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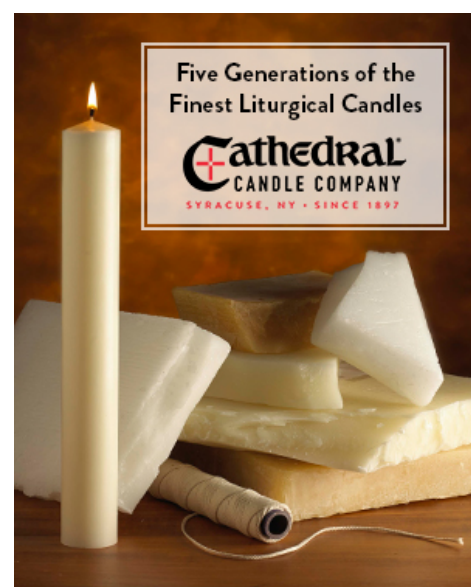
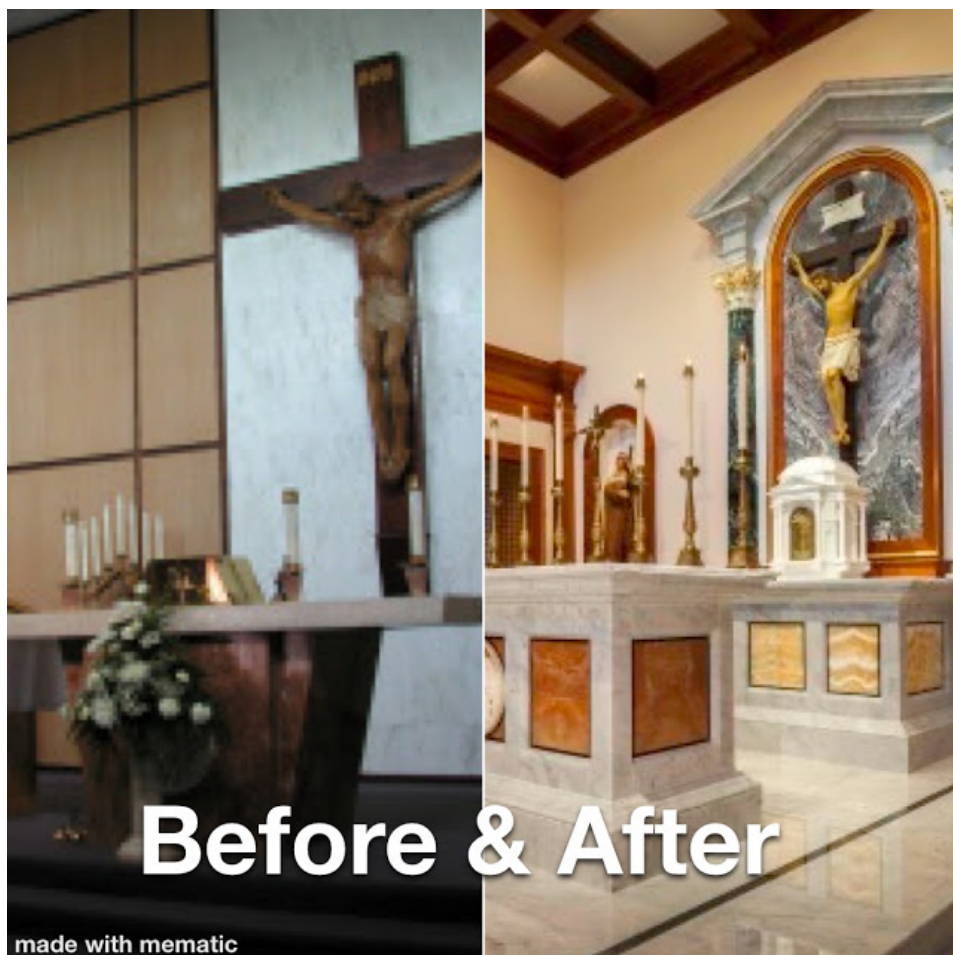
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The Renovation of the Chapel of a Carmelite Monastery in Michigan

by John Paul Sonnen on October 08, 2020

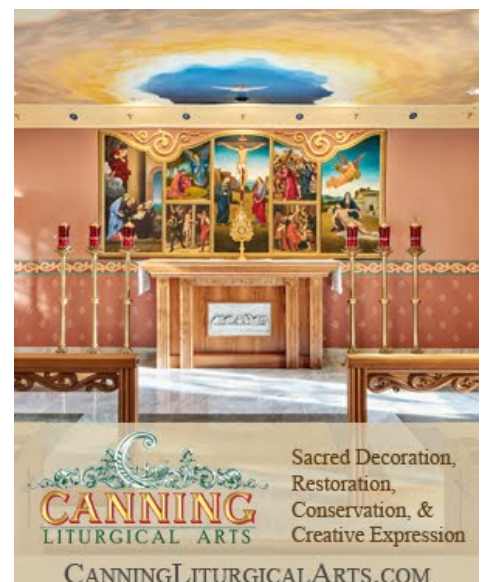
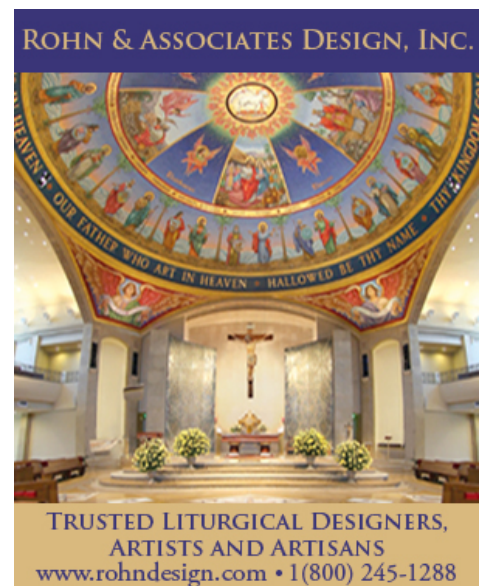
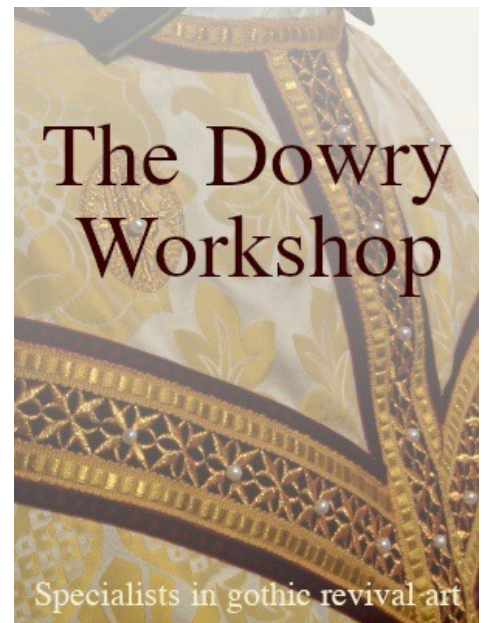


A little known Carmel of Discalced Carmelites in Traverse City, Michigan (Diocese of Gaylord) is garnering attention among traditional Catholics and young women discerning. It has an interesting history -- it was founded by nuns who came originally from Mexico, fleeing persecution. The small convent today has 5 sisters with one more joining next year. The present-day sisters are American, with one from

Canada. Just a couple of years ago the nuns made the switch to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, in an effort to return to their liturgical and spiritual roots. As a side note, the O. Carms celebrate the ancient Carmelite Rite, while the Discalced Carmelites adopted the Missal of Trent in the sixteenth century. Daily Masses are open to the public. The daily Mass schedule in the EF is 7:30 am on Sundays and Saturdays and 6:55 am on weekdays. Interested young women who may be discerning a possible call to convent life are encouraged to write directly to the Reverend Mother.



Each Carmel is a little different. The sisters at the Traverse City monastery live a cloistered life, complete with a single grill in their choir attached to the sanctuary of their chapel along with a double grill in their visitors' parlor with a speakroom turn to pass items through. They maintain the full habit, papal enclosure, the 1990 Constitutions, Divine Office and Holy Mass sung in Latin in Gregorian Chant, with Mass, Office and Sacraments celebrated in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite. The spiritual rhythms of the convent life bring to mind the life of the Little Flower during her extraordinary life and short time in the convent in France. The sisters are fortunate to have such a fine chaplain in residence, our good friend Fr. Philip Gerard Johnson, a distinguished graduate of the US Naval Academy.





The interior of the convent chapel was completely renovated in 2012 by the great Catholic architect, Duncan G. Stroik. The chapel was built in 1962, following the construction of the monastery which began in 1959. The stained glass windows seen today were installed in 2009, creations by Fr. Richard Cannuli OSA, a master iconographer who has since passed. The chapel renovation in 2012 was done for the fiftieth anniversary of its dedication. The sisters wanted to update the chapel to inspire greater piety among both the nuns and those who visit. The new Renaissance interior shines with new lighting, marbled altar and tabernacle, mahogany woodwork with gold leaf, new statues and furnishings, new oak pews, and a newly fashioned hand-crafted choir grille to match (seen on the wall of the Gospel side of the altar).



The Latin inscription in gold leaf above the entrance to the sanctuary is from Isaiah 56:7: "I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer." Photos of the chapel renovation, a little oratory, can be seen here. This brings to mind a quote from the Rule of St. Albert: "Let an oratory be erected...in the midst of the cells, where you are to assemble every morning to hear Mass."



God bless the sisters for their fidelity to the monastic traditions of the Latin Church. I have no doubt this wonderful community will continue to flourish as heaven rewards the kind sisters for their faith and good works, through the intercession of the prophet Elijah, the founder of the Carmelite Order. And may St. Teresa of Avila, foundress of the Discalced Carmelites along with their co-founder St. John of the Cross, continue to bless them and intercede for their community now as always. Let us pray!

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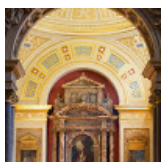
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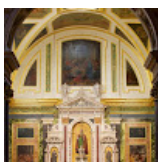
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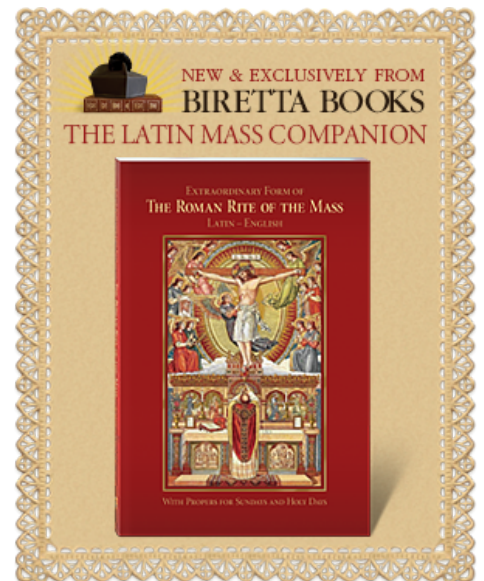
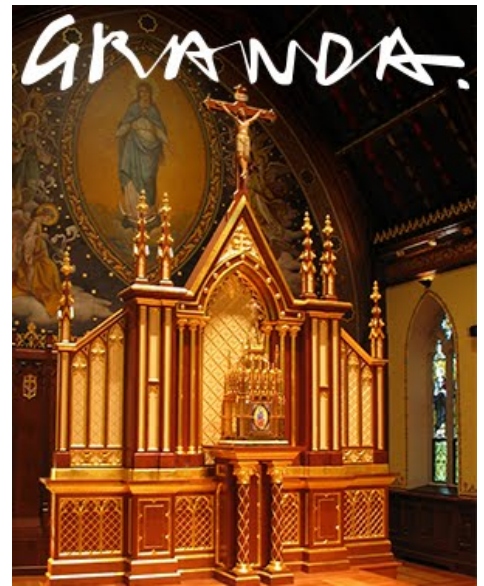
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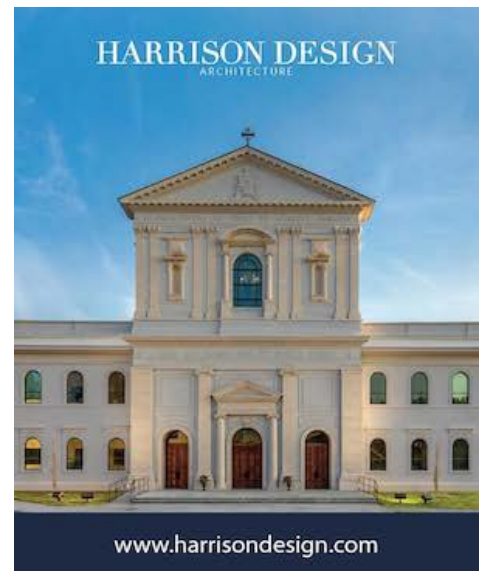
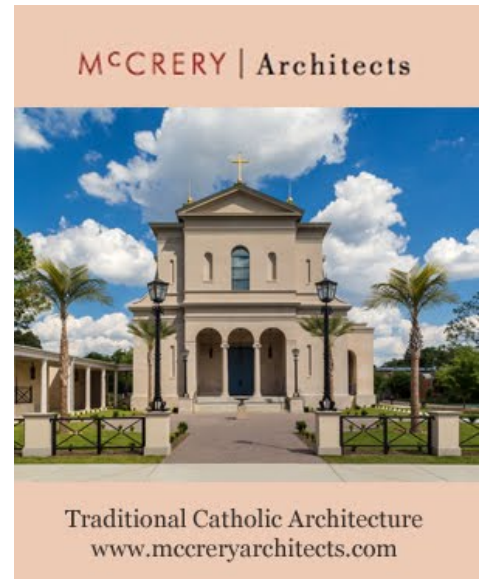
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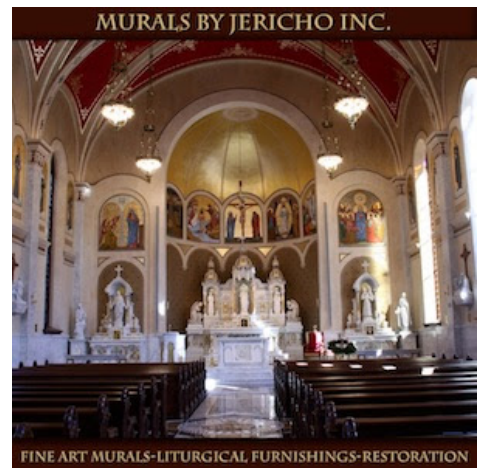
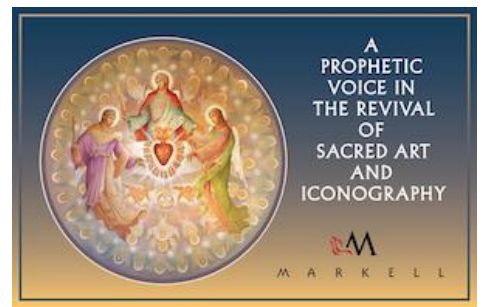
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