ART AND THE MISSION OF REGIS UNIVERSITY

Images crafted by humans have been significant in the historical and spiritual traditions of countless tribes, peoples and nations over the globe. Whether the awesome paintings in the prehistoric caves of Lascaux, the breathtaking sculpture of the Greeks, the ritualistic masks of African tribes, or the funerary art and architecture of ancient Egypt, human beings have taken wood, clay, stone, glass, and pigment in hand to try to capture something of the transcendent, the mysterious, the divine.

In the Western Christian tradition, the making of images has played a similar vital role since its coalescing into “a church.” Images have been used to share the story of Jesus, his parables, miracles, sacrifice, resurrection, his continual presence in the Christian community and the shifting understanding of who the Christ is in any given age. Paintings, sculptures, tapestries, glass and metal have been used to tell the bravery of the saints, the mysteries of the faith, or the work of the Body of Christ. Art and architecture have served to teach, to inspire, to comfort, to warn, and to aid prayer and devotion. Artists and builders have created everything from an encouraging glimpse of heaven, a terrifying view of hell, and the beauty (and temptations) of earth.

In the Jesuit tradition, where the essential goodness of Creation is affirmed, and the belief that God is to be found in all things, the arts, including painting, sculpture, music, drama, architecture and dance, have all been pursued as ways to engage the human and the Divine. For Ignatius, the appropriateness of any Jesuit pursuit was to be discerned by whether or not it promoted “the greater service of God and the more universal good” (Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, no. 622). As long as the making (and appreciation) of images, music, stories and buildings achieves that purpose, there is room for that activity in the Ignatian world.

FAITH AND ART PROGRAM AT REGIS UNIVERSITY

The Faith in Art Series was begun through a grant by the John and Florence Fortune Family Foundation in 2000, and has continued through other University and donor funding since that time. The goal has been to represent the University’s Jesuit, Catholic identity through art installations in classrooms, meeting rooms, and public spaces.

In addition to art from the Catholic and Western traditions, the Faith in Art series has intentionally included images and artifacts from a range of faith traditions around the world. This embrace of other traditions indicates some of the historical and contemporary realities of the Jesuit embrace of the whole world, as well as a Catholic sensibility that the Spirit of God pours into all of God’s creation.

AN ONGOING ENDEAVOR

The installation of art on campus is an organic process that will continue to grow and change over the years as Providence, benefactors, and changing space dictate. Reproductions and even original art works have a limited life and will require changing out and replacement over the coming years. But the commitment will remain to show how the “Word takes flesh” and is among us in art as part of the Jesuit Mission of finding God in all things.

For more information, contact Ken Phillips, Office of Mission kphillip@regis.edu
CRUCIFIXION

Chapel Meditation Garden, west side of chapel: In 1998, Denver sculptor, Ms. Jan Van Ek, was commissioned to create a crucifix with a corpus depicting Christ as an African man. Using a life-cast of a Denver native, she created a moving portrayal of the sacrifice at Calvary. The church that had requested the artwork creation was unable to complete its part of the commission agreement, and Van Ek eventually moved to Oregon. The sculpture languished for years in the workroom of the Fedde Foundry, at which it was cast. Seeking to find a home for over a decade, foundry owner, Ray Fedde (who cast the Chapel bronze doors and Stations of the Cross) donated the sculpture to Regis University. Fedde also fabricated the new steel cross for its installation (August 2010) in the meditation garden of the Chapel. The cross is situated against the view of the mountains, in the beautiful native plantings.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, BRONZE

Courtyard behind Carroll Hall: shows the Jesuit poet deep in prayer, with various passages from his works on adjoining benches. By Irish sculptor, Rowan Gillespie. This is another good spot for prayer and meditation on campus.

JAMES JOYCE, BRONZE STATUE

Garden area outside Coors Life Directions Center: by noted Irish sculptor, Mr. Rowan Gillespie. Shows the Irish author (Jesuit trained) standing in the center of a circle with the words of some of his works flowing from beneath him along with rivulets of water. (Pamphlets that further explain the work and its artist are to be found in a stand near the statue.)

PEDRO ARRupe, S.J., BRONZE STATUE

Fortune Plaza between Main Hall and Chapel: Pedro Arrupe, S.J., was the prayerful and visionary 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus. He served in that position from 1965 to 1981. This thoughtful work was sculpted by Brian Hanlon of New Jersey, based on a famous image of the Basque born Jesuit in Zen-like meditation. This is a twin of an image at Arrupe Jesuit High School in North Denver.

Across the stairs from the bronze is a unique glass sculpture designed by Jim Fletemeyer and Associates that displays the famous “Prayer of Arrupe” (“Nothing is more practical than finding God…”) with background images evocative of Japanese scroll painting. (Arrupe was Superior of the Jesuit house near Hiroshima at the time of the bombings of WW II.) Plaques explaining some of the history of Father Arrupe accompany the artworks.

PETER DE SMET, STATUE

West entry walkway to the Adult Learning Center: There is a breath-taking backdrop of the Rocky Mountains for this bronze ensemble that shows Belgian Jesuit missionary, Fr. Pierre-Jean De Smet (left) in conversation with a member of the Flathead tribe. Created by Montana artist and noted history sculptor, Joe Halko. On the statue base are representations of ancient Native American petro glyphs.
ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, STATUE

Plaza adjoining Carroll Hall: life-size sculpture of the founder of the Jesuit enterprise by Colorado sculptor Jack Kreutzer. This statue is part of a beautiful reconfiguring of space between Carroll and O’Connell Hall (2006) that replaced a small parking area and a non-descript driveway. The plaza includes etched pavement installations of the University crest, a beautiful natural rock fountain, and a “compass rose” whose points articulate the primary “Jesuit Virtues” (cura personalis, magis, etc.). Various plantings continue the spirit of the arboretum that is incorporated in the Lowell campus.

ST. JOHN FRANCIS REGIS, BRONZE RELIEF

East outside wall of the Student Center: shows Regis in conversation with the women and children of Le Puy, France, by Montana artist, Joe Halko. Make sure you take time to observe the varied emotions on the faces of the women.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, STATUE

Boettcher Commons in front of Main Hall: an original installation from the early years of the University, when it was known as Sacred Heart College. Though missing its right hand, this image of the compassionate Christ has been a visual anchor for the campus for over a hundred years.

THE TREE OF WISDOM, SCULPTURE

From Minnesota, Alexander Tylevich, an award-winning, Russian-born sculptor, created the 35 foot tall sculpture of “The Tree of Wisdom” that incorporates the cross of Christ, rays of steel cable, multiple spirals, and cast symbolic images of the disciplines taught in the Science Center. This elegant assemblage of shapes and modern materials is crowned by a circle of stainless steel “ribbons” referencing Jesus’ crown of thorns and the cosmic kingship of Christ. A quote of Jesuit paleontologist, Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., is set within the base near a bronze canon ball (from the life story of St. Ignatius).

THE VIRGIN MARY, STATUE

In front of O’Connell Hall: Created by Father James Hannon in 1950, this area is a wonderful place for prayer and reflection. Along with the serene statue of the Virgin and its surrounding curved wall of Colorado stone, the area has enjoyed many developments in landscaping from our Grounds Crew from our Physical Plant.
INSTALLATIONS IN VARIOUS CLASSROOMS, MEETING ROOMS, CORRIDORS

Art and Faith installations began with the Lowell Campus’ main classroom buildings. There are reproductions of art from the Western tradition of Christian painting (Gothic masters, Greek icons, Fra Angelico, Hieronymous Bosch, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and others). The images include some more modern pieces of contemporary American artists and the likes of Salvador Dalí and modern iconographers. There are also some installations of Buddhist and Hindu images.

CARROLL HALL

Images of Healing from Scripture — third and fourth floor corridors and stairways in Carroll Hall, office/meeting areas of the Rueckert-Hartman School for Health Professions: These moving scenes in ceramic (fired clay) from both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, are by talented Michigan artist Suzanne Young.

Judaica Collection — Regis Room, Carroll Hall: This collection of Seder plates, paintings, embossed calligraphy, artifacts, and prints are based on Hebrew Scripture and wisdom writings, and reflective Jewish devotional life. The Seder Plates are actually used for the annual Seder Supper hosted by University Ministry.


COORS LIFE DIRECTIONS CENTER

A Season For Everything: Quilt works based on the book of Ecclesiastes — Atrium of the Life Directions Center: Denver artists Kenneth Phillips and Eileen O’Brien collaborated to produce four 6x6 foot cloth panels based on the seasons and the well-known Scripture (“there is a time and a season for every purpose under heaven…”). Using a variety of fabric techniques and dozens of different kinds of cloth, the pieces create a interpretive tapestry of the seasons and indicate the breadth of energies that are part of the LDC work.

DAYTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

REGIS SANTOS COLLECTION — Dayton Memorial Library, second floor: This extensive (and rotating) collection of both antique and contemporary Hispanic Catholic devotional art from the American Southwest has been the life’s work of Father Thomas Steele, S.J. Fr. Steele edited The Regis Santos: Thirty Years of Collecting, 1966-1996, which describes the holdings within that period.

ONGOING EXHIBITS — The Library’s fireplace lounge and adjoining display area also serves as an intimate gallery for recent works of visiting artists throughout the year.

MAIN HALL

African Tribal Masks and Mudcloths — Main Hall: These artifacts give a tiny glimpse of the rich artistic and spiritual heritage of the great African continent.

Scenes from the Quaran and Tales of Islamic Prophets — Main Hall 306: A tiniest sampling of the visual art from the vast Islamic cultural heritage.

The Mary Room — Main Hall 304: Multiple images of Mary through the centuries and in different cultures give a glimpse of the different theologies, church views, and interpretation of this central figure in the story of Jesus. Tibetan Buddhist Mandalas — West Hall 137 and Main Hall 305: Images of healing, power and meditation are shown with photos from the Dalai Lama’s visit to Regis in 1997. The current Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his nonviolent efforts to resolve the Tibetan conflict.

Traditional Stations of the Cross — Main Hall 333: These original stations come from the time when the room was the chapel of the Jesuit Community. Restored and refinished after decades of neglect, these plaster sculptures give a taste of the history of Main Hall and the earlier life of Regis College.
POMPONIO FAMILY SCIENCE CENTER

With halls, offices, classrooms and an amphitheatre re-designed and outfitted in 2008, the building itself is worth a walk-through. Those who remember the old building will be amazed at the new vistas from new windows, the clean design throughout, and the additional scientific and educational amenities. In addition to the tremendous make-over, there are works of art that come from Regis’ own art department.

Entry Way: The Science Center Mural is the work of digital arts art professor, Judy Gardner, and students from her digital imaging class (2009). Images reflective of a number of the disciplines explored in the science building have been digitally amplified and altered, then printed on multiple canvases. They are clustered across the curved south wall of the entry. The images are joined with steel etched panels carrying the words of Hopkins’ famous poem “The world is charged with the grandeur of God…” A legend with explanations of the individual panels hangs nearby.

Another Art Department professor, Gene Stewart, produced original works along with his students to produce a series of prints of Jesuits in Science History. The hand-crafted prints reflect a variety of printmaking techniques and portray few of the Jesuits whose devotion to their calling along with their academic and scientific zeal accomplished incredible things. (Did you know that a number of the craters of the moon are named after various Jesuits who have distinguished themselves in the sciences?) A detailed description of the project is framed in the entry lobby of the Science Center. A portfolio of the set of prints can be viewed in the Archives in Dayton Memorial Library.
ST. JOHN FRANCIS REGIS CHAPEL ART INSTALLATIONS

The Saint John Francis Regis Chapel is a finally-realized dream of many within the Regis community. Designed by Soderstrom and Associates, Architects, from Portland, Oregon, its soaring spaces, wide vistas, and thoughtful use of natural materials combine to create a unique, flexible and energetic space for prayer, reflection, and Faith and Mission related activities. A mandated dynamic of the chapel is that it should serve as a teaching place about the Catholic faith as well as a place of prayer and worship. Visual art serves in a similar tradition of the great cathedrals of Europe, to instruct in the stories of the faith, and to inspire with representational and abstracted art.

BRONZE DOOR PANELS

Front doors of chapel: Eight scenes from the life of Jesus were fashioned in low relief bronze by Michigan-born, now (2010) Denver resident, Antonio Francesco. As you enter the chapel, you are invited to enter through the 11 foot tall ceremonial doors, into the story of Jesus, healer, reconciler, friend and savior.

CRUCIFIX

Upper South wall of sanctuary: Jerzy Kenar, a Polish-born sculptor from Chicago, received the commission for the larger than life (the corpus is 9 feet tall) image of the crucified Christ. The talented sculptor received the difficult instruction to create an image of Jesus that was subtly transitional, a crucified figure that was unmistakably on the path to resurrection, but not yet “there.” It was to be an image that “death is not the final word.” The corpus is carved of Linden (bass) wood and the cross is oak. (Its complicated installation was a day of triumph and superb teamwork by the Physical Plant team.)

FIRE AND WATER SCULPTURE

West side of the Chapel Plaza: Several years ago, as the University chapel was being built and gifts were being given to outfit the building, a donor gave a gift to fund a vessel for the ceremonial Easter Vigil Fire. Choosing a vessel that would be a work of religious art as well as an appropriate container for the of the garden, opposite a stone bench inscribed with the words: “Be still and know that I am God.” A dedication service is in the planning stages for the Fall semester, 2010.

LITURGICAL FURNISHINGS

The altar, ambo, presider's chair, candle sticks, Paschal candle stand and additional furnishings are all the work of Colorado artist/craftsman Timothy Hinz. The simple designs are reminiscent of Craftsman style furnishings and display restraint and lots of hands-on craftsmanship.

MADONNA DELLA STRADA CHAPEL: 5 ICONS OF ST. IGNATIUS/MOMENTS OF DISCERNMENT, ICON OF MADONNA DELLA STRADA

Thanks to Jerry Cobb, S.J., who served as a gracious liaison, Regis University connected with the multi-talented artist, Dora Bitau, who lives in Rome. She received the commission to create original images of the life of Ignatius and a (strikingly accurate) representation of the fresco of Madonna Della Strada (church of Il Gesu, Rome), who is the patron saint of the original Jesuit enterprise. A pamphlet describing the scenes is available in the chapel.
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

In addition to the beautiful visual art works in the chapel, beautiful music is also a dynamic part of the on-going life of the community. A concert grand Bosendorfer Piano and an exquisite Allen Digital Four Manual Organ assist the creation of many joyful noises in this exquisite gathering place for the Regis Community.

NARTHEX DOOR PANELS

Sliding doors between narthex and sanctuary: “Come to the Water” (narthex side) combines a sweeping design of the motion and vitality of water with wavelike renderings of water references from Hebrew and Christian Scripture. “The Great Harvest” (sanctuary side) is evocative of Colorado landscape and Eucharistic themes. The images were designed by Denver sculptor Antonio Francesco and fabricated in mixed metals by Bob Cook of Trovo Designs of Portland, Oregon in conjunction with Ken Phillips.

SAINT JOHN FRANCIS REGIS PREACHING TO THE PEOPLE

Chapel entryway niches: This titular sculpture is the work of noted sculptor, Jack Kreutzer, from Loveland, Colorado. (Jack also did the bronze of Ignatius of Loyola near Carroll Hall.)

The life-size bronze of St. John Francis is especially engaging for its humanity and immediate presence. The depictions of a young man and woman (western niche) act as visual metaphors for contemplative and active life, both elements of Ignatian spirituality. These figures are also emblematic of many of our younger students. A brief biography of the saint is cast in a bronze landscape in the Eastern niche. The bronze bench on the west side corner of the entrance allows the viewer to sit be part of the tableau, to contemplate the oft-considered question: “How ought we to live?”

SAINT JOHN’S BIBLE SHOWCASE

A large showcase on the Western entry way of the sanctuary is designated for 7 volumes of a facsimile of the St. John Bible Project (4 of the 7 volumes have been received as of August 2010: Wisdom, Psalms, Prophets, Pentateuch). The St. John’s Bible is the first hand written and illuminated Bible in the English language for well over 400 years. A limited edition of facsimile Bibles is being printed (a complex and laborious process to capture the artistry of the original Bible which will be housed at the Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota). The first volume is due to arrive on campus soon and it, along with future volumes, will be displayed in the showcase and used for special liturgies in the chapel.
SANCTUARY NICHE ART

Following the mandate for an ongoing “teaching chapel” the images that occupy the niches on either side of the main altar rotate according to the liturgical seasons of the year. These paintings, hangings, and low relief sculptures present a variety of aspects or titles of the Blessed Mother and other elements of the saints and feasts of Christian liturgical year. They include the following:

- Late summer: Our Lady of Sorrows/ Assumption and Pentecost Banners (by Ken Phillips and Joe Kraus)
- September: Pentecost (Mass of the Holy Spirit), Mary of the Pentecost (sculpted and painted screens by Greg Lewis of Portland)
- October: St. Francis of Assisi, Our Lady of Refuge Paintings (by Denver artist, Meg Ingraham)
- November: Our Lady of Guadalupe, The Communion of Saints Paintings (by Regis Art faculty Tony Ortega)
- December/Advent: Our Lady of the New Advent, Holy Family icons printed on satin (images by William Hart Mac Nichols)
- January: TBA
- February: Lent: TBA
- March: Annunciation of Mary, St. Joseph the Worker Paintings (by noted Denver painter, Sandra Wittow)
- Easter Season: Mary of the Resurrection, Resurrection Meditation, silk processional banners, altar antependium (by Judy Gardner, Denver Digital artist and faculty member)
- Summer Ordinary Time: TBA

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

East and West clerestory levels of chapel: Scenes from the Passion and Death of Jesus by Denver sculptor Antonio Francesco. Commissioned especially for our chapel, these expressive stations are, despite their simplicity, very effective in their communication of the central story of the passion and death of Jesus.

TABERNACLE, HOLY WATER FONTS

North Denver artisan Alec Juhan designed and executed the tabernacle in the main chapel to inhabit a unique setting created by the architects to accommodate mixed use of the sacred space. The tabernacle repeats the shape of the apse (rounded north portion) of the chapel. It is constructed of rare hardwoods with inlaid crosses. The twin holy water fonts at the chapel entry are elegant in their stability and simplicity.