



# THE CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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::GUIDE::

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SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of Your love.*

*Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created,  
and You shall renew the face of the earth.*

*O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the  
hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we  
may be truly wise and ever enjoy the Spirit's consolations*

*We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

The Chapel of the Holy Spirit was dedicated on September 27, 2009.

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**I**t was Saint Francis of Assisi, who, some 800 years ago, offered this timeless advice: Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words. Sacred Heart University's Chapel of the Holy Spirit embraces this counsel: every square inch seems to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord using all the elements available in its sharing of the Good News of Salvation.

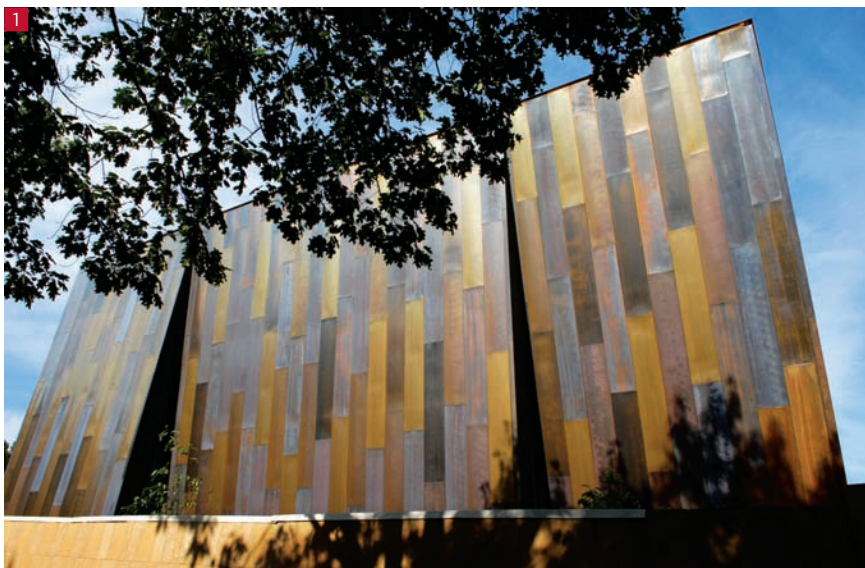
## At the Center of Campus

The Chapel is literally and figuratively at the center of both the University campus and its community of learners. It occupies a prominent position that is impossible to miss from almost any direction. Midway between SHU's main academic building and its Ryan-Matura Library, it is the focal point of a newly configured Quadrangle, the University's front lawn. An 80-foot-tall bell tower marks the spot, and its massive bells toll the hours and call the community to prayerfulness throughout the day.



The Chapel of the Holy Spirit is a unique and remarkable structure. Its design, by the award-winning international architectural firm of Sasaki Associates, puts one in mind of the nomadic tents of the ancient Israelites. Indeed, copper folds <sup>1</sup> seem to fall off the roofline onto the sides of the building in the manner of a desert dwelling, and the soft billows of the ceiling can remind visitors of the interior of such a space. All of this subtly speaks of the Church as the Pilgrim People of God, ever on a journey with and toward their Lord. This is a theme that was developed with great vigor during the Second Vatican Council, which was celebrated at the time of the University's founding, in 1963, and from which the University takes so much of its energy and direction.

Complementing the main sanctuary are little oases <sup>2</sup> – inviting spaces that are ideal for meditation and private prayer, and the Chapel's massive front doors open on to the great lawn of the Quadrangle. Huge expanses of glass allow the high-ceilinged foyer, or narthex, to act as a visual bridge between the active life of the campus and the serene spaces of the Chapel. Again, it is a kind of preaching without words. Not that the exterior of the Chapel is entirely non-verbal. Carved into the limestone walls facing the Quad are admonitions to “Feed the hungry” and “Clothe the naked.” These and the other Corporal Works of Mercy found in Matthew 25 remind all who pass of what the life of faith makes imperative: reaching out to others in imitation of the Lord's own self-giving.

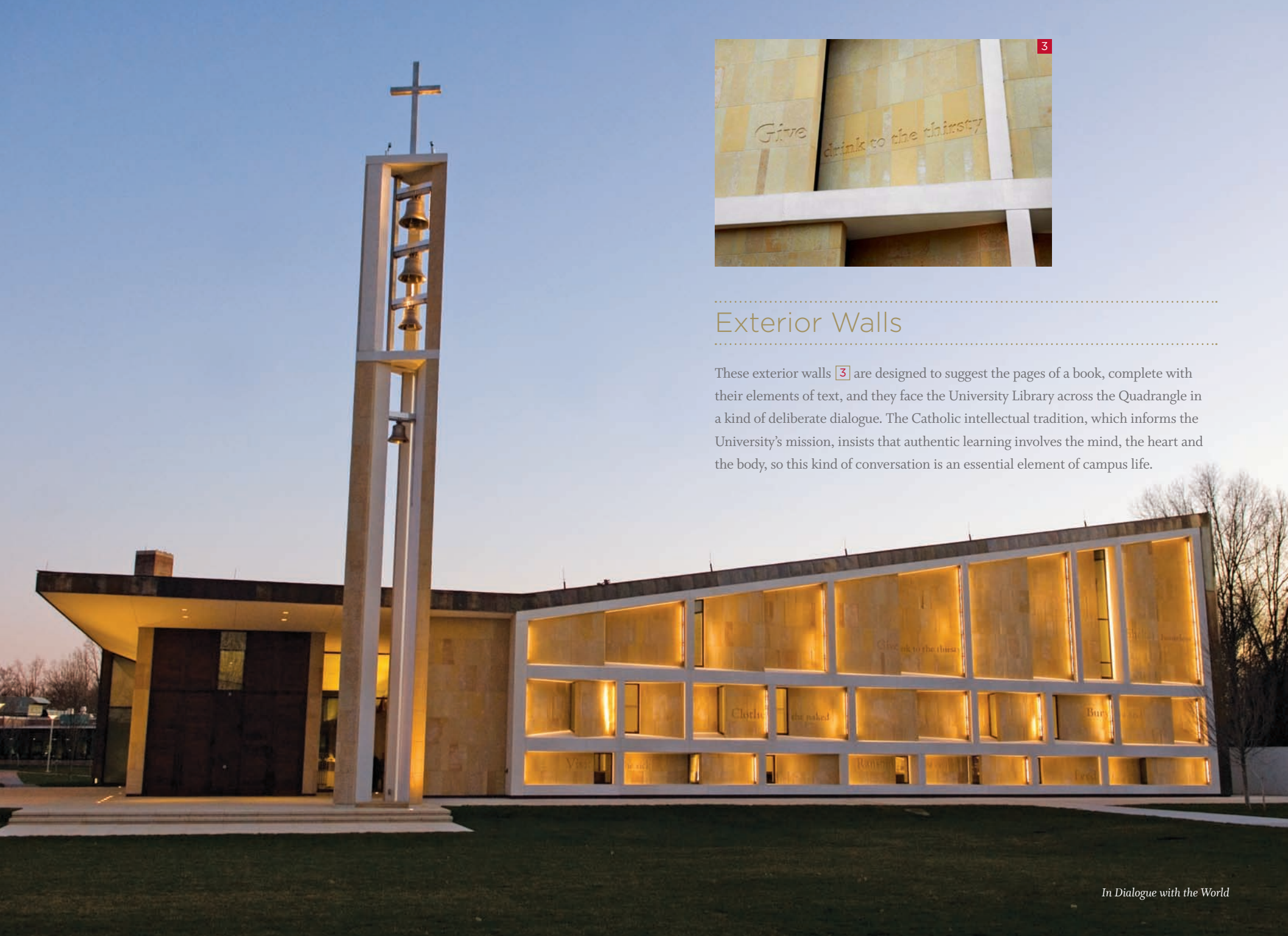


*Like the Folds of a Nomad's Tent*



*An Oasis of Peace*





## Exterior Walls

These exterior walls <sup>3</sup> are designed to suggest the pages of a book, complete with their elements of text, and they face the University Library across the Quadrangle in a kind of deliberate dialogue. The Catholic intellectual tradition, which informs the University's mission, insists that authentic learning involves the mind, the heart and the body, so this kind of conversation is an essential element of campus life.

*In Dialogue with the World*





## Chapel Artist: Father Marko Ivan Rupnik

The Chapel's main worship space is a treasury of sacred art that silently but eloquently preaches the Gospel. Designed and executed by the world-famous Jesuit artist, Father Marko Ivan Rupnik, the dazzling mosaics that dominate the sanctuary are timeless in their appeal: they look as if they had been there for a thousand years, and yet there is something new to see in them on each viewing. The Scriptures speak of the Church as being made up of "living stones," and the elements of these haunting images seem to have a life and energy all their own.

Father Rupnik is the director of Rome's *Centro Aletti*, a center for scholars and artists connected with the Pontifical Oriental Institute. In association with Sacred Heart University, the *Centro Aletti* inaugurated the Cardinal Tomas Špidlík Center for Ecumenical Understanding to promote dialogue and cooperation between the great Eastern and Western traditions of Christianity. His mosaics and stained glass are strongly inspired by the rich iconic traditions of Eastern spirituality.

*Thousands of "Living Stones" Make up the Chapel's Intricate Mosaics*





## The Main Mosaic

Behind the altar in the main sanctuary is the commanding presence of the Risen Jesus. The Lord is literally surrounded by His faithful ones, His Apostles. He has come to them in the upper room to bestow the gift of peace. Depicted on the left of Jesus, from the top, are

Saints Peter; James, the son of Zebedee; Simon the Zealot; Jude (Thaddeus); and Andrew. On the right, from the top, are Saints John, the brother of James; Bartholomew; Philip; James, the son of Alphaeus; and Matthew. Visitors find it difficult to understand why just 10 disciples are present until they recall that in John 20, not all 12 of the Apostles were in the upper room.

Judas was not there, of course, and neither was Saint Thomas who said he wouldn't believe the testimony of the other Apostles until he was able to put his fingers into the Lord's own wounds and see for himself. And those wounds are easy to see here: the nail marks are evident in Jesus' hands and feet, and a wide gash marks His chest where the soldier's lance had struck it.

The triumph of Jesus over death takes place, literally, in the midst of the reality of the Incarnation. While the image of the Easter Lord is central, it cannot be understood as separate from the Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The great mysteries of faith are summed up, visually, in this unique and powerful mosaic: preaching the Gospel without a single word.





Jesus Triumphant over Death

These iconic images are rich with such detail. In total, a quarter-million stone and glass pieces were used to construct the mosaics. In the main sanctuary alone, the artwork fills more than 1,200 square feet, providing a vibrant catechesis – or teaching of the fundamentals of the faith. The Risen Jesus 4 is depicted in the very act of redemption: He is seen pulling Adam and Eve from the depths of the netherworld: death will have no more dominion over the human race. In a touching detail, the Lord draws Eve's hand to His Sacred Heart; it is an image that is echoed in the smaller adjoining Chapel of the Nativity where the Blessed Mother is shown in a similar movement, gesturing toward the side of her newborn Son.



"Be it done unto me..."

While Jesus is at the very center of the sanctuary, two major images are also easy to discern. At the left, as one looks toward the altar, is the Archangel Gabriel 5 who announces to the Virgin Mary that she will bear the Son of God – if she agrees. The Virgin stands at the right 6 pondering these things in her heart. In her hands are two balls of yarn, a homely image that suggests the ordinary life of the Lord's Handmaiden while suggesting the poetic image that she will knit together in her womb the long-awaited Messiah. Other images on this dramatic reredos range from a fiery red orb indicating the presence of the Holy Spirit to a small squirrel – the Rupnik team's gentle mascot that makes an appearance in all his major works.



"The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary..."



## The Chapel of the Nativity

The Chapel of the Nativity, which seats about 50 for daily Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, also houses the Blessed Sacrament in what was the tabernacle from the original SHU Chapel. It is now highlighted by brilliant shafts of gold that catch the warm natural light of this space. This Chapel features mosaics of the Nativity [7]. On the left wall are larger-than-life images of the Three Kings from the East. The Magi are bearing gifts to the newborn King [8] and traditionally represent the Gentile world paying homage to Jesus. On the opposite wall are St. Ann and St. Joachim [9], the names traditionally given the parents of the Blessed Virgin and, thus, the earthly grandparents of the Lord. In a dramatic visual fashion, the Chapel of the Nativity spans the whole of Salvation History as it bridges the original covenant between God and the Jewish people, seen here in the persons of the Lord's own family, and the larger, waiting world of the Gentiles, embodied by the visitors from the East. Literally at the center of those two dispensations is the Nativity: the bridge of history and of nations. Incidentally, the stones on which the Magi tread are native of Connecticut, an affirmation that all of us must walk on our own path.



*The Chapel of the Nativity*

A spacious and light-filled reconciliation room is in one corner. Thus in a sanctuary dedicated to the new life of the Word made flesh, Catholics may renew themselves in sacramental confession.

Another striking feature of the main sanctuary is its unique processional Cross. Crafted in bronze, it stands some eight feet tall when mounted and features a corpus (the body of Jesus) that is bent in

agony. Its pedestal repeats in miniature the themes so vividly depicted in the mosaics of the sanctuary. There is a reprise of the narrative of Adam and Eve; a visual representation of a skull, for Jesus was crucified at Golgotha (the place of the skull); and a snarl of roots holding open the jaws of death, reminding one that Jesus was killed on a tree to free all from the snares of death.



*Jesus and His Mother*



*Mary's Parents, Saint Joachim and Saint Ann*





*The Way of the Cross for a Pilgrim People*

## Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross <sup>[10]</sup>, which mark the traditional 14 moments in the journey to Calvary, are not found on the inside walls of the Chapel as might be expected. Rather, they are denoted by simple crosses on the floor, and believers are invited to literally make the Way of the Cross by following this route through the Chapel – another element of pilgrimage that is made evident by deep theological reflection and thoughtful design.

## Organ

The 105th Psalm offers this joyful invitation: “Sing praise, play music, and proclaim all the Lord’s wondrous deeds.” Whenever the Sacred Heart University community answers this call in its Chapel of the Holy Spirit, it will be aided by a magnificent pipe organ <sup>[11]</sup> designed to enhance worship there for generations to come.

This astonishing musical instrument was hand-crafted in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, by the storied Casavant Frères organization, one of the oldest and most respected organ builders in the world. Its façade was designed to blend in with the unique architecture of the Chapel, as well as the stunning mosaic behind the main altar. It features a wooden screen on which pipes made of polished tin are attached. These pipes will actually sound, along with the majority of the pipes that will not be on view inside the organ.

The organ stands over 28 feet high and occupies a prominent position immediately to the right of the main sanctuary and mosaic. The modernist façade houses an instrument that remains very traditional in its tonal and mechanical arrangement. Its tone is grounded in the French musical tradition which has inspired some of the most illustrious organ music in the repertoire, and it features a rich, warm and singing tone that is full, but not harsh or overpowering.

The sound of this organ is created exclusively by pipes blown by lightly pressured air, called “wind.” When sounded, each pipe gives one specific note or pitch. Each stop knob on the organ console controls a set of pipes known as a rank, which contains pipes from lowest to highest pitches of a given sound, for example, flute, trumpet, string or principal.

Sacred Heart’s instrument consists of 1,261 pipes with room for an additional 628 to be installed later. Its pipes are made of tin or wood; the longest is about 16 feet long – and the shortest is the size of a pencil. In total, the organ weighs about four-and-a-half tons. When completely installed, the console will feature three manual keyboards of 58 keys each and a full pedalboard with 30 pedals that also play the bass pipes. The manual keys are mechanically linked to pallets (which open the air to individually wind each of the pipes) by thin strips of wood called trackers.

This mechanical action offers multiple benefits. To work successfully, the keyboards and pedalboard need to be located fairly close to the pipes. Having a close, tactile connection between the individual keys and the pipes is musically quite advantageous.

When the organist presses a key, it directly pulls a tracker that physically opens a channel for air to enter a pipe. The player can actually feel the nuances of touch and articulation that are immediately affecting the musical sounds coming out of each of the pipes. With mechanical action, the pipes can speak with a more clearly defined character and presence. And mechanical action itself is actually more reliable and long lasting, since there are many fewer parts to wear out or need replacement over time.





*"Sing praise, play music, and proclaim all the Lord's wondrous deeds."*

Although the organ's mechanical action is based on a technique of organ building going back hundreds of years, the University also wanted its organ to be as up-to-date technologically as possible. The instrument features its own computer memory that will allow the organist to set combinations of sounds known as registrations. The organist can pre-select these registrations based on the volume and tonal requirements of the music performed. Another important feature is called a midi (for Musical Instrument Digital Interface), which is a technologically modern way for musical instruments to interface with each other. Basically, the midi will allow other keyboards and synthesizers to be played through the organ's keyboard, while simultaneously playing the wind-blown pipes.

The University's tracker organ was constructed and tested in Québec before being dismantled and rebuilt in Sacred Heart's new Chapel. Casavant Frères has been making organs for 130 years. As with musical compositions, each of its creations is assigned an opus number, and Sacred Heart's is 3,869.

## Stained Glass Windows



*Colors of Light*

The University's Chapel is bathed in natural light, which emphasizes certain elements of its design depending on where the sun enters. Numerous stained glass windows [12](#), also designed and fitted by Father Rupnik and his team of European artisans, add soft colors that complement the vivid hues of the mosaics.

There is no mistaking what is central in this house of God: all eyes are drawn to the main

sanctuary with its limestone altar and ambo (pulpit). Each is decorated with appropriate artwork. The ambo boasts an image of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and the central visual element of



the altar is the ancient image of a pelican. Legend has it that the mother pelican will pierce her own side to feed her young; an iconic message that wordlessly recalls the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the gift of self that the Incarnation represents.

## Chapel Design

Virtually every aspect of design in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit is deliberate and works to preach the Gospel – occasionally with words. The entire building is a work of art that communicates important and enduring realities. Its location is a visible reminder of the centrality of the life of faith at Sacred Heart University, and its overall appearance links the believing community to its roots in Judaism. Its artwork is a catechism in stone and glass and light that shares the central themes of Christian belief: calling and incarnation and redemption.

The Chapel is distinguished by world-class art crafted by a “modern-day Michelangelo” that puts it in company with some of the world’s most memorable sanctuaries: in the Vatican and at Lourdes and Fatima. The highly stylized mosaics seem to bridge the great Christian traditions of the West and the East: what Pope John Paul II called the two lungs of the Church. They are made up of tens of thousands of small pieces, each contributing to the overall power and effectiveness of the whole. Attention to detail is everywhere evident: the Nativity images of the donkey and the cow, for example, boast 20 different colors.

For the Sacred Heart University community, this sanctuary is the fulfillment of a dream as old as the University itself. The Chapel will host a wide variety of religious services and other programs to include Sunday liturgies and, in the Chapel of the Nativity, the celebration of daily Mass. It is a special place that makes possible – and actively encourages – a deepening of the life of the Spirit within this community. There is no doubt as to its Catholic heritage and purpose, but it is a place of welcome and refuge: in the timeless words of the Hebrew Scriptures, a “house of prayer for all peoples.”

## Bells

The Sacred Heart University community assembled to “baptize” the first of four bells that now reside in the bell tower near the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. Following ancient traditions, each bell was named and is distinguished by an inscription.

The 80-foot-high bell tower stands as a dramatic exclamation point near the Chapel’s front entrance doors. It holds four hand-crafted bronze bells that toll the hours and call the University community to prayer.

Created in the Netherlands especially for the new Chapel by the Royal Eijsbouts Foundry, the bells have distinctive sounds and each one proclaims a message important to the University community. The top-most bell weighs in at three-quarters of a ton and is 41 inches wide at its base. Named Esther, for the Old Testament queen, it features a quotation from the Book of Deuteronomy. It is the foundational prayer of the Jewish people that reads in Hebrew: Shema Yisrael Adonai Elohenu Adonai Echad, or “Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is Lord alone.” This ancient affirmation ties the University’s community of faith to its Jewish roots and serves to emphasize the richness of the Catholic intellectual tradition that animates our mission and history.



*Four “Saints” Call the Community to Prayer*

The next bell down <sup>13</sup> is 1,056 pounds and is exactly a yard wide at its base. Its Latin text is taken from St. Pope Leo the Great: Agnosce Christiane dignitatem tuam: “Christian, know your dignity!” This invitation celebrates each believer’s dignity in light of the Incarnation, the taking on of human flesh by the Son of God.

The third bell is 31 inches wide and tips the scales at 634 pounds. It bears a message from St. Augustine, also in Latin: Quia fecisti nos ad Te, it reads, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te. “For You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”



The “baby bell” occupying the niche closest to the ground is a mere 27 inches wide and weighs less than a quarter of a ton. Named for St. Therese of Lisieux, it proudly bears the title of the Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes*, otherwise known as the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Sacred Heart University was founded in the hopeful early days of the Second Vatican Council, and its mission owes much to the renewing spirit of the Council. The opening words of this document are a clarion call for the Church – and the University – to be engaged with all of human society and culture. “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted: these are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”

Following a tradition dating back many centuries, Sacred Heart University’s bell tower <sup>14</sup> is the most prominent feature of its skyline, and its unique design and materials complement those of the Chapel building. The four bells that are visible in the tower will be busy all day long – tolling the hours and inviting the community to prayer.

The bells in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit are set to toll the hours from 8 in the morning until 10 at night. But inside this rotation will be three special “announcements” that signal the



*Chapel Bells: A Voice for the Ages*

traditional recitation of the Angelus Prayer. From monastic times, bells would ring at 8 A.M., at noon, and at 6 P.M., signaling a brief pause in the day’s work and the offering of the Angelus, a prayer that begins, “The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.” In like fashion, the bells will chime in three sets of three to unite the day in a cycle of prayerfulness.

The University community will also hear the bells tolling in connection with liturgical services on campus. At 10 minutes before Mass is to be offered, the bells will ring, and again at the Great Amen during the liturgy at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer.

## A Growing Roman Catholic College Puts Its Faith in a Broadened Mission

“The \$17-million chapel also serves as a physical marker of just how far the university has come in the past 20 years—growing from a commuter college with about 1,500 undergraduates to a residential campus with more than twice as many. The number of graduate students, too, has grown rapidly, pushing total enrollment to more than 6,000.

The art and architecture of the new chapel symbolize the Catholic nature of that education and highlight the university’s approach to faith. Both are fundamental to the college’s mission, but leaders also hope those ideas will set Sacred Heart apart.”

*- The Chronicle of Higher Education*

“It is hard to decide what is most remarkable about the new chapel at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Conn., that will be dedicated on Sunday: the art, the architecture or the idea of such a chapel in the first place...Where the chapel’s art is overtly dramatic, its architecture is subtle. The design emerged from reflection on the Second Vatican Council’s themes of the church as the pilgrim people of God and as engaged in dialogue with the contemporary world.”

*-The New York Times*

“Walking into the Daily Chapel is like ‘stepping into a dazzling icon.’”

*America*





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