

writings is a testimony not only to Ranft's theological acumen, but to her sensitive psychological insights as well.

Those who may be discouraged at times at the state of the Church in the twenty-first century may find a measure of relief in the fact that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. That being the case, it is also true that every age can boast of holy witnesses who challenge the status quo.

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543. The Church of the Transfiguration, edited by Donna Kehoe (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 2012, 244 pp. \$69.96, ISBN 97809886195 00).

This is a book about BEAUTY. I use capital letters because the book is about a very beautiful new church and also because the book itself is beautiful. It is not, repeat *not*, something that you can "hold in your hand," to quote the first sentence. In fact, it weighs about five pounds and measures 12x14 inches. It is best to read it on a good solid table, and not in bed.

The Community of Jesus, which is a mainly Protestant religious community that includes celibate brothers and sisters as well as married couples, has been in existence for about 50 years. In the 1990s they decided to build a church on their property on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. This was to be a church specifically designed for their community, with the choir stalls facing each other as in classical monastic churches.

But more than that, it was to be a locus of beauty, both aesthetic and spiritual. To achieve that goal, the community hired liturgical artists with specialization in various forms of sculpture and painting. Most of these artists were from Europe, which was not a surprising choice since the style of the church is very much of the Old World. To wit, it is an early-Christian basilica, complete with atrium, apse and side-aisles.

To anybody who has been to Ravenna, on the east coast of Italy, it is obvious that the inspiration comes from the churches of that town. This is especially true of the splendor of the mosaic work, which was indeed executed by an artist from Ravenna, Alessandra Caprara. These mosaics are not miniature; they cover the floor of the entire center

aisle and the clerestory walls above the pillars. In my estimation, they are stunningly beautiful.

But the whole church is truly exquisite, and to page through this book is to have a pretty fine experience of the building. The photographs are quite magnificent. You feel like you are there. What is more, some of them were taken during ceremonies such as the Easter Vigil, so they give one a feel for the actual liturgical ambience of the church and the community. It is obvious that the whole program was thought through by people with highly developed liturgical sensibilities.

Although the authors are not very prominent in the notes, we read that the basic text was an unpublished manuscript by G. Thomas Ryan and Martin Shannon. I feel that these men should have been given more credit, but it could be that the community style is anonymity. As for the editor, Donna Kehoe, she has done a first-class job. The text is very informative and insightful. It gives readers a good feel for the whole process of creating the church. In the back of the book are some very touching statements by the artists that produced this remarkable building.

To someone who is reluctant to put out \$69 for another art book, I would say: This is not just another art book! It is a very fine statement by a community that is justifiably proud of their new church. I do not think that there is a more beautiful monastic church in this country, at least in the "old style." And I agree with those persons who have testified that their visit to this building was a genuine religious experience.

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544. Monasticism between Culture and Cultures. Acts of the Third International Symposium, Rome, June 8–11, 2011, ed. Philippe Nouzille and Michaela Pfeiffer, *Studia Anselmiana*, 159, *Analecta Monastica* 14 (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo / Sankt Ottilien: EOS, 2013. Pp. 701. EUR 49.95. ISBN 978-3-8306-7598-3).

The stated theme of this book of papers from a conference at Sant' Anselmo is the place of monasticism in relation to the manifold cultures that are present in the postmodern world. The forty chapters are arranged under seven headings: Oriental Monasticism, Western Monasticism, *Regulae Benedicti Studia*, New Monastic Communities, Non-Christian Monasticism, Monasticism and Art, and Postmodernism and Various Solutions. Sixteen are in Italian, fourteen in English, six in French, and four in German. Except for a Lebanese and an American from Dormition