But we have to ask ourselves what is happening in America. Is it being formed here? Are we romantics? Do we love beauty? A deeper and more troubling question would be, if we lose our capacity for beauty and romantic love, can our culture survive?

Looking at our culture with the eyes of faith, there is reason for concern about our young people and our culture in general. We are wounded by original sin, and we can forget who we are and how we are made. In the 1500s, Saint Teresa of Avila wrote that she worried that the young Carmelite nuns she was forming could be like silly little shepherdesses frolicking around and forgetting the tremendous river of grace the Lord had put inside them. I think there is a danger that some of our young people are forgetting who they are. They turn into "players," swapping partners and going from one lover to another like animals in the woods. It
is sex without romance. Where is the joy in that?

Without romance, there is not enough power to sustain the culture as a whole. This kind of sexuality does not have enough strength to move men and women beyond themselves into giving life to children (and sustaining and caring for them as they grow up). Fathers and mothers have to learn to respond to the demands of love and focus on what is good for their children. That is the way married people imitate Christ, Who emptied Himself and took on the form of a slave. Without the grace of God, there is no possibility of romance. Without romance, there is no possibility of life for the next generation. After all, only a hopeless romantic would think that changing diapers and cleaning up snotty noses and on and on would all be worth it in the end! By the same token, only a romantic would build a beautiful church or worry about creating a ballet or put paint to canvas. Our capacity for romance and beauty and joy is tied to our nature, tied to our being made in God’s image.

We modern Americans need to let go of our bad thinking about all kinds of things, and there is one strain of thought we ought to learn to recognize as coming straight out of the shadows of the underworld. It is the kind of thinking that kills beauty and romance and leads to death. It leads us to pity the poor.

Walker Percy, in *The Thanatos Syndrome*, has Fr. Smith argue “that the problem of contemporary life is that morality is based on so-called tenderness, not on justice or a sound idea of the human person or the dignity due to the least of us.”1 There are a couple of great lines of dialogue:

“Don’t you know where tenderness leads?”
Silence.
‘To the gas chambers.’”2

Percy is echoing Flannery O’Connor. She writes that, in the absence of faith, “we govern by tenderness. A tenderness which, long since cut off from the Person of Christ, is wrapped in theory. When tenderness is detached from the source of tenderness, its logical outcome is terror. It ends in forced-labor camps and in the fumes of the gas chamber.”3 This is the kind of thinking that led Margaret Sanger (the founder of Planned Parenthood) to write that “the most merciful thing that a

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*Zwettl Cistercian Abbey on the Kamp River, Lower Austria. The eighteenth-century tower was designed by Matthias Steindl.*
large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.”

God save us from this kind of mercy!

We have to imagine this strain of thought over against the work of the Little Brothers of the Poor. I remember hearing years ago that in their soup kitchens, they have flowers on the tables. In fact, their motto is “Flowers before Bread.” What? A waste of money. Only a romantic would think that someone eating at a soup kitchen might need a flower. The Little Brothers would think that only someone who

has forgotten our common humanity would leave the flower off the table! Fr. Smith would call it “the dignity due to the least of us.” How silly it is for us to think the poor are somehow different from us. After all, the fact that we do not have to eat at a soup kitchen is only due to God’s grace.

Compare the thinking that puts a flower on a table to the thinking that built high-rises in Chicago to house the poor. Someone thought it would be a good idea to “help” the poor by knocking down their dilapidated housing and building them some high-rises. Look what it leads to when we forget that we are all made in God’s image. A smoking disaster of dehumanization and death. There is no room for beauty or joy or romance in this kind of thinking. If you have ever seen a picture of these high-rises, you have to wonder what the architects were thinking. How ugly they were. Clearly these social planners and architects were not romantics or people of faith.

The thinking that gives flowers to the poor also creates beautiful music, glorious churches, and children too! Only a romantic would believe in the power of beauty or music or love to change the world. We should pray for our young people, for an increase of faith and beauty and a rebirth of romance! Only people who can dream impossible dreams will be able to change the world. Only hopeless romantics will be called to priesthood, religious life, and marriage—to create art and beauty and children and culture. We need a wave of art and grace and beauty and life! May the Lord God in His mercy send us this grace! And the joy that goes with it!

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Endnotes
3 Elie 458.
London’s Saint Martin-in-the-Fields is famed not only as a great work of architecture, but as the prototype for hundreds of churches throughout the world and especially in the United States. Designed by the Anglo-Palladian architect James Gibbs (1682–1754) and completed in 1726, Saint Martin was one of the first parish churches in England specifically planned to accommodate the Protestant worship style of eighteenth-century Anglicans.\(^1\) This is ironic since Gibbs himself was raised and remained a Roman Catholic, albeit discreet in the practice of his faith. Gibbs’s original proposal called for a circular church, inspired by Sir Christopher Wren’s first scheme for Saint Paul’s Cathedral, but the constrained site and excess cost caused the Church Commissioners to have the design modified to a temple-form exterior with a hexastyle Corinthian portico.\(^2\) Indeed, Saint Martin was the first major Anglican church to be so configured in this blatantly pagan form. The layouts of most of Wren’s comparatively small City of London churches were dictated by very compressed, often irregular sites, preventing the expansive building Gibbs proposed for Saint Martin. We may speculate that the rationalization for a temple form was that ancient temples provided the earliest spaces for organized Christian worship. Gibbs was obviously made aware of this during the years he spent in Rome as the pupil of architect Carlo Fontana.

To signal Saint Martin as being a church, the composition was dominated by a richly detailed steeple, a feature associated with churches since the Middle Ages and later popularized in classical-style variations by Wren for his city churches. The steeples helped to locate a church in the tightly packed city streets, and their differing designs served to identify one church from another. Although Saint Martin today is a highly conspicuous landmark on London’s Trafalgar Square, it original-
ly fronted a narrow lane, with only its portico and steeple being visible amid the surrounding structures, nearly all of which have since been removed.

Because the eighteenth-century Anglicans were resolutely anti-Catholic, Gibbs’s design for Saint Martin’s exterior was completely devoid of religious symbols. Instead of sculptures of saints or members of the Holy Family, the pediment sported the royal coat-of-arms, signifying that this was an edifice of the Church of England, having no obeisance to the papacy and what the English Protestants perceived to be its idolatry. The windows were filled with clear glass—stained glass also being associated with Catholicism. The steeple was topped not by a cross but by a weathervane with a crown for a finial. As with all of Gibbs’s steeple designs, Saint Martin’s steeple was fitted with clock faces—a civic amenity since few people could afford watches. The multi-tiered steeple itself is a masterpiece of English Baroque design, one that has inspired countless imitations and variations, as we shall see.

The high point of the eighteenth-century Anglican service was the sermon, not the Mass or the Eucharist. Saint Martin’s interior thus took the form known as the “auditory” church: a unified, large space where the seating of the nave and galleries focused on the pulpit, the dominant interior element. As shown in the plan, Saint Martin’s pulpit was situated amid the nave’s front pews where there was no chance of missing it nor the word being preached from it. It was essential for the preacher to be clearly seen and heard. Like many eighteenth-century Anglican churches, Saint Martin was originally outfitted with high-back box pews. Such pews were designed so that when seated, the parishioners could focus exclusively on the pulpit and not be distracted by fellow parishioners or even activity around the communion table up front. We should note the use of the terms “communion table” and “Holy Table.” That article of church furniture was rarely referred to as an “altar”—which was seen as a Catholic designation. Moreover, there was no hint of a screen separating the nave
from the chancel, a standard fixture of English medieval (Catholic) churches. Indeed, Saint Martin’s chancel was just two steps above the nave and barely ten feet deep, not the long, extended, screened-off space of a Gothic church. The term “chancel” is a misnomer here since the choir originally sat in the rear gallery, near the organ.

Saint Martin-in-the Fields was a marked contrast to England’s many medieval churches in which congregations had to adapt to the new Anglican worship forms, often with difficulty, and sometimes resulting in the loss of important medieval fabric. While Saint Martin indeed set a precedent for new churches in Britain, its broader influence was spurred not just by the building itself, but by the publication of its design in Gibbs’s highly influential A Book of Architecture of 1728. In his introduction Gibbs stated that his book “would be of use to such Gentlemen as might be concerned in Building, especially in the remote parts of the Country, where little or no assistance for Designs can be procured.” Because the growing cities in the remote American colonies were in need of new churches, Gibbs’s published designs became a popular source for builders of houses of worship—particularly the plans, elevations, and sections for Saint Martin. Hence, nearly every major colonial American city received one or more churches inspired by Gibbs’s plates of Saint Martin.

Saint Michael’s Church in Charleston, one of America’s premier colonial urban churches, is among our earliest works modeled after Saint Martin. Saint Michael’s was erected in 1752-61 by Samuel Cardy, a local contractor. Its landmark steeple has more girth than Saint Martin’s, and the order of its portico and main body is Doric rather than Corinthian. Its three-tier steeple displays three orders—Ionic, Corinthian, and a crude form of Composite—rather than just the Ionic and Corinthian of Saint Martin. Saint Michael’s interior is a classic example of the auditory form with its galleries and its high pulpit, the latter prominently placed amid the front pews and topped by an elaborate sounding board. Among other noted urban colonial churches inspired by the Saint Martin form are Christ Church, Philadelphia (1754); Saint Paul’s Chapel, New York City (1768; steeple added in 1796); and King’s Chapel, Boston (1754), though King’s Chapel never received the steeple planned for it. The historic edifices cited here were built to serve the Anglican Church, colonial America’s leading denomination and the officially established religion of several colonies. An exception is First Baptist Church of Providence, Rhode Island, built 1774-75 to serve the colony’s main Baptist community. Founded in 1636 by the Calvinist Roger Williams, Rhode Island became a haven for dissenters and the cradle of American Baptists. The prodigious wooden structure, with a seating capacity for 1,220, was instigated by its pastor, James Manning, first president of Brown University, who wanted a building large enough to hold college ceremonies. In place of a full portico, the church is fronted by a dwarf portico topped by a large lunette, roughly following a composition on Gibbs’s Fellows’ Building at King’s College, Cambridge. Its breathtaking steeple, the first on an American Baptist church, references Gibbs’s published steeple designs. This steeple established the precedent throughout the country for Baptist churches to be adorned with such classical confections.

Providence’s First Baptist Church also set a precedent for other non-Anglican churches, resulting in scores of such churches in the post-Revolutionary period. A striking adaptation of
Saint Martin’s design is Center Church on the New Haven Green. Built 1812-15, the church is the fourth Congregational meeting house on its site. The Congregational faith was the established religion of colonial Connecticut. It is ironic that a church echoing Saint Martin’s Baroque qualities was designed by Asher Benjamin, a Boston architect famous for pattern books that spread the Greek Revival style throughout the country. Moreover, Center Church’s construction was supervised by Ithiel Town, who studied in Benjamin’s drawing class and who also became noted for his Greek Revival and Gothic Revival schemes.7 While the resemblance to Saint Martin is clearly evident, Center Church departs from its model in several ways. Its portico is tetrastyle rather than hexastyle, and the main order is Doric rather than Corinthian. Also, the spire is conical rather than faceted. However, its balustrade pedestals are topped with Baroque urns similar to those intended for Saint Martin but never acquired.

As with Center Church, the Saint Martin format proved to be an ideal model for many of the meeting houses gracing the towns and villages scattered through New England, forming picturesque focal points for uniquely American scenes. A New England meeting house would not be a proper example of its type without a soaring, Gibbs-type steeple laden with tiers of classical details. Nevertheless, it’s a fifty-fifty chance as to whether a meeting house façade was adorned with a portico. The 1830 First Congregational Meeting House of Guilford, Connecticut, has the necessary elements to affirm the Saint Martin precedent. It is fronted by a pedimented portico and its steeple has the requisite weathervane and clock faces. Reinforcing the church’s strong New England flavor are its dazzling white clapboards, its two tiers of windows with louvered shutters, and its prominent location in the town center. The Guilford structure belongs to a group of architecturally related Connecticut houses of worship that includes the Congregational meeting houses in Cheshire (1827), Litchfield (1829), Southington (1830), and Old Lyme (1816; burned 1907 and reconstructed).

If Baptists and Congregationalists could build Saint Martin-style churches, so could Presbyterians. A particularly grand edifice of this denomination is Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia. Dedicated in 1819 in a ceremony attended by President James Monroe, the church was the third church to serve Savannah’s community of Scots, who originally arrived in Georgia with James Oglethorpe in 1733. The design was supplied by Providence architect John Holden Green, and closely resembled Green’s First Unitarian Church of Providence, completed in 1814. Like Saint Michael’s in Charleston, the church has a display of the orders: Doric for the portico and Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite in the steeple. Keeping with the Saint Martin prototype, the steeple features clock faces and is topped with a weathervane. The church was all but destroyed by fire in 1889 but was replicated in the rebuilding designed by New York architect William Gibbons Preston. Fortuitously, Preston had made measured drawings of the original church prior to the fire. In an effort at fireproofing, the new steeple was fabricated in cast iron rather than wood. Like the New England meeting houses, Independent Presbyterian was (and is) pulpit-centered, symbolizing the Protestant belief that spirituality is instilled principally through the spoken word.

The 1845 Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia illustrates how the Saint Martin prototype could be expressed in the Greek Revival idiom. Dedicated in 1819, the church was designed by Robert Mills, an architect who had studied in London. Like Saint Martin, Saint Paul’s has a display of the orders: Doric for the portico and Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite for the steeple. Keeping with the Saint Martin prototype, the steeple features clock faces and is topped with a weathervane. The church was all but destroyed by fire in 1889 but was replicated in the rebuilding designed by New York architect William Gibbons Preston. Fortuitously, Preston had made measured drawings of the original church prior to the fire. In an effort at fireproofing, the new steeple was fabricated in cast iron rather than wood. Like the New England meeting houses, Independent Presbyterian was (and is) pulpit-centered, symbolizing the Protestant belief that spirituality is instilled principally through the spoken word.
Revival style. The church was designed by Philadelphia architect Thomas S. Stewart and is essentially a copy of Stewart’s Saint Luke’s Church in Philadelphia. The main body follows the temple form, and its portico employs the Greek Corinthian order of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates. A historic view is illustrated here because Stewart’s 155-foot needle spire was removed in 1906 when the city decreed that steeples were in danger of toppling in hurricanes. The belfry was then capped with a small dome. Conforming to the nineteenth-century low-church tradition of Southern Episcopalians, the interior was originally pulpit-centered. This was changed in 1890 when the pulpit was removed and replaced with a lower one to the side. The chancel was deepened to accommodate the choir, and an altar installed—all in an effort to conform to the medieval liturgical practices revived by English Ecclesiologists in the mid-nineteenth century. During the following three decades, stained-glass memorial windows replaced Saint Paul’s original clear-glass sash.

The popularity of the High Victorian Gothic and Italianate styles tended to stifle construction of Saint Martin-type churches in the second half of the nineteenth century. A conspicuous exception is Boston’s Arlington Street Church, designed by Arthur Gilman and Gridley Bryant, and completed in 1861. Its dark brownstone exterior nevertheless lent it a decidedly Victorian cast. Indeed, what we normally describe as gleaming white “wedding-cake” steeples came out here in deep chocolate. It took the Colonial Revival and Georgian Revival movements of the turn of the century to reignite the fashion for houses of worship in the Saint Martin pattern. Of this new wave of early twentieth-century churches, one of the most literate as well as literal interpretations of Saint Martin is All Souls Unitarian Church on Meridian Hill in Washington, D.C. Completed in 1924, the church is nearly identical to Saint Martin except that its main walls are brick rather than Portland stone. The Saint Martin model appealed to the Unitarians since it reflected the meeting houses of New England where Unitarianism was originally formed. Architect Henry Shepley of the Boston firm of Coolidge and Shattuck introduced a subtle variation on Saint Martin by employing eustyle spacing in the portico columns (i.e., making the center bay slightly wider than the flanking bays). Shepley, however, did not fail to provide the steeple with its clock and weathervane.

Lynchburg, Virginia’s Centenary Methodist Church is typical of the finely articulated versions of the many Saint Martin-type churches erected throughout the country in the first half of the twentieth century. Designed by local architect Stanhope Johnson, its cornerstone was laid in 1924, but the Great Depression delayed completion until 1947. Like All Souls Church, the congregation determined to have the grandeur of the Corinthian order rather than something simpler. The use of red brick and white trim gave the church a decidedly American Georgian Revival flavor. Johnson cleverly provided the steeple with an implied base by extending the portico entablature one bay on the side elevations and supporting it with pilasters. Instead of clock faces, the steeple base has only circular brick panels.

Illustrating the permeating influence of Saint Martin on the most basic of American ecclesiastical buildings is a mid-twentieth-century Assembly of God church in northern Virginia. Though simple to the point of being poky, it’s safe to say that this church and innumerable others of its ilk would not look the way they do had there been a Saint Martin spire.
been no Saint Martin. With hundreds of derivatives of Gibbs’s London landmark, Americans became imbued with the idea that a proper church should have a portico and steeple, no matter how elementary. Hence, to give a clear signal that this well-intended but architecturally naïve edifice is indeed a house of God, it is fronted by a portico, albeit of skinny columns, and topped by a pre-fab steeple of equally skinny proportions. Though in Virginia, this church could be anywhere in America.

James Gibbs thus gave America an easily adaptable template for church design. As with Saint Martin-in-the-Fields, the auditory church could be enriched with classical motifs, or it could be excessively plain, as with the last example shown here. Moreover, the several steeples illustrated in this piece demonstrate how the same architectural feature can be given individuality simply by varying the classical vocabulary, much as we create different meanings by varying the words of our sentences. We see how this works in three steeple designs from Gibbs’s A Book of Architecture. Such is the beauty and flexibility of the classical language.

Finally, we need remind ourselves that Saint Martin-in-the-Fields served as the prototype for countless American Protestant churches. Conceived to accommodate Protestant worship practices, Saint Martin was not a model for Roman Catholic churches. A quick scan of several hundred images of Roman Catholic churches revealed only one edifice hinting at a kinship to the Saint Martin model.

Steeple designs, James Gibbs, A Book of Architecture (1728), plate 30

Endnotes

1 A church existed in this area of London as early as 1222. It was rebuilt in 1542 and received the designation “in the fields” as the area was semi-rural at the time. A survey of 1710 revealed the church to be in a state of decay, resulting in an act of Parliament in 1720 authorizing the construction of the present church.
2 Instead of the usual generic Corinthian order for the portico, Gibbs employed the Corinthian of the Temple of Castor and Pollux which was illustrated by Palladio in Book Four of The Four Books on Architecture (1570).
3 Whereas Saint Paul Cathedral by Christopher Wren has statues of the saints on the exterior and interior.
4 Saint Martin’s pulpit has been relocated more than once. Historic interior views show that it originally had a canopy or sounding board above it. These canopies were standard features of eighteenth-century pulpits.
5 The design was covered in seven plates, and included plans, sections, and elevations.
7 Town designed the 18th Gothic Revival Trinity Episcopal Church, located to the left of Center Church.
8 Saint Luke’s Church (now Saint Luke’s and the Epiphany) was designed to have a steeple but it was never built.
9 Henry Shepley was the grandson of H. H. Richardson. The firm later became Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch, & Abbott.
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There are few finer sights than a Gothic cathedral. They fill a European Catholic with a great sense of achievement, sufficient, even after all this time, to form a significant part of our confidence as Christians today.

Endless tomes have been compiled about them—in particular their art, their stylistic heritage, the life lived within them. The Catholic artistic mind, considering Catholic art, cannot flee from the influence of these towering achievements. In meditating on the methods of evangelization and re-evangelization, the Gothic cathedral represents the most exalted point of reference. The Catholic imagination wonders how a head of steam is generated among a people, sufficient to thrust the vast tonnages of these buildings hundreds of feet from the soil. How did a people come to love the sacraments so much that they chose to serve them so wholly?

In your mind, position yourself at the foot of the façade of a great Gothic cathedral. Look up and look around you. Consider the scale, the elaborate detail, the endless revisions. My brother, Theodore, a sculptor, coined the expression “curve equals cost”: a thing made with a curve is far more costly to make than a straight one. In all periods of history, flat, square design (like European design from the 1920s to the 1980s) denotes poverty. But consider your cathedral. See how she sweeps, her arches raising and raising their heads again to let their Lord enter. See the vaulting in the roof; the tracery in stone within the windows; the fluting of the pillars; the intricately wood-carved pulpit, font cover, and choir; the curls and twists of iron, brass, and bronze. These buildings were comprehensively more spectacular than anything being built around them.

“Sheesh!” says the craftsman. “This building cost a fortune!”

“Sheesh!” says the Socialist. “What an unjustifiable sump of the People’s cash!”

“Sheesh!” says the Protestant. “All this from the sale of indulgences and relics!”

Are cathedrals, abbeys, and monasteries of that great age of Catholicism to be scorned as remnants of a domineering, selfish, profiteering clergy? What was their funding source? Who were their fundraisers? What was the Church trading in at the time? Why are they so huge?

The idea of the cathedral did not arise valiantly out of crushing adversity, nor were they the overflow of material surpluses, nor were they simply an outlandish desire by the clergy to ram their catechetics home. They were the product of a very brilliant, practical Christian idea.

The cathedral is an enterprise that is, to every intent and purpose, a social security system of immense beauty designed to sustain a local people for upwards of a quarter of a millennium. They were built incrementally. To build a cathedral, first you have to build a road to a quarry. To feed the road-builders, you have to drain the fen or clear the forest and cultivate the land. Iron and copper need to be smelted, clothes made, lime excavated, food cooked, carts built, pots thrown: an entire economy is stimulated and springs into being.

The Church’s greatest achievement at that time was to fall in love with the filthy, unrespectable poor and to “get into bed with them,” as Londoners say. Placing into their lives a promise from God—the Eucharist—the clergy created a commonwealth revolving around the cathedral as a unifying project enshrining the ceremony that brought that mystery about. It is no coincidence that adoration of the Blessed Sacrament appeared as a phenomenon at that time.

The common economics of any historical period are summarized as the trade in goods that satisfy the basic physical needs of the individual (i.e., more ease and more pleasure). Such systems tend toward reducing costs by any means to increase profits, resulting in ugliness. In contrast, the Church’s social policy has always rightly ordered an economy around an idea greater than the needs of the individual and even the sum of the individuals—namely, praise worthy of God Himself. The economic model of the “great building” is a self-perpetuating project because everyone benefits (materially as much as anything else). Yet it is administered by volunteers; the chief ben-
and extraordinary. Ageless, immortal, art is a wayward and mercenary bunch—sensual, somatic. They gravitate to the highest bidder. But whoever does bid highest for their services and delimits their output controls the whole aesthetic: the look, feel, and motivation of society. We know, for example, that there exists an intimate bond between pop culture in all its forms (including architecture) and the products of the massive industries that pay so handsomely for them. It is also clear to me that the Church, for no reason, dropped the baton in the race to own the heart of culture a long time ago.

I work as an artist—a painter. I am a very successful, ambitious, rough, and driven man. I come from a skilful, huge Catholic family of 150 artists and craftsmen. Between us all we could probably begin to build and decorate every aspect of a Gothic cathedral, but we do not. Every now and again one of us accepts a job to “reorder” some small place of worship. We pull a team together and crash through the job because it pays less than a tenth of the price of secular work. We work for bankers, traders, and industrialists because they know that our quality work reinforces who they are—makes them believable. We are owned—lock, stock, and barrel—by worldly men because without their support we would not be able to feed and educate our large Catholic families.

When I stand in another cheap, bare Catholic church and trudge through another generic hymn reading the words “Copyright the songwriter” at the foot of the page, I am saddened to know that it means that the Church did not click a single penny onto the table for his craft, so he wrote a text appropriate to as many denominations as possible to make ends meet. He, when writing, and I, while singing, were both thinking about Mr. Bieber in his mansion and his clever patrons. I do
not like being beaten.

All is not lost. The Gothic cathedral was born in a period of great stability following huge population migrations and successful (but rather chaotic) evangelical efforts in strange lands. We are in an expansive age now. The last fifty-six years (since the papacy of John XXIII) has seen the Church grow from 550 million to 1.1 billion. It is not a bad thing at all that our funds and resources are stretched, or that Rome does not know whether to concentrate on the North, South, East, or West. It is now a very big Church to guide, and much of Rome’s efforts are valiantly dispensed on encouraging homogeneity. This is another age of migration, conversion, and re-conversion. But there will certainly come a time—and projects occasionally appear even now—when it will be well to remember that great Gothic Commonwealth. What a monumental legacy they left us.

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Near the end of the Second World War, Winston Churchill remarked of war-torn England, “We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us.” Churchill understood buildings as more than pretty pictures on souvenir postcards. We learn many things from the bricks, stone, mortar, sidewalks, streets, and plazas in many cities. Our buildings, rooms, corridors, streets, sidewalks, landscapes, and skyscapes affect and influence us in very profound ways. All those things around us that we take for granted, such as the width of a street or sidewalk, the distance to a pub or a grocery store, or the height of an apartment building or townhouse, may seem of little importance to Christians living in this fallen world. But, in part and in whole, the things we build speak to us and reveal our deepest convictions. So what do our cities say to us? Do they speak to God’s goodness and mirror His wise rule over all creation, or do they deny it? What do they say about the community of men, imaging forth the Trinitarian community of the Godhead and the host of heaven?

As a pastor and an architect, we are Presbyterians with a love for the Reformed faith. We also love art and architecture, but here we see a disconnect between the patterns of community written on our hearts and the patterns of community written on our twenty-first-century streets and highways. Things like human scale, the interaction of different classes of people in mutually enriching ways, the family as the first institution, rhythms of work and rest, the harmony of God’s works and the works of man, and the church as the final institution—all these things and more echo the message revealed in the Bible. In the first instance, many cities not only ignore all these things, they actively suppress them, just as all sinners suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

Think of what Ahab could have accomplished with modern zoning!

In 1 Kings, chapter 21, we are told that King Ahab wanted Naboth’s vineyard. There were two ways—and only two ways—for King Ahab to get it. The first way was the voluntary method. King Ahab asked him for his vineyard and offered him compensation. We know Naboth turned him down. The second way was the coercive method. Jezebel arranged for Naboth to be falsely accused and stoned to death, whereupon his property was seized by the king. The Lord told Elijah to tell Ahab, “Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?” (21:19). The end result was God’s wrath upon King Ahab and his offspring.

The story of Naboth’s vineyard brings up two questions for us as we consider the built environment: First, why would Naboth not sell Ahab the land? And second, would it have been any less of a theft if King Ahab had just changed the zoning, taken it by eminent domain, or raised the property tax rate to force Naboth out?

The first question is answered by Deuteronomy. The land Naboth possessed was the inheritance given by God to his ancestors. Naboth saw himself as a temporary superintendent. It was land held dear, a patrimony to pass on. For the twenty-first-century Christian, it is easy to see that we have given up our inheritance, exchanging a world made with people in mind for a modern world of machine-like efficiency.

The second question is one that also must be considered. In 1926, the Supreme Court decided, in Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Amber Realty, that a city could use zoning laws to force prescribed land uses on property owners as an extension of their policing powers. This led to an explosion of zoning ordinances across the country as modern leaders seized upon the opportunity to make a world in their own image. One could easily argue that these changes led to the dismantling of depth and richness of a world built for community. For example, zoning laws separated the uses of home and work and of faith and family. Buildings previously integrated into the community, especially churches, were pushed to the perimeter of the city—not in search of needy souls, but in need of the required number of parking spaces. With this blow struck, today’s communities have largely gone the way of King Ahab’s family. “Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab...” (21:34). In other words, modern cities are places where people get eaten, not places where people thrive.

The silence of Christians about these
matters speaks a loud message to the world. It says that we have little regard for the promotion and protection of our common humanity in all the ordinary things of life, such as at the heart and center of our cities. It also suggests that an atomistic and materialistic understanding of social life is a matter of indifference to Christians. The result of our silence is that churches are physically relocated far away from the center of the city. Many observers have described twenty-first-century cities as “cities with no there there.” For the Christian the missing “there” is the promotion of human wholeness and the presence of Gospel-churches at the center of cities.

Learning to See Again

Romans, chapter 1, says that “the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness.” The truth, while being temporarily suppressed, is not ever contained. By the 1970s, urban theorists like Jane Jacobs, in her book The Death and Life of the Great American City, and Christopher Alexander, in his book The Pattern Language, began to point out the inhumanity of our cities. As a countermeasure, Jacobs and Alexander attempted to identify systems and patterns that are present in vibrant, living cities. Their work influenced a generation of architects and planners. Certainly, what has been produced has been a step in the right direction. Their contributions to city planning have even been received with open arms by many Christians. But one danger is that they continue to use King Ahab’s coercive methods to achieve their ends, and so the results are mixed. These are not communities finally motivated by love of neighbor; they are still modern beneath the surface but covered over with a Thomas Kincade-type façade.

Genuine life is always organic, springing up by the power of God. According to scripture, governments are tasked with honoring and protecting life, not necessarily reproducing it. When they try, the results are often artificial and ugly. Modernity is guilty of many crimes against humanity, and the reason is that modern men do not know what a human being is. The modern condition breaks things down into their smallest material parts; but as with Humpty Dumpty, modernity does not know how to put things back together again. And in the process it kills what it seeks to understand. That is why modern cities are so charmless and inhuman. Everything is sorted into classes: financial districts here, industrial zones there, bedroom communities over there, shopping centers—you get the picture. But where are the people? And where are the institutions that connect people and God?

We need to see that cities are complex and organic things that spring up freely, not mechanisms made by governments. Secondly, we need to reclaim the inheritance of older cities like London or Geneva where there was a visible presence of the community of Christ, the Church. As Christians, we must resist trading with King Ahab for better parking, freeway access, and more land for the surround-sound auditorium. Thirdly, we need to expose King Ahab’s plots to marginalize the church in urban life. We are in for a fight—zoning commission meetings can be very pugilistic!

God’s creation is designed for community, from the interaction of the largest city down to the smallest subatomic particle. Everywhere we look we see reflections of His glory and signs of His plan for human flourishing. The Gospel brings us into community and fellowship with the living and Triune God, Who then empowers us to reflect that fellowship in communities far and wide.

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Vitruvius covered the whole range of architectural concerns when he coined the phrase “Utilitas, Venustas, Firmitas” around 15 BC. Utilitas (utility) refers to convenience and commodity of use. Venustas (beauty) naturally involves the aesthetics. Firmitas (stability) refers to the strength of construction. Vitruvius further expands on firmitas by stating, “Durability will be assured when foundations are carried down to the solid ground and materials wisely and liberally selected.” The terms “firmness,” “durability,” and “stability” are synonymous and often interchangeable. However, the term stabilitas is more aptly applied when describing sacred architecture for two reasons: it is a basic human need and it is a foundational mark of the Catholic Church.

Stabilitas is a Basic Human Need

Humans have a deeply rooted need for a sense of place, belonging, and home. “The soul is no traveller,” notes Ralph Waldo Emerson in Self-Reliance, “the wise man stays at home with the soul, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still.” The soul seeks to be stationary and at home. Stabilitas describes a place that has the quality of being securely and immovably fixed in place. Humans have understood the permanence of place for centuries due to the physical and technological limitations of one’s mobility.

By the turn of the twentieth century, man’s mobility went through significant changes, and with it grew a “new spirit.” This new spirit was in no doubt driven by the vast increase in one’s mobility due to advancements of machines. Culture and art searched diligently to find ways to express this newfound spirit of the age. Modern architects championed new ideas centered on movement, such as the free plan, curtain walls, pilotis, and ramps. Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier designed houses and buildings inspired by ocean liners. Frank Lloyd Wright captured America’s love for the automobile in his designs and ideas. Modernists, whether consciously or not, disliked design principles that went contrary to the spirit of mobility – ideas such as stability, centrality, and symmetry. Their true intent revealed itself when Wright, at an American Institute of Architects convention in 1952, declared a “war on architecture as a box.”

Today’s postmodern era consists of internet super-highways, hotspots, Wi-Fi, social networking, avatars, email, chat, texting, cyber cafés, antennas of every nature, super-mega-everything, and a whole multitude of technologies that allow for even greater mobilitas; a mobilitas virtualis (virtual mobility). The hyper-modern world is a hyped-up version of the former modern era.

Even though mobility has increased and geographical location has physically become less relevant, human beings increasingly insist on some sense of place. As Professor David Morley at Goldsmiths University of London states, “Also contrary to the claim that networked mobility overcomes geography, is the prevalence of the question, ‘Where are you?’ by which many mobile phone conversations begin.” This demonstrates that one can virtually be anywhere, but at the same time humans have the deeply rooted need to know where they are in the world. This reality cannot be denied, and sacred architecture plays a prominent role in providing for the need of a sense of place.

The triumph over the limitations in

*Holy Ghost Catholic Church, Denver, Colorado*
mobility is taking a toll on one’s sense of sacred space. The sense of place has never been more relevant. As Gerald Schlabach, associate professor of theology at the University of Saint Thomas, so wisely puts matters at the end of Unlearning Protestantism: Sustaining Christian Community in an Unstable Age: “It is not by abandoning one’s tradition or superficially adopting others’ traditions that the gift of an enlarged community becomes possible in an age of globalization. It is rather by living fully and authentically within one’s tradition, by practicing a form of stability that true community flourishes in an age of increasing fluctuation, designers are ever more seeking a sense of belonging, a sense of permanence of place, and a sense of the sacred. Noted Norwegian architect Christian Norberg-Schulz reinforces this when he states, “Human identity presupposes the identity of place, and that stabilitas loci, therefore is a basic human need.” Rebel as one may, human nature cannot be avoided.

**Stabilitas is a Foundational Mark of the Catholic Church**

The principle of stabilitas can be found throughout the history of the Church. In the sixth century, Saint Benedict introduced the principle of stabilitas loci (stay in one place) as one of the cornerstones of Western monasticism. On the manner of admitting brethren, Saint Benedict states, “Let him who is received promise in the oratory, in the presence of all, before God and His saints, stability.” This addition to his Rule provided the members with a profound sense of meaning in the world. He added this vow in the midst of the declining years of the Roman Empire and the breakdown of the family social unit. Saint Benedict sought to establish for his monasteries a stronger community and an extended family. To Saint Benedict the virtue of stabilitas loci seemed utterly lost in other established orders. As the British Benedictine George Cyprian Alston states: “[Certain early monastics] were yet without that element of stability insisted upon by Saint Benedict, viz: the ‘common life’ and family spirit. In adapting a system essentially Eastern to Western conditions, Saint Benedict gave it coherence, stability, and organization, and the verdict of history is unanimous in applauding the results of such adaptation.”

The principal vow of stabilitas allowed Benedict’s monasteries to flourish during the turmoil of the sixth century. Sacred architecture can learn from this and flourish as well in an ever-increasing world of mobilitas.

According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, stabilitas is foundational to the Catholic Church. He states in his exposition of the Apostles’ Creed: “The Church has four essential conditions, in that she is one, holy, catholic, and strong and firm (fortis et firma).” Charles Cardinal Jourdain expands upon this by writing: “Her solidiity, which comes of the foundations on which she is built—namely, Christ and the Apostles—appears outwardly in the fact that neither persecutions, errors, nor the assaults of the devils have been able to overturn her. The Vatican Council consecrated this doctrine when it recalled that the Church, by reason of her sanctity, her catholic unity, and her triumphant perpetuity—in invictam stabilitatem (unflinching stability)—is herself a great and standing motive of credibility and an irrefragable witness of her own divine mission.”

Church buildings, as symbols of faith, must stand as a witness of her own divine mission and demonstrate her “triumphant perpetuity” and “unflinching stability.” This concept is repeated throughout Church history. The First Vatican Council teaches in Pastor aeternus “the Church is built on a rock and will continue to stand firm until the end of time (ad finem saeculorum usque firma stabit).” Stabilitas reinforces the Church’s eternal and sacred nature.

Christianity has a distinct perspective on the notion of place because Christians accept the words in the Gospel of John—“the Word was God (Gk. Logos)” (Jn 1:1). The reality of the Incarnation establishes a distinct world view. The Gospel writer further reinforces this with “And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:14). The literal interpretation is “He pitched his tent among us.” The pitching of a tent requires a dwelling to be fixed in place, and through
the Incarnation, God fixes Himself in place within humanity and manifested Himself in physical form. By taking the physical nature of man in the past, and by taking on physical nature in the present through the Eucharist, Christ became and becomes present here on Earth. He provides a bearing point from which the Christian can venture. For the Christian, there is a center, a fixed place, an axis mundi (a point of connection between heaven and earth), and a permanence of sacred place. This realization provides sacred order to the Christian’s soul. He orders his world around this knowledge and his soul is no longer left to wander through the desert. The Incarnation convinces him that while traveling in the world of ever-increasing mobilitas, he is at home still. The Christian world is not perpetually in fluctuation, and sacred architecture as a reflection of the Christian’s world view must sit firmly on the foundation of Christ.

The use of the term stabilitas versus firmitas implies a greater sense of actively withstanding current forces; by definition, “stability” is “The ability of an object…to maintain equilibrium or resume its original, upright position after displacement, as by the sea or strong winds.” So when discussing sacred architecture in today’s strong winds of increasing mobility, one might say, “Utilitas, Venustas, Stabilitas.”

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On the Building of the New Cathedral of Saint Louis, sermon preached by the Most Reverend John J. Glennon, Archbishop of Saint Louis, circa 1905. This sermon was followed by a design competition in 1906, groundbreaking in 1907, and the cornerstone laid in 1908. In 2014 we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the cathedral’s dedication.

“Thou knowest the will of David, my father, and that he could not build a house to the name of the Lord his God, because of the wars that were round about him, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. But now the Lord my God hath given me rest round about; and there is no adversary nor evil occurrence. Wherefore I purpose to build a temple to the name of the Lord my God.”

- 1 Kings 5:3-5 (Douay-Rheims)

These words were spoken by Solomon the King, more than three thousand years ago, and they furnish us his purpose—namely, to build a great temple. In its elaboration, the chiseled stone, the stately cedar, and the feted gold blended to produce a temple worthy of the God of Israel.

That temple became at once the symbol of unity and center of the practice of the Jewish religion. There the Lord appeared between the flaming cherubim, announcing His judgments and proclaiming His laws. Holy was it by His presence, the holiest place in all the world. And such it remained: the pride, the consolation, and the hope of the Jewish people.

Forty years ago our predecessor, the illustrious Archbishop Kenrick, spoke these same words: “Thereupon I propose to build a temple to the name of the Lord, my God.” His cathedral city even then was rich in the number and piety of its people. It had wrought nobly and well for charity and education; its traditions were those of faith and sacrifice. A site was purchased and an association formed for the purpose to procuring the necessary funds. It would appear an easy task, yet delay followed delay until finally the project fell in abeyance with the hope that more auspicious conditions might by degrees manifest themselves. So the years passed, and with them too the venerable archbishop.

Then came the lamented Archbishop Kain, who, accepting in all earnestness the trust imposed upon him, threw all the energy of his vigorous life, all the consecration of his heart, into the work before him. He purchased the present site, had sketches prepared for the edifice, and plans formulated for the payment of it—when all too soon he was called to his reward.

From the first day I came amongst you, I found pressing on me with ever-increasing urgency this great work, the fulfillment of which is so evidently the will of God. Indeed, we would be recrearing to the duties of our holy office, faithless to the traditions of the diocese and to the memories of the dead, forgetful of your spiritual interests were we to delay any longer in the performance of this manifest duty. We must now do so, and, with God’s help, we hope to see the work soon commenced.

And should we not live to see its completion, we can at least feel, in joining the group in Calvary, that their hopes were ours also.

In this matter I feel I am only echoing your wishes, and that you are as anxious as I am to begin the great work. Yet there may be some who, for reasons more or less praiseworthy, would advise against it. “This,” they might urge, “is not a cathedral-building age—the purpose which it answered in the past exists no longer. Religion requires today consecrated lives, not magnificent temples. The true building is that not made by hands—the building of character, principle, purpose; the elevation of lives through sacrifice, prayer, devotion. It is thus we should worship God ‘in spirit and in truth.’”

And if there is a surplus of goods, we are told that it is on the poor and sick and lowly it should be expended, for our love and service of humanity is best expressed in the love and service of God.

There is much in these statements...
that may be held as true, and we can readily agree with them. But I might ask to reply, are we forgetting the poor?

When we ask for a cathedral, we set up no rivalry to the mission of charity. Rather we fulfill it to the last degree. If it be charity to house the homeless, the cathedral will be such for them, and it will serve at the same time as a home for the living God. A home for the poor, I say, because among the poorest must be counted those who have lost their faith, whose hearts are loveless—in whose lives there is no light or hope. They, the orphaned of heart—they whose poverty is most pitiful—will find in the temple that we would build consolation and peace and hope. For in that temple there would arise an altar, and from that altar would come the pleasing words of the waiting Savior: “Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you.”

Why build a church? While it is true that the essence of religion is spiritual, not material, and while it is true that the temple of God, insofar as its building goes, is material—yet in our condition (members of a visible church, professing a definite creed, united in an organized society) the material structure is just as necessary for the proper observance of that religion as our material bodies are to the life of the soul. Since our faith teaches us not only the necessity of divine worship, but also that divine worship must accept a visible form, then there should be a place set apart for such worship. Our faith teaches the sacramental system; then there should be a place where sacraments would be administered. The duty of the minister of God is to preach the word of God. Will it not best be done if an edifice is prepared wherein God’s word may be heard? But again, if the mysterious Eucharistic presence of the Christ is to continue—if that wonderful condescension and love exhibited by Him is to meet response in any way worthy—it becomes a necessity to have the altar, tabernacle, and church as the visible home of the Emmanuel.

Indeed, it is in the last we find the true inspiration with all great church building. “We have an altar,” says Saint Paul, and around that altar and above it has been wrought in stone and marble the great architectural monuments of Christendom. From the humble niche in the catacomb out in the open, and upward in clear blue of the sky, has been the evolution of the Christian church.

And why all this? That men might be honored? No. Their gold was not for the crown of kings, nor was their building for kingly delection. It was the offering of faithful hearts, of devoted nations to the honor of this King of kings. It was the undoing of Bethlehem’s ingratitude, the breaking of Calvary’s gloom, the apotheosis of the crucifixion. Christ would be their King and this would be His earthly home and here He would rule them in spirit and mercy and truth.

It is to the ages of faith we must turn for the fullest expression of this truth. Then arose all over Europe those majestic temples that today remain the pride and the despair of the modern world. What lessons their chiming bells could tell, if only we could interpret their message from the past. They have watched the invading army. Their towers echoed back the boom of siege gun. Their walls were battered by attacking forces. Around them has surged the blood-red tide of revolution. Oft-times even the consecration of their walls did not save them from the hands of the destroyer. Yet they remained—remained to bless the city and the nation; remained as shrines of peace for crusader returning, for the sinner turned penitent; remained to welcome the army returning home with victory, to be treasurer of their trophies and the recorders of their achievements. And, although ominous war clouds now hang around many of these sacred edifices, they stand today as sentinels of old, guarding the gates of a Christian civilization, proclaiming the ways of peace.

You have churches—many of them—in the city and diocese, but they are orphaned till the mother church, the cathedral church, is built. It stands to them and the diocese what the parish church is for the parish. Until the cathedral church is built, the circle is not complete; the crown is not reached. The work of God is unfinished as long as we remain without the crowning edifice, which will be a parish church for you, a cathedral for the diocese. The battle cry of the crusaders, of Saint Louis the King—the cry that led them on to victory or consoled them in defeat was “God wills it, God wills it.” So, in the name of the crucified One we take up this new crusade. Shall we build for Christ this temple? Yes, for surely “God wills it.”

John J. Glennon, born in County Westmeath, Ireland, was ordained to the priesthood in the Diocese of Kansas City, Missouri, in 1884. After serving as coadjutor bishop of Kansas City he was appointed archbishop of Saint Louis in 1903. Archbishop Glennon laid the cornerstone of the new cathedral in 1908 and dedicated it in 1914. After being elevated to cardinal, he passed into eternal life in 1946.
"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

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Out of the Mouths of Monkeys and Dragons


Reviewed by Andrew Wilson Smith

It is cold. The first gloom of dawn reveals the forms of a wretched octet of shaggy apes, carved into the structural support of an abbey cloister in the hills south of the Pyrenees. Bound hand and foot, these degenerate descendants of Atlas bear the weight of a whole monastery on their shoulders. A young novice strides along the cobbled arcade en-route to his choir stall for Lauds. He catches sight of the tethered devils only for a moment, but in that time his thoughts are flooded with a torrent of associations. Monkeys, he recalls from his studies, are like men in appearance but unlike men in their capacity for reason—and are analogous to monks who don the habit of their order, but keep not the rule. He is also reminded that if one is to grow in grace and wisdom, one must bind the more bestial aspects of one’s own fallen nature. Despite these sober reflections, the boy cannot quite hold back the smirk of amusement that the ungodly and lascivious simians cause to dart across his face.

*Palace of the Mind* is an apt title for a book that so thoughtfully examines the admixture of corporeal and spiritual realities that lie ingrained in the masonry blocks at the Monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos.

In the eleventh century, a long-established religious community on the Silos site undertook a period of reorganization and liturgical reform under the leadership of Abbot Domingo, who was responsible for building a large church and initiating a series of building campaigns that would continue intermittently for generations. After his death in 1073, a cult devoted to the memory of Santo Domingo grew along with the monastic compound. The cloister where his relics were preserved is the most majestic result of this period of expansion.

Most contemporary scholars, including Valdez del Alamo, now agree with the views held by Meyer Shapiro: that the main portion of the cloister was executed between 1085 and 1100 AD. These dates are important because they imply that the Spanish sculptors who carved the capitals and pier reliefs at Silos must be recognized as co-originators of the monumental Romanesque style, rather than mere emulators of the French masons who worked at Moissac and elsewhere.

In the third chapter of the book, which focuses on the most important set of sculptures, the author takes her readers on a detailed tour of the cloister. The overall design is typical of Benedictine abbeys: four covered arcades enclose a square courtyard, and large masonry piers serve to buttress the tectonic thrusts set in motion by long arcuated colonnades making up the exterior sides of the covered walkway. Starting with *The Descent from the Cross* and concluding with a carving celebrating Pentecost, these images chronicle biblical events as they unfolded after the death of Christ and provide a convenient means for contemplating these mysteries.

The column capitals provide a contrast to the pier reliefs in subject matter, but, as the author makes clear, the overarching themes of death and resurrection are maintained. The subjects of these capitals are the “filthy monkeys, fierce lions, fearful centaurs...extrordinary things, at once beautiful and ugly” that Saint Bernard of Clairvaux so vehemently loved to loath. Bernard, in his riveting satirical epistle *Apologia*, asks: “What excuse can there be for these ridiculous monstruosities in the cloisters where the monks do their reading?” In more recent centuries many prominent scholars have dismissively answered, “None.”

Contradicting the notion that dragons, lions, warriors, and monkeys have no proper place in the thoughts of holy monks, Valdez del Alamo elucidates the nuanced allegorical significance of the “Ridiculous Monstrosities.” For example, dragons possess all of the negative associations with Satan and his legions that one might expect, but, though terrifying, they can also be benevolent guardians of monastic property. To show another connection, the author quotes Augustine of Hippo: “When you consider the dragon, regard the dragon’s Maker, then admire the dragon, and say: Great is the Lord who made this thing! Then the dragon praises God by your voice.” By looking at the Silos carvings holistically, Valdez del Alamo helps us to understand the complex network of cultural associations that intertwine death, resurrection, and grotesque animal imagery into an elaborate and entertaining symphony of associations. The erudite monk who preferred to “take his reading from the walls rather than from a book,” scoffed at by Bernard, would have been treated to an intense literary experience at Silos, unparalleled perhaps even by that silver-tongued Cistercian’s own skillful oratory.

It is the reviewer’s opinion that the retrieval of twelfth-century imaginative methods among artists and patrons has the potential to revitalize a tradition of sacred art that has become stagnant over the last two centuries. In contradicting much of the received wisdom handed down through generations of art historians, Valdez del Alamo helps to better our understanding of the inner workings of the medieval imagination: a world vision in which the name of the Lord is so admirable that, out of the mouths of monkeys and dragons, praise can be fashioned.

Andrew Wilson Smith is an itinerant sculptor, stone carver, and teacher. His recently completed project, The Twelve Apostles, was carved into the grand portal at Our Lady of the Annunciation Abbey Church, Clear Creek, Oklahoma. Images may be found at www.AndrewWilsonSmith.com.
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To Offer Themselves as a Living Oblation to God


Reviewed by Matthew Levering

Cognizant that “the ceremonies of medieval liturgy are among the most underappreciated treasures of our Catholic heritage” (xviii), James Monti has written a masterpiece of liturgical history. In accessible prose, he shows how the medieval liturgy mirrors and expresses the Church’s development of doctrine.

After a richly detailed opening chapter on the medieval Mass, he devotes one chapter to each of the seven sacraments, focusing on the rite of the sacrament, with its prayers, actions, and readings. In these chapters, the commentary of Durandus is Monti’s favorite guide to the meanings of the rite. Theological insights that some imagine to have been lost in the medieval period appear in Durandus, as, for example, Durandus’s insistence that all the baptized are kings and priests, called “to offer themselves as a living oblation to God” (121). One thing that will impress many readers is the evidence that piles up for the large degree to which the contemporary rites of the Catholic Church draw from medieval liturgical developments. After baptism, for example, a lit candle is presented to the baptized (or his godparents on his behalf), with an accompanying prayer that is quite close to the one the Church now has. The priest’s making of the sign of the cross while giving absolution to the penitent is a medieval development. In the rite of priestly ordination, the bishop’s imposition of hands takes place in silence. During the rite, the bishop’s prayers for the holiness of the newly ordained and the bishop’s and clergy’s chanting of the Veni Sancte Spiritus, as well as the singing of the tenth-century hymn Sancti Spiritus asint, indicate the medieval Church’s awareness of the centrality of the Holy Spirit’s work. During the sacrament of marriage, the couple exchanges rings as a symbol of the indissolubility of marriage and of marital chastity. The prayer of blessing, accompanied by the sign of the cross, calls upon the Lord to join the married couple’s “hearts together in a perpetual bond of genuine love” (226). The marriage rites described by Monti contrast sharply with any supposedly negative medieval view of marriage. When Monti turns to the rites for extreme unction, the care for the dying is deeply moving, both with regard to the prescribed prayers and with regard to the prescribed actions, including instructions for how the priest should console the dying person and how devout persons should assist at the deathbed.

The second part of Monti’s book focuses on the liturgical year. Much of the Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, and Easter liturgies remain the same today, significantly indebted to the medieval liturgy; whereas the chapters on the liturgical processions suggest how much would be gained by reintroducing these processions in their full form.

In a third part, Monti treats the liturgical rites for the election, installation, and coronation of a pope; for canonizations; for consecration of virgins; for funerals; and for blessings. Again, though much from these rites is no longer in use, a large amount remains the same today. In some instances, the disappearance of certain rituals strikes me as a good thing, such as the end of the “custom of laying the sword on the altar for the blessing” (629), which was understood to be “a visual reminder to the candidates [for knighthood] of their obligations to the Church” (629). This custom seems to undermine the symbolism of the Eucharistic altar, which should be separated from instruments of war (just as priests cannot be soldiers). Similarly, the papal installation included a marvelous “tow-burning rite as a reminder of man’s mortality and the transitory nature of earthly glory” (553), but I think the Church is now well advised to do without the medieval crowning of the new pope with a three-tiered crown.

In his conclusion, Monti writes, “Our examination of the medieval liturgical texts has shown them to be pervaded by the words and thoughts of the Sacred Scriptures and filled with prayers drawn from the earliest known liturgical books of the Western tradition. Clearly these medieval rites evince what the Second Vatican Council describes as the organic development of the liturgy” (639). Monti has indeed shown this organic development, and we are deeply in his debt for constructively putting to shame any stereotypes about the medieval liturgy. Monti then applies his findings to the post-conciliar liturgical situation, “when some have deliberately sought to pervade the liturgy with the spirit of the world and treat it as merely a platform for airing heterodox theological opinions and secular causes before a captive audience” (642). Since Monti’s research is so persuasive in its own right, it seems to me that Monti should have retained a calm, irenic tone in his conclusion, so as better to reach the audience whose minds he wishes to change. Fortunately, well aware that “in some recent discussions concerning the sacred liturgy there has arisen an increasingly antipapal rhetoric” (650), he insists upon “filial adherence to the teaching and disciplinary authority of the supreme pontiff, and the recognition that the final decision as to what is to be changed or retained in the sacred liturgy rests solely with the Vicar of Christ” (648). Monti wisely concludes that what is most needed, both in participating in the liturgy and in studying it, is humility.

Matthew Levering, PhD, is the Perry Family Foundation Professor of Theology at Mundelein Seminary. He serves as co-editor of the quarterly journal Nova et Vetera, and has authored and edited numerous books, including Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist (Blackwell).
The Golden Road Out of the Desert


Reviewed by Milton W. Grenfell

To even the casual observer, clearly the Himalayan heights of quantity and quality that Western art attained from the fifteenth century until the end of the eighteenth century have never been attained before or since. And indeed, one might even say that it is the casual observer who has most noticed this, since the more “educated” have usually been miseducated so as not to see it. But the more serious student (and one not miseducated) has no doubt pondered: “Why?” And “why then, and not now?”

David Mayernik is such a serious student, who has spent most of his long career seeking the answer to these questions; and in this magnificent book, he offers to us the answers he has found. Although art amateurs will profit from this book, it is the art connoisseur and practicing artist whom it will most enrich. For frankly, a thorough understanding of the book requires a high level of art knowledge that few possess.

Mr. Mayernik, artist-architect, makes the case that a fundamental change in the approach taken by artists was initiated in the early eighteenth century, and by the end of that century had poisoned the very wellsprings of Western art. From then until now, we in the West have wandered in a trackless aesthetic desert, relatively speaking; and Mayernik in this book gives us a map showing the way out of the desert. The way is to reject the capricious invention of the past two centuries, which is best known as modernism. But we must also reject the sterile imitation of the various “traditional” revivals of these years and instead embrace emulation, the “Golden Road” out of the desert, which leads to the artistic richness and fecundity experienced in the three centuries that began with the Renaissance.

And Mayernik makes his argument for emulation in the most persuasive and instructive way possible—that is, by doing it. This luxuriously illustrated book, predominantly—and uniquely—featuring the author’s own pencil sketches, oil paintings, frescoes, photographs, designs, and even his built buildings, is an astonishing tour de force. The book itself vividly manifests the author’s ideal of the architect as a broadly and deeply educated humanist, and a multi-skilled artist. Not surprisingly, this ideal, as portrayed by this new book on architecture, closely mirrors the portrait of the ideal architect delineated by the first-century BC Roman architect-author Vitruvius in the oldest extant book on architecture. This continuum across two millennia implicitly advances the proposition that the principles underlying the practice of a full and true architecture are immutable and eternal.

The book proceeds as a series of case studies of particular works of art. Each study illuminates further the nature of emulation versus imitation or invention. There are so many facets to emulation as an artistic approach—one so long abandoned since the advent of modernist art in the early nineteenth century, that like a just-discovered precious gem, it must be held up to the light at a number of angles if one is to comprehend it and see its brilliance. In illustrating each case, Mayernik draws heavily on his considerable acquaintance with a large body of academic art history. This is in itself novel, for practicing architects and architectural historians are seldom even on speaking terms. Despite the arcane hermeneutics of so much of this literature, the professor puts it to good use in helping himself more deeply understand what the creative process was like prior to the late eighteenth century. As he acknowledges: “I could not have made coherent choices [of study] without the mediation of historians. History at best tells us about principles as much as events, and lets us understand not just what happened, but how and why. With that information a modern architect or artist can engage with models from the past with coherence and creativity.” Arguably, it is this creative engagement with the past that is the book’s most urgent lesson for today’s practicing artist.

The Challenge of Emulation in Art and Architecture, as a kind of gesamtkunstwerk is in itself a compelling, persuasive argument in favor of his case for an emulative and syncretic approach to architecture. The book as a whole makes a much stronger argument than the book makes textually. The text is labyrinthine, detailed references are made to works of art that are not illustrated, metaphors are mixed, important terms left undefined, and concepts introduced but left undeveloped or unexplained.

But let me hasten to say that the book’s flaws do not make it a bad book—just a more difficult book. Yet despite its difficulties, it is a book any serious student of the arts would be well advised to read, and all who practice art or architecture should be obliged to read. To cite one reason why it should be read, in an art world afflicted by the prevailing ethos of “nonjudgmentalism,” it is a salutary tonic of great value to read Professor Mayernik’s confident assertion: “Contrary to the expected neutrality of most art-historical writing, I will be operating from the position that there was in fact a cumulative improvement in skill from the fifteenth through the middle of the eighteenth centuries.” In today’s parlance—no, it’s not all good.

The road map towards the recovery of architecture, after decades of decay, is presented in this ambitious book. The road may be at times meandering and hard to discern, but the book maps it out with unassailable erudition and convincing conviction.

Milton Wilfred Grenfell, NCARB, CNU, is principal of Grenfell Architecture, in Washington, DC, whose firm applies classical design principles to projects ranging from mantle pieces to town squares, from houses for people to houses of God.
Marrying Drawing to the Art of Building


Reviewed by Carroll William Westfall

All buildings are made out of other buildings or parts of buildings. An architect looking for precedents can look here. In seventeenth-century Rome, an architect had Rome’s buildings and the extensive Museo Cartacio (Paper Museum)—the modest dal Pozzo palace. The well-connected non-architect Cassiano dal Pozzo began assembling its drawings and books in the 1620s, and after his death in 1657, his brother Carlo Antonio spent another thirty years doubbling the holdings. Really a compendium of what man and nature have made, roughly half was devoted to ancient arts and modern architecture and half to natural history: in all more than 7,000 drawings, watercolors, and prints, as well as 5,000 printed books and manuscripts. A publication program that began in the 1980s will reach thirty-five volumes even when excluding 1,700 drawings that may not have come from Pozzo’s museum, more than 600 drawings of ancient and modern buildings, and the Codex Coner sketchbook (now in Sir John Soane’s museum)—all accompanied by extensive scholarly apparatus.

These two handsome volumes present 366 drawings, some previously unpublished and many others buried in obscure sources. Each one receives a sharp image—many in color with detailed commentaries written by one of the project’s several knowledgeable scholars, and many with comparative images (swelling the total to 589 illustrations).

Half of the second volume presents mainly seventeenth-century decorations with wall and ceiling treatments, enframements, and nearly twenty luxurious variations on acanthus scrollwork, all of which provide rich material to assist in emulating this taste. The other half presents a miscellany of military material—fortifications, siege and battle formations, weaponry, and armor—which reminds us that architects played a major role in war before modern warfare became mechanized just as architecture has.

The bulk of the first volume’s buildings illustrates the restored classicism that Bramante and Michelangelo brought into being. Many are familiar, extant buildings in Rome, others are unbuilt projects, a few show preliminary projects, and a few others are elsewhere in Italy and in France and Spain. About half are churches, palaces, and villas, with the balance a miscellany of parts of buildings, portals and fireplaces, and construction paraphernalia.

The choice of buildings and the museum’s use well into the seventeenth century show that the High Renaissance was not a style confined within chronological limits but a standard for the renewed classicism. A eulogy of Pozzo from 1664 explained that his collecting was “governed not by affection but by merit.” He favored the “restores of great art, who from the measurements of Roman buildings extracted the true proportions of the most regular orders, from which no one can ever depart without error.” His interest was in the drawings’ documentary value rather than their artistic quality, and many were made by competent draftsmen, often as copies of other drawings. There are measured plans and elevations, a few sections, fewer detailed studies, and an occasional sheet studying design options. Like Sebastiano Serlio and Andrea Palladio, both of whom are well represented, he interspersed ancient works (published in three volumes in 2004) and these modern works. When merit shifted from quality to chronology, the museum’s utility diminished, and in 1762 it was sold to George III, with the bulk now residing in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle.

Although Pozzo’s contemporaries consulted his material, he included little of their work in his museum. His taste apparently agreed with that of the École des Beaux-Arts-trained A.D.F. Hamlin, who in 1896 characterized the Baroque as “lawless and vulgar extravagances,” “the debasement of architectural taste,” and “monuments of bad taste and pretentious sham.”

Pozzo’s collection and the graphic conventions they use illustrate the classicism that became solidified in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. It emerged from the analytical investigations recorded in sketchbooks and embodied in the vast corpus of drawings made by the assiduous and inventive architects who married drawing to the art of building and then used that offspring to make architecture like that in the projects in the Vatican, which became the school for modern classicism. Illustrated, printed books, such as those by Serlio in 1537 and Palladio in 1570, as well as Vignola’s handbook of the orders, conventionalized the representation of buildings and disseminated the renewed classicism, and the Paper Museum expanded the range of precedents to consult. Now that digital sources and the ever-dwindling range of history books seem to be increasing-ly antipathetic to traditional architecture and allergic to plans, sections, and details, this publication is a welcome augmentation to the resources available to those who would emulate that heroic period’s accomplishments.

Carroll William Westfall came to Notre Dame in 1998 as Frank Montana Professor. He has published books and articles on topics from antiquity to the present with a current focus on the reciprocity between the beautiful and the good in the American civil order.

Four leading contemporary figures in liturgical and sacramental theology reflect upon the liturgy since the Second Vatican Council’s Sacrosanctum Concilium. Cardinal Arinze emphasizes the role of each diocesan bishop as moderator, promoter, and guardian of the liturgical life of the diocese. Cardinal Estevez discusses the irreplaceable ministerial role of bishops and priests, the common priesthood of the faithful, and the official teaching that the liturgy is an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. Cardinal George suggests that the roots of the post-conciliar liturgical reforms are found in the Enlightenment, with both positive and negative consequences. Reason was exalted at the expense of perception, imagination, and intuition. Cardinal Pell’s introductory comments point out the inculturation of Catholics in the English-speaking world and the need for a renewed notion of duty and obligation to worship and to confess our sins regularly, despite its counter-cultural nature. The text concludes with the full 1963 text of Sacrosanctum Concilium in English.


Focusing on Tiberio Alfaranò’s 1571 ichnography of Saint Peter’s Basilica, Goffi questions the design pursued after Michelangelo’s death in 1564 and shows how Carlo Maderno used Michelangelo’s drawing as a substratum for new design proposals. The author proposes a hybrid architectural-conservation approach for contemporary renovation and argues that Alfaranò’s artifact provides a rich and fertile source of ideas about issues of building conservation today.


What were spiral stairs, galleries, and upper chambers in medieval cathedrals used for? This book, written by a professor at the University of Kent, presents the evidence for the practical functions of these spaces from c. 1000-1550.


Proctor examines the transformations in British Roman Catholic church architecture surrounding the Second Vatican Council. The book examines the role of Catholic clergy as patrons of modern architecture and art and the relationships between churches and modernist urban planning in new towns and suburbs. Architects in this period designed radical new forms of church building that became accepted in post-war Britain.


The first section of the book analyzes the artistic and architectural patronage of church lay procurators and patrician women in fifteenth through eighteenth-century Venice. The second section discusses drawing and mapping Venice and their effect on the shaping of the city. Palladio’s creations are the focus of the third section that presents the drawings, books, and buildings of the Renaissance giant. The final essays speak to the history and culture of Venice and its territories.
I have been grateful for what the journal has done to stimulate, encourage, and guide the renewal of sacred art and architecture in our perplexed culture. From the perspective of a parish priest, I am constantly struck by how all ranks of people are drawn instinctively to things made beautiful... Sacred architecture is evangelical.”

- Rev. George W. Rutler, Archdiocese of New York