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An Affinity for the Traditional

By Nancy A. Ruhling

It was the great cathedrals of England that opened David B. Meleca's eyes to the beauty of traditional ecclesiastical architecture in contemporary settings. His long-ago study-abroad summer in Oxford took place while he was in architecture school at The Ohio State University in his hometown of Columbus.

"We traveled all over the country," he says. "And we saw four to five churches every day as well as castles and palaces." Meleca, who always had had an affinity for the traditional style, found himself drawn to "the strength" of the ancient architecture. "I finally figured out what U.S. architecture was trying to emulate," says Meleca, FAIA, NCARB. "Here was the original source; it had human scale and incredible detailing."

His attraction to the classics was reaffirmed a couple of years after graduation when he attended a second university summer program, this time in Italy. "We explored the architecture of Rome and Florence," he says. "This gave me another level of inspiration, and I thought, This is something I would like to bring to the United States."

LEFT: Multiple classical orders were incorporated for their structural and anthropomorphic meanings to make a classically readable whole at Saint Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Leawood, KS.
Even if he had not taken the trips, it's likely that he would have ended up in the traditional camp. "When I was a student, deconstructionism was the talk of the university," he says. "Everybody was of the same mindset at that time, and it never set well with me. My work was called unsophisticated because it was often symmetrical."

After working 11 years for Sullivan Gray Bruck Architects in Columbus, Meleca opened his own firm in 1996, building a name for himself as an award-winning traditionalist and a national leader in Roman Catholic church design.

Meleca, who works with a team of 10 architects, practices what he calls "creativity through tradition." David B. Meleca Architects has been named by the Classical Institute as one of the top 100 Classical design firms in the world and has a diverse portfolio that includes restaurants, offices, apartments, hotels and retail as well as churches.

His most visible public project—The Cap at Union Station in Columbus, a mixed-use plaza that bridges the urban gap of Interstate 670 where a trio of spans converge to form new retail frontage—has been the center of national attention and acclaim. Since its completion in 1996, it has received five awards, including the 2002 Ohio Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects ASLA Merit Award, the 2005 Columbus Landmarks Foundation James B. Recchie Design Award and the 2006 Congress for the New Urbanism CNU Chapter Award.

Although most of Meleca's work is commercial—he designed the flagship Victoria's Secret store in Easton Town Center, an indoor and outdoor shopping complex in Easton, OH—he cherishes his ecclesiastical work.

"I strive to invoke the revelation of Heavenly Jerusalem, substantiate the priest's role in the revelatory ritual and deploy a classical vocabulary as the embodiment of the exceptional—truth, beauty and clarity—that is most accessible to a broad public," he says.

He grew up attending Roman Catholic churches, but they looked nothing like the elaborate traditional-style structures he designs. "They were not very engaging, and there was no traditional iconography," he says. "The church we went to the most was housed in a gymnasium."

In the 1990s, when he established his own full-service interior and exterior design practice in Columbus, Roman Catholic churches were being stripped of their traditional architectural robes and clothed in plain white boxes. "They were strange objects," he says. "Some of them looked like spaceships."

It wasn't just the contemporary aesthetics that bothered him. "Traditional church architecture is important because each element has meaning," he says. "There's no prescribed style. I haven't seen a successful contemporary style that works with the liturgy. It misses the point of how the architecture responds to the liturgy and vice versa."

Meleca wanted to bring church buildings back to their religious design roots, so he contacted the diocese and waited what seemed an eternity to get on a list of recommended architects.

"The common thread in my church work is tradition-based," he says. "My reputation is a call back to pre-Vatican II architecture, where the liturgy
informs the architecture. The liturgy has not changed, but people’s interpretation of how to make it work with the architecture has.”

Meleca frequently collaborates with or consults with Denis R. McNamara, associate director and associate professor at the Liturgical Institute of Mundelein Seminary in the Archdiocese of Chicago and the author of *Heavenly City: The Architectural Tradition of Catholic Chicago and Catholic Church Architecture and the Spirit of the Liturgy.*

“I pull on multiple traditional styles, depending on where the church is going to be located or who it’s for,” he says. “Sometimes, there’s a blending of styles, but I try to distinguish them with specific traditional details. I’m always looking for some local identifier.”

When Meleca was commissioned to design a larger house of worship for the parishioners of Saint Edward The Confessor Catholic Church in Granville, OH, his mission was to strike a balance between classical Roman Catholic church design and unpretentious country church aesthetics while creating a sacred space for the congregation, which had increased to 900 people.

“The original church was essentially a 300-seat country chapel,” he says. “There was a lot of emotion attached to it, and there wasn’t much budget, so we reused it, turning it into the narthex of the new complex.” He designed the brown brick building, in the American Georgian style, to grow with the parish. The design incorporates 300-seat balconies that can be added to the 14,500-sq.ft. building when they are needed.

At Saint Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Leawood, KS, the style—Italian Renaissance—was a given because its twin-winged U-shaped school had already been built. The church was to be set in the center, completing the trinity.

“This was my first engagement with Denis McNamara,” Meleca says. “I was holding the pen, and he was critiquing the liturgical aspects.” Meleca’s stucco structure detailed with Kansas limestone adhered to classical orders and featured a Greek-cross floor plan.

“His is a spiritual representation of heaven,” Meleca says. “There’s seating on three sides of the sanctuary, allowing for a close view of the altar and ambo, which further engages parishioners in the signs and symbols of heavenly realities as outlined by the Second Vatican Council.” Meleca also designed the altar and baptismal font, which were made in Italy and assembled on the spot.

For inspiration for Saint Paul Apostle Catholic Church in Westerville, OH, Meleca turned to the architecture of the city’s downtown district, which residents refer to as Uptown. “This was the third church to be built on the site,” he says, adding that the parish, which has 14,000 members, is the sixth largest in the state. “There are a number of other denominations in the Uptown, but this site is outside of it geographically because in the past, the town was not very friendly to Catholics.”

Meleca’s brown brick and Jerusalem limestone building in the Romanesque style makes quite a statement: It’s an astounding 40,000 square feet and has seats for 1,200 people. A 20-ft.-high gilded cross and bold Romanesque finials on the corners and cupola make it a commanding presence on the sublime skyline.

To create a cozy feeling in such a large space, Meleca placed the altar and ambo in the apex of the cross and raised them 3 and 5 feet, respectively, to make them more visible to all. The seats are situated on three sides of the altar, a plan that left enough room to accommodate a private chapel behind. Stained-glass windows, salvaged from closed churches, add ambience as well as a sense of shared history.

The project, which was named one of 10 National Treasures by U.S. Catholic Magazine, attracts worshippers from around the country.

One of Meleca’s more recent projects, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Pickerington, OH, gave him a chance to bring tradition back to the interior of the contemporary structure. The 30,000-sq.ft. stucco and limestone octagonal church building, which was 20 years old, was desperately crying out for a traditional religious renovation. The sanctuary roof was leaking, the floors were cracking and the pews were delaminating.

Infrastructure aside, there also were design issues that were glaringly out of sync with liturgical thinking. The stadium-style seating sloped downward toward the front, the altar platforms were separated, the presessional aisle was at an acute angle to the altar and the 24-hour Eucharistic adoration chapel was too small to accommodate the number of parishioners who were using it and was virtually hidden in a side room off the sanctuary.

“Through the writings of Denis McNamara, the parish had become aware that the church was not
ABOVE: The interior architecture and art at Saint Paul Apostle Catholic Church in Westerville, OH, is meant to be the built meeting of heaven and earth—the New Jerusalem. Photo: Brad Feinknopf

TOP: Romanesque façade details at Saint Paul Apostle Catholic Church were derived from the historic commercial Uptown architecture of Westerville, OH. Photo: Brad Feinknopf

RIGHT: Victoria’s Secret flagship in Ohio’s Easton Town Center features classical London detailing to tie it to its European branding.
condLlcive to the Catholic liturgy,” Meleca says. “We reconfigured the interior.”

His spiritual solutions were simple. He created a major axis and sited the altar, tabernacle and baptismal font along it to emphasize their importance and centered the seating around the liturgical altar, which is crowned by a hanging crucifix.

The altar and ambo were elevated above the nave floor onto a large platform decorated with red stonework to represent the blood of Christ. These so-called blood stones flow down to the sanctuary floor and continue to the back of the church, where they symbolically pool into the baptismal font for the parish’s purification. The narthex and portico were also located on the axis and expanded to create a more prominent entrance to the church.

The adoration chapel was placed behind the altar. It features a private entry, separate restroom and shares a two-sided tabernacle with the sanctuary, which is surrounded by a stained-glass window with fan-shaped rays of light and radiant angels.

Meleca says that his projects have proved that the traditional style remains a vital and viable option for ecclesiastical buildings. “There’s a small band of architects who are doing this,” he says. “But we’re a national movement in the world of Catholic architecture, and you’ll see more of us. In a town near you, we’ll be there.”

Indeed, if it were up to Meleca, all of his projects would be churches. “It has meaning that other kinds of architectural work, like commercial developments, don’t,” he says. “We build churches to last 100 years. I love the idea that it’s a legacy and that the parishioners inspire me and I inspire them.”

But for Meleca, the real reward of traditional ecclesiastical architecture goes far beyond the church building itself. “At St. Paul’s in Westerville, a number of parishioners responded to their new worship space with tears of joy,” he says. “They were overwhelmed by the beauty and power of its architecture and strong connection to liturgy, saying that they didn’t know you could still build churches like this.”
Red and white Jerusalem limestones were incorporated into Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish's altar platform, risers and mosaics to symbolize the mixing of Jesus' blood and water in the liturgy.
When it comes to church architecture, the devil is in the saintly details. So is the delight. This is especially true of the wooden ornament and furniture that bring character to the space, whether it be a mighty cathedral and or a humble country church.

We asked several woodcarvers and woodworkers to tell us all the details about their favorite ecclesiastical projects. Here's what they said.

Master carver Ian Agrell started carving in 1961 and opened his full-service, family-run office, Agrell Architectural Carving, in 1978. The firm now has offices in San Rafael, CA, and the UK, and 25 employees, including his daughter, Kate, who is the project manager, and Master Carver Adam Thorpe, who serves as a design consultant. It specializes in large architectural carving projects, millwork and organ cases.

"Over the last four decades, we have worked on a number of cathedrals and churches in the UK and the USA," says Ian Agrell. "The two big standouts were the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City, Utah, where we worked with Beyer Blinder Belle on the new screen and tabernacle and redesigning the confessional, and the Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul, Minnesota, where we worked with Architect Duncan Stroik and his team on the new organ case inspired by the original one designed by Beaux-Arts Architect Emmanuel Louis Masqueray."

By Nancy A. Ruhling
He adds: “The Madeleine Cathedral was our first big project in the USA, and the big challenge was being a liaison with the team on the ground and collaborating with the electricians and other trades to prepare the site for the installation of the work.”

One project that was a big challenge was at St. Paul’s, where the massive size of the organ case—60 feet wide, 20 feet deep and 40 feet high—meant that Agrell had to work out a way to construct the sections so they could be lifted up 30 feet to the platform and installed in a tight space. “With help from a local scaffolding firm and being sailors from the San Francisco Bay Area, we used our skills and knowledge of rigging and winches to lift and turn these large elements,” says Agrell.

“Then, of course, there was the throne that we made for the 1993 visit of His Holiness Pope Saint John Paul II to Denver, Colorado,” notes Agrell. “We worked with Denver Architect David Tryba. He visualized a seat that combined the Rocky Mountains with images from the State of Colorado. Although it was simple in design and execution, it was, of course, a great honor because it’s not often that you get to make a chair for a saint.”

Enkeboll Designs, in Carson, CA, was established in the 1950s as a furniture manufacturer. The family-owned business shifted to architectural wood carvings in the mid-1980s and the company now offers more than 1,000 solid-wood, machine-carved architectural components, from corbels to mantels to moldings and appliques, in a variety of wood species.

The firm also does custom work. It has supplied components to a variety of churches, including Latter-Day Saints temples in Fiji, Utah, Peru and Rome and various Roman Catholic and Protestant churches across the United States.

“Because we sell components and not finished products, we do not always get to see how they are used,” says Rosanna Vaughn, Enkeboll Designs marketing manager. “We don’t make furniture either, but some of our pieces have ended up as arms and side pieces for pews. Sometimes, people use our pieces in ways we never thought of or ask us to modify them for custom projects. For instance, we have an angel in our line that is made to be used at the end of a column or a mantel base. A church asked us to add praying hands to it for a different application, and it is simply beautiful.”

She adds: “I really loved the custom cross we recently made in mahogany for The Walk to Emmaus. The bottom is Jesus’ intertwined hands that morph into a traditional cross. It’s about three feet tall and is meant to be carried in public processions. We decided to gift it to the walk and hope it will be used for years to come.”
Another firm, Heritage Restoration and Design of Peoria, IL., is a 200-year-old family design-restoration-preservation business that applies old-world knowledge and techniques, which have been passed down through its six generations, to its projects. The 12 members of the production team hand-carve and hand-tool church furniture, millwork and moldings. The company also makes marble statuary and marble furniture and stained-glass windows. It does plaster restoration, painting, marbleizing, wood graining, gold detailing and creates decorative molding, custom canvas murals and wall mosaics.

“A large percent of our projects is in church work,” says Michael Berlinger, president, CEO and chief conservator at Heritage Restoration and Design, “but there are two projects that stand out in my mind. About a dozen years ago, we were asked to duplicate a wooden railing for the altar area at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo, North Dakota. The original railing had been gone for a long time, and they wanted it to match the banister style around the choir loft so everything blended in with the architecture.”

The wood species was white oak and the design was in the Roman arch style, and individual pieces had to be assembled by hand. It was about 40 feet across, and there were 10 individual wood pieces in every foot. It was made more difficult by the fact that the rail system was interrupted by the pulpit. “We built it over a five-week period. It took another two weeks to finish and two more weeks to install,” says Berlinger (See story, page 16).

He adds that the firm has recently completed work at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Unity Temple in Oak Park, IL. “We just finished a two-year project stripping and refinishing all the woodwork, doors, moldings, pews, wooden chandeliers and wooden wall sconces at the temple,” he says.

“The temple dates to 1908 and it was his first commercial building and our first time to work on one of his buildings,” Berlinger adds. “The project also included the classrooms and offices that were in the same building. Everything was taken apart and tagged. There were thousands of pieces, including 40 to 50 doors, and the Unity Temple foundation members suggested there are about 10 miles of moldings in the complex.”

“The idea was to make it look like it did when it opened. The wood had been mounted onto the concrete walls. It had absorbed moisture, and it had spots of white efflorescence powder from absorbing the chemicals in the concrete,” Berlinger explains. “We had to hand clean it with proprietary chemical...
mixture we had created that would not harm the woods, which were red and white oak. We used a four-component neutralizer that we put on and wiped off. Some of the pieces had turned black, and we had to duplicate them right down to matching wood grain. We looked through a lot of piles of wood to get the exact matches. We used 37 different colors of stains on this project in order to maintain a uniform color range.

"The doors were challenging," he adds. "They required Dutchman repairs because the holes of the new locksets and hardware did not match the old, so we had to replace the face panels with ones that had the exact color and grain pattern as the originals and fill in the hollow pockets. This is difficult to do on clear finished wood. There are not many companies that do this kind of work anymore."

"This project is exactly the type we love to do because it's complex, it's historic and it's preserving the church for the next generation," Berlinger points out.

Dimitrios Klitsas, Fine Wood Sculptor, of Hampden, MA, consists of Dimitrios Klitsas and his son, Spiro. They specialize in hand-carved furniture and every type and style of architectural ornament.

"I learned how to carve in Greece," says Dimitrios Klitsas, "where we used the traditional Byzantine style in churches. I love that style, but I'm open to any style, because if it's well done, it's art. I've done a lot in the Gothic style, and I've worked on Roman Catholic and Protestant churches."

"I'm particularly proud of the work I've done for St. Luke's Greek Orthodox Church in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts because that's where I worship. I did all the carving and built pretty much all of the furniture," he adds.

He adds that one of his favorite pieces is the chantor's stand, which is in the traditional Greek Orthodox style. "It features cabinets and a two-sided rotating top in oak and basswood. It is used to display and store books during the service. I built and carved it and dedicated it to my parents and donated it to the church."

He explains that the stand features a grapevine, which is a recurring theme in liturgical furniture that references this scripture: "I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

The oak stand depicts the vine and grapes. The bas relief depicts King David, the composer of the Psalms, with his harp. "I carved this from a two-inch-thick slab of contrasting basswood that is secured from the inside with screws," says Klitsas.
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S 1908 Unity Temple in Oak Park, IL, is considered a masterpiece of modern architecture. The 8,000-sq.ft. structure is significant not only for its design but also because it is one of the first poured-in-place concrete buildings."

Until this point, poured-in-place concrete had been used primarily for commercial buildings. Time and deferred maintenance had taken its toll on Unity Temple. In 2000, the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois (now Landmarks Illinois) placed it on the state's list of Ten Most Endangered Buildings. In 2009 a piece of the ceiling fell down near the pulpit. Now, though, the historic temple is looking and operating better than ever, thanks to a six-year, $25-million restoration led by Harboe Architects.

"I got involved with Unity Temple around 2000 when they were doing work on the overhangs," says T. Gunny Harboe of Harboe Architects. "I was working on matching the concrete." At the time, he was with McClier (now part of AECOM).

He was then engaged to do a preservation master plan, which was completed in 2006 and was used as a guide for the restoration project. The work involved three major components—the exterior, including the concrete walls, the roof and the chimney; climate control and upgrading the MEP systems; and the interior, including art glass, plaster, paint finishes, floors, lighting and oak trim.

The project was launched when the Alphawood Foundation donated $10 million in 2013 and then the Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist congregation raised another $1.75 million.

On the exterior, the challenge was to match and repair the shotcrete that had been added in the 1970s which matched the original concrete. This material is a mixture of concrete, sand and pebbles. The design team conducted a long series of mock-ups using 2x2-ft. concrete pieces, and "we finally got close enough to do a sample in the wall," says Harboe, who had launched his own firm in 2006. Then the exterior work could begin. "The sons of the man who did the work in the 1970s did the work for us," he adds. The exterior work also included new roofing on the 20 flat roofs as well as enlarged drains and chimney repair.

On the interior, the goal was to restore Frank Lloyd Wright's original appearance, including his colors, and to upgrade all systems. Wright had divided the building into specific spaces—a foyer, the Unity Temple and the Unity House, all bathed in natural light from laylights and clerestory windows.

By Martha McDonald
Using historic photographs and microscopic paint analysis conducted by Building Conservation Associates (BCA), the design team investigated how to remove paint on the interior wall and return them to the original condition.

"Modern latex paint had altered the appearance of the walls," says Harboe. "We came up with three alternatives. One was to strip as much of overburden paint as possible, and apply new paint. That didn't really work; it gave muddy appearance, and didn't give beauty of original. That wasn't going to work."

The second alternative was to overpaint yet again with paint that was a closer match to the effect of original.

The third option was to do a skim coat of plaster that matched the original exactly including the large amount of exposed aggregates (sand) and then to paint that with the original wash-like paints. "This was the most appealing on a lot of levels," Harboe notes. "It would recreate the finished palette. You see and feel the softness of the colors, almost like velvet or suede on the walls. It was a combination of the sand and the very thin paints."

Rewiring the temple involved digging shallow trenches in the concrete walls, then grouting them back and covering them with new plaster. "Another reason we went with the skim coat treatment was
because of the buried conduit. We had to repack it," Harboe states. "It was quite involved." Mechanical systems were also inserted into the four hollow columns that support the building.

Another part of the interior work was the restoration of all of the art glass, which features green, brown and yellow geometric patterns designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. "We took this opportunity to completely restore everything correctly," Harboe explains. This included all of the windows with the exception of a recently restored slot windows and the interior windows between the minister’s office and Unity House. "All of the others were fully re-camed, while retaining the original glass where possible," he says. This work was done by Judson Studios with consulting by Julie Sloan, an art-glass specialist.

All 25 of the laylights (each is about 12 sq.ft. in size) were removed by Judson, shipped to California and repaired in the studio. Including the light fixtures, there are 168 panels of art glass made up of many thousands of pieces of glass, Harboe points out.

Most (over 95%) of the woodwork was original. It was removed, cleaned, refinished and re-installed. And the concrete and magnesite flooring was in fairly good condition, says Harboe. It just required stripping, cleaning and refinishing. This work was done by Heritage Restoration & Design.

Working on the Temple for two years, Heritage disassembled and refinished the pews on four floors and also restored miles of decorative wood trim for the ceilings, walls and windows. Each piece was stripped, cleaned, and refinished back to its original appearance. In addition, the firm removed and restored wooden light fixtures, and created replicas where needed. Several dozen doors and door jambs were also restored to "like new" condition.

"This project is exactly the type we love to do because it’s complex, historic, and it preserved the church for the next generation," says Michael Berlinger, president, CEO, Chief Conservator, Heritage Restoration & Design;

Another significant addition to the building was the geothermal system that is used for both heating
and cooling. It incorporates nine wells that reach 500 ft. below ground. This is the first time that the temple has had air conditioning.

New lighting technology was added throughout, including theatrical lighting at request of congregation.

Unity Temple was under construction for three years, Harboe explains. “The congregation rented space elsewhere while the work was going on.”

After many years of discussion, planning and fund raising and then the construction, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Unity Temple is once again as beautiful as it was in 1908. In addition, the new systems will allow it to serve the congregation for at least another 100 years.

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History Speaks to New Church

By Gordon H. Bock

TO THE LAYPERSON, traditional church architecture might appear so tied to millennia of history that it can't be applied easily to modern conditions, but facts run counter to this belief. A testament to this point is the recently completed Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church and Newman Center in Lincoln, NE, the work of McCrery Architects of Washington, DC, in conjunction with Clark Architects Collaborative of Lincoln, NE.

The genesis of the project was an enviable problem. Since 1906, students at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln, had been graced with a Newman Center—a Catholic ministry center found at non-Catholic universities around the world—but by 2015 the 1960s-era complex just off the campus was no longer up to its calling.

"The daily masses held for students had grown so well-attended that the church became too small for hundreds of worshippers," explains James McCrery, AIA, NCARB, principal at McCrery Architects. Local papers noted lines out the door on holy days, leading Church leaders to a critical decision. "They asked themselves, 'Should we just tinker with the existing Center or simply tear it down?'" recalls McCrery. In the end, he says, "The Church leadership had the courage and wisdom to raze the buildings and build a new Newman Center and a new church on the exact same property."

While the basic program was pretty straightforward, it had strong spiritual components. "The client needed a venue that effectively doubled the size of the church, going from around 300 to 600 seats, and they wanted a bell tower and some other features." Added to this were the aesthetic hopes. "We wanted something suitable for the nearby University, but also to be a landmark in the city of Lincoln, Nebraska, and understood as an important downtown building."

No small feat in a town home to the unique, towered Nebraska State Capitol, a masterwork of architect Bertram Goodhue. "There are a number of very good buildings downtown and on the campus, and the client wanted to be sure that they were holding their own, so to speak, within that architectural tradition."

At the same time that the downtown site set a lofty bar for design, it held the project to some very earthbound limits. The St. John Newman Center is immediately adjacent to the campus, on property owned not by the state university, but by the Church.

"The church is a large building for a small site," says McCrery. On top of this, he explains, "both
the client and the architect wanted to be sure that
the church had a cruciform shape on the inside and
the outside, but because of the tight site we didn’t
have the luxury of open space that a typical cruci-
form plan requires.” Therefore, they needed to use
as much of the site as they could, he says, building
right to the property line. In order to satisfy the
desire for a cruciform shape, “we manipulated the
building in three dimensions, all on top of a per-
fectly rectangular floor plan.”

The arrangement of the St. Thomas Aquinas
Church is very traditional, says McCrery: a center-
aisle with two side aisles. In plan, this would appear
to be a big, long rectangle, but in three dimensions
it is, in fact, cruciform, though only very subtly.

“What we did is have the transepts—the por-
tions of the church that cross the main axis at right
angles—occupy the space of only the side aisles.”

So, in three dimensions, he says, from the inside
and the outside, one can look along the side aisles
and see where a side aisle stops and a transept begins.
“The transept rises the full height of the church, and
then returns back down to a side aisle again, all
within the exact same footprint.”

The three-dimensional solution is more evident
when studying the church exterior along the street
view. “The rose window on the far right-hand side
of the street elevation is in the transept. While the
outside face of that transept is in the exact same
plane as the outside wall of the side aisle, it (along
with its twin transept on the other side) is what
gives the building its cruciform shape—not only on
the outside but inside too.”

An equally enlightened response is the immense,
stained glass window at the very end of the build-
ing. “The window is about 40 feet wide and 30 feet
tall—three stories of stained glass the full width of
the sanctuary, and very much part and parcel of the
design from the very beginning.”

As McCrery explains, a church of this size and
importance would typically have a semicircular
apse—a space to house the altar at the end of the
main axis—but this apse is rectangular. “The
back wall of the sanctuary where the high altar
is positioned is flat, and for the very same reasons
that shaped the transept, we have a very tight site
plan without the luxury of space to accommodate
a conventional apse, so our apse is a flattened, very
broad rectangle.”

He adds, “Rather than take that flat apse as a
weakness or failure of the plan, we actually saw it
as an opportunity to commission a very important
and truly beautiful window designed and produced
by a 158-year-old company in Germany (Franz
ABOVE: Looking down the main axis, the traditional plan of Church ends in an imposing stained-glass window that takes advantage of the wide span of the flattened apse. Note the pointed arches with original decorative treatments, and faux bois wood graining on ceiling beams by EverGreene Architectural Arts, Inc. of New York.

MIDDLE: A large stained-glass window for the rectangular-shaped back wall of the sanctuary was designed and produced by Franz Mayer of Munich. It measures approximately 40 ft. wide by 30 ft. tall.

The Newman Center
Sharing the site with the church, yet standing on its own architecturally, is the new Newman Center. McCrery points out that while McCrery Architects was the design architect, the project also included Clark Architects Collaborative of Lincoln, NE, as the architect of record. “We worked very closely with Clark Architects and their very able principal, Kevin Clark. So, when we set about designing the new Newman Center and the church, the Newman Center became a collaboration between Clark Architects Collaborative and McCrery Architects, while the church is a McCrery Architects design, in and out.”

As he explains, all parties wanted the Newman Center to continue to have a strong presence on the campus, but even more than before. “With a bell tower, students can now see this building from a distance, and identify with it, so it becomes more of a visual destination.” What’s more, the tower houses four newly cast bells that ring on the hour and quarter-hour, so now the Student Catholic Center has an identity on the campus in sound as well as in sight. “Even if students can’t see the tower, their faith is made present to them by the ringing bells.”

Despite the fixed, limited site and a tight budget, McCrery notes that this is a very substantial project. “The church and the Newman Center both fit over an entirely enclosed lower level,” he says.

In fact, the entire footprint of the building is a field of 77 geothermal wells sunk 620 feet below Mayer of Munich).” Other windows throughout the church are still clear glass until stained glass is commissioned by families or people moved to give.
The narthex is located in the center of the building, providing entry to both the chapel and the Newman Center.

The antique altars, ambo, reading stand and presidential chairs were acquired from Ohio and England and were restored and constructed by Mountain View Millworks.

The Church and Center. “Churches can sometimes be expensive to heat and cool because they're large spaces with many people coming and going,” he says. “Given that the building is an institutional use, with the Church planning to be there for a very long time, they did the math and determined that the system was entirely worth the hefty initial investment.”

The design straddles time too, borrowing from late Romanesque/early Christian churches as well as from the early Gothic era. “In Romanesque, classically you would have round-top arches, and in Gothic you would have pointed arches,” he explains. “Here, we have pointed arches, which most people would say is Gothic but, on the other hand, most of the shape of the building is very clearly Romanesque, so we're inspired by both—the late Romanesque and the early Gothic.”

McCerry explains that the source of his firm's inspiration is the entirety of Church history. “I consider myself a traditional and classical architect, but classical per se is not the only appropriate style for a church—and proof of that is history.”

He notes that, while some periods are, perhaps, more inspirational than others, his firm relies on the entire length and breadth and depth of the Church's architectural and artistic traditions. “Working on churches is almost entirely what occupies us here at McCerry Architects,” he says. “Our approach, and what we prefer to do, is use the best from the best, and that's what we did here.”

Gordon Bock is an architectural historian, an instructor with the National Preservation Institute (www.npi.org), and a speaker. He can be reached at www.gordonbock.com.
By Martha McDonald

RECENT PROJECT

When a tornado destroyed St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Ridgway, IL, the town consolidated four parishes and rebuilt as St. Kateri Tekakwitha. Designed by Cram and Ferguson, the new church is built to withstand severe weather conditions and earthquakes. All photos: Lindsay Adams

When a tornado hit St. Joseph Catholic Church in Ridgway, IL, in 2012, the 1894 brick Gothic structure was completely destroyed. The congregation has built a new church that was inspired by the original one, but it has made a number of changes and structural improvements.

The new church, now known as St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Church, consolidated four local parishes and took its name from the first American Indian saint. They turned to Cram and Ferguson of Concord, MA, to design the new building. Explaining the new name, Ethan Anthony, AIA, principal in charge, Cram and Ferguson, notes, "They combined several parishes so they chose a name that reflected something out of all of their experiences."

The 2012 tornado lifted the roof from the church and dropped it on the nearby rectory, narrowly missing Father Steven Beattie. The only portions of the building that survived were the 100-year-old Carrara marble altar and the bells from the bell tower. "The task given to us by Father
Steven was to replace the church, but not to make it an exact copy,” says Anthony. “They wanted a Neo-Gothic inspired church with a tower.”

One of the major challenges was building for weather challenges. The new building will withstand earthquakes, as well as future tornadoes and floods. To withstand shaking from the nearby Madrid Fault, it has a welded steel frame with quite a bit of X-bracing. Anthony points out that this welding added about three months to the construction process. As for tornadoes, the church is constructed to withstand 100mph winds.

The water table was another consideration. “The building is in a flood plain, so we set the floor to be one foot above the flood plain,” he adds, noting that the entire town was nearly destroyed by a flood in 1938. In addition, the area had to be de-watered for three months to lower the groundwater before construction could begin.

Yet another unusual feature is the large mechanical vault under the narthex, a usual feature since most buildings in the area are built on slabs. Although not an official refuge, it could provide shelter from a tornado, says Anthony. De-watering pipes and a membrane under and around the concrete structure make the vault waterproof, and a generator will provide electricity for a few days.

Completed in 2016 at a cost of $6 million, the 12,400-sq.ft. St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Church features a cruciform design that seats 425 and a tower that houses the original bells. The exterior is Wisconsin limestone quarried nearby in Missouri. “Father Steven wanted a stone church instead of brick like the original,” says Anthony. “This was a bit of a departure because the rest of the complex is brick.”
The trim is precast instead of carved stone, because it was more affordable, says Anthony. Another cost savings involved the use of gypsum wallboard instead of wood on the interior. “The ceiling supports are designed to look like painted wood trusses,” he says.

Windows are extruded aluminum with double-pane glass and tracks for insulated glass on the exterior and another track on the interior for stained glass windows. These were salvaged from another church that had closed.

Reaching a height of 155 ft., the tower includes a 95-ft. bell tower topped with a 60-ft. spire. It was supplied and installed by Campbellsville Industries. The roof is made of composition shingles designed to resemble slate. Supplied by EcoStar, they are made of a combination of recycled industrial plastic and rubber including recycled tires.

“We were able to produce a stone church on a very modest budget,” says Anthony. “It is a beautiful, permanent building that they can have for the next 100 years.”

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Designer, fabricator & installer of new stained & leaded glass: restoration & replication; protective glazing; beveled, carved & fused/slumped glass; steel casement retrofitting; mosaics; established in 1920.
Click on No. 6240 for stained glass; 1490 for windows

**Swiatek Studios**
716-597-6683; No fax
www.swiatekstudios.com
Buffalo, NY 14210
Restoration services: for churches & historical landmarks; decorative painting, statue restoration, brass plating, stained-glass restoration; murals, stenciling, faux finishes, gilding, marbleizing, carpentry, trompe l'oeil & decorative plaster.
Click on No. 2054

**TOI Inc.**
708-445-7290; Fax: 708-445-7234
www.toiwestores.com
Stone Pike, IL 60165
Historic restoration, conservation & preservation; decorative finishes, acoustic & historic wallcoverings, murals, gold leaf, wood graining faux marble & more.
Click on No. 2095
Bovard Studio’s Woodshop created this new rose window frame with plantation grown mahogany for the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Note: We also fabricate and install ornate aluminum frames.

Before Restoration

After Restoration

Bovard Studio Inc. repairs and replicates storm damaged stained glass windows in all styles and techniques. Bovard Studio Inc. has US Patent #7607267 framing systems designed for the conservation of stained glass windows with exterior glazing available in both wood and metal. Bovard Studio Inc. has framing and glazing systems approved for maximum hurricane and impact codes.

Louis Tiffany’s “The Good Shepherd”, exhibited at the 1893 World Columbian Exhibition. Tiffany’s stained glass masterpiece was restored by Bovard Studio Inc. for St. Luke’s United Methodist Church in Dubuque, Iowa.
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Old Westbury, NY 11568
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Click on No. 2094

Conrad Schmitt Studios, Inc.
800-969-3032; Fax: 262-786-8613
www.conradschmitt.com
New Berlin, WI 53151
Creator, conservator & restorer of decorative painting; stained & art glass; ornamental plaster work & ceilings; gilding; murals; mosaics & statuary for public & religious buildings; since 1889.

Click on No. 8080; 1841 for art glass; 1839 for ecclesiastical specialties

Commissioned portraits of hockey players for Toronto's Air Canada Centre were cast in bronze and installed by Erik Blome's Figurative Art Studio near Chicago, IL.

Figurative Art Studio, LLC
925-488-3466; No Fax
www.erikblome.com
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
Art studio: commissioned bronze sculpture; monumental historical pieces, children, birds, portraits & more.

This bronze spout with a leaf motif is the work of Hunt Studios.

Hunt Studios
415-401-7745; Fax: 415-373-4498
www.huntstonecarving.com
San Francisco, CA 94124
Full-service sculptural studio: figurative, ornamental & decorative carving & sculpture; restoration & conservation; ecclesiastical & monumental projects; custom maquette creation; public art commissions.

Click on No. 2094

Pigott Studio
518-541-2008
www.pigottstudio.com
Mechanicsville, NY 12118
Sculptor: specializes in the human form in freestanding or bas-relief formats; from small interior pieces to monumental works; quality portraits; trained in classical architecture & sculpture design.

Player Bronze
404-307-8613
www.playerbronze.com
Atlanta, GA 30309
Sculptor: Tom Player creates fine art bronze reliefs, icons, crosses & other religious symbols; from design to installation; winner of 2017 Shutze Award for artisanship.

Click on No. 2096

This representation of the Madonna and Child was cast by Modern Art Foundry.

Modern Art Foundry
718-728-2638; Fax: 718-267-0819
www.modernartfoundry.com
Astoria, NY 11105
Bronze casting: lost-wax & sand castings; nonferrous metals; sculpture & commemorative design services; conservation & maintenance; more than 70 years experience.

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Ecclesiastical Specialties

David Wilson Design
607-334-3015; Fax: 607-334-7055
www.davidwilsonodesign.com
S. New Berlin, NY 13843
Designer of glass art; site-specific architectural works; for public, corporate, private & religious buildings.

Dufour/Corso designed and fabricated this 520 square feet stained glass window/veil for the W.C.C. Claiborne Building in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Gerald Siciliano Studio Design Associates
718-636-4561; Fax: 702-442-7487
www.geraldsicilianostudio.com
Brooklyn, NY 11215
Custom fabricator of fine art; liturgical sculpture, architectural details, capitals, fountains, fireplaces & mantles; bronze, granite, marble & stone; interior & exterior; repair & restoration; studio & fieldwork; 30 years of experience.

Gerald Siciliano Studio Design Associates
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Custom fabricator of fine art; liturgical sculpture, architectural details, capitals, fountains, fireplaces & mantles; bronze, granite, marble & stone; interior & exterior; repair & restoration; studio & fieldwork; 30 years of experience.

This custom wood paneled ceiling/trim was created by Heritage Restoration using a mixture of new and restored wood sections.

Heritage Restoration & Design
309-637-5484; Fax: 309-637-5740
www.heritagegard.com
Peoria, IL 61603
Historic preservation and replication of: wood doors, trim, altars, pews, staircases, stained glass, fine arts. New design/fabrication of custom wood furniture, traditional windows, oil paintings, mosaics. Generational company.

Click on No. 2093

Crenshaw Lighting
540-745-3900; Fax: 540-745-3911
www.crenshawlighting.com
Floyd, VA 24091
Designer & manufacturer of fine lighting since 1957: custom designs; historic restoration & replication; contemporary, residential, government, university, worship, theatre, museum, interior & exterior; handmade in the USA.

Click on No. 313

Fredrick & Emily's Church Renovations
717-288-2722
www.fredrickandemilys.com
Mount Joy, PA 17552
Restorer & refinisher of church pews, altars & chancel furniture; layout modifications; pew modifications; cushions & kneelers.

Click on No. 2093

Baker Liturgical Art restored the interior of Holy Family Church in Watertown, NY.

Baker Liturgical Art, LLC
800-621-7471; Fax: 800-621-7477
www.bakerliturgicalart.com
Plantsville, CT 06064
Supplier of liturgical furnishings & art; complete range of restoration services, design to final decoration; baptismal fonts, mural restoration, statuary, tile & wood flooring, custom doors & millwork.

Bovard Studio created the stained-glass San Damiano Cross for St. Patrick's Chapel in Denison, TX.

Bovard Studio, Inc.
641-472-2824; Fax: 641-472-9734
www.bovardstudio.com
Fairfield, IA 52556
Restorer, designer & fabricator of stained-glass windows: faceted glass, mosaics & hand-crafted wood, aluminum & steel frames; protective glazing systems vented for stained-glass conserva
tion, U.S. patent 4760276, replicates lost stained-glass windows.

Click on No. 7690

Cave Company
800-889-2263; Fax: 516-767-9095
www.churchgoods.net
Old Westbury, NY 11568
Interior services for churches: painting, decorating, restoring, artwork & murals, statuary; also manufactures fiberglass religious statuary & electric decorative candle stands.

Click on No. 2094

Christoph Paccard Bell Foundry
908-886-5670
www.christophpaccard.com
Charleston, SC 29414
Foundry: specializes in installation of cast bronze bells, chimes, carillons, electronic carillon systems, tower clocks & turn-key bell & clock tower projects; custom design & installation service; service, restoration & repairs for new or existing bell & clock systems.

Click on No. 2081

Covington & Boling
705-842-6464; Fax: 705-842-6465
www.covingtonboling.com
Covington, VA 24426
Our specialty: stained glass art glass & restorations; glass & leaded glass; conservation, restoration.

Click on No. 1426

Crenshaw Lighting
540-745-3900; Fax: 540-745-3911
www.crenshawlighting.com
Floyd, VA 24091
Designer & manufacturer of fine lighting since 1957: custom designs; historic restoration & rep
ilication; contemporary, residential, government, university, worship, theatre, museum, interior & exterior; handmade in the USA.

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David Wilson Design
607-334-3015; Fax: 607-334-7055
www.davidwilsonodesign.com
S. New Berlin, NY 13843
Designer of glass art; site-specific architectural works; for public, corporate, private & religious buildings.

Dufour/Corso designed and fabricated this 520 square feet stained glass window/veil for the W.C.C. Claiborne Building in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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The Intensive program satisfies the core subject requirements for the ICAA's Certificate in Classical Architecture.

Cost: $2,000 for members, $2,100 for non-members, and $1,250 for students. Scholarships available.

Credits: 57.5 AIA LU's, 57.5 credits towards the Certificate in Classical Architecture

To learn more and to register:
classicist.org
(212) 730-9646 ext. 111
education@classicist.org
Parrett Windows & Doors replicated this historic window for a 19th-century church in Erie, PA.

Parrett Windows & Doors
800-541-9527; Fax: 877-238-2452
www.parrettwindows.com
Dorchester, WI 54425
Manufacturer of custom, quality wood & aluminum-clad windows & doors: vast array of options, numerous wood species & complete finishing capabilities; historical replications; screen doors, casings & moldings.
Click on No. 3003

This historically styled sash lock is available from Phelps Company.

Phelps Company
603-336-6213; Fax: 603-336-6035
www.phelpscompany.com
Hinsdale, NH 03451
Manufacturer of traditional hot-forged solid-brass window hardware: sash pulleys, weights, chains, lifts & locks; stop-bead adjusters, spring bolts, window ventilation locks, push-out casement hardware, storm/screen-door latch sets & more.
Click on No. 6001

The round-top C418RT entrance door with matching "Manhattan" screen and storm door was fabricated in solid mahogany by Vintage Doors.

Vintage Doors
800-717-2001; Fax: 315-324-6531
www.vintagedoors.com
Hammond, NY 13646
Manufacturer of custom exterior & interior wood doors: door hardware, screen doors & storm doors; traditional, Craftsman & Victorian Styles; solid wood & glass panels available.
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www.fosterwood.com
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www.heartpine.com
Micanopy, FL 32667
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www.tile-source.com
Hilton Head Island, SC 29926
Supplier of genuine encaustic tile, simulated reproductions & Victorian-style wall & fireplace tile: advice on economical restoration of 19th-century ceramic floors for public buildings, courthouses & private homes.

Click on No. 2845 for tile; 8121 for plaques.
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Buon Fresco
888-87-3726; No fax
www.blresco.com
Alexandria, VA 22312
Creator of interior murals & decorative paintings: faux finishing, graining & marbleizing; Venetian plaster; gilding services.

Cave Company
516-333-3659; Fax: 516-676-9695
www.churchgoods.net
Old Westbury, NY 11568
Interior services for churches; painting, decorating, restoring; artwork & murals; statues; also manufactures fiberglass religious statues & electric devotional candle stands.
Click on No. 2094

City Arts/Peck Studios created this large bird mosaic for a public space in the Washington, DC, area.

City Arts/Peck Studios
202-331-1966; Fax: 202-331-1966
www.peckstudios.com
Washington, DC 20001
Designer & installer of large-scale public decorative works: murals & trompe l'oeil paintings, mosaics, faux finishes, graining, keim mineral systems & gilding.

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We provide over fifty years of experience in the restoration and investigation of original religious decorative schemes and custom finishes.

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Clem Labine’s Traditional Building 49
John Tiedemann, Inc.
877-630-2666; Fax: 201-991-3195
www.johntiedemann.com
North Arlington, NJ 07031
Restorer of interior elements: interior painting & design, liturgical renderings, decorative granite flooring, faux finishes, murals & frescoes, gilding, art glass, fine art, paint & plaster analysis, historic analysis & testing.

Rambusch's The Shrine of the Good Shepherd, exterior mosaic tesserae panel hand-set in Italy, displaying images of saints and including a stone bench for quiet reflection at St. Vincent Martyr Church, Madison, N.J.

Rambusch Decorating Co.
201-333-2525; Fax: 201-433-3355
www.rambusch.com
Jersey City, NJ 07304
Designer & fabricator of public & ecclesiastical art & stained glass: altars, ambos, arks, crosses & more; decorative painting; murals & mosaics; lighting; commercial environments; since 1898.

Swiatek Studios conserved this mural at Corpus Christi Church in Buffalo, NY.

Swiatek Studios
716-597-6663; No fax
www.swiatekstudios.com
Buffalo, NY 14210
Restoration services: for churches & historical landmarks; decorative painting, statue restoration, brass plating, stained-glass restoration; murals, stenciling, faux finishes, gilding, marbleizing, carpentry, trompe l'oeil & decorative plaster.

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Conrad Schmitt Studios, Inc.
800-969-3033; Fax: 202-786-5038
www.conradschmitt.com
New Berlin, WI 53151
Creator, conservator & restorer of decorative painting: stained & art glass; ornamental plaster work & ceilings; gilding; murals, mosaics & statuary; for public & religious buildings; since 1889.

Canning Studios restored the decorative painting scheme for the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing, MI.

EverGreene Architectural Arts
212-244-2800; Fax: 212-244-4204
www.evergreene.com
New York, NY 10001
Decorative-arts studio: murals, decorative painting, gilding, plaster, wood, metal, stone & mosaics; new design, conservation & restoration; ecclesiastical, institutional, public & commercial projects; offices in NYC & Chicago.


Cornice #6310 and niche cap #7821 from Felber Ornamental Plastering Corp. were used in this custom wall installation.

Felber Ornamental Plastering
800-392-6836; Fax: 619-275-6836
www.felber.net
Parkesburg, PA 19365
Creator & manufacturer of interior & exterior molded ornament: capitals, cornices, friezes, niches, keystones, rosettes, coffers, domes & medallions; custom mantels; plaster, gypsum & GRG; GFRC; signage, plaques, sculptors, model makers & casters on staff; stock & custom.

Click on No. 2890

Conrad Schmitt Studios provided a new palette and design artistry comprised of faux stone painting to enhance the Romanesque interior of the Basilica of Holy Hill, National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians in Hubertus, WI.

Click on No. 2460 for decorative painting; 743 for ecclesiastical specialties; 2678 for plasterwork

John Canning Conservation & Painting Studios
203-272-9868; Fax: 203-272-9879
www.johncanningco.com
Cheshire, CT 06410
Restorer, conservator & designer of decorative finishes, ornamental plaster & wood; historic paint analysis; plaster consolidation & stabilization; decorative paint, murals, interior & exterior gilding, wood graining, metal & stone cleaning.

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Pictured above: Restored Sanctuary of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church - Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Interiors Lighting

Crenshaw Lighting
540-745-3900; Fax: 540-745-3911
www.crenshawlighting.com
Floyd, VA 24091
Designer & manufacturer of lighting: custom designs; eclectic restoration & replication; contemporary, residential, government, university, worship, theatre, museum; interior & exterior; handmade in the USA; since 1957.
Click on No. 313

Authentic Designs offers handmade lighting fixtures in heavy-gauge brass, copper or terne in a wide range of finishes.

Authentic Designs
800-844-9416; Fax: 802-294-2422
www.authenticdesigns.com
West Rupert, VT 05776
Manufacturer of historical lighting fixtures & specialty metal products: chandeliers, lanterns, sconces & table lamps crafted in brass, copper, terne metal & Vermont maple; Early American & Colonial; CUIUL listed for wet & damp locations; library binder S30.
Click on No. 60

Lighting for the City Hall Annex project in Honolulu, HI, was refurbished by C.W. Cole; the renovations consist of 18- and 30-in. chandeliers and a matching 18-in. surface-mounted ceiling fixture.

Cole & Co., C.W.
626-443-2422; Fax: 626-443-9253
www.colelighting.com
South El Monte, CA 91732
Manufacturer of specialty & custom lighting fixtures: interior church lighting; landscape lighting & spotlights; fencing; antique refurbishments; for commercial & institutional use.

This lead-coated-copper hanging lantern, model #251 from Deep Landing Workshop, is 9½ in. wide and 21½ in. tall.

Deep Landing Workshop
877-778-4022; Fax: 877-778-4070
www.deeplandingworkshop.com
Chesterstown, MD 21619
Manufacturer of custom lighting fixtures: chandeliers, sconces, pendants & lanterns; new designs, historic reproductions & custom work; handcrafted in wood, tin, brass or copper; glass, mica or alabaster shades.
Click on No. 809

This chandelier was designed and fabricated by Crenshaw Lighting.

Grand Light restored and rewired three chandeliers for Yale University's Marquand Chapel.

Grand Light
800-822-1469; Fax: 203-828-6307
www.grandlight.com
Seymour, CT 06483
Restorer of historic lighting fixtures & manufacturer of custom lighting fixtures: metal fabrication, glass fabrication, metal finishing, polishing, painting, welding, abrasive blasting; historical replication & reproduction.
Click on No. 2006

The Hampton Copper Lantern Wall Light with Bracket, shown here; from Lanternland, is in a traditional Antique Copper finish with Seedy Glass.

Manning Lighting provided the fixtures for the St. Pius X Catholic Church in Granger, IN. (Photo by Matt Cashore.)

Click on No. 2673
Manning Lighting, Inc.
920-458-2184; Fax: 920-458-2491
www.manninglight.com
Shiocton, WI 54170
Supplier of contemporary & traditional lighting: custom church lighting; restoration of historical

Mills Architectural Lighting supplied this custom energy-efficient fixture for the Mary Mother of God Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Click on No. 1096
Lanterland
955-454-5280; Fax: 480-962-1997
www.lanterland.com
Mesa, AZ 85219
Manufacturer of lighting: artisan handmade copper & brass lanterns & outdoor lighting; many period styles.

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— Rev. Msgr. George F. Hundt
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A look at the restoration of state capitol buildings around the country, a feature analyzing what our readers liked and clicked on in 2017, and book reviews by Clem Labine and Patrick Webb.

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Architectural Iron
restored this massive cast-and-wrought-iron main gate for the Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, DC.

Architectural Iron Co.
900-442-4766; Fax: 570-295-4766
www.architecturaliron.com
Milford, PA 18337
Manufacturer of historical wrought- & cast-iron items: columns, benches, fences, gates, crests, cast-iron window sash weights & more; restoration & custom casting; foundry & blacksmithing; field removal & installation services.

Compass Ironworks
717-442-4546; Fax: 717-442-1948
www.ironworkclassics.com
Gap, PA 17527
Fabricator of wrought-iron metalwork: gates, fences, railings, décor; family owned, handcrafted; historical styles; recycled content.

Flaherty Iron Works, Inc.
703-971-7653; Fax: 703-971-0840
www.flahertyironworks.com
Alexandria, VA 22310
Custom fabricator of hand-forged metalwork: sculpture, gates, railings & furniture.

This ornate historically styled ironwork is the work of the artisans as Compass Ironworks.

Custom Ornamental Iron Works
602-275-2581; Fax: 602-275-2953
www.customironworks.com
Phoenix, AZ 85034
Supplier of wrought-iron, ornamental iron & aluminum gate & stair parts & accessories; all items in stock; in-house production.

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Wiemann Metalcraft created the decorative ironwork for St. Therese's Church in Collinsville, OK.

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Campbellsville Industries fabricated the steeple for the Second Presbyterian Church in Louisville, KY.

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www.cvilleindustries.com
Campbellsville, KY 42718
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This cupola from Cape Cod Cupola is shown with the firm’s Marconi Rigg Sailboat weathervane.

Cape Cod Cupola Co.
508-394-2119; Fax: 508-597-2511
www.capecodcupola.com
North Dartmouth, MA 02747
Manufacturer of cupolas: with windows or louvers; available in finished pine or maintenance-free PVC; weathervanes & finals.

Copper-Inc.com
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www.copper-inc.com
Galveston, TX 77551
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Heather & Little completed this zinc steeple for the SMU Perkins Chapel in Dallas, TX.

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The Durable Restoration Co. repaired the roofs and replicated the original copper cross at the Incarnate Word Catholic Church in New Orleans, LA.

Click on No. 2470

NIKO completed this zinc steeple for the SMU Perkins Chapel in Dallas, TX.

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www.gregorymullerassoc.com
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www.stonelegends.com
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This Baroque detail was hand-carved by Agrell.

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Enkeboll Designs' custom carvings include this 3-foot-high processional cross for The Walk to Emmaus. At the bottom, Jesus' intertwined hands morph into a traditional cross.

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Boris Khechoyan hand carved this altar three candle holders and the processional cross in oak for a Lutheran church.

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Michael A. Dow hand carved these 30-in.-tall acanthus-leaf brackets in Honduras mahogany.

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Celebrating Our Artisans

Good Work: Masters of the Building Arts
Directed by Marjorie Hunt and Paul Wagner
65 minutes; $24.95

A craftsman works, between blueprint and finished product, with creativity and ability, to make a building a piece of art. In the documentary, Good Work: Masters of the Building Arts, co-directors Marjorie Hunt and Paul Wagner celebrate the hardworking craftspeople whose hands create our nation's monuments. Through wood, stone, plaster, brick, metal, glass, clay, and paint, skilled workers shape raw materials and generations of knowledge to turn vision into reality.

Good Work: Masters of the Building Arts, a 65-minute documentary celebrating the artisans in America's building trades, was born out of a living exhibition at the 2001 Smithsonian Folklife Festival of the same name. It was produced in association with the American Institute of Architects, the Associated General Contractors of America, the National Building Museum, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Through profiles of eight master craftspeople, the film encapsulates what it means to be a modern day traditional building artisan. Take for example, stained-glass artisan Dieter Goldkuhle and adobe craftsman Albert Parra. Exposed to the elements under the New Mexican sun, Albert restores a traditional morada, or chapter house, of one of 80 surviving Penitente fraternities. With the help of other members of the community, he uses mud plaster to mend the building's façade. This is the traditional method and requires Parra and his team to return year after year.

Sure, they could have a stucco company come in, cement the whole thing, and be done with it. This, Perra says, would cause the 300-year-old building to die. His annual maintenance is a “journey of faith” that causes the structure to breathe with the seasons and provide greater connectivity to the people it serves.

In contrast to Perra's community effort is the solitary stained-glass work of Dieter Goldkuhle. Having worked with the National Cathedral for over 37 years, on over 100 windows, Dieter approaches his detailed work with enthusiasm and respect. Handling every step of the process, from cutting to placement, he views his craft as a total expression of himself, exclaiming on the subject with contagious pride. "It can be smoldering, it can be subdued, it can be brilliant," Dieter says of the Cathedral's stained glass, "by revolving around the sun in a 24-hour cycle, it has a tie to the universe, to the solar system...to me that is the spirituality of a stained-glass window." Dieter passed away before the film's release in 2011.

Watching Good Work at Washington National Cathedral, my appreciation for the unsung artists soared like the cathedral spires they restore. Those who have bent metal, sculpted stone, and laid foundations will outlive us all through their work and will awe future generations. Through their stories, this viewer understands that these artisans work with pride and passion. Skilled and steadfast, they are dedicated to continuing the traditional methods of their craft.

The film itself is a carefully crafted passion project from co-directors Marjorie Hunt and Paul Wagner. The duo has documented craftsmen before in the Academy Award winning documentary The Stonemasons. Expanding on themes first sculpted in Stone Carvers, Good Work places builders front and center.

"People generally aren't aware," says Hunt in a panel discussion after the screening, "of the important role the craftsman plays in the architectural project. A lot of times people think of the architect or the building itself and lost somewhere in the equation are the craftspeople who bring it to life through their knowledge of materials and tools, their quest for mastery."

The film successfully shines a spotlight on the too often overlooked artisan; it also doesn't shy away from the subject of the industry's future. Stone cutters, glass blowers, iron forgers, wood carvers...these are skills and crafts that evolve through families, refined by the soul of each practitioner. Good Work clearly illustrates the importance for future generations to preserve handcrafted traditional building materials and methods, and by simply showing the pleasure and pride the craftspeople take in their work, is an inspirational call to the craft.

The video is available for $24.95 from Amazon at www.amazon.com/Good-Work-Masters-Building-Arts/dp/B01M9DV8UR.

Griffin Suber is the Marketing Director for the Home Group at Active Interest Media.
Unity by Exclusion?

By Duncan Stroik

ost modern people (if they are not trained as modernist architects) have imbibed the idea that architectural consistency is the highest form of order. This means that college campuses should use the same color brick, Gothic buildings should never have classical additions and modernist churches should only have modernist additions. But what if they are ugly, falling down or inhospitable?

Where is our purported love of diversity when it comes to building in neighborhoods or renovating churches? We worry what the neighbors would think if we tried to build a Romanesque church among Prairie school apartment buildings. "It might not fit in," we say. Yet it seems that when traditional churches get additions from other historic styles they survive.

How did the master-builders of the Gothic cathedrals regard consistency of style? In many Gothic cathedrals there are abrupt changes in style as new designers and patrons took over. Why then does the basilica of St. Peters in Rome, though it took approximately 150 years to complete, seem all of one piece? More than 20 architects (most of them famous) and 21 popes had a hand in it. If you know what to look for you can see their individual talent: Bramante's plan, Antonio da Sangallo'sedicules, Michelangelo's dome, Maderno's nave, and Bernini's bronze baldacchino being among the most famous. How did this happen? It would seem that their egos were balanced out by an appreciation of architettura antica, a shared love of tradition.

Thus, stylistic consistency is not necessarily a bad thing. In my own firm, we have often tried to design new things that look original. But what should we do if the existing building is a mediocre example of Midwestern Gothic or an incompetent essay in Beaux-Arts Classicism? Couldn't we improve these historic buildings by bringing something more elegant, simpler or even more complex into the mix? Could the renovation of a church enrich it by adding stylistic elements, materials or art forms that the original architect could not countenance or afford?

The vitality of disparate architectural traditions is manifest in the work of English ecclesiologist Sir Ninian Comper who practiced architecture up through 1930s. Comper's early works were essays in pure English Gothic which he learned from G.F. Bodley (designer of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC) and others.

Comper's designs manifested a unity by the exclusion of all other styles. As he matured and traveled to the Middle East, he fell in love with an architecture of palimpsest, churches which had been added to over the centuries. He began to embrace aspects of the classical tradition, such as the Early Christian baldacchino, the basilica type, and baroque statuary within a generally medieval church body.

He called it "unity by inclusion" rather than "unity by exclusion." Previous ages had practiced inclusion without ever naming it. You see this in the Early Christian basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin with its Gothic baldacchino, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris with its baroque altar and at the Gothic duomo in Florence with its Renaissance dome.

"Unity by inclusion" allows baroque side chapels and Neo-Classical altarpieces to be inserted into high Renaissance churches like the Gesù. If we were to be stylistically consistent we should reject the use of stained glass in classical churches, yet we have come to accept it whether in colonial churches in New Haven or neo-baroque churches in Chicago.

For all of our pride in America's variety of ethnicities and rhetoric about diversity we often prefer unity by exclusion in our architecture. A Renaissance high altar in a Gothic hall church would never do. Yet, what could be more beautiful than to have Titian paint a huge Renaissance altarpiece complete with a classical frame in the apse of a Gothic church in Venice? A true masterpiece is at home in a traditional building of any style and traditional styles, if well executed, can absorb other traditional styles.

For many, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome may be acceptable because it seems stylistically consistent. Yet, across town at St. John Lateran, we see everything that is wrong with inclusion: a cruciform basilica from 318, a cosmatesque floor from the 1300s, a Gothic baldacchino from 1369, coffered ceiling from the 1500s, a baroque nave from 1650, a Neo-Classical façade from 1735 and, would you believe it, a neo-Medieval apse from the 1800s.

Too much variety, inconsistency and chaos. Or is it? Along with this incredible stylistic diversity there is also a great unity. We see the history of Christian art and architecture in one building, a gift from saints and sinners throughout the centuries. Looking at it that way, it makes sense that St. John Lateran has so much variety.

Consider the wonderful complexity and harmony that results. Not the consistent beating of a drum but a variety of instruments and themes that make up a majestic symphony. It is not the cacophony that often happens when contemporary architects add on, but a four-part harmony of the sacred.

At St. John Lateran, each architect says it in a slightly different way, like so many voices in a choir.

This Christian church, the oldest in continuous use, is perhaps the most striking example of what happens when a house of God is built over the centuries. Whether it is the addition of a Romanesque church to a colonial city, such as at Trinity in Boston, or the beautification of a Midwestern Gothic church using classical vocabulary, traditional styles can speak to one another.

Modernism, for all of its strengths, cannot do this. It cannot converse with the past, except to disparage or destroy it. This is not because modernism values simplicity. Simplicity is a legitimate theme in sacred architecture, particularly the monastic or the mendicant orders. It is more that modernism denies the human figure and all that it represents, it rejects traditional architecture, ornament and decoration thus becoming the ultimate expression of "unity by exclusion."

Duncan Stroik is a professor of architecture at the University of Notre Dame, editor of Sacred Architecture Journal, with an architectural practice that focuses on sacred architecture.
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