

Insites



August 2018

On the road from Cape Town to Stellenbosch we veered off into a valley of parched hills and ordered vineyards and olive groves. In Cape Town we had been told that there was just 90 days of water left for the whole city. It was a very sobering thought and so when we came upon two pristine reflecting pools it seemed a bit unreal. It was a great extravagance mirroring the great extravagance of the sky above. Not only did the water reflect the hills and the sky but also a beautiful chapel. Actually they reflected the undulating roof of a chapel. The white, formed concrete roof appeared to float effortlessly like a mirage of a cloud.



The chapel is approached over a path bisecting the reflecting water. The walls are transparent glass. So the roof seems to hover between the hills and dip to the earth to touch the water as if God's protective wing from the psalms has come down to shelter us. To pray in this space is to feel both the intimacy of a sanctuary and openness to the created world of the surrounding countryside.

The nondenominational chapel is a beautiful modernist ode to the South African land – an embodiment of incarnational theology in minimalist language. Its references to Cape Dutch architecture are oblique but more blatant in nearby buildings where not only Dutch roof shapes are echoed but entire walls are of blue and white tiles.

Adjacent to the chapel area are three places. The first is a large, canyon like water feature with flowing walls of water that you can walk through. The pathway leads to a manmade hill for pilgrimage to the top of the mountain' filled with symbolic plants and stations with a cross on the top. Somewhat separate lies an old cemetery. Though the cemetery is less prominent, it speaks volumes about this place and it's Dutch settlers for me more movingly than the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.



In contrast to the serenity of the chapel designed by Coetzee Steyn, a South African born London based architect, the chapel and its setting are marketed as the 'latest amenity' for visitors to the Bosjes Wine Estate and guest-house. Apparently aiming for a share of the destination wedding market. In spite of its marketing hype, this architecture rises above any commercial impetus that may have birthed it. The Bosjes chapel is a rare and beautiful site gently placed in a very complicated land.

by Carol Frenning, ACLS President

Events:

Southwest Liturgical Conference Study Week 2019

Houston, TX

January 23 - 26, 2019

FDLC National Meeting

Atlanta, GA

October 2 - 4, 2016

Dallas Ministry Conference

Dallas, TX

October 11 - 13, 2018

New

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