

tron screens and other large-scale telecommunication devices for the viewing benefit of large assemblies (Fig. 6). At the same time, the vehicle-free Saint Peter's Square reminds us that automobiles need not dominate a sacred site and that its visitors will gladly traverse considerable distances on foot if they deem the journey worthwhile. Daily, of course, people of all ages and physical abilities meander through Bernini's vast, uncovered forecourt as part of an uphill trek to the Basilica, their spirits lightened by having escaped the debilitating frenzy of Rome's own streets.

The more modest grounds of American churches, too, can be oasis-like places marked by the tranquility and order modern Catholics secretly desire even while enduring the very freneticism their automobiles make possible. To the extent that architects and pastors alike prevent sacred sites from resembling the mean, paved expanses of commercial parking lots, they minister wisely to the faithful (Figs. 7A and B). Like the church squares of Europe, the grounds of even the humblest American parish can be venues for collecting and serving people, not just their vehicles, and places where the juncture of road and rood points to the life-long journey of the spirit to which every Christian is called.

Michael E. DeSanctis, Ph.D. is Professor of Fine Arts and Director of the Honors Program at Gannon University in Erie,

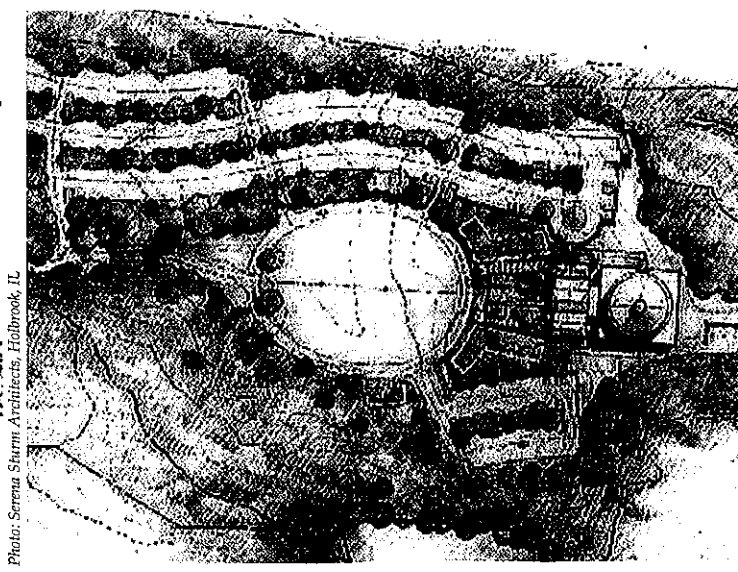
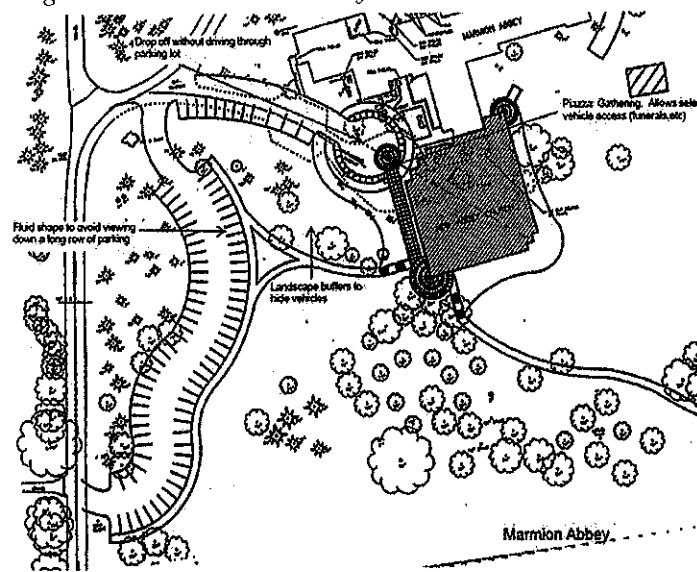


Figure 7: Serpentine parking arrangements with extensive landscaping distinguish the ecclesiastical site from the commercial one. At left: Marmion Abbey, Aurora, IL, 1998. At right: Saint Bede Church, Williamsburg, VA, 2005.

PA. He writes widely on Catholic church architecture and serves as a liturgical designer and consultant. He can be reached at desancti001@gannon.edu.

(Endnotes)

- 1 At a talk I offered recently to a regional chapter of the American Institute of Architects, for example, serious questions arose from younger practitioners about the future of the building arts in a techno-culture whose electronically simulated environments make traditional places unnecessary. Any parent who has watched a child slide into the electronic simulacra of an Xbox game, for example, knows how oblivious one can become to the general buzz that surrounds them in "real" space and time.
- 2 The latter, like the suburban setting in which it is typically found, is a direct product of the automobile, which allows Catholics living at considerable distance from each other to maintain some semblance of parochial "community."
- 3 Experience gained from my work as a design consultant suggests that the symbolic component of a church building's main, or "processional," entrance is of little consequence to modern Catholics and that they typically assume seats within the building closest to where their cars are parked outside.
- 4 The so-called "Seven-Minute Homily" has become the standard shared by American pastors, who know that by preaching beyond this modest limit and thereby lengthening the Mass they risk fouling up completely the strict cycle of vehicular traffic that must flow unencumbered through their campuses. Even the Word of God, apparently, is expected to defer to the automated ebb and tide of worshippers that is a parish's lifeblood. I once attended an Easter Vigil service in a parish that had succumbed to the tyranny of the parking lot. So many components had been lopped off of this most solemn of rites to facilitate parishioners' departure from the premises that I was able to begin my journey home barely an hour after arriving for worship.
- 5 <http://www.nfcym.org/resources/ymnm/drivers.htm>, August 29, 2005.
- 6 In some parishes, of course, an annual "Blessing of Motor Vehicles" ceremony is maintained, during which members of the pastoral staff may pray blessing 868 C from the Church's official *Book of Blessings*, which invokes God to help drivers make Christ "... the companion of their journey" whether their travels be for business or pleasure." See International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Book of Blessings* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1989), 378.
- 7 Though no scholarly figures exist on the popularity of luxury cars among American clergy, anecdotal evidence abounds that priests own and drive nicer vehicles than their parishioners. Members of the clergy themselves seem aware of at least the perception that they enjoy access to high-prices cars, as is clear from a confession by Capuchin Father Martin Pable's book *A Religious Vocation: Is It For Me?* (*Our Sunday Visitor*, 1994) excerpted on a website maintained by the Office of Vocations of the Diocese of Reno. Pable admits that a popular image of priests

is that "[t]hey live in nice comfortable homes, they dress in the latest fashions, they drive luxury cars." See <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/global-climate-change-a-plea-for-dialogue-prudence-and-the-common-good.cfm> <http://vocationsreno.com/discernment/isitforme.shtml>.

- 8 An estimated 75 percent of American Catholics now live in suburbs. See *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Almanac 2009*, Matthew Bunson (ed.) (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor), 362.
- 9 A survey of some 26,000 households conducted jointly in 2001 by federal Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) and Highway Administration (FHWA) suggests that there are nearly two (1.9) vehicles available to every licensed American driver. Data also suggest that vehicles used as a means of transport to religious services carry an average of only 1.7 occupants and that over 15 percent fewer trips are made weekly to "school/church" than to "social/entertainment" events. See "National Household Survey (Washington: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2001), 2, 10-11. In a statement promulgated in 2001, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) warned the faithful to resist "... the frenzy of wanting more and more—a bigger home, a larger car..." and encouraged them instead to simplify their lives. See "Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good," (par. 360), <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/global-climate-change-a-plea-for-dialogue-prudence-and-the-common-good.cfm>.
- 10 The high ratio of parking spaces to church occupants required by the municipal building codes of many communities do nothing to encourage Catholics to share vehicles on days of worship. The 3-to-7 configuration maintained in Collier County, FL, site of such tourist/retirement communities as Naples and San Marco, for example, presumes that on average only two Catholics occupy a church-going vehicle, though it might be much more beneficial for the elderly couples to double-up for their trips to the Mass.
- 11 The vehicle's pedigree, not to mention the sheer gigantism of its form and cost, its poor fuel economy, and emissions record, together mock the Church's stance on peacemaking and responsible stewardship of the planet.
- 12 *Gather Faithfully Together: Guide for Sunday Mass*, 1997.
- 13 Op. cit., art. 31.
- 14 *Neither Strangers nor Spectators*, 2000.
- 15 Op. Cit., p. 5.
- 16 *Liturgical Policy and Guidelines for Building and Renovation* (Office of Worship, Diocese of Wilmington, 1999), art. 303-18.1
- 17 *Building and Renovation Guidelines* (Diocese of San Diego, 1998), 3.
- 18 *Built of Living Stones* (Washington: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), art. 209.
- 19 Another wrinkle in this trend involves Catholics who claim "membership" in a Newman Center or other campus ministry-affiliated community, which fills their sacramental needs while exempting them from real or financial commitment to a parish.
- 20 "Reflections: Parish Membership and Boundaries," *The Observer* (Diocese of Rockford, IL, February 2, 2001), 5.

THIRTEENTH, GREATEST OF CENTURIES?

Randall B. Smith

An American physician and native New York Catholic by the name of James Joseph Walsh once published a wonderful little book entitled *Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries*, in which he extolled the virtues of that bygone era. There were indeed many such virtues, but as the great French philosopher and medievalist Étienne Gilson is reported to have once said about the Middle Ages: "I love studying them, but I'm glad I didn't have to live in them." There is also, of course, Edward Arlington Robinson's famous character from the poem "Miniver Cheevy." Two stanzas from that poem are especially fun:

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and
steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

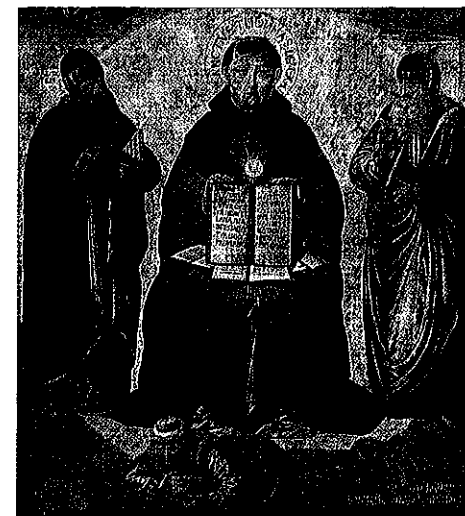
Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Then there is my favorite stanza of all:

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

The Medici aren't exactly "mediæval," but there are plenty who overromanticize the Renaissance in much the same way people sometimes overromanticize the Middle Ages.

Don't get me wrong. Like Gilson, I love the Middle Ages. I never tire of studying them, especially those geniuses like Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventure, who were among the finest intellects who ever lived. And yet, by the same token, to be honest, I'm glad I didn't live then. It's not merely that I prefer flushing toilets, streets unclogged with mounds of horse and human fecal material, clean water, antibiotics, air-conditioning, the ability to buy dozens and dozens of printed books at will, including all the collected works of both Plato



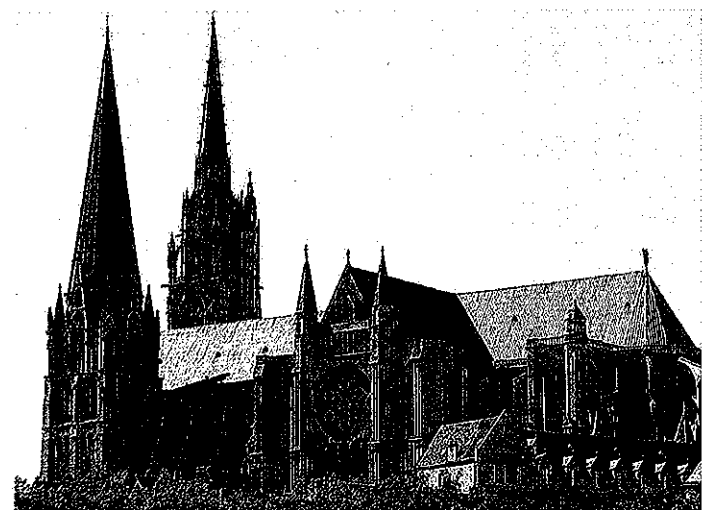
Saint Thomas Aquinas between Aristotle and Plato, Benozzo Gozzoli, Louvre

and Aristotle, safety in travel, political stability, the freedom to vote and move about as I wish, and many other creature comforts it would take too long to mention, none of which were available to even the wealthiest medieval king. We think we have problems (and we do), but they're really just pin-pricks compared to the near-constant onslaught of troubles medieval men and women of the Church had to endure.

Let's begin with just the political intrigues. I'm always amused when I hear contemporary people say that things "move so much faster" now than they did back in "the olden days." You get this picture of rustic people, working in their fields patiently, year after year, waiting for something, *anything* interesting to happen. Everybody moves in slow motion; nothing major changes. Of course nothing could be further from the truth. The political intrigues were constant and borders shifted repeatedly. The map of Europe has been relatively stable for decades. You wouldn't have found anything like that sort of stability during most of the Middle Ages. If you were a "lord," you could simultaneously be a vassal of another king with regard to certain of your lands, and he could be your vassal with regard to other lands. People's loyalties were always in question and shifted constantly. And then, of course, there was that very confusing time in the fourteenth century when there were three claimants to be the true pope, none of whom was particularly worthy of the job—and yet the Holy Spirit brought us through in spite of all that.

We sometimes look upon the great instances of medieval sacred architecture and say: "Behold one of the glories of human achievement." And so they are—in a way. But not entirely. What I suggest we realize is the degree to which the Holy Spirit was able to guide the Church even through the most confusing and troubled times to produce edifices of lasting beauty and importance, churches that have lent dignity and nobility to the towns in which they stand, and which have been a blessing to their citizens for centuries.

Allow me to give just one example of what I mean. Certainly one of the most beautiful and artistically rich of the Gothic churches in Europe is the cathedral dedicated to Our Lady in Chartres, France, roughly seventy miles outside of Paris. On the contemporary scene, one sometimes comes upon rooms filled with odd sculptures and lighted tubes and painted walls that have been given the very serious-sounding name of "an artistic installation." Whether or not it's "artistic" is often open to question, but that it has been "installed," usually in such a manner that it gets in the way of where you want to go, cannot be denied. The point of such "installations," I am told, is to combine all the various arts in one concentrated space: painting, sculpture, light, music, words. Such installations are meant to bathe your senses. Usually they just offend your sensibilities, but we'll leave that aside for the moment. What these modern "installations" are attempting to do and usually do very badly, the cathedral church at Chartres does as brilliantly as any piece of art ever created. It is a work of art that combines all the arts into one concentrated space. There is the beauty of the music and the spoken word. There is the beauty of the stained glass, the quality of the changing light throughout the day, the sculptures that adorn the columns and capitals. Every part of the cathedral speaks and teaches; it tells the story of salvation history cul-



The beautiful cathedral of Chartres. The circumstances surrounding its construction were not so edifying.

Photo: Randall B. Smith

minating in the coming of the Savior Jesus Christ. You could study the building literally for decades and still not have plumbed the depths of its theological and artistic richness.

That's all fine and good. But now let's take a look at some of the circumstances surrounding its construction. As one commentator has written: "The cathedral itself was a house divided." It's a nice line, but a "house divided against itself cannot stand," or so the Scriptures (and Abraham Lincoln) tell us. What's amazing is that with all the division, Chartres continued to rise and still stands today. The basic source of the divisions at Chartres came from conflicts between three distinct sources of authority whose interests often came into conflict: first, the Count of Blois, within whose territory the city of Chartres was located; second, the local bishop of Chartres, whose seat was at the Cathedral, but whose duties would often take him throughout a wide-ranging archdiocese; and finally, third, what is called "the cathedral chapter." The term "chapter" originally was used for a congregation of monks, but it was extended to include any number of ecclesiastical bodies, including the sort of monks (often called "canons") who gathered to pray in and lived near most major medieval cathedrals. (Who do you suppose it was who used those "choir" stalls and did the chanting? Not the sort of paid choirs one finds today in "high" Anglican churches.) The *Catholic Encyclopedia* helpfully explains that:

The chapter can be considered as forming one body with the

bishop, in as far as it constitutes his senate and aids him in the government of his diocese; or as forming a body distinct from the bishop, having its own regulations and interests. Viewed under the first aspect the cathedral chapter has the bishop for its head; under the last, it has its own proper superior. Taking the chapter in the strict sense,

however, canonists generally declare that the bishop must always be distinguished from it; nor can he be called a member of the chapter. Anciently, the principal dignitary of the chapter was the archdeacon, but from the eleventh century the dean, who was also archpriest, had the internal government of the chapter.

In the case of Chartres, the cathedral chapter was distinct from the bishop and had its own dean. Those of us in the United States are accustomed to stories about conflicts between "church" and "state," and sometimes even between "lords" and "bishops." What we are not so accustomed to is hearing stories about conflicts between a bishop and the canons of his cathedral chapter. In the case of Chartres, however, we have conflicts among all three.

One of the sources of friction came from competing jurisdictions. The count (or when he was away, the countess) had authority to collect taxes and enforce his laws in the town of Chartres, but not in the areas directly surrounding the cathedral, where the cathedral chapter had jurisdiction. Not only did the cathedral chapter increasingly draw laborers into their jurisdiction, thereby making them exempt from the count's taxation, they also had sole authority over the cathedral fairs, a great source of revenue, which were also exempt from the count's taxation. An additional wrinkle arose from the fact that the count would divide many of these town taxes equally with the bishop. Thus to deny revenue to the count was in part to deny it to the bishop and to the diocese at large. As

serfs who had previously been working on the count's lands and in his fields increasingly moved into the cathedral precincts to work on the building, tensions mounted. A contemporaneous ecclesiastical writer recounts what transpired next:

It happened in the city of Chartres, in October 1210, on a Sunday afternoon, that a great crowd dared to violently attack the home of Guillaume, the dean, and his household because a certain serf of the dean's had berated and verbally abused one of the town rustics of the countess. When the countess's marshal and the provost had been summoned by the chapter, even by the king, so that they might repel the furious crowd ... instead they attempted to incite the people. Indeed, a crier was dispatched throughout the city who cried out in the street and by-ways to the mob that they all rush upon the dean's home with their arms to demolish it.... The dean, as soon as he saw the increasing rage of the mad mob grow, fled to the church.... Many of the sacrilegious crowd were wounded, and some of them succumbed to a merited death.... looting continued at night with light from burning candles.¹

Violence erupted regularly in the years after, until in 1249, the provost, or chief administrator of the countess within the town, took as prisoner and subsequently hanged one of the chapter's serfs. The dean of the chapter demanded that the countess and her provost pay 150 *livres* in recompense—a "livre," like a British "pound sterling," being the equivalent of one pound of silver. The chapter demanded in addition that the provost should be marched naked through the streets of the town to the church, there to be subjected to a public whipping by the canons of the cathedral before the altar of the Virgin Mary. Those who know the story of King Henry II of England's troubles with Saint Thomas à Becket will remember that, after Becket's murder at the hands of several of Henry's knights, Henry was similarly forced to strip naked and endure whipping at the hands of the canons at the cathedral of Canterbury. In Chartres, however, two of the countess's men responded by kidnapping one of the canons and holding him hostage. In



Peasant revolt of 1381, called Wat Tyler's Rebellion, London

Photo: Randall B. Smith

response, the dean of the chapter increased the fine from 150 *livres* to 400 and demanded that the provost undergo *three* penitential processions and whippings.

The hostilities continued with both parties jockeying for the upper hand, until in 1253—when the count's men killed two of the chapter's serfs, and the cathedral's cantor, Renauld d'Épine was appointed to arbitrate the dispute—Renauld was murdered on the cathedral steps while on his way to matins. At which point, both the bishop and the members of the chapter became so frightened for their safety that they fled Chartres and stayed away for *five years*, residing first at Mantes, roughly fifty miles north of Chartres, and later in Étampes, some thirty-eight miles to the east.

Only after the chapter's appeals to the king caused him to take twenty town burghers hostage and force two hundred members of all the trades, the agents of the count, and the people of the town to swear they would do no further harm to the chapter, along with gaining permission from Pope Innocent IV to hold matins at five in the morning because of the insecure condition of the cloister at night, did the chapter and bishop return in 1258. The chapter also gained permission from the king to seal off the area near the cathedral with a fence and lock the gates each night. It was not, shall we say, an entirely edifying or inspiring affair. Not exactly the sort of thing we hope for in our churches and monasteries.

And all this culminated in 1258! Both Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure were teaching in that year as Masters of Theology at Paris, a period often described as "the high Middle Ages"! All this horror and confusion at Chartres

was taking place virtually in their backyard; although in that regard, it's worthwhile remembering that neither Saint Thomas nor Saint Bonaventure would have been allowed to become Masters at the University of Paris at all if it hadn't been for the intervention of the pope. The lives and careers of the "two great

lights" (as they are often called) of the Middle Ages were not at all peaceful or easy ones.

When we think of the accomplishments of the Middle Ages, we can allow ourselves to imagine: "What a blessed age! What a thing it would have been to live then!" While yes, it was a "blessed age," those who had to survive during those hard and often confusing times might be forgiven for not having always thought so at the time. Perhaps then we could say of the thirteenth century what Dickens says at the beginning of *A Tale of Two Cities*:

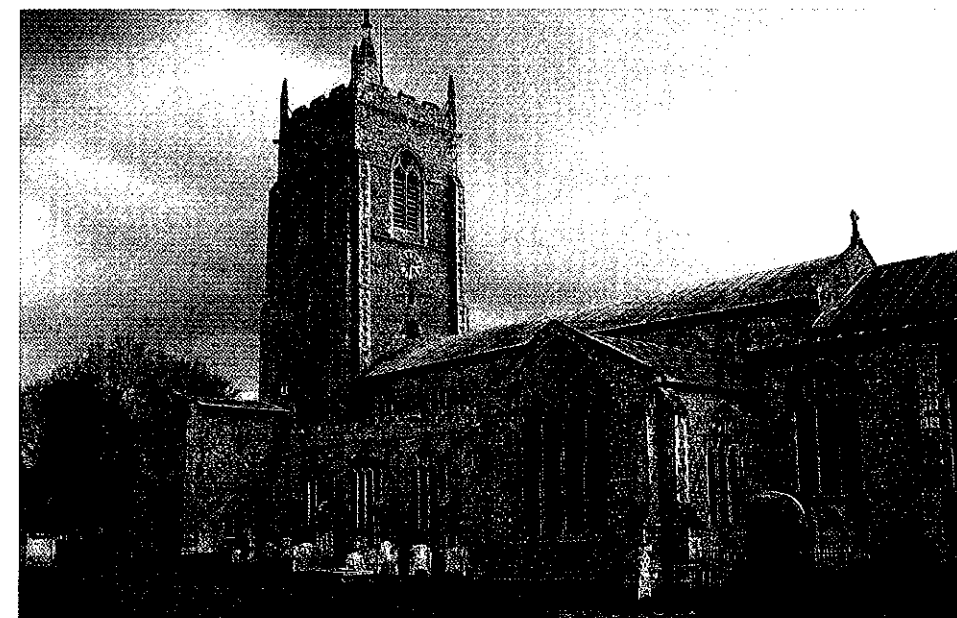
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the

season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

The thirteenth century: Greatest of centuries? Or the Dark Ages? Age of faith? Or age of petty religious squabbling? Well, both actually.

This is undoubtedly an important lesson for us to remember at times such as ours which can often seem far from "blessed" and when the Church seems so often in such sad shape. What monuments will we bequeath to the future? Certainly, there are the writings and reforms of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict. People in the future will certainly look back at us and say: "What an amazing time it must have been to live with such popes." And so it is. Not many ages have been as blessed in this regard as we.

We also enjoy the fruits of the Thomistic revival begun by Pope Leo XIII near the end of the nineteenth century, as well as the recovery of the works of the patristic fathers and doctors of the Church, spurred on by the great *ressourcement* movement, in



Church in East Anglia, England, built when Europe was poor and war was rampant. We can't build churches like this today, when we're as rich as we've ever been.

Photo: Randall B. Smith

which the current pope played an important role. There is also the incomparable achievement of the Second Vatican Council, for those who understand it correctly.

What it seems we won't leave behind, however, are very many beautiful churches, both because nearly all of our churches are ugly as sin and because they're not built to last—the latter undoubtedly a blessing considering the former. Although even in this area, there are signs of hope and renewal. One finds them here and there, many of them usefully catalogued in this journal (along with some of the continuing horrors). The existence of this journal, along with the good work it catalogues, shows that there is increasing interest in good churches and that things may be turning around—finally.

I am recently back from a trip to England where I spent some time exploring the medieval churches in Norfolk. They are amazing, and I can't recommend such a road-trip enough. There is one problem, though. There are simply too many of them. Indeed, often one will find a beautiful stone church on one rise or hillock, only to look across the way and see another, just as lovely, on the next rise, no more than four miles away. Most of these churches were built during the early Middle Ages, when the political circumstances in England were decidedly confused, constantly shifting, and life was often enough, to quote a much later statement by Thomas Hobbes: "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." And yet, they left us to this very day these wonderful churches, any one of which, if you had the chance to worship in it, given the usual alternatives in the U.S., would make you think you'd died and gone to heaven. Granted, they're all Anglican, but I will say this for our Anglican brethren: they've kept the church buildings intact without screwing them up, as has happened so often with the Catholics, who have torn out altars and altar rails, turned their churches sideways, put in orange carpeting, replaced crucifixes with indistinguishable (and ugly) modern art installations, just to mention a few of the many horrors visited upon the great church buildings of the past. You won't find any of that nonsense in these great eleventh and twelfth-century churches. And for that, I must say to my Anglican brethren, as a Catholic, I am profoundly grateful.

The result of a well-built, beautiful church building is a gift-that-keeps-on-giving to future generations. I am perfectly aware of the state of the faith in Europe. It's not good. And yet, anyone who studies Church history can tell you, we've seen troubled times before, and until Christ's second coming again at the end of time, we'll continue to see troubled times in the future.

Indeed, each age has its own troubles and confusions: the age of Thomas and Bonaventure had theirs, we have ours. Once the current madness passes, however, those great church buildings will still stand as a monument to the faith and sacrifice of our forebears, and as such can serve as a foundation upon which the next generation can build its renewed faith. The towns and villages that surrounded those churches have long since passed away, but the churches still remain. So too all the disputes and controversies and fads of today will soon enough pass away, but the Church will still remain. What we'll need then is a place to worship. We might do well to remember that when the Lord said to Saint Francis from the cross: "Francis, rebuild my church," his first response was to start rebuilding the church in which he was praying: the little, crumbling church of San Damiano. In our day, as in Francis's, the church is in need of some "rebuilding." We might similarly do well to begin, as he did, by rebuilding our church buildings.

If we can learn from the age that created the great Gothic cathedrals, however, here are some of the elements we will need to bring about better and more beautiful churches in the future. First, we will need a healthy guild of skilled architects and workmen who can continue to work at a high level of excellence even when confusion and quarreling prevails among the officials in the local church community. Second, we will need generous and wise patrons who are willing to pay for excellent building and who refuse to pay a dime for the sort of trash we so often see today. Third, we need a critical mass of faithful parishioners

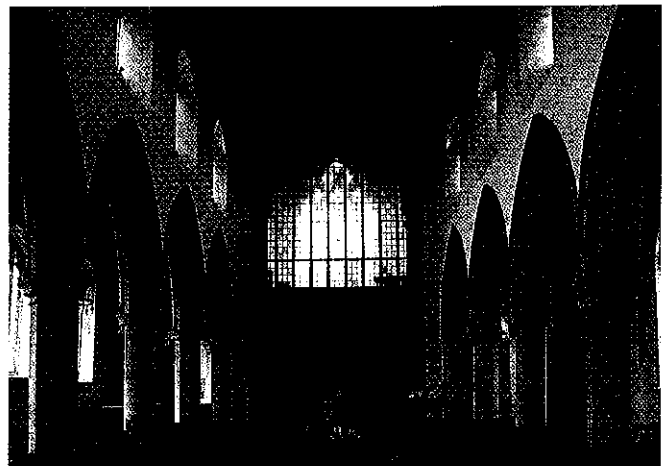


Photo: Randall B. Smith

Church interior in East Anglia, England

who believe that beautiful churches are still possible and who insist that such buildings be built. As with patrons, it is essential that the faithful not allow their piety to be abused into paying for ugly churches. Finally, and most importantly, we need the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit. Nothing will be more important in such ventures than prayer. If we are to succeed, it will be by the work of the Holy Spirit, or we will not succeed at all.

Randall B. Smith is an Associate Professor of Theology at the University of Saint Thomas in Houston, Texas. He was the 2011-12 Myser Fellow at the Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture. He writes regularly for *The Catholic Thing and Crisis* and has a forthcoming article in the journal *Nova et Vetera* on "How to Read a Sermon by Thomas Aquinas."

(Endnotes)
1 Cf. Cartulaire de Notre-Dame de Chartres, ed. E. De Lépinoy and Lucien Merlet, (Chartres: Garnier, 1861-1865), vol. 2, #203, 1210, 58-59; quoted from Jane Welch Williams, *Bread, Wine, and Money: The Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 25. The English text quoted here leaves out a few details from the original Latin: "Contigit in urbe Camotensi, anno ab incarnatione Domini millesimo CXX, mense octobri, die quadam dominica, post prandium, quod vulgi pars maxima in Willelmum decanum ejusque familiam violenter insurgere et domum ipsius, que in claustrum Beate-Marie sita est, violare presumpserit, eo scilicet quod unus ex memorati decani servientibus ausus fuerat in eodem claustrum, sicut dicebatur, cuidam rustico de villa, servo scilicet Comitisse, minis duntaxat et convitiis injuriam intulisse. Cumque ministri Comitisse qui civibus preerant universis, marescallus videlicet et prepositus, requisiti fuissent a Capitulo, etiam ex parte Regis, quatinus furiosam vulgi multitudinem a claustrum repellere, vel eorum furorem pro tradita sibi potestate comprimerent, noluerunt, sed impellere potius populum quam repellere, et augere furorem magis quam comprimere conti sunt, misso etiam per urgem precone qui per vicus et plateas clamabat quantunus universi cum armis ad domum decani diruendam irruerunt.... Sane decanus, ut primum furentis populi rabiem vidit increasce, ad ecclesiam confugit... multi ex eadem sacrilega multitudine vulnerati sunt, quorum nonnulli morte non immerita corruerunt.... Depredatio enim illa noctis tempore candellis accensis, facta est...."

CONCERN FOR THE SPIRIT: A HISTORY OF MODERN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

Karla Cavarra Britton

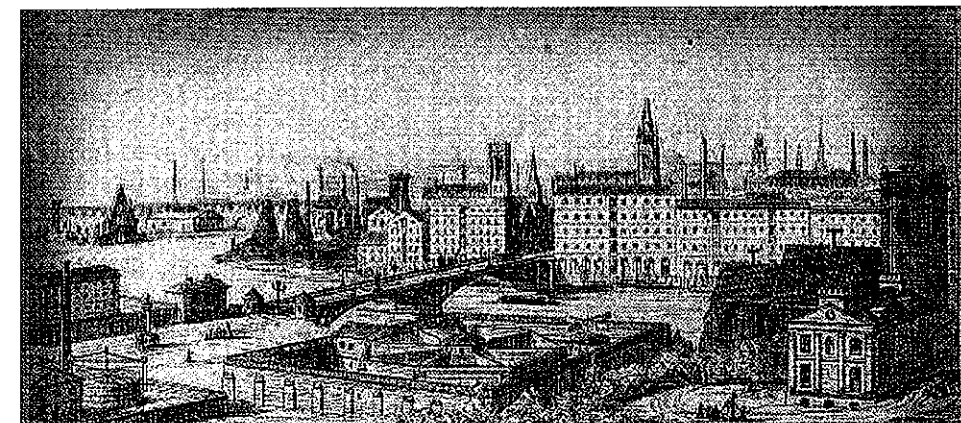
"People will again go up to the religious community building, whose architectural prominence will command respect, and which can only be approached along a triumphal axis.

Its great internal space will inspire us again, not because of a sacredly mystic devotion that makes us long for a transcendental world, but because of a devotion characterized by a reborn Dionysian joy.

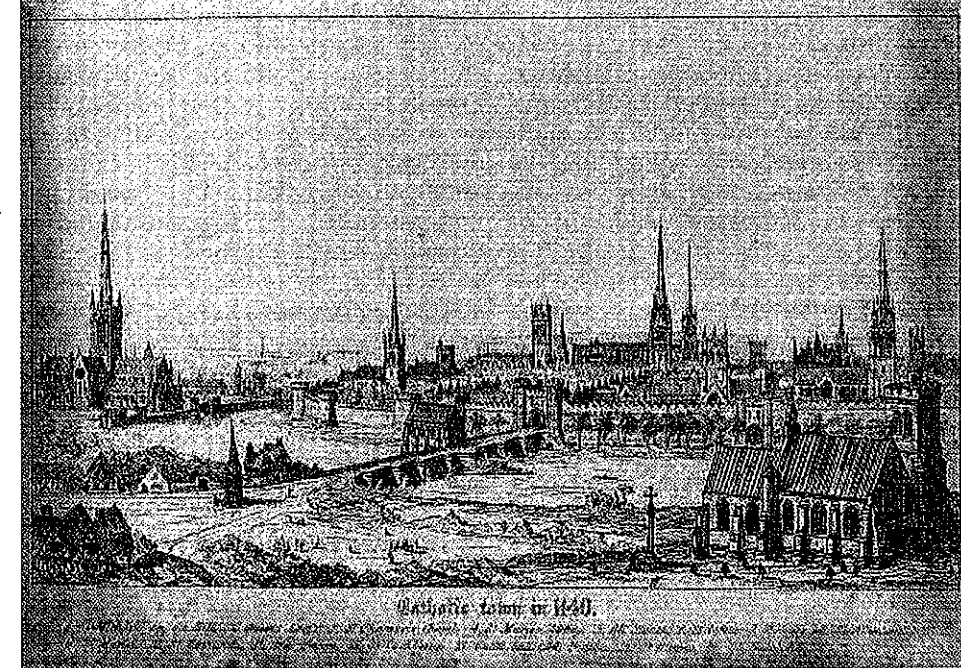
Yet it will be essentially different from the small classical temple space, which was only intended to be used by the deity. For this new space will have to contain thousands of people who will approach the earthly god in a totally different way, and the god will be present again in this space, but only in a spiritual form . . ."

—Hendrik Petrus Berlage, "Art and Society" (1909)

What are the recent important accounts of the history of twentieth-century church architecture? One or two come to mind: Wolfgang Stoek's two-volume *History of European Religious Architecture*, or Edwin Heathcote's extensive introduction to *Contemporary Church Architecture*, as well as some studies of the history of modern churches in individual countries. Yet overall the history of modern religious architecture in the twentieth century is a relatively unexplored field. Hence this essay, which sets out to call attention to this area of study by sketching three identifiable historical narratives in the history of modern church architecture. Avoiding a strictly chronological definition, this essay focuses on mapping these interlocking narratives through an emphasis on prominent features of representative work. Less emphasis is placed here on the subjective experience of individual buildings, their interiority, and how they manifest important influences of the liturgical movement, than on a consideration of how these larger narratives represented by the modern church have been received within the history of early twentieth-century architecture. In this sense the wider reception of methods and ideas presented through the design of new church buildings often helped to



THE GREAT TOWN IN 1840
The illustration shows a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings, streets, and a prominent church spire. The scene is depicted in a detailed, etched style.



'A town in 1840' contrasted with 'a Catholic town in 1440',
from Augustus Welby Pugin's *Contrasts*, Second Edition, 1841

redefine the professional identities of prominent architects, far beyond the circle of the faith traditions that their church buildings were intended to serve.

Innovation within a Cultural Continuity

Augustus Welby Pugin, in his *Contrasts* of 1841, dramatically conveys his vision of the moralizing force of

church architecture by aligning it with the ethical and aesthetic composition of society. Pugin's famous comparison of an idealized fifteenth-century English town with its numerous Gothic steeples, is contrasted with the industrial city of his day where the steeples have been replaced by factory chimneys. Whereas in Pugin's vision the fabric of the fifteenth-century town is fully integrated and comprehensible through