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ROME



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ON THE COVER: Richard Meier's Jubilee Church in Rome.

Photograph © Alan Karchmer/Esto Photographics

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JOIN THE CONVERSATION




EDITOR'S PAGE ★ MICHAEL J. CROSBIE

You have probably already noticed that *Faith & Form* looks a little different. In our last issue, which presented the winners of our annual awards program, we instituted a new design for the journal; in this issue we've had an opportunity to push it a bit further.

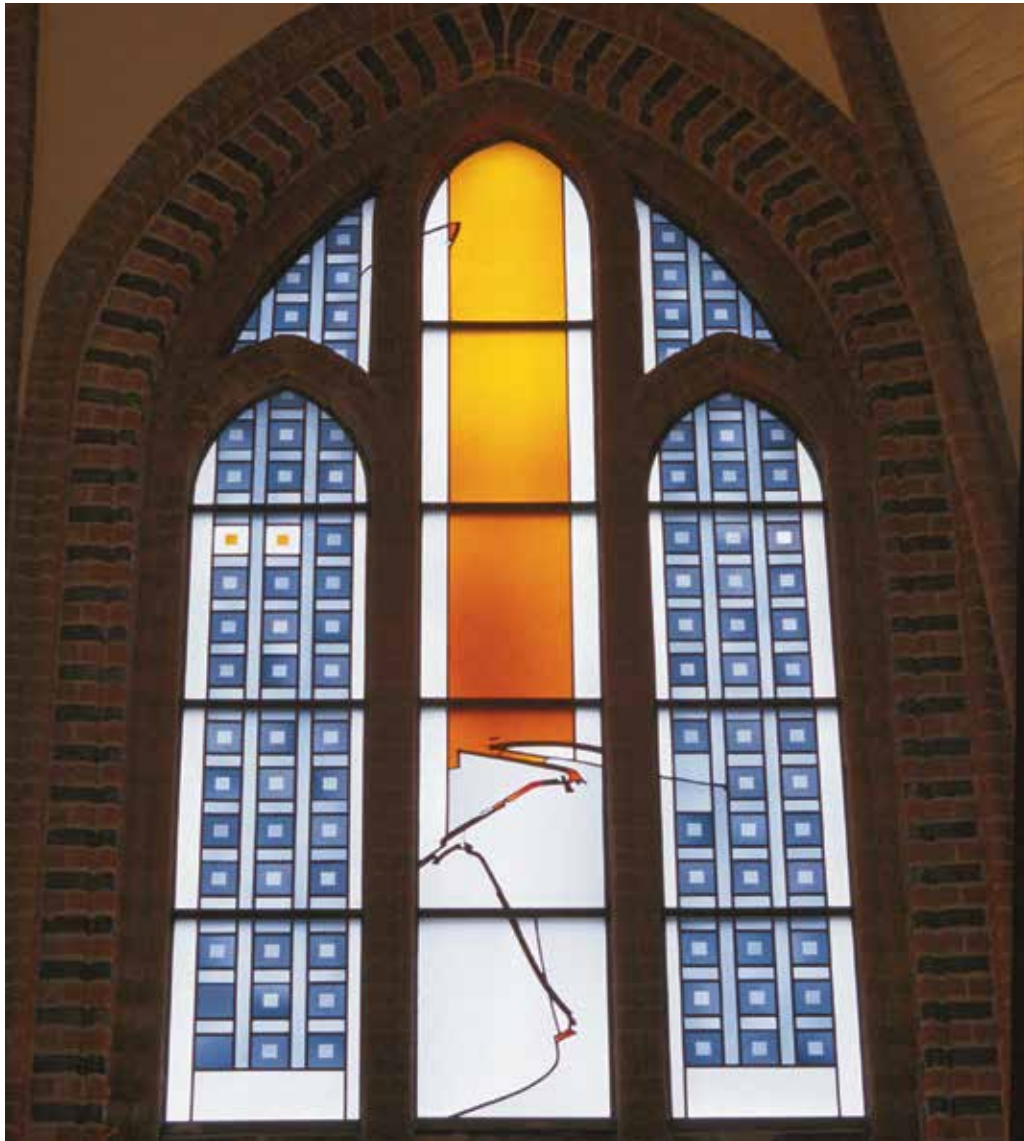
Our graphic designer, Dave Kuhar of The Media Cellar, is responsible for the new look. Because *Faith & Form* is read not only by artists, architects, and other design professionals who are visually attuned, but also by clergy and others who are champions of good design in the service of faith, we believe the journal's design should work in the service of our readership. Our primary motivation for the redesign was to make the magazine easier to read, with a more user-friendly typeface, larger photos, and better use of white space. We think Dave has done an excellent job in freshening up the journal's presentation while preserving a sense of the earlier design's restrained, elegant appearance. Please let us know what you think as we continue to make refinements to this new graphic design.

Which brings us to a new section of the magazine: with this issue we debut a "letters to the editor" column, which we have named "Views." Communication, of course, is a two-way street (actually, it's more like an eight-lane clover-leaf highway). One of the most important missions of this journal is to further debate and dialogue on all aspects of design for worship, and our readers need a place to voice their views. The new Views column, which debuts on page 22 of this issue, is a space where your voice can be heard. Please mail, fax, or email us your views and we'll make sure that they become part of the ongoing conversation.

You will detect a strong Italian accent in this issue's conversation. Richard Meier's Jubilee Church in Rome is our cover story, which includes an interview with the architect on the design of the building and its meaning. This new church is a landmark work not only because it was the product of an international competition and was built to commemorate the Roman Catholic Jubilee year of 2000 (it was dedicated on the occasion of John Paul II's 25th anniversary as pope). The church also displays conflicting currents in the design of religious buildings across faiths. For example, there is a welcoming sense of openness, while at the same time it is surrounded by a foreboding wall. Ashraf Salama's insightful article on the creation of the Islamic Cultural Center, also in Rome, shows the co-existence of Christian and Islamic traditions within the Eternal City, and how they have influenced each other since the completion of this important project. Shifting gears to the American Southwest, Talitha Arnold and Craig Hoopes consider the role of landscape in faith traditions and how awareness of the land can be part of the worship experience. Noting his passing in February, a number of readers have contacted *Faith & Form* with remembrances of liturgical designer Frank Kacmarcik. Carol Frenning writes about his work and influence on liturgical design in the latter half of the 20th century (Robert Rambusch and Ed Sövik also contribute their thoughts on Kacmarcik in this issue). 

MICHAEL J. CROSBIE IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *FAITH & FORM* AND CAN BE REACHED BY EMAIL AT MCROSBIE@FAITHANDFORM.COM

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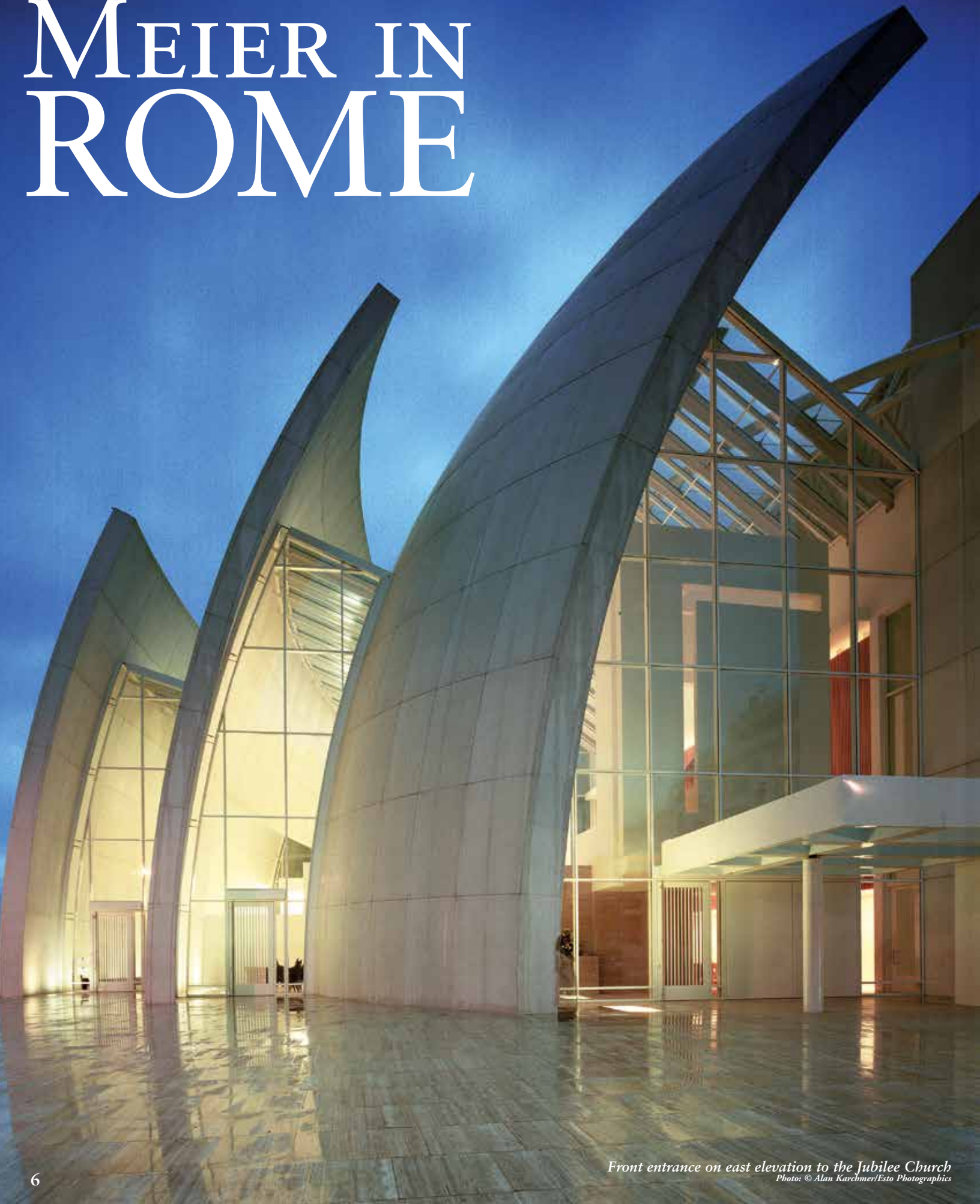
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MEIER IN ROME



Front entrance on east elevation to the Jubilee Church
Photo: © Alan Karchmer/Esto Photographics



A MODERN MASTER CREATES A NEW CHURCH IN THE ETERNAL CITY

BY MICHAEL J. CROSBIE

Coming upon Rome's new Jubilee Church is like discovering a rose among the thorns. It opens as a rose might, petal by petal, inviting you to enter the folds. Architect Richard Meier's first commission in the Eternal City is found in Tor Tre Est, a working-class neighborhood of 1970s concrete slab and brick housing projects approximately six miles east of central Rome. By public transport, one takes a trolley from Rome's Termini Station for miles through sprawling post-war housing projects, then a city bus that winds its way into the heart of Tor Tre Teste. A fleeting glimpse up a winding street reveals the Jubilee Church in an expanse of travertine, arcing in full bloom.

The Jubilee Church (consecrated Dio Padre Misericordioso) is one of 50 new churches planned by the Vatican in the late 1990s to be constructed in Rome and its environs, marking the Roman Catholic Church's Jubilee year of 2000. While most of the other churches were designed by architects native to Italy, the Vatican determined that this church would be the product of an international invited design competition (*Faith & Form* published an extensive account by John Dillenberger and Daniela Ford of the competition in Vol. 31, No. 2). Along with Meier, designs were submitted by Tadao Ando, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Santiago Calatrava, and Gunter Behnisch. Meier's design for a church that was open and welcoming, that would engage the poor neighborhood around it, carried the day. In fact, Vatican officials were so taken by the design that they asked Meier to change nothing—they wanted it constructed exactly the way he had designed it. (Meier discusses the design and other features of the project in an exclusive interview that begins on page 11 of this issue.)

Alas, there are differences. The biggest change is a wall that now surrounds the church and its plaza, which was added by the client. It includes an opaque sliding gate that suggests the church is a fortress, not the open, welcoming house of worship called for in the competition. Meier saw the church and the plaza as part of the life of the community, a place where people could congregate and make this space and the church their own (the way countless other Italian churches are used by their communities). Instead, the wall guarantees that the plaza of the Jubilee Church will remain empty

and off-limits, day to day, from the people of Tor Tre Teste.

In the Mediterranean sun, Meier's curved walls of self-cleansing, pristine white cement—a material first used by Pier Luigi Nervi in his Palazzo della Sport in Rome in 1958—are brilliant, if not blinding. The building's whiteness seems to radiate from within, and although this church is not dedicated to the Virgin, its immaculate presence suggests the long tradition of Mary worship that is particularly Italian. The convex walls scored with lines of latitude and longitude allude to the propagation of the Catholic Church around the globe, or its three shells might symbolize the current third millennium of the Church's existence, or the holy trinity.

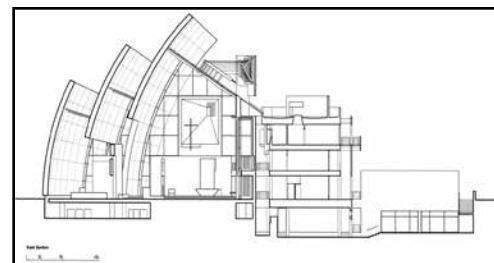
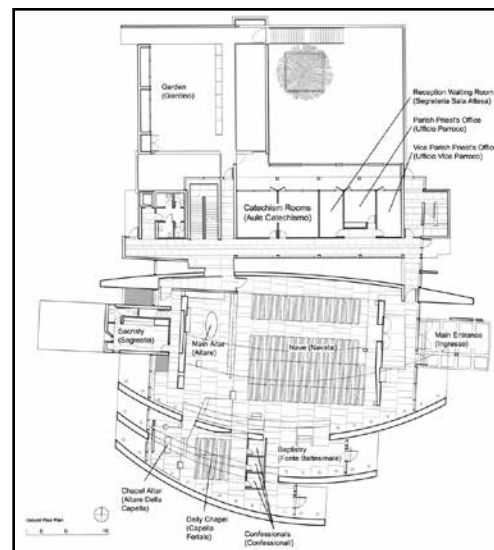
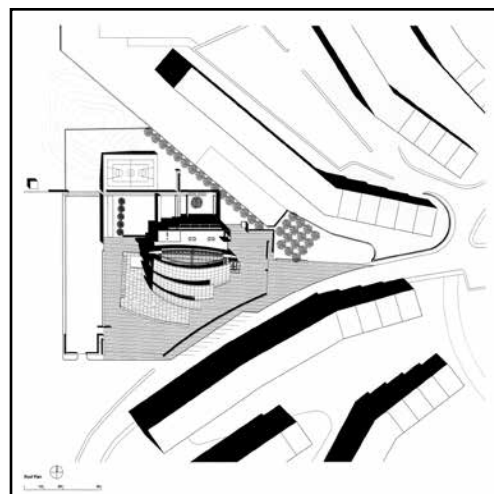
Walking around the plaza, observing this gleaming object, one gets the impression that the shells are pressing in, and you might anticipate a strong sense of this spatial pressure within the worship space. But, the reverse is actually the case. Once through Meier's tall yet compressed narthex, and around the wall that blocks your view into the space, the interior of the Jubilee Church inflates before you, pushing up and out. Reading the double-sided concrete shells from the inside, one senses the release of a spirit that expands the space, filling it like the Pentecostal wind. The void above your head bows out like a wing of glass, revealing the Roman sky and filling this space with soft light.

The most remarkable quality of this worship space is its intimacy. While photographs of the interior suggest that it is a chasm, it is actually a space that caresses you, holding you in an embrace of white. Here, Meier notes Borromini's Sant'Ivo della Sapienza in the heart of Rome as a design influence. This small chapel, constructed between 1642 and 1660, has a pristine white plaster interior and mystical light. The space explodes over your head, spiraling into Borromini's lantern. I visited Sant'Ivo after seeing the Jubilee Church, and the character of these two spaces is similar in subtle ways.

Liturgically, the layout of the main worship space in this modern building is rather conservative. The main altar, presider's chair, reredos, and pulpit are found on the west wall. Meier explains that the orientation of the site, the main approach to which is from the east, made

this necessary. Some have faulted Meier for this reversal of where one expects to find the altar in a Christian church, yet the apse in St. Peter's Basilica is to the west.

More surprising is the arrangement of pews as they are usually found in churches designed before the Second Vatican Council, all facing in one direction toward the altar. Meier notes that



Courtesy of Richard Meier & Partners



*View from the southeast,
with wall surround the site*
Photo: © Alan Karchmer/Esto Photographics



*Day chapel is screened
from sanctuary to the
right in photo*
Photo: © Alan Karchmer/
Esto Photographics




*Altar furniture is all rendered in travertine,
found throughout the church*
Photo: © Alan Karchmer/Esto Photographics



the fixed pews and their orientation were stipulated by the client. The tabernacle, which has in recent years has been placed in any number of locations in Catholic churches, is to the south of the chancel, so it can be shared between the main worship space and the day chapel. The font is also positioned off to the south side of the main worship space, and not in a prominent spot (where it is now posited in many Catholic churches in the U.S.).

But these details do not detract from the power of what Meier has created in the Jubilee Church. Nigel Ryan, an architect in Rome who helped coordinate the project and served as Meier's representative during construction, remembers how crowds of Tor Tre Teste residents swelled in the plaza on the dedication day, clamoring to get in. As they passed into the soaring white space, some halted as if possessed by a vision before them. "Bellissimo," they whispered.

There is a guest book near the narthex that is already filled with comments by visitors from all over the world who have made a pilgrimage to Dio Padre Misericordioso. But one of the most poignant is from a local man, who wrote that he cannot believe that such a beautiful church now occupies the center of his neighborhood: "It is as though Christ himself has come as a visitor to Tor Tre Teste." 



*Font in foreground, with
organ loft in background*

*Photo: © Alan Karchner/
Esto Photographics*



Sanctuary is a play of light, space, and geometry
Photo: © Alan Karchmer/Esto Photographics

A CONVERSATION WITH RICHARD MEIER

Photo: Luca Vignelli



The architect of the Jubilee Church discusses its design and the meaning of sacred architecture.

Michael J. Crosbie: I would like to know if you consciously thought about pilgrimage in how you approach this site from the east, the way one proceeds down that long street, into the heart of the site, and the Jubilee Church is revealed to you.

Richard Meier: Well I didn't think so much about pilgrimage, but it's the sort of access that seemed the most obvious. Even if you only think about the community, that's how the community would reach the church. I anticipated that there would be a fair number of visitors, but I never thought of it as a pilgrimage church.

Crosbie: When I visited, there was a steady pilgrimage of visitors, some of them architects. When you come across the first threshold of the building itself, what was the intent of the blank wall, that you move around to either side?

Meier: The doors on access are not intended to be open for everyday use, so it is a foyer. Your choice is go left or right, so it seemed like a straight forward way of handling the sequence of spaces.

Crosbie: My impression is that it magnifies the experience of the space. What about the layout of the pews themselves?

Meier: This had been one of the points of discussion between people who think that there should be a looser seating arrangement than the more traditional one of pews. The original program asked for pews. There were those who constantly mentioned that this was an old fashioned church in that it had pews. I brought that up to the Monsignors who we were dealing with, and they were adamant in that they didn't want seats. They didn't want loose chairs, they wanted pews.

Crosbie: I'm curious about the arrangement of the pews, the fact that they are on access

with the altar. The movement in the Catholic Church, at least in the United States, since the Second Vatican Council has been to place the altar more at the center of the space and radiate the pews around the altar. It's more of a communal arrangement.

Meier: It's a little static that way.

Crosbie: The placement of the tabernacle off axis to the south of the main altar is much less traditional because it is not the focus when you first walk into the sanctuary.

Meier: Well, we had many discussions about the placement of everything, and once you make one decision, the next decision sort of follows. I can't say which came first, but it has to do with the whole arrangement within the atrium.

Crosbie: You need to share the tabernacle between the day chapel to the south and the larger, main worship space.

Meier: Right.

Crosbie: Why is the altar located to the west rather than to the east, as is historically done in most Catholic churches?

Meier: This is a legitimate question. The location of the site, in the heart of the community, and the primary access to the site, dictated the positioning of the entrance. If the altar were placed in the east one would have to enter from the back of the church, which makes little sense.

Crosbie: Where you surprised that this building was built pretty close to the way that you designed it?

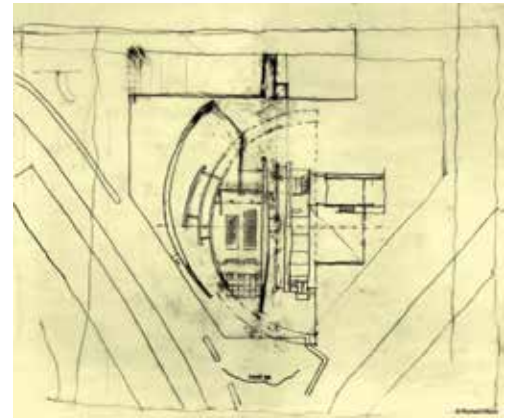
Meier: I have had this experience before in other competitions that I've won. It was my suggestion after winning the competition that we take the meeting room, which in the competition entry was a kind of appendage to the bar and put it underneath. But they said no, no we like it the way it is.

Crosbie: A wall now completely surrounds the church, blocking the view from the street.

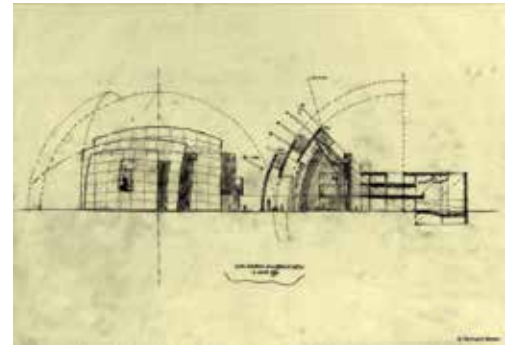
Meier: Yes, that's unfortunate. That was added to the design, quite late. It was a security issue and seemed unnecessary to me, but they were rather adamant about it.

Crosbie: One of the underlying concepts of the competition and the design was to make the church welcoming.

Meier: I agree. It seemed to me that it should have been all open. This makes it a kind of precinct. I felt kids should be allowed to run around the plaza at any time of day. That's the way most of the public spaces which I've designed are, whether it's at home or in a place like Barcelona—it belongs to the public. But the archdiocese thought differently. "This is our domain, we've got to keep it under control."



Early design sketch for church plan



Early design sketches exploring building's geometry

Crosbie: You've designed many museums. Were there ideas about museum design and the ritualistic way one moves through museums that found their way into this building?

Meier: I wouldn't say it comes from museums. I think it comes from the concern about light and illuminated space. Whether it's a church or a museum, light is very important to me—the changing qualities of light, how the space changes, and how your experience there changes with it. In a church it is even more important, because this is a building used throughout the day, throughout the seasons, and sometimes at night.

Crosbie: Do you think you've created sacred space in this design?

Meier: I do, yes.

Crosbie: What is the quality of sacred space in this building?

Meier: Well, for me the quality of sacred space is that it's a space that you enter and immediately feel a sense of being removed from the outside. After entering, you realize that you're here to think about things you wouldn't normally think about if you were walking down the street or at home. It's a space of contemplation and introspection.

Crosbie: That's a quality of sacred space across all denominations and all faiths. Some



have questioned how a Jewish architect could design a Catholic church, but I think that's really beside the point when you're trying to create sacred space.

Meier: That's right, it's about making space. For me this is one of the most important experiences of my life. I feel honored, appreciated, and I feel that I've been able to do something that other people will value. It is very clear that the Catholic Church chose my design based on its merits, not because of a need to make a statement in regard to their relationship to Jews throughout history. Three of the architects in the competition were Jewish. They were chosen to compete because they were among the top architects of our time. However, I think it is important that there is communication and mutual admiration and respect between members of all faiths. As the architect of this church, some might say that I am to some degree a symbolic bridge between faiths.

I think what people respond to is the human scale. It's intimate, it's not overwhelming. That's why it has to be experienced. You have no idea what it's like without being there. Light is the protagonist of our understanding and reading of space. Light is the means by which we are able to experience what we call sacred. Light is at the origins of this building. I am reminded of H.G. Gadamer's words in *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, "We only have to think of certain expressions like the 'play of light' and the 'play of the waves' where we have such a constant coming and going, back and forth, a movement that is not tied down to any goal. That the sense of freedom and movement – both in human festivities, and also in natural phenomena as the play of light – may be seen as fundamentally theological."

In the Jubilee Church, three circles of equal radius generate the profiles of the three concrete shells that, together with the spine-wall, make up the body of the nave. The three shells define an enveloping atmosphere in which the light from the skylights above creates a luminous spatial experience, and the rays of sunlight serve as a mystic metaphor of the presence of God.

Crosbie: What do you say to those who criticize the Vatican's choice of you for this project?

Meier: It was a great honor and a great privilege to be chosen. The true test is how people feel about being in the church, not how they react to me, not whether the entrance is revised, or whether "Richard Meier is a Jew," but rather how it is received by those in the parish of Tor Tre Teste, and how it is enjoyed by visitors that will come to experience it. Anything that makes a statement is open to criticism.

Crosbie: What history or essences of building in Rome do you feel you captured in this building, or do you feel were influential on you?

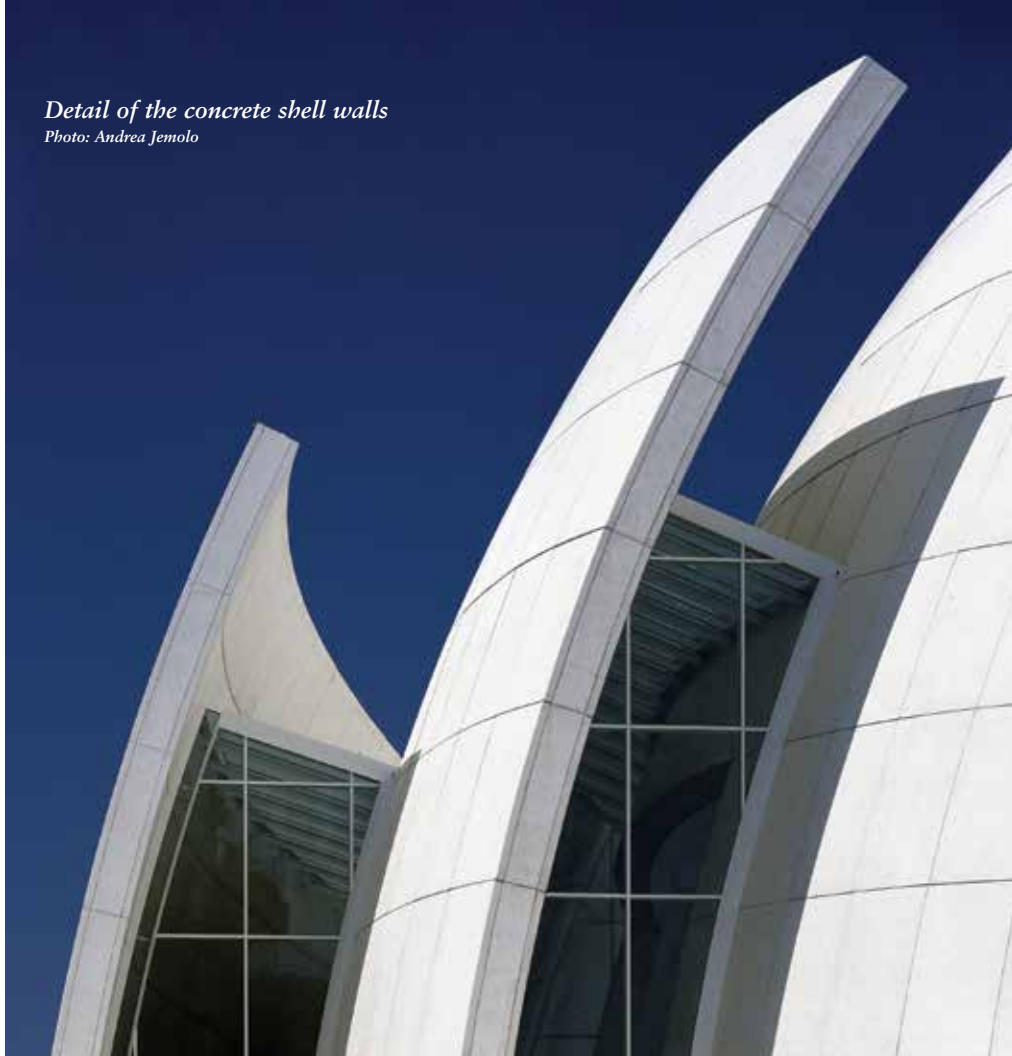
Meier: There are very few cities that are so rich in the history of architecture like Rome today. Architecture is what is what Rome is all about, as far as I'm concerned. Rome is architecture. For me to be part of that continuum was very important. To build this church in Rome and bring Rome into the 21st century, I think is an extremely important value not only to me, personally, but to the city. It's not simply a city of the past, it's a city of the present and the future. Through the magnificent use of space, form, and light – rather than through ornament, illustration, and symbolism – the Jubilee Church shows the true "modernity" of the Catholic Church's efforts to adapt to the revolutionary time we live in.

Crosbie: This is even more important for this neighborhood, because it's a place that is economically stressed.

Meier: The purpose of this church is to weave an isolated residential district back into the communal fabric of Rome. I hope we accomplished this architecturally by creating a sense of appropriateness, flow, and movement throughout the site. The church and community center provide the more than 8,000 residents of the immediate area a space for ritual, play, and celebration. Hopefully, the more than 25,000 residents of the larger area of Tor Tre Teste will avail themselves of the church facilities as well. The placement of the building in the area where apartment buildings fan out from the main street of the complex creates an anchor for the area. As one approaches, the lines of access are so clear visually,

Detail of the concrete shell walls

Photo: Andrea Jemolo



that one is drawn directly into the church.


Crosbie: What has been the reaction of the neighborhood to the church?

Meier: At the dedication people who lived in the neighborhood just were thrilled. They couldn't believe that this is something that was brought to their neighborhood. I think they felt this way even during construction. Whenever I was there people were out on their balconies, looking. They're part of the church and it is part of the community. You don't have to be at the ground level to be there.

Crosbie: I understand that the type of concrete used in the church was also used by Nervi.

Meier: The white cement was originally invented for the Olympic Stadium in Rome, designed by Nervi. This material was suggested to me by the engineer Gennaro Guala of Italcementi. It is a beautiful white concrete with a smooth finish that resembles polished marble without veining. The engineering effort involved in erecting the shells was Herculean and Italcementi did a fantastic job of realizing my design. Each of the blocks weighs eight tons, and a crane was designed to move on tracks.

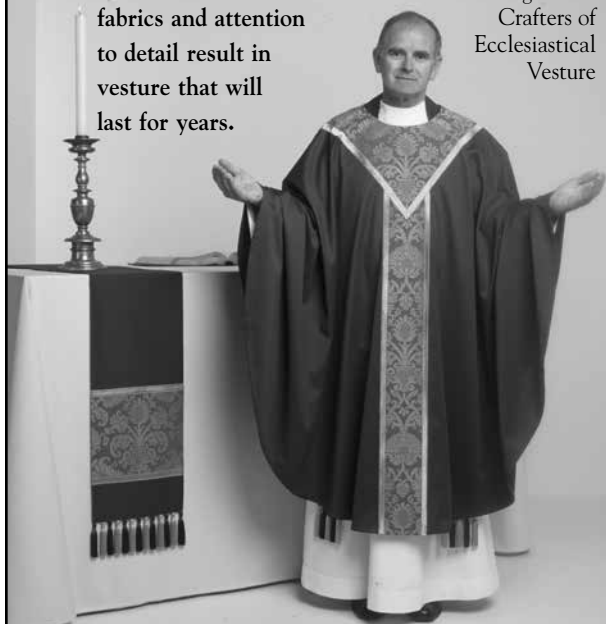
Crosbie: Was there anything in the execution that you were less than joyful about?

Meier: Well, of course being American, the notion of time is different than it is in Italy. It took a while to realize that this project was being done on Italian time. 

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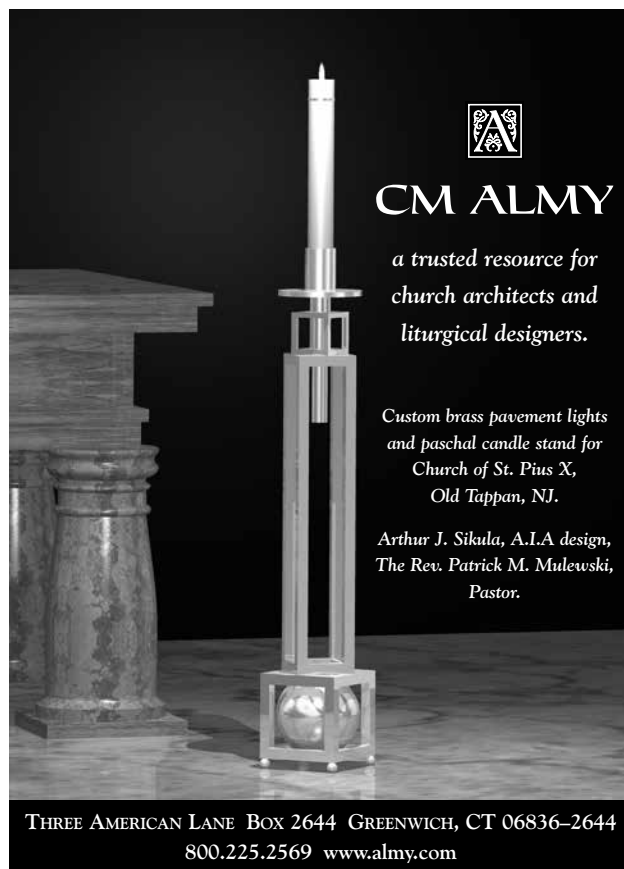


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SACRED LANDSCAPE

BY TALITHA ARNOLD AND
CRAIG HOOPES, AIA



"Tell me the landscape in which you live," wrote the novelist Jose Ortega y Gasset, "and I will tell you who you are."

Congregations and architects, especially in the American desert Southwest, could expand on Gasset's observation: "Show me the church you've built in that landscape, and I'll tell you who you are."

Historically many of the sacred spaces Protestants have created in places like Phoenix, Albuquerque, or Santa Fe have belied how uncomfortable they've felt in this desert. Like churches elsewhere, Southwest churches have been designed to help people feel at home, except that home is somewhere else like Michigan or Massachusetts – some place lush and verdant, not vast and filled with cactus. The result often is a building that doesn't blend in with the landscape and a congregation that is dislocated from the desert around them.

For the past several years, we – a pastor and an architect – have worked together and with the United Church of Santa Fe to develop sacred

space that tells a different story of who we are and who we want to be in this land. Neither of us were "present at the creation" of the United Church in 1980, or when the first building – a small multi-purpose sanctuary and even smaller children's room – was constructed. However both of us for many years have explored the relationship between spirituality and the land, and both of us are committed to helping the congregation connect with the sacredness of its setting in the Southwest.

Talitha Arnold is a third-generation Arizonan who returned to the Southwest in 1987, after a 10-year sojourn in Connecticut for seminary and work, to become the pastor for the then-seven-year-old church. Craig Hoopes, a native of Baltimore, who has designed both sacred and performing arts spaces on the East Coast, in Santa Fe, and Ecuador, moved to Santa Fe in 1992. He started to work with the United Church in 1997 when the congregation decided, after several years of making do with insufficient space, to develop a master plan and begin a series of building projects to expand and remodel.

The church's critical need to accommodate its growth has offered an opportunity to develop a unique sacred space in Santa Fe, one that incorporates both the essence of the church's Protestant tradition and the deep sacredness of the desert landscape.

A LAND TO BE TAMED

Seeing the sacred quality of the Southwest has been a difficult task for Anglo-American Protestants. Unlike Navajos, Hopis, or other Native Americans for whom the desert is home, Christians have long regarded it as a strange and hostile place of testing and temptation. And unlike the Spanish Catholics whose Iberian homeland looked similar to this new world, the early Protestant settlers left behind "field and forest, vale and mountain" to come to this dry land of ancient rock and endless sky. Even the colors of this region—red rock and brown earth—were disconcerting for people accustomed to green hills and blue lakes. Consequently the move often felt like an exile from Eden, well expressed by a young Congregational girl from Connecticut who wrote, "Goodbye God, we're moving to Montana."

Church historian Sydney Mead notes that many of the early settlers (and church builders) "felt lost in the limitless spaces, overwhelmed by brute nature." From the beginning of settlement—and church building—that dislocation

and fear often drove the new immigrants to regard the Western landscape as they did its original inhabitants – in need of conversion, even conquering, and made to look and feel like "back home."

That longing for home was expressed in a variety of ways for the early Protestants. Among the settlers favorite hymns, for example, were "Come to the Church in the Wildwood," and "Shall We Gather at the River?" – incongruous selections for the upper Sonoran desert of Arizona and the high desert of northern New Mexico.

Looking homeward fueled their architectural decisions as well. As Mead notes, settlers from the Midwest and East "rebuilt what they could of the old and remembered in the new place. The new structure never looked quite like the old, but it was their own, and it was continuous with their past and the 'east' and it was the surer hope for the future."

Derivative architecture wasn't limited to the 1800s. With its white steeple and Greek columns, the Congregational Church (United Church of Christ) in Tempe, Arizona, where Arnold grew up, looked like it had been transplanted directly from a Connecticut green. Its steep slanted roof was designed to keep off the snow, in a region with less than 10 inches of rain a year and a snow shower once a century. The congregation dates back to the 1880s, but the New England style building was constructed in the 1950s.

You can find countless examples throughout the Southwest of churches that might be appropriate in the Midwest or the East Coast, but make no sense in places like the American Southwest.

In another attempt to feel at home in this region, some Protestant congregations adopt a Spanish mission style, such as Neighborhood Congregational Church in South Phoenix, founded in 1917 and built in 1942. Such churches blend in better with both the indigenous architecture and the surrounding landscape, but one might question this Protestant adaptation of a traditionally Catholic style. Often the sanctuary became more linear, and the Congregational experience of the community gathering in a more egalitarian meetinghouse was lost. Perhaps circular Pueblo kivas or Navajo hogans might have been a better indigenous model.

In Santa Fe, a large Baptist church has just broken ground for its new building, whose stucco walls, wood vigas and portals, and Spanish design mirrors that of two historic Presbyterian churches as well as the newest Catholic church down the street.



Entrance to United Church of Santa Fe. Photo: Robert Reck



The 'Celebration Circle' is based on an ancient kiva form, carved into the earth. Photo: Robert Reck

In addition, many Protestant churches in the Southwest, both historic and contemporary, disconnect the congregation from its desert surroundings. Rather than helping people feel at home in this landscape, they have been specifically designed to *keep out* the outside world. Inside their thick cinderblock walls lined with stained glass windows, the congregation can't even see this land of little rain, lots of cactus, and even more sky.

Far from honoring the sacredness of this land, such church architecture fuels the fear of the desert and the subsequent desire to redeem it – dam it, develop it – to make it into the garden we think God intended it to be.

Like the early pioneer churches, the United Church of Santa Fe is composed primarily of Anglo immigrants, people who have moved to the Southwest from someplace else “back East” (which, for native Southwesterners, includes the Midwest). Thus we face many of the same challenges, spiritually and architecturally. How do we create a sacred space that helps people feel at home in *this* place? How can the sacred space of the church connect people with the sacredness of this landscape and also honor their Protestant heritage.

DESIGNING FOR THE SOUTHWEST

Designing a new church in the Southwest meant deciding what that heritage was, architecturally as well as theologically. Did we want stained glass windows, padded pews and a divided chancel, or is it the simplicity of design that underscores a direct relationship to the mystery and power of God? Our heritage also includes the emphasis on the gathered commu-

nity, be it for worship or town meetings. And our belief in God's continuing revelation, as Pilgrim leader John Robinson affirmed, “There is always more light and truth to break forth from God's word.”

If that continuing revelation is at the heart of our faith, then we can be open to the lessons of this particular landscape and let it teach us about the sacred and about our place in this world.

The lessons from this land are many. One is the age of things. You can see millions of years



Kiva fireplace in corner, with shadows of trees in the sunlight, adobe wall, and acequia in foreground. Photo: Robert Reck



Corner of sanctuary has generous windows for light and views of the landscape. Photo: Robert Reck

in the desert landscape. The layers of mountains and mesas, representing eons, offer a new perspective to our place in the universe.

A second lesson from the land is its vastness. The vistas are immense. In Santa Fe (as in Phoenix, before smog and pollution) you can see 70 miles in both directions. At night, you can see the constellations with clarity. Like its age, the region's vastness frames human life in a new way.

A third is the land's fragility. In the desert, we are daily aware of the scarcity of water and the limited ability of this earth to support life, be it animal, plant, or human. “Back East,” the experience of nature is different. With all the rain and snow, Easterners have to keep the vegetation at bay. In the West, if you cut into the earth, it's felt for generations. In the Southwest, we can see first-hand our relationship with the earth and our responsibility for its care.

Out of that fragility comes a fourth lesson – interdependence. Western myths of lone rangers aside, survival in the desert depends on our acknowledging the connections with creation and other human creatures, and one could affirm, with the Creator.

These are not easy lessons. Life in the desert can be overwhelming, even with air conditioning and swimming pools. A sacred space needs to offer shelter, be it from the stormy blast of thunderstorms and sandstorms or from the desert's intensity of light and heat. As a child in the “Valley of the Sun,” Arnold loved one particular church because it felt like a cave, with only stained glass windows and no outside light.

That dark, cool space provided protection from the glare of the summer sun and the immensity of the landscape.

To be sure, architecture must hold us close within the vastness of the desert. At the same time it needs to give us a sense of where we are in the world and invite us to enjoy that world. That's what we've tried to do at the United Church of Santa Fe.

In the original sanctuary, the congregation took a lesson from our native brothers and sisters and incorporated the four elements of creation: earth (in an adobe tram wall); water (in an acequia, a fountain that is both a reminder of baptism and a symbol of the irrigation ditches that bring life to the communities and farms of this region); fire (in a kiva fireplace); and wind (which some claim is best represented by the preacher).

In the expansion, we have retained those elements and added new dimensions. The sanctuary and other parts of the building now have a variety of windows. They provide a great deal of natural light and also frame the world outside so that we can appreciate, but not be overwhelmed by, its vastness and mystery.

We've also taken another lesson – this one about light – from Native Americans and Hispanic Catholics. The quality of light in the desert Southwest has often been extolled by poets and painters, but as Bernard of Clairvaux once said, “the light must be gentle.” Both Kivas and Catholic mission churches let light spill into a space while offering protection from its glare and heat. As it moves across the wall, the light can evoke a sense of mystery and connection with its source.

Skylights along an unadorned side wall let the light move in a similar way in the new sanctuary. A floating wall near the entrance to the nursery also lets the light play along the hallway. It connects young and old alike to the mystery of the creation around us. And it reminds us, yet again, of that central tenet of our Congregational heritage—that there is always more light and truth to break forth.

Along with developing an appreciation for the sacredness of the land, we have also sought to deepen our understanding and connection with the people who have prayed in this land a lot longer than we have. Several years ago we built an outdoor “Celebration Circle” in the shape of a Pueblo kiva. It's where we begin the Easter sunrise service before walking up a hill to greet the new day. We also use it for baptisms, weddings, evening vespers, and Earth Day celebrations. On the altar, we often use Navajo or Hopi baskets and weavings or carved wooden bultos and santos, in place of traditional floral arrangements. They help us remember we're the new kids on the block in this region, spiritually and every other way.



*Even the nursery offers views to nature, positioned where small children can see out.
Photo: Robert Reck*


TELLING OUR STORY THROUGH LANDSCAPE

People are still moving West, exploring this country and our place in it. The challenge for churches in the Southwest is not dissimilar from what the Pilgrims faced in their wilderness. They, too, were exploring new territory, geographically but also architecturally and spiritually. They had to develop new designs and styles, different from the Anglican churches from which they'd come, that fit the landscape of New England and also expressed their new understandings of God and Church.

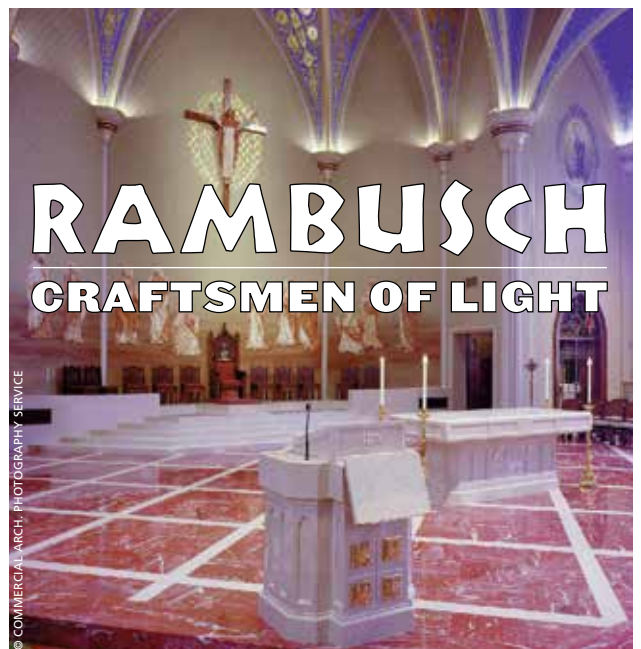
“Tell me your landscape,” says Gassett, “and I will tell you who you are.” For much of our history in the West, the story we've told about this land is that of conquering the wilderness and redeeming the desert. It's a story often rooted in fear, be it of the scarcity of resources in the desert or of its vastness and complexity. The churches we've built have reinforced that fear. In the process we have ignored, and in some cases even destroyed, the sacredness of this region.

But we can choose different responses than in the past. We can keep constructing buildings that distance us from the desert. Or we can learn from the land around us and the people who preceded us and acknowledge we human creatures and the rest of creation are all in this together.

Our architecture can help. We must design churches to fit this environment, sacred places that help people experience God's presence in this land that is still new to many. As the old hymn says, “New occasions teach new duties.”

And new landscape must teach new architecture. 

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A PEACEFUL FUSION OF CULTURES

BY ASHRAF SALAMA



As other faiths have done, wherever Muslims went they established communities and designed and built religious facilities for congregational prayers. Muslim communities in Western cultures constitute a clientele for mosque architecture that did not exist before the 1950s. During the early 1960s significant numbers of Muslims immigrated to Europe and North America. In the mid-'60s they felt the need to express their presence by erecting mosques. The mosque in a non-Muslim setting became a symbol, a point of reference that provides an umbrella under which people of a common belief can unite and interact. It is a catalyst for developing community spirit, promotes collective strength, and imbibes values that pertain to human behavior and code of conduct.



A column capital in the prayer room

In Europe and North American, Muslim communities are minorities in predominately Christian and non-Muslim cultures whose great churches, temples, and synagogues date back to several centuries. Mosques are perceived as non-verbal statements that convey environmental messages of presence. They differ dramatically from mosques built by communities in Muslim countries for everyday use. This is evident in early mosques built in London, Paris, Hamburg, and Washington, and later in New Mexico, Indiana, and Toronto.

The design of mosques in Western cultures is constrained by several variables that include the

physical and socio-cultural contexts, pressures from the local community, building bylaws and regulations, and references to regional traditions. Therefore, the ultimate objective of



Axial view of one of the courtyards

designing a mosque in a non-Muslim context is to strike a balance between these aspects while satisfying functional, visual, and symbolic requirements. The Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center in Rome is no exception. It is a synthesis of elements, derived from Roman, Baroque, and Islamic architecture, forming a unique landmark that speaks to the Eastern and Western worlds. The complex was designed by Sami Mousawi, an Iraqi architect based in Manchester, England; Paolo Portoghesi, Italian architect and historian; and Vittorio Gigliotti, Italian structural engineer.

TOLERANCE AT ALL LEVELS

Conditions around the establishment of the center emphasize that tolerance existed, from all sides and at all levels. Programmatic requirements foster active involvement of the Italian community in the activities of the center. The design team's international mix reflects that architecture is a borderless language capable of resisting tensions between cultures and regions.

Recognizing the high demand to provide a mosque for the benefit of several thousand Muslims living in Rome, the Vatican issued a decree in the mid-'60s that it would not oppose the construction of a mosque in Rome on the

conditions that it be located out of sight of St. Peter's Basilica, and that its minaret not be taller than St Peter's dome. While the basic intention of the Islamic Cultural Center was to serve the Muslim community, the foundation charter also included that it should become an international forum to encourage dialogue between religions.

The project is located approximately 5 km. north of the historic core of the city, situated in the Parioli district, which is characterized by the upper middle class residential apartment buildings built in the period between 1950s and 1970s and a large Jewish community. The site is at the edge of the vast Villa Ada Park (a residence of the Italian royal family), which contains Monte Antenne, believed to be the location of the Sabian city of the Antennates, who were conquered by the founder of Rome, Romulus.

With a clear vision and in collaboration with the community, the Islamic Cultural Center developed an architectural program for a mosque and a cultural center that encompass religious, social, cultural, and educational activities. An international competition was launched in 1976, and the first and second winners were requested to form a team to re-design the project. The program objectives were to provide an architectural setting to accommodate periods of prayer, a spectrum of educational and cultural activities, and socio-religious services to the Muslim community. Intercultural activities provide the Italian community with a clearer understanding of the Islamic faith while providing language classes for those seeking to learn Arabic.

Among the program requirements were a main prayer hall for 2,500 worshippers (20 percent of whom would be females) served by ablution areas. There would also be a smaller prayer hall suitable for 150 worshippers, an



The cultural center with central Rome in the distance



Multilayered woven quality of dome

educational section containing library and classrooms, a conference auditorium for 400, meeting rooms and offices, an exhibition area, and two residential sections, one for the Imam (religious leader) of the Mosque and the other for visitors.

DESIGN CONCEPT

The complex of 13,800 square meters consists of two masses. The first is a rectangular prayer hall whose longer side faces southeast—the qibla wall. The second is H-shaped and accommodates the remaining functions of the complex. The ablution facilities are beneath the prayer hall. A water channel runs along the longitudinal axis of the H-shaped mass and connects two pools, one located in the center of the mass and another to the northeast. The minaret is located southwest of the prayer hall, close to where the H-shaped mass and the prayer hall meet.

The prayer hall contains two symmetrically arranged gallery floors that run perpendicular to the qibla wall. The galleries provide a space for female worshippers about a fourth of the size of the main prayer hall located below



A major fountain at the complex

them. The H-shaped mass includes three floors with riwaqs occupying the roof. The riwaqs are colonnades, generally in the shape of an H, that form a sahn (courtyard) at the center. The stories below the riwaqs are divided into four wings that include classrooms, offices, the small prayer hall, an exhibition hall, dorms and library, storage, and accommodations for the Imam. Below the sahn are the multipurpose and conference halls. The center also has health care facilities to meet the high demand for medical services. Volunteer physicians and doctors serve in these clinics.

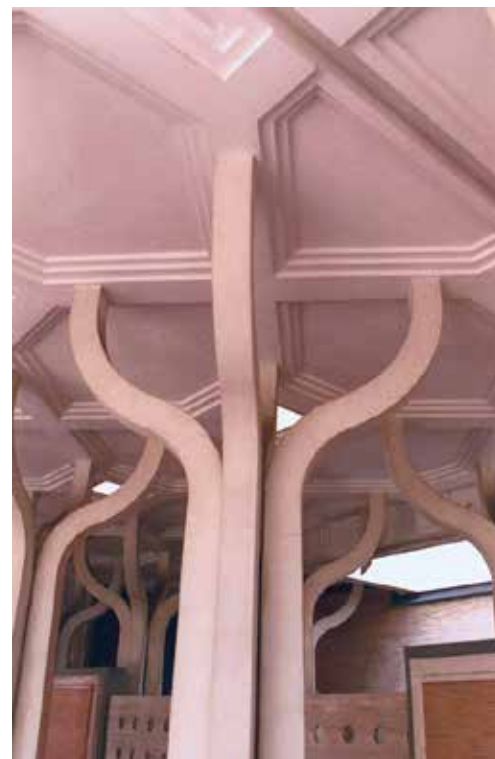
The form of the complex follows traditional mosque architecture. The prayer hall is articulated by a large central dome, surrounded by 16 smaller domes. The columns forming the colonnade/riwaq areas are symbolic. Each one consists of four small columns that curve outwards at the top, suggesting a four-branched tree. The columns are used as a unifying element throughout the mosque. The four branches of prayer hall's main columns extend to form an intricate web of arches and ribs that articulate the area just beneath the domes. Natural light enters through ornamented fenestration and a series of small windows in the stepped structure of the dome.



Riwaq extends out from the building

The water channel steps down to form a chute as it moves from the upper pool to the lower one. The lower pool has a central water-spout surrounded by sixteen smaller ones, all arranged in a manner that reflects the arrangement of the domes above the prayer hall.

Figurative art and the depiction of human form are forbidden in the Muslim faith. Consequently, geometric ornament and calligraphy are used as devices that modulate the space of the main prayer hall. Traditional Moroccan decoration is applied to the interior of the prayer hall. Geometrical patterns of mosaic cover the lower part of the prayer hall's walls and columns, and the mihrab. A band of painted calligraphic inscriptions is found at the top of the geometric patterns, while calligraphic inscriptions are carved in stucco. Design features are based on symbolic interpretations and are derived from historic references. For



Column detail in the riwaq

example, the image of the tree expresses the diversity inherent in the unity of Islamic faith. Another symbolic reference appears in the central dome. It rests on seven stepped concentric circles that represent the seven sacred heavens. Throughout the exterior, roundels pierce the walls with dynamic patterning.

MULTIPLE ROLES FOR MULTIPLE USER GROUPS

The center plays multiple roles in terms of uniting the Muslims living in Italy and establishing constructive dialogues between Islam and Christianity. As a result of the wide spectrum of social and cultural activities and the services provided to the Muslims and the surrounding community, this has become one of the important religious buildings in Italy today.

The complex serves multiple user groups. The first group is small but very important and visible in the Italian community. It includes members of diplomatic missions from Muslim countries to Italy and the Vatican. The second group that the center serves consists of students from Muslim countries studying in Rome. The third and largest group is made up of immigrants working in the city and engaged in relatively low-paying jobs. On Fridays and important religious holidays, the complex becomes a vibrant container. For Friday prayers about 1,200 worshippers gather, while on religious holidays over 15,000 visit the center and perform the prayers in shifts. On these days food vendors set up shops outside the center creating a mobile souk (market). During the



Design is distinguished by monumental verticality

holy month of Ramadan about 500 Muslims visit the center daily, take their Iftar (break their fast), and perform the prayers.

The fourth group served by the center is the Italian community. The complex has become a venue through which people of Rome are better acquainted with Islam as a faith and as a civilization. These services are provided through seminars, public lectures, and conferences, and classes in Arabic language and Islamic culture. Weekly cultural and art programs are devised especially for students of public schools and Italian universities. Visitors can visit the center on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Records indicate that more than 3,000 persons other than the worshippers visit the center every month.

The building and its premises are utilized as a teaching tool for understanding the development of contemporary architecture, where a number of American, Canadian, French, and German schools of architecture organize annual visits to the center as part of their study tours and field trips to Rome. The center became a tourist attraction since it is listed in Rome's tourist maps and is featured in important Rome guidebooks, and in major books about the architecture of Rome. The inhabitants of Parioli district together with the Muslim community have developed a sense of pride in the center where many of the residents participate in the socio-cultural and educational activities.

**ORIGINALITY AND
CONTEXTUAL COMPATIBILITY**



Worshippers chatting in the riwaq, or arcade

Originality in the architecture of mosques stems from the fact that design ideas are based on the sensitivity to history and the traditional elements that acquired meaning over time, while satisfying contextual constraints. In the Cultural Center, this is reflected in the open interior spaces with large roof spans, especially in the prayer hall, to evoke the historical model of the mosque of Cordoba in Spain in terms of horizontality and the organic image of the forest of columns. The designers felt that this captured an atmosphere of spirituality. The



The central courtyard, or sahn, includes a fountain

Moorish influence, combined with Turkish, Persian, and Roman imagery, reflects the varied backgrounds of the client as a group, the users, as well as the members of the design team. Concomitantly, one can argue that originality in this project lies in the synthesis of these historic references in a contemporary visual statement.

The project emphasizes the introduction of several design features that pertain to Roman and Baroque architecture. Monumentality and axuality appear to be the most dominant of those features. The relation of the project to the cultural context is strong and manifested in the types of services provided and in the visual expression of the facades and the overall massing. The center is a community mosque that fulfills key religious, cultural, and social integrative functions. Since the project is serving the Muslims and the surrounding community, its design takes the form of a complex that satisfies socio-religious needs and incorporates them into other cultural, educational and service activities.

The final realization of the project in terms of design concept, construction, material technology, and detailing make it highly responsive to the overall environmental context of Rome. The establishment of visual links to Roman and Baroque architecture has been emphasized by three major features: the use of typical roman stone and brick work in the facades; the marble

A Mosque Glossary

Qibla: Direction of Mecca which determines the direction of the prayer. It is the prime factor in the orientation of mosques. It is believed that the idea of qibla orientation is derived from the Jewish practice of indicating the direction of Jerusalem in synagogues.

Mihrab: A niche set into the middle of the qibla wall.

Minbar: A pulpit (podium) from which religious guidance is delivered.

Riwaq: Arcade or portico, open on at least one side.

Sahn: The courtyard of the mosque.

finishes in the main prayer hall; and the brick pavement of the sahn and the riwaq. Positive impact on the local environment is noticeable. The quiet residential area became very vibrant, especially on Fridays. The main road that was constructed and paved in conjunction with the construction of the project made the site easily accessible. The new route of the international marathon of Rome passes through this road and this event was one of the reasons that made the project internationally renowned, since it is covered extensively in the media.

The project has a tremendous impact on the area. Before construction of the Cultural Center,

community are indicative of the social impact on the community.

CRITIQUE AND ANALYTICAL REFLECTIONS

In functional terms, the Cultural Center's components relate very well to each other and reflect a sensitivity to the functional requirements of the mosque and the center. However, one can argue that the existence of the wide staircases at both sides of the entrance of the main prayer hall that lead to the galleries for female worshippers indicate that access to these designated spaces was not carefully considered. According to traditions, it is not appropriate for females to

enter the prayer hall via the main space of male worshippers. Accessibility, circulation, and wayfinding aspects seem to have been studied very well. Nonetheless, a designed signage system would help visitors to find their way.

In socio-cultural terms, the project is very successful in providing educational, cultural, social, and socio-religious services.


The multiple and interdisciplinary role that the center plays makes it a significant piece of architecture that is responsive to the needs and demands of the Muslim community. In essence, its significance lies in the cultural activities conducted in and by the center that integrate it with the Italian community and provide insights into a better and deeper understanding of the Islamic culture.

In symbolic terms, this mosque is a courageous building that reflects the spirit of the time. In fact, it is a statement by architects of different backgrounds who have dug deep into their own history, and have united two cultures. The project draws upon past legacies of Islamic and Christian architecture that share common Byzantine roots. It has an eclectic

Indeed, the design of the mosque and cultural center is a conscious endeavor toward creating positive dialogues between Islam and Christianity.

nature, in which elements of different historic eras of different regions are re-interpreted and translated to fit together and respond to the overall environmental and cultural contexts, while satisfying norms and requirements placed in the architecture of mosques by tradition. The fact that the traditional elements of mosque architecture—the sahn, the riwaq, and the dome—were not compromised or simplified asserts the success of the project in symbolic and functional respects.

Visually, the cultural center establishes an array of analogies and metaphors that unite the community it serves. Re-interpreting historic references, it provides an atmosphere that combines sacredness, solemnity, and dignity. The use of a tree as a theme that integrates the inside of the prayer hall with the rest of the complex successfully enhances this atmosphere. In this context, visual interaction with nature is fostered, especially in the areas of the sahn and riwaqs. In turn, it dramatically provides an atmosphere of peace and security.

Indeed, the design of the mosque and cultural center is a conscious endeavor toward creating positive dialogues between Islam and Christianity, East and West, technology-based and human made, and traditions and modernity. Rather than adopting specific historic references derived from precise regional styles, several interpretations of a range of historic references are adapted to create a neutral visual expression in a non-Muslim setting, which speaks to the West and to Muslims regardless of their geographical origin or cultural background. 



Shade is offered through the courtyards

the parcel was a dumpsite in the foothills of the Monte Antenne. On Fridays, commercial activities take place around the fences of the center, where traders sell products and home-made food. Other cultural impacts are evident in the educational programs designed for students of Italian public schools and can be seen in the classes offered to Italians at their request. Medical services provided to the Muslim com-



View of the entrance into one of the courtyards

ASHRAF SALAMA, PH.D., IS DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND CONSULTING FOR ADAMS GROUP CONSULTANTS, LLC IN CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA. HE IS INDEBTED TO THE AGA KHAN AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURE IN SWITZERLAND FOR PROVIDING THE ESSENTIAL MATERIAL TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS ARTICLE.

FRANK KACMARCIK—AN APPRECIATION

BY CAROL FRENNING



From the back of the tour bus I heard the cry: “Folks, you are going to like this next church. It’s in the Minnesota Monastic Dairy Barn Style.”

The comment got quite a chuckle, but everyone on the bus knew exactly what it would look like, and who had been the guiding light behind the new building. Frank Kacmarcik, who died this past February, not only had a distinctively recognizable artistic and architectural style, but also a distinctive personal style. Stories abound about his gruff and bullying ways to implement his vision of a project. His presence was truly larger than life – both physically and in the profound influence he had on the way in which American religious architecture has developed in the past 50 years.

Kacmarcik matured as an artist and liturgical designer at a pivotal point in history. Beginning in the later 1950s, with his work with Marcel Breuer on the Abbey Church at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and through to his final projects there, Kacmarcik had a clear and unified vision reflecting a highly trained artistic sensibility, an innate sense of spatial proportion, and a deep understanding of liturgical rituals. His work shall be remembered as the visual essence of the liturgical reforms that culminated in the Second Vatican Council.




Churches from the last half of the 20th century look markedly different from those of the first half. As historians look back on our religious architecture they will note that by the mid-20th century there was in the Christian world a wind of change in theological arenas. It would have great consequence for church design. Technical innovations in building and the influential architecture and theories of European architects such as Rudolf Schwarz combined with the new theological insights of Paul Tillich and others. There was a flourishing of ecumenism and a flowering of the Liturgical Movement. Though debated by Protestant denominations at the Bad Boll conference in the 1950s in Germany, and distilled by Roman Catholics in the documents of Vatican II, the architectural impact of these forces was modest in the U.S. until the post World War II period. In the time between the end of the Second World War and the cataclysmic social changes of the mid-1960s, a new vision was formed for American religious architecture. Kacmarcik was at the center of giving form to this new vision in America.

For these pioneers the revitalized religious thought demanded a revitalized place for worship: a place where a search for truth and authenticity; a search for justice, economic and ecologic; and a search for the beauty of the numinous strove to replace empty sentimentality. This search inextricably bound the vision of Vatican II, the Liturgical Movement, and modern architecture. The breadth of the effect of this vision is seen in Richard Meier’s recently completed Jubilee Church in Rome (page 6).

Just as the roots of modern architecture extend back into the early 19th century, so too do those of the Liturgical Movement, which originated in Belgium at the turn of the century, then traveled to the Netherlands, Germany, and on to France. Though focused initially on the liturgical denominations (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal) it has affected all Christian denominations.

Kacmarcik’s role was at the center of the Roman Catholic thought and practice during this creative and paradigm-shifting era. Working with Robert Hovda, Ed Sövik, and others, he helped formulate guiding principles for the building of post-Vatican II churches. His work is often identified as that of the iconoclast – the one who broke the mold of the old wine skins to make appropriate containers for the new wine. Understandably, monastic communities (such as Mepkin Abbey or Sacred Heart Chapel in St. Joseph, Minnesota) supported some of his best work. Yet early parish churches, such as St. John the Evangelist in Hopkins, Minnesota from 1964, remain fresh and paradigmatic models for today’s faith communities.

While his work and its justifications seemed new and mystifying to many, there were strong historic precedents for his beliefs. The liturgical reforms and the “one room plan” associated with them were encouraged by Pope Pius X before the First World War. As architects today probe new stylistic forms to house a worshipping community, many of the important concepts of this earlier era are now ubiquitous: the centrality of the altar, the concept of gathering for celebration, and the active participation of the laity.

In implementing a clear, theologically based architectural vision, Kacmarcik pioneered a new profession – the liturgical design consultant. He was known among architects as a perceptive and demanding critic and a leader of the modern renewal movement in church building design. 

CAROL FRENNING IS A LITURGICAL DESIGN CONSULTANT WHO WORKS WITH CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. SHE IS VICE CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD FOR IFRAA-AIA AND ON THE BOARD FOR FAITH & FORM.



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VIEWS

ENTICING THE ALMIGHTY

As always, I enjoy the magazine, especially the articles in the Vol. 36, No. 4 issue. However, I am still not convinced that we can consciously set out to create "sacred space."

Speaking of cathedrals, I am reminded of something an American missionary stationed in central Europe once told me. He had been discussing the megachurch phenomenon with a European colleague, when his friend said something like this: "Europe is full of megachurches; they are called cathedrals, and they are all dead." Perhaps, to quote a frequently heard theological comment, combined with a paraphrased common witticism, "God is not dead, but He has left the building."

I cite this not as a judgment on megachurches, but to point out that a building cannot generate its own sacredness, nor can its creators. Maybe Robert Scott is correct about the idea of a "Sacred Force," but I cannot accept the premise that we can entice God to come down and reside in a building when and where we would like. The God I worship comes down and resides in the hearts of the worshippers, and that's it.

Frank Orr, AIA

Brentwood, Tennessee

THE LEGACY OF KACMARCIK

Frank Kacmarcik (Vol. 37, No. 1) was known among architects as a consultant in liturgical design, a perceptive and demanding critic and a leader of the modern renewal movement in church building design. National AIA design awards were given to six of the church buildings in which he was a participant; he was made an honorary member of the AIA in 1987.

Kacmarcik's education included years at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, St. John's University, and studies in painting and liturgical

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arts in Paris. In 1950 he returned to St. John's to teach and to work as a graphic and book designer for the Liturgical Press and other publishers. This design work continued for more than 50 years and brought dozens of awards and much recognition, nationally and abroad. His membership on the faculty was not so durable. A trait of personality or character that some regarded as arrogance led to a departure from teaching. He spoke of himself as "professor evictus."

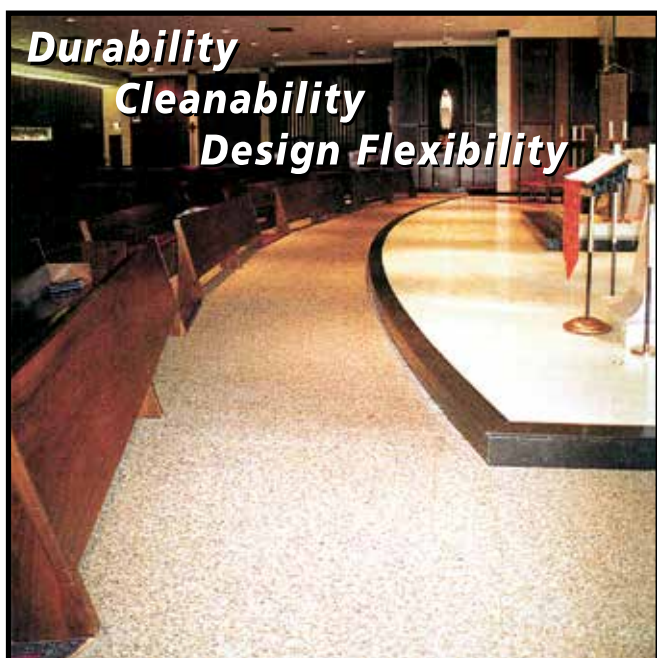
Marcel Breuer had been engaged to design the now famous abbey church, and Kacmarcik participated in offering advice and counsel. Breuer recognized the contribution, and when Kacmarcik left the abbey, Breuer designed for him a notable house for no fee, on a bluff in the southeast corner of St. Paul. It was from this base that for 30 years Kacmarcik did his work, carried on his correspondence in calligraphic longhand, and shared a leadership in the changing forms of church design with people like Robert Rambusch, Hovda, McManus, Sloyan, and other visionary churchmen and artists. The many people who now call themselves "liturgical consultants" look to Kacmarcik as one of the very first who gave credibility to their calling.

For Kacmarcik it was a vocation. From his earliest time at St. John's Abbey, his life became focused on the arts of the church. This absolute subjection of his life was the clue to a real humility and also to his fierce and outspoken disdain for mediocrity or pretense; it brought his concentration of perception and quick intuition, his immaculate taste, his love for beauty in great variety, and his passion for bringing together his collection of books and art.

Edward A. Sövik

Northfield, Minnesota

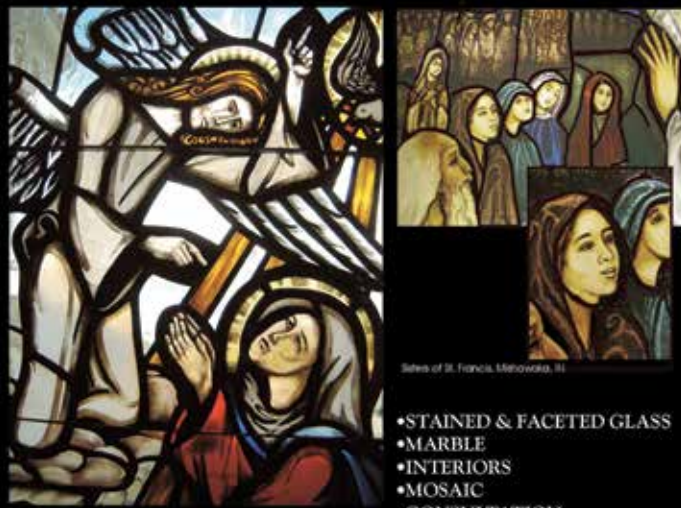
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VIEWS

Frank Kacmarcik's accomplishments are many and have been lauded in homily, biography, and eulogy. This appreciation arises out of the almost six decades of my friendship and professional association with him.

I first met Kacmarcik in the 1940s. We were enrolled at the Center of Sacred Art in Paris, under the GI Bill. After World War II, France was an epicenter of contemporary religious art and architecture, and of developments in liturgy. The Parisian Dominicans edited the journal "Art Sacré" and helped start the Center of Sacred Art, which offered the usual art school disciplines plus lectures in theology and the spirituality of the sacred artist. Dominican Friar Alain Marie Couturier, O.P., one of the conceptualizers of the Center, sought the collaboration of the great artistic and architectural talents of the time at Assy, Ronchamp, Audincourt, Vence, and La Tourette.

In the 1950s Kacmarcik and I returned to the U.S. We, with architect Edward Anders Sövik, joined the board of the Liturgical Conference, which gave prophetic voice to the reform of Catholic worship and contemporary religious art and architecture.

In the 1960s the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council promulgated the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy and enunciated principles and directions for a fitting and supportive worship environment. To bridge the hiatus between the understanding of the new forms of worship and supportive architecture, Frank, Sövik, and I invented the role of Liturgical Design Consultant and the educative growth and design process for clergy and congregation. Frank considered liturgical consultation a "ministry." Gradually such consultation developed into the recognized profession it is today. For years the Liturgical Conference hosted its own architectural competition with projects exemplifying worthy implementation of worship environments. Frank's work figured consistently among the winners.

In the 1970s the Catholic Bishops' Committee commissioned Liturgical Conference Editor the Reverend Robert Hovda to write the classic and succinct "Environment and Art in Catholic Worship," which well served church building and renovation for decades. Frank Kacmarcik's exemplary projects were the visual basis for the theory being explicated in the text.

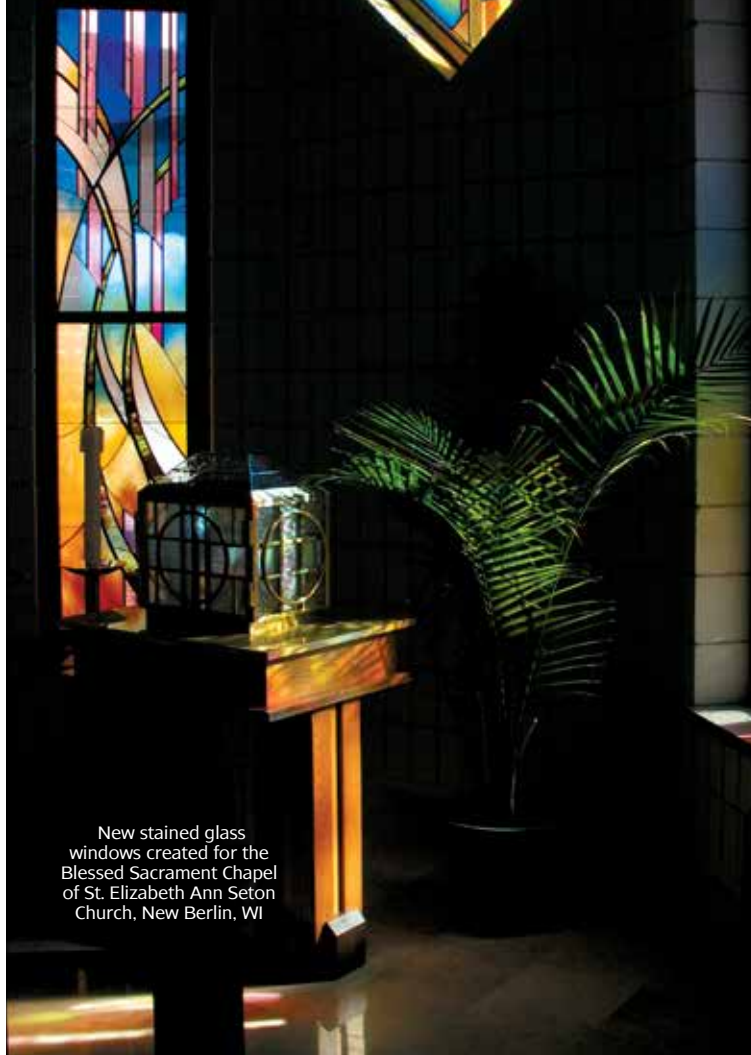
Kacmarcik was also interested in expanding ecumenical cooperation. At a time when Protestant and Jewish entities were part of the synergetic Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art & Architecture (IFRAA), Frank had the Liturgical Conference suppress its own established and separate architectural competition to join the IFRAA competition. But Frank insisted that IFRAA honor the Liturgical Conference practices of citing the liturgical design consultant in the list of credits with architect and religious client, and of publishing the comments and evaluation of the judges.

In the 1970s Jesuit John Gallen convened his newly formed North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL) at the Scottsdale, Arizona meeting for liturgical scholars and allied professions as an ecumenical sharing of worship principles and pastoral implementation. Sövik, Kacmarcik, Richard Vosko, and I were among the founding members.

Frank Kacmarcik was a prodigious presence. His process as a consultant was to bring you into what he thought should be, liturgically, environmentally, and historically. He was known to have high standards and this was sometimes perceived as inflexibility. Rather, it was an invitation to share his unique vision. But he was humble in self-criticism, laboring to refine his own work through many revisions until it met his exacting standards. Frank was generous, loyal and enjoyed a good sense of humor. In recent years, he endured a debilitating disease. He did not complain during our weekly telephone conversations; rather he displayed a healthy acceptance and an exemplary demeanor. A great talent, a man of profound faith and personal integrity, Frank gifted those that he knew well with a formative friendship.

Robert E. Rambusch
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NOTES & COMMENTS

SWISS ART AND ARCHITECTURE TOUR

The *Faith & Form* Art & Architecture Overseas Seminar in Switzerland will be held September 15-29, 2004. This will be the eleventh biennial seminar led by Dr. Donald J. Bruggink, who can be contacted for itinerary and details at donb@westernsem.edu, on the web at www.westernsem.edu/connects/switzerland.html, or at 101 East 13th Street, Holland, MI 49423; phone: 616-392-8555.

THE BUILDING OF ST. PETER'S



Few sacred sites on the face of the earth have been as storied as St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. A special exhibit now at the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven, Connecticut, traces the history of not only the current basilica, but as far back as the tomb of St. Peter, upon which the current church is built. "Creating St. Peter's: Architectural Treasures of the Vatican," contains more than 100 artifacts from the Vatican's vast collection related to the 16th century basilica, including Michelangelo's 16-foot-tall wooden model of the dome. Also considered in the exhibit is the design and construction of St. Peter's piazza, the raising of the Egyptian obelisk in the square, construction of the basilica's bell tower, and the illumination of the building. The exhibit is free and open to the public through August.

VOSKO HONORED BY GEORGETOWN CENTER FOR LITURGY

The Georgetown Center for Liturgy in Washington, D.C. has presented its 2003 national award to Rev. Richard S. Vosko, in

recognition of his "outstanding contributions to the liturgical life of the American Catholic Church." Vosko is a presbyter of the Diocese of Albany, New York, a leading liturgical consultant and designer of worship environments in the U.S. and Canada, and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Faith & Form*. In announcing the award, Rev. Lawrence J. Madden, S.J., founder and director of the Center for Liturgy, commented that, "thanks to the dedication of individuals like Richard Vosko, remarkable strides have been made in the way the Catholic Church in the U.S. celebrates liturgy since the Second Vatican Council."

CONGREGATION OF CONTINUITY

When the building committee of St. John Vianney Catholic Church met in Houston, Texas, to begin planning the much needed expansion and construction of a new sanctuary, it was quickly decided that the new buildings should help connect the parish back to its historic European heritage.

Many of the building committee members had made pilgrimages to visit the sleepy farming village of Ars, France, about 20 miles outside of Lyon, and had first-hand experience of the shrine of St. John Vianney. The quaint village setting and the venerable country church were powerfully evocative of the Curé d'Ars, who soon after becoming a parish priest in 1818 earned renown as a director of souls. He had not been long at Ars when people began coming to him from other parishes, then from distant cities and eventually from countries around Europe to seek his counsel. St. John Vianney's direction was characterized by rare insight, endowed with supernatural knowledge and leavened with common sense. It was with this understanding, that the committee and the Rev. John Morfin brought something of that legacy to the new buildings.

There is a distance of almost 150 years, and a vastly different culture, climate, and place from the parish in Houston to its namesake. To begin, we would use different building materials and methods, and required a considerably larger footprint to accommodate the 1,600-seat sanctuary for a 6,000-family congregation. And yet, despite all the differences, the new church at a bustling intersection in suburban Houston does indeed echo the original.

The new design is a reinterpretation, not a reproduction. And although it is not nestled in the French countryside, significant reflections back to the home parish create a definite con-

nection. A rooftop cupola, three rose windows, and stonework refer back to the original. The use of interior arches is also strongly suggestive of their primary source. The quality of light in the new building, while filling a 32,000-square-foot space, is different from the original, and is a very important element. Natural light infuses this space with a sense of God's grace that is palpably present in Ars.

Special attention was devoted to the parish's two reconciliation rooms, through the use of custom art glass to usher light into the rooms and heighten the experience while maintaining privacy. Placing the reconciliation rooms on either side of the tabernacle that holds the Blessed Sacrament also was an intentional design choice. As Father Morfin says, it brings



the full meaning of reconciliation to the fore, with the penitent and the presence of Christ being there together. And again, there is a connection to the original parish, as St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, was known for spending 16 hours a day hearing confession. It was important that the new building give that feature of parish life the prominence it had in its patron saint's own life.

The new worship space more than doubled the seating capacity and observed the traditional cruciform pattern, with pews arranged in the shape of a cross and the altar at the intersection of the arms of the cross. While the arrangement is traditional, the openness of the design allows virtually every person in the church to see all of his fellow worshippers. Another decidedly modern element of the new church is the baptismal pool that is six inches deep and eight feet long. The font was built into the third step of the sanctuary to allow the entire congregation a clear view of baptisms, in a church that sees about 50 adult baptisms a year—a clear reflection of the church's vibrant evangelism and outreach ministry.

As the design phase was nearing a close, we considered the 12 stained glass windows that would allow slightly larger than life-size portraits, we thought, of the 12 apostles. But once again, there was an opportunity to bridge the rich history of the church to its current context.

NOTES & COMMENTS

The decision was made to depict 12 North American saints or beautified persons in the windows.

There are other reflections of the parish's contemporary context. A memorial altar is inscribed for the victims of the September 11 attacks. The former sanctuary has been renovated as a chapel and it has a shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe in recognition of the thriving Hispanic Catholic community.

The new sanctuary built a bridge, not only to the founding parish in France, but also to its own beginnings on this site when the first church was built in 1968. Literally connecting the new sanctuary to the original church building created a large, welcoming narthex, something that was lacking. It also allowed designers to reorient the church to face the primary route of entry, a physical expression of the congregation's desire to engage and welcome others to come back to the church or come join the church. —*Tim Schorre*

TIM SCHORRE IS AN ARCHITECT WITH BAILEY ARCHITECTS IN HOUSTON, TEXAS, AND WAS THE LEAD DESIGNER ON THE NEW ST. JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

NEW SYNAGOGUE RISES IN MUNICH

The cornerstone of the new main synagogue in Munich, Germany, to replace one destroyed by the Nazis 66 years ago, has been laid. The city's new main synagogue, in the cradle of the Nazi movement, is being taken as a sign of a Jewish rebirth in Germany. According to an Associated Press news story, approximately 100,000 Jews now live in Germany, compared to a half-million before World War II. The new \$65 million synagogue, Jewish museum, and community center will replace the one destroyed on Adolf Hitler's orders in June 1938. The new complex, scheduled to be completed in 2007, will stand on St. Jacob's Square in Munich's Old Town. Historians at the Munich archive recently found a strongbox in the foundation of the old synagogue, which contained the original building plans,

handwritten documents, and newspapers and coins from 1887, the year the old synagogue was built. The mementos will be displayed in the new museum. At the laying of the new cornerstone, a new strongbox was buried containing the names of Munich Jews deported, killed, or driven to suicide by the Nazis.

HISTORIC RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS RECEIVE FEDERAL PRESERVATION AID

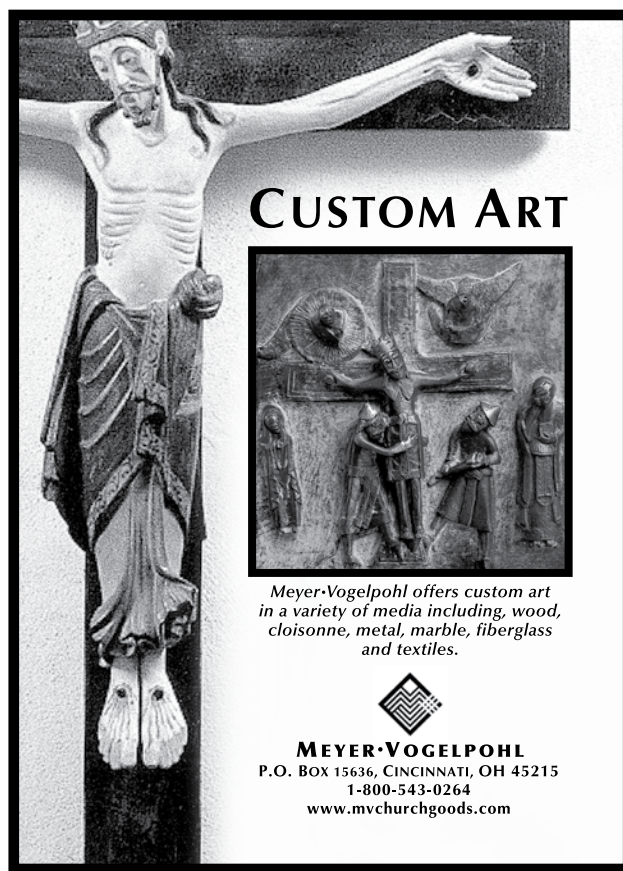
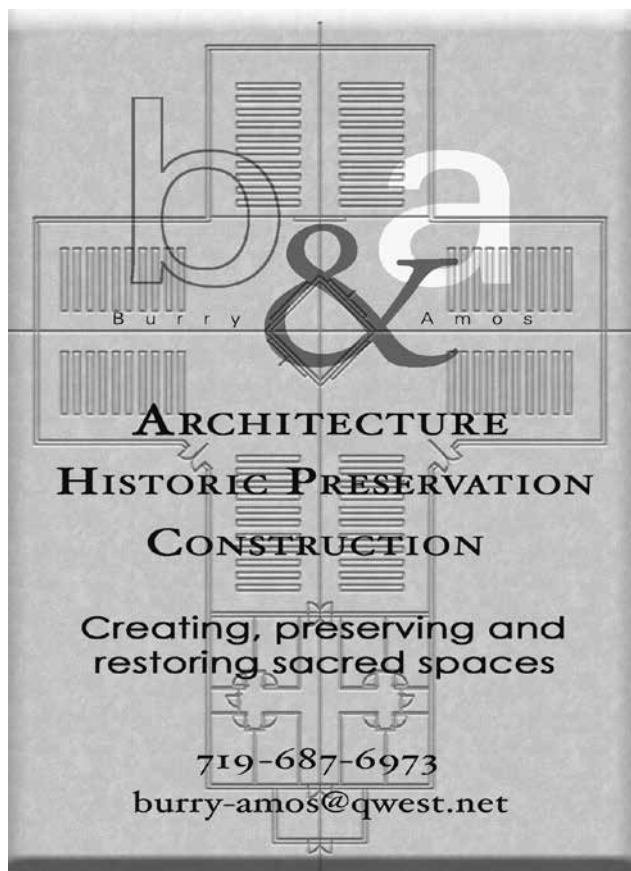
A \$375,000 grant under a new government policy to allow religious institutions to qualify for historic preservation funds has been given to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island. The synagogue, designed by Peter Harrison and dedicated in 1763, is the oldest synagogue in the U.S. The new policy reverses a ban on federal funds for the preservation of historically significant structures used for religious purposes because of concerns about the separation of church and state. The Old North Church in Boston, the Eldridge Street Synagogue in New York City, and Mission Concepcion in San Antonio were also given grants. The new policy has drawn criticism from Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "What the administration is trying to do is shift the traditional church and state separation," said Robert Boston, assistant director of communications for the group.

CORRECTION

The location of the First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, one of the 2003 Faith & Form Religious Architecture Award winners, is Gurnee, Illinois.

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The editors of *Faith & Form* want to bring its readers the latest news of those involved in the fields of religion, art, and architecture. Send press releases and materials to the attention of Michael J. Crosbie, Editor, *Faith & Form*, c/o Steven Winter Associates, 50 Washington Street, Norwalk, CT 06854; fax: 203-852-0741; email: mcrosbie@faithandform.com.



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A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM



JUST ONE MORE THING... ★ BETTY H. MEYER

"I don't like modern art (or architecture)" is an opinion I hear expressed over and over. I have always admired curator Frederick Walkey's reply: "But don't you wish you could?" Lacking any art education or experience, many adults might say this, but one can sometimes detect a certain wistfulness in their voices.

I remember well an incident when a parishioner asked artist Louise Nevelson (who had created a much publicized chapel for this woman's church), "Does your abstract mural stand for the 12 disciples?" And Nevelson answered, "Or the 12 tribes of Israel, or the birds in the air, or whatever your imagination wants it to be."

What can be done to educate current parishioners and clergy in the arts? A new book entitled, *Calling Church and Seminary into the Twenty-First Century* by Donald E. Messer, the President of Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, addresses this problem. He strongly disagrees with those who claim the ultra-liberalization of seminaries is regrettable. Messer declares that change in seminaries, whether evangelical or liberal, is absolutely necessary. Ever increasing numbers of women, ethnic minorities, and gays have brought their experiences and belief systems into seminaries with a psychic energy that must be absorbed, and not only absorbed but celebrated and recognized as equal.

We sometimes take seminaries for granted and forget that there was a not too distant time when all that was needed for ministry was to hear the "call." Consequently, a certain tension about the education of a minister existed between the churches and the seminaries. Theologian H. Richard Niebuhr urged seminaries to be the centers of intellectualism in religion and philosophy. It is interesting that today secular colleges and universities are including more and more departments of religious studies in their curricula. But sadly, so few young people are entering seminaries that smaller churches may have to post "Out of Business" signs soon.

But I hasten to say that there are encouraging signs. The new world of communication holds the promise of being a bridge between churches, seminaries, and secular academia.

I was excited recently to visit Hebrew College, the first full-time trans-denominational rabbinical college in the U.S. Part of my excitement was a new building, designed by Moshe Safdie on a wooded site adjacent to Andover-Newton Theological School in Newton, Massachusetts. President David Gordis and Rabbi Arthur Green point out that the program includes not only training in ritual (speaking, teaching, counseling), but also the practical (communal organizations, hospitals, day schools), and the spiritual (development of their own faith and what it means to them). Jewish diversity is celebrated but interfaith issues are of increasing interest and concern. Students from Andover-Newton take classes at Hebrew College, and vice versa.

David M. Greenhaw, President of Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, Missouri, tells me that Eden is having conversations about the role of the visual arts in its curriculum. The hope is to possibly establish some work in religious architecture.

Chicago Theological Seminary's Genet Soule, Assistant Vice President writes, "A program in the transformative arts will not live by itself in a silo labeled 'the arts.' We have become convinced that arts education is a critical piece of our whole curricular commitment. Arts education must be central to the theological work of faculty and students."

And what encouraging is happening in the churches? The *United Church News* reports that a Congregational Church in Centerport, New York, purchased a rug with memorial funds, which was based on an oil painting in the Guggenheim Museum, and many people did not like it. But the children did. One second grade boy expressed his opinion: "It looks like cubism to me." This lack of knowledge on the adults' part precipitated much embarrassed discussion of the arts and their relation to the church.

A U.C.C./Presbyterian Church in North Philadelphia has begun an unfolding program called City Vision. A first project ended in a three-story ceramic tile mosaic that establishes a sense of beauty in a low-income community.

Something is happening. Things are undergoing change, and I am reminded of the Wallace Stevens poem:

*They said you have a blue guitar
You do not play things as they are
The man replied, "Things as they are
Are changed upon the blue guitar."*

BETTY H. MEYER IS EDITOR EMERITUS OF FAITH & FORM

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