coming in to see the garden. Its not the same attitude as before. And its not so much that people are coming and asking to come in; its that we are asking people to come in. Its not done in our other monasteries. We may be seperating from them.

Q: What is the purpose of the enclosure?

It is to provide quietude and privacy that is supposed to promote a prayerful atmosphere. When we have troops of kids coming through all morning you can see how it might be disruptive. This was happening more than once in a while. It was every week. We've cut it down somewhat now.

Q: Where do you go alone?

I like to be alone. I prefer solitude for prayer. I go to my cell for privacy a great deal. In the morning I go there for our hour of meditation and again in the evening for the half hour of meditation. I also will go into the garden. Even if its cold I will get all bundled up and go out there because then I am sure that I will be alone. There are other places, like the hermitage, but I don't even bother with it. Everyone wants lots of space. In the summer you will find one of us on the swing and another at the well and think it would be wonderful.

Q: Any feelings about the relationship of the monastery to nature?

I just like a lot of windows. I'm not too fond of these windows that you can't see out of (points to fogged window in parlor.) I was in a sanctuary with a window in it that had a live oak tree right next to the window. There was a crucifix on it - it looked like Christ was dying right on the tree because the cross was made of sticks. It was very impressive and very lovely.

**** Sister Alice Mary originally had not agreed to participate with the other Sisters in the project. She did attend the group meeting on Saturday, and I was told today that she had decided to be interviewed.
"I'm sentimental enough to be sad to see someone cut down a tree..."  Gr. Alice May
Sister Blanche is 85 years old. She was a lay sister before Vatican II, working mainly in the kitchen as a cook. She has been in the religious orders for 54 years.

I have been in Lafayette since 1957. I've been a choir sister ever since I moved from Brooklyn. The changes of Vatican II have not been hard for me at all. I like this place because it is so small. Brooklyn was so big! But then, the Chapel is too small here. We should plan for the future. When we came here the Chapel was big enough - but now...too small. This is a beautiful, nice house. When the kitchen was redone the sisters said I should go and look at the new cabinets. I said, "No, I am old and will not matter," but they insisted. So I go, and I look. Oh, and now it is a beautiful kitchen.

I like the brick better than redwood, but brick is too expensive. I have a brick wall in the corridor outside of my room. I like that. It is very nice. I do not use the elevate. I use the little stairs in the kitchen. They go right up to my room in the infirmary. They are good because I can put my hands on either side and make my way up. I go to the recreation room and chapel. I don't go much in the garden because the ground is up and down, and I am afraid to fall.

Q: What is your favorite game for recreation? (Julia told me to ask.)
(Laughs) Lassie! I know how to play this game; so I like it. But I say play a new game; it is by watching that I learn a new game.

Q: What might you change in a new monastery that you haven't been able to change here because of the "givens" of this house?

Oh, I don't know. Brooklyn was so big. I worked in the infirmary and 20 sisters died. The silence was very strict there. And I could never go home when my family died. Here, two have died, but still I do not go. It is so far to Quebec, and then you have to talk to this person and then that person. I am too old for that. I do not go. In Brooklyn at 8:30 we had to go to bed. Here we can go to bed when we like, but I still go to bed at 8:30 because I have to - I am so old.

Q: Are the sisters your family?

Yes, this is my family. This is a small house. A family spirit is here. I have my golden jubilee here. My silver jubilee was in Brooklyn. When I come here there is a big change. I think people resented the grille. It made the house too small. The parlor and the chapel split in half were so small. So we asked the Bishop, and he said it was o.k. In Brooklyn all the doctors come to the monastery. Here we walk - those of us that can - or drive to the doctor.

Q: What amount of natural versus artificial light do you like in chapel?

You have to have both artificial and natural light. It would not be enough if it were just natural. The sisters gave me a beautiful table lamp and a clock that I can see in the dark for my jubilee.

Q: How would you feel about a brand new monastery that replaced this house?

(Laughs) Oh, I don't think...we have added so much to this house. It is a good house. Even the architect said the foundations are very good. We like to eat on the new porch. We used to take our plates upstairs to the infirmary porch. We can have such nice conversation. We are still silent for breakfast. This is a beautiful house. The natural wood and the stained glass windows in the dining room are beautiful. There is no dining room here for people that come to visit though.

Q: Is the house private with regards to the neighborhood?

The neighborhood is very quiet. This is good and private. The neighbors are all old people. We never see them. There are no children. It is quiet in back. You can hear some cars up here. But Brooklyn is noisy.

Q: Have you ever attended an outdoor Mass?

I went to a funeral for Sister at St. Mary's. And then we went to St. Ann's. Oh, it was beautiful. They said they had just redone it. I had never seen it before, so I didn't know what they had done, but you could see that it was very clean and just painted.

Q: Are the Sisters of the Precious Blood still changing from the ideas suggested by Vatican II, or is all the change in the past?

I do not think the sisters are changing
anymore. I think the sisters should have to wear a veil. I don't like it when the religious don't. The veil is a sign that we are contemplative. The scapular is more formal, but I wear it all the time. I tried a red skirt, but I didn't like the blouse. It wasn't for me. I am very happy in my religious life. I never have any regrets for what I chose.

Q: What kind of a place - what qualities of a place - are conducive to prayer and contemplation?

The presence of God makes contemplation. It is my goal to be united with God always - even in my work. It is good to leave your work 5 minutes early and go to chapel to collect your thoughts.

The Protestants have nice churches. When I drive by I think they are Catholic, and the chaplain tells me they are Protestant.

Q: Why do you like brick?

Brick is monastic (laughs.) The wall outside my room is so beautiful. They have smoothed it out a bit, I think. But brick and a dark place, these are things that are monastic. We make do with what we have here. Once we were very poor, in Brooklyn. But a simple life is all we need. In Brooklyn we did not go out, and we did not see anybody.
"...but brick and a dark place these are things that are monastic..."
Sr. Jaqueline

October 15, 1984

Sister Jaqueline has been in Lafayette since 1971. She was previously a member of an active order. Her duties include Sacristan, kitchen helper, gardner, Director of the Novitiate, and gardner.

Of course, I am attached to this old building, but if the wind were to damage it - which is not something we pray for of course - I'd be prepared to level the house and start over again. I've been walking around in the garden, and you wouldn't believe how many things I've built and torn down. But what I've decided is that I would like a circular chapel in front here at the road. The more I think about building back in the woods, the more I think we should stay where we are. The site is a problem because I don't think a circular chapel will fit very well. Looking at it practically as well as beautifully, I suppose what we'll really do is use the land below for the garden, and we'll just add a few more boxes to this old house. But in a new monastery - and some day we may seriously have to think about this - the chapel would be towards the front, and there is also a chaplain's and guest's area. The chaplain needs a suite with a Sacristy and a priest's Sacristy for the vestments. The guest area should include a bedroom, dining room, and living room. I think there is nothing more

beauty in the world, not in the altars, but in the way that the sun sets in the west. You see, I've never seen a sunset where there was never a cloud in the sky. The sun is so beautiful, it needs something to be reflected on, so when I look at the sun I always think of the sunbeam and the earth.
beautiful than a circular chapel with the altar in the center and a skylight over the altar to where you can see the steeple and the trees. That's where all the beauty is. You can look right out and see the trees, and whether or not it is raining. We had a skylight on a fourth floor attic space in Illinois in a big convent. And then we would need driveways and a parking lot. But that's so extravagant - all that I've said so far - that we can't afford to build the enclosure!

But then the chapel has two wings coming off of it. At the end of the wings are the enclosure spaces - the dining room and kitchen. This would have to be a two story building, of course. And the wings would enclose a garden between them. The wing could be where the greenhouse goes, but it faces the wrong way. The one we have now is in a bad place. Off the dining room is a patio, and the greenhouse is accessible from the dining room. I guess these long wings make for a lot of walking. But if the first part of the wing is the chaplain's and guest quarters... I don't think this works because things are facing the wrong way, but if the kitchen is too close to the chapel then you would be able to smell the meals being cooked in chapel. So I decided the guest quarters can have a small kitchenette. This is pretty extravagant!

The offices will also have to be in the wing - the business and secretary offices on either side of the hall. There should be enough room. The cells go above the kitchen, and the community room is above the dining room and has big windows that face the courtyard. All the cells have running water - not a toilet, but a lavatory. Our rooms are small, but we don't need more space. The Host rooms are in the other wing with steps going up to the second floor where plants and big windows line the wall outside the infirmary. There we have bathrooms and a kitchenette. And there is a sun room at the end of the infirmary. After that, in a light open room, is a studio for art work. Under the wings in the basement is the sewing room, just under the offices. That is where the furnace would go also since it is sort of central in the building. There might be a need for another heater in the other wing. Well, let's see, the basement has the laundry room with an ironing board, and a sewing room, and a media room. Then a storage room under the dining room, and then there's some extra space, so I guess that's the Goof Off Room!

There have to be areas for a workshop, either in the building or in the garage. Oh, I forgot the novitiate! I guess that is at the end of the infirmary wing. It is a long wing so there is space. Young people are pretty noisy, but they should still be around the old people, so that is a good place for the novitiate. There has to be a fire escape stairway somewhere. I also know that the wings have to be connected by the chapel by a stairway so that one doesn't have to walk all the way around the whole thing to get downstairs or to another part; but I'm not sure how to do that. I also didn't put in an elevator because I wasn't sure about where it should go. Maybe between the wings, behind the chapel. All this is awfully extravagant for 12 people!

Q: What do you dislike or like about the existing monastery?
I like the closeness and the small chapel. I wouldn't want a huge, huge chapel. It lends itself to a beautiful family spirit. In this
house we always know what is going on. There is a certain simplicity and beauty from the oldness of this house. We kid about all the boxes we've added to this, but really the existing house was a box.

Q: For your photographs of sunrises and sunsets where do you have to be in order to take them? (this is Sister Jaqueline's hobby) There are lots of trees in the way so you have to be high in the house. Sometimes I lean out of the window of my cell, and once I almost fell out. I mean I really lost my balance. The sunrises are easier than the sunsets. To get the sunsets when they go all the way into the clouds banks you really have to lean. It keeps getting harder too, because the trees keep growing. On an island it isn't so hard.

Q: What might you change in a new monastery that you haven't been able to change here because of the "givens" of this house?

I've fallen in love with the oldness of this house, but I think there is a place for new things too. The old beauty isn't always easy. All the woodwork on the walls and the floors has to be cleaned, you know. I'd like to go through and open up all of the old fireplaces in this house. I think there should be a fireplace in the community room of the new monastery. Our dining room harkens back to pre-Vatican II days. I'd like to see it differently. The traditional horseshoe shape makes it nice for conversation, but if we had twelve people, it just wouldn't be possible the way it is now. Especially with the problems of having an aging group and hard of hearing members. We're not getting any younger, you know. I'd like to see 4-5 separate tables with captain's chairs: four people per table. And with each meal the seating can change. The serving area needs cabinets - a closer relationship between kitchen and dining room. I forgot the library! It needs to be in the new monastery. It would be good to have off the community room. Or it could be in the goof off room, I suppose.

Q: What qualities of a space are conducive to contemplation?

I always tell the novices in counseling that no matter what your room or the place you are living in looks like you can always set up your own sacred space. It can be done anyplace. I don't think you have to find places. Only outside have I found places. Under a tree or on a swing. Cluttered spaces are hard for me to deal with. I like to have everything picked up and put away before I can concentrate on anything.

Q: What is the relationship between the monastery and nature?

Because we don't go out much we need to bring beauty inside - through music and nature. That nature and God relationship can't be separated. I think that once in a while you have to go out there and really get dirty! Buildings have to blend in with nature around them.

Q: Would you like to have Mass outside once in a while?

That would be good if it were in a special place. In Kentucky, I once attended a Mass outside under a tree - a oak tree - and that was all we needed. We seemed to be absorbed in all the beauty of nature.

Q: Is this house private with regards to the neighborhood?
The privacy is just fine. Sometimes the kids hang over the fence and say, "Who are you?" That is fine - it's beautiful. I would like the enclosure wall to be a stockade fence, but I'll be paying for that for the rest of my life!! I want the wall to blend in with nature. You never have to paint those fences. I don't like a stone or brick wall.

Q: Is the enclosure meant to keep the world out or to keep you in?

In the past it was to keep men out. Once, all sisters were contemplative, thus, vulnerable. Women belonged in the home. Even after Vatican II the Church insisted on it for the contemplatives. We have certain areas, the Host rooms for instance, that could be outside the enclosure, or occasionally the garden could be open. Maybe the new monastery could have a swimming pool...

Q: Would you like a fountain in the courtyard?

Well, I had one there, but I couldn't imagine how to blend it in with the steeple on the church. I don't want anything to detract from the steeple. Cleaning the fountain can also be a problem, but I guess there won't be too many trees in the courtyard, or they will be the kind to keep small. I want my rosebushes in the courtyard. I think there can be 100 rosebushes in there. I have 50 now. I believe in raising flowers for chapel. I don't want cars in the garden at all. The new monastery won't have much wooded area. We might have to fill in the slope back there to grow flowers. I guess the building can also be built into the hill. You know those kind of buildings that are buried with just one side facing out? That's another way of building according to nature. I like brick for building a lot. Its sturdy. I like stone better, but it is so expensive. You can't always have what you want. Maybe the front of the chapel could be stone.

Q: What balance of natural and artificial light do you prefer?

I love natural light and lots of windows, but you have to be careful because they let so much cold air in. I'm a firm believer that every window should be the type that you can open. Except for stained glass; it is so beautiful. I would love to take classes to learn to do it, but that would be overextending myself. God has given us so many beautiful gifts, we have to choose the ones that serve him best. When the kitchen was remodelled, I wanted so badly to put a stained glass window in the door. I'd like to have more natural light in the chapel. I think lighter colors in there would be nice to give it as much light as possible. I like those long thin windows with clear glass in them. The chapel should be air conditioned also.

Q: Can you describe a very pleasant or unpleasant place you have been?

The Gesthemane Abbey Church in Kentucky would be it. They have stripped all the frescoes off the walls and left the wood rafters showing. It is beauty and simplicity and stark nakedness. I don't know if I could kneel there every day and feel the same way. There is nothing to detract from the focus.

Of course, I also enjoyed watching the monks come in because they all had on different shoes under their robes. Some had sandals, some had sneakers, some had hush puppies, and so on and so on.

Q: What is the least important space in the monastery?
Oh, we need all of it. The sewing room is hardly used right now because we are too busy with other things. There is no wasted space...its all used. One of the bedrooms in the infirmary I use as an office. Its a quiet place and its out of the way. Everybody needs that. Togetherness is great, but...

Q: How does you community compare to a family?

Our private lives may not be shared the same way as in a family. There are sisters you may never get to know. Its conceivable that you can live in a monastery for years and never see one of the sisters in her nightgown. It is a family, but not as totally close. We come here with different characters.

Q: How is the superior appointed?

She is elected every three years by the community. She cannot be the superior more than nine years in a row. I forgot to tell you we need a garage and a separate place for garden tools. We are very likely to get a car sometime in the future, and the way it is now, we wouldn't have room in the garage for the car.

Everybody needs a place to eat, sleep, work, pray, and hide. I need a private room for conversation with the novices. We don't have a carpet anywhere but in the chapel. It is not generally accepted. When carpet was considered a luxury, we revelled in our waxed, wood floors. But they are noisy!!
"To get the sunrise when they go all the way into the coal banks, you really have to learn...."

Sister Jacqueline
October 15, 1984

Sister Mary is Irish. She is the second youngest member of the community. Her work is in the Host room where she packages the host, orders supplies, and mails the Host to the parishes.

I work in the Host room – packing and mailing the Host. I've often thought there must be a much better way to store the boxes before they are mailed. I don't think any higher cabinets will help, but deeper – that would be good. The boxes are all different sizes. The room really needs to be larger because when they are cutting or sorting in there, I really can't pack until they are done. I need a big table with a sealer on it. Two people can't be doing different things at the same time in there.

I've been thinking about your letter and what I do and do not like. I think every chapel is very pleasing, but you should be at ease in a monastery chapel because you spend so much time in there. The chapel in Brooklyn was so much bigger than the one we have here. I was there for 13 years. There the chapel for the public was away from the sisters. The building was in an "H" shape. But there are two parish chapels I can remember that I don't like. One has a great big circle from the roof to the floor behind the altar with
all these colored things that came together at the center of the circle. No matter where you sat in the church you could see this huge thing, but I could never quite tell what it was - but it was so distracting! The other church I visit when I go home to visit my family. It was so beautiful with murals on the wall that were very colorful and interesting. You could look over here and see this painting and then over there and see that one. And they all had some kind of a beautiful green color in them. It was very beautiful to see. And then, they had red carpet in the sanctuary, and the altar was a beautiful white marble. It was such a fabulous contrast of color. But the priest said they would have to remodel and make changes in accordance with Vatican II. And they all had to pay something like 100 dollars for this change. But when I saw it - it was such a drastic change. The architect said there were too many pews, and he pulled the altar out to the middle so now people have to stand. There isn't enough seating. All the murals were painted over with just plain paint. The lighting in the sanctuary is just awful. It is on these three things that look like three golf clubs hung upside down. And another thing, now you can walk around the sanctuary in a circle because it is pulled out like that, and they have a place on one side of it where people put lost gloves or books or something that they've found like that. Right out in the church like that there is this place. They used to have this vestibule in the front for vagabonds where they would stay and it was glass to keep them from disrupting the Mass. Now the parish has to stand there. So there is that Church and the one with the big, huge colored things - I think they were mostly red - coming into the center of that huge circle.

Watertown is a new monastery since Vatican II. The way they are is simple, wood, cozy, and nothing distracting. The Tabernacle is to be central in the church, but now there is some confusion about genuflecting - whether it is done to the altar or the Tabernacle.

I feel for the priest at that parish church. He was trying to convince the people that they should contribute to the renovation to bring the parish closer together, but it almost backfired. A lot of people left the church when they saw the terrible changes that had been made. If these changes are going to be made, I think people need to be educated about them.

I've also thought about what you mentioned about the connection between a place of worship and nature. Now, after entering the religious life, I have a better appreciation of nature. We have workshops to teach us how to see nature. We'll go outside and pick something we find that we like - anything that has meaning to us - and we'll share it. Or we'll make something with the things we've found and give them to each other. We learn to look at a plant to see how it grows; how the rain makes it grow; how nature is reflected in it. We really dwell on nature which is new to some of us. Some of the sisters don't like plants, but when others bring in flowers we will notice them and realize how beautiful they are. If nature is brought into the chapel we all make an effort to go in and see how beautiful nature is. I think beauty can be seen in all of nature - a storm, a cloud, or a hurricane.

Q: Had the grille been removed when you came in 1972?
Q: How does your community compare with a family?

There is a big difference. In some ways we are much closer than a family. There isn't anything that goes on that you don't know about. I mean one of us can't be feeling bad in the morning and keep it from the rest. There is a lot of sympathy - we grow in our understanding of others. There is a great closeness. On the other hand there is a great reserve that borders on coolness. There are a lot of things that could be very private. For instance there is no sharing of our personal families. We are closer in some ways and farther in others to typical families. One difference is that no one caters to personal preferences. This, of course, is to prevent jealousies. All is very fair. There is no show of favoritism. My personal family is very special and different to me than this family. It's not quite the same. I go home to visit my family every two years.

Q: Where is home?

Home is Brooklyn. It is also Ireland, but I'm only allowed to have one home to visit. Most of my family is in Brooklyn, I only have one Brother in Ireland. It is too expensive to send me there. I have gone to Ireland only once.

Q: What might you change in a new monastery that you haven't been able to change here because of the "givens" of this house?

Well, the monastery has probably doubled in size since the order arrived in 1955. We've added this guest room, the three rooms of the infirmary and the porch, the business office and the Host rooms. The monastery was
originally just the middle part. There is only one change that has been made that has really disappointed me. And that is: we had a big, beautiful room over the parlor that has been divided into the novitiate and the secretary. Now the corridor is very dark whereas the sun used to come through the windows and the open doors. It's quite a wide corridor, but now it is full of books and very cramped. I liked it better when it was one big room. We just keep adding more to this house. I like it the way it is.

Q: What qualities of a space are conducive to prayer and contemplation?

It helps to be in a place that uplifts your mind. I go the the porch off the infirmary where I can sit and look out over the trees and the garden. Its good to be able to look out the window. The chapel, of course, is a place of contemplation, and the warmth of the wood is very nice. I'm so glad its not stone. In the chapel, you know you're in a place of prayer, and that really helps. It is important to have a place that is conducive to prayer and that means simplicity.

Q: How do you feel about the changes of Vatican II?

We are a democratic society. We get everyone's ideas before we decide anything. Before Vatican II the Superior decided and told us later. Now its more of a collegiate. We all decide and the majority tends to rule, unless there is something that one sister just can't accept. Then we will wait until she is better able to accept the thing. We all see the financial reports now which is certainly better business practice. We can keep much better track of things and avoid being overcharged. When I order something it comes with a slip. I used to just throw them away, but now I give the slip to Sister Margeret Mary or Sister Joan so that when the bill comes they can check and be sure we aren't being overcharged. All the changes are for the better. The only reservation I have is that I need a very good night's sleep. The schedule is not as definite anymore. It's not good. We didn't used to be able to answer the phone after a certain time at night. But last night my Brother called at 10:00 and I was so dead asleep that I thought it was midnight. And then at midnight I didn't wake up, and I was half an hour late! And again this morning I was supposed to wake everyone else up (We take turns.) But someone else had to do it because I overslept. The schedule was good when it was more definite. Sometimes we have visitors who stay late in the evening and we have night prayers at 8:30 instead of 8:00 which means we all get to bed late. The bells used to indicate to visitors that we had to go to pray, but now we do not have them anymore. I belive that its good for a person's health to lead such a scheduled life.

Q: Is the monastery private with regards to the neighborhood?

I like the closeness of the road and that we are not terribly isolated. It is very convenient. I would not want to be back in the woods and get mud all over my shoes everyday I went outside. The little bit of noise we hear up here is nothing compared to what it was like in Brooklyn.

Q: If the sisters were to build a new monastery, would you be reluctant to level this house?
If this house were gone it would not be hard for me. We are homesy people, and we like living in this house. What I wouldn't want to change is the location. Some sisters had mentioned some beautiful land behind the Bishop's house, but I like it here.

Q: What do you like or dislike about your cell?

We all appreciate having our own cell. It is so nice being able to go up and lay down, and be alone. To be alone, the place has to be the cell. There really is no other place to go where somebody won't walk in. Sometimes I think I'll come in here or go to the parlor, but you can't be there but a few minutes before somebody walks in. But this morning I was just so tired after work - from all the goings on last night - that I went up to my cell and layed down for ten minutes. I can't remember when I did that ever before. But it was so nice! I forgot all about being tired. The disadvantage is to have to walk up three stories. The size of the cells is small, but this has many advantages. There isn't much to clean at all. Just a few swipes with the cloth over the floor, and you're done. At one time there wasn't even a wastepaper basket in the room. The only things that we were to be doing in our rooms was sleeping and praying, so there was no need. But now we all have wastepaper baskets.

Q: I know that Sister Blanche has a Pillsbury Doughboy in the kitchen, what kind of personal possessions do you have?

Our cells have one metal closet in which we traditionally kept an oratory and a kneeler in the top portion. We used to have to store everything in the closet in a very special way, and all we had were two habits; you never aquired a new one. The only things I have now are some special writing papers which I keep in another closet. Some of the younger Sisters decorate their cells with banners or cartoons and little things like they would do in their rooms at home. We have a problem with accumulating more than we need. I like to have a place to put it besides my cell. I have all kinds of shoes - eight boxes maybe, because they never wear out. The dog - Greta - is more of a pet than a watchdog. All monasteries are to have dogs to protect the sisters. But in many ways we bend the rules. And whenever I go home my family says, "Here, take this, it fits you!" How can you turn these gifts down? Before we never could aquire anything. But all these changes, if anything, have made us more human. We didn't know people's problems. Now we are aware. It is good because we pray for people and it makes a difference to know their problems. It also helps you to appreciate your own way of life when you hear all the problems in the world today. As long as it doesn't interfere with the schedule. The area for prayer must be maintained or else you can't have a center for quiet. It becomes a penance to have to go shopping. I do the grocery shopping once a month. Sometimes we have to spend the whole afternoon shopping, or going to the clinic for allergy shots and waiting to be picked up. We still have to do our work sometime even when we shop, so it backs up.
Sr. Joan

October 18, 1984

Sister Joan was originally a member of an active community. She has been a religious for 26 years. She has been with the Sisters of the Precious Blood for 7 years. Of the seven sisters in Lafayette, Sister Joan is the youngest at age 44.

What I've been thinking about is that in reality we would really never build. As the older sisters die we can very easily adjust the space to our needs just as we have been doing. What we have talked about is the expansion of the hermitage. It would include the library of books that are not frequently used, and then more commonly used books would be kept here in the house. And the card catalogue would be here in the house. It could be kind of a split level thing with a place for indoor sports. It would also be a good place for the novitiate and younger people.

Q: What has been positive or negative about the changes of Vatican II?

I think it is all positive. Sometimes the interpretation of the Vatican II Council has not been good, but the recommendations themselves are good. People have been allowed to express their individuality. The changes have been really good. Its moved from
systemic control to personal motivation. And really it is harder to do things because you feel you should than to do them because you have to. For instance, we used to have to be silent, but now we choose to be silent at special times, and it is more beautiful because of that. We have moved from following rules, to seeing the value behind the rules. Now the atmosphere of silence is more profound and more relaxing. There used to be a lot of emphasis on rank. We sat according to rank, we walked into chapel according to rank, and it led to some divisions. Now there is more of a collegiality. Rank is determined solely by years in the religious life, but now even the novices are treated as equals. A monastery is really a microcosm of the Church. These changes are reflected in the whole Church. I find it has been very healthy for our day.

Q: If you were going to build a new monastery would you be reluctant to level this house?

Yes, I would be very reluctant to level the house. The reason is not sentimental reasons so much as that the house does serve us. Now if the structure were found to be failing - yes, I would be willing to level it. I've lived in both types of buildings, those built for a monastery and those which are houses converted to monasteries, and I prefer the house. I guess I just don't like things that are institutional.

Q: What might you change in a new monastery that you haven't been able to change here because of the "givens" of this house?

Well, I would plan for more space. Perhaps the availability to visitors could be better. We need a larger area for guests. We've needed a separate dining room for guests. It gets cramped in here. And the chapel is cramped for space. We have very wide halls, which I supposed are non-institutional, but I think all that hallway space could be better used in the rooms.

Q: What is the purpose of the enclosure?

I think in part it is an attitude of the individual person. It keeps primary a life of prayer. It is not to keep people out. It is to preserve the atmosphere of prayer. Those of us who might bring visitors in and out might disrupt the contemplation of another. And so it is also out of respect for others. And besides that it is traditional. I wouldn't want to see it go. I'm glad it's been more of an individual decision on the part of the community though. I think it is still in the state of renewal with this community.

Q: Are there many things that are still in a state of renewal for this community?

The group is still renewing, and I wouldn't expect that to change. Its an ongoing process. Sometimes we wish it weren't changing. It was more secure the other way.

Q: What kind of a place - what qualities of a place - are conducive to prayer?

Primarily the chapel and the outdoors. I like quiet, but a natural kind of quietness, not an artificial one. I like the sound of the outdoors in chapel, and natural light and air. I don't like too much artificiality. In the chapel I do feel religious art is conducive. Stained glass is very beautiful. I also like a lack of clutter. The chapel is so small I find it has a sense of clutter. I
would probably like it better without the ceiling being lowered as has been done. I would like more light and air. I like some of the art in the chapel.

Q: There seems to be reserve about nature. You all speak about it as something very distinct from the monastery. In other words, the boundaries are strong - inside and outside are very separate. Is this true, or is it a false impression?

I think Sister Margaret Mary would be a better one to ask about that. I don't like the frosted windows on the second floor. It seems to be a custom of the community, because Sr. Margaret Mary wanted them in the infirmary additions as well. It is tradition that we have no curtains on the windows for reasons of maintaining simplicity, and perhaps that is why we have the frosted windows. Simplicity is considered a virtue. That is why we never used to have carpet on the floor in this room or curtains in the windows. It is a principle of purity and eliminating anything which is unnecessary. I guess also that looking out windows is considered a source of distraction. In the older monasteries there were courtyards with windows facing inward.

Q: How does your community compare with families?

Well, it's not like a family in that we are all females. There is a family spirit because we are all motivated by the same goals. In a family there are layers of status which isn't reflected here. This group has more equality than a family. Even a new sister is treated as an equal, whereas in a family a new comer is treated quite differently. I think since Vatican II the family spirit has grown. There is more oneness. We no longer have the extern sisters, lay sisters, and choir sisters. There is also a breakdown of offices. Previously a sister's job or office was very specific, but now the sisters help out all around. People feel free to go to the kitchen and bake something without insulting Sister Blanche. There is more interaction and interest in each other now. We also have our disagreements, and that's family like. Sometimes it is painful.

Q: Is this house private with regards to the neighborhood?

It is satisfactory. Nothing intrudes on our way of life. Some of the neighborhood thought that the shelter house at the United Way was a threat and there was opposition. Hearing them though one can't help but think and be compassionate.

Q: What colors are appropriate for a monastery?

Yellow is a good color. I like yellow. I like light colors. We have all painted our cells with different colors. Sister Mary's is green. Sister Margaret Mary painted hers orange and tumbler weed. Sister Blanche's room is yellow.

Q: Where do you go to be alone?

I go to the yard on the swings or to my cell. Sometimes the novitiate or my office. The cells are satisfactorily private. They aren't very big. You certainly can't exercise in there. They are hot in the summer and cold in the winter. I also like to go to the hermitage. For the most part the house is quiet and comfortable.
Q: Do you have any personal possessions?
I have my flute.

Q: Have you ever attended a Mass outside?
Oh, lots of times. Whenever I go home, I have to go wherever I am. I like the liturgies and enjoy the music, but sometimes they are so big and crowded!

Q: I was referring to a Mass outdoors, not outside the monastery.
Oh, yes I have, and I like it very much. I was once at a Mass by the water. All the sisters sat on the rocks. Every so often a seagull would fly overhead, but it wasn't distracting. It just added to the whole thing. It was very lovely. Sometimes we have processions through the garden here in Lafayette, and in a warm Easter we will have the vigil outdoors. I like the outdoors.

Q: What are some pleasant or unpleasant buildings you have experienced?
The unpleasant experience was in Marywood Library in Scranton, Pennsylvania. I took a class in a second floor classroom that had no windows, and the doors had to be kept closed to prevent disturbing others. It was kind of the same sensation one gets in an elevator of being all closed in. It was a pleasant class, also - children's literature. But I remember it being very hard to sit in there through the whole class. There is also a room at Purdue that I've had classes in that has no windows, but it is a much larger room with a high ceiling, and I don't get the same feeling there. I also used to live in a very institutional monastery in a cell on the third floor. I had a window, but it faced immediately into a brick wall. I resorted to getting a big poster to put over the window. It was very bad.
October 13, 1984

Julia is 23 years old. She has been eligible to enter the monastery since she was 21, but she is caring for an invalid grandmother. She has been visiting the monastery since she was 16. She lives in Union City, Indiana.

Q: What are your feelings about this building?

I can compare it to Tipton which is so huge. This place is more like a home. Tipton has tile floors that make it look as if it were a hospital. I like this place. Its nice.

Q: What should the relationship between the monastery and nature be?

Well, there should be a relationship with nature. I like to have lots of windows - I like to be able to hear what's going on outside, and i like the natural light. But privacy is also important. We have these fogged windows on all the first floor and in the lower pane of the second story windows because most of the houses near here are 2 stories. Our back yard is great. Its not just a lawn. Its good to have so many trees.

The house should be divided as it is with a separate part for guests. I think we need a dining place separate from the parlor. When
the Bishop comes it gets quite cramped in here. I like this room - especially the woodwork. Its cherry, I think. That sort of relates to nature. I like the natural wood that's not painted.

Q: How do you like the chapel?

The chapel is too small on the weekends, but big enough during the week. The front pews are too close to the altar. Its uncomfortable. Its very pleasant overall. Its small.

The floors in this house are too thin. You can hear visitors in the parlor when you are in the novitiate. I don't feel any invasion of privacy from the neighborhood. There are often children at the United Way - but its not bad. Its nice to hear them having fun. Its not so good to hear their ghetto blasters. Its good to have certain areas in the enclosure to be quiet in. You don't yell here if you want to find someone. You go and get them.

Q: Any special needs in the novitiate that aren't being met now?

The novitiate should have a separate place from the secretary's office. There are three desks in the novitiate.

Q: Can you compare the chapel with others you have been in?

The Tabernacle in the center is nice. I also like the way the lights are in the ceiling. We have individual control for different parts of the room so that some sisters can read while others pray. The closeness of the chapel is nice. It isn't as spacey as my chapel at home.

Q: Would you like to have mass outside sometimes?

Yes, I never thought of that. That would be nice.

Q: What amount of natural versus artificial light do you like in the chapel?

I prefer natural light. I love stained glass windows. I took a course on making them. There are candles on the altar, and the vigil light is always lit. Skylights would be nice in the hallway on third floor. They have them in the halls at Tipton.

Q: Talk about your cells.

They are very simple. They have a chair, bed, desk, one window, a locker for clothes, a four drawer dresser, and a medicine cabinet. They are plain because that is all we need. Its comfortable, but its just not important. All we do there is sleep. Its nice to have two different stairways to get upstairs by. If one is blocked, you can always use the other one. The windows are about 4 feet off the ground to where you can see better when you are standing. I wouldn't mind a bigger window. The walls could be thicker. If you hit your elbow against the wall, the person in the next cell can hear it. The walls are very thin.

Q: How does the community compare with a family?

We eat cafeteria style. Sometimes I miss having the food on the table. There is a sink in the dining room, so when you are finished eating you can get up and wash your own dish.
dishes, and then put them away.

Q: What are some pleasant or unpleasant buildings you have experienced?

The Carmelite Monastery in Indianapolis really catches your attention. It looks like a Spanish Castle. Its got huge arched doorways with big wooden doors and black hinges. Then you walk up some stairs, and all the floors are stone so they echo when you walk. There were arches everywhere. And a little window was in the door. We heard this voice calling us, but couldn't tell where from...and there was this little window that the sister was talking to us through. I've never seen anything like it. The wall around the monastery was huge. It was probably...uh...(looks at the ceiling in the room) probably as tall as this room? Maybe I'm exaggerating, I probably am, but it made me think of the book I Leap Over the Wall. It looked like something from the movies.

Q: Do you like the habits the sisters wear?

Yes, I like the habits. They are unusual in color. They aren't burdensome. I like the location of the monastery. It is close enough to downtown to be able to walk there.
"...the closeness in the chapel is nice..." Julia
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<th>Issue</th>
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<tr>
<td>QUALITATIVE</td>
<td>M. Catherine Aurelia Caruelle founded the order in 1835 at St. Hyacinth in Montreal. In 1876 a diocese in Brooklyn invited the Sisters of the Precious Blood to begin a monastery there. In 1935 the Lafayette diocese made a similar request.</td>
<td>The order is relatively new compared to the order more open to change, as they are not encumbered in a 2000-year tradition.</td>
<td>On one level, however, the history and traditions of all are part of the identity of this group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRADITION &amp; HERITAGE</td>
<td>B. RELIGIOUS</td>
<td>The sisters work for the salvation of souls through a life of prayer. Priority is to their openness to visitors.</td>
<td>The habit is a second level of identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. HISTORY</td>
<td>C. HABITS</td>
<td>M. Catherine modelled the habit of the order after existing orders. The habits were white with a red scapular and black veil. The red is symbolic of the Precious Blood of Christ. The modified habit is individual—whatever is most comfortable to each sister. The colors have remained consistent.</td>
<td>The color red indicates a second level of identity. Red is a very unusual color for a habit. This is the strongest image of the order giving a festive impression.</td>
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<td>RENEWAL</td>
<td>D. CHANGE</td>
<td>A mandatory 8:00 bed-time is now individually decided.</td>
<td>A movement from systemic control to personal motivation.</td>
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<td>2. INTER MONASTERY RELATIONSHIP</td>
<td>• silence was once observed at all meals, but now only at breakfast. Visits outside the monastery were forbidden, but now sisters visit family once every two years or at the time of a relative's death. All monasteries must have a watch dog.</td>
<td>• the atmosphere of silence is more profound when voluntary. It is a great improvement to be able to visit the family.</td>
<td>• Renewal has emphasized the identity of the individual monastery by allowing it to initiate and execute its own changes.</td>
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<td>• once the monasteries of the S.O. of R.E. communicated only through newsletters, now the sisters visit each other in their monasteries.</td>
<td>• Greata is more of a pet than a watch dog.</td>
<td>• The other monasteries in the order are often referred to when the sisters are looking for direction. The identity of the order offers support for individual decisions or direction when no strong feeling, or consensus exists. This is reinforced by better communication within the order.</td>
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<td>• Watertown is a newly built monastery since Vatican II. • Watertown and Brooklyn have an “L” shaped chapel</td>
<td>• relationships are more sincere; it is a great improvement.</td>
<td>• Watertown is simple, warm, cozy, and has nothing distracting. The new one here would be “L” shaped, I suppose.</td>
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<td>• All of the house and garden are part of the enclosure, including the chapel, guest parlor, and guest room bath.</td>
<td>• we may be separating from them.</td>
<td>• the Host rooms do not have to be in the enclosure.</td>
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<td>• Occasional tours of the Host rooms are given; also the garden is often open to lay people. • In 1968 the sisters initiated</td>
<td>• tours are disruptive to contemplative life.</td>
<td>• the people were thrilled when</td>
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xliv-2
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<td></td>
<td>the removal of the grille</td>
<td>the grille came down, and we have made many beautiful friends as a result</td>
<td>The physical presence of the grille was a symbolic and psychological barrier mainly for the secular world. The sisters wish to retain an atmosphere of quiet and contemplation while the enclosure continues to be redefined. The physical arrangement of living, worship, and work spaces should support future renewal.</td>
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<td>the grille dramatically reduced the perceived and usable size of the parlor and chapel</td>
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<td>part of the grille is used in the horticulture, as a wall hanging behind a small altar</td>
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<td>The focus of the group's renewal is to support an interface between the sisters and the secular world to the benefit of both.</td>
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<td>the enclosure is still in a state of renewal</td>
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<td>the Church insisted on the enclosure for contemplatives after Vatican II</td>
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<td>b) SELF IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td>The sisters are allowed to take classes at Purdies (i.e. theology)</td>
<td>It is a great improvement to be able to take classes.</td>
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<td>The sisters watch T.V.</td>
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<td>The sisters vote</td>
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<td>visit home were forbidden, but now the sisters visit their families once every two years or at the death of a relative.</td>
<td>It is a great improvement to be able to visit our families</td>
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<td>E. EXISTING STRUCTURE</td>
<td>The existing monastery includes the following facilities: A full basement with furnace room</td>
<td>we like the smallness, family spirit, and non-institutional house.</td>
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xliv-3
issue

fact

- paint room; sitting room; library; workbench, storage.
- FIRST FLOOR with chapel, sacristy, guest room, parlor, lodge, dining room, bathroom, parlor, kitchen, Host room, screened porch.
- SECOND FLOOR with community room, refectory, secretary's office, linen room, cell with bath, business office, studio, infirmary, 2 bath, superior office, porch, pharmacy.
- THIRD FLOOR with 10 cells, bath, fan room, 2 closet areas.
- the foundations of the existing house are good.
- many fireplaces are closed-up.
- much of the original wood remains.
- some original stained and beveled glass remains.

- the existing monastery is a made-over house.

hypothesis

- the expansion of the hermitage into a library, place for indoor sports, and refectory could be considered.
- the existing house could become a retreat house.
- we've been adding boxes, but really the original house was a boy.
- the house has a beauty and simplicity.
- I like eating on the porches.
- I like the wood and stained glass.
- brick and a dark place - these are things which are monastic.
- I like brick and stone for a monastery because they are sturdy.
- I don't like a box manufactured look.
- The Carmelite monastery is.

interpretation

- institution. These qualities include:
  - a richness of materials, a sense of identity (personal) function-specific spaces.
  - The process of endowment to the existing structure has been achieved as "boxes" are continually added to the existing house. This endowment is similar to what one experiences as a tree grows. The new monastery, if designed in phases, would be sympathetic.
  - The sisters prefer the image of a monastery to the image of a home. They admire traditional monastic structures for their qualities of starkness and introversion.
II. COMMUNITY & PRIVACY
   A. INDIVIDUALITY
      1. PERSONAL EXPRESSION

   - All the sisters have chosen colors to paint their rooms.
   - Personal possessions include: a flute, writing papers, a pillsbury doughboy, table lamp, clocks, a picture of a sailboat on an orange sea, a poster of Mt. McKinley.
   - All sisters chose a modified habit that was comfortable for them individually.
   - The sisters are able to go out for educational purposes.
   - Hobbies include: photographing, sunrises and sunsets, making rosaries, playing the flute, art.

   **Hypothesis**
   - Fabulas because it is a real Carmelite monastery (copied from Spain).
   - There is no real Precious Blood monastery because we are in no way cultural.
   - The monastery in Brooklyn was a regular monastery.
   - A new monastery would have the quality of simplicity.
   - There has been a movement from systematic control to personal motivation.

   **Interpretation**
   - The building should be an expression of the order as well as the specific community of the Lafayette monastery.
   - Expressions of individuality have a humanizing effect on the perception of the sisters by others in the secular world.
   - The expression is more prominent because of its specificity.
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<td>2 PERSONAL WORSHIP (CONTEMPLATION)</td>
<td>each sister has an area available to be alone in.</td>
<td>natural quietness, light &amp; air, views to the outside, the warmth</td>
<td>the goals of the contemplative nun are shared, but</td>
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<td>the cells are most private</td>
<td>of wood, simplicity, the chapel is a place of prayer</td>
<td>their pursuit is intensely individual. The ultimate</td>
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<td>PRIVACY</td>
<td>decisions are made democratically unless one sister strongly</td>
<td>the presence of God makes any place suitable, give yourself 5</td>
<td>relationship in the sisters' lives is very personal.</td>
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<td>B: INSTITUTION</td>
<td>opposes the majority decision.</td>
<td>minutes to prepare for prayer</td>
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<td>I: STRUCTURE</td>
<td>superior - she is elected every three years by her peers. She</td>
<td>the presence of light, being in the presence of the Blessed Sac-</td>
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<td>(a) FORMAL</td>
<td>cannot serve more than 9 con-</td>
<td>rament, the rocks at the Carmelite</td>
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<td>beauty, simplicity, and stark</td>
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<td>nakedness, a lack of clutter, you create the place.</td>
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<td>the more bare a place, the better</td>
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<td>for the most part the house is</td>
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<td>private and quiet</td>
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<td>we all need a place to hide</td>
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<td>our equality makes us unlike a</td>
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<td>family - there is no catering to</td>
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<td>personal preferences</td>
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<td>secuive years. The superior handles business matters. Host room work. jobs can entail baking, cutting, or packing &amp; mailing the Host. Librarian. Organist. Postess - answers door &amp; telephone. Shopping for the community. Secretary - corresponds, etc. Sacristan - prepares Chapel for Mass &amp; arranges vestments. Director of Novitiate - instructs novices. Cook. teachers often change.</td>
<td>we all have common goals. we do have disagreements. there is a beautiful family spirit. a place for an outdoor Mass. would have to be special. sisters should be at ease in a monastery because they spend so much time there. there should be nothing distracting and an atmosphere of simplicity. a circular form is suggested.</td>
<td>The sisters support each other through love and respect. Mass is an act of man and must occur in an ordered setting. Chapel is one of the living spaces in the monastery as well as a worship space.</td>
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<td>Ages range from 40 to 85.</td>
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<td>there is no place for outdoor Mass. there is little natural light in the chapel.</td>
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### Issue: Privacy/Proximity
- The director of the novitiate has no private office.
- The floors and walls are thin.
- Wood floors are noisy.

### Fact: INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP
- The existing house is 3 stories high in a dense urban neighborhood.
- The first and second floor windows are fogged.
- The neighbors are mostly elderly.

### Hypothesis
- Closereness to the altar, Blessed Sacrament, and each other is important.
- I need a private place to talk to the novices.
- Carpet in the community room could help reduce noise transmitted to the chapel.
- The chapel should be in a quieter area (relative to public entrance).
- The kitchen and dining room need a closer relationship.
- The guest and chaplain areas should be associated with the chapel.
- The green house should be accessed through the dining room.
- The kitchen and chapel should be separate to keep smells out of chapel.

### Interpretation
- The ultimate focus in designing the chapel should be the Blessed Sacrament.
- Principles of silence and austerity can be in conflict. Silence has priority with the sisters in the chapel area.
- The sisters' urban setting is supportive to their desire to be visible in the community. The only discomfort they feel is directly on the street facade where neighbors can see in.
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<tr>
<td>I. Relationship to Site and Nature</td>
<td>- Cars and lawn mowers can be heard&lt;br&gt; - Former Way Station House for miners awaiting trial is next door&lt;br&gt; - Downtown is in walking distance</td>
<td>- The neighborhood doesn't interfere with our lifestyle&lt;br&gt; - I like the convenience of the road and not being isolated&lt;br&gt; - The enclosure wall (garden) should blend in with nature.</td>
<td>- The sisters are not walled in by force; they remain in by choice.</td>
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<td>II. Windows</td>
<td>- The green house is in a bad location relative to the sun.&lt;br&gt; - Flowers are brought in to chapel</td>
<td>- Beauty is mall of nature&lt;br&gt; - I believe in raising flowers for chapel&lt;br&gt; - The NE part of the site is most attractive for wandering&lt;br&gt; - If we built in the woods, I wouldn't want my feet muddy all the time&lt;br&gt; - The God and nature relationship cannot be separated.&lt;br&gt; - We dwell on nature and have workshops to heighten our awareness&lt;br&gt; - An outdoor mass would have to be in a special place, but would be very nice!</td>
<td>- The sisters use their garden to re-establish a wilderness within an urban setting. The monastery has an order which becomes more profound in contrast with nature.</td>
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<td>- Controlled lighting is appropriate for worship spaces&lt;br&gt; - A higher level of natural light is good in living and working spaces</td>
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**Issue**

**Fact**

- existing equipment includes: washers and dryers, a lawn mower, a typewriter, a T.V., two record players
- cells are hot in summer and cold in the winter
- the Host rooms are very humid to rotten the bread, but have condensation running down the walls
- brick is more expensive than redwood
- the sisters own the house and

**Hypothesis**

- skylights are great
- it would be a hardship to have no windows in the Host room
- stained glass is beautiful
- every window should be the type you can open
- we need more natural light in chapel
- windows let cold air in.
- no windows in a small room can be claustrophobic
- would like additional equipment including: a copy machine, a computer, deeper cabinets in the Host room, a swimming pool, lavatories in the cells
- if the Host rooms were internal rather than external walls it would help.
- we would never really build this house serves us

**Interpretation**

- views are best focused inward to garden
- Modern equipment saves the system more time for worship or other important tasks. The time is more valuable than the principle of austerity.
- Much of what makes a conducive atmosphere for the sister's life.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Fact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Space Requirement</td>
<td>- the garden path was not blacktopped until 1971</td>
<td>- a stockade fence would be too expensive</td>
<td>- Style is within their beliefs and the power of their faith. Building is an extravagance.</td>
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<td>- there is no library</td>
<td>- more space is needed in the host rooms because only one operation can happen at a time</td>
<td>- Space is used inefficiently in the existing monastery</td>
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<td>- the chapel is too small</td>
<td>- the cells are small, but all that we need</td>
<td>- a feeling of expansiveness might ease the perceived feelings of crampedness</td>
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<td>- there is no guest dining room</td>
<td>- a larger area for guests is needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- I can sit comfortably in the parlor</td>
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<td>- the sacristy is smaller than in any of our other monasteries</td>
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Father Tracy

November 1984
Father Tracy has been the Chaplain for the monastery for 22 years. He is also the Superintendent of Schools and Ministries.

I began the interview by explaining the drawings I had done thus far to Father Tracy. To the drawings, Father Tracy's comment was that I had a very good understanding of the sisters. When I showed the drawing of the cell and indicated that it was an interpretation of what they had told me about the cell - I had not seen it myself, he was amazed that they had not shown me through the monastery. He said he had been in all the rooms of the monastery at one time or another and there was no reason why they shouldn't show me through.

The discussion then turned more specifically to the Chapel, what he liked or disliked about the existing, what the ideal chapel might be, etc.:

"In that Chapel they have now, the people are too close. You see, I am a self-conscious, nervous person. I never knew I was until I overheard someone say, 'Have you noticed how Father Tracy's hands shake when he holds them out?' For this reason I feel uncomfortable that the people are so close to me."

Q: How have the changes of Vatican II affected the sisters?
"That is very interesting. I think the sisters have interpreted the directives of Vatican II very loosely. There were three young sisters that were behind all the reforms. They were the ones who got the T.V. in the refectory, who got the grille to be taken down. The other sisters were not so much in favor of these things. Then as soon as the changes came, the three sisters left and the rest of the sisters had to deal with all of the things left behind.

"But with regards to the chapel, the chapel needs more room and more... well its kind of stark. For instance the stations of the cross they have now are not the same ones they have always had. One of the young sisters insisted on these new ones that are just fourteen black crosses with words on them and no depiction of the passion. I'll bet the sisters have trouble telling which station is which. And they have the two statues of Joseph and Mary, but I would like to see more religious art. The chapel just isn't a chapel. It could really be any room. The windows with the marble aren't very ecclesiastical.

"An example of what I'm saying is St. Anne's church where all the statues were put in the basement. The positive side is that they turned the altar to face the people. I think that is a change for the better. I like all the changes, but I don't like the removal of art. It'll come back though. I think in time people will be more moderate in their reactions to Vatican II. Most of these churches evolved with a strong sense of the nationality of their congregations, such as with St. Anne's. But when they put the statue of St. Patrick in the basement a lot of the identity of the church went into the basement too.

"The Sacristy at the Monastery is very good. I like the preserved brick wall. But it is also the coldest sacristy in the world. I think they forgot to install heating when they built it. Even three or four priests can get along in there very well before Mass. The Chapel can accommodate 70 to 80 people at the maximum. I have a lot of my students from Purdue who like to come on Sunday. We go out to breakfast after Mass. I think it is also so popular because it is the shortest Mass in town. There are much fewer people for communion. They asked the Bishop if they could make it bigger when they were remodelling it - you know, move out into the parking lot a bit- but he said no."

Q: How would you describe your relationship with the sisters?

"We're good friends. I celebrate Thanksgiving with the sisters. I've been Chaplain there for twenty-two years now! I live right down the street in a house that is 130 years old. It was once the end of the city where Kossoth meets State. We are good friends. My favorite is little Sister Blanche. She always bakes me a turkey."

Q: Do you hear the sisters' confessions?

"No. I am not Holy enough for that. There is an appointed confessor. They set up in the parlor or the sacristy. I hear the confessions of lay people but never the sisters. My services are to administrate Mass daily, Benediction, and then I am also the Superintendent of Schools and Foreign Ministries."

Q: What sort of things describe the ideal monastery chapel?
"I very much like St Mary's here in town. It was built after Vatican II. It is very well done. No, I guess it was done just before Vatican II. I'm against overhead lights. My idea of good lighting is to have wall lamps that are shot up against the wall at the ceiling. They have too much light over at the monastery. What do they need all that light for anyway? They have spotlights on the crucifix and too much light on the altar. Technically, Mass is not supposed to be said under a bedroom. Its one of those Victorian principles associated with the sort of things that go on in bedrooms, I guess. My only concern here is that you're going to get the sisters wishing for something they can't afford.

"You know, when I was first given the assignment at the monastery, I hated it. It was before the altar faced the people, so I had to be jammed up against the wall when offering Mass. The sisters were so timid. I mean they were very nice, but they wouldn't sing at Mass, and they still are reluctant to do the readings. One day after years of trying to encourage them to sing, they went and bought an organ. And so now they sing. They have come quite a ways. Now once in a while they do the readings."

October 19, 1984

Mr. Beckman is an architect with Wright, Porteous and Lowe Inc., a firm that has done a good deal of Catholic religious architecture. Mr. Beckman is himself a Catholic.

Your questions are rather formal, so I think I will just tell you how I feel about this. The Fatima Retreat House on 56th and Shadeland, just before Kessler is in my mind what a modern monastery could be. I imagine a quiet, peaceful setting with rolling hills. Fatima is very plain and functional. It consists of chapel, dining room, kitchen and rooms. The rooms are very small - 8 X 15 - with carpet on the floors. They are analogous to the cells in a monastery. I think of a monastery as being stark, plain, and austere. But I'm not so sure a modern one would be that way. Monasteries were originally that way because of the available building materials - plaster, stone - and simple construction techniques. Color was not available as it is today. The more progressive orders may persist, but I believe those that refuse to change will perish. I would imagine some of the religious orders behave as if they have never heard of Vatican II. The nun or monk whose vocation is contemplation may not be necessary anymore. I can't understand their motivation. Vatican II gave the religious orders the power to have
minds of their own.

In my mind, I would think the sisters would want to relate to the community through teaching or nursing. You said they make altar breads, maybe they have a bakery that is separate from the monastery where they sell breads. To me, I don't think this monastery should have walls. It doesn't have to be primitive; it can be modern. It should be in harmony with the area around it. It should be plain and neutral - not necessarily in the use of materials, but it should not reflect extravagance.

Q: What is a pleasant place you have experienced? What qualities did it have?

A person can be awed by the magnificence and beauty in any architectural experience. It all has to relate to art and how one conceives the art. No two people see the same thing. You walk into a magnificent Cathedral, and you are awed by the space and all the art. To me that is not a religious experience, it is showing off. If you take a Jew into a Catholic Cathedral like that, they see all the magnificence, and they come to the conclusion that the Church is wealthy and powerful. To me something plain and simple is a sacred place. When you walk into a sacred place, you automatically change your tone of voice to a whisper. The Lincoln Memorial can be a religious experience. I am from the Viet Nam era, and although I have not seen it, I am sure the Vietnam War Memorial is a religious experience. A structure doesn't have to relate to an experience. I can't get any religious feelings from modern architecture. Most churches are religious. I grew up in a small rural town with a one room, 1800's, church building. I always felt it was very special, even though the architecture was nothing spectacular.

I would think that this order - because of its size - would be in a secluded, wooded, rolling setting with the buildings fitting and blending into the site. I would picture the priest as the local parish priest. He would lend support to the group. The budget has to be kept in mind because of the size. You've got to realize that the client has a limited budget. In the past churches always had a benifactor. The building ended up being a monument to that benifactor. That rarely happens today.

Q: What do you like about doing religious architecture?

Well, this applies to a lot of projects. It is the challenge of working with a committee. It is similar to working with a school. It is rare that you are dealing with only one person. It is always a building committee. The challenge is to really do your job and help them. They all feel they know exactly what they want. They usually don't. The architect's job is to guide them. The client is to be served because he lives with the building forever. You only do for the year or two that the project is in the office. And if something doesn't work, it comes back to haunt you. To take their ideas and put them down on paper and from that create a structure, space, and environment is exciting.

Q: What is the importance of historical precedent in the design of a monastery?

It should be modern - but what is modern? I think you have to find out from this order. Have they really accepted Vatican II?
Historically anything built pre-1960 is a whole different type of structure. To look at the retreat house you wouldn't say "There's a monastery!" But I find it to be very much what a monastery could be. The walls create a mystique - what's behind the wall? The whole concept of Vatican II was to tear the walls down - both literally and figuratively. I would try to convince them that they shouldn't have the enclosure, but the client's wishes would dictate. It's really not necessary if the site is secluded.

Q: What qualities of a space are conducive to prayer and contemplation?

The setting - paths and walkways - would have a lot to do with it. Areas for quiet, individual meditation should be provided. Someplace besides the Chapel. Each of them have their own room that is plain and neutral. I can't picture a lot of color anywhere. I think the colors should come from the outside - nature and flowers. They should be God's own colors. I don't think there has to be a designated area for specific kneelers. Mostly, I see something similar to Fatima.

October 19, 1984

Mr. Stafford is employed at Wright, Porteous and Lowe Inc. He is presently the project architect for a Catholic church which the firm is designing.

My immediate reaction to the project is to address the problem of how they want to interact with the outside world. I can imagine a sheltered or buffered area before one actually gets to the building. The program really comes from the client. The budget is a product of their needs for square footage. They have to know that if they want this much space it will cost them this many dollars. Churches are subject to a great deal of "phase building." We constantly have to deal in realistic areas, not just philosophical.

With a group like this, how they live will have a big impact on the design. What are their patterns of movement between the chapel, their rooms, their work areas, etc? This is where they live. This one building is it for their lives. I would have to see the site to be able to deal with their relationship with nature. The eastern light and the orientation would be very important. I think their attitude would be unusual. I think they would have definite ideas about the way they would want to interact. When we
work with a client initially, we do site studies, ideas, and preliminary alternatives. We try to give them ideas that they hadn't thought of. We give them options and let them react. You've got to have a very flexible attitude. You have to see the pros and the cons and let the solutions evolve.

I still imagine something that is sheltered - a wall. It should be protected, but you should be able to see the height of the chapel behind this wall and access for the public. They don't want to sacrifice their intimacy, I'm sure. It's hard to imagine without the site or having talked to the people.

In addressing your question about the religious' vow of poverty, I would think you would try to eliminate ostentatious detailing. The use of natural materials seems essential. I really feel that all these questions you are asking are questions I would ask the client! I wouldn't want to make uninformed conclusions.

Q: What do you like about doing religious architecture?

Well, I feel if a person is a good designer, he is willing to tackle anything. I'm excited about religious architecture. The scale allows you to deal with a lot of volume and natural lighting. People are willing to accept that in a religious structure. It's not like an office building in that way. You can do things you might not normally be able to.

Q: What are some examples of outstanding religious architecture you have experienced?

I think the European cathedrals are fantastic. We don't even approach those in our sense of building today. An important quality to me is natural light. I also admire Paul Rudolph in the way he handles artificial light. The way the circulation is introduced into the main worship space is important also. I really think most of the drama of the space - the volume, natural light and structure.

This firm doesn't have an established philosophy. I have a definite attitude about being a problem solver. I feel strongly about working with people. There may be a benefit to having a philosophy, but I approach each project as if it has a unique solution inherent to itself.
October 17, 1984

Mr. Gibson is a partner with Bohlen, Meyer, Gibson and Associates Inc. The firm has done most of the convent and monastery work in Indiana.

Q: What is the importance of historical precedents in the design of a monastery?

I find it to be very important. With any religious structure it is important. I believe that in the Bible there are many times instructions on how to build a temple.

Q: What should the relationship between the monastery and nature be?

There is a very close relationship. They spend a lot of time with nature. In the monastery I visited, the monastery itself was not particularly open to nature with windows. But there were windows. They are closed in and private. One Sister had a hobby of woodworking. She designed the concept for the sanctuary. They were very delightful people. Working with wood might be considered a relationship with nature. They are very close to natural materials. A lot of stone and basic natural materials are used.

Q: What should the relationship between the monastery and the secular world be?

Well for the maintenance of the buildings they have to have contact with the outside world. I suppose there are some monasteries that might be constructed without modern technologies.

Q: What is the importance of symbols in a monastery, and what might some important symbols be?

Figures of Christ are primary. The whole structure at this monastery was austere and plain. It was not pretentious at all, but in extreme good taste.

Q: What are some examples of outstanding religious architecture that you have experienced? What qualities did it have?

One would be the Washington National Cathedral and the second would be the Air Force Chapel. I have always thought that the Crystal Palace must be fabulous, but I have never seen it. The Methodist Church in Shelbyville that I belong to and designed, I like very much. The parish church in Williamsburg, Virginian is an unusual, early American Church. There is nothing spectacular about the building, but the sense of history inside the church was really quite moving. I'm sure the Cathedrals in Europe have an even greater sense of history that makes them quite overwhelming.
Q: What qualities of a space are conducive to contemplation and prayer?

The sanctuary at the Carmelite's monastery gave me a sense of contemplation, but I don't know why unless it was the history and because I know what goes on there. The Chapel at the Air Force Academy had one large Chapel, and then several other small Chapels for the various religions - Catholic, Jewish, etc. The Catholic Chapel in the basement had a beautiful piece of stained glass with lights behind it. It gave you the feeling of being in a religious place. It was quite unlike the Carmelite monastery which was quite plain and austere. I'm not sure if there is any one thing that is contemplative.

Q: What approach might you take to issues of community and privacy within the monastery?

I was once at a place where an isolated building surrounded a courtyard. It wasn't like a prison, but it was enclosed. I don't know if there was a fence.

Q: What approach is suitable to addressing the religious' vow of poverty in the design of a new monastery?

The key is the austerity and plainness of the structure itself. No expensive accessories should be added.

Q: What are some pleasant or unpleasant places you have experienced? What qualities did they have?

There are so many things that go into making something pleasant or unpleasant. I like Jefferson's Monticello and even Andrew Jackson's hermitage. I like so much of Williamsburg. Why? I don't know! I think it's the knowledge of what has happened there. A modern structure - are there any that are pleasant? I like the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta. I think it has to do with spaciousness, motion, and the sound of waterfalls. I tend to agree with John Portman in that a space needs motion and sound.

Another thing that can be either enhancing or otherwise is odor. The Botanical Gardens in Washington D.C. is pleasant because of its own particular function. The Jefferson Monument is pleasant in that it relates to a sense of history. The function of a place has a lot to do with the reaction one has to it - the meaning of a place. There could be a lot of places that are unpleasant. Sometimes a pleasant place can be unpleasant by just having a lot of people around it. Some buildings I don't like, I haven't even seen - like the Portland Building and a lot of other post-modern buildings. An unpleasant place is an Army barracks. It is very plain with wood floors and ceiling, no color, etc.

Q: What is the difference between the plainness of a monastery and an Army barracks?

It is the purpose of the space. If you made an Army barracks out of the monastery sanctuary it would be unpleasant. I was in a place where part of the building was very pleasant and part of it was very unpleasant. The room I had in a hotel in Yellowstone Park had an odd space arrangement. It was uncomfortable with a bad view and exposed sprinkler heads. The hotel itself - the lobby - was an atrium structure with exposed structural wood and nice light fixtures. The restaurant at the Grand Canyon was one of the most pleasant dining experiences I ever had.

October

Mr. H. A. Bohler confirmed no additional monasteries.

There is some concern about fire protection below grade and the dissipation of work. It is a concern. We have discussed the matter. Each building has little fire protection. Of course, we know they are never going to do anything or live.

Those for further discussion of design and prayer are very important. It is all a design for the person. It has to have
Mel Meyer

October 19, 1984

Mr. Meyer is a partner with the firm of Bohlen, Meyer, Gibson and Associates Inc. The firm has done most of the convent and monastery work in Indiana.

There are several cloistered convents in the country of the order we designed here. The first one in the United States was located below Washington D.C. The group had almost dissipated so a sister from the group I had worked with here in Indiana was sent to help the group build itself back up. I happened to have the opportunity to visit her there at the monastery. They had a very unusual thing. Each of the sisters lived in a separate 8X10 little building there. They feel they are closer to God in their own little building. Of course, they had to go out in the inclement weather to get to the chapel, and they catch colds like everyone else, but I never heard one of them complain. They had 8 or 10 of those little buildings there.

Those sisters are very ingenious. They use carpenters tools like men. They built a prayer chapel that was about 16X24. It was very rustic, but just beautifully done. They are immaculately clean. This office has designed 5 different Motherhouses. I personally have designed two. In each case we have found the sisters to be very knowledgeable about building materials. They do their homework. They can read plans. I don't know how they become so knowledgeable because they really separate themselves from the world. They don't read the newspaper or watch television.

Q: What is the importance of historical precedent in the design of a monastery?

Historical precedent is very important. They constantly refer back to the Foundress of the order and her hardships. They have a tremendous library of the history of the order. The books are very well written. They have changed to a more open concept, and that is good because they are part of this world. They want to be a part of this world. But they also want to have their own world.

Q: What should the relationship between the monastery and nature be?

There is a close relationship between nature and the sisters because nature is very close to God. I visited a monastery in Des Plaines, Ill. It was very modern and contemporary, however, still that monastic feeling was there. It was present not only in the surroundings. You also could see it on their faces. Their faces just glow. They have great big eyes that sparkle.
Q: Have the monasteries you have experienced been very internalized, or is there an open free exchange with nature?

In the ones I have seen it has been very open. They have beautiful open courtyards. They do not feel as close to God in the garden as in chapel. They pick a spot in the garden for prayer and meditation. It's a way of achieving seclusion without being in the cell. They choose a spot next to a statue or a flower and make it their own. The sisters I have worked with wear sandals or thongs (Discalced Carmelites.)

Their cells are very small - about 8 X 10. They have a bed with a lacing of rope. I did not see a mattress, but maybe they have one. There is a chair - the type that is reversible and can be used as either a kneeler or a chair. The walls are cement brick. The floors and ceiling were cement. There must have been a light, but I have a feeling they use candles quite often. They have a tremendous relationship with God. They get whatever they ask for. I've never seen a sad one - they are always happy! They have never answered a question I have asked them about their life. They love daylight. They insisted we put a skylight in. The interiors were all unpainted concrete brick. One might think that would be drab, but with daylight it was very nice. They have terrazzo floors and stone in the chapel.

When we first started working with the sisters we talked through a cloth. The second time they had gotten a special compensation so that we could come into the room with them. This was in 1970. They called it, "Coming through the door." I was overwhelmed to see the brilliance of their faces and the sparkle in their eyes. I explained the drawings to them which I found out I had no need to do because they could read them as well as I could. During construction there were never any problems or objections to having the workmen come in. I never saw any other sisters in the building but the two we always talked with. When construction was completed, the sisters had an open house for the community to see what they had done. This lasted for one month. At the end I asked the Superior how she felt about returning to the cloister soon. She said, "Oh, we can't wait!" In the chapel the congregation sits facing the altar behind which is a metal grille with an opening for communion. Behind the grill was a cloth so that you couldn't see the sisters during the service. This whole screen - about 30' X 30' - was covered with raw silk. Someone had been in Japan during WWII and gotten this for the sisters. Raw silk is a demure gray, nubby, very beautiful material.

Q: What should the relationship between the monastery and the secular world be?

Any building should reflect the personality of who is going to use it. That way they will be comfortable with it. A building should reflect its use.

Q: What is the importance of symbolism in monastery design, and what might some important symbols be?

In this kind of monastery, symbolism is a big item. I had designed an altar with three steps leading up to it, and the sisters perceived it as a symbol of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. I had designed seven small windows along a wall, and the sisters gave the names to them, the sun, the moon, and the stars. They were the seven planets when man first named them, the names they still have today. The beauty of this building was the fact that it was something the sisters who came after us would use.
On the outside of their building they wanted a statue to stand about 9 feet tall. It was cast aluminum and cost $99, but because they decided against it the cost was cut to $99.

Q: What is the most beautiful thing you have ever seen in your travels?

A: The stained glass window of Notre Dame in Paris. It is grander than I expected, with its rubies and emeralds. Once you see it you'll never forget it, Charles.

Q: What are some examples of outstanding religious architecture that you have experienced?

A: The cathedral in Chartres is a beautiful example of medieval architecture. The rose window is especially impressive with its intricate designs. The abbeys in Normandy are also stunning, with their elaborate carvings and stained glass windows.

Q: What qualities of a space are conducive to contemplation and prayer?

A: A space that is conducive to contemplation and prayer is a quiet, open area with natural light. The presence of water, such as a fountain or lake, can also be calming. The architecture itself should be simple and unadorned, allowing the mind to focus on the moment.

On a side note, I remember the window of Westminster Abbey, which I saw many years ago with a number of other people. We saw it from the outside and the stained glass windows were spectacular. I can still picture the colors and the light filtering through the glass. It was quite a sight to see.

On another note, I was impressed by the architecture of the Taj Mahal when I visited India. It is a truly beautiful example of Islamic architecture, with its intricate carvings and use of light and shadow. I have seen many examples of architecture in this country, but the Taj Mahal stands out in my mind.

On the inside of the building, there is a statue of Mary on a pillar. The wood is decorated with black walnut and the wood is stained and waxed. It looks very good on the pillar. The cross and the statue are made of walnut. It was carved by the monks of the monastery. In the main nave, there is another one. Partly, I was impressed by its size and grandeur, and it was just beautiful inside. The Mahal without the minarets is outstanding. It is a true example of Islamic architecture. It is a good example of how the monks carved in India.
there at one time.

Q: What approach is suitable to addressing the religious' vow of poverty when designing a new monastery?

They want to reflect strength and durability. They like stone, marble, terrazzo - not only in their churches, but also in their schools. If it costs 10% more to show strength with a superior material, they do it. They think of lasting into the future. It gives the architect a little freedom and liberty in the use of materials. They choose marble windowsills rather than slate or terrazzo. They want what is more beautiful and longer lasting. They want quality with austerity and strength.

Q: What are some pleasant spaces you have experienced?

The new National Art Gallery in Washington D.C. It is a wonderful example of simplicity, and yet it has warmth even though the outside is all granite. Something I would like you to remember. The secret to good architecture is proportion. The first example is the pyramids in Egypt. Why are the Greek's buildings so beautiful? It's because of proportion. And the Romans improved on it. The beauty of the Gothic era comes from the proportions. A Gothic Cathedral is the dirtiest thing you ever want to see, but its mass and the proportion of its width to its height makes it spectacular. Why do you like or not like building? It is proportion. There are 3 elements to a building - a base, a shaft, and a cap. A good piece of music has an introduction, a body, and a finish. Likewise, a good building has the same. That is what is wrong with these buildings that are glass from the bottom to the top!

David Nice

October 17, 1984

Mr. Nice is employed at Pecsko, Jelliffe, Randall and Nice in Indianapolis. The firm does a majority of church, school, and library work.

Q: What is the importance of historical precedent in the design of a monastery?

I would guess that would be pretty important to the Sisters. Just from what I know from when I worked on convents many years ago.

Q: What about the building of churches since Vatican II? Is historical precedent valuable there?

There is a big change brought about by Vatican II in the churches. I really see that all Churches are coming closer together in their method of worship. Maybe someday it'll be one big happy Church.

Q: What should the relationship be between the monastery and nature?

It is a home for them, so I think it needs to relate to nature. I have an idea these people would enjoy working with nature as a source of recreation if nothing else. I think they need to have that.
Q: What should the relationship be between the monastery and the secular world?

They're going to have to get involved with the secular world whether they like it or not. But then again they need a separation. I was involved with Oldenburg when I was with Bohlen way back in the Fifties. Their contact with the outside world was limited. They had guest rooms and a chapel open to the public, but all the inner workings were separated by walls or buildings. They raise their own food there. I guess that makes them somewhat self-sufficient.

Q: What is the importance of symbols in the design of a monastery, and what might some important symbols be?

My feeling about symbols is whatever their feeling is. I feel that way about any church that we do. I think it is the client's and that it should reflect what they want it to reflect. The symbolism should reflect the people that are involved. The Catholic symbolism is deeper than the Protestant. I have an idea that the order bases a lot on their history, and what has happened in the past.

Q: What is an outstanding piece of religious architecture that you have experienced? What qualities did it have?

As it relates to Catholic architecture, some of the buildings at the University of Notre Dame. The Episcopal Church at 26th across from the Hospital has always impressed me. Both of the churches by Saarinen in Columbus are nice. The Washington Cathedral seemed like an awful lot of big spaces and alcoves. The problem with that is the expense today.

It takes hundreds of years to build something like that. No one is going to be too happy about that these days.

Q: What qualities of a space are conducive to prayer and contemplation?

I think it has to do with volume. A contemplative space has to have some height. The most unreflective spaces are the temporary worship spaces that are great big rooms with an eight foot ceiling. It needs to have some warmth rather than cold grey masses of stone. It ought to be comfortable for the participants. All the senses are involved in what is going on. What you see and hear are important. Most Church building takes place over the course of ten to fifteen years. The first phase is usually a multi-use space that they are using for worship and everything else. That doesn't fit at all.

Q: What is an approach to issues of community and privacy in a monastery?

Whatever they want. I see that as their family group, and I think however they see themselves should be reflected in whatever you design for their use. Whatever the spiritual as well as secular needs are depends on them. You have to develop a program with the client. If you don't come up with something that suits their needs you've failed. In schools and libraries there are some universals - some numbers that are quantitative rather than qualitative. Each congregation is individual. Each group has an identity that is different than any other group of similar people. We reduce the program to writing before we ever start designing or putting a pencil to paper to draw. One of the biggest things about the
real world that is different than school is you have to be able to work with people and draw out their ideas. I haven't been at a board for ten to fifteen years.

Q: What is a suitable approach to the religious' vow of poverty in the design of a new monastery?

Simplicity is probably the key word there - plain if you want to call it that. I don't know that it needs to be. It may not be poverty, but it shouldn't be extravagant. You can't do a colonial building for your clients these days. All the people that made colonial buildings are dead and gone. Artisanship is hard to find.

Q: What are some pleasant or unpleasant spaces that you have experienced? What qualities do they have?

I like to see the outdoors brought in as much as possible. Sometimes that isn't practical from a budget standpoint. It depends on what the space is being used for. If you are trying to worship in a basement that bothers me. But a Market Square or a sports facility has its own kind of features. I think one of the most important things in almost any building is what you see or feel or visualize as you enter a building. Whether you feel welcome or not. It also affects how you treat the exterior of the building. Today the big concern is how close you can get the parking to the front door of the building. Personally, I'd rather walk a little bit through a pleasant environment. Religious architecture has always struck me funny with regards to entry. Traditionally the Narthex or entry is a tiny little place that's bombarded with doors. Now, its becoming more of a social place. Its the first impression you have of a building. Many churches are eliminating the balconies and stepped construction because of codes and structural requirements.

Q: What do you like about doing religious architecture?

We like to do it. Its not profitable if that's what you want to know. You have to like to do it to be involved with it. It is the satisfaction of dealing with religious people and providing them with a space that they can worship in. Every group is different. The interest is that you get variety. It is less stereotyped. As I said, libraries and schools are somewhat more typical. There is a personality that you need to transmit. Libraries and schools have boards that have nothing to do with the users. You will be talking to the boards of education, but never to the students or the teachers. That is also the case with industrial architecture. We are doing a post office now. We aren't allowed to work with the local postmaster, we can only talk to the one in Louisville, Kentucky. With religious architecture, the people we are designing for are the people we are talking to.

Q: What about the art and architecture board? The Methodists want to see the project preliminary plans, and then they want to see it again after C.D.s have been completed. They approve or disapprove what each parish is doing.

Q: Have you done any remodeling of Catholic churches since Vatican II?

We remodeled a church that was 100-150 years
old in accordance with Vatican II. We kept the old pews and the stained glass. Mostly we just rearranged some things and added a daily mass Chapel. There was some very ornate work on the altar that was allowed to stay. We didn't touch the outside. At St. Andrew the parish had been worshipping in a basement for twenty years. We built them a smaller building because the parish has diminished. When you are dealing with large groups you have to deal it down to 4 or 5 people if you hope to get anything accomplished.

C. Participatory Design

The drawings on the following pages are a summary of five sisters' chapel designs. They are my interpretations after having individual sessions with five of the sisters who discussed what an "ideal" chapel might look like. At that time some crude sketches were also generated. It is obvious from the drawings that a circular form is favored. Other conclusions from the drawings are represented in the final design.
CHAPEL PLAN

Sacristry and organ
music storage

Statue of St. Mary

Altar

Sister's pew

Walls with Stations of the Cross

Reading nook with gallery above

Reading nook with gallery above

Priest's procession for mass.

St. Margaret Mary
Dec. 13, 1984
CROSS SECTION THROUGH CHAPEL

gallery for the ill
reading room below gallery

stations of the cross

statue of St. Mary

tabernacle

Sr. Margaret Mary
Dec. 13, 1924
Cross Section Through Chapel

- Staircase on roof
- Circular skylight above altar
- Cross
- Tabernacle
- Round altar

Stations of the Cross alternating with windows

Sr. Jaqueline
Dec. 13, 1984
CROSS SECTION THROUGH CHAPEL

St. Mary
Dec. 6, 1984

skylight in center of dome

domed ceiling

tabernacle

statue of St. Mary

statue of St. Joseph
February 2, 1985

Notes from meeting with the Sisters of the Precious Blood
Discussion of concepts

Zoning/organization concept
The first and immediate concern was the cost of maintaining the existing house if it was to be used only for guests and retreats. Sister Jaqueline saw that it might be quite possible that in the future the frequency and quantity of retreats would take full advantage of the space. She saw the involvement of either lay people or an associate group of women who wanted to live there but not become professed members of the order as a distinct possibility. All the sisters thought it would be feasible only with the further involvement of the diocese in some way.

The progression from public to private space appealed to all the sisters. The idea of a garden zone that was shared by the sisters and the public was popular. Sister Jaqueline said she saw many opportunities for the gardener in the scheme. It was suggested that the public zone include more parking than what is presently available. Sister Jaqueline noticed the large trees (oak and maple) and the spruces. When it was pointed out that many of the cedars, white pines and the spruce that are now by the hermitage had been
removed in this scheme, no one seemed concerned.

Sister Mary was very pleased that the host rooms were located in such a way as to be visited by lay people without interfering with any of the other spaces in the monastery. In the discussion there was a distinction between the chapel, the "convent", and the house. The "convent" referred to the living quarters, offices, and host rooms. Sister Margaret Mary liked the idea of having a business office in the existing house. The need for a garage was brought to my attention by Sister Francis Mary.

Contemplative space/ expansive and contained space:

Many heads nodded in agreement when I said that a contemplative space was both a space that allowed one to look out (expansive) and to look in (contained.) In concept they all agreed that having many choices was good. Sister Jaqueline suggested that a sister could have her cell either looking in to the courtyard or out down the valley. Sister Margaret Mary observed that the courtyard was like a courtyard, and yet was not totally enclosed by building on all four sides. She reacted to this positively. Sister Joan was somewhat uneasy about "looking out" as it may imply a loss of privacy. She felt perhaps the windows would have to be frosted. The description of walls which broke the contained space up further into many small subspaces to provide the sisters with privacy solicited a very negative response. Sister Margaret Mary began by saying that she thought landscaping could accomplish the same thing without being so "inhibiting." Sister Joan explained that the walls would require a great deal of maintenance because they would often have to be trimmed around. Sister Jaqueline felt that a tree provides enough privacy for one to sit behind, and that without walls it would be more open. There was a concern that walls would close them in too much.

When asked if they felt there was too much walking distance involved in the scheme, the sisters expressed many opinions. They found the whole concept of walkways that are enclosed but have no adjoining spaces to be quite intriguing and often interpreted the drawing as an outdoor walk instead of an enclosed walk. Sister Jaqueline saw the walks as a great advantage for some indoor exercise and admonished Sister Joan who felt the distances to be quite extensive that she wouldn't even have to put on her boots to walk and get exercise. There was a lot of discussion about just how long the distances actually were and I found it interesting to put it in terms they could easily comprehend (i.e. from the swings to the hermitage.) While the circulation battle raged I felt it a good time to explain my circulation and image concept.

Circulation/ Image

The sisters seemed to agree with the concept of the circulation as being used in a contemplative way. They understood the correlation between the early drawing I had done contrasting the house and monastery images with what I was now showing them.

Sister Joan initiated a discussion of the placement of the Chapel relative to the rest of the monastery. She felt that the Chapel...
should be more in their midst and that it shouldn't be a place you had to go to. She expressed it that spiritually the presence of God should be central to their building as it is to their worship and lives. I explained that I wanted the convent to be tied more closely to the chapel, but that the chapel is central to the composition - framed by the existing house and the new convent. Sister Margaret Mary felt that on the other hand the remoteness of the chapel would add greatly to the quietness of its atmosphere. Sister Jaqueline reiterated that she thought it would be good for everyone to have the exercise of walking such a distance. Sister Mary suggested having an oratory in the convent near their work as a compromise. Sister Joan said she would yield her objection if there were an oratory at the end of one of the hallways I had described as being a place for seating. I asked if there wouldn't be a conflict between having an oratory and a tabernacle in the chapel both as to which one was more important. They all insisted that absolutely not, there would be no conflict. They would both contain the presence of God, and thus, they would have equal importance.

Sister Joan asked how poor Sister Francis was going to be able to answer the door from such a distance. I explained the intercom and door buzzer system which seemed quite agreeable to Sister Francis Mary. I also explained a separate entry to the Chapel which could be used by those who wanted to go directly to the chapel, and they reacted very negatively. They were even surprised that Watertown had such a feature at their monastery. Sister Mary said that when deliveries are made they always want to have you sign for it, and that the Host rooms would have to be accessible for deliveries. At this point I suggested that both the Fortress and the Host Rooms be moved to the existing house. This was heralded as an ingenious idea by one and all.

Discussion of Chapel designs:

Sister Margaret Mary's design was "chosen." Three entrances are proposed for the Chapel: one for the people, one for the sisters, and a procession entrance for the priest.

Sister Alice Mary's design was felt to have a contradiction in that the pews for reciting office focused on the altar, while the pews for attending mass focused on the tabernacle. They also felt the seats would become dead space during mass. When I explained that they could also view this as being a symbolic way of presenting to others what else goes on in the Chapel they found this interesting and "poetic." They liked the light coming from the side onto the altar.

Sister Mary's design they felt was more traditional because the entry was from behind the altar (?) The placement of the sister's pews was disliked.

Sister Joan said she didn't recognize her design when she saw it. She didn't like the little "cubbies" along the wall and very much preferred the design of the reading nook in Sister Margaret Mary's Chapel. She preferred the reading nook to be more open.

Sister Jaqueline tried to convince the sisters that many different cloths were round and would be quite attractive on a round altar, but to no avail. The sisters felt that...
the round altar took up too much room and kept everyone too far from the altar. The group is divided about fifty/fifty on the subject of having a skylight over the altar. It is felt that the amount of light is too uncontrolled and for those that prefer less light it is inappropriate.

Beth Miller's design was deemed to be a very good idea because it was liturgically correct, and yet allowed them to focus on both the altar and tabernacle. The sisters would prefer a slightly better orientation to the altar. The sisters were amazed by the fact that natural light could be manipulated to suit their daily routine so nicely and will be sending me a list of dates when they would like a beam of sun to signify an important Holy week. Sister Joan joked that they could use Sister Francis Mary's birthday as one of those dates. The sisters also pointed out that they would like windows that can be opened in the chapel so that the birds can join them for the services. Sister Joan was very curious about how the light scoop worked and how it was possible to be so precise with a beam of light. She also was somewhat suspicious of the light scoop as she had never heard of it before, and wanted to know if there were any other problems associated with it. I told her that any opening in the building envelope would cause heat loss, but that it was possible that the solar gain would offset any heat loss they might also experience.