DOMUS EUCHARISTICA

This worship, given therefore to the Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, above all accompanies and permeates the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. But it must fill our churches also outside the timetable of Masses. Indeed, since the Eucharistic Mystery was instituted out of love, and makes Christ sacramentally present, it is worthy of thanksgiving and worship. Pope John Paul II

Over the years, church buildings have received numerous titles: domus Ecclesiae, domus Dei, temple of the most high, image of the eternal, holy place, and body of Christ. John Cardinal Newman called churches gospel palaces. In this Jubilee year dedicated to the Eucharist it is appropriate to reflect on the domus Eucharistica, the church as a Eucharistic house. Our churches are the places we gather to eucharist, to thank God for His marvelous gifts. The psalmist exhorts us to “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and enter his courts with joy.” A church building which is eucharistic should foster our thanks by bringing to our eyes those things which we have to be thankful for in salvation history.

In constructing a new church, the community dedicates a building to prayer, and the building itself becomes a thank offering. It has been often remarked that God does not need church buildings. Perhaps, but from biblical times His children have sawn fit to erect monuments, tabernacles, temples and churches in His honor. What do we make of the many faithful who have built shrines in thanks for answered prayers? A domus Eucharistica can be likened to a gift offered by a bride to her bridegroom. Through its particular architecture and iconography, the eucharistic house can represent the giver as well as the beloved. If we think of the church as the finest gift we can give, it will be a beautiful jewel.

Eucharistic architecture is an architecture that supports and proclaims the Paschal mystery. As the source and the summit of all that we do, the liturgy of the Eucharist, deserves buildings that embody Christ’s death and resurrec-
tion. The architecture of the domus Eucharistica must focus us on the altar, which is the place of meal and sacrifice, as well as on the liturgy in heaven. It must help us to remember the Last Supper as well as making Christ’s sacrifice present. Our participation can be full, conscious and actual if due reverence is given to the design and placement of the other liturgico-sacramental elements: the font, the confessional, the ambo, and the tabernacle. Paintings, sculpture and symbols can reinforce the multiple foci of the domus Eucharistica as well as offering us a visual foretaste of the liturgy in heaven. To emphasize Christ present in His Church, his minister, the Eucharistic species, the sacraments, the holy Scriptures and in prayer and song the church building is conceived of as a unified whole permeated with the beauty of the Savior. Ultimately the domus Eucharistica will be directed towards the orien-

ti, the “Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle.”

This reminds us that our tabernacles are prefaces which, if beautifully crafted and through physical orientation re-conect us with the orien
ti of our worship. Since the Middle Ages, one of the ways saints and mystics have understood the church building has been as a place to adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Vatican II makes this tradition explicit in defining a church as “ a house of prayer in which the Eucharist is celebrated and reserved.” And this is one of the reasons why Catholics are drawn to churches even outside of the liturgy, because they sense that God is truly present there in a way he is not in other places. The tabernacle at the center of the domus Eucharistica reminds us of His presence that will be with us until the end of the age.

And who is responsible for the emphasis on ornate tabernacles and eucharistic adoration outside of mass? Much of the credit must be given to the Poverello. Much Eucharistic piety, as well as emphasis on the design and placement of the tabernacle can be traced to St. Francis of Assisi and to the Franciscan renewal. Francis asked the Friars to show great respect for the Blessed Sacrament and that the liturgical practices of St. John Lateran, where the Eucharist was reserved on the altar, were to be followed. On his deathbed he urged his followers, “above everything else, I want this most holy Sacrament to be honored and venerated and reserved in places which are richly ornamented.” Contrasting this with the poverty of the mendicant life underscores the great honor Franciscans gave to the Sacrament in their decoration of the domus Eucharistica and ornamentation of the tabernacle. Francis’ love of the body of Christ in the Eucharist overflowed into his love of Christ in the least of his brothers.

As a sacramental people, Catholics take the art and architecture of our churches very seriously, believing that archi-
tecture re-presents what we believe. Thus the placement and design of the tabernacle of reservation signifies Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament. Architectural principles as well as examples from history seem to confirm the wisdom of the sensus fidelium. In the domus Eucharistica what could be more natural than to enthrone the Lord in a worthy tabernacle at the head of the church. As Cardinal Ratzinger has written, the Eucharistic Presence in the tabernacle “has the effect, of course, of keeping the Eucharist forever in the church. The church never becomes a lifeless space but is always filled with the presence of the Lord, which comes out of the celebration, leads us into it, and always makes us participants in the cosmic Eucharist.” This living presence in the tabernacle makes of the whole church a place of reservation. The tabernacle itself is a small domus Eucharistica that the whole church imitates in its richly ornamented offering of thanks.

Duncan Stroik
Notre Dame, Indiana
Fall 2000

On the cover: View of the interior of the Wieskirche, Bavaria, Germany, 1746, by the Zimmerman brothers
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Journal of the Institute for Sacred Architecture

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The long awaited revision of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, which accompanies the Roman Missal, has become available in Latin from the Vatican Press. According to an analysis issued by the Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, the composition of the present Instruction, which replaces the 1975 edition, remains generally unchanged, although there are many minor and some major alterations. The Instruction treats the renovation of churches when an old altar, impossible to move without compromising its artistic value, is so positioned that it makes the participation of the people difficult. Another fixed and dedicated altar may be erected, and the old altar is no longer decorated in a special way, and the liturgy is celebrated on the new fixed altar. The revised Instruction speaks of a cross with the figure of Christ crucified upon it positioned either on the altar or near it and clearly visible, not only during the liturgy but at all times, remembering the saving passion of the Lord, and remaining near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations. The section on the place of reservation of the Blessed Sacrament has been adjusted and expanded. Two options for the location of the tabernacle are given: 1) either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, not excluding on an old altar or 2) even in another chapel suitable for adoration and the private prayer of the faithful, which is integrally connected with the church and is conspicuous to the faithful. It is more fitting that the tabernacle not be on the altar on which Mass is celebrated. A new introductory paragraph has been added to the section on sacred images setting their use in an eschatological frame. In the earthly liturgy, the Church participates in a foreshadow of the heavenly liturgy, which is celebrated in the holy city Jerusalem, towards which she tends as a pilgrim and where Christ sits at the right hand of God. By so venerating the memory of the saints, the Church hopes for some small part and company with them. Throughout the revised Instruction there is an increased emphasis on the care of all things destined for liturgical use, including everything associated with the altar and liturgical books. Thus the tabernacle, organ, ambo, priest's chair, vestments, sacred vessels, and all liturgical elements should receive a blessing. The original Latin text can be obtained on the internet from http://www.nccbuscc.org/liturgy/current/missalisromanilat.htm. An approved English version has not yet been made available.

**Art can effectively communicate** “the history of the covenant between God and man and the richness of the revealed message,” John Paul II said at the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church in Vatican City on March 31, 2000. John Paul II called Christian art “a particularly significant cultural good.” He emphasized that “The Church is not only the custodian of the past,” and “constantly increases its own patrimony of cultural goods to respond to the needs of every epoch and culture.” He made further recommendations about the quality of new art, that its various expressions “develop in harmony with the Church’s mind in the service of its mission, using a language capable of announcing the Kingdom of God to all.”

**Twenty Cathedrals are being renovated in the U.S.,** according to Fr. Carl Last, former head of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. Among the Cathedrals undergoing major renovations are San Antonio, Detroit, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Memphis, Kansas City (Kans), Covington, Savannah, Wheeling, Colorado Springs, Lafayette, and Honolulu. Other dioceses such as Houston, Laredo, Oakland and Los Angeles are building new Cathedrals. In addition to repairing roofs, restoring stained glass and artwork, and replacing electrical and mechanical systems, many of these projects are proposing major redesigns of the nave and sanctuary, removal of historic elements, and simplification of iconography. Some of the renovations have met with objections from preservationists, laity, and other people in their communities. The cost of the Cathedral renovations is presumed to be over $150 million, while the total cost of new Cathedrals could be well over $230 million.

**The Church of the Transfiguration** was dedicated on the feastday this June with a festive celebration that included banquets, fireworks, concerts, and specially commissioned music and dance. The Community of Jesus, an ecumenical community of 325 members in the Benedictine monastic tradition, is located in Orleans, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. Their new abbey church is part of the master plan for the community and adds a worship space which accommodates a full choir, orchestra, a 10,000-pipe organ, procession and sacramental spaces, and up to 540 worshippers. The iconography planned for the church is rich in biblical scenes and symbols of faith in cast bronze, mosaic, stained glass, marble, limestone and fresco. The apse mosaic, planned to be 55 feet high, will illustrate the risen Christ and the Four Evangelists. Architect William L. Rawn III of Boston, based his design for the church on the Early Christian basilica type at the request of the community, who wished to relate to the time before Christianity was divided. The 12,000 square foot church is built with concrete walls sheathed inside and out with Minnesota limestone. Douglas fir roof trusses 55 feet above the ground, and a Vermont slate roof. The liturgical elements of altar, ambo, font and tabernacle were designed by Keefe Associates. Built for approximately $10 million, with an additional $3 million scheduled for artwork, it is the community's desire that the church serve as a model for other new churches around the country.

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The Church of the Transfiguration, Orleans, MA, was dedicated this past June.
The Chicago Tribune noted a new trend towards public religious art in the Chicago area. A 33 foot tall stainless-steel sculpture of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the New Millennium, has been trucked from parish to parish for more than a year. It even inspired another donor to commission a massive statue of Jesus, the Icon of the Divine Mercy, which was unveiled recently at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Chicago. It is scheduled to go on permanent display just feet from the southbound lanes of the Kennedy Expressway this fall.

**Built of Living Stones** is the new name of the Bishops’ Committee on Liturgy document on art and architecture. The draft document, previously entitled Domus Dei, was reviewed at the June meeting of the BCL and a number of changes were made, according to Fr. James Moroney, Secretary of the BCL. After a special August meeting to review the revision, the Administrative Committee considered the document in September. The Committee judged the document to be ready for full debate and a possible vote at the November meeting of the American Bishops.

The new entrance for the Vatican Museums is now open, allowing access for 20,000 visitors a day. In the inauguration ceremony, Pope John Paul II said that the completion of this project is proof of the Church’s will for a dialogue between faith and art. This is the most ambitious of the architectural projects undertaken by the Holy See for the Jubilee year and cost $23 million.

Fr. Andrew Greeley criticized church renovations and modern liturgists in an address to the Religious Education Congress in Los Angeles this Spring. The novelist and sociologist said that “Unfortunately, since Vatican II, a highly authoritarian and doctrinaire perspective has infected many liturgists: All the beauty of the past should be eliminated-only the pulpit, the altar and baptistry, nothing else. Our beautiful altars were stripped. With the battle cry 'we can't do Vatican II liturgy in a pre-Vatican II church,' this kind of liturgist has written off 2,000 years of Catholic artistic experience, 2,000 years of Catholic heritage. You tell people when they’re doing this-removing statues, stations of the cross, vigil lights-that they are offending the Catholic people; and they say, 'if you’re right, you don’t need an opinion poll to make a decision; you don’t need to consult people.'" The liturgy, and the celebration of all the sacraments, he said, quoted Pope John Paul II, must be appealing: "We have to do them so beautifully that people outside the Household of the Faith will give second thoughts about the Church."

The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles is planned for dedication sometime in 2002. The $163 million structure is built on a massive 64,000 square foot foundation - uniquely engineered to withstand major earthquakes - with a nave one foot longer than St. Patrick’s in New York. The monumental nave will seat 3,000 people and will have an 85 foot tall ceiling, a 200 foot ambulatory and 24,000 square feet of alabaster in its windows.

The Charlemagne corridor of St. Peter's was dedicated in January 2000. In keeping with the Jubilee message of conversion, it is a place of recollected prayer, flanked by two lines of confessionalists in this monumental passage that rises to the basilica.

"At least in the United States, it seems eucharistic teaching and preaching have been neglected, eucharistic adoration has been discouraged outside of the Mass and even the Mass sometimes lacks the prayerful attitude it deserves" said Francis Cardinal George of Chicago. In his address at the International Eucharistic Congress in Rome this June, the Cardinal said that "there is a growing desire among the Catholic people for more clarity and insight into our eucharistic faith and practice." Because it is not simply a re-enactment of the Last Supper, the Eucharist in the tabernacle is worthy of the same veneration as the Eucharist on the altar during Mass. The cardinal said the eucharistic spirituality Catholics are called to live and to share with others must follow the stages present in the Mass itself: asking forgiveness, listening to God’s word, interceding in prayer for others, offering gifts, concealing them, sharing in communion and going forth in mission.

During the Eucharistic Congress in Rome, Pope John Paul II said that without the Eucharist, it is impossible to understand the witness of missionaries and martyrs over the last two centuries. The celebration of the Eucharist, he said, "is the most effective missionary action that the ecclesial community can make in world history." The Pope said the Eucharist gives believers "the courage to be agents of solidarity and renewal, responsible for changing the structures of sin in which individuals, communities, and sometimes entire peoples, are trapped.”

Earlier this year, the National Gallery in London featured an exhibition entitled "Seeing Salvation: The Image of Christ", which aimed to put Jesus back at the heart of art history. The National Gallery’s director, Neil MacGregor, in explaining the reason for the exhibit said that Christianity “is the fundamental element of western culture. The vast majority of these pictures are from British collections: it is our job to remind the public that it owns these astonishing things.”

John Paul II’s Letter on the anniversary of Aachen Cathedral referred to the ties that unite the Catholic community spread over the world with the Church of Rome and the Holy City of Jerusalem. The Cathedral, dedicated to the Virgin, was built in 800 at the request of Charlemagne, who was crowned that same year in Rome by Pope Leo III. Aachen Cathedral also contains four precious relics that Jerusalem gave Charlemagne and that recall “with
profound reverence events in the history of salvation.” The four relics are fragments of the newborn Jesus’ diapers, the cloth Jesus wore around his waist on the cross, the dress Mary wore on Christmas Eve, and the cloth of John the Baptist’s beheading.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee has unveiled a $10 million plan for the renovation of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. The plan for the landmark 1847 structure, which includes a glassy atrium, a cloistered courtyard and extensive changes to the cathedral’s sanctuary, drew praise from city officials and criticism from others. Along with replacing the church’s outdated mechanical, sound and lighting systems, the original sanctuary will be removed, and a new altar will be placed in the middle of the nave. Seating capacity, now 740, would be increased to more than 900, with chairs arranged in the round. The architect for the project is Hammel, Green & Abrahamson and the liturgical consultant is Rev. Richard Vosko.

The 1931 statue of Christ the Redeemer that overlooks Rio de Janeiro is being restored. The project is being funded by the Brazilian Environmental Institute, the newspaper “O Globo,” and Banco Real. A titanium mesh will be placed in the interior of the 125 foot statue to conduct electric current, preventing salt from damaging Christ’s robe.

Brazil’s oldest church has been rediscovered on a hill considered sacred by the inhabitants of Porto Seguro. Vestiges of the Church of St. Francis, constructed between 1503 and 1515, were discovered in March of this year. Up until the 1970s, Mass was celebrated on the hill, although no one knew exactly where the ruins were buried. Researchers of the University of Salvador of Bahia made the find of the outside walls, the base of the belfry and the main altar. Chronicles of the time refer to the Church of St. Francis as being part of the first urban nucleus established by the Portuguese in Brazil.

The mystery of beauty was the subject of a Lenten Meditation addressed to Pope John Paul II. Fr. Cantalamessa, the Capuchin who delivered the series of meditations, quoted an Orthodox author: “God is not the only one covered in beauty. Evil imitates him and makes beauty profoundly ambiguous.” Referring to Genesis, he spoke of Eve, who was seduced by beauty; she realized the fruit was beautiful, desirable, aesthetically attractive. This means that, although truth is always beautiful, beauty is not always true. This ambiguity is overcome by Jesus, who redeemed beauty by depriving himself of it for the sake of love in the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection. In this way, the Son of God demonstrated that there is only one precious thing: the beauty of love that passes through the cross and is purified by the cross. Rather than closing one’s eyes before ambiguous beauty, they must be opened wide to look at the transfigured Christ. Fr. Cantalamessa ended by paraphrasing Fyodor Dostoyevski: “It won’t be the love of beauty that saves the world, but the beauty of love.”

The congress “Abbeys and Monasteries in Europe’s Roots” was held in Conques, France, on February 18, 1984. It was part of the “Campaign for a Common Patronage of Europe,” promoted by the European Council, and was organized by the Pontifical Council for Culture and the European Center of Art and Medieval Civilization. Pontifical Council President Cardinal Paul Poupard called the congress an invitation to study the value and importance of abbeys and monasteries in the making of Europe. Moreover, through this initiative, the Vatican reaffirmed its profound interest in Europe’s cultural and religious patrimony and its desire to protect and make it accessible to the greatest possible number of people.

A Second Floating Russian Orthodox Church has been provided by the Catholic charity “Aid to the Church in Need”. The first such ship has been serving on the Volga River since May, 1998. On July 11, 2000 a second was consecrated in Volgograd in the name of St. Nicholas by the Russian Orthodox Archbishop of Volgograd and Kamyshin. These church-boats are in the spirit of the 35 “chapel cars” instituted by “Aid to the Church in Need’s” founder, Fr. Werenfried van Straaten, the “bacon priest,” in Germany after World War II. The agency is working with the Orthodox in response to the desires of the Holy Father for the unity of Christians. At present, its work stands as one of the few examples of successful ecumenism with the Russian Orthodox.

Over 3,000 artists met with the Pope on the feast of Blessed Fra Angelico. The artists listened to the Pope’s call to conversion in the most difficult work of art of all: the sculpturing of Christ’s features on the stone of one’s own heart. “The artist who can do this profoundly is the Holy Spirit, but he requires our correspondence and docility,” the Pope said. At this point, the Pontiff intoned a beautiful song about Michelangelo’s cupola. Everyone present followed the words with attention, gazing on the beauty of the Basilica transfigured by the clear midday light. “Seen from outside, it seems to curve against the sky over a community recollected in prayer, as is the love of God. From within, instead, with its vertiginous launching to the heights, it evokes the work of elevation toward the full encounter with God,” John Paul II proclaimed on February 18, 1984.

New England Jesuits are considering restoring the historic South End Boston Church of the Immaculate Conception, fourteen years after they had dismantled many of its artistic elements. The Boston Globe reports that the Jesuits are “driven by concerns over the structural soundness of the church’s roof and by the fact that a once-dying congregation is now flourishing.”

While the Renaissance Revival church, designed by Patrick C. Keely in 1861, still has a 19th century pipe organ considered one of the best in the world, 30-foot-high etched-glass windows, and rosette-strewn pale blue coffers on a barrel-vaulted ceiling, many elements were lost in the renovation fourteen years ago. Pews were ripped out and destroyed, the pulpit broken and put in a closet, the communion rail hidden, and Stations of the Cross and paintings of Jesus, St. Andrew and St. John
removed. The restoration would be especially significant in view of the long and bitter legal battle over the Jesuits' right to remove much of the building's interior. In 1991 they won a precedent-setting ruling from the state Supreme Judicial Court, which held that it was unconstitutional for the city to regulate changes to a church interior by declaring it a historic landmark.

Mount Sinai is claimed to have been discovered at Mount Har Karkon, in the Israeli Negeb desert. In his book, Mysteries of Mount Sinai, Emmanuel Anati writes, "we found the altar and 12 boundary posts at the foot of the mount. Those 12 pillars are mentioned in the pages of the Bible [Ex 24:4]. Then, some 60 meters away, the remains of a Bronze Age camp. This is also mentioned in the Old Testament . . . In a protruding commemorative burial mound was an altar, and underneath, the vestiges of a fire. On the altar there was a white stone in the shape of a half moon, the symbol of the moon god Sin." A

Austrian archeologist Renate Pillinger of the University of Vienna revealed the discovery in Ephesus of Christian cave paintings representing St. Paul. In 1995, a cave was discovered a few kilometers away from the city's ruins. Inside the cave, there are paintings depicting the Transfiguration and a sequence inspired by the Acts of the Apostles, referring to St. Thecla and St. Paul's preaching. Paul's portrait is one of the best-preserved frescoes in the cave. It is too early to state that the cave's discovery archeologically confirms Paul's presence in Ephesus, which other sources, such as the Bible, consider indisputable.
CATHOLIC ARCHITECTURE
AND NEW URBANISM

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH PLATER-ZYBERK

James C. McCrery

Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk is dean of the University of Miami School of Architecture and a partner in the design firm Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company. She is an ardent promoter of New Urbanism, a movement that has been successful in designing new communities as towns rather than subdivisions and revitalizing older communities. Among Duany Plater-Zyberk's best known projects are the towns of Seaside in Florida, Kentlands in Maryland and downtown West Palm Beach, Florida, all designed to be pedestrian-oriented with schools, churches, libraries and shops within walking distance of homes.

Sacred Architecture: Why is it important for America's towns, cities, and communities to include significant church buildings?

Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk: Churches are an important place for community life today. The very large, suburban congregation with multiple activities is providing a focus for community in a landscape which otherwise does not have one. In the poor urban neighborhood, the church provides any number of community support services, including outright social services such as feeding the hungry. Across the range of communities, churches are playing a very important role in community life and its quality.

SA: How does the architecture of the church want to reflect that?

EPZ: The church as a place of civic gathering certainly should be reflected in its architecture. A number of issues are important in church design today in the various denominations, but the buildings also need to reflect their role in the community.

SA: Why, if at all, should Catholics be interested in New Urbanism?

EPZ: Many aspects of New Urbanism have to do with the goals of religion in general, but some in particular are related to concerns which grow out of a Roman Catholic spiritual and intellectual foundation.

I will offer three topics as examples: environment, society, and economy. The first is environmental, and responsible stewardship is an inherent part of understanding our role on the planet. Being a good steward of the environment is very much a part of the New Urbanism's core value system. I found it gratifying to read recently that some priests are preaching that urban sprawl is irresponsible.

The second topic, perhaps more obvious to Catholics, is the social context. New Urbanism is concerned with structuring the physical environment to promote a sense of community while enabling individual autonomy and empowerment, whether allowing children to walk to school or seniors to live independently within their home community. An important aspect of community is interdependence and connectivity. By the proximity and interaction fostered by the physical environment, one understands the role one plays in the community.

The third topic regards the economic context. The New Urbanism proposes a framework for an economic system that is supportive of individuals in community. The economic picture is one of collaboration, diversity, and establishing or enabling institutions, the workplace and commerce that facilitate the community and ensure its longevity.

We're living in a time in which commercial activity is extremely short-lived. Main Street is dying at the hands of cannibalistic retail development. This does not promote a sense of community, and is not related to any sense of responsibility for people. We think the physical environment can reflect a better way, a better philosophy.
SA: What role do you see the Catholic Church being able to play in aiding the design or development of new towns? Should it have a role in it at all?

EPZ: That is a very interesting question. I think the Catholic Church can play an important role in the revitalization of neighborhoods. But I am not sure that it needs to play an initiating role in new places, except insofar as the Church may be interested in building a kind of ideal community.

There is a design role that should be played by the Church exemplifying the civic role, the community-focused role that a Catholic Church plays in neighborhoods. And the biggest impediment to this design role is dimensions. From my own experience of designing one church in a suburban part of Miami and my understanding of common practice, I find that these churches are very big.

The big, suburban church that we designed had to seat 800 in the main sanctuary and then be able to expand to 1,000 or 1,200 for special occasions in the Church year. Of course, you have to have parking for all of those people. Then usually there is a small office component, and a community room, and possibly even a school. Consequently, the church campus is very large.

Even in their smallest permutations, these campuses require an enormous site and the isolation of buildings amidst parking lots, like other institutions in suburbia. However, large dimensions can be mitigated. There are alternative solutions. In the new urbanist neighborhood, the New Urbanism, the parking is shared with commercial establishments that are not used much at night or on Sundays. In Canada, public and parochial schools share facilities. They are developed by the government and Church, and they share the big ticket items, things like libraries or playing fields, that also happen to take up a lot of space.

In several Canadian projects, we found there was a feasible way to put schools together in the greenbelt between the several neighborhoods from which they draw their students, who can walk to school. The institution on the edge, rather than at the center of the neighborhood, is the least disruptive of its walkability.

In the New Urbanism, that is, in a compact, pedestrian-oriented community, dimensions and measures are extremely important. The way we build churches now sometimes seems contradictory to the goal of making these places pedestrian-friendly and acceptable.

In older neighborhoods where there usually are already churches, the initiatives may have less to do with the building itself reacting to its role in the physical fabric and more with revitalization. Renovation should not be accomplished in such a way that the building becomes defensive against hostile surroundings, or that it begins to take apart the neighborhood by suburbanizing the urban fabric around it.

I have often thought that wealthy, suburban congregations could adopt congregations in the inner city and do some concrete projects, like building and rebuilding housing for people in those places. I am sure that this already goes on in various parts of the country. But all involved have to pay attention to the fact that the structure of the physical environment is important. Not only for increasing the economic value of the place over time, but to promote good community.

SA: From your experience with church projects, what are some of the issues in designing a new church building, whether it be in an established neighborhood or in a newly planned development?

EPZ: We designed a little church in a neighborhood in Miami. It was initiated by a pastor who thought that if he franchised smaller chapels, creating what he called “missions” within his large parish then he might be able to influence behavior in those areas which weren’t within walking distance of the big church.

So, we designed one on a 50 x 100 foot...
lot in a traditional style. It is very simple, its vernacular details refer to the colonial prototype of Puerto Rico, the predominant ethnicity of the neighborhood. A front building at the sidewalk has a small prayer chapel and an office for social services. Above the entry area is a small apartment for a concierge, a caretaker keeping an eye on the neighborhood. Behind this is a courtyard, as you might find in a traditional Caribbean or Mediterranean building, and then beyond that is the nave, which seats about 200.

**SA:** How many of these franchised chapels are in this parish?

**EPZ:** The intention was to have four.

**SA:** Amazing, and how large is the parish?

**EPZ:** It spreads out over a large area that has both industrial and residential neighborhoods in it.

**SA:** That is a fine example of original thinking on the part of pastors.

**EPZ:** The pastor, Father Jose Menendez, a Cuban with a terrific amount of charisma, is at work in this parish with struggling but very energetic immigrant neighborhoods. On his own initiative, he raised the money to buy a $40,000 lot. The lot was sandwiched between a café with loud, bawdy music and a crack house. The first thing he did was erect a wooden cross and put a sheep in the lot, because this was going to be called “Mission San Juan Bautista.” The cross and the sheep both survived there for many months. He then convinced a Cuban sculptor to do a small statue of Saint John the Baptist that stands on the fountain. He convinced a painter to do a mural on the ceiling of the sanctuary. It is a heavenly scene full of people from the neighborhood.

The church design symbolizes the progression from the profane to the sacred. After crossing a short front yard of gravel, the desert, one enters the front building and walks over a mosaic floor of a coiled snake with an apple in its mouth, depicting the Garden of Eden, the first sin. You are stepping on the snake as you begin your procession from the profane to the sacred.

**SA:** That is a great American story. What are things for the patron, the congregation, and architect to be concerned about in the commissioning of a church? Anything absolutely crucial?

**EPZ:** Outside of the urban context, there is one crucial issue. That is the conversation or conflict between tradition and modernism. In the Church this conversation exists, and it is marked by conceptions of “pre-Vatican II” and “post-Vatican II.” There is a dominant directive towards openness, post-conciliarism and modernism.

There are design advisors within the church at large who will be very explicit about what this post-conciliar attitude means: “don’t do what you would have done before,” “don’t enter on axis,” “the cross should not be on axis,” and so on. On the other hand, many people still have an inclination to the traditional form and a very emotional attachment to the history of the church, its ceremonies, its rituals, and its buildings.

The modern/traditional discussion is unavoidable and very challenging. It requires a sorting out of intellectual goals and the emotional or visceral effect that a space can have on a people’s spiritual stance. Obviously that wasn’t so much a challenge in the old Church. But I find that truly challenging today, not just in terms of design, but in terms of dealing with the politics of the client and working...
with any kind of committee.

SA: From your experience can you say that working with committees is beneficial? Are you able to compare working with a single patron or a particularly strong leader of a committee versus a band of semi-interested parishioners? Do you have a preference?

EPZ: I haven’t had the full range of experience. Father Menendez was basically a sole diocesan. Father Greer, the Good Shepherd pastors, did have a committee, but he played a strong leadership role. The committee was eager to expedite the church because for 12 years they’d had only a community hall.

I could give one word of advice about committees. Bring the conversation to intellectual issues and principles and be very explicit as a designer about what different forms represent. Be very involving. It is not always easy for designers to explain what they do, but the more rational you can be, the better.

SA: Fantastic advice. Let’s go back to your comment earlier about dimension. Do parish priests and committees think too grandly when they commission churches that must seat 800, stand 1,200 and accommodate 100 priests in the sanctuary? Would it be better for communities to have several small churches or parishes than one large one?

EPZ: Well, in Miami the Archdiocese is a wise steward and does not let parishes begin projects before they are ready to pay for them. In terms of size, I do think that smaller would be better. But locations and the shortage of priests can create problems.

SA: A question on style. What do you think about the way the Catholic Church has planned and designed its church buildings during the last 30 years?

EPZ: This has not been an outstanding time for church architecture or any other kind of architecture. That is a statement that stands alone. Maybe we could look upon this as a transitional time. We were asked to deal with all sorts of new issues after the Council, and now we are in a shakeout time. Hopefully we can learn from those first attempts and efforts.

SA: I’ve attended other conferences where it has been suggested that after Vatican II in the United States there was a very good atmosphere architecturally and design-wise for iconoclasm to thrive. Have you ever thought about a possible link; that perhaps the two phenomena fed each other, resulting in a dearth of architectural and artistic expression?

EPZ: That is why I am being kind about calling the last thirty years a “period of transition”. Because, perhaps you need these rough moments of discarding and deciding what to take back in order to foster change. But a lot of people do feel the loss of historical attachment. Certainly, our teaching about the Church and the body of Christ on earth has to do with its history. Christ existed at a very specific time in history, creation was time-based. Every religion brings along its history, so why not allow that physical continuity to occur?

By the same token, we shouldn’t preclude the spiritual opening that discovery and the new can provide.

So, it is still not an easy time to figure things out stylistically. We should certainly have the opportunity to rebuild or to carry on the traditions of building of a specific place. The exhibit, Reconquering Sacred Space, that opened in Rome in November 1999 has some terrific examples of traditional design, but it represents a fraction of church building today.

SA: Do you mean to say that it is okay in America to evoke an architectural style or place in time that isn’t American?

EPZ: Yes, or even one that is traditionally American. Our early Puritan heritage, religiously based, produced some wonderful models of churches that should be acceptable to us for reinterpretation. At various times in American architectural history we referred to earlier times for spiritual reasons. American Neo-classicism connected the new land to the democracy of ancient Greece. In the early Renaissance the Italians were excited by the forms of a prior time that was pagan, cleverly integrating ancient classical elements with the Roman Catholic imagery of the period.

There is a rich tradition of Christian appropriation of symbols from prior cultures and prior spiritualities. That is an age-old kind of inclusivity or appropriation that we don’t seem to be allowing ourselves now. One must acknowledge that for all the hopefulness of multiple interpretations that the abstractions of modernism promotes, the turning away from representation, from evolution, is not an enrichment at all.

SA: So, then what should be done with all of these abysmal churches out there? What do you have to say to the priest who has been committed by his bishop to a parish that isn’t going to build anything soon, but who has an empty hall in which to celebrate the Mass?

EPZ: This is actually the design challenge of our time, not just in the realm of church architecture. A great deal has been built in recent decades which doesn’t lend itself to addition, renovation, and enhancement. It is so autonomous, so aggressively individualistic that it is hard to imagine how to engage it. This is something that we need to be teaching designers: how to deal with the suburban context, individualistic forms and buildings that are far apart from each other with little hope of spatial relationships. In the case of such a church, a parish priest should look for a very sensitive and clever designer who can begin dealing with the situation incrementally.

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Antoni Gaudi: God’s Architect
Michael Rose

All the great cathedrals have taken centuries to complete. The Cathedral of the Sagrada Familia (Holy Family) in Barcelona, Spain, is no exception. Begun in 1883, only half of this imposing church is now complete. Construction work, however, steadily continues as donations keep coming in to support the work. Architects estimate that the church will take at least another 40 years to complete. Some say it could take as many as 150 years.

Sagrada Familia is the most renowned building designed by Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi, whose cause for beatification was opened last year by the Cardinal Archbishop of Barcelona. The cathedral is a testament to the architect’s faith. In some ways, Gaudi’s Barcelona church resembles the great cathedrals of the Medieval age. Sagrada Familia was based on the plan of a Gothic basilica with five naves, a transept, an apse, and ambulatory. It is designed with soaring towers, capped by spires, and is replete with dense symbolism throughout the structure. Gaudi, however, wanted to create a “20th century cathedral,” a synthesis of all his architectural knowledge with a visual expression of the mysteries of faith. He designed façades representing the Nativity, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Christ; and eighteen towers, symbolizing the twelve Apostles, the four Evangelists, the Virgin Mary and Christ. The Christ tower, the tallest, when completed will stand some 500 feet high. To date, eight of the eighteen towers are completed. Each is of a unique spiral-shape covered in patterns of Venetian glass and mosaic crowned by the Holy Cross.

Construction of Sagrada Familia continues

God’s Architect

“My client can wait,” was Gaudi’s genial response to his helpers when delays occurred due to his constant changes to the original plans. Gaudi always acknowledged that his ultimate client was God, whom he felt was in no hurry. The architect wanted the finest and most perfect sacred temple for his client. He truly worked ad majorem Dei gloriam, for the greater glory of God.

Gaudi, known as “neo-Medieval” in his day, developed a unique style of building. His work is characterized by the use of naturalistic forms, and his approach came to be known as the “biological style.” Sagrada Familia is known for its conical spires, parabolic arched doorways and freely curving lines. As in most of his work, Gaudi has created the impression the stone used was soft and modeled like clay or wax.

Gaudi directed the construction of the church from 1883 until his sudden death in 1926. He became so involved with the church that he set up residence in his on-site study and devoted the last 14 years of his life to this most important of all his projects. He regarded Sagrada Familia as a great mission. On June 7, 1926, Gaudi was hit by a street car. Three days later he died at the age of 74.

When he died, the people of Barcelona popularly proclaimed him a “saint.” There was great commotion. Even though he lived in a reserved manner, removed from the world, rumor of his sanctity had already spread. No newspaper, not even the most virulently anti-Catholic, attacked him. The director of the Museum of the Barcelona Archdiocese wrote an article calling Gaudi “God’s Architect.” His architecture is an expression of his Christian commitment. From the very beginning of the 20th century Sagrada Familia became an icon of the city of Barcelona, just as the Eiffel Tower is an icon of Paris. And after the architect’s death, the people of Barcelona regarded him as a patron of their grand city.

There have even been documented conversions resulting from the architecture of Sagrada Familia. The most prominent involved two Japanese men. One is architect Kenji Imai. He arrived in Barcelona two months after Gaudi’s death. He was traveling all over the world to meet the great architects of the day, but by the time he reached Barcelona Gaudi was dead and buried. Even so, Imai was not disappointed. Sagrada Familia made such an impression on him that, when he became a professor in Japan he gave several lectures on Gaudi and, finally, converted to Catholicism. The other convert is sculptor Etsuro Sotoo, who worked for years fashioning statues on Barcelona’s cathedral, and ultimately became a Catholic.

The Work Continues

After Gaudi’s death, work continued on the church until 1936. These were the days of the bloody Spanish Civil War. The Communists, who hated all things Catholic, set fire to Gaudi’s study which held his notes and designs for Sagrada Familia. Many of these were destroyed, but the project resumed in 1952 using the surviving drawings and models to continue the work. Today, the constructed part is open to visitors as well as the small museum that exhibits Gaudi’s original plans and models.

Later this year, Cardinal Ricard Maria Carles of Barcelona will inaugurate Sagrada Familia with a solemn Mass on December 31, the Feast of the Holy Family. The 150-foot-high central nave is scheduled to be totally roofed by that date. Referring to the Basilica’s beauty, Cardinal Carles told a Spanish newspaper: “for me it transmits an evangelical message, very much Gaudi’s style.” Perhaps for that reason, Antoni Gaudi is regarded still as “God’s Architect.”

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It is generally thought by liturgists and theorists of liturgical architecture that little occurred in the area of renewal of church design before the Second Vatican Council. The architectural modernism of the post-Conciliar era has therefore often been thought to represent the Council’s artistic intentions. However, before the Council, church architecture had already undergone significant change in response to the Liturgical Movement and Pius XII’s encyclical Mediator Dei (1947). Statements of popes, architects, and pioneers of the Liturgical Movement point to a liturgical and architectural context which presents a vastly different approach to architecture than the stark interiors presented by many architects after the Council.

Despite the prevailing belief that architectural modernism was the only available option for the modern church, the early twentieth century provides considerable evidence of representational, historically-connected and often beautiful architectural designs responsive to the same principles canonized in the documents of Vatican II. Sacrosanctum Concilium grew directly out of the ideas expressed in the Liturgical Movement and Mediator Dei (1947). Statements of popes, architects, and pioneers of the Liturgical Movement point to a liturgical and architectural context which presents a vastly different approach to architecture than the stark interiors presented by many architects after the Council. Despite the prevailing belief that architectural modernism was the only available option for the modern church, the early twentieth century provides considerable evidence of representational, historically-connected and often beautiful architectural designs responsive to the same principles canonized in the documents of Vatican II. Sacrosanctum Concilium grew directly out of the ideas expressed in the Liturgical Movement and Mediator Dei, and must be read in that context to convey a full understanding of the authentic spirit of Vatican II regarding liturgical architecture.

The Liturgical Movement in America

Architects and liturgists of the early twentieth century proclaimed an almost unrelenting criticism of Victorian ecclesiastical design. It was, they argued, the product of a pioneer mentality in American Catholicism in which poor and under-educated patrons hired uninspired architects and purchased low quality mass-produced liturgical goods from catalogs. In response, architect-authors like Charles Maginnis and Ralph Adams Cram called for more adequate ecclesiastical design and furnishings. At the same time, the Liturgical Movement began to establish its presence in the United States. The movement’s leaders believed that American liturgy had suffered under an individualist pioneer mentality as well, leading to a minimalist liturgical practice and general lack of understanding about the place of the Eucharistic liturgy in the life of the Church. The Liturgical Movement mingled with the pre-existing traditionally-based architectural design methods of the 1920s and 1930s, and over the next several decades wrought considerable improvement in ecclesiastical design.

One of the earliest American mouthpieces of the Liturgical Movement was the Benedictine periodical Ora et Labora, a journal of liturgy founded by Benedictine monk Virgil Michel and based on his studies of philosophy and liturgy in Europe in the 1920s. One of the journal’s first articles, entitled “Why a Liturgical Movement?,” was written by Basil Stegmann, O.S.B., who was later to become an active participant in the American liturgical discussions. He explained the need for liturgical reform to an American church still generally unaware of European developments. Stegmann cited Pius X’s 1903 Motu proprio which expressed the pope’s “most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish again” and which claimed that “the foremost and indispensable fount is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church.” Stegmann called for all members of the Church to become intimately united with Christ and form “what St. Paul calls mystically the body of Christ.” The movement’s new concentration on the baptistery, altar and improved participation naturally lead to changes in church design. Other features of the Liturgical Movement included a “profound spirit of fidelity to the Church,” a patristic revival, a new interest in Gregorian chant, the use of the Liturgy of the Hours for laypeople and the more frequent following of Latin-vernacular missals.

The early proponents of the Liturgical Movement sought to improve liturgical quality by putting the primary features of the liturgical life in their proper place. Previously, the prevailing individualist approach to liturgy meant that worshippers...
not only failed to follow along with the liturgical action, but often busied themselves with other things, often pious enough, but unrelated to the Eucharistic liturgy. With relatively little interest in making the liturgical action visible to the congregation, altars were sometimes set in deep chancels and attached to elaborate reredoses that overwhelmed their tabernacles. Various devotional altars had their own tabernacles, which quite often doubled as statue bases. Overly large and colorful statues only compounded the problem. With the Blessed Sacrament reserved in multiple bases. Overly large and colorful statues only compounded the problem. With the Blessed Sacrament reserved in multiple tabernacles, the centrality of the Eucharistic liturgy as a unified act of communal worship became less clear. Since clarity of Church teaching on the Eucharist and liturgy were key features of the Liturgical Movement, architecture changed to serve its ends.

Liturgical Principles and Church Architecture

The Liturgical Movement called for clarity in representing the centrality of the Eucharist and the pious participation of the membership of the Mystical Body of Christ in the Eucharistic liturgy. At the most basic level, architects of the Liturgical Movement wanted to raise the quality of American liturgical life. By making the liturgical regulations of the Sacred Congregation of Rites more widely known, they hoped to bring about consistent practice in order to increase the reverence for the Mass and other devotions. Their concerns were not merely legalistic, however. Intimately connected with these goals was the desire to increase the active and pious participation of the laity, and architectural changes followed almost immediately to serve that end.

Maurice Lavanoux lamented in a 1929 article in Orate Fratres that American architects and liturgists often failed to veil the tabernacle, ordered low quality church goods from catalogues, and designed reredoses that enveloped the tabernacle and thereby failed to make it suitably prominent. Art and historical continuity still had their place, but now the two primary symbols, the altar and crucifix, would dominate. Lavanoux asked that artists treat the altar with proper dignity, not simply view it as a “vehicle for architectural virtuosity.” He quoted M.S. MacMahon’s Liturgical Catechism in describing the new arrangement of the altar according to liturgical principles. Instead of the old Victorian pinnacled altar with its disproportionately small tabernacle, MacMahon wrote,

the tendency of the modern liturgical movement is to concentrate attention upon the actual altar, to remove the superstructure back from the altar or to dispense with it altogether, so that the altar may stand out from it, with its dominating feature of the Cross, as the place of Sacrifice and the table of the Lord’s Supper, and that, with its tabernacle, it may stand out as the throne upon which Christ reigns as King and from which He dispenses the bounteous largesse of Divine grace.

The intention to simplify the altar originated in a desire to emphasize the active aspect of Mass and clarify the place of the reserved Eucharist.

Advocates of architectural and liturgical clarity received a new mouthpiece with the premiere of Liturgical Arts magazine in 1931. Its editors wrote that they were “less concerned with the stimulation of sumptuous building than...with the fostering of good taste, of honest craftsmanship [and] of liturgical correctness.” The resistance to mere sumptuous building and the emphasis on honesty were means by which the Liturgical Movement sought to correct the architectural mistakes of the nineteenth century while maintaining a design philosophy appropriate for church architecture. This call for honesty and simplicity was to be extraordinarily influential for two reasons: first, it was echoed strongly in Sacrosanctum Concilium, and second, with a changed meaning it became the leitmotif of Modernist church architects.

Specific architectural changes appeared quickly in new construction and renovations. Altars with tall backdrops were replaced by those with a solid, simple rectangular shape and prominent tabernacles. Edwin Ryan included instructions on the design of the appropriate altar in the inaugural issue of Liturgical Arts. He asked for “liturgical correctness” and included an image of two prototypical altars fulfilling liturgical principles. The rectangular slab of the altar remained dominant, and the tabernacle stood freely. Its rounded shape facilitated the use of the required tabernacle veil. The crucifix remained dominant and read prominently against a plain backdrop. The tester or baldachino emphasized the altar and marked its status. Ryan made it clear that these suggestions were not meant to limit the creativity of the architect and that “within the requirements of liturgical correctness and good taste the fullest liberty is of course permissible.” A built example from the firm of Comes, Perry and McMullen gave the high altar of St. Luke’s Church in St. Paul, MN a figural backdrop. The sculpture group stood behind the altar and not on it, was dominated by the crucifix, and contrasted in color with the large tabernacle. Clarification of the place of the altar and the tabernacle did not necessarily mean a bare sanctuary and absence of ornamental treatment.

Another influential journal, Church Property Administration, provided information on the liturgical movement and its architectural effects. With a circulation of nearly 15,000 in 1951 that included 128 bishops, 11,007 churches and 802 architects, the magazine reached a popular audience but included numerous articles on architecture which evidenced the ideals of the Liturgical Movement. Michael Chapman penned a piece called “Liturgical Movement in America” in 1943 that spoke of liturgical law, tabernacle veils and rubrics, but his underlying thrust grew out of the context of the liturgical movement. The
changes at the altar, he claimed, were meant to “direct the attention of our people to the inner significance of the action performed at it.” The simplification of the altar and sanctuary was intended to help the altar resume “its functional significance as the place of Sacrifice; its very austerity serving to focus the mind and soul upon Him who is there enshrined, rather than on the shrine itself.”

Chapman also critiqued nineteenth century architects for reducing tabernacles to mere cupboards and reiterated that liturgical law forbade the nonetheless common practice of putting a statue or monstrance atop a tabernacle.

The common abuse of using tabernacles as stands for statues and altar crucifixes became one of the immediate issues to resolve. This small but significant problem tied directly to the Liturgical Movement’s aim to clarify the place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church. Maurice Lavanoux lamented with “a sense of shame” that he had once designed an extra-shallow tabernacle “so that the back could be filled with brick as an adequate support” for a statue.

Altar, tabernacle and statues were meant to be brought into a harmonious whole through placement, treatment, and number. The various parts would amplify the true hierarchy of importance without diminishing the rightful place of any individual component of Christian worship or piety. One author in Church Property Administration titled his article “Eliminate Distractions in Church Interiors,” and suggested that all things which “distract attention and reduce the power of concentration” be removed or improved. As H.A. Reinhold, one of the pioneers of the liturgical movement, put it, liturgical churches would “put first things first again, second things in the second place and peripheral things on the periphery.”

In the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council, much discussion continued concerning the appropriate church building and the kind of design it required. The great majority of architects and faithful held to their traditions without fear of appropriate updating. While certain Modernist architects built high profile church projects, such as Le Corbusier’s Notre Dame du Haut (1950-54) and Marcel Breuer’s St. John’s Abbey in Minnesota (1961), most church architects avoided this type of modernism. Even in 1948 when Reinhold suggested the possibility of semicircular naves, priests facing the people, chairs instead of pews, and organs near the altar and not in a loft, he would preserve his more traditional sense of architectural propriety. Before the Council, a middle road of architectural reform emerged, one that shared ideas with the Liturgical Movement and Mediator Dei.

The Spirit of Mediator Dei

In his 1947 encyclical Mediator Dei, Pius XII praised the new focus on liturgy. He traced the renewed interest to several Benedictine monasteries and thought it would greatly benefit the faithful who formed a “compact body with Christ for its head” ($5). However, one of the introductory paragraphs explained that the encyclical would not only educate those resistant to appropriate change, but also address overly exuberant liturgists. Pius wrote:

We observe with considerable anxiety and some misgiving, that elsewhere certain enthusiasts, over-eager in their search for novelty, are straying beyond the path of sound doctrine and prudence. Not seldom, in fact, they interlard their plans and hopes for a revival of the sacred liturgy with principles which compromise this holiest of causes in theory or practice, and sometimes even taint it with errors touching Catholic faith and ascetical doctrine ($8).

Pius was concerned with abuses of liturgical creativity, a blurring of the lines between clerics and lay people regarding the nature of the priesthood, and the use of the vernacular without permission. In matters more closely related to art and architecture, he warned against the return of the primitive table form of the altar, against forbidding images of saints, and against crucifixes which showed no evidence of Christ’s passion ($62). Mediator Dei offered strong recommendations for sacred art as well, allowing “modern art” to “be given free scope” only if it were able to “preserve a correct balance between styles tending neither toward extreme realism nor to excessive ‘symbolism’...” ($195). He deplored and condemned “those works of art, recently introduced by some, which seem to be a distortion and perversion of true art and which at times openly shock Christian taste, modesty and devotion...” ($195).

Jesuit Father John La Farge, chaplain of the Liturgical Arts Society, lost no time in tak-
ing the words of Pius XII to the readers of Liturgical Arts in 1948, even before the official English language translation was available.¹³

By the 1950s, the use of contemporary design methods had begun to merge with the liturgical movement and provided a new set of buildings which have received little notice in the liturgical and art historical journals. With a few notable exceptions, most architects worked within the requests of Mediator Dei while adapting new materials and artistic methodologies to church design. Despite some arguments against a supposed “false” and “dishonest” use of historical styles like Gothic, architects continued to either build overtly traditional churches or use new idioms which maintained a logical continuity with those that came before. Architects like Edward Schulte and others who echoed Pius XII’s call for moderation in liturgical innovation found few allies in the architectural media. Without much fanfare, they simply continued to design church buildings that served the needs of the day.

Schulte, a Cincinnati architect and one-time president of the American Institute of Architects, took an approach to church design that truly grew organically from that which came before. His Blessed Sacrament Church in Sioux City, Iowa appeared in Church Property Administration in 1958 and provided a dignified and substantial answer to the problem presented by the architectural Modernists: how to make a modern church which espoused new ideas in liturgical design.¹⁴ The generous openings of the west facade and the single image of “Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament” embodied noble simplicity as expressed by the Liturgical Movement without sacrificing content or resorting to an industrial aesthetic. The interior presented a large sanctuary with a prominent tabernacle, a dominant crucifix, all of it at once appropriately ornamental and without distractions. The limestone piers supported visible truss arches which fulfilled much of the movement’s demand for “honesty” in construction. The adoring angels painted on the ceiling appropriately enriched the church in a style which copied no past age. Schulte satisfied the demand to focus attention on the high altar by placing his one side altar outside the south arcade. Most strikingly, he placed the choir behind the high altar, satisfying the requests of those such as Reinhold and others to restore what many liturgical scholars believed to be an ancient arrangement.

Another novel yet historically continuous approach to the Liturgical Movement produced the Church of the Holy Trinity in Gary, Indiana. Published in 1959, it used a style called “modern classic” but partook of the ideas generated by the Liturgical Movement. Architect J. Ellsworth Potter gave the exterior a campanile, porticoed entrance, and a dignified ecclesiastical air growing from continuity of conventional ecclesiastical typology. The plan proved a departure, however, turning the nave 90 degrees and putting the sanctuary against the long end. This arrangement gave all of the congregation direct sight lines to the sanctuary’s prominent tabernacle and forceful imagery. By providing seating for 432 with only 12 rows of pews, the church brought “the congregation of Holy Trinity closer to the main altar.”¹⁵ Fulfilling the Liturgical Movement’s requests for an increased prominence for Baptism, the baptistery was a substantial chapel-like room. Instead of competing with the high altar, another special shrine was pulled out from the main nave and given its own small chapel. The desires of the Liturgical Movement were incorporated within a church which otherwise maintained a recognizable architectural continuity with older churches. It grew organically from those that came before.

In one other example, an article entitled “Dignified Contemporary Church Architecture” appeared in Church Property Administration in 1956 and presented the Church of St. Therese in Garfield Heights,
 Ohio. Designed by Robert T. Miller of Cleveland, the building used a palette recalling his early days as a designer of industrial buildings but nonetheless maintained a sense of Catholic purpose. The very large church seated 1,000 people, using materials of steel, concrete block, and brick. Despite the incorporation of industrial building methods, the architect was content to let the "modern" materials be a means rather than an end. The tall campanile proved visible for miles and the west front of the building offered a grand entry. A well-proportioned Carrara marble statue of St. Therese in a field of blue mosaic with gold crosses and roses was surrounded by an ornamental screen inset with Theresian symbolism. A dramatic three-story faceted glass window with abstracted figural imagery gave the baptistery a grandeur it deserved. The sanctuary received dramatic natural lighting over the high altar and its prominent tabernacle. Images of Joseph and the Virgin form part of the scene, but without altars of their own. The symbolism in the aluminum baldaquin joined with the precious materials of the altar to establish its proper status. The altar carried the simple but essential message "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus." Modern materials came together with a decorous arrangement of parts to form a dignified contemporary church.

These churches were built in the spirit of Mediator Dei. They eschewed the claims of some for unusual shapes, banishment of ornament, and the use of exposed industrial materials. Despite the prevailing notion that the post-war United States saw nothing but modernist architecture, in 1954 three "traditional" churches were being built for every one "modern" church. Ironically, Modernist architect-heroes disproportionately found their way into the secular press, impressed other architects and persuaded building committees. No matter how clearly the traditional architects adopted features of the Liturgical Movement, they could not compete with the excitement of the stylistic avant-garde. The Modernist critique of traditional architecture reached all levels, from educational institutions to popular culture to chancery offices.

While leading architectural journals praised the latest concrete designs, William Busch, a liturgical pioneer and collaborator with Virgil Michel in the Liturgical Movement, asked readers to understand the true nature of a church building. In 1955 he penned an article entitled "Secularism in Church Architecture," discussing the term "contemporary" and its associations with modern secular buildings. Secularism in church architecture, he feared, would lead to buildings which would "lack the architectural expression which is proper to a church as a House of God and a place of divine worship." Furthermore, he denied claims of some architectural modernists by writing:

A church edifice is not simply a place for the convenient exercise of prayer and instruction and for the enactment of the liturgy. The church edifice itself is a part of the liturgy, a sacred thing, made holy by a divine presence through solenn consecration: it is a sacramental object, an outward sign of invisible spiritual reality. The concept of the church building as a "skin" for liturgical action, as would be presented later in documents like Environment and Art in Catholic Worship (BCL, 1978), was absolutely proscribed. In fact, Busch criticized architect Pietro Belluschi, who would become one of the major forces in American church architecture, for seeing a church as a "meeting house for people." He asked instead:

Where is the thought of church architecture as addressed to God? And where is the thought of God's address to man in hallowing grace? Are we to imagine modern society as in an attitude of more or less agnostic and emotional subjectivism, and unconcerned about objective truth and the data of divine revelation? H.A. Reinhold, a prominent voice of the Liturgical Movement, also urged moderation. He asked that architects neither "canonize nor condemn any of the historic styles," rather, "appreciate all of these styles of architecture, each for its own value." Although he spoke of "full participation of the congregation" he cautioned against centralized altars. Other writers and architects had different ideas, and many church architects who ignored Mediator Dei often received considerable notoriety. Articles in Liturgical Arts became more and more clearly aligned with a "progressive" notion of liturgical reform at the same time that architectural modernism under architects like Le Corbusier and Pietro Belluschi were taking hold. Even before the arrival of the Second Vatican Council, Liturgical Arts was discussing abstract art for churches, presenting images of blank sanctuaries, and encouraging Mass facing the people. Modernist architects and liturgists who privileged what Pius XII called "exterior" participation in reaction to the individualism of the previous decades held the majority opinions and established the normative principles of new church architecture.

The language of the Liturgical Movement found its way into the documents of Vatican II and remains relatively unchanged despite the variety of architectural responses that claim to grow from it. Phrases such as "noble simplicity" and "active participation" were formative concepts in pre-Conciliar design which nonetheless allowed for a traditional architecture, one suitably elaborate yet clear in its aims. In contrast to the conceptions of post-Conciliar architecture promoted by architectural innovators, the 1940s and 1950s provide contextual clues for the architecture of the Liturgical Movement. It is reasonable to ask whether the writers of Sacrosanctum Concilium had the larger history of the liturgical movement in mind when they called for "noble beauty rather than mere extravagance" (SC, §124).

Similarly, in understanding Vatican II's statement giving "art of our own days...free scope in the Church" (SC, §123), it can be remembered that Pius XI (reigned 1922-39) had chastised certain modern artists for deviating from appropriate art even...
as he argued that the Church had “always opened to door to progress...guided by genius and faith.” Moreover, the very words of Pius XII’s Mediator Dei which read “modern art should be given free scope in the due and reverent service of the church” found their way into Sacrosanctum Concilium. The proper context for this “free scope” comes in relation to Pius’ other exhortations from Mediator Dei: preservation of images of saints and the representation of the wounds of Christ on the crucifix (§62), the priority given to interior elements of divine worship (§24), the encouragement of extraliturgical devotions (§29-32), the warning against seeing ancient liturgical norms as more worthy than those developed subsequently (§61) and the prohibition of the table form of the altar (§62). Mediator Dei appeared only 12 years before plans for the Council were announced, yet almost immediately after the Council, architects and liturgists were defying its requests. Even Paul VI criticized artists for abandoning the Church, and for “expressing certain things that offend us who have been entrusted with the guardianship of the human race.” While he asked artists to be “sincere and daring,” he also said to them:

One does not know what you are saying. Frequently you yourselves do not know, and the language of Babel, of confusion, is the result. Then where is art? Paul VI asked of artists the same thing that the Liturgical Movement asked of architects: clarity and lack of confusion. In spite of great efforts to the contrary, architectural and liturgical disorientation has characterized the period since the Council, and many search for ways to reestablish that clarity. Understanding the “spirit of Mediator Dei” and its resultant architecture may prove very useful.

That the artistic recommendations of Vatican II grew so directly out of the context of the Liturgical Movement and the recommendations of Mediator Dei gives credence to the idea that some of what came before Vatican II might provide insight into understanding what the Council fathers intended. The liturgical architecture of the decades before the Council need not be ignored or seen as outdated relics of a past age. In fact, forty-five years later, pre-Conciliar church architecture inspired by the Liturgical Movement might yield significant clues for proper implementation of the renewal.

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NOTES
2 Stegmann, 6.
6 “Editorial,” Liturgical Arts 1 (Fall 1931).
8 Michael Andrew Chapman, “Liturgical Movement in America,” Church Property Administration 7 (Second Quarter, 1943), 7.
9 Lavanoux, 280.
12 Reinhold, 8.
14 “Church, Rectory and Convent for Iowa Parish,” Church Property Administration 22 (March-April 1958), 56-59. For another examples of Schulte’s work see “Church of Christ the King in Dallas,” Church Property Administration 20 (May-June 1956), 48-51, 162.
15 “Holy Trinity Church in Gary Indiana...Closer Proximity of Congregation to Altar,” Church Property Administration 23 (July-August 1959), 53.
18 Busch, 31.
19 Busch, 32.
20 Busch, 33.
23 Pius XII wrote in Mediator Dei of interior and exterior worship. While he valued the actions and ritual which made up exterior participation, he claimed the “chief element of divine worship must be interior” (523-24).
Spanish Colonial Sacred Architecture

The New Parish Church of San Juan Capistrano

Patrick James Riley

Just why it took a century and a half and more to replace an historic parish church destroyed by earthquake in 1812 is too involved a story to tell here, and not very relevant to ecclesiastical architecture. Lincoln buffs, of course, will want to know that Abraham Lincoln played a role in it by giving the ruins back to the Catholic authorities. What interests us most here is an example of architecture as a pastoral instrument.

The San Juan Capistrano Regional Library, by the Postmodernist master Michael Graves, sits on a knoll at the corner of El Camino Real and Acjachema Street, occupying a curiously rural slice of downtown San Juan Capistrano. A quasi-mannerist interpretation of Spanish Colonial architecture in early Postmodern idiom, it is striking for its diminutive scale, an overgrown architectural model in wood and pastel-painted stucco. It proudly displays the ubiquitous pseudo-classical elements of 1970's and early 1980's Postmodern: squat, purely cylindrical columns; bare lintels; paper-thin barrel vaulting; and the mandatory Aldo Rossi-inspired fenestration.

Above Graves' liberating interpretive architecture, across Acjachema Street and toward the Camino Capistrano to the west, looms the massive figure of the new parish church of San Juan Capistrano. Dating from 1986, it is an opus of the architect John Bartlett, then based in Arcadia, California.

Built to replace the original mission parish church that was destroyed by earthquake in 1812, this faithfully Spanish Colonial church actually isn't massive at all. The scale is in fact trompe-l'oeil. Just as Graves's library dispenses its mass by branching out across its site, creating the illusion of smallness, the new parish church concentrates its own mass in a simple union of three separately articulated forms: the great cupola, a bell tower, and a central facade. The architectural elements in these edifices define the physical and cultural landscape. Spanish Colonial is often required by local design review boards and planning authorities as condition sine qua non for obtaining a building permit. The "Mission style," as Spanish Colonial architecture is most often called, has become California's official architecture. Like so much of California's cultural produce, it has also come to symbolize, by unfortunate association with the recent crop of substandard design and construction, all that is cheap, superficial, and speculative in the world of buildings.

The spirit of Torquemada is alive and well in the world of architectural criticism. Books already are being burned, and altars defaced and overturned. What treatment will be reserved for the architects and built work of a true Classical revival in ecclesiastical architecture, especially as this movement gathers more disciples? We know the answer to that question. But the forces that destroyed the Postmodern movement will likely be in for a surprise when they stage their inevitable assault on this authentic and most durable architecture.

Spanish Colonial Architecture in America

California is peppered with buildings in the Spanish Colonial style. From suburban homes to gasoline stations to major public projects, these edifices define the physical and cultural landscape. Spanish Colonial is often required by local design review boards and planning authorities as conditional sine qua non for obtaining a building permit. The "Mission style," as Spanish Colonial architecture is most often called, has become California's official architecture. Like so much of California's cultural produce, it has also come to symbolize, by unfortunate association with the recent crop of substandard design and construction, all that is cheap, superficial, and speculative in the world of buildings.

The "Mission style," of course, wasn't cheap or Hollywoodish in its original incarnation, the architecture of Spain's American colonies and, soon thereafter, of the missions founded by Blessed Junipero Serra up the California coast. Like most of the Spanish-inspired architecture of the New World, the "Mission style" derives from Spanish Plateresque and Churrigueresque architecture.

Late fifteenth-century Plateresque freely borrowed the decorative motifs of the intricately detailed work of Spanish silversmiths, the "Plateros." In the seventeenth century, after the restrained Juan de Herrera interlude, decorated architecture in Spain reached an apotheosis in the exuberant—some would say capricious—Churrigueresque baroque, named after the Churriguera, a family chiefly known in its day for the design of altars. Characteristic of both the Plateresque and Churrigueresque are the elaborate frontispieces that are then applied to an otherwise flat facade. The architectural elements in these decorations, columns, entablatures, pediments et al play a purely decorative role. With the Plateresque and Churrigueresque, Spain's Gothic moment, based like all Gothic on structural purism, meets its end.

The Spaniards eventually exported their decorated architecture to Southern Italy and to their colonies in the Americas. In the 18th century the Churrigueresque set roots in Mexico, while a native brand of Plateresque, the Mexican Plateresque, less exact in the carving of ornamental details than its Spanish forebear, emerged. This architecture would come to define Spanish Colo-
nial architecture in North America, including that of the California Missions.

The Pastoral Power of Architecture and History

To replace the original mission parish church, destroyed by an earthquake in 1812, a new parish church in a Spanish Colonial spirit was built and dedicated in 1986. For the pastor, Monsignor Paul Martin, the historicist architecture of the new building served two critical purposes: the first was to maintain historical-artistic continuity with the rest of the adjacent Mission San Juan Capistrano; the second was to give the predominantly Hispanic parishioners a church building with a familiar face, making it for them a church they could feel comfortable in.

“This church is familiar to the parishioners, it reminds them of home, it establishes a link with their families and relatives back in Mexico,” says Monsignor Martin. “A modern church building would not have served the needs of this diocese.”

The design of the new church borrows what it can from the remains of the original church. The rest, as explained by Dr. Norman Neuerberg, an expert whom Monsignor Martin consulted, was obtained by studying similar churches in Mexico. The plan is the same for both churches, a Latin cross. Culled from the ruins are many of the ornamental details: for the carved stone doorways, for the proportions of the broad intrados of the Roman arches, and in the use of engaged pilasters at the nave and transept. While the pictorial record of the old stone church indicates a quadripartite rhythm to the nave, the new parish church has only three bays, but wider and deeper. These are capped by sail vaults, each pierced by an oculus, as in the original design.

In the sanctuary of the new church we find the first and only—in so far as we can tell—substantial departure from the collapsed archetype: a dome of Renaissance proportions raised on pendentives and with a drum punctuated by clerestory windows replaces the fifth sail vault that was located above the old sanctuary.

The treatment of the exterior of the new church is hard to decipher. Its stunted Plateresque seems to be characteristic of modern California Mission architecture. It suggests a stunted effort at achieving a Plateresque effect. While the Plateresque design is clearly implemented, the result is only moderately, or perhaps modestly, Plateresque. Doubtless this was intentional in the new parish church, which again relied on the record furnished by the ruins of the old stone church. It is natural to postulate a scarcity of funds, materials or of qualified mano d'opera at the time of its construction.

Regardless of the reasons, the parsimony of applied ornamentation in the original might indicate something altogether different: the emergence, for whatever reason,
solidation of the Mexican Plateresque in architecture. An intriguing contrapunto to the floral painted decorations is provided by the painted architecture that adorns niches and sometimes frames other artwork: it could reasonably be seen as a Plateresque interpretation of Renaissance quadratura, the use of painted architecture to frame a subject. It is in any case the purest and most readily discernible Plateresque element of the new church. In painted form, we can fully admire the architecture of the Mexican Plateresque, its delicate tendril work, its intricate vegetal motifs, the full ornamental complexity denied us, not necessarily for the worse, in the built work.

The Parish Church As Sacred Sign

William Whyte, the noted urban theorist who died in 1991, coined the term “imageability” to describe the salient characteristic of an urban landmark. Not all buildings are landmarks. To be a landmark, a building must be “imageable,” that is, it must impress its image in the mind of the citizen, and in doing so it helps the citizen understand the city better, and helps him find his way about town. An “imageable” building, a landmark, is a sign. Like all signs, it points to something other than itself, to a destination, to some other reality.

“This church is familiar to the parishioners, it reminds them of home,” Monsignor Martin said of his new parish church. This church is a sign to the ethnic Hispanic parishioners, a sign of their homes, their family, and their country of origin. It points to all these realities—home, family, country—by pointing to the churches back home, the Plateresque and Churrigueresque churches of Mexico. And like all successful churches, it points to a far greater reality, a “faith reality,” as Monsignor Martin called it, the Church founded by Christ.

In Catholic theology, a sacramental is a sacred sign that is similar to the Seven Sacraments in its effects, but was not instituted by Christ Himself. The Code of Canon Law defines sacramental as “sacred signs by which, in a certain imitation of the Sacraments, effects above all spiritual are signified and are obtained by the intercession of the Church.” These sacred signs can be either visible, as in priestly vestments, or invisible, as in the blessing of objects and dedication of a church. The blessing of sacred objects, which is a sacramental in itself, is a requisite if an object is to assume the nature of a sacred sign, that is, if it is to become a sacramental. Unlike the Sacraments, which were instituted by Christ, the sacramentals are instituted by the Church, through its intercessory power.

Does the blessing and dedication of a church make that church a sacramental? Sacrosanctum Concilium, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, doesn’t specify. But a church building is sanctified thusly. The church edifice, when it indicates the greater “faith reality,” is a sign. It is made a sacred sign by the blessing and dedication that it receives. The new parish church of San Juan Capistrano is a cultural sign that reminds parishioners of all that is humanly dear to them. It is also a sacred sign that points to that which is divinely dear to the believer. It prepares and disposes the believer to receive the Grace that flows from the Sacrifice taking place within its walls at Mass.

The Rebirth of Classical Ecclesiastical Architecture

In 1981, the late Italian architect, historian, and critic Bruno Zevi declared Postmodern architecture “stillborn.” Less than a decade later, this prophet of Modernism was proved right. Postmodern has vanished from the architectural avant garde, surviving only in the works of its high priest, Michael Graves, and rearing its head now and then in the immense plantations of corporate America’s office parks. The art and architecture intelligentsia will quickly predict a similar fate for Classical sacred architecture. But it will be mistaken. The seeds of the demise of Postmodern architecture lay not in its “Post,” but in its “modern.” A public sickened by the havoc wreaked by the Modern movement warmly received and embraced Postmodernism until the truth set in: it was not an attempt to give modern architecture a classical face, but to give Classical architecture a modern face. Classical architecture was reduced to a mere caricature, to an infantile interpretation of ancient and timeless themes and motifs.

While the critics rejected the Postmodern right away because of the presence of the Classical, the public rejected it for the lack of a true Classical soul. In its essence, it lacked true “imageability,” and quickly became meaningless and insignificant in the true sense, that is, incapable of signifying anything, incapable of being a sign.

The intelligentsia will be writing the obituary of Classical architecture even as the Classical suffers the labor pains of rebirth. “Rumors of its death will be greatly exaggerated.” The unsung John Bartletts of this world will see to it that we have more churches like San Juan Capistrano.
Last autumn I published an article in Antiphon documenting a discrepancy in the 1967 English text of Eucharisticum Mysterium 56 which I speculated may have contributed to a misunderstanding and narrowing of liturgical principles and architectural norms in the United States.\(^1\) I suggested these ill effects arose because the mistaken text of EM 56 recommended that the tabernacle be placed off the altar in a separate chapel (whereas the authentic text permitted placement on an altar in the main church) and because the misprint created the impression that the principles of EM 55 should guide the design of new churches. EM 55 describes the Mass as a liturgical celebration during which four principal modes of Christ’s presence emerge clearly and successively in the assembly, the Word, the priest, and the Eucharistic species. This liturgical theory closely parallels and may well have influenced post-conciliar church designs in the United States. Unfortunately, the Church intended EM 55 to serve only as a practical recommendation on tabernacle placement, not as a statement of a new liturgical theory to be used in designing churches. The present article will examine how the theory found in EM 55 can favor a particular type of church design and how that design fails to reflect the authentic intentions of the Church. This analysis will reveal some of the underlying reasons for the long-standing controversy over church architecture in the United States and will suggest a direction that could help bring closure to that debate.\(^2\)

The Rationale of EM 55 and Its Architectural Implications

The Instruction Eucharisticum Mysterium (25 May 1967) desired, in light of the manifold ecclesial pronouncements on the Eucharist, “to draw out practical norms from the total teaching of such documents” so that the Eucharistic mystery and “the relationships that are recognized in the Church teaching as existing objectively between the various facets of the mystery [might] become reflected in the life and mind of the faithful.”\(^3\) EM 3 presents a number of doctrinal themes from Church teaching which are to be used in the Instruction as “the source of the norms on the practical arrangement of the worship of this sacrament even after Mass and of its correlation with the proper arrangement of the Mass.” Several of these themes are elaborated in part one of the Instruction as principles for liturgical catechesis.\(^4\) EM 55 is found in a subsection of part three entitled “Where the Blessed Sacrament is to be Reserved”\(^5\) and, read in this context, it is clearly intended to be a practical recommendation derived from previously established principles such as those discussed in EM 3. Therefore it is contrary to the nature of the passage and the stated intention of the Instruction to read EM 55 as establishing new theoretical liturgical principles:

In the celebration of Mass the principal modes of Christ’s presence to his eucharistically from the beginning on the altar where Mass is celebrated. That presence is the effect of the consecration and should appear as such. EM 55 is not meant to be anything more than a practical recommendation on tabernacle placement. In the discussion which follows we are not concerned with the actual recommendation made by EM 55 that the tabernacle should be separated from the altar used at Mass (which may be justifiable for a variety of reasons), but with the...
useful and legitimate architectural criteria for new designs. Since the four modes of Christ’s presence are said to emerge clearly one after the other during the liturgy, it would seem that church designs should lead worshipers to focus attention successively on the congregation, the ambo, the chair, and the altar. At the same time, the primacy given to clearly seeing these distinct modes favors maximizing proximity and minimizing architectural or decorative features which might attract attention or obstruct vision. The imagined designs thus have four foci and seek to establish those foci without the use of extraneous architectural or ornamental elements. The result is a building that is principally a utilitarian structure shaped by the minimalistic requirements of the rites so that the modes and rites are free to speak for themselves.

A circular church with the altar, ambo, and chair centrally located meets these criteria, especially if it is of modest size and has no internal columns. The congregants are then located as closely as possible to each other and to the place where the other three modes will appear. The lines of sight are unimpeded and directed naturally toward the modes without needing other elements to draw attention. Since the assembly itself is a single mode of presence, its unity in the celebration is perhaps best expressed by placing the altar, ambo, and chair in the midst of the assembly with as little distinction as possible between the congregation and the central sanctuary. The equal dignity of the modes suggests that neither altar, ambo, nor chair should be placed at the exact center. The practical drawbacks to this design are the same as those for the theatre-in-the-round: 1) some of the assembly faces the backside of the central space; and 2) there is no backstage or wing space allowing for hidden storage, access, and movement of equipment and personnel. These shortcomings can be overcome by a compromise in which the floor plan is semicircular or fan-shaped rather than a full circle.

The inadequacy of the principles in EM 55

I do not think it is overstating the case to say that the type of design described above has characterized much of church architecture during the post-conciliar period in the United States. The widespread use and encouragement of this style has created controversy because the pattern does not fit well with the designs of most pre-conciliar Catholic churches in the United States and therefore does not accord with the sensibilities of those attached for historic, personal, or esthetic reasons to more traditional or classical styles. The result has been thirty years of debate and frustration regarding the design of new churches and the renovation of existing ones. Such conflict is natural to human life and is at times unavoidable in the life of the Church as she adapts to changing historical circumstances. The roots of the present conflict, however, run deeper than the challenge of change and adaptation. The design criteria discussed above, which so closely parallel the theory of EM 55, do not in fact fully correspond to the Church’s understanding of the church building or liturgy and, in some details, actually violate the existing legislation governing the design of churches. These discrepancies arise because the Church’s understanding of the church building and the liturgy center on the Church’s participation in the Pasch of Christ and have nothing to do with EM 55’s novel theory of successive manifestations of the four modes of presence.

It is essential to keep in mind that the rationale of EM 55 was not presented by the Church as a statement of new theoretical principles for use in liturgical theology or church design. To be sure, EM 55 seeks to justify its practical recommendation on tabernacle placement by appealing to what it evidently believes are legitimate theoretical principles, but the context assures us that EM 55 is intending to apply existing principles and not to introduce new ones. That EM 55 does not provide an adequate statement of the Church’s previously established liturgical principles can be demonstrated by a comparison with the underlying texts of EM 9 and Sacrosanctum Concilium. EM 7 does not speak of four modes of presence and neither it nor EM 9 states that the modes emerge clearly one after another during liturgy. A more fundamental departure from SC 7 and EM 9 is the failure of EM 55 to mention the sacrifice of the Mass and the Church as ways in which Christ is present. These are startling omissions. After all, the Paschal Mystery of Christ’s saving death, resurrection, and ascension is present in the Mass as the source and summit of the entire life of the Church. And the Eucharistic celebration is not merely an ad hoc gathering of two or three believers as EM 55 states; it is the public worship of God performed by the Church, the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members ordered in a hierarchical communion. Indeed, for Vatican II the celebration of Christ’s Pasch under the headship of the bishop is the principal manifestation of the Church. EM 55 does not convey this paschal and ecclesial vision of the liturgy, or ground its novel theory on established principles. Therefore, it is not a legitimate source of liturgical theory.

The goal of the liturgy in the thought of Vatican II is the full, conscious, and active participation of the Church and her members in Christ’s Pasch by which God is glorified and humanity redeemed. This participation leads to communion with God and humanity in Christ. Thus, the focus of the liturgy is on transforming union in Christ and His Pasch, not on the various modes of His presence. Liturgy understood as participation is primarily a matter of being and becoming rather than one of seeing or performing. The significance of Christ’s presence to the Church (in far more than four principal ways) is that by this means we are enabled to become participants in the Pasch (this is the entire point of SC 7). When mistakenly used as a liturgical theory, the novel rationale of EM
55 shifts the focus of liturgy from the end (participation in Christ and His Pasch) to a few particular means (the four modes). Liturgy is then easily considered to be about making or seeing Jesus present in our midst rather than about being united to Him in His Paschal Mystery. We find here, ironically, a continuation of an impoverished pre-conciliar liturgical theory that now awaits the arrival of Christ not only in the Eucharistic species and the priest, but also in the assembly and the Word. Vatican II reminded us that something much more than Christ’s appearance is at the heart of the liturgy: our participation with Christ in His saving work.

**Articles vs. Defective Designs**

**Based on EM 55**

The implications of the teaching of Vatican II for architectural design are profound. A liturgy which is a participation in the Pasch calls for a building which is the place of the Pasch, an architectural manifestation of the Church and the Kingdom with space for symbols of Christ, His saving work, and the angels and saints. It is an iconic building which elicits and fosters communion through contemplation of the Church and the Kingdom—and not merely through the seeing of the symbols and the doing of the rites. Just as the life of the Church is not limited to participation in the liturgy, so the building’s iconic function of symbolizing the Church cannot be reduced to its ritual function in liturgy. The building is therefore more than a utilitarian ritual space. Its function is to be a symbol of the Church even when the liturgy is not being celebrated. Based on this identity and function as a sign of the Church, the building is enabled to be an evangelical witness, a place of prayer, and an aid to full participation in the liturgical and devotional celebrations which take place within it.

Because the building is a symbol of the Church, the people of God who possess an organic and hierarchical structure expressed in diverse ministries and charisms, the general plan of the church should convey this image in its unity and diversity by having distinct places for congregation, choir, and priests. For this reason “the part of the church that brings out [the] distinctive role of the ministerial priest,” the presbyterium (called the sanctuary in the United States), “should be clearly marked off from the body of the church.” This distinction of the presbyterium reveals the hierarchical ordering of the Church under the headship of Christ present in the apostolic ministry of the clergy. This explains why a layperson who leads a celebration in the absence of the clergy does not sit in the sanctuary. A church without a clearly distinct sanctuary risks being headless and disordered.

The focal point of the entire building is the altar because the altar is the symbol of Christ and the place of His Pasch, the table from which we are fed His Word and His Body and Blood. The altar, then, is the center of the thanksgiving accomplished in the Eucharist and, in a sense, the other rites of the Church are arrayed around it. The altar is also the center of the presbyterium where the priest presides in the person and name of Christ who is the High Priest, head and bridegroom of the Church leading the people in prayer, proclaiming the Gospel and offering the sacrificial banquet. As the symbol of Christ and center of worship, the altar therefore stands within the sanctuary at the head and heart of the church. It is fitting, then, that the location of the altar be singled out from the beginning of the building’s construction by placing a cross on the spot where the altar will be raised. A church not centered on the altar is not centered on the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

Unlike the altar that is a consecrated image of Christ and the center of the church, the priest’s chair and the ambo are functional appointments rather than focal points or liturgical symbols per se. Hence the chair and ambo are not themselves objects of reverence, or even attention, during the liturgy. They simply serve as places where specific liturgical functions are carried out and they are located and designed to focus attention on the liturgical action, not on themselves. That the altar rather than the chair or ambo is the center of the liturgy and is properly the table from which the Gospel and Eucharist are taken and distributed to the people signifies that the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist are not actually separate ceremonies, but form a single act of worship flowing from Christ and His Pasch. It is impossible to juxtapose Word and Sacrament (or altar and ambo) because the Sacraments are the greatest proclamation of the Gospel; in them Word and deed are conjoined so that mankind is drawn to participate in the very Mystery of Christ they proclaim.

The liturgical theory in EM 55 cannot adequately explain the Church’s design criteria of hierarchical arrangement and the centrality of the altar because of its failure to mention the Church and the Paschal Mystery, the source and summit of the Church’s life. This fundamental flaw leads to an impoverished architectural style and content to foster the manifestation of four modes rather than to draw the ordered assembly into contemplative participation with Christ in His Pasch. Lacking any reference to the Pasch, the building loses its authentic identity as an icon of the Paschal Banquet which is the Kingdom and becomes merely a shell that houses liturgical ceremonies. Consequently, the role of the altar as the center of the entire Paschal celebration, a position mandated by the Church, is surrendered to the shifting foci of assembly, ambo, chair, and altar. This loss of center in turn threatens the unity of the celebration, for example, by separating the liturgy of the Word (centered on the ambo) from the liturgy of the Eucharist (centered on the altar). Because the assembly is considered only as a group of disciples gathered in His name rather than as a assembly of the Church, the building does not reflect the hierarchical ordering of the community and so cannot function as a symbol of the Church. This leads to designs which fail to distinguish the presbyterium (sanctuary) from the main body of the church as urged by Church law. Designs based on the liturgical theory of EM 55 therefore literally place the assembly in a false relation to its visible head and to the altar, signifying a false relation to Christ and His Pasch. It is worth noting that these design criteria, lacking any reference to the Paschal banquet and the ordered Church, tend to parallel the sacramental and ecclesiological vision of congregational Protestantism. This can be seen in a striking way by comparing post-conciliar design and remodeling in...
the Church and the liturgy.

We have seen that architecture based on the liturgical theory of EM 55 is in a variety of ways prevented from expressing the truth about the Church and the liturgy: that there is no Eucharistic assembly (or Church) without hierarchical ordering, that Word and Sacrament flow from the altar of Christ’s Pasch to the people through the apostolic ministry of the clergy, and that the Paschal sacrifice and banquet of Christ celebrated around the altar is the origin and consummation of our lives and of all creation. In short, architectural styles based on the principles of EM 55 are incapable of expressing adequately the theology of the Church and the particular vision of Vatican II for the Church in our time. Because they fail to articulate the Church’s vision such designs are destined to ignore or distort post-conciliar reforms and liturgical law, resulting in buildings which are fundamentally inadequate—if not false—symbols of the Church and which therefore subject people to inauthentic expressions of the Church and the liturgy.

Conclusion

The use of the liturgical theory of EM 55 in the design of churches is tempting because it offers what seems at first glance to be a nice, short, simple statement on the liturgy, apparently sound enough to resolve the question of tabernacle placement, and seemingly mandated by the mistaken 1967 English text of EM 56 as a basis for church architecture. In addition, the principles it espouses have been widely accepted and implemented in the United States for thirty years. But EM 55 was not intended by the Church to be used as a statement of new theoretical principles, and its failure to mention the Pasch and the Church renders its theory inadequate as a guide for liturgy or architectural design. It is understandable that few people have time to read or reread the Church’s diverse pronouncements on liturgy and architecture and therefore rely on isolated passages that have been most frequently cited on a given issue. In the case of EM 55 this proves dangerous because EM 55 has been taken out of context and used as if it were an authentic statement of established liturgical theory when it is not.

The misuse of the principles of EM 55 as a theoretical foundation for church architecture results in design criteria that distort the purpose and structure of the church building. The building is reduced from being an icon of the Church as envisioned by the Council to being a functional space manifesting four modes and the rites. Architects and those involved with church design should therefore avoid developing or using design criteria based on the liturgical theory in EM 55 and its faulty notion of four successive modes of presence. Likewise they should not be guided by any theory of church design which begins with ritual requirements. Instead, all designs should begin with the role of the church building as a symbol of the Church and the Kingdom, the place of the Pasch, as stated in the Rite of Dedication of a Church, and by the ecclesiology of Sacrosanctum Concilium and Lumen Gentium. From this starting point designs should then consider the requirements of the liturgical books and the genuine devotions of the faithful. Through a continual return to these and other authentic sources of liturgical theology and law it will be possible over time to bring church design into harmony with the actual vision of the Church. The result will be buildings which manifest and celebrate not only the four particular modes of presence mentioned in EM 55, but others as well and, above all, the Church’s ongoing participation in the Wedding Feast of the Paschal Lamb, the eschatological Kingdom present now in mystery.

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NOTES

1 See “The Place of the Eucharistic Tabernacle: A Question of Discrepancy,” Antiphon 4:2 (1999), 10-13, and the subsequent exchange “The Place of the Eucharistic Tabernacle: Responses to Timothy V. Vaverek,” Antiphon 4:3 (1999), 25-34. The 1967 English text of EM 56 mistakenly says that the principles of nn. 53 and 55 (recommending Eucharistic chapels and a liturgical theory favoring location of the tabernacle off the altar) are to be used in new churches when it should cite nn. 52 and 54 (one tabernacle placed on or off the altar). This text remains in print in most English versions with the notable exception of ICELs Documents on the Liturgy (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982).

2 The present paper is concerned with the architectural controversy. The underlying issues, however, are properly theological. I have prepared a separate article offering a theological critique of EM 55 which demonstrates that its principles do not adequately reflect the theology of the source documents or the liturgy. Since EM 55 makes no claim to establish new liturgical principles, appeal to the novel liturgical theory of EM 55 is theologically misleading and unwarranted.

3 EM 2. All quotations are taken from Documents on the Liturgy.

4 EM 5-15.
5 EM 52-57.
6 EM 9 states: In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the eucharistic mystery, the faithful should be instructed in the principle modes by which the Lord is present to his Church in liturgical celebrations [footnote: see SC 7].

He is always present in an assembly of the faithful gathered in his name (see Mt 18:20). He is also present in his word, for it is he who is speaking as the sacred Scriptures are read in the Church.

In the eucharistic sacrifice he is present both in the person of the minister, “the same now offering through the ministry of the priest who formerly offered himself on the cross,” and above all under the eucharistic elements. For in that sacrament, in a unique way, Christ is present, whole and entire, God and man, substantially and continuously. This presence of Christ under the elements “is called the real

St. Odulphus, Assendelft, Netherlands, as renovated by the Dutch Reform, from a painting by Pieter Saenredam
presence not to exclude the other kinds, as though they were not real, but because it is real par excellence."

SC 7 states:

To accomplish so great a work [i.e., the saving work of the Pasch (see SC 5-6)], Christ is always present in his Church, especially in its liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of his minister, “the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,” but especially under the eucharistic elements. By his power he is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes. He is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly when the Church prays and sings, for he promised: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20).

Christ always truly associates the Church with himself in this great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and the recipients made holy. The Church is the Lord’s beloved bride... [so that] in the liturgy the public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

A NOTE TO OUR READERS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your support for Sacred Architecture. With this, our fourth issue, we finish our third year of publication. The journal has been an exciting endeavor from the start, and it has grown in readership and impact. In order to keep the quality of the journal up to the highest aesthetic standards, we are publishing it two times a year. If you have not already done so this year, please consider renewing your subscription and supporting the work of Sacred Architecture. We look forward to hearing your comments on the journal and serving the Church in the renewal of its architecture.
CATHOLIC IDENTITY, THE BUILDING, THE REACTIONS

A VIEWPOINT FROM ANTHROPOLOGY

Rev. William J. Turner

It has become evident recently that a plethora of opinions and reactions to liturgical renewal exist, especially as it applies to sacred space. This fact is reflective of the concern of many Catholics, and it needs to be seriously addressed. Today, an ever-greater number of Catholic laity are well-educated professionals who expect that an approach to renewal will reflect a more collaborative method of decision-making. A model for renewal that does not include listening to their concerns will often meet with rejection. I suggest that proposals for renewal need to be tested in the light of the experience of Catholics as well as by the teaching of the Church. If so, renewal will become acceptable to such individuals, rather than becoming a challenge to their identity. Their history and their culture would thus be respected and upheld as valuable.

An understanding of the anthropological process of critical self-reflection becomes an important element here. Critical self-reflection demands that an observer rethink categories and reorient perspectives that involve the effects of the liturgical renewal.

It is interesting to note that when the Center for Pastoral Liturgy at Notre Dame celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 1995, even liturgists felt that the first among significant losses in the last 25 years of renewal was “Catholic identity.”

The question may arise whether traditional symbols found in our church buildings may be changed. My respondents have seemed to accept many of their symbols as having eternal value that rise from a community history. They often report that any new symbols proposed must respect the older symbols.

My research has encouraged many responses from Catholics. In the light of reflection upon this experience of comments and concerns, I offer recommendations that may enhance successful implementation of renewal or refurbishing processes. One may wish to reflect upon the following:

What is the Catholic identity of this group of people? On what do they focus upon entering their church building? Do they look for symbols that express “Catholicism” for them? A strong Eucharistic presence and Eucharistic sensibility may be noted. This concept is not unanimously accepted as primary, yet it is nonetheless a critical element of Catholic identity. Ideas for construction or renovation seem to be appreciated by these individuals when they have been applied with consideration for their local parishes, rather than being applied as universal concepts. (For example, a baptismal pool may not be appropriate to every parish, and indeed may be offensive to some parishioners. This sensibility could change in the future.)

Does the proposed renovation exhibit a respect for the history and experience of this group of people? It would be difficult to respond to this if an architect or artist were not willing or able to spend time in a community and begin to know these people in many contexts. Their history can be celebrated in many ways that can bring about feelings of trust rather than suspicion.

What is the history of the parishioners’ relationship with leadership in the parish? What models have been used? If the community has had a negative relationship with its leadership, there may be a hesitancy to express trust in new proposals. Healing can occur if the leadership is willing to listen without an agenda of proposed changes.

How does a proposal for change effect the concept of the church seen as “the house of God” apart from its use as “the house of worship?” This is a key distinction. The building is their sacred building, home to sacred things, and not just an edifice for sacred events and ceremonies, and...
Have liturgical artists, architects and leadership been led to a rethinking of pre-established categories and perspectives throughout the process of renewal? This may be evident in the development of flexibility and the use of the collaborative model of decision-making.

Communication was a high priority concern in the experience of my respondents. That concern may need to be addressed in a renovation process. The simple, yet often neglected, art of listening may prove to be the most important component of a renewal or renovation project.

This form of anthropological methodology can be successful inasmuch as it brings forward the voices of parishioners, relating what is sacred for them, how that sense of sacred applies to their church building, and what factors establish Catholic identity in their minds. If one can propose that such liturgical processes are indeed a “ministry,” then I would also propose that this ministry must be carried out with such knowledge, with sensitivity to feelings and as a response to needs.

Results of my research indicated the “things” that respondents felt made a church “Catholic.” Although my sampling was not from the entire Catholic population, nevertheless, from my experience in North America, I believe it to be true in a general sense. Let the reader investigate and find similar results:

From their experience in churches, many Catholics feel the following items express their Catholicity, and they desire to see them present and visible in their church space in the following order:

First Place: The Tabernacle (39%)
Second Place: The Crucifix (26%)
Third Place: The Altar (13%)
Fourth Place: The Baptismal Font (7%)
Fifth Place: The Stations of the Cross (7%)

Kneelers, statues, stained glass, holy water, confessionals were also of note, but to a lesser extent than the overpowering “top two” categories. Since I have done this research, I have never entered a church without thinking of these first two priorities found in the minds of most Catholics I know.

As the millennium is upon the Church, it is interesting that a strong, building, and emerging group of Catholics are policing what is happening in their buildings. With all the energy of the news reporter in the movie “Network,” they are loudly saying that they are “mad, and they are not going to take it any more!” This anger has been deeply felt in the liturgical community, who with the kindest of hearts, but sometimes with the strongest reaction, propose liturgical and architectural reform. Most distressing to them, and I count myself among them, is the recent questioning of past proposals and liturgical documents by the American bishops. This has also expressed itself in Rome’s response to concerns over translations proposed by ICEL. (The International Commission for English in the Liturgy). There seems to be a great loss of confidence here. Much of this response has been a bottom up movement, initiated by Catholics who have addressed concerns to their bishops. We are only now reflecting on what this is saying and how we should move forward. One such document that may be thought out of touch with the sensibility of such Catholics has proposed, and sometimes demanded locally, that the Tabernacle be moved to a separate chapel away from the body of the church. Whether this directive is adhered to in the future will not only affect the sensibility of Catholics in general, but also the future plans and proposals of artists and architects.

Lest many Catholics become, what I have phrased: “voices crying in the wilderness,” I would hope and propose that the future would bring an openness to dialogue that comes from those who see sacred environmental change as a process that looks at the self and at others. I dare to suggest that answers to this current dilemma, and the research that needs to be done by liturgical reformers and church architects, for that matter, may be found with the assistance of some of the methodology of cultural anthropology.

Rev. William J. Turner, a Roman Catholic priest of the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan. This article is a summary of his 1997 dissertation on Catholic identity and its relationship to the Catholic Church building.
The Roman Road to the Baroque

The Triumph of the Baroque: Architecture in Europe 1600-1750

Reviewed by Catesby Leigh

It is no secret that art history suffers from a fragmented outlook. It tends to focus on the particularities of a given period rather than the great continuities arising from secular reliance on a canon of forms and conventions. The current architectural exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, The Triumph of the Baroque Architecture in Europe, 1600-1750, suffers from this academic tendency. The commentary accompanying the exhibition does not set the baroque in its broader context. But the exhibition is wonderful nevertheless. Its main feature consists of 27 architectural models. The models would be inadequate in and of themselves, for many of them represent only parts of an overall scheme, or designs worked out in their architectural aspects only, with the decoration merely suggested or left out entirely. But the exhibition also includes paintings, prints, and photographs, as well as architectural plans and elevations. These largely fill in the gaps. Though wider in geographic scope, The Triumph of the Baroque is a welcome complement to a similar exhibition of Italian Renaissance architecture the gallery mounted in 1994. It remains on view through October 9.

The first and, for the purposes of this journal, most significant portion of the current exhibition concerns Rome and papal patronage of sacred architecture and civic amenities alike.

The model for the Trevi Fountain (1733), commissioned by Clement XII and designed by Nicola Salvi, provides a vivid illustration of the continuity of Roman forms. The Trevi model consists of the fountain's monumental backdrop, a façade dominated by a great Corinthian order and a central niche. Closely akin to an ancient Roman fountain-building or nymphaeum, the façade is not baroque but classical in its treatment. Its ample decoration is only partially indicated by the model, which does not include the sculpture in the round adorning its flanking niches and attic. Even so, the excellence of the design is obvious. The fountain-building occupies the formal pole in a scheme involving a fantastically naturalistic rock outcropping enriched by waterfalls and statues of Ocean, who stands on a huge conch shell in front of the central niche, and a pair of Tritons and seahorses. A painting by Panini which forms part of the exhibition shows the fountain in its entirety. A similarly scenographic conception animates Bernini's Cornaro Chapel in the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome. The chapel is best known for the sculptor-architect's Saint Teresa in Ecstasy, a terracotta model (c.1644) for which is on view. But the general scheme is revealed by an unknown painter's meticulous depiction of the chapel from around 1650. Above, a celestial ensemble including the Holy Spirit and the angels encroaches upon a window in the vault, leaving one to wonder whether the window is real. In the altar below we have the statues of Saint Teresa of Avila and the angel, with the glory radiating upon them. The altar is crowned by a canopy configured as a sort of half-broken pediment, curvilinear in plan and supported by columns. Three entablatures, one of which is carried on by the pediment-canopy, lie beneath the vault and the arch situated in front in it. The rich decoration includes angels, putti, and swags carved in bold relief, and a harmonious variety of color in the marbles employed. In the galleries flanking the altar, sculpted members of the Cornaro family discuss the divine spectacle among themselves. The world, in deference to the saint, has come rather as-

Model of Smol'ny Convent, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1748
tonishingly out of joint.

Are the fountain and the chapel mere symptoms of a theatrical fad in Western design? Or does that very theatricality arise from enduring human preferences? Only functionalist superstition could cause any doubts about the answer. But still, some will wonder whether such flamboyant visual display is as appropriate for a house of worship as for a public fountain. From time immemorial, however, such display has been indispensable to the creation of settings for worship exalted above the rudimentary background of daily life. And of course profound insight into human modes of perception -- psychological insight, in a word -- hardly originated with the "moderns." In Hadrian's Pantheon, too, a rich array of color and illusion lay at the heart of the architectural scheme, with the walls of the great rotunda "dematerialized" in such a way that the skylit dome would seem not to be supported, but to float.

Bernini, like his Renaissance forebears, was simply building on the artistic achievements of ancient Rome. Where is the biblical injunction against such endeavor? From the Greeks the Romans had inherited an architectural canon whose expressive powers they vastly increased as part of that great instinctive task of incarnating the sense of an ideal life beckoning to us during our earthly sojourns. After the long medieval interlude, Christian Rome assumed this great legacy for its own artistic purposes. This was only natural, for that task is not specifically pagan, nor Christian, but human. And the result was that the expressive range of classical architecture was once again broadened enormously over the course of several centuries.

The real question, of course, is why the moderns eventually abandoned the classical tradition. A hint at the answer is perhaps provided by two enchanting, and quite large, canvases included in the exhibition. They are Panini's Ancient Rome and Modern Rome (1757). Each picture shows connoisseurs and copyists in a magnificent, luminous gallery. In the first instance, the gallery is replete with great works of Roman antiquity in architecture and sculpture. (The architecture is shown in paintings covering the gallery's walls.) In the second, works of the same kind from the Renaissance and baroque eras are on view. If it weren't for the pictures' titles, the casual viewer might well be oblivious to the chronological distinction. For what we encounter in both paintings is the same vessel of forms, to use Spengler's expression. Or, to put it another way, we encounter the great cultural continuity that characterizes what Geoffrey Scott called "the Roman road, which stretched forward and back to the horizon, sometimes overlaid, but not for long to be avoided."

The burden of historical consciousness which the Enlightenment brought in its train accounts for the subject matter of Panini's pair of pictures as well as the famous querelle between the ancients and moderns, which got underway in France during the 17th century. The utterly misleading modern notion of progress in the arts equivalent to progress in science proved profoundly disruptive to the classical tradition. After all, Bernini's art and architecture essentially involved the discovery of new facets of an inexhaustibly fertile ideal which had existed across the ages. The same applies to Sixtus V's brilliant scheme of the 1580s for Rome's spatial integration, which provided the urban framework for major architectural developments of the baroque era. But pseudo-scientific theories and the subjection of esthetics to sociology did away with the idea of design grounded in the past.

The Triumph of the Baroque shows the plastic possibilities of the classical canon being grasped far from Rome. Models for churches in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland display baroque plasticity and ornamental exuberance fused with the conical roofs and onion domes of northern Europe. Far more impressive, however, in their unity of conception, harmonious proportions, figural appeal, and detailing are two superb models for ecclesiastic projects in St. Petersburg. In both cases, Italian architects incorporated local conventions such as the centralized Greek-cross plan and the combination of four secondary domes with a great central dome and a lofty entrance bell-tower into their schemes.

The earlier of the two models is of the Cathedral of St. Isaac commissioned by Catherine the Great in 1767. St. Isaac's was completed in 1802, then demolished in 1818 to make way for a more capacious building, the ungraciously neoclassical pile of the same name. The second, and much the grander, of the two models is of the Smol'ny Convent, which includes a central church, girded by the convent's residential wings, chapels, and gardens, plus a great perimeter wall. The model boasts typically Russian blue-and-white polychromy, while a profusion of gilt ornament suggests ripples of flame running along its domes and towers. The convent's brilliantly configured bell-tower entrance, with its very high, onion-domed central lantern perched above five orders and two flanking towers, was never built, but the rest of the design was carried out.

The exhibition also includes examples of commercial, civic, military, and residential design from different parts of Europe. It serves as a reminder -- if a reminder were needed -- that it's high time we tossed the querelle aside and got back on the Roman road.

Catesby Leigh is a writer and architectural critic residing in Washington, D.C.
Rejoice! 700 Years of Art for the Papal Jubilee, edited by Maurizio Calvesi with Lorenzo Canova, New York: Rizzoli, 1999. 239 pages. $75.00.

Reviewed by Michael Morris, O.P.

ReJOICE! is a very dumb title for a very smart book. The title smacks too much of those mindless felt and burlap banners from the trendy 1960's which look like an embarrassment to us now. But this book has the finer arts in focus. The Rizzoli publication, which is a compilation of twenty-four essays by a variety of Italian scholars, looks at 700 years of papal artistic patronage for the Jubilee Years that brought pilgrims from around the world to Rome. The superfly illustrated coffee-table book covers both art and architecture.

Pope Boniface VIII promulgated the first Jubilee in the year 1300. His annus jubilaeus was rooted in the tradition of the Hebrew feast of the Jubilee. The feast occurred every fifty years and was dedicated to the sanctification of society. There was neither harvesting nor sowing; the land was left fallow. Freedom was restored to the slaves, property returned to its original owners. Debts were cancelled. For the Christians of the Middle Ages, the call to Rome was an opportunity to cancel temporal punishment due to sin. By papal edict, the faithful could gain indulgences by going on pilgrimage and visiting the sacred basilicas in the Eternal City. How often these Jubilees would be held was a matter not settled for several centuries.

One-hundred-year intervals and thirty-three-year intervals (supposedly the length of Christ’s time on earth) were tried until it was finally decided that the Holy Year would occur every twenty-fifth year, save for special occasions when an “extraordinary” Jubilee might be called for special reasons. Throughout the centuries, the popes prepared for such events by sponsoring elaborate building programs and commissioning beautiful works of art. A sweeping view of these achievements is the object of these essays, and they have been masterfully edited by Maurizio Calvesi, a professor of art history at the University of Rome.

Students of architecture will appreciate especially the chapter on the Jubilee called by Pope Sixtus IV in the year 1475. Because the Holy Land was controlled by the Mohammedans, Rome took deliberate means to become a substitute destination for pilgrims who longed to go to Jerusalem. The papacy appropriated for itself and at the same time confronted the potent symbolism of the Jewish High Priesthood and the glorious Temple of Solomon. The scholars of this book prove that it is by no mere coincidence that the dimensions of the Sistine Chapel are identical to the dimensions of Solomon’s Temple. An inscription found in the Chapel reads: “You, Sixtus IV, inferior to Solomon in wealth, but superior to him in religion and devotion, consecrated this immense temple.” In 1500 the Jubilee of Alexander VI embellished the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, reputedly built on the site of the Empress Helena’s palace, which contained the many relics of Christ’s Passion retrieved from her extraordinary archaeological expedition to the Holy Land in the fourth century. He also had a group of medieval and ancient buildings hurriedly demolished (including the fabled Meta Romuli, a sepulchral pyramid named after the founder of Rome) to create a traffic-friendly avenue that connected Castel Sant’Angelo with St. Peter’s Square. Running out of time, the pontiff was forced to mobilize pilgrims to help clear the rubble themselves! The conflict between the remains of antiquity and papal building programs continues to haunt the Jubilee Year, but today more conservationist minds prevail.

The art and illustrations of REJOICE! tend to favor painting and prints over architecture, but throughout the book the various art forms tend to complement each other rather than compete. How else might the authors have portrayed the developments made at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the Piazza of St. Peter’s, and the Pantheon without utilizing the graphic work of Piranesi? Beautiful photographs record the current state of other Jubilee buildings: the Casino del Belrespiro, the twin churches of the Piazza del Popolo, the sacristy of St. Peter’s, the Museo Pio Clementino, and the churches of Divina Sapienza and Maria Mediatrice in Rome. In comparison, a model for Richard Meier’s Church for the Jubilee of 2000 looks jarringly out of place. This modernist exclamation in the realm of classicism seems less a prediction for the future than a faint echo of masterpieces from the century past, most notably the Sydney Opera House. Yet it is the variety of artistic commissions recorded in REJOICE! tying particular pontiffs with particular monuments, that reinforces in the reader’s mind the important role of patronage in the advancement of the arts, a noble activity that not only dazzles the eye, but feeds the soul.

Rev. Michael Morris O.P. teaches classes in art and film at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and directs the Santa Fe Institute for Catholic Faith and Culture.
The Renovation Manipulation: The Church Counter-Renovation Handbook

Reviewed by Christopher Carstens

Taking to heart the final words of the current Code of Canon Law, that “the salvation of souls, which in the Church must always be the supreme law,” the recent book by Michael S. Rose gives clarity and advice to the troubled soul experiencing a church renovation project. The Renovation Manipulation: The Church Counter-Renovation Handbook attempts, in the words of its author, to “give the average lay Catholic a clear understanding of the renovation process and ultimately the knowledge necessary to bring about honesty and integrity in the renovation of existing churches as well as in the construction of new ones” (p.6). Succinct, accessible, and rich in Church documentation, The Renovation Manipulation will be a useful resource to all parties involved in the process of church renovating.

In the years following the Second Vatican Council, Rose explains, many liturgists and architects manipulated more than just the renovation process, interpreting the principles of reform and subsequent documents according to pre-conceived visions of sacred architecture. The first of Rose’s chapters shows, rather convincingly, how much of the direction of modern church architecture has its roots in the theories of Lutheran architect Edward A. Sövik. Citing Sövik’s book Architecture for Worship, Rose illustrates how Sövik’s theories later came to be expressed in the 1978 document of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, Environment and Art in Catholic Worship. Sövik says: “Down through the centuries church buildings have not been considered as exclusively places of worship. Church buildings have been multi-purpose buildings, houses for people, used for a variety of public and secular activities that nourish the human and “secular” life” (Sövik, p. 19; cited in Rose, p. 11). Accordingly, this “meeting place for the people” (Sövik, p. 68) should have portable chairs rather than pews; a separate room for eucharistic adoration; few religious images; and an altar “table” surrounded by the congregation. Familiar suggestions today, to be sure.

After this brief history Rose familiarizes the reader with what to expect “when the church renovators come to your parish.” The main facilitator of the renovation project is the Liturgical Design Consultant, or LDC. The LDC, in conjunction with other professional liturgists, serves to implement the renovation project. But beware: “While appearing to give architectural advice, the design consultant’s real function is to manipulate parishioners into accepting controversial changes to their church building and into believing that their own input...is being taken into consideration in the renovation of their church” (p.23). To this end the LDC incorporates a manipulative strategy called the Dæphl Technique, wherein a “consensus” is reached by creating factions among the people in the parish and then, under the direction of the LDC, propelling his or her own plan to the top: a “divide and conquer” strategy. Rose even goes so far as to dissect the “anatomy of the process”: hiring the design consultant, introducing the idea of “restoring” the parish to its original condition (which is, in fact, “renovation”), planning educational sessions where novel interpretations of Magisterial documents are presented, selecting a small like-minded committee to carry out the renovation, and finally the implementation of the plan itself.

How does one avoid falling prey to such a design? Rose spends the remainder of the book arming the “guy in the pew” with the pertinent information. He gives a list of resources that the LDC will most likely recommend to parishioners, answers some of the most commonly heard suggestions put forth by manipulative consultants, and provides the appropriate excerpts from Church documents and a comprehensive list of the documents that should be used when responding to suspected dubious claims.

Although speculative and cynical at times, The Renovation Manipulation provides an articulate defense for “traditional” church architecture, a position not often heard today. The handbook (and it truly is a handbook) gives expression to many of the sentiments that disappointed parishioners have often felt but have been unable to express or defend. A work rooted in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium) of the Second Vatican Council, as well as documents appearing before and after the Council, this book can help the current debate in liturgical architecture. What the handbook lacks, though, is a clearly-defined theology of “the Church” in all her dimensions (hierarchic, apostolic, pilgrim, etc.) and the worship of this Church. Only with a clearly stated ecclesiology as a base can sacred architecture, in whatever style, reflect the true nature and liturgy of the Church. Only then can such arguments concerning “traditional” versus “modern” architecture, pews versus chairs, an apse reservation versus a separate chapel for Eucharistic reservation be resolved, since liturgical legislation is at times unclear or altogether silent.

The Holy Father, in Tertio Millennio Adveniente (n.36), called for “[a]n examination of conscience [concerning] the reception given to the Council.” At the end of this examination, held from February 25th to the 28th of this year at the Vatican, the Pope said: “Certainly, [the Council’s teaching] requires ever deeper understanding...the genuine intention of the Council Fathers must not be lost; indeed, it must be recovered by overcoming biased and partial interpretations which have prevented the newness of the Council’s Magisterium from being expressed as well as possible.” The Renovation Manipulation, while certainly having a vantage-point of its own, does offer an intelligent and well-documented interpretation of the “genuine intention of the Council Fathers” and should be considered seriously by any involved in this particular dimension of the Catholic spiritual life.

Christopher Carstens is the Assistant Director of the Office of Sacred Worship for the Diocese of Lacrosse, Wisconsin.
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