

# A Symbol of Catholic Values

*Honoring our past, celebrating our present, preparing for our future*

**D**URING his Christmas sermon in 1903 Archbishop John Ireland announced his desire to build a church in Minneapolis that would strikingly symbolize the values and significance of the Catholic Church. He asked for the support and cooperation of the parishioners of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in realizing this dream. By early 1904 committees had been established and the project had begun.

In 1905 Archbishop Ireland appointed Emmanuel Masqueray as the principal architect for the project. Masqueray was born in Dieppe, France in 1861. He was educated in Rouen and Paris where he studied architecture at L'École des Beaux Arts. He came to New York City in 1887 to work for the firm of John Mervin Carrère and Thomas Hastings, fellow students at L'École des Beaux Arts in Paris. Five years later, he joined the office of Richard Morris Hunt, the first American architect to attend L'École des Beaux Arts. Of note is that while

in New York he established two so-called ateliers where he taught young architects. One atelier was for men, the other for women. About the latter he said that he had "unbounded faith in women's ability to succeed in architecture... provided they go about it seriously." In 1901 he left New York to become Chief of Design for the St. Louis Exposition. In 1905 he moved to St. Paul to work on the St. Paul Cathedral and the Pro-Cathedral of Saint Mary, now The Basilica of Saint Mary.

Ground was broken for the Pro-Cathedral of Saint Mary in 1907. The corner stone was placed by Archbishop Larissa, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, on May 31, 1908 in the presence of 30,000 people. Six years later to the date, the first Mass was celebrated. Though the building could be used for worship, the interior was not finished. As a matter of fact, neither Emmanuel Masqueray (who died in 1917) nor Archbishop John Ireland (who died in 1918) saw the finished interior of the church. Work

BY JOHAN M.J. VAN PARYS, PH.D.



Architectural design model of The Basilica campus.

PHOTOS/ELYSE RETHLAKE

on the interior began in 1923, two years after Father James S. Reardon, later Msgr. Reardon, became pastor.

Msgr. Reardon carefully oversaw the interior design. The work was done by the local architectural firm Abrams and Slifer, two of Masqueray's collaborators who took over his firm upon his death. McGinnis and Walsh from Boston designed the high altar and baldachino. And Thomas Gayte created the stained glass windows. The interior was completed in 1926. That same year the sacristy and rectory were added onto The Basilica. During his 43 years as The Basilica's rector, Msgr. Reardon kept making changes to the building. In 1950, the Wicks organ with a faux-stone case was added. In 1952, the ceiling was repainted in the "colors of Mary." In 1954, the bronze doors were installed replacing the original oak doors.

While at prayer in The Basilica, Msgr. Reardon died on December 13, 1963 — the same year Pope John XXIII died and Pope Paul VI was elected, and one year into the Second Vatican Council. In response

to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the document on the liturgy promulgated by the Second Vatican Council just days before his death, the Office for the Dead for Mgr. Reardon, previously prayed in Latin was celebrated in English for the first time at The Basilica. An editorial published at the time described Reardon as "a clerical gentleman" and "a link with the past, a tradition himself." But change was clearly coming to the Catholic Church. One cannot but wonder what Mgr. Reardon thought about the Second Vatican Council and how he might have reacted to the many changes happening in the years after his death.

1963 indeed marked a big shift for the Catholic Church, both locally and internationally. The document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* set in motion a complete re-ordering of the liturgical life of the Catholic Church that had not been witnessed in centuries, if ever. The point of departure for this was the affirmation that "the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows" (SC10). This

necessarily called for the full, active, and conscious participation in the liturgy by all those present (SC14). As a result all the liturgical rites, from Baptism to Eucharist to Funeral, were revised with the above mentioned principles in mind and based on careful analysis of the ways these liturgies were celebrated in the earliest centuries. Since 1963, the way we celebrate the liturgy has continued to evolve. The Roman Missal, for instance which provides all the instructions and texts for the celebration of the Eucharist has been revised numerous times, first under the pontificate of Paul VI and then under Pope John Paul II. The most recent revision dates to 2002.

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**JOAN M. SORANNO, FAIA** Lead Architect | HGA

An award-winning architect specializing in religious and cultural architecture, Joan's passion for design is evident in every facet of her work. Joan recently received the 2018 Edward J. Frey Award that recognizes AIA architects for their contributions to the field of religious architecture. Her notable projects include the new entry pavilion for Walker Art Center; Lakewood Cemetery Garden Mausoleum, which received the 2014 AIA Institute Honor Award for Architecture and the 2013 ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects) Award of Excellence; the education and lobby expansion for Temple Israel; and Bigelow Chapel for the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, which received the 2006 AIA Institute Honor Award for Architecture.

Soranno serves as a juror for national design awards programs and has presented programs at major forums, including "Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture" at Yale University, "Innovative Uses of Wood to Evoke a Sense of Spirituality at Religious Facilities" at MIT, and "The Here and the Hereafter" at The Catholic University of America.

Originally from Boston, Joan spent most of her childhood with her family in Milan, Italy. She has a BS in Architecture from the University of Notre Dame and is a member of the GSA Design Excellence Program-National Peer. She has been published in The New York Times, Architectural Record, AIArchitect, and ARCHITECT.

**Q: WHY ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT THE BASILICA PROJECT?**

**JS:** The Basilica has been — and always will be — one of the defining icons of the Minneapolis skyline, welcoming existing and new generations of residents and visitors as a place of peace and refuge. We are so excited to be working with The Basilica to look for ways to further strengthen its presence in the Twin Cities and enhance the experience of belonging.

**Q: WHAT MAKES YOU WANT TO DO THE PROJECT?**

**JS:** Having spent most of our career working with religious and cultural institutions, John and I love working on projects that celebrate community, outreach, faith and beauty. We are drawn to projects like The Basilica that activate the mind, engage the heart, touch the soul, and invite new ways of seeing.

We look forward to creating a sustainable plan that resonates with the local community and is successful from a social, environmental, and spiritual perspective. It's been such a joy to work with The Basilica leadership and staff who are so passionate, committed, and dedicated to mission of the Church.



**CHURCH ART AND ARCHITECTURE**

These liturgical revisions have had a great impact on church art and architecture. To give just a few examples, the fact that the Mass was to be celebrated with the community gathered around the altar and with the priest facing the people made most every altar built before Vatican II useless, as they were constructed to accommodate the celebration with the priest facing east (*ad orientem*), i.e. with their back to the people. The rediscovery of full immersion as the norm for baptism rendered the pedestal baptismal fonts useless and required the construction of large immersion fonts. The emphasis on reconciliation rather than confessing one's sins during the Sacrament of Reconciliation necessitated the replacement of confessionals with reconciliation chapels. The US bishops have written two documents to assist parishes with the building and adaption of existing spaces to accommodate current liturgical needs: *Art and Environment for Catholic Worship* (1986) which was superseded by *Built of Living Stones* (2000).

In addition, the full, active, and conscious participation of the entire Body of Christ



calls for full accessibility for all. Most churches built before 1960 are intended, in the words of Archbishop Ireland, to symbolize the significance of the Catholic Church thus elevation and majestic stairs were the norm, both outside and inside the building. Little or no consideration was given to accessibility when building a church. However, again in the words of Archbishop Ireland, a church building must also symbolize the values of the Catholic Church. These values today clearly include the kind of accessibility, inclusivity, and welcome that go far beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and are described in the US Bishops document: *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities* (revised in 2017).

So today, 116 years after Archbishop Ireland announced his intention to build the Pro-Cathedral of Saint Mary in order to symbolize the significance and values of the Catholic Church; 111 years after the placement of the cornerstone; 105 years

after the celebration of the first Mass; 93 years after the completion of the interior; 78 years after the solemn dedication of The Basilica of Saint Mary; 67 years after the interior redecoration; 56 years after the proclamation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*; 19 years after the publication of *Built of Living Stones*, the US bishops' document on church art and architecture; and 2 years after the revision of *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities* we need to ask ourselves if The Basilica of Saint Mary accomplishes Archbishop intentions: to symbolize the significance and the values of Catholicism in our world today and tomorrow.

To answer this question we embarked on a long journey that started in early 2018 with a diverse group of parishioners representing different constituencies called the Campus Space Planning Committee, under the guidance of Fr. Gilbert Sunghera, S.J., our space planning consultant. After many months of study we settled on a vision statement for our project: If the next

intervention to the physical campus does nothing else, it should

- be a gateway that invites encounters, in a dynamic environment
- that embraces tradition, provides refuge, builds connections and
- inspires service as a catalyst to build inclusive communities.

After the completion of this vision statement, the Campus Space Planning Committee set out to hire a team to help us realize the vision. With the help of The Basilica Landmark, through a competitive process, renowned and multidisciplinary design firm HGA was selected to lead the Master Planning and Phase 1 Design for our Basilica campus. The team for the project exemplifies a unique blend of expertise: HGA in architecture and engineering, as well as historic preservation in partnership with Beyer Blinder Belle; Duval Companies in urban strategy; and TEN x TEN in landscape architecture.

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This professional team is engaging with Fr. Gilbert Sunghera, S.J., Basilica staff, and volunteers as they translate our vision into architectural concepts. A small group of representatives from both The Basilica and The Basilica Landmark, called the Master Planning Committee, are working more closely with the design team and will continue to do so until a Master Plan for The Basilica Campus is complete.

This is a very exciting time for our Basilica community as we evaluate how our buildings may best serve our mission today and into the future. As we continue on this journey, let us keep those charged with the visioning in our prayers. There is not an easy task; exciting yes, but not easy. May the creator of all creativity bless them with great insight, imagination, and inspiration so that the end result may be both inspired and inspiring. ✚

*Johan M.J. van Parys has been The Basilica's director of liturgy and sacred arts since 1995.*



**The Master Planning Committee members:**

- |                         |                     |                            |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Kathy Andrus (co-chair) | Todd Grugel         | Bob Welch                  |
| Terri Ashmore           | Tom Paul (co-chair) | Fr. Gilbert Sunghera, S.J. |
| Peter Crain             | Deb Pekarek         | (consultant)               |
| Felicia De Santos       | Johan van Parys     |                            |



**JOHN COOK, FAIA**  
Senior Project Architect | HGA

Since joining HGA in 1997, John has been instrumental to the development of several high-profile, award-winning religious, museum, and cultural projects. Recognized for his considerable technical design skills, he is adept at resolving complex programs, and researching innovative materials, building systems, and structural solutions. John's partnering with Joan and other leading architects including Frank Gehry, Herzog & de Meuron, David Chipperfield, the artist James Turrell and international landscape architects Michel DesVigne and Petra Blaisse, is a testament to his expertise in managing state-of-the-art projects that push the limits of aesthetics, engineering, and technology.



**GINNY LACKOVIC, AIA**  
Lead Preservation Architect | HGA

Ginny specializes in historic preservation, building forensics, and preservation technology. She takes a hands-on approach during design and construction, working with owners, city officials, historic preservation commissions, government agencies, and other stakeholders to design sensitive solutions that respect a building's architectural integrity while supporting new requirements for contemporary uses. As a preservation specialist, Ginny has reviewed and advised on hundreds of projects impacting historic landmarks throughout Minnesota, collaborating with some of the most committed preservation advocates from across the state. She serves as chair of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Committee and in 2016, Ginny was awarded the City of Minneapolis' Steve Murray Award — the top individual honor for preservation in Minneapolis.



**TOM LINDBERG, AIA, LEED AP**  
Preservation Project Architect | BEYER BLINDEL BELLE

Tom has 30 years of experience on a wide range of religious, institutional, and cultural projects, including the restoration of several historic landmarks. He specializes in planning and design for ecclesiastical and sacred spaces, from feasibility studies to preservation and restoration of large iconic churches and cathedrals across the country. His notable projects include the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento; the Church of Heavenly Rest, St. Thomas Church, and Temple Emanu-El in New York; and the Cathedral of St. John in Providence, Rhode Island. Tom is recognized for his extensive experience with projects that require comprehensive conditions studies resulting in prioritized recommendations for preservation and maintenance. His experience with historic building upgrades and rehabilitations, many of which have included masonry, roof repairs, and modernizing mechanical, electrical, and fire protection systems, will be invaluable to The Basilica.



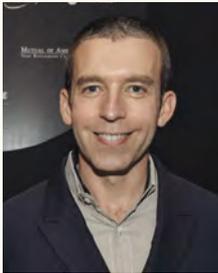
**KJERSTI MONSON**  
Lead Urban Strategist | DUVAL

Kjersti is co-owner and CEO of Duval Design and Duval Development, related firms (Duval Companies) that provide development, design, and policy solutions for public, private, and nonprofit entities. At Duval, she directs the Civic Studio, which specializes in urban projects with a public realm or public interest component. Prior to Duval, Kjersti served as planning director for the City of Minneapolis (2013-16) and as the real estate strategy market sector leader for the US Eastern region at AECOM, a global design and engineering firm. Kjersti is a frequent public speaker on urban issues and specializes in complex urban projects and strategic initiatives. She has lived and worked around the world, but her deepest roots are in Minnesota, where she was born and raised. Her strong relationships with local leaders in the public, private, nonprofit, and academic sectors give her unique implementation insights that cross scales and uncover synergies. Active in civic life, Kjersti serves on multiple boards and committees. She is a leading voice on topics such as public realm enhancement and livability, next generation transportation and wayfinding, iconic placemaking, and the future of Downtown Minneapolis.



**ROSS ALTHEIMER, ASLA, PLA, FAAR, LEED AP**  
Lead Landscape Architect | TEN x TEN

Ross has led the visioning and execution of significant religious and cultural projects. His work explores the art and temporality of landscape and its power to build strong communities and institutions by leveraging landscape's capacity for transformation. Prior to TEN x TEN he was the Director of Landscape Architecture at HGA where he designed Lakewood Cemetery, Temple Israel and American Swedish Institute. His current religious projects include Luther Seminary Campus of the Future in Saint Paul, Kol Rinah Synagogue Campus in Saint Louis, and Tri Faith Initiative Commons in Omaha. His work has received awards and recognition from ASLA National, ASLA Minnesota, GSA Design Awards, and the Graham Foundation. He was the 2012-2013 Rome Prize Fellow in Landscape Architecture at the American Academy in Rome.



**ALEX DUVAL**  
Programmer | DUVAL

Alex is the founder and president of Duval Companies and has over 18 years of experience working on culturally and geographically diverse projects both nationally and internationally. Prior to founding Duval he was a director at Portman Financial, a private investment office with assets under management of over \$1.5 billion; a director at Portman Holdings, a real estate company with over 50 million square feet of built projects; and a project manager with John Portman & Associates, where he led the design and planning of complex projects in the US and abroad. His research and writings on urbanism have been published by Routledge, Urban Land Institute, Princeton Architectural Press, and others. In addition to his professional work, he has lectured at Harvard University, Yale University, Columbia University, Tongji University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and other higher education institutions. Alex is a parishioner of The Basilica of Saint Mary and an oblate of Saint John's Abbey.