

William Rawn Associates Architects, Inc.

Church of the Transfiguration, Community of Jesus » Orleans, Massachusetts



To ensure that liturgical furnishings and art were integrated with the building, an iconographic planning group was convened even before an architect was hired. The architect and artists all agreed to collaborate, ensuring that worship would be fostered, and the gospel message proclaimed. An international team of artists worked closely with community members and the planning committee, adhering to a comprehensive master plan, and teaching members of the community in their specialized crafts. The church became a living vessel for the sacramental economy: Helen McLean from Ireland designed the mosaic apse, processional path mosaic, stained-glass oculus window, altar mensa, interior lintel and pillars of doors, corner pilaster capitals, bronze work for ambo and font. Romolo Del Deo from New York created monumental bronze doors, bronze font gates and bowls, and an ambo reading desk; Daphne du Barry, a Dutch artist, created the 14-foot bronze "Angel of the Church" atop the bell tower; Florentine artist Silvestro Pistoiesi created a complete cycle of mural frescoes; a Cape Cod artist assembled the gems of Revelation 21 into a bronze processional cross; Gabriele Wilpers from Germany created the 45-foot-tall glass sculpture for the west wall; Chris Kanaga, Soren Olsen, and Susan Kanag--a team of American liturgical designers--created the altar, ambo, font, paschal candle stand, sanctuary floor design, and drawings for the stone sculpted capitals; Alessandra Caprara from Italy created 4,000 square feet of mosaic, for nave processional path and apse, painted first

in full-scale images by McLean; Regis Demange from France provided stone relief sculpture for the lintels, mensa, and 58 column capitals for the church, atrium, and cloister. In integrating the arts in service to sacrament and scripture, certain foundational principles guided the decisions, such as: biblical fidelity; coherent interplay between differing art media; space and iconography build community; elements engage all present in communal, sacramental work.

Jury Comments

The arts shown in this project are in support of the liturgical action. Symbolism, art, and architectural form are blended, and there is an astonishing variety of art forms celebrating this community. From floors to frescos to furnishings to paintings to carvings to tile work--all are integrated into the structure of the building as a feast for the eyes. The artworks are beautifully executed with extremely high craft.

Architect

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Photographer

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