When you go to a great European city, you find beautiful spacious piazzas, outdoor cafes, charming shops, fountains to sit near, and people to watch. For many today, that symbolizes the good city.

As bricks-and-mortar retail decreases, our cities become more about experiences we can’t get online. Most of us like active places with nightlife, theaters for movies and plays, concert halls, museums, parks for bike riding, and sidewalks for walking our dogs. Fresh food, old bookshops, coffee bars, and micro-breweries satisfy our passions. Those make a public realm worth visiting.

Adding a church to the mix doesn’t really help. Or does it? Is the European plaza so great merely because of commerce and culture? Does it need something else? Does it need the temple? Our temples serve people’s most fundamental needs: forgiveness, hope, and meaning. Their presence on the piazza says that commerce is not enough, that not even culture is enough.

But who visits churches? They need to be something out of the ordinary like Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in New York, preferably with masterpieces of art inside. We are a secular country with Protestant origins and our church buildings are not normally open, and in any case rarely worth visiting for their architecture or their art. Interestingly, a recent study in the U.K. found that church architecture had a greater impact on conversions than even youth groups. If left open, people will visit beautiful churches and have the opportunity for conversion.

There are certainly many great cities with churches where the urban realm is not so lively. There neither commerce nor culture nor the temple flourish. In Naples, I have witnessed many closed churches with desolate piazzas. Of course, a closed church can still be a beautiful ornament on the square, not unlike a Roman ruin, but it will not be able to fulfill its ultimate purpose. This is because the role of church architecture, like retail, is to draw us inside, but for a different purpose: to bring us in contact with the divine.

A city is more than just commerce and culture. The good city needs a civic realm marked out by a proper architecture of the civic realm. City Halls are there to promote good government, schools to promote education, courts to promote justice, museums to promote art and concert halls to promote the performing arts. Some of these civic structures we visit once a year or on special occasions, others every week or daily. Others we prefer not to visit, like the courthouse. These are the foci of our cities, and we have invested our best efforts to erect them.

The answer to good cities is not to put retail everywhere to activate the public realm with commerce, nor to add cultural pleasures like parks and micro-breweries. It’s first to have a public realm that is worth visiting. That public realm must include our temples. And it must be architecturally expressed in a certain way. If churches and other civic buildings are invested with monumental architecture they will become the focus of our streets and city squares. Adding a church to the mix does help. It helps create and sustain a vital public realm by serving people’s most fundamental needs for forgiveness, hope, and meaning in a way no other civic institution can do.

And ironically, perhaps, temples will draw parishioners and tourists alike, resulting in vibrant commerce as well.

Duncan Stroik
Notre Dame, Spring 2018

Above: Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta, Piazza Paolo VI, Brescia, Italy
Credit: Roberto Ricca
Cover: Saint Mary of Nazareth (Scalzi), Venice
Credit: Vittorio De Battisti Besi
Ab Urbe Condita

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Journal of the Institute for Sacred Architecture
SACRED ARCHITECTURE NEWS

Church Leads Neighborhood Redesign
Third Baptist Church held a design charrette for the revitalization of Tuckahoe Neighborhood in Richmond, Virginia. Michael Watkins Architect, LLC, and a team of architecture students from Dr. Christopher Miller’s studio at Judson University, along with local architects and designers, came together and designed a masterplan. The masterplan includes creation of a neighborhood square, additional green space, improved parking, and identification of entrances. Short term proposals include reclaiming green spaces by stripping parking lots, adding parallel parking, and building a community garden. Long term proposals include fully furnishing the town green, bringing buildings to the street, repairing broken sidewalks, and creating a green next door to the church property.

Pope Francis Speaks on Mary’s Maternity. In his homily on the Feast of the Translation of the Miraculous Image of Our Lady Salus Populi Romani, the Holy Father preached on the divine and spiritual maternity of Mary: “She is attentive to our weariness, sensitive to storms — the storms of life, she is close to our hearts. And she never, never despises our prayers; she does not let even one of them fall to the ground. She is our Mother, she is never ashamed of us; on the contrary, she waits for the chance to help her children.”

Saint Francis Exhibit, National Gallery
The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., has featured a special exhibit titled “Heavenly Earth: Images of Saint Francis at La Verna,” which includes thirty different pieces of Saint Francis receiving the stigmata. Assistant curator Ginger Hammer stated that “It’s a unique topic for a show at the National Gallery, but I think it’s a really happy one. Francis promoted joy.” The display features work from the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, mainly engravings, pen and ink drawings, and wood carvings by artists such as Rembrandt, Nicolò Boldrini, Federico Barocci, Sebastiano Ricci, Lucas Emil Vorsterman, and Johann Matthias Kager. “My hope,” Hammer explained, “is when people come to see the show that they will walk [out] with a certain understanding of the importance of Franciscan imagery within the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.” The exhibit runs through July 8, 2018.

Traditional Latin Mass, Indiana
The first Traditional Latin Mass in over fifty years at Holy Angels Cathedral in Gary, Indiana, was celebrated on January 1, 2018. The Mass was offered by Bishop Joseph Perry, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago. The first day of the year is the Octave Day of the Nativity, which commemorates the circumcision of Jesus, as well as Jesus’ reception of His Most Holy Name. Long Beach resident Bill Wendt attended the Mass, reflecting, “It’s lovely to see. I’m very supportive of the restoration of the sacred liturgy. What’s wrong with a little tradition?”

New Cathedral, Knoxville
A new cathedral was dedicated on March 3, 2018, in Knoxville, Tennessee. Groundbreaking for the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart was April 19, 2015. Designed by McCrery Architects of Washington, D.C., and BarberMcMurry Architects of Knoxville, Tennessee, the 28,000-square-foot edifice seats 1,200 people and was built for $30.8 million by Merit Construction of Knoxville. The diocese raised $28 million to build a church adjacent to the original cathedral, which will be repurposed. “There is nothing in this building that is not intentional, and the details really matter,” said the cathedral’s rector and pastor, Father David Boettner. “When you walk in, the goal was that the beauty really should take our breath away.” A Vatican representative along with several cardinals and bishops were in attendance at the dedication of the Cathedral on March 3rd.

Sacred Heart Cathedral was dedicated in Knoxville, Tennessee, on March 3, 2018.

An aerial perspective of a design proposal for Tuckahoe Neighborhood in Richmond

Sacred Heart Cathedral was dedicated in Knoxville, Tennessee, on March 3, 2018.
Altar Discovered, Jerusalem

At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, an ancient altar has been discovered. The stone, known as the “graffiti stone,” had been hiding in plain sight for decades against a wall in a corner of the church. A team of both Greek and Israeli engineers and architects examined the other side of the stone while moving it during restoration. They found an intricate design with marble and porphyry common in Rome in the twelfth century. Israeli Antiquities Authority Amit Re’em and historian Ilya Berkovich observed four circles surrounding a central circle, which they believe to be the work of the Cosmati family, artisans who worked for the Pope. Other archaeologists argue that Byzantine craftsmen used similar patterns. It has been determined that this stone panel was likely carved when the Crusaders rebuilt the church and was the high altar. Since part of the stone is broken off, further research is needed to determine who carved the stone.

Graffiti both ancient and modern is common in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Recently a graffiti-covered stone (similar to the stone pictured above) was discovered to be likely to be the high altar of the Crusader-era church.

Redemptorists Leaving Shrine, Quebec

The Redemptorists of Ste. Anne de Beaupre in Quebec are leaving their monastery, which is one of Canada’s biggest shrines. Father Bernard, rector of the Redemptorists, has announced that the community will be moving into various residences in Quebec City and will not be able to retain the monastery. Several members of the community need medical care which was difficult to provide within the monastery. Currently twenty-one Redemptorists reside in the monastery.

New Marian Feast Day, The Vatican

Pope Francis has instituted a new feast day in the Roman Calendar to be celebrated annually on the Monday following Pentecost Sunday. This feast is the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. The Pope hopes this devotion will “encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the Church in the pastors, religious and faithful, as well as a growth of genuine Marian piety.” The Pope further states that “growth in the Christian life must be anchored [...] to the Mother of the Redeemed, the Virgin who makes her offering to God.” New liturgical texts for the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours will be forthcoming.

Faith and Form Winners

The journal Faith and Form named twenty-seven winners in their 2017 International Awards Program for Religious Art and Architecture. The five-member jury selected awardees from among 120 submissions. Submitted projects range from adaptive reuse (secular use to religious), new construction and interiors, and unbuilt projects and student work. Faith and Form is published by the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture.

Parishioners’ objections to church closures have persuaded the Archbishop of Saint Andrews and Edinburgh in Scotland to keep many churches open.

Churches Not Closing, Scotland

Plans to close several Catholic churches in Scotland have been canceled by the Archbishop of Saint Andrews and Edinburgh. Archbishop Leo Cushley had planned to merge several parishes and held public meetings that were attended by more than 7,000 people. Parishioners’ objections to the church closures influenced the Archbishop’s decision: “I was happy to be persuaded by the case that was made to me by many of our people and clergy.” The Archbishop noted from these meetings that there were two main arguments to keep the churches open. The first was that many were attached to their local churches, and the second was that evangelization can happen better within the scale of the community. The Archbishop said that the Archdiocese will still merge some of the parishes, though they will continue to use as many of the church buildings as possible for worship. He writes, “The time may well come in the future when not every church or chapel can expect Sunday Mass to be celebrated in it every week, but this is a separate question for us to answer in due course.”
**News**

**Vatican Participating, Venice Biennale**

For the first time, the Vatican City State will participate in the 2018 Venice Biennale Architecture Exhibition, sponsoring the creation of ten chapels. They will then be transported to new locations around the world which are in need of a place of worship. Architectural historian Francesco Dal Co selected ten architects to design the chapels. Francesco Magnani and Traudy Pelzel (Italy) designed the Asplund Pavilion showing the drawings by architect Gunnar Asplund (1885 – 1940) whose cemetery chapel in Stockholm provided the “theme” given to the ten architects. A Vatican statement explained the choice of architects “was based on the decision to focus on designers capable of applying different expressive languages, all with clear personalities from the standpoint of constructive experimentation, belonging to different generations, and hailing from Europe, Australia, Japan, the United States and South America, in order to reflect the universal — indeed catholic — nature of the Church.” No traditional architects were invited.

**Fulton Sheen’s Remains, New York City.** The body of Archbishop Fulton Sheen will remain for now in New York City following a ruling on February 6, 2018, by the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court. This reverses an order of the New York County branch of the State Supreme Court, which ruled that Sheen’s remains be transferred from Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City to Saint Mary’s Cathedral in Peoria, Illinois. (Sheen grew up and was ordained a priest in Saint Mary’s.) The Appellate Division ordered a hearing to ascertain Archbishop Sheen’s wishes for burial due to “disputed factual issues” between the late Archbishop’s oldest living relative, Joan Cunningham, and a priest of the Archdiocese of New York who served as his aide from 1962 to 1967. In a statement on the same day, the Archdiocese’s director of communications expressed hope that the late Archbishop’s cause will continue. Joseph Zwilling noted that though the cause for canonization had been opened by the Diocese of Peoria, “the Vatican has told us there is no requirement that the earthly body of a candidate for sainthood reside in a particular place.”

**New Basilica, Virginia**

The Vatican has designated a historic Virginia church as a basilica. Saint Mary Catholic Church in Old Town Alexandria, across the river from Washington, D.C., is the newest basilica in the United States. The church traces its history back to George Washington and the founding of the country. Washington himself was the first to give money to the church. Founded in 1795, Saint Mary Catholic Church was the first Catholic parish in Virginia. It is the eighty-fourth basilica in the U.S. The Vatican designates churches as basilicas “for architectural beauty, historical significance, or renown as a place of public worship.”

**Earthquakes Damage Almost 2,000 Churches, Mexico.** The Mexican Bishops’ Conference has reported that 1,850 churches were damaged in two earthquakes during September 2017. The report was released on January 29, 2018. Seventeen are cathedrals and 1,603 churches are designated “historic.” Church authorities will have to work with the federal government to begin reconstruction. Historic churches in Mexico are seen as national patrimony, stemming in part from past government regulations against Church ownership of property which were struck in 1992.

**Scala Sancta Frescoes to be Restored, Rome.** The Scala Sancta in Rome will be closed during 2018 for restoration of the frescoes enclosing the stairs. The “Holy Stairs” are located adjacent to the Papal Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran and have been open to the public for 400 years. Believed to be the stairs which Jesus ascended to His trial by Pontius Pilate, they were found by Saint Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, and brought to Rome in the fourth century.

**Our Lady of Loreto Church in Brooklyn, New York, was demolished to make way for affordable housing. The church was built by Italian immigrants in 1906 and was shuttered in 2009 after struggling financially. While preservationists hoped to use the church as a community center, demolition permits were granted in March 2017. Catholic Charities Progress of Peoples Development Corporation will construct sixty-four low income units on the site.**

**Over 1,800 churches were damaged in the earthquakes in Mexico in September 2017.**

**Pilgrims ascend the Holy Stairs in Rome on their knees.**

**Saint Mary Catholic Church in Alexandria, Virginia, was recently designated as a minor basilica.**
Restored Icon, Saint Mary Major, Rome
The restored icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Salus Populi Romani, was unveiled at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome during a Mass with Pope Francis on Sunday, January 28, 2018. In addition to remediating previous restorations and cleaning the ancient image, the restorers fabricated a new case for the icon with handles, to facilitate safer and easier transportation for major celebrations.

Divine Creatures, The Vatican Museums. The Vatican Museums presented Divine Creatures, photographic recreations of masterpieces of sacred art. It ran from January 23 to March 3, and featured people with disabilities enacting scenes from the Renaissance to the twentieth century, including works by Titian, Caravaggio, and Rosso Fiorentino. Inspired by Saint Matthew’s account of Jesus healing a leper (Mt 8:1-4), filmmaker Adamo Antonacci worked with forty-five individuals over six months to emulate the masterworks. Struck by the Gospel scene, the native Florentine said, “that gesture was revolutionary. Instead of condemning people for their disabilities, Jesus made them His focus.” Divine Creatures premiered at the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo in Florence and opened in Rome at the urging of Barbara Jatta, Director of the Vatican Museums.

$20 Million Given for Pilgrimage Site, Detroit. A few weeks after Father Solanus Casey’s beatification, Art Van Elslander, a Detroit businessman, announced he was donating $20 million to the Solanus Casey Center for an expansion of the pilgrimage site. The project is currently in conceptual development with Hamilton Anderson Associates of Detroit, Michigan. The proposed building project will include a café, outdoor seating, green spaces for large meetings and concerts, and gardens with the stations of the cross. The A. A. Van Elslander Foundation hopes to acquire sixty-four properties owned by the city of Detroit on behalf of the center. Van Elslander died on February 12, 2018, at eighty-seven. The center’s director, Father David Preuss, called him “a dear friend” of the Capuchins.
Warhol Exhibit, The Vatican.
The Vatican Museums are engaged in final discussions with the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh over an exhibition of the late artist’s religious artwork in 2019. The exhibition would be located at the museum in Pittsburgh and in Rome. It will include selections from Andy Warhol’s Last Supper series, as well as archival media, films, and memento mori canvases.

Restored Statue, Chartres Cathedral
A statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Chartres Cathedral was restored in 2015 during the course of an extensive restoration of the building. Known as La Vierge Noire de Chartres (the Black Madonna of Chartres), the sixteenth-century statue of Mary and the Infant Jesus was restored through extensive cleaning and repainting of the revealed surface conditions. Restoration of the nave began in 2009 and was completed in 2017. The restoration will be continued in the transepts.

New Chapel, Aquinas College
A new chapel was dedicated at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on October 7, 2017. Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel was dedicated on October 7, 2017, the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Publicly-Funded Cross Challenged, Michigan.
Officials in Ludington, Michigan, held a meeting on January 23rd to discuss the removal of a large cross that has stood along Lake Michigan for decades. The cross has been maintained with public funding since 1955, when it was built on the spot where Jesuit missionary Father Jacques Marquette presumably died in 1675. The Michigan Association of Civil Rights and Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation hold that the Father Marquette cross is unconstitutional because of the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause. Township Supervisor Paul Keson said that the Township received numerous messages of support for the memorial. In April, the Township Board reached an agreement to sell the property where the cross is located to the Pere Marquette Memorial Association for $800. The Association will maintain the site with private funds.

A view from the late 1950s of the Father Marquette Memorial Cross near Ludington, Michigan

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Sacred Architecture

Benedictine Monastery Sold, Arizona
The Benedictine Monastery of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Tucson has been sold to a developer, and may be converted into luxury housing or possibly student housing for the University of Arizona. Designed by Tucson architect Roy Place, the Spanish Colonial monastery is known as the Pink Rose of the Desert and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The seven-acre property is in East Tucson in a historic neighborhood and is a Tucson landmark. The sisters are hopeful that the developer will respect the historic past of the property. The nine remaining sisters will move back to their headquarters in Clyde, Missouri. The sisters have been in Arizona since 1935, when they came at the invitation of Bishop Daniel Gercke.

Basilica of Saint Benedict to be Rebuilt, Italy.
The Italian government has agreed to begin the rebuilding and restoration of the Basilica of Saint Benedict in Norcia. After months of discussion, the office of the Prime Minister decided a design competition will be held for the construction of a new basilica. Professor Antonio Paolucci will be involved with the project. He was director of the public museums in Florence and recently retired from directing the Vatican Museums. President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker has ensured financial support of the project.

Pope Speaks on the Artist, The Vatican
Pope Francis in his address to the members of the Diaconie de la Beauté on February 24 spoke about the vocation of the artist. Echoing Pope John Paul II’s Letter to Artists, he said “the gifts you have received are for each one of you a responsibility and a mission.” Referencing his encyclical Laudato Si’, the Pope invited artists to develop their talents, and “to propose an alternative understanding of the quality of life […] to serve creation and the protection of ‘oases of beauty’ in our cities, too often ‘concrete jungles’ without a soul.” He concluded that the Church relies on artists to “to make the ineffable Beauty of God’s love perceptible and to enable every person to discover the beauty of being loved by God, to be filled with His love, to live on it and to bear witness to it.”

Government Can Aid Churches, FEMA
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced in January 2018 that houses of worship owned or operated by private non-profits are now eligible to apply for disaster relief assistance. In the foreword to the new Third Edition of the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide, FEMA explains that last year’s Supreme Court decision Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia v. Comer led to the change. The court ruled that the state violated the church’s First Amendment rights “by denying Trinity Lutheran Church an otherwise available public benefit solely because it was a church. In light of the Trinity Lutheran decision, FEMA has considered its guidance on private nonprofit facility eligibility and determined that it will revise its interpretation…so as not to exclude houses of worship from eligibility for FEMA aid on the basis of the religious character or primarily religious use of the facility.” The new guidelines are effective for disasters and applications pending on or after August 23, 2017.

Public Statue of Saint Junípero Serra Controversy, San Francisco.
The San Francisco Board of Appeals ruled in April that a statue of missionary Saint Junípero Serra will remain in the Pioneer Monument depicting the founding of California near City Hall. This reverses an earlier decision by the city’s Arts Commission, which had voted to remove the statue featuring Sir Francis Drake, Father Junípero Serra, and a Native American on the grounds that it is “racist and demeaning.”
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Most people would struggle to identify the church in Rome dedicated to Saint Mary and the Martyrs. But refer to it as “the Pantheon,” the home of all the gods, and everyone would immediately know what you are talking about.

Examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely of Christian buildings associated with a pagan past or even still showcasing pagan imagery. In Venice, for instance, the church of Saint Mary of Nazareth, better known as the Scalzi, features statues of sibyls (pagan oracles) in the sanctuary.

At Caprarola, in central Italy, the Villa Farnese, built for a cardinal, houses plentiful pagan iconography cheek-by-jowl with Catholic art, as if it were the most natural thing in the world for a high-ranking church official to celebrate paganism and Christianity under one roof. Saint Mary’s Church, Iffley, near Oxford, has an archway that shows the four evangelists jostling side by side with Aquarius, Pisces and other characters from the signs of the zodiac.

The interplay between paganism and Christianity intrigued C. S. Lewis. His reflections on this relationship are well worth bearing in mind when visiting churches that seem to have a surprisingly relaxed attitude to pagan imagery and the pagan past.

A Language More Adequate

It was largely through his love of pagan mythology that Lewis himself became a Christian. And in his best-known writings, the seven Chronicles of Narnia, he demonstrated very ingeniously how Christianity can incorporate and redeem pagan traditions.

The immediate human cause of Lewis’s Christian conversion in 1931 was a long night-time conversation with two good friends, J. R. R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson, on the subject of Christianity, metaphor, and myth. (Tolkien was Catholic, Dyson an Anglican.) What had been holding him back from accepting Christianity was, he said in a letter, “a difficulty in knowing what the doctrine meant.”

Tolkien and Dyson showed him that Christian doctrines are not the main thing about Christianity. Doctrines are translations into concepts and ideas of that which God has already expressed in “a language more adequate: namely the actual incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection” of Christ. The primary language of Christianity is a lived language of an actual person being born, dying, and living again.

When Lewis realised this, he began to understand what Christianity really meant, because he had been fascinated from childhood by stories of dying and rising gods. He had always found these pagan stories to be “profound and suggestive of meanings beyond my grasp even tho’ I could not say in cold prose ‘what it meant.’”

The difference between his attitude to the pagan myths and to the Christianity he then rejected was that he did not try officiously to explain the pagan myths. These stories he saw to be fruitful in their own terms. They had to be accepted as saying something in their own way, not treated as a kind of allegory and translated into something less, something secondary, into mere “doctrines.”

Doctrines are the product of analytical dissection. They recast the original, equivocal, historical material into abstract, less fully realized categories of meaning. In short, doctrines are not as richly meaningful as that which they are doctrines about.

Lewis now understood that the essence of Christianity was the story recounted in the gospels, rather than the commentary upon and explication of that story in the epistles, and that the Christ-story could be approached in a way similar to the way he approached pagan myths. Christianity is the “true myth.” In paganism God expressed Himself in an unfocused way through the images human imaginations deployed in order to tell stories about the world. The story of Christ is “God’s myth” — the story in which God directly expressed Himself through a real, historical life of a particular man, in a particular time, in a particular place: Jesus of Nazareth, crucified under Pontius Pilate outside Jerusalem, circa AD 33.

God the Father of All Lights

That there were certain similarities between pagan myths and the true myth did not lead Lewis to conclude, “so much the worse for Christianity.” He explained in “Is Theology Poetry?” It led him to conclude, “so much the better for Paganism.” Paganism contained a good deal of meaning that was realized, consummated, and perfected in Christ.

The important thing to notice is the resemblance he observed between the Christian story and the stories of “pagan Christs,” as he called them. Since God is the Father of lights (James 1:17), He is the Father of “natural lights as well as spiritual lights,” Lewis told the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Even the flickering lights of pa-
Paganism could be attributed ultimately to Him. He now believed with his poetic hero Edmund Spenser, as he put it in *Spenser’s Images of Life*, that “Divine Wisdom spoke not only on the Mount of Olives, but also on Parnassus.”

His inclusive attitude here reflects the approach of Christian poets in the sixteenth century. Of them he wrote (in a scholarly paper titled “Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser”): “It was not felt desirable, much less necessary, when you mentioned, say, Jove, to exclude any of his meanings; the Christian God, the Pagan god, the planet as actually seen, the planet astrologically considered, were all welcome to enrich the figure, by turns or even simultaneously.”

He explained (in another scholarly work, “Hero and Leander”) that “gods and goddesses could always be used in a Christian sense” by a medieval or Elizabethan poet. Dante, Sidney, Spenser, and Milton all recognized that the redeemed gods could perform all sorts of good, true, and beautiful tasks. As he wrote in his magnum opus, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, for them “the gods are God inognito and everyone is in the secret.” They understood paganism as “the religion of poetry through which the author can express, at any moment, just so much or so little of his real religion as his art requires.”

In a review of *The Oxford Book of Christian Verse*, he coined the term “transferred classicism” for those poets who imagined their Christianity under classical forms. There, “God is, in some degree, disguised as a mere god” and the reader enjoys seeing “how well Christianity could produce the counsils, catalogues, Mercuries, and battle-pieces of ancient epic.”

Chaucer, a Christian poet, could describe himself as Venus’s “disciple.” This practice of using mythological untruths to hint at theological truths lasted as late as the composition of Milton’s *Comus* in 1634. It was, for most poets and in most poems, by far the best method of writing poetry which was religious without being devotionally.

The Similarities Ought to Be There

One need not draw hard and fast lines between Christianity and paganism because God, as the Father of lights, is the source of all truth. Perhaps Lewis’s favorite theologian was Richard Hooker (1554-1600), the so-called “father of Anglicanism.” Hooker thought that “all kinds of knowledge, all good arts, sciences, and disciplines come from the Father of lights.” Lewis explained in *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*. As Hooker put it, they are “as so many sparkles resembling the bright fountain from which they arise.”

After the talk with Tolkien and Dyson, Lewis was no longer troubled by the similarities between, for instance, the pagan Jupiter and the Hebrew Yahweh. The similarities “ought to be there,” as he wrote in his essay, “Myth Became Fact.” It would be a problem if they were absent. And so he takes pleasure in pointing out, in his book *Miracles*, that “God is supposed to have had a ‘Son’, just as if God were a mythological deity like Jupiter.”

This all-embracing Christian mentality was seen in the way that people in the Middle Ages interpreted the pagan poetry of the ancient Roman writer, Virgil. In his *Fourth Eclogue*, Virgil had written (Lewis’s translation):

> The great procession of the ages begins anew.

Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns, and the new child is sent down from high heaven.

These lines were understood in the Middle Ages as a pagan prophecy of the birth of Christ. Dante viewed them as such in his masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy*. The adult Lewis made the *Fourth Eclogue* a regular part of his Christmas reading, finding in this Virgilian insight evidence that God could speak even through a Roman pagan in order to prepare the human imagination for the coming of the Christ-child.

Following Saint Paul

Here Lewis followed the example of Saint Paul. The apostle preached to the men of Athens, using the pagan gods to communicate his message. Paul tells them that God “is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being; as even some of your poets have said, ‘for we are indeed his offspring.’”

The first quotation comes from Epimenides, a Greek poet and philosopher of the sixth century before Christ, who wrote of Zeus as the one “in whom we live and move and have our being.” The second comes from Aratus, a poet from about 300 years before Christ, who says of Zeus that “we are indeed his offspring.”

Paul meets the men of Athens where...
they are, where they already have an
inkling of meaning. He is not trying to
obliterate their limited and incomplete
religious knowledge. He takes what
they already possess, imaginatively,
and baptizes it. And apparently he had
some success. When the Greeks heard
Paul, “some mocked; but others said,
‘We will hear you again about this.’”

Lewis would have been among
those Greeks who followed Paul’s
logic, finding it evangelistically effec-
tive. He was ready, like the apostle, to
work upwards from the copy to the
original, from Zeus to the true God.

And this attitude was not just intel-
lectual or imaginative on Lewis’s part.
It also affected his personal devotional
habits as a Christian. I mentioned his
reading of the Fourth Eclogue at Christ-
mas. On honeymoon in Greece with his
dying wife, Lewis found it hard not to
pray to Apollo the Healer to heal his
wife Joy of her cancer. “Somehow one
didn’t feel it would have been very
wrong — would only have been ad-
dressing Christ sub specie Apollinis;” he
wrote a friend, the Wheaton College
professor Chad Walsh, in 1960.

The Gods Must Die to Live

Lewis’s high view of the pagan gods
affected the way he wrote his own
Christian works. He was not averse, in
fact he was wholly committed, to using
paganism for literary purposes. As a
good medievalist, Lewis was not con-
cerned to keep pagan deities separate
from the deity of his believed religion.
He was ever prepared to present God
sub figuris viliim corporum (“under the
figure of vile bodies”), as Saint Thomas
Aquinas put it.

He recognised that the gods had
departed from deities whom people
worshipped devoutly to symbols that
writers used poetically, but he did not
consider this a history of sheer loss. Al-
though the gods “died into allegory,” as
he explained in his first scholarly work,
The Allegory of Love, they rose again into
a world of romantic imagining, a world
of myth and fancy, for “gods, like other
creatures, must die to live.”

In his Narnia Chronicles he causes
the seven planetary deities to enjoy a
most sophisticated resurrection. Here
in his most famous works, as I show
in my book Planet Narnia, Lewis takes
the seven planetary gods of the pre-Co-
pernican cosmos and uses their various
qualities and attributes as his imagi-
native blueprint for each Chronicle.

In this manner, Lewis gave a con-
temporary twist to the medieval prac-
tice of using cosmological material.

In our work with murals, statue restoration and the iconographic use of
symbols and colors, we establish a unified vision of the spiritual.

We carry these skills over to decorative painting, plaster restoration, marble
cleaning and repair, wood refinishing and furniture restoration.

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cleaning and repair, wood refinishing and furniture restoration.
One thing he particularly admired in Dante was his presentation of the best cosmological thought of his day, his acting as a medieval version of modern astronomers like Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington. The medieval cosmos, Lewis thought, was perhaps the greatest work of art the Middle Ages produced, and Dante’s presentation of it was only the most perfect of the various versions on offer. “They wrote it, they sang it, painted it and carved it. Sometimes a whole poem or a whole building seems almost nothing but verbalized or petrified cosmology,” he wrote in a scholarly paper on “Imagination and Thought in the Middle Ages.”

We do not have space here to examine the songs and paintings which Lewis was referring to, but when speaking of the poems which verbalized this cosmology, Lewis had in mind not just Dante’s Divine Comedy, but also Chaucer and Henryson, in whose Knight’s Tale and Testament of Cresseid, the “character and influence of the planets are worked into” the story-line. He also had in mind Spenser’s Faerie Queene, which is both “a representation of, and hymn to, the cosmos as our ancestors believed it to be. There has been no delight (of that sort) in ‘nature’ since the old cosmology was rejected. No one can respond in just that way to the Einsteinian, or even the Newtonian, universe.”

The Gods’ New Life

As for the buildings that verbalized or petrified this cosmology, Lewis is thinking of the Old Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence, in which the constellations depicted on the cupola above the altar are there not for mere decoration, but because they are in the right position for the day (July 9, 1422) the altar was consecrated.

He also mentions the Salone at Padua, which is designed so that at each sunrise the beams will fall on the Sign in which Sol would then ride. “Just as the planets are not merely present in the Testament of Cresseid but woven into the plot, so in the buildings the cosmological material is sometimes woven into what we may call the plot of a building.”

It is in connection with “the plot of a building” that Lewis came nearest to disclosing his secret imaginative plan for Narnia. One of his American correspondents, Professor William Kinter, had suggested that Lewis’s publications could be laid out to form a kind of literary cathedral. Lewis wrote back saying, “It’s fun laying out all my books as a cathedral. Personally I’d make Miracles and the other ‘treatises’ the cathedral school: my children’s stories are the real side-chapels, each with its own little altar.”

Each with its own little altar. Let the reader understand! The Narnia Chronicles are all “about Christ,” as Lewis admitted in a letter, but they are about Christ by means of what in “The Al-literate Metre” he called the seven “spiritual symbols” furnished by medieval cosmology and classical mythology. Christ, like Jupiter, is the king of kings. Christ, like Mars, is the lord of hosts, mighty in battle, before whom the trees of the field clap their hands. Christ, like Sol, is the light of the world and more to be desired than gold.
Dr. Michael Ward is a fellow of Blackfriars Hall in Oxford and a professor of apologetics at Houston Baptist University. He is the author of Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens of the Narnia series and The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis.

Christ, like Luna, reflects the Father to mankind. Christ, like Mercury, is the Word of God. Christ, like Venus, is the bright morning star. Christ, like Saturn, makes of death itself a tool of divine purpose.

If Lewis had meant the whole Narnia series to be “about Christ” in a simple sense, the seven books would constitute one large, single altar dedicated to Him. Since the septet is actually “about Christ” as understood by means of the heptarchy — “the seven kingdoms of the seven planets,” as the poet John Donne called them — each Chronicle constitutes its own peculiar understanding and representation of the Divine nature.

And so the pagan gods rise to new life in the seven heavens of Narnia. Lewis’s professional expertise as a literary historian and his theological imagination as a Christian writer are ingeniously united. In his survey of the great medievalists of the twentieth century, called Inventing the Middle Ages, Norman Cantor is quite right to note that Lewis’s fictional works cannot be separated from his scholarly writing. Both show how he sought “to transmute [his] medieval learning into mythopoetic fiction, fantasy literature for a mass audience that communicated the sensibility of medieval epic and romance.”

Dante, Chaucer, Henryson, and others had Christened the planetary gods in works of considerable complexity and subtlety, for, as Lewis put it, “intricacy is a mark of the medieval mind.” By adopting and adapting their methods, he shows himself to be an heir of their line, ready and willing to baptize paganism and put it to Christian effect.

The pagans may have turned the planets into gods and goddesses, but that was only an imaginative extension of the Biblical picture of the celestial bodies as angelic powers who are “telling the glory of God.” Christians need not spurn such cultural accretions, as long as they were correctly understood and put in their proper context. When the true God arrives, then, and only then, “the half-gods can remain,” he wrote in The Four Loves. Half-gods, recognized as such, have their own proper excellence. We do not have “to throw away our silver to make room for the gold.” Rather, it is a case of “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.” He writes in Christianity and Culture, “it is lawful to rest our eyes in moonlight — especially now that we know where it comes from, that it is only sunlight at second hand.”
The architectural implications of the Augsburg Confession were probably not top-of-mind for those who signed it in 1530. The Confession was a presentation of Lutheran teaching, most significantly on the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. It was the theological statement of the political leaders who had been convinced of the Lutheran position, a position whose initiation has been marked by Luther’s posting of the 95 Theses in October 1517.

While the Augsburg Confession makes no mention of church design or art, it does define the Church unequivocally as “the congregation of saints.” In so doing, the Lutherans located any notion of sacredness, not in a specific institution or place, but in the gathering of believers — wherever it may occur — who come together around God’s word and, consequently, in the presence of Jesus Christ. This definition, a ramification of the doctrine of justification, drove Lutheran church design. Lutherans didn’t build many churches in the first century following the start of the Reformation. In the lands that came to be identified as Lutheran, existing churches were merely given over to Lutheran use, in most cases, with minimal change. These spaces were usually conservatively modified in order to ensure that all could hear the preacher, witness baptisms and receive the Lord’s Supper. Typically, the use of devotional candles before images of saints was discontinued. In some cases extra-biblical religious art was removed or covered. Frequently new, didactic Biblical art was introduced. Luther’s own conservatism regarding the liturgy, art, and environment of worship was itself a reaction to what he saw as the excess of the iconoclastic Andreas Karlstadt. During Luther’s self-imposed exile of 1521, Karlstadt instituted sweeping reforms to the liturgy and removed all images from the church in Wittenberg.

The new churches that were built took a variety of forms, yet all display a commitment to the gathering, the centrality of Sacramental life — Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper — and the authority of Scripture. Most make extensive use of images, though in didactic rather than devotional ways. None were perceived by their communities as sacred in any way that could be distinguished from the sacredness of all creation which had been consecrated by the Word of God in the act of creation.

What follows are descriptions of three early church buildings, offered as manifestations in design of these core Lutheran commitments. Hartenfels Castle Chapel in Torgau, built in 1544, was the first newly constructed Lutheran space. The town church of Freudenstadt, built in 1608, was one of the first newly created Lutheran churches. Holy Cross Church in Augsburg, built from 1651 to 1653, was the...
Handcarved 5’10” Crucifix
St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church in Raleigh, NC
Architect: O’Brien & Keane

GERMAN WOODCARVING STUDIO FOR SACRED ART
product of civic competition with the Catholics, and the creative use of an oddly-shaped space the city gave them.

The Lutheran Archetype

The Castle Chapel at Hartenfels Castle in Torgau was dedicated on October 4, 1544. This first newly constructed Lutheran space is an archetype for Lutheran church architecture, both embodying Luther’s ideas about the nature of worship and influencing, if not in design details, in core values, the design and construction of Lutheran churches in Germany and across Europe.

The chapel is a renovation of the east wing of the castle, commissioned by Johann Frederick I and designed and constructed by Nickel Grohmann. Torgau was the seat of German reformation political power. Luther consulted on the design and Lucas Cranach contributed both sketches for the bas-reliefs that mark the pulpit and the color scheme for the whole room.

When Luther preached at the dedication, he made a statement about the nature of Christian worship that has been formative for Lutheran liturgical theology. “The purpose of this new house may be such that nothing else may ever happen in it except that our dear Lord himself may speak to us through his holy word, and we respond to him through prayer and praise.” For Luther, Christian worship is people gathering to receive the gifts of God’s grace, namely life and salvation through the proclamation of God’s word and the administration of the Sacraments to which God’s word had attached the promise of the gift of righteousness.

What is fundamental for Lutheran architecture is the gathering around the Word of God and the congregation’s collective response. The primacy of Scripture, even in the context of the Sacraments, and the fact that Scripture was shared for the sake of the gathered community, required both the visual and acoustical presence of the speaker and a specific place in the speaker’s presence for the gathered community. The baptismal font and altar must be close to each other because they too were places from which the Word of God was shared.

That said, everything for Luther is about function for the community. The place itself is but a concession to the need to have a communally identified place of gathering. How is this seen in Hartenfels Castle Chapel?

As a renovation and re-purposing of an existing castle wing, the chapel is not identifiable from outside the building, save for the sculpture by Simon Schröter over a door that opens to the ground floor of this three-story space — a depiction of the removal of Christ’s body from the cross. The doorway pierces the exterior wall under the second of four barrel vaults that line the long walls, supporting two levels of galleries above.

The prominent pulpit is the obvious center of the room’s attention, visible from every place in the chapel, both from the ground floor and from the Duke’s place in the gallery, which opened off his personal quarters. It is mounted at the level of the first gallery and centered on the wall opposite. This conforms to Luther’s own comments at the dedication that the room was intended for the proclamation of God’s word.

The barrel of the pulpit is adorned with three scenes from the Gospels, each illustrating one of the Reformation’s five signature “solas.” From left to right, these images are: Jesus forgiving the sin of the woman caught in adultery (Sola Gratia); the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple teaching by pointing to the Scriptures (Sola Scriptura); and Jesus driving the money changers from the temple (illustrating Sola Fide through the Lutheran rejection of the sale of indulgences and the practice of pilgrimages).

This use of art to illustrate Biblical stories that teach theological concepts is emblematic of the ways in which Lutherans used art in their churches. Luther, responding to the iconoclasm of both Lutheran and Reformed pastors, observed that he couldn’t conceive of the crucifixion of Jesus without creating an image in his imagination. For Luther, visual art merely supplied the imagination with an illustration.

At the end of the room, to the preacher’s right, on the main floor but elevated on two steps, stands a stone table: the altar for the Sacrament of the Altar. The corners of the mensa (the top) rest on four angelic beings. There...
is room behind the table for the presiding pastor to face the congregation, as Luther recommended in his commentary of 1526 on the liturgy for his suggested, vernacular, German Mass.

There is no railing or barrier that would limit access from the common space. Luther did not recognize a hierarchy of holiness within the church space or outside of it. In his dedicatory sermon, he remarked that the community could be meeting just as well outside by the fountain, but that the room had been set aside as a mark of orderliness and neighborly service.

Installed above the communion table is the room’s organ, the pipes housed in simple but beautiful casework. As Luther saw it, the community’s appropriate response to the gift that is the Word of God is the repetition of that same Word in song and prayer. That the organ is aligned with the Sacramental table on the narrow wall is not only acoustically desirable, but a comment on the interrelationship between the means of God’s grace and the response of the Christian in worship.

The room itself is airy and brightly lit with large clear windows and white plaster work that sets off the sandstone rib vaults. It is a pleasant place in which the saints of God might gather.

A New Lutheran Church

As noted above, in most Lutheran communities, existing churches were taken over, making the construction of new buildings a rarity. The construction of an “ideal” town under the direction of Duke Frederick of Württemberg in 1599 created an opportunity for the construction of a new church. Freudenstadt (“Happytown”), built near Stuttgart in the Black Forest, was designed by architect Heinrich Schickhardt. Frederick and Schickhardt imaged a walled city, perfectly square with a large central plaza dominated by the Duke’s citadel and surrounded on all four corners by the important municipal buildings. The church, town hall, market, and hospital, all L-shaped in plan, turned each of four corners.

The citadel was never realized, but the church was built between 1601 and 1608.

Impressive copper-roofed towers mark the entrances at its north and east ends. The liturgical furnishings — altar, Romanesque font and ambo taken from a preexisting church, with high pulpit in the corner behind the altar — are grouped in the vertex of the right angle created by the unusual L-shaped floor plan. Pews, galleries, and the organ are located in the arms of the L-shape, facing the vertex. The building, done in a Gothic/Renaissance style, seats 1,000. Everyone can see the preacher. The organ dominates the north gallery. Today, a smaller instrument is also housed on the main floor just east of the altar.

The unusual floor plan illustrates a key idea in Lutheran church architecture of the period: the church building is a place of meeting. As such there must be a place for all those who will gather there. These places are to be sufficient for the need: that is, there must be enough room close to the preacher and the Sacramental furnishings. People need to be able to see and hear the preacher. They need to be able to see or gather around the font. They need to be able to approach the communion table.

But it also means that the whole congregation must have their places. Luther rejected the idea that only the religious had vocations. His doctrine...
of vocation elevated all acts of human service, and thus all stations, as a means by which God blesses human society.

But he was not an anarchist, nor was he an egalitarian. While all were equally needy of God’s grace, all also had their places within civil society. Pews in Lutheran churches not only made listening to the didactic sermon possible, they fixed individuals into particular places in the room. In the case of the church at Freudenstadt, pews made possible segregating the sexes, while giving the whole congregation access to the preacher, font, and table, but not to one another.

The use of art at Freudenstadt is consistent with broader Lutheran practices. The ambo, font, altar, and life-size crucifix are older than the building, taken over from some other location. All the pieces are heavily decorated with images. The font dates from 1100 and is raised on the backs of four figures, and the bowl is surrounded by what appear to be deer and dragons. The base of the ambo is surrounded by figures of the four evangelists who hold the desk of the ambo on their shoulders, a symbol of their foundational place.

The altar features the images of the twelve apostles. At the dedicatory sermon, Andreas Veringer, the pastor during the time of construction, identifies the crucifix as an aid in recalling the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament. He also takes the opportunity to point out that by retaining the altar and font, the community is distinguishing themselves from Zwinglians and Calvinists who destroy altars and fonts.

Adopting a Catholic Design

In 1555, the treaty of the Peace of Augsburg between Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and the Lutheran princes of the Schmalkaldic League determined that both Lutheran and Catholic confessions would be allowed within the Empire. Princes and city councils would have the right and authority to choose which confession would be practiced in their domain. Interestingly, Augsburg was unable to take advantage of this decision. While Lutheranism was the choice of most of the citizens, the merchant and patrician classes favored the Catholic faith. Augsburg descended into a tenuous situation of attempting to balance the interests of two official religions. The effect on Lutheran architecture is noteworthy for the way this bi-confessional situation drove Lutherans to adapt Roman Catholic spaces and adopt what might seem to be Roman Catholic design in their effort to assert their place in the community. The expectation was that Augsburg would eventually decide the issue as had other cities. During this time the contending parties asserted control over parts of churches and whole structures, but the lack of resolution over property claims prevented any serious
efforts to build. Finally, in 1648, the Peace of Westphalia formalized the bi-confessional nature of Augsburg, requiring parity across the city. Lutheran and Catholic churches were guaranteed the right to exclusive claim on land granted to them, opening up the possibility of a cohesive Lutheran approach to church design in Augsburg.

When the Lutherans meeting at Holy Cross Church received their land grant, the plot deeded to them was an odd, nearly triangular shape. Rather than placing a cost effective rectangular hall church on the site, similar to the Franciscan preaching halls that the Augsburg Lutherans had favored during the earlier time of uncertainty, they constructed a building with a complicated floor plan and structure (a right trapezoid) that maximized the breadth of the façade and the seating capacity of the interior.

Unlike the narrow late Gothic design of the neighboring Roman Catholic church of the same name, the broad Baroque design of Holy Cross was covered with all manner of curves and spirals that serve to keep the eye low, further emphasizing the size. The ochre stucco walls stand in contrast to those of its white-colored neighbor. An onion domed bell tower rises over it all. The building looks larger than it is, larger than was allowed, and maybe even larger than the building next door.

Stepping through the main door, the nave turns off to the right at a 55-degree angle, with a gallery running down the long left wall and over the main doorway. The paneled ceiling is ornately painted with the grid of the ceiling aligned with the parallel side walls. A heavily ornamented pulpit and canopy is mounted on the wall to the right about half-way down its length, under a life-sized sculpture of the Crucifixion. Two large paintings depicting Christ’s suffering flank the pulpit.

The altar and choir are housed in an apse on the west wall. The choir was redone in 1730 in the latest Rococo style, indicative of the community’s desire to present themselves as up-to-date. It features frescoes in the ceiling of faith, hope and love over soaring organ pipes. Images around the altar feature key elements of the life of Christ. The altar and the pulpit command the room, as is typical of Lutheran churches. All of this is roofed over by an enormously expensive copper roof that still stands out among the red tile roofs in the neighborhood today.

Holy Cross was built from 1651 to 1653. The economic and demographic devastation wrought by the Thirty Years War had hit Augsburg especially hard. Yet, with funds raised from across Lutheran Europe, the Lutherans in Augsburg built a church that would be a point of pride. Holy Cross was not just the ordered room in service of the congregation that gathered to hear God’s word, as Luther had described the church in Torgau. The art and architecture of Holy Cross was a bid for a legitimate place in the civic and religious life of Augsburg. It was a way for the community to assert itself in the theological market.

The Lutheran Impulse

Regardless of context — palace chapel, ideal new town, or civic competition — the Lutheran impulse is the same: to gather the community of the faithful in proximity to word and Sacrament and provide an environment for their song of response to God’s gifts of grace. In every case, art — some new, some old — provides visual reminders of Biblical truths. The shape of the rooms, style of the appointments, and size of the spaces vary depending on the local need, but these three examples are emblematic of a Lutheran approach to church design that still holds sway today.

The Reverend James Wetzstein serves as University Pastor at Valparaiso University, an independent Lutheran university in Valparaiso, Indiana. Through his active liturgical consulting practice, Wetzstein guides congregations to reflect on their theology of worship and its design implications in preparation for renovation or new construction. Among his recent consultations is the Chapel at the Old Latin School in Wittenberg, Germany.

**Articles**

1. This and other insights are taken from Bridget Heal’s “Sacred Image and Sacred Space in Lutheran Germany,” in Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe, edited by Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

**Endnotes**

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LOGOS
A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture
On a lovely October afternoon I rode with William Burleigh to the Pontifical College Josephinum, he for the meeting of the board of trustees, and I to see the newly renovated and rededicated chapel of Saint Turibius. I had taught there for a year in the mid-seventies and I remember the chapel as a dark and unattractive sacred space that was rarely used, since there were other chapels at the seminary.

Named after the sainted bishop of Lima, as the first saint of the New World, the chapel was dominated by the 1936 mural behind the altar. It had become discolored by many leaks and in a post-Vatican II renovation, was completely covered over in an antisep tic scheme that ignored the early Gothic charm of the chapel.

The Pontifical College began as an orphanage for those of German extraction in 1875, founded by Father Joseph Jessy. A few of the boys expressed a desire to be priests and when Father Jessy put a notice in a German-American newspaper, twenty-three young men applied. Trusting in Providence, he began a college seminary in 1888. And in 1892 he asked Pope Leo XIII to put it directly under papal oversight and the pope granted the request. Seven years later now-Monsignor Jessy died, having founded the only pontifical seminary in the United States.

In 1931, the college moved to its present site in the countryside north of Columbus, Ohio. I remember it in this country setting from when I taught there. Now, it sits in a mostly urban mix of highways and malls, but it still has spacious grounds with trees and vistas that showcase the noble brick Gothic structure designed by the Saint Louis architect Francis A. Ludewig. The chapel was the heart of the building and its apse covered with a floor to ceiling mural of Christ in glory attended by saints and angels, painted by Gerhard Lamers.

Enveloped by Light

When one enters the chapel, one feels enveloped by light. The Emil Frei windows are mostly white glass with
liturgical symbols, letting in light that plays off the mural and the chaste early Gothic stonework.

EverGreene Studios created a new mural based on the 1936 Lamers original, but there are some changes. The centerpiece of the frieze halfway up the mural used to be Saint Turibius ordaining a priest. Now it is Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom. She is flanked by Saints Joseph, Turibius, Rose of Lima, Catherine of Siena, John Neumann, Gregory the Great, Vincent de Paul, and Blessed Miguel Pro. Above them is Christ, the high priest robed in gold, offering communion, while the Father’s hand pours the Holy Spirit upon him. The whole heavenly vision is surrounded by myriads of angels, whose wings add a celestial splendor.

William Heyer, the present architect, pointed out all this to me as we walked through the chapel examining its many details: the altar of sacrifice and the place of reservation behind it; the choir stalls modelled after the originals; the more traditional choir plan for the sanctuary; the beautiful marble and porcelain floor tile and the increased seating in the nave.

The altar arrangement particularly caught my attention. Beautifully fashioned from different marbles, the altar is freestanding, as the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (#299) requires. Relics are in an exquisite cask under the altar and can be seen from the back. The six candlesticks are mildly baroque. The GIRM (#303) favors one altar in new churches. Often in an old church, a new altar facing the people is set up in front of the old high altar. While this solution may be desirable when the old altar is a work of art, the symbolism of the one Eucharist celebrated at the one altar is lost, when one sees two altars side by side.

William Heyer sees the place of reservation as a gradine, a kind of extension of the altar and not another altar. Pope Pius XII warned against separating the tabernacle from the altar and here the two are in harmony, symbolizing the sacrifice of the altar and the abiding presence thereafter.

One thing that would have rejoiced the hearts of J. B. O’Connell and Maurice Lavanoux, of Liturgical Art fame, was the tester over the tabernacle sprung from the dorsal in a rich red brocade, the pattern of which is repeated on the dorsal of Our Lady’s throne in the mural. The crucifix from the old chapel complements the risen Christ in the mural above in depicting the Paschal Mystery. The tabernacle is from the old chapel as well.

The Heavenly Liturgy

Anyone assisting at Mass in Saint Turibius Chapel would, it seems to me, experience something of the heavenly dimension of the liturgy. When the Lord is made present in His timeless eternal sacrifice, has Heaven come to earth or are we somewhat transposed to Heaven?

Vatican II’s Constitution on the Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium, states that in the earthly liturgy we take part in the “foretaste of that Heavenly Liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem towards which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, minister of holies and of the true tabernacle. With all the warriors of the Heavenly army we sing a hymn of glory to the Lord, venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them, we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until he, our Life, shall appear and we too will appear with him in glory” (#8). I quoted that passage at length because I think that is what the light playing on the great mural of the Heavenly Liturgy gives us.

This same Constitution makes provision for the artistic training of seminarians. They should be taught sacred art history so as to be able to appreciate and preserve the ancient monuments of the Church and guide artists working for the Church (#129). While the first point is important, I think the last is particularly important. It is true that terrible acts of vandalism and iconoclasm have been committed: marble altars destroyed, good statues pulled down, fine murals painted over. Still it is necessary
that artists and architects be guided by knowledgeable priests for the future churches that are to be built and decorated.

Pope Benedict XVI’s *Sacramentum Caritatis*, after treating the beauty of the Mass as an echo of the Transfiguration (#35), goes on to expound how seminarians can learn from the Via Pulchritudinis, the Way of Beauty. He says that a solid knowledge of the history of sacred art can help those who are responsible for commissioning artists and architects to create works of art for the liturgy. It is essential that the education of clerics include the study of art history with a special reference to sacred buildings. All aspects of liturgy should be beautiful so as to foster awe for the majesty of God and manifest the unity of faith and strengthen devotion (#41).

Considering the many courses that are required for seminary training, both texts, I suspect, are more honored in the breach than in practice. While they clearly should be implemented, I submit that praying each day in the chapel of Saint Turibius that Francis Ludewig created and William Heyer creatively restored will have its own quiet educational effect.

**The Ancient Beauty**

Our spirits rise with good sacred architecture and are brought down by the church “of the lowered ceiling.” Our spirits rejoice in Heavenly vistas with colorful saints and angels who pray with us; we can lay our cares on the altar in union with Christ’s sacrifice, that altar surrounded by the glow of candles symbolizing the Light of Christ. As we experience Christ’s presence in the golden tabernacle, we are lifted up by the “Ancient Beauty ever New.”

Beauty heals and strengthens us, and as one participates in the timeless eternal sacrifice in such a wonderful chapel, one is refreshed. The Josephinium is to be congratulated in restoring such a marvelous sacred space and William Heyer for having carried out the restoration so well and sensitively.

Reverend Giles Dimock, O.P., S.T.D., studied liturgy at Notre Dame and at Sant’ Anselmo, and theology at the Angelicum in Rome. He has taught at Providence College, Franciscan University in Steubenville, the Angelicum and the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, and Christ the High Priest are surrounded by saints and angels in the new mural covering the back wall of the apse.
Sir Giles Gilbert Scott’s magnificent Liverpool Cathedral commenced construction in 1904, shortly after his initial design, prepared at the age of twenty-two, had won a now-famous competition, and was finally completed seventy-four years later in 1978. Toward the end of its construction, Sir Nicholas Pevsner described the cathedral, in his series *The Buildings of England*, as “desperately of a past that can never be recovered.” Another equally distinguished architectural writer, H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, called it in 1953 “a scenic prodigy, aloof from architectural reality.” He predicted that its tremendous tower might become the venerated last resting place of romantic architecture.

These appraisals are quite understandable so soon after two devastating World Wars destroyed so many traditional buildings and cities in Europe, and when modern methods of construction, promoted by Modernist architects, seemed to offer an answer to the urgent need for reconstruction. Now, almost forty years after the last stone was laid on the cathedral’s west front, perhaps it is time to re-evaluate these predictions of a final irrecoverable high point of achievement.

Scott’s cathedral is perceived to be the most traditional of the new English cathedrals built in the twentieth century. Some even labelled it anachronistic in the mid-twentieth century. This is a simplistic view of a building Scott continued to develop and refine up until his death in 1960. It is a building of subtle invention and “modern” in its fresh contribution to the Gothic language.

The Beginnings

Liverpool is not the only entirely new cathedral to have been built in England in the twentieth century. There is Coventry by Sir Basil Spence; Guildford by Sir Edwin Maufe; Clifton Roman Catholic Cathedral in Bristol by the Percy Thomas Partnership; Bentley’s Westminster Cathedral in London; and Frederick Gibberd’s Liverpool Roman Catholic Cathedral, built over the crypt of Sir Edwin Lutyens’ cathedral which, had it been built, would have matched in Classical terms what Scott achieved in his Gothic cathedral on Saint James’ Mount, a short distance away. What a double glory that would have been.

These cathedrals were all, apart from Liverpool, built in relatively little time. By comparison, Scott’s cathedral commenced construction at the end of the Gothic revival in the first years of the twentieth century and continued to be built in the Gothic manner throughout most of that century, during which time the prevailing architectural style shifted from Gothic to Monumental Classicism and then to International Modernism.

This tenacity of design intention says a great deal about the architect, his patrons in the church, and all those who contributed to its cost over so many years. This is even more remarkable given that the period of construction included two World Wars and at least one severe economic depression. To maintain a steadfast faith in a design, in this way, is a notable achievement.

The distinguished Cathedral Competition Committee, comprised of Norman Shaw and G. F. Bodley, discovered that the anonymous design they had selected was by a young architect...
who, albeit from a very distinguished dynasty of ecclesiastical architects, had built nothing to his own designs, and was a Roman Catholic. Concerned about his lack of experience, the committee appointed Bodley (who himself was then engaged in the design of several cathedrals, including the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.) to work alongside Scott. This was an uneasy relationship during which Scott challenged Bodley’s design approach until the latter’s death in 1907.

After being appointed, Scott almost immediately began fundamentally rethinking his design for the cathedral, so that by the time Bodley died his conception of the building had changed entirely. The somewhat academic competition design began to be replaced by a new approach, infused with what Scott called a “bigness of touch.”

In his debate with Bodley at the outset of the project he argued for boldness of individual motifs: “I really believe scale may mean two things. One kind of scale is got by making a part small … so as to make the building look larger than it really is. … Another kind is got by keeping the parts on a large scale, thereby giving the design a big touch imparting a feeling of grandeur and impressiveness, which is not produced by the other method.” This “masculine grandeur” he described as “my ideal and [it] is what I want, above anything in Liverpool Cathedral. Harmonious beauty without this quality is nothing for me.”3

**The Reworking**

By 1910, Scott had completely reworked his design and the cathedral began to take on the characteristic form that was eventually to be built. The two transept towers of the competition entry were replaced by a vast, open, central space under a massive monumental tower, flanked on the north and south sides by symmetrical, equally monumental transept entrances to the great central space. It is remarkable that the Cathedral Committee agreed to these changes given that the foundations for the earlier twin towers were already in place.

In the new design, the cathedral had been transformed into a composition of large blocks or masses which provide an overpowering sense of the sublime and which elevate the design to something akin to the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis. Scott’s Romantic vision for the cathedral was perhaps shaped by the drawings of the enigmatic architect Beresford Pite and might also have been influenced by the visionary engravings of imaginary Gothic towers by F. L. Griggs.

Even though it could be argued that this Romantic vision of the Gothic world was in the air, Scott’s changes still challenged the architectural establishment. This is perhaps best illustrated in the reaction to this new approach by Scott’s contemporary genius in America, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, who had already been responsible for a series of very fine Gothic churches and who was supremely versed in the Gothic language. Goodhue was initially profoundly shocked by the change. However, he subsequently met Scott in England in 1913 and immediately changed his mind and, thereafter, was hugely influenced by Scott’s new approach.

The boldly scaled massing of Scott’s cathedral was eloquently described by Professor C. H. Reilly as “so broad and monumental in its lines that, unlike the old Gothic cathedrals; it has much of the balanced beauty of a Classical building, while not abating a jot of the dynamic force of Gothic architecture in its most energetic form.”4 Reilly, the influential professor at the remarkable Liverpool School of Architecture, dedicated to monumental Classicism, refers to the other aspect of Scott’s new approach that was so attractive to Goodhue: the fusion of Classical monumentality with Gothic sensibility.

Goodhue had long dreamed of an architecture that would go beyond one particular style, seeking a form of architecture that would be “malleable enough to be moulded at the designer’s will, as readily toward the calm perfection of the Parthenon as towards the majesty and restless mystery of Chartres.”5 Liverpool Cathedral was undoubtedly the catalyst for the flowering of Goodhue’s final feats of genius in the fresh traditionalism of his late works such as his Nebraska State Capitol building.
The Architectural Result

At this point, it is worth examining more closely the architectural result that Scott achieved in his synthesis of Classical and Gothic architecture, as well as addressing some of the further criticisms leveled at his design in the past.

The 1924 guide to the then-unfinished cathedral describes the way in which the design is Classical rather than Gothic in composition, with a symmetrical plan that has similarities with the plan of St. George’s Hall in Liverpool. It goes on to say: “But if the bones are Classic, the flesh in which they are clothed is pure Gothic, pure because it is living and not a mere aggregation of dead styles.”

The guide presents these attributes in a favorable light, while Sir Nicholas Pevsner regards this as a fundamental weakness in the design, describing the central tower space as “useless, functionally speaking” and puts it down to Scott’s obsession with symmetry. Pevsner, however, misses the essential point that Scott is perhaps making in his design: the importance of so-called redundant space in the service of sublime expression in a sacred building. Scott understood the importance of redundant beauty in a sacred building better than almost any other architect. In that vast central space and in the monumental massing of the exterior of the cathedral, he seamlessly combined the stillness and gravity of the Classical with the soaring lines of the Gothic.

This combination in the design and the symmetry that Pevsner dismisses is a stroke of genius, particularly in relationship to the site on which the cathedral is placed. The composition of two pairs of transepts flanking the tower and main portal are described by Pevsner as “highly original and bold,” but he goes on to describe the matching of the Welsford porch on the north side with the Rankin porch on the south side as “utterly useless, because leading straight into the abyss of the cemetery, but it had to be there, because north must match south.”

It seems to me that Pevsner entirely overlooked the point of those two portals. The ceremonial entrance to the cathedral from the Rankin porch, on the urban side of the cathedral, is contrasted on the densely wooded cemetery side of the cathedral with the Welsford porch, with dramatic and symbolic purpose. The journey from the bustle of the city to the stillness of the cemetery, separated by that vast, great, central space within the cathedral, with its view of the high altar and its astonishing reredos, is a mighty symbolic statement and an example of Scott applying his genius to the particularities of the site. The Rankin porch extends a yawning invitation to the city while the Welsford porch is the dark cave of the sepulchre above the wooded graveyard.

The Appropriation of Styles

There is another important point to note about the plan of the cathedral, which only gained its final form in 1927. Scott’s most significant change to the 1910 plan was the way in which he narrowed the dimensions of the central tower, which in turn caused the supporting walls at ground floor level to close off the continuous views through the cathedral along the length of the north and south aisles. This not only achieved a more elegant tower but also added considerable mystery to the experience of the interior. Later Scott reinforced this idea of screening and framing views in the interior by introducing the Dulverton Bridge between the nave and the central space.

In this way the development of the plan from 1904 to its final form represents a shift away from a conventional, transparent interior, with continuous open views through the length of the building, to a plan form that is much more layered and Romantic in its conception. Thus the final form of the interior achieves something of the feeling of an ancient cathedral that has developed over centuries with certain idiosyncrasies that add considerably to the spiritual mystery of the building. This development might not have been achieved without the benefit of Scott’s fifty-nine years of involvement in the design of the cathedral. It is a testament to his view that “Art is evolutionary, and the solution is not in revolution.”

Scott’s appropriation of other styles and references is not confined to the broad massing and planning of the cathedral, but also manifests itself in his detailing. The latter shows that he was a master of many architectural styles. One thinks of his monumental Classical buildings at Clare College in Cambridge, his Byzantine chapel at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford, and his Romanesque church of Our Lady and Saint Alphege in Bath. John Goodall argues that the Lady Chapel owes more to medieval architecture than Gothic and that the detailing in the central volume of the cathedral has parallels in Spanish buildings.

Certainly much of the Gothic detailing owes more to Spanish flamboyant Gothic architecture than to English Gothic, but Scott’s integration of Renaissance and Classical references is also evident and is probably best displayed in the War Memorial Chapel. This space is dominated by a small cenotaph placed under the transept arch. The idea of a cenotaph is a Classical one and this was the first cenotaph to be suggested in England as
Articles

A memorial of the Great War (and as such it precedes the magnificent cenotaph designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens in London).

The reredos and holy table here are in marked contrast to the monumental, highly ornate, Gothic reredos in the main sanctuary. The reredos in the War Memorial Chapel gains its beauty not from its degree of ornamentation, but from its restraint. A red sandstone canopy inspired by perpendicular Gothic surrounds a Classical sarcophagus in polished Hoptonwood, resting on carved brackets. The sarcophagus and the field of the reredos are ornamented with Renaissance inspired bronze detailing and the flanking figures by the sculptors Walter Gilbert and Louis Weingartner are distinctly moderne in style.

Scott achieves a perfectly harmonious integration of these diverse elements and this is just one example of something repeated throughout the cathedral. His free interpretation of styles and references is one of the great joys offered by the building.

Scott’s Contrasts

Another strong characteristic of Scott’s design is his use of a contrast of scale and contrast of plain wall surfaces with tightly conceived and controlled smaller areas of ornamentation. These contrasts all serve the expression of sublime beauty. The high altar is dwarfed by the mighty reredos; the delicate altar rails are swallowed up by the vast volume of the sanctuary; the cathedra is a giant presence dominating the choir and priest stalls.

There are many examples of these contrasts. His oversized hanging lanterns somehow expand the volume of the Lady Chapel, as does the organ in the main choir of the cathedral. The soaring canopy of the baptismal font has a similar effect. Perhaps most dramatic of all is the way in which the Duverton Bridge leaps across the nave at its junction with the central space and, in so doing, frames the high altar and reredos in such a way that the sanctuary appears to be infinitely distant. The effect, for the visitor, is of a vast architectural landscape of awe-inspiring proportions.

Scott also makes use of large, unornamented wall surfaces (which could perhaps be called “fields of rest”) contrasted with beautifully designed and wrought concentrated areas of decoration. This contrast is evident everywhere in the cathedral on the exterior and interior and is also characteristic of so much of his other architectural work, sacred and secular.

As with the contrast in scale, the effect is to intensify the sublimity of expression. The 1924 guidebook describes this approach admirably: “It will be found that while the decoration has been made subsidiary to broad general effect, there is an exuberance of detail which is characteristic of the best periods of medieval craftsmanship. Decoration is the ritual of architecture — it should emphasise and not obscure the principles it seeks to glorify; and this has been kept constantly in view.”

It also describes a very good example of Scott’s use of decoration on the south elevation of the cathedral: “Running along the exterior of the choir, above the windows, is an arcade gallery in the thickness of the wall. The figures of Saints and Angels on the window mullions, and the huge Angels surmounting the buttresses are the only ornament the architect has allowed himself, unless the frequent string courses and the pierced parapet along the roof of the vestries be included.” The same contrast between plain surfaces and concentrated detail is evident in all the fittings within the interior of the cathedral.

Scott’s “Bigness of Touch”

Unfortunately, Scott died in 1960 before the nave and west end were completed. In 1942, at the height of the Second World War, he had settled on his final design for the west end. It is a remarkable design that would have perhaps given ultimate expression to his ideal of “bigness of touch.” In this design, the vast height of the west front is largely blank, save for a rose window and the two flanking towers, with the decoration concentrated more than eighty-six feet above ground.

The entrance itself was a low, prow-like portico dwarfed by the west wall and projecting westwards over the very edge of the site. This was another flash of genius, but as with all uncompromising ideas as dramatic and visionary as this, it was vulnerable. After Scott’s death his office partner Frederick
Articles

Thomas, assisted by Roger Pinkney, revised the design by introducing a broad arch with a tripartite window lighting the nave. The design is by no means inadequate, but it is a great loss that Scott’s uncompromising design was not implemented.

Scott and his wife are buried in a plot just west of the west frontal, making the abandonment of his design, at the eleventh hour of construction, even more poignant. It is a salutary reminder to retain faith in the integrity of the design until the very last stone is fixed.

The Integration of Sculpture

It is also worth reflecting on Scott’s integration of architecture and sculpture in the cathedral, because this is now rare in contemporary sacred architecture and indeed in architecture generally. By this I mean a carefully conceived program of sculpture which sets up a narrative which is fully integrated into the meaning of the cathedral from the outset, rather than the arbitrary placing of statues as an afterthought, which is regrettably commonplace today.

Throughout his involvement with the cathedral, Scott commissioned and worked alongside a large number of fine sculptors and artists. In the Lady Chapel, he worked with Lillie Reed who sculpted the figures on the Children’s Porch. For the great reredos he employed Louis Weingartner and Walter Gilbert and in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit he used William Gough.

These were all fine sculptors, but as Scott’s architectural approach developed, he became looking for sculptors that could throw off the Victorian influence of Bodley and provide a more austere aesthetic better suited to his architecture. Initially, he worked with David Evans, a genius, who, soon after completing the Nurses Memorial in the Lady Chapel and Bishop Chavasse’s Memorial in the south choir aisle, left for New York. After that, Scott collaborated for the rest of his life with Edward Carter Preston, a sculptor perhaps less talented than Evans, but someone who was able to produce sculpture wholly subservient to Scott’s architecture.

This was Scott’s ideal, which he wrote about to Sir Frederick Radcliffe: “The figures being regarded as part of the architecture, rather than isolated examples of sculpture, is ... a point of view which Carter Preston has kept constantly before him.”

This approach is perhaps best evident in the two porches where Carter Preston’s columnar figures provide the linear emphasis and faceted appearance that Scott felt best suited his architecture.

After Scott’s death, there was less concern with the integration of architecture and sculpture in the cathedral, ending with the installation on the west front of Dame Elizabeth Frink’s bronze of the Resurrected Christ that was quickly dubbed as “Frinkenstein.”

Another important lesson that can be learned from this cathedral is that it is constructed to last for posterity. It is a cathedral built of many millions of load-bearing bricks and vast quantities of hand-worked red sandstone laid in lime mortar, using the same old-fashioned load-bearing masonry techniques that have been employed for thousands of years and which have stood the test of time. This cathedral was built for eternity and, because it was built in the age of photography, its construction has been recorded in beautiful black and white and sepia photographs, which offer so many practical lessons to all those who hope to build sacred buildings in the future.

Scott was criticized even by his son, the gifted architect Richard Gilbert Scott, for not wholly embracing the modern technology of the twentieth century. But Scott’s circumspection for these untried materials deserves considerable respect, especially considering the inevitable pressure to economize. Ultimately, he did use concrete extensively in the foundations as well as in the bell tower and in the roofs covering the vaults. But the shell of the tower was surrounded by a massive load-bearing masonry structure and the concrete roofs were covered over in verdigris copper.

A Sublime Expression

Giles Gilbert Scott’s masterpiece in Liverpool Cathedral embodies everything that is now rarely found in sacred or other forms of architecture. It is a building given sublime expression in massing and detail, a building of subtle invention, borne out by a deep understanding of traditional architecture in all its variety and that successfully and meaningfully integrates architecture and sculpture. It is a building whose builders and patrons had the courage and faith to stay true to their intentions in the face of war, economic depression and in an age of philistinism and iconoclasm, and it is a building that is built for eternity as an acknowledgement of its divine purpose.

Hopefully, the time has come again for architects and patrons to take courage from the Romantic vision realized at Liverpool, within living memory, and to prove that its glorious tower is not the last resting place of Romantic architecture, but instead a beacon for the resurrection of this sublime manner of making sacred buildings.

Craig Hamilton is a Classical architect, practicing in the United Kingdom, who specializes in sacred and monumental architecture and has completed three new chapels and is working on a fourth. He is the recipient of the 2018 ICAA Arthur Ross Award for Architecture.

Endnotes
2. Ibid.
3. Michael Hall, George Frederick Bodley and the Later Gothic Revival in Britain and America (Yale University Press, 2014).
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
7. Metcalf & Pevsner.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
In the late 1990s, I watched the rebuilding of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, replicating the nineteenth-century cathedral that had been dynamited by Stalin in 1931. It can hold an estimated 10,000 worshipers (they stand throughout the long services, for pews are abhorrent to venerable tradition) and is the tallest Orthodox church in the world, with a dome reaching 338 feet.

Stalin’s plan to build on its site a Palace of the Soviets with a huge statue of Lenin atop its dome was never realized because of World War II. That recalls the statue of Zeus, “the Abomination of Desolation,” which the Greek ruler of Syria, Antiochus IV, erected in the Jerusalem Temple after he despoiled its sacred vessels. Antiochus basked in the title Epiphanes, which means “radiance of God,” but the Jews punned that as Epimanes, or “the mad man.”

Two hundred churches are planned for Moscow, along with an estimated 1,000 across the nation, replacing and adding to those destroyed in the Communist period, during which priests were crucified on the church doors. These are in the classical Byzantine style, not the modern biscuit boxes and flying saucers that were the bane of the West over the last few decades. In some towns, the local people are taught iconography and mosaic art, so the churches really are the work of their own hands.

These days in China, where Christianity is oppressed — not especially for theological reasons, but because it is a threat to the political hegemony of the state — churches are being destroyed. Within the past few months, for example, in Henan Province an Evangelical church was dynamited in Shangqiu, with a blithe ferocity paralleling that of Stalin.

In the West, churches are getting demolished for reasons other than political: redundancy, the lack of need for “ethnic” parishes, and the sheer cost of maintenance. Often, people who are much wealthier than their ancestors, who built the churches sacrificially out of their penury, do not contribute enough for maintenance. Between 1995 and the present, the Catholic population in the United States increased from fifty-seven million to over seventy million. New churches are being built in the South and West where populations are growing faster than the decline in other parts of the country.

There is another factor, however, in the loss of churches in much of our nation, and it is simply indifference. The vice of sloth is a spiritual malignancy, and many of our great metropolises have become hospices for lapsed believers. When I was sent to our parish here in “Hell’s Kitchen,” which is experiencing a phenomenal population growth, I was asked, “How many Catholics live there?” The proper question is, “How many Catholics will live there?”

The Ascending Lord did not send His disciples into Catholic neighborhoods, because there were none.

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A Magnificent Work of Beauty: Dedication of the Trinity Dome

Donald Cardinal Wuerl

ENGRAVED IN THE stone façade of this great basilica are the words that speak of the devotion and pride that bring us to this Mass and celebration today: “Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel and the honor of your people.” That exclamation, taken from the Book of Judith (15:9), has long been applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In a rich patristic and devotional tradition, it is Mary who is recognized as the glory, joy and honor of God’s holy people.

Directly under that proclamation is the image of the Angel Gabriel announcing to Mary the reason why she was to become our honor, joy and glory. Here also is the greeting carved in stone and proclaimed in the Gospel for today, “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” In those words that are so familiar in the heart and on the lips of every Catholic, we also announce that Mary is blessed among all women because of the fruit of her womb, Jesus.

This magnificent tribute in stone, glass, marble, and mosaic to Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mother of God and our Mother, invites all of us to recognize not only the special role of Mary in our life but the unique glory that is hers in her Immaculate Conception. Over the main entrance way to this basilica on the balcony above the center doors is Ivan Mestrovic’s limestone sculpture depicting “Mary Immaculate with Angels.”

What we today celebrate, dedicate and consign to the ages to come is the completion of the basilica represented in the adornment of the entire interior of the great dome with millions of pieces of colored tile culminating in the presentation of Mary with the title of her Immaculate Conception under the radiant image of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

TODAY’S BLESSING of the Trinity Dome completes a work that was began nearly 100 years ago. On September 20, 1918, on the very spot where this basilica now stands, Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore announced, “Let us, too, offer to the world an example of Catholic gratitude, faith and love by erecting at Washington the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at whose altars your children and your children’s children will be proud to pray and worship.” Two years later, on September 20, 1920, Cardinal Gibbons laid the cornerstone.

In 1953, the bishops conducted a nationwide appeal for funds with which to erect the great superstructure of the National Shrine. Work began in the summer of 1955 and was completed for the dedication of the Great Upper Church, November 20, 1959.

At that time, the interior of this magnificent basilica, measuring over 450 feet in length and 239 feet to the top of the cross of the dome, was adorned with only one mosaic, the depiction by John de Rosen of “Christ in Majesty” which fills the wall of the north apse.

Two years ago, Pope Francis celebrated Mass on the basilica’s east portico. Prior to the canonization of Saint Junípero Serra, our Holy Father dedicated the very first portion of mosaic for the dome. He asked God’s blessing on the words that begin and end the Creed: “I believe” and “Amen.” Some months ago, Monsignor Walter Rossi, the Rector of the Shrine who has overseen the work that now stands before us completed, and I, were honored to put in place the mosaic rendering of those words blessed by Pope Francis. In them, we can all also say, “Amen” to the vision of a century ago.

As you gaze up at this modern-
day masterpiece, around the base of the dome you can see the words of the Creed that we all profess on our lips and in our hearts. Now it is also proclaimed in glorious mosaic.

Look carefully, and you will also see the likeness of saints who have had either a special tie to our country or a link to this Shrine. Among them are Saint Pope John Paul II who named it a basilica, Blessed Pope Paul VI who presented the Shrine with his papal coronation tiara and, of course, Saint Pope John XXIII. It was this pope who sent a special message for the blessing in 1959 of the Great Upper Church.

Today, his successor Pope Francis has honored us with a papal message for this sacred occasion and a special messenger to bring it. His Eminence Cardinal Kevin Farrell, head of the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life, is here as the Pope’s Envoy. Cardinal Farrell has a personal tie to the National Shrine since it was here in 2002 that he was ordained a bishop. We look forward to his message from our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

INSPIRATION FOR the shrine and therefore this dome may be said to go back to 1846 when a score of bishops assembled in the 6th Council of Baltimore chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the patroness of the United States under the title of her Immaculate Conception.

This very basilica is a splendid example of Catholic devotion to Mary. What prompted the bishops, clergy, religious, and laity of the Church in the United States to make the sacrifices that resulted in this temple dedicated to the glory of God and honor of God’s holy Mother? What motivated so many of the Catholic faithful encouraged by the request of their bishops to complete the work of this great central dome culminating in the artistic representation of the Most Holy Trinity and Mary the Immaculate Conception?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers one clear answer: “Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God’s almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ’s power. The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that ‘nothing will be impossible with God.’”

Mary is the model of what our faith should be. Like us, Mary was a human being who had to be open to hear and accept God’s word and to grasp the mysterious ways in which God works. She did so with such consummate fidelity that she is forever the example of what we mean by faith — true, profound faith.

On this day, as the Church recognizes the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, patronal feast day of the United States of America, we pause, once again, to hear God’s Word, to have our hearts and minds elevated by the beauty of what we are about to bless and to thank God for the invitation to walk in His way revealed to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God and Man.

THE ULTIMATE goal of every follower of Christ is to become, as closely as we can, one with Christ in a way that we participate in the new life He offers us through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

It was God’s Providential design that His own Eternal Word would come among us, take on flesh and be born as a human being. The human nature through Mary and the divine nature through the power of the Holy Spirit by which Mary conceived are united in the fruit of her womb, the person Jesus who is God and man. Anything else we say about Mary will always refer back to the fact that she is the Immaculately Conceived Mother of God.

In anticipation of the fact that she was to bear the Son of God, Mary was preserved from her conception from any stain of original sin. No taint of sin would touch her so that she would be a fitting and worthy vessel of the Incarnation. In 1854 Pope Pius IX proclaimed in Ineffabilis Deus that: “The Most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the Human Race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.”

Here we hear echoes from the first reading for today from the Book of Genesis. The Church has long reflected on Mary as the New Eve. This was to be the beginning of a new covenant bringing together all people into one new Body — the Body of Christ — the Church.

My brothers and sisters, when we look at this great Trinity Dome and see the myriad tiles in so much color coming together to realize this extraordinary work of art, we are reminded that here in the pews of this National Shrine, our nation’s Marian House, we see a similar phenomenon this time in living stone — the living members who make up the Body of Christ.

On any given Sunday or Solemnity, such as today, all we have to do is look out across the thousands of people gathered for Mass and we see the face of the world. Just as there are chapels throughout this Basilica reflecting national heritages, ethnic backgrounds, all proclaiming in unison “Hail Mary” so, too, do we look across this great Church of God and see out of so many one great faith family. We have come to be one in proclamation of faith, experience of redemption in the Eucharist and communion as one Church in God’s Holy Spirit.

In a moment we will solemnly bless this magnificent work of beauty. May we always look to this great majestic dome mindful of our prayer to Mary the Immaculately Conceived Mother of God that she will always intercede for us so that strong in faith, renewed in hope and committed in love, we might always sing in the silence of our hearts or with the joy of our voices (from Sing Praise to our Creator): “Oh, most Holy Trinity, Undivided Unity; Holy God, Mighty God. God Immortal, be adored.”

†

His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl is Archbishop of Washington. His services on numerous national and international bodies and is chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.
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Pictured above: Restored Sanctuary of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church - Milwaukee, Wisconsin
BOOK REVIEW

MAKING THE DIVINE MANIFEST

The Framing of Sacred Space: The Canopy and the Byzantine Church, by Jelena Bogdanović (Oxford University Press, 2017), 411 pages, $60.00 hardcover

Reviewed by Nathan Dennis

Combining equal parts rigorous architectural analysis and theoretical model for understanding the design principles behind the construction and performativity of early Christian and Byzantine liturgical space, Jelena Bogdanović’s monograph on the use of canopies in Byzantine churches is a welcome addition to the study of medieval art and architecture, as well as the framing devices, both physical and rhetorical, that were used to make the divine manifest in ecclesiastical space.

The core discussion of The Framing of Sacred Space is a precise, careful, and nuanced assessment of the extant archaeological and literary evidence for the development and geographical distribution of canopies in the Byzantine world. The monograph is divided into five chapters, bookended by an introduction and conclusion. The author has included seven tables in the appendix, an extensive bibliography, five maps, and nearly 175 beautifully illustrated figures (including canopies never before published). Many appear in color and in high resolution, which is becoming increasingly rare in academic print publications.

Chapter 1, “Ciborium or Canopy? Textual Evidence on Canopies in the Byzantine Church,” catalogues the myriad terms, phrases, and literary allusions to the architectural form of the canopy in medieval literature.

Chapter 2, “Canopies in the Byzantine Church: Archeological and Architectural Evidence,” provides a wide-ranging survey that covers not only the eastern Mediterranean and Levant, but also key examples of canopies in Italy and the North African Maghreb. Bogdanović extends her scope beyond the immediate confines of the Byzantine church—and most notably canopies—to include an analysis of ciboria erected over saints’ tombs, shrines, icons on display, baptismal fonts, and other architectural and liturgical furnishings within, adjacent to, or even outside of more strictly defined forms of Byzantine ecclesiastical space.

Chapter 3, “Place-Making: The Place of the Canopy in the Church,” examines the specific locations and uses of canopies in Byzantine constructions of sacred space. It is here that the author begins to craft her theoretical and theological approach to Byzantine architecture as both cosmological and, most importantly for her two final chapters, anthropological model.

Chapter 4, “The Micro-Architectural Framing of Sacred Space,” continues developing this model and further explains the relationship between architectural framing devices and the Byzantine conception of the human body itself, arguing for an inextricable relationship between the divine and the human, with the canopy functioning as a threshold between the two.

It is also in the chapter that the author recontextualizes the canopy as a critical link between the early Christian development of the centrally-planned church and the more modular and fluid architectural solutions of the Middle Byzantine era. She thereby effectively challenges more conventional narratives of the rise and fall of Byzantium before and after Iconoclasm that tend to overstate the influence of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople as the only legitimate archetype for understanding cross-in-square church construction.

Finally, chapter 5, “Nested in Its Own Shape: The Canopy and the Byzantine Church,” concludes the study with an analysis of theological typologies in early Christian and Byzantine, as well as western medieval, literature, most notably the Jerusalem Temple, the Holy Sepulchre, the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant, and the eschatological Heavenly Jerusalem, among others. The author consistently frames the discussion of these typologies with a broader analysis of the architectural forms of specific canopies, where they were placed, and the materiality of the canopy as earthly substance and locus of an otherwise heavenly encounter.

Bogdanović has written considerably more than a catalogue or compendium of Byzantine canopies from the earliest Christian example at third-century Dura-Europos in Syria to fifteenth-century Turkey and Greece. The Framing of Sacred Space incorporates a much-needed discussion of the intricate relationship between Byzantine architecture, interior decoration, and the very conception of enlivened, animate space, with divine presence activated and facilitated by the use of the canopy. This monograph should be a standard reference and starting-point for future discussions of spatial archetypes in Byzantium and the medieval world.

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Ecclesiastical Art since 1875

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Wood
Marble
Bronze
Mosaic
Fiberglass

CHURCH INTERIORS

STATUES

RESTORATIONS

Best references in USA:
- Cathedral of Saint Patrick - NYC, NY
- Cathedral of St. Petersburg - St. Petersburg, FL
- Church of the Epiphany - Miami, FL
- Church of Saint Williams - Round Rock, TX
- Church of Saint Catherine of Siena - Wake Forest, NC
A Glorious Masterwork

The Glorious Masterworks of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, Missouri, by Randal J. Loy (Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, 2017), 560 pages, $65.00 paperback (unabridged edition)

Reviewed by Rolf Achilles

The Glorious Masterworks of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, Missouri is an almost once-in-a-lifetime read on a single sacred space and its myriad of interlocking factors bound into a hefty, fascinating, profusely illustrated monograph. Grace and Holy Trinity is the cathedral church of the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri.

Most monographs devoted to a single sacred space in the U.S. discuss the architect and maybe a source or two of inspiration, then mention a major donor or two for the windows, and that all in fifteen or so pages. Loy’s book gives a comprehensive architectural and art history of the church and exhaustive biographies of its several major and minor donors. Loy, a lifelong resident of Kansas City who spent ten years researching and writing the book, leaves no stone, pew, vestment, or chalice of the church unexamined.

The gathering of glorious windows, each reproduced in full color on its own page with an exhaustive description, makes the nave a very special place in the United States. Loy’s finds, for example, include the discovery that one window was created by Gottfried Heinersdorff (1883-1941) of Munich, Germany. This is the only known window fabricated by this important Munich studio in North America. He also discovered that Mary Fraser Weselhoeft, an American artist, designed this window. Their lengthy biographies could be a stand-alone publication.

Further, Loy writes that the Choriester window (installed in 1901) is the only known window to be in a church west of the Mississippi by the studio of Heinigke & Bowen of Brooklyn, New York. He also identifies the Saint Cecilia window from 1902 as produced locally by the Campbell Glass and Paint Company.

The parish purchased property in 1887 for its first stone structure and invited among others, the firms of Burling & Whitehouse, McKim, Mead & White, and James & James to draft plans. Only the James design has survived in the Cathedral Archives. The brothers John King and Arthur Henry James proposed a large structure in the style of Henry Hobson Richardson, whom Arthur had worked for in New York. It was rejected.

A design submitted by another pair of brothers, Adriance and John Van Brun of Kansas City, was chosen. Though they did not have the formidable James brothers’ pedigree, their design was selected. Their building is now the Guild Hall. It too had Romanesque roots but is mostly free of ornament, columns or arched window openings.

Foundations for the nave had already been laid in 1888 when the Reverend Cameron Mann requested a three-month leave of absence to visit great English cathedrals. He returned convinced that Richardson’s American Romanesque style was not the answer. He asked Frederick Elmer Hill to design a cathedral in the English style.

Hill was born in Wisconsin to immigrants from Hamburg, Germany. He studied architecture at MIT and then worked in the firm of McKim, Mead & White in New York until about 1890, when he moved to Kansas City. After some discussion, the nave was built in a style identified as Transitional Norman Gothic. Construction on the 138-foot-long, 60-foot-wide, 75-foot-tall peaked roof building began in June 1893 and was completed at the end of 1895. Its interior decoration was left for later. Plain opaque glass filled the round-arched windows. Over the next several decades the congregation donated the windows and other fine liturgical furnishings we see today.

Meanwhile, Francis Merydith Whitehouse, of the Chicago architectural firm of Burling & Whitehouse, designed Trinity Church, also downtown. Built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style — a stylistic cousin to Trinity Church, Boston — it was completed in 1888.

Trinity Church, Boston, had spawned a style craze that swept America. The style was a mélange of cream and rust colored rusticated courses of ashlar with historical round-arched references and inspirations that sprang from Early Christian Syria to Carolingian, while clutching to Byzantine and Visigothic memories.

Grace Church and Trinity Church flourished as the congregations grew, then declined after years of national economic instability and the movement of population away from the downtown. Crushing financial woes followed. Grace Church owned its buildings free and clear and in 1917, Trinity Church merged with Grace Church. Membership totaled about 850 souls for both churches.

Grace Church flourished while Trinity Church declined and was sold in 1935, with most of its interior furnishings and windows removed. The last congregation vacated that building in 1957. It was demolished in 1966. In 2006, the location became a parking lot.

Loy’s book also features a fascinating section on Kansas City from its early years, with an especially telling photograph from 1875 of what may be a 25 to 30-foot-tall mound of bison skulls.

The Glorious Masterworks of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, Missouri is about so much more than a building. It tells the story of a culture now gone, but not forgotten.

Rolf Achilles (www.rolfachilles.com) is an independent art historian and consultant with a special interest in the decorative arts.
Robert Hart Lamb discusses the influence of a designer’s view of human nature in architecture and urbanism. He is interested in how invention, convention, and assumption affect the design of a place. Lamb examines architecture, landscapes, and urban places from the perspective of ecology, that is, how the designer perceives nature and man. He asserts that how man sees himself is reflective in design as it is a built application of the insight of the designer. This influences the design of a place, and further shapes the experience of those who will be in the space. Environments affect feelings, thoughts, and how daily lives are lived. Hart uses specific examples and case studies illustrated by artist Albrecht Pichler, a practicing architect. Complete with drawings, illustrations, and examples, this book looks at the views behind the practice of design.

This book is a compilation of essays on Carlo Dolci, a prolific Florentine painter in the seventeenth century. Dolci was renowned for his works of sacred art, which he painted as a kind of meditation and time for prayer. He received many commissions by wealthy families in Florence, and followed the artistic traditions of Florence at the time, with predecessors such as Fra Angelico and Andrea del Sarto. One essay, Edward Goldberg’s “Looking at Carlo Dolci,” describes his life as virtuous, successful, and witty, whose portrait is a “beloved eccentric who is fully in on the joke.” Scott Nethersole’s “Carlo Dolci and the Art of the Past” looks at Dolci’s style of painting, his copies of compositions and use of motifs, and the influence of Fra Angelico in his works. Complete with images of Dolci’s expansive work, this book offers deeper insight into his work from a variety of scholars.

The Angel of the Annunciation by Carlo Dolci, 1616

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The History of England’s Cathedrals, by Nicholas Orme (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2017), 304 pages, $45.00 hardcover

Nicholas Orme, an English historian and emeritus professor of history at Exeter University, gives a comprehensive history of the cathedrals of England beginning with the Romans and Anglo-Saxons and looking towards the twentieth century. Traditionally, the cathedral has been understood as the seat of the bishop, which often held relics and was a base for scholars and teachers, especially before universities became common. With over ninety illustrations, Orme looks at forty-three Anglican cathedrals and nineteen Catholic cathedrals in England, following their history, their staff, and how they adapted over time.

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Architecture in Context Book IV: The West, From the Advent of Christendom to the Eve of Reformation, by Christopher Tadgell (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 928 pages, $125.00 hardcover, $60.00 paperback

Part IV of the series Architecture in Context, this book gives an encyclopedic reference to how the classical tradition in architecture developed around the world. Christopher Tadgell begins Part IV with the collapse of Rome and visits the rise and decline of the Carolingian empire, illustrating the book with more than 2000 images, including architectural drawings. He focuses on the Holy Roman Empire, the East and the West, the Gothic Age, and the revival of classicism, looking at architecture in context of political, historical, artistic, and cultural events. The book ends with “cataclysm and classicism” in Europe, particularly looking at the High Renaissance and architects such as Bramante. This is the fourth of seven books in the Architecture in Context series.


Americans took a particular interest in Baroque art from the late eighteenth century through the 1960s. This book shows the history of a culture of collecting Italian Baroque art from Thomas Jefferson to Walter P. Chrysler, Jr. Filled with essays with quotations, letters, stock books, and diaries, it looks at the development of aesthetic taste relating to the collectors, auctioneers, and dealers of Baroque art and what led to the demand of Baroque art during this time. Focusing on how these collections came about, the book also examines how these collections later became the foundations for American museums today. The book is part of The Frick Collection Studies in the History of Art Collecting in America.
Detail of work in progress, St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Lincoln, Nebraska, Inaugurated 2015

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