<table>
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<th>issue</th>
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| SPACE REQUIREMENT | - the garden path was not black-topped until 1971
- there is no library
- the chapel is too small
- there is no guest dining room
- I can sit comfortably in the parlor
- the secretary is smaller than in any of our other monasteries | - a stockade fence would be too expensive
- more space is needed in the host rooms because only one operation can happen at a time
- the cells are small, but all that we need
- a larger area for guests is needed | - style is within their beliefs and the power of their faith. Building is an extravagance.
- Space is used inefficiently in the existing monastery
- a feeling of expansiveness might ease the perceived feelings of crampedness |
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 Kossuth 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 administer 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."

Gene Beckman

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's 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.

Dick Stafford

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 me 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.
John Gibson

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 its 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 in 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.
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 knowledgable about building materials. They do their homework. They can read plans. I don't know how they become so knowledgable 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 not 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 terrazo 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 those windows some meaning. I don't remember what now, but it meant something to them. I know a priest who told me, "You give me a number, and I can find a symbol to go with it!" Symbolism is part of what they are. Bare brick walls are a symbol of austerity. They want anything that shows simplicity. They live a simple life that is very ordered and ritualistic. In the one we designed, as you come in the door there is a cross hanging on a rustic, stone wall. The cross is made of two pieces of black walnut split out of a log with the bark still on it. It was cut from the wood of a tree that we had to take out on their property. They took one of those wood reels that electrical cable comes on, and polished and stained and waxed and sanded it. Then they put a statue of Mary on it.

On the outside of their building they wanted a statue of Joseph. It was cast aluminum and about 9 feet tall. It was contemporary, but not so much that you couldn't recognize it. The cost was twice what they could afford so they decided against it, but then they ended up getting it for half the original price because of an error on the manufacturer's part. The reason I am telling you this is to emphasize that they are austere, but their wants and needs are always taken care of.

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

Notre Dame of Paris is a beautiful building. Its granduer is so impressive. To realize it has been standing there for so long is just incredible. The rose window is incredible with its rubies and beautiful colors. Once you see it you'll never forget it. Chartres overwhelmed me with its lacy stonework. When you realize that all this was done by hand. People spent their lifetimes working on pieces of that building! Some of those little pieces of stone are no bigger than your thumb, but they have the most incredible patterns carved on them! Westminster Abbey is another one. Partly, I was impressed by its size. It is such a good example of English Gothic. In contrast with Parliment which I thought was a dirty old building, it is fabulous. It is a true example in both plan and decoration. St Paul's impressed me with just its size and grandeur, and it was just beautiful inside. The Taj Mahal without the four minarets is outstanding. Looking at that gorgeous building reflecting in the water....There is a Catholic cathedral in Washington, D.C. that isn't the National Cathedral. It is so gorgeous because it is certainly romanesque in design, but the inside is spectacular with the use of so many light colored stones! It is huge and attended by thousands at Easter. There are at least 14 Chapels off the main nave. There are many other examples in this country.

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

The church itself. They seem to pick a little spot of their own. They also each have a special place in the building where they made their decision to take their final vows. There is a very special place where they made the decision within themselves.

Q: What approach is suitable to addressing issues of community and privacy in the monastery?

There is a community room. The chapel is a community atmosphere because they are all in
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!
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 uncontemplative 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 effects 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 thats 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 thats 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 aprove or disaprove 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.
CROSS-SECTION THROUGH CHAPEL

St. Margaret Mary
Dec. 13, 1984
CHAPEL PLAN

Guest rooms & office wing

Parish and vestry

Host rooms wing

Statue of St. Mary

Sister's pews

Tabernacle

Sister's pews

Skylight above

St. Jaqueline
Dec. 13, 1984
CROSS-SECTION THROUGH CHAPEL

St. Mary
Dec. 6, 1984
READING NOOK

- Recessed reading light
- Stations of the cross between nooks
- St. Joan
- Built-in bench for reading

Gr. Joan
Dec. 13, 1984
D. Meeting Notes

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 maintainance 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 excercise 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 processional entry 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 "cubicles" along the wall and very much preferred the design of the reading nook in Sister Margaret Mary's Chapel. She prefered 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.