



Association of Consultants for Liturgical Space

QUARTERLY NEWS - SPRING 2020

this issue:

Why I am so very grateful for the Second Vatican Council - James Hundt
 Rome, Sweet Rome - Shelley Kolman Smith
 Meet our new member - Sarah Hempel Irani
 President's Letter - James Hundt

Upcoming Events

Oberammergau Trip - postponed

ACLS Retreat - pending
 San Antonio, Tx Sept. 2020

Webinar Schedule

April 21- Lauren Berge speaking
 on historic preservation

May 19-Jim Hundt, architect
 and Ken Griesemer, consultant
 speaking on the changing role of
 the Gathering Space

Why I am so very grateful for the Second Vatican Council

James Hundt | October 30, 2019

I was not quite 5 years old when Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council and had just turned 6 when Sacrosanctum Concilium, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, was promulgated by Pope Paul VI. I was not yet old enough to be an altar boy so my experience of the Roman Catholic Mass was limited to hearing mostly incomprehensible words from the celebrant and the assembly, punctuated by bells rising from time to time. I know that I was not particularly attentive and had little interest in going every Sunday - a fact that I made clear to my parents through my behavior in the pew each week.

Fortunately, thanks to the work of Vatican II, things changed soon after that. Once the language of the Mass switched from Latin to English, I became a bit more interested. In fact, I eventually became an altar server, then some years later, the head of the altar servers, then church organist and so on until I developed a deep love and respect for the Roman Catholic liturgy. This love and respect eventually led to my career as a church architect, where I could use my God-given gifts to help create appropriate environments for the post-Conciliar liturgy.

I never fully understood the significance of that shift until recently, when I had the opportunity to attend a pre-Conciliar liturgy while I was traveling outside the United States. While I had read in an online review that the Mass would be in Latin, I had no idea that it would be such a trip



back in Time. Built between 1842 and 1849 in the eclectic style, the church was designed to resemble one of Rome's many basilicas with a flat apse choir. As I walked in one of the side front doors (the center ceremonial doors were not open), I looked down the 217-foot long side aisle upon a side altar whose ornate marble altarpiece reached almost the full 59' vault height. I picked up one of the hymnals that included text for the Latin Mass and headed toward the center aisle to find a seat. The first thing I noticed was that every other row of chairs was facing the opposite direction. I thought that perhaps they had turned some of the chairs for an organ recital or prayer groups so I continued up the long aisle to find the chairs arranged for Sunday Mass. As I neared the altar, I suddenly realized why the chairs were facing each other. The opposing chairs were to be used as kneelers?

I stepped into a row and tried out the kneeling chairs, only to find that they were too uncomfortable for me so I just sat down and waited for the Mass to start. As I sat there, I noticed a few things that I had not seen before.

First, the original high altar, with all its steps and marble and candles was clearly the altar to be used for the celebration of the Mass. It was separated (at quite some distance) by a communion rail that was covered with white linen. The pulpit was halfway down the nave but there was a small lectern in the Sanctuary. As the various attendees shuffled in and took their seats, one young woman who blew her nose several times gave me a basis for measuring the reverberation time of this immense church - roughly 7 seconds. As the Mass started, I heard the usual ring of the bell at the Sacristy door. But instead of everyone standing to start the liturgy, they all knelt on their chairs. The priest and a man who I thought was an acolyte, but later read the gospel, knelt down on the steps in front of the high altar. (As this was the Messe lue, there was no music.) The priest started speaking what I assumed was Latin. Between his unamplified voice, the fact that he was facing the altar and the long reverberation time, I could not understand a single word. I kept trying to follow along in the hymnal but it was not until we got to the Kyrie that I was able to understand a single word. At some point, the priest stood up near a microphone on the side of the altar, which made it much easier to hear him. (Of course, he was still facing the altar.)

The readings and homily were proclaimed in French from the small lectern and were easily understandable. I would say that the homily was somewhat contemporary in nature, focusing on the importance of faith and praising the missionaries who carry that message to non-believers.



The most surprising part of the entire service was the Eucharistic Prayer (or whatever it is called in the Latin Mass). After the Sanctus, I did not hear a word. It wasn't just because the priest was back in front of the altar without a microphone. It was because he was just saying it to himself! Every word of it, including the consecration. I could see the host and the chalice going up and could hear the bells ringing by that was it. The central part of the Mass "proclaimed" in silence. Later, when the priest started the Pater Noster, I read along out loud, only to later realize that the congregation was only supposed to say the "Amen".

Not surprisingly, communion was distributed at the rail, kneeling. I now saw the purpose of the white linen, which served as a sort of purificatory to catch any crumbs of the Body of Christ, even though paten was being used. Each communicant placed their hands under the linen while waiting to receive the host on the tongue.

At the conclusion of the Mass, as the priest left the Sanctuary, the congregation started to sing a Latin hymn. Where the hymn was over, people quietly walked out, where they were greeted by the priest at the door to the street, where they could purchase fresh pastries from what appears to be parishioners stationed on the sidewalk nearby.

Now I understand that such churches and such liturgies exist in the United States as well. I've just never felt any compulsion to check them out. And I probably wouldn't have this time if it weren't the only church in the neighborhood where I was staying. But after spending the last 25+ years designing worship spaces for "full and active participation" by the assembly, this just didn't seem right to me. It's not really about the language. I have a working knowledge of Latin from my high school studies, so I pretty much know what is being said at the Mass. It's the disconnection between what the priest is doing and what the assembly is doing. It very much felt as if I was attending a performance where

I occasionally got to participate in saying a few lines.

There was absolutely no sense that "the priest celebrant and ministers together with the congregation from the liturgical assembly, which is the Church gathered for worship" to quote Built of Living Stones. Not only did I not feel any connection to the priest, I felt no connection to the other worshipers. Perhaps that was due to the physical distance between us (there couldn't have been more than 50 or 60 of us in the huge church). But, to me, it felt more like we were all just actors in a play, not a worshiping community. There are obviously many who feel differently than I do about such Masses. I'm just grateful that I have the ability to exercise my role in the liturgy in a full and active way, because that's what works for me.



Rome, Sweet Rome

Shelley Kolman Smith



Like all of you, I'm enduring self isolation for over five weeks so far. To entertain myself I have projects scattered throughout the house and into the studio. Knitting baskets with at least 6 unfinished projects, quilting fabrics as well as mask fabrics line the dining table. My garden has been planted, and the studio has a couple of large commissions in various stages of completion, my drafting table has been moved into the living room. Sometimes it's nice to just open my iPad and scroll through travel photos and be transported back to Italy where I had the marvelous opportunity to be not once but twice last year. Please allow me to tell you about those trips.

I was astounded at the reverence and holiness I felt in Rome. Everywhere you turned there stood yet another magnificent church - a museum unto itself. Rafael, Michael Angelo, Bernini...., all adorning the walls and spaces for hundreds of years. The feeling of urgency to see it all was intense. We practically ran from one church to another and logged in at least 10 miles a day on foot.



I had done my homework in researching what I wanted to see and where to find it, but once there, none of that mattered. One afternoon we walked into Santa Maria Della Vittoria. Being somewhat overwhelmed, I just meandered around, taking in all the Puttis and the incorruptible body of St. Vittoria and then I saw it. Right there in a nook on the left is THE - THE St. Teresa in Ecstasy by Bernini. My heart skipped a beat as I stood motionless to take in the most beautiful, dramatically depicted scene set in stone. Natural light poured in from an unseen window. Across the room from this was a sculpture of a group of men as if in a theater box watching and discussing the show. The men are quite realistic and alive witnesses, while St. Teresa is very much mystical in appearance. Both were sculpted by Bernini.



In Florence we wandered into Santa Croce and found Galileo's elaborate tomb, Michelangelo's and Dante's. All with grand angels and muses standing guard for generations at the stone coffins where these gifted men were laid. By contrast, in Rome at Santa Maria Maggiore, you'll find an unassuming slab in the floor that is Bernini's tomb, no angels, no art.

Also In Rome, in St. John the Baptist (San Giovanni Battista dei Fiorentini) was a relic of Mary Magdalene's foot - the first foot that entered the tomb of Christ. Down the street, next to the Gesu church was St. Ignatius of Loyola's apartment with his death mask and clothes! You could almost sense St. Ignatius' presence in the humble little apartment. Other places held relics of the "Crib", the Cross, columns where 2 apostles were chained and beaten, the list goes on and on.

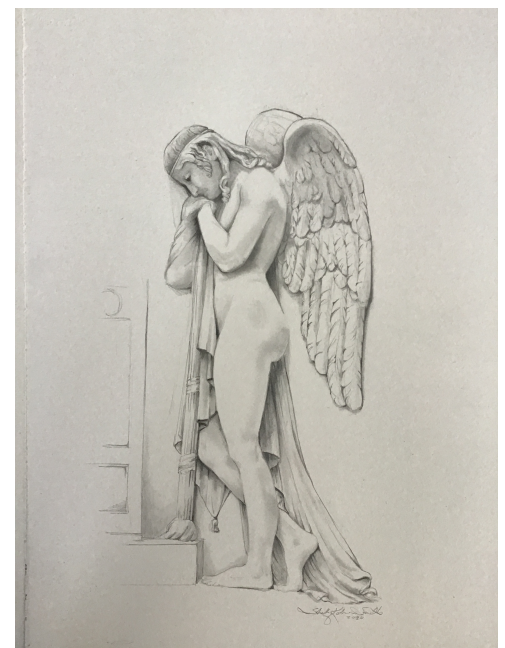
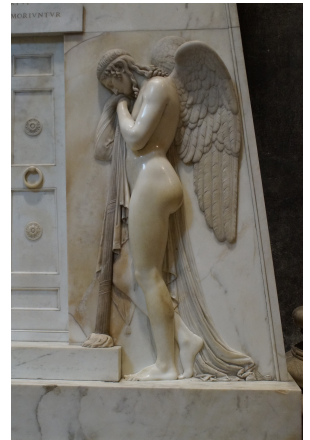


The entirety of Rome evoked such reverence and emotion. We walked across a bridge to the Trastevere neighborhood that was over 2000 years old. St. Paul the Apostle had walked across that bridge. Popes walked down the very street our hotel was on (Via Guilia) and I'm pretty sure it didn't look much different then with the exception that there probably weren't any scooters and tiny little cars parked along the sides.

As a sculptor, Rome and Florence were truly magical. My favorite way to study important works of art is to draw them. It's only in looking closely do you notice the delicate drape of fabric and the softness of skin that these sculptors were able to convince the stone to portray. That these sculptors worked in stone, a medium that does not allow you to change your mind mid-work is a marvel.

It would be easy to spend your entire visit to Rome solely in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. I photographed everything I could and in looking back I find I missed 3/4ths of what's there. On the Tomb of the Stewarts (a family exiled from England for not renouncing their faith) stands two gorgeous angels silently mourning and guarding the doors. These were sculpted in the early 1800's and could easily be a precursor of the art deco style of work. In a room full of sculptures with so much motion and story, these two are a perfect compliment with their quietness and grace.

I was able to climb the stairs of St. Peter's up to the dome and was thrilled with the chance to touch the mosaics at the top of the Basilica. What looks like paintings throughout the building are actually tile mosaics. To walk through Rome and touch, smell, and see all these artworks that are so familiar in person was a true gift. I look at my own projects now and find myself referring to the photos hoping to emulate the great sculptors, even if only in the tiniest way.





Meet Sarah Hempel Irani - new member

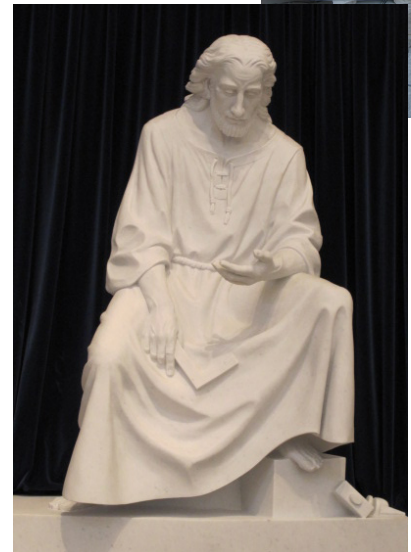
Thank you so much for welcoming me into the Association of Consultants for Liturgical Space! It is an honor to be a part this organization and I look forward to participating in future events. My name is Sarah Hempel Irani and I am a figurative sculptor specializing in sacred art, public statuary, and portraiture. I offer sculptures in clay, plaster, bronze, and marble.

Originally from Michigan, I moved to the Washington DC metro area to apprentice with Jay Hall Carpenter, former artist-in-residence at the Washington National Cathedral. I assisted him on a project that included twelve saints and holy people for a church in the Chicago suburbs, in addition to a larger-than-life-size bronze monument to former comptroller of Maryland, Louis Goldstein.

When it was time to branch out on my own, I teamed up with another young sculptor to create fourteen 4' x 2' bas-relief *Stations of the Cross* for Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church in Potomac, Maryland. Once they were installed, Our Lady of Mercy commissioned me to create two larger-than-life-size marble sculptures depicting *The Virgin Annunciate* and *St. Joseph, the Carpenter*. I articulated the clay sculptures at my studio, then sent the plaster casts to a marble carving studio to be cut in stone. I traveled to Pietrasanta, Italy, where I was introduced to Italian carving culture as I worked with the multi-generational Studio Antognazzi.



After the installation at Our Lady of Mercy, I went on to earn a Master of Arts in Humanities from Hood College Graduate School, with a concentration in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. My thesis focused on the intersection of the artist, the patron, and the community in the commissioning of Piero della Francesca's *Misericordia Polptych* in the 15th century. I stepped away from commissioned sculpture for a few years after we adopted our daughter. During that time, the local economic development office invited me to launch a 501(c)3 arts nonprofit; we opened an arts center in 2014. While the work was incredibly rewarding, I was eager to get my hands in the clay again.



Currently I am sculpting a seven-and-a-half-foot statue of renowned fashion designer, Claire McCardell, to be cast in bronze and placed in a city park. The monument has been commissioned by the Frederick Art Club in celebration of their 120th anniversary. This project is an exceptional opportunity to celebrate what is good and noble about humanity, as these qualities were embodied in the life of this creative, innovative, and hardworking woman.

You can find me elbow deep in clay at my studio at the Griffin Art Center in Frederick, Maryland.



ACLS President's Letter

ACLS President's Letter

April 2020

I am grateful to be able to reach out and communicate with all our members in this time of working from home (which is not new to many of our members) and social distancing. I am sure we have all adapted by now to new ways of staying in touch with friends, families and clients. Fortunately, our ACLS newsletter continues to serve the same purpose – keeping us all informed and connected.

Thank you to those of you who voted on the proposed By-laws for creating a not-for-profit corporation. There were 29 votes in support of the changes and none opposed. We are now working on the necessary paperwork to keep the process moving forward.

According to our website statistics, two-thirds of our members read my last letter relative to the updated website. If you have not yet visited the new site, I encourage you to do so. I have been trying to post relevant information from time to time. For example, if you are looking for liturgical resources during the pandemic, www.FDLC.org offers some excellent resources. We are still continuing with our webinars, which are also announced on our website, so please stay connected with us through our website and our webinars – especially if you have never attended one before. Now is the ideal time!

In other news, the Oberammergau Passion Play that was the focus our May trip has been postponed until 2022, which has led to the cancellation of the trip. (We are still working with the travel agent on refunds.) If there is enough interest, we will consider trying again in 2022.

We are hoping that we will still be able to move forward with the retreat that we have scheduled for Sept. 10-13 in Boerne, TX (near San Antonio). We will continue to communicate with you about that as we receive the information.

As the current uncertainty about just about everything continues, may we join with our Holy Father in this prayer: “Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts.”

In peace,



PRESIDENT

Send your Member News to be included in the next Newsletter to:

Shelley@ShelleyKolmanSmith.com

We'd like to know more about you and your work.