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Looking Anew at the Rothko Chapel: The Future of Interfaith Space on the Catholic Campus

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Honors Thesis

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Department: Art and Design

Advisor: Roger J. Crum, Ph.D.

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Abstract

The University of Dayton is among many Catholic institutions that are experiencing the need for multi-faith accommodation as its student body becomes more diverse in the 21st century. While the majority of the University's population is Catholic, there are growing numbers of Muslim, Jewish, and Protestant students as well as others of undeclared faiths or of no faith traditions who must interact on campus. In view of the history of Catholic higher education and the current practice and philosophy of interfaith dialogue, how should the University of Dayton approach this new multi-cultural reality in terms of dedicating space and designing or modifying architecture? This thesis provides a comparative analysis of existing university spaces and their artistic appointments for multi-faith and interfaith accommodation. In the broader context of assessing how Catholic colleges and universities and the Catholic and Marianist University of Dayton in particular are presenting addressing interfaith dialogue, this thesis proposes the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas as a model of multi-faith religious space that could lead to the next stage of interfaith dialogue and accommodation on Catholic university campuses.

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I. Introduction

Mark Rothko, an Abstract Expressionist painter, was among the more influential artists of his time, creating pieces that move well beyond visual representation to evocative suggestions of pure color and pure thought. The Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas is Rothko's crowning masterpiece (figure 1). This structure and its interior space form a harmonious environment in which visitors leave behind the physical world as they are invited to search an expansive space "beyond." As a broadly spiritual and contemplative space, the chapel is open to people of all faiths who are welcome to celebrate, worship, or reflect individually or in dialogue with one another. For this reason the Rothko Chapel provides an inspirational model of how a space can be conceived and used to acknowledge and foster the contemporary matter of interfaith dialogue.

In broad terms the Rothko Chapel is a manifestation of American diversity. People from all ethnic and racial backgrounds have become American citizens, eager to enjoy individual freedoms, including the right to choose and practice religion. While this holds to be true in theory, there is often a divide in practice between and among different religions that hinders the kind of pluralism that is intended in a society that espouses religious freedom and diversity. This divide has been evident in recent years between, but not exclusive to, the relationship between Christianity and Islam, largely as a result of tensions surrounding and following the events of September 11, 2001 when terrorist attacks in America precipitated a wide spectrum of responses ranging from thoughtful conversations and intelligent retrospection to acrimony, thoughts of revenge, and even

war. All of these responses at once advanced and hindered interfaith dialogue between these religions.

The American university is a microcosm of American society in terms of diversity. While academia has successfully shaped the university as a place of learning in diversity, a complicated matter arises in relation to what extent colleges and universities have been able to establish their campuses as places of diverse worship. This matter presents one set of challenges for colleges and universities that are secular in identification and purpose. Quite a separate set of challenges arises when religiously-affiliated institutions, such as Catholic colleges and universities, approach the task of providing sacred spaces for different religions and addressing the opportunity of fostering interfaith dialogue.

Increasingly religiously-affiliated colleges and universities are not exclusively intended for those of a particular religious faith and practice. Rather, they actively seek to attract people of different cultural origins and religious traditions in the interest of encouraging intercultural exchange and interfaith dialogue. Yet is a campus environment inherently encouraging of interfaith dialogue through this diversity or does a college or university specifically need to construct situations and places for this dialogue? This thesis is directed at exploring how Catholic colleges and universities in general, and the University of Dayton in particular, are responding to the increasing religious diversification on their campus and what these institutions are doing by way of fostering interfaith dialogue in the sacred spaces of their built environments. As a Catholic and Marianist institution, the University of Dayton provides an appropriate case study because of its commitment in mission to inclusivity and multicultural development. The

University of Dayton has a *Statement of Inclusive Excellence* that calls for a commitment to “engaging in reflection, dialogue, and experiences that both challenge and affirm multiple perspectives.”¹ With a university that is thus dedicated to fostering multicultural diversity and inclusivity, it is expected that such an institution would be open to and indeed seeking new ways and spaces to accommodate and encourage diverse spiritual development and interfaith dialogue.

Arising out of a general survey of Catholic colleges and universities, an analysis of the University of Dayton’s current stance and provision of sacred spaces demonstrates that steps toward combining the provision of diverse religious spaces and the fostering of true interfaith dialogue are still at a stage of preliminary action. This suggests that the next era for sacred spaces on Catholic university campuses like the University of Dayton should actively seek new solutions to transform more notably their religious spaces to accommodate interfaith dialogue. This thesis argues that as contemporary Catholic universities continue to pursue adequate sacred spaces in order to accommodate and promote diversity and interfaith dialogue, they should seek architectural solutions beyond the established Catholic tradition that might actively serve the developing value that the Catholic Church places on interfaith dialogue. Steps toward this solution can be found in the history, practice, and mission of the Rothko Chapel.

II. Defining Catholic Universities of America

Catholic higher education has a tradition that is both similar to and distinguished from the traditions of other religious or secular developments in higher learning. While first established to educate future clergy, Catholic colleges and universities have evolved

¹ “Student Development Mission,” University of Dayton, https://www.udayton.edu/studev/about/vision_mission_values.php.

to educate more broadly the Catholic laity, and further developments have led to the current role of Catholic higher education in educating those from various backgrounds. As the structure of Catholic higher education continues to evolve to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse society, Catholic institutions can similarly continue to change in order to accommodate and promote interfaith dialogue in American society.

Catholic higher education has been present in the United States since the eighteenth century. The first Catholic institution of higher learning was Georgetown College, founded in 1789 in Washington, DC.² Georgetown was the first of 42 Catholic schools founded before 1850 whose mission was to prepare and educate clergy, provide structure for missionary activities, and ensure cultivation of religious and moral values in young men.³ As noted, the aims of early Catholic higher education in America were to educate Catholic men in preparation for the seminary. As a result, early institutions received little funding from philanthropic organizations or wealthy lay benefactors; notably, they also received little or no funding from the Catholic Church with one result being that only twelve of the first forty-two schools in America have survived.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Catholic populations increased substantially in the United States. Catholics increased from two million in 1850 to twelve million in 1900 due in large part to the dynamics of immigration. In this same period, Catholic higher education changed in its intentions. Bishops became less involved in the institutions as separate seminaries were being created for men who aspired to be priests. As those separate seminaries were created and Catholic hierarchies

² Matthew Garrett, "The Identity of American Catholic Higher Education: A Historical Overview," *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (University of Notre Dame: 2006), 230.

³ Garrett, "The Identity of American Catholic Higher Education," 231.

had less involvement in the administration and direction of colleges and universities, Catholic institutions broadened their educational missions to accommodate general male Catholic laity.

Along with this change in demography and mission, there was also a shift in the curricular structure at these institutions. While early Catholic higher education placed a focus on theology and philosophy, these changing institutions began to include scientific education, paralleling the new developments of the Industrial Revolution that were similarly reflected in the curricula of secular institutions of higher learning. It is in this period that Catholic colleges and universities also began implementing the now typical four-year degree track.⁴ These changes demonstrate how Catholic institutions made gradual changes to respond to the new challenges of the modern age.

Transformations in Catholic education in America continued into the twentieth century. The number of students enrolled in Catholic colleges and universities continued to increase significantly in this period. Enrollment increased from 16,000 students in 1916 to 162,000 students in 1940.⁵ In almost twenty-five years, enrollment in Catholic institutions increased roughly 900%. This was a significant moment in the history of Catholic higher education. With rising numbers of students and a growing presence within the American higher education system, Catholic colleges and universities were faced with a need to seek accreditation.⁶ Not unexpectedly, Catholic institutions

⁴ St. Louis University was the first Catholic institution in America to offer a four-year curriculum track, beginning in 1887. This new plan differed from the previous six-year track in which students had three years of standard academic courses followed by three years of humanities subjects. (Garret, 233)

⁵ Garrett, 233.

⁶ Accreditation of American colleges and universities began in the 19th century. The Northeast Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools has records as early as 1885.

struggled with accreditation processes as those processes often reflected and valued standard secular curricula that occasionally conflicted with Catholic teaching and the overall goal of preparing good Catholics for the world.⁷ As a result, in 1930 a full 60% of the Catholic colleges and universities did not qualify for accreditation.⁸ While these institutions realized the importance of accreditation, they did not work extensively to alter their Catholic identities to meet what could be considered secular, standardized practices.

While a majority of institutions may not have met the standards of accreditation, Catholic colleges and universities still worked to adapt to standardized curricular practices. For example, Catholic colleges and universities began to offer theology courses rather than strictly scholastic philosophy as the main intellectual frame for exploring the core of Catholic teaching. Institutions also began to establish distinct academic departments, develop graduate studies programs and research-based learning, and reorganize administrative procedures. These changes benefited Catholic institutions as more and more reached a level of standardization that led to accreditation. In 1938, a notable 76% of Catholic schools achieved accreditation.⁹

As Catholic colleges and universities were becoming more attuned to the modernization of American higher education, they struggled to gain support from Church

In the early twentieth century, accreditation associations enforced explicit standards in their regions. These standards could influence “library holdings, classroom and laboratory size, programs, degrees, and numerous facets of institutional functioning.” (Arthur M. Cohen and Carrie B. Kisker, *The Shaping of American Higher Education: Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 167.)

⁷ In 1913, the University of Notre Dame was the only Catholic university to meet accreditation standards set by the North Central Accrediting Association (Garrett, 233).

⁸ Garrett, 233.

⁹ Garrett, 235.

hierarchies because the Church continued to be more inclined to provide financial support and administrative aid to institutions more closely in line with official teaching. In this atmosphere prominent Catholic colleges and universities began a campaign in 1907 to convince Church officials to provide support to all Catholic institutions. For example, the Catholic Education Association made the case for Church support in 1926 by declaring secular colleges incapable of providing the religious education and moral training that Catholic schools could provide.¹⁰ In this instance it was evident that “Catholic institutions threaded a difficult way between obedience to their superiors and interest in modernizing curriculum and student life.”¹¹

Catholic colleges and universities are now broad institutions that welcome students of all backgrounds and support diverse academic subjects. The major transformations that led to this contemporary situation occurred in the post-war era and beyond. After World War II, the number of American Catholics grew to forty-two million.¹² With Catholicism’s growing presence in American society, increasing numbers of Catholic students pursued higher education, and this led to the expanded size and scope of the already existing Catholic colleges and universities as well as the founding of new Catholic institutions. Forty-one, four-year Catholic colleges and universities, twenty junior colleges, and fifty colleges for religious women were developed between 1945 and 1967, and with these new institutions enrollment at Catholic

¹⁰ Garrett, 236.

¹¹ Linda Eisenmann, “Reclaiming Religion: New Histiographic Challenges to the Relationship of Religion and Higher Education,” *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 3, (1999), 297.

¹² This was the number of Catholics in America between 1940 and 1960. (Garrett, 236)

institutions in America grew to nearly 400,000 students.¹³ One result of this expansion was that the number of qualified priests, brothers, and nuns could not meet the needs of the growing student population. Catholic colleges and universities then began hiring laypersons (usually Catholic, but not always) as administrators, educators, and trustees. It was also at this time that Catholic institutions placed less focus on integrating a religious core into the curriculum and instead emphasized a broader perspective on overall excellence in attempts to compete with prominent, more secular schools.¹⁴ As more lay people became involved in the governance, operation, and teaching at Catholic institutions, the relationship between Catholic colleges and universities and the Church became more distant.

To place more authority in these institutions, the Vatican created in 1949 the International Association of Catholic Universities to discuss the characteristics that should constitute a Catholic institution of higher learning.¹⁵ This association discussed membership criteria, and those involved debated whether Catholic colleges and universities needed to be approved by the Vatican.¹⁶ The proposed involvement of the

¹³ Garrett, 236.

¹⁴ Harvard University was established in 1636 as a religiously-affiliated university. The aim was to educate a Puritan ministry, but the college was never a seminary and was always committed to an arts education. Harvard's secularization began in the latter half of the nineteenth century. (Roger Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 6.)

¹⁵ Garrett, 237.

¹⁶ Giuseppe Cardinal Pizzardo of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities was a key proponent of this. In such a case, a school could not grant honorary degrees without the approval of Catholic officials in Rome. There eventually was a compromise between Rome and American Catholic higher education, as Rome agreed that awarding honorary degrees was a civil matter, and approval from papal authority was unnecessary in this sense. There eventually was a compromise between Rome and American Catholic

Church in Catholic higher education continued to be debated throughout the second half of the twentieth century.

While the Catholic Church and Catholic colleges and universities in America struggled to find a balance between the sacred and secular, the Second Vatican Council and the resulting shifts of thought and practice within the Church contributed to further changes in Catholic higher education.¹⁷ During Vatican II in the 1960s, Pope John XXIII urged Catholics to “end their segregation of themselves with the world.”¹⁸ The Pope wanted Catholics to cooperate with the surrounding goodness of the world and adapt to the changing modern culture. This shift in perspective did not call for a change in values or in Catholic commitments; what it did call for was a new attitude of renewal. In higher education the momentum of Vatican II led to the meeting of the International Federation of Catholic University’s (IFCU) at Land O’Lakes, Wisconsin in 1967. At that meeting the IFCU discussed the definition of Catholic higher education and drafted a document entitled “The Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University.” In this document the IFCU gives Catholic institutions a sense of independence from the Catholic Church, ultimately affording them the opportunity for academic freedom. The document states:

The Catholic university today must be a university in the full modern sense of the word, with a strong commitment to and concern for academic excellence. To perform its teaching and research functions effectively the Catholic university

higher education, as Rome agreed that awarding honorary degrees was a civil matter, and approval from papal authority was unnecessary in this sense (Garrett, 237.)

¹⁷ The Second Vatican Council addressed the Catholic Church’s relations to contemporary culture in the modern world. It commenced under Pope John XXIII in 1962 and closed under Pope Paul VI in 1965. Several changes occurred during Vatican II, such as the use of vernacular language during Mass, the open promotion of ecumenical dialogue, and aesthetic changes of liturgical music, art, and architecture. (For more information, see Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)).

¹⁸ Garrett, 238.

must have a true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself. To say this is simply to assert that institutional autonomy and academic freedom are essential conditions of life and growth and indeed survival for Catholic universities as for all universities.¹⁹

With this newfound academic freedom, Catholic colleges and universities were able to make changes to their curricula, faculty identities and interests, and research practices. For example, philosophy was no longer seen as foundational to theology, separating the two into distinct, individual subjects. While Catholic institutions were granted a degree of autonomy, they still needed to maintain a noticeable Catholic presence on campus and engage in public service opportunities in efforts to remain true to their founding religious affiliation.

Pope John Paul II made further definitions of Catholic higher education in his apostolic constitution of 1990 *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. This constitution described the identity and mission of Catholic colleges and universities and provided General Norms to help fulfill its vision.²⁰ The document calls for an alignment between the mission of the Catholic Church and the governance of Catholic colleges and universities, continuing the dialogue between spiritual faith and contemporary culture. Pope John Paul II addressed the identity of Catholic institutions, their missions of service, and their general and transitional norms. According to the document, a Catholic institution of higher learning is an academic community that works to protect and advance human dignity and cultural

¹⁹ International Federation of Catholic Universities, *The Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University*, (1967), 1.

²⁰ Catholic Bishops of the United States, *The Application for Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, (November 17, 1999), Paragraph 1. <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catholic-education/higher-education/the-application-for-ex-corde-ecclesiae-for-the-united-states.cfm>.

heritage in its research, teachings, and offered services to the local and international communities.²¹ There must be an institutional commitment to the Christian message and the Catholic faith, and in this commitment there is a nurturing of knowledge and the search of truth through research and academic discipline. After *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was promulgated, Catholic institutions within different countries were to develop their own local norms for Catholic higher education to be approved by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education. Accordingly, Catholic institutions in the United States created in 1999 *The Application for Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* as their concerted plan for the implementation of *Ex Corde*'s message and norms.

The discussions of Catholic colleges and universities in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and in *The Application for Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* provide the most recent, contemporary definition of Catholic higher education, and these documents demonstrate how Catholic colleges and universities are to engage in dialogue with diverse cultures. In *Ex Corde* Pope John Paul II writes:

A Catholic University must become *more attentive to the cultures of the world of today*, and to the *various cultural traditions existing within the Church* in a way that will promote a continuous and profitable dialogue between the Gospel and modern society... Traditional cultures are to be defended in their identity, helping them to receive modern values without sacrificing their own heritage, which is a wealth for the whole of the human family.²²

The document urges Catholic colleges and universities to engage in cultural dialogue, staying true to Catholic identity while also respecting individual consciences. Catholic institutions, in their commitment to Catholicism, are to recognize the “dignity of the

²¹ Pope John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: On Catholic Universities*, Papal Archive, The Holy See, (August 15, 1990), Paragraph 12, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jpii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae_en.html.

²² Pope John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Paragraph 45.

human person” and respect “the religious liberty of every individual, a right with which each is endowed by nature.”²³ Catholic colleges and universities are therefore to undertake the Catholic mission by welcoming diversity and engaging in dialogue with modern, global cultures in order to promote the common good.

Catholic colleges and universities in America have a distinct duality of identity as both educational institutions and Catholic institutions. This twofold identity has developed in a growing balancing of the secular and the sacred. The evolutionary history of American Catholic colleges and universities demonstrates the institutions’ ability to adapt to changes in the modern era. Contemporary Catholic institutions have a sense of academic freedom, but also a commitment to the Catholic mission. That Catholic mission is not only to proclaim Christian values and teachings, but also to demonstrate respect for all human dignity and the engagement in interfaith dialogue.

III. Marianist Education Values and the University of Dayton

While Catholic colleges and universities are to uphold the general values of the Church, each Catholic institution varies in its particular identity as the Catholic tradition includes differing orders. Each of these orders, while still remaining true to the overall values of Catholicism, differs in its philosophy of education. How, then, has the University of Dayton, a Marianist institution, shaped its own particular educational mission and how does that mission frame the institution’s perspective on interfaith dialogue? As written in the *Characteristics of Marianist Universities*, “Marianist spirituality emphasizes faith, which requires movement of the heart as well as an assent

²³ Catholic Bishops of the United States, *The Application for Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Article 2, No. 4.

of the mind. It moves a person to act.”²⁴ This action and social transformation does not occur only by the power of the individual, but additionally by communities of faith and love, emulating the vibrancy of the Christian spirit. This Marianist spirituality has its own perspective on education.²⁵ Marianist teachers are not only to educate students but are to love and respect them in a mutual relationship of compassion. These relationships form communities as people work together in education, leadership, and service, embracing each other’s gifts to be shared with the world. “Attentive presence, genuine community, and a call to competent and loving service create an environment for teaching and learning that is inviting and invigorating to people from any and all faith traditions.”²⁶

Marianist education calls for the development of the whole person and for the creation of a welcoming environment for diverse faculty and students of various or no religious backgrounds. By educating the whole person, Marianists seek to develop a person’s “physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social qualities.”²⁷ In this development, Marianists respect individual gifts and beliefs while nurturing a person’s spirituality regardless of her or his differing background from the Catholic faith. Marianist universities seek to embrace “respectful humility” and “to learn from those who are of other faiths and cultures as well as from those who may have no religious

²⁴ *Characteristics of Marianist Universities*, (1996), Paragraph 6.

²⁵ Marianist education has five distinct characteristics: (1) Educate for formation in faith; (2) Provide an excellent education; (3) Educate in family spirit; (4) Educate for service, justice, and peace; (5) Educate for adaptation and change. (*Characteristics of Marianist Universities*, Paragraph 22.)

²⁶ *Characteristics of Marianist Universities*, Paragraph 16.

²⁷ *Characteristics of Marianist Universities*, Paragraph 27.

faith at all.”²⁸ By engaging in difficult dialogue with people of differing religious traditions, Marianists strengthen the community. Marianist universities must also educate people to embrace the ever-changing, pluralistic society of the current world. This calls for the appreciation of cultural differences and the continuous dialogue between faith and culture.

IV. The Catholic Perspective of Interfaith Relations

While it may seem contradictory to the core identity of Catholic colleges and universities to engage in interfaith dialogue and provide specific spaces for students of non-Catholic backgrounds, the Catholic Church does find goodness in and respects non-Christian religions. That stated, the Catholic Church has had a rather uncertain history in regards to interfaith relations. A majority of that history has denied the validity of other religions, but a shift in perspective occurred during the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. Before Vatican II, the Church made no positive statements about non-Christian religions.²⁹ It was at Vatican II, however, that the Church moved from a strictly inward focus to a more inclusive perspective. The council affirmed that there was a need for the Church to look beyond itself and “theologically to address the world...the whole of humanity.”³⁰

Beyond Vatican II, the relationship between the Church and non-Christian religions is discussed in *Nostra Aetate*, a declaration proclaimed by Pope Paul VI in 1965. The document states that “the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy

²⁸ *Characteristics of Marianist Universities*, Paragraph 25.

²⁹ Miikka Ruokanen, *The Catholic Doctrine of Non-Christian Religions: According to the Second Vatican Council*, in *Studies in Christian Mission*, Vol. 7, (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1992), 11.

³⁰ Dugan McGinley, "Dialogue and the Spirit of Vatican II: Reading *Gaudium Et Spes* Fifty Years Later," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* Vol. 50, No. 1 (2015), 106.

in these religions.”³¹ In other words, the Catholic Church recognizes that while different religions have varied teachings and expressions, non-Christian religions have elements of goodness and truth that should be recognized, preserved, and respected. *Nostra Aetate* references Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism. The document also recognizes past hostilities between religions, such as Christian-Muslim conflicts, and urges all people to forget these past quarrels and work toward mutual understanding through dialogue. “The purpose of this move forward is mutual service to the ‘common good,’ as it is the Church’s duty to ‘foster unity and charity’ among individuals, nations and religions.”³² Instead of focusing on differences and past hatred, interfaith dialogue can encourage understanding and unite people to achieve a common good.

As discussed at Vatican II and in the subsequent *Nostra Aetate*, the Church supports interfaith dialogue. But what exactly is interfaith dialogue from the perspective of the Church? The Church defines interfaith dialogue in different ways. On a basic level, interfaith dialogue is defined as a form of reciprocal communication that can lead to a common goal. Dialogue can also be understood as “an attitude or friendship, which permeates or should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the Church.”³³ In a third sense, interfaith dialogue refers to “all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are

³¹ Pope Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate*, Papal Archive, The Holy See, (October 28, 1965) http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

³² Gavin D’Costa, *The Catholic Church and the World Religions: A Theological and Phenomenological Account*, (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 17.

³³ Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, *Dialogue and Proclamation*, (May 19, 1991), 9, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html.

directed at mutual understanding and enrichment, in obedience to truth and respect for freedom.”³⁴ In this way, interfaith dialogue is used by the Church to respect other religions without forfeiting the call for Catholic proclamation.

The Church describes four forms of interfaith dialogue: life, action, theological exchange, and religious experience. The first refers to people living in an open spirit, sharing their human struggles and joys together. The second addresses dialogue in which people of defined or of no religious backgrounds work together to develop and liberate others. The third form of dialogue occurs when theological specialists study and deepen their understanding of their own religion while also respecting the differences found in others. The final form of interfaith dialogue is when people share their religious practices and traditions, like that of prayer.³⁵

While the Catholic Church supports interfaith dialogue, its perspective on interfaith prayer can be more complicated. According to the Church, both Christian and non-Christian prayers are valid. The Catholic Church obviously embraces Catholic prayers since they are prayed to the triune God. Although non-Christian prayers are not directed toward the triune God, these prayers are still valid because they are understood as being inspired by the Holy Spirit, as the Church regards the Holy Spirit as mysteriously residing in each person’s heart. Pope John Paul II advanced this position while conducting the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986 at which 160 religious leaders gathered in fasting and prayer. Despite the advances in dialogue that this day represented, from the perspective of the Church the experience did not constitute “true” interfaith prayer since those prayers were directed toward different ideas of God or

³⁴ *Dialogue and Proclamation*, 9.

³⁵ *Dialogue and Proclamation*, 42.

higher spirit.³⁶ The Church asserts that people of differing religious backgrounds cannot validly create combined prayers as, when prayed, those prayers would not be directed to the same idea of God. In this way the Church does not recognize the authenticity of “interfaith” prayer.

Despite its reservations regarding interfaith prayer, the Catholic Church does not prohibit people of diverse faith backgrounds from praying in the same space. The Church therefore ultimately does appreciate other forms of prayer from people of diverse faiths. Catholics can learn from the Spirit in others from different faith backgrounds. The Church affirms that a Catholic can appreciate the discipline and reverence of Muslim prayer, or the joy of Sufi prayer, and transform his or her own prayer life. This is ultimately what the dialogue of religious experience means, allowing people of diverse religions to pray together in their own ways and traditions. Again, the Church holds that prayers that are different from Catholic practice can still be viewed as authentic as the Holy Spirit is present in all people. By observing and being open to the diverse prayers of others, the Church holds that people can enrich their own understandings of prayer and strengthen their faith. Ultimately this means that interfaith dialogue is seen by the Church as a positive and deepening experience.

V. The Importance of Sacred Architecture on Catholic Campuses

As the Catholic Church is supportive of interfaith dialogue, it is reasonable for Catholic colleges and universities to be similarly supportive of religious diversity and therefore provide worship space for students of varying faith backgrounds. The current issue of sacred space appropriation lies within the greater context of the history of chapel

³⁶ D'Costa, *The Catholic Church and the World Religions*, 25-26.

architecture on Catholic campuses, as the histories and renovations of these chapels parallel the institutions' shifting proclamation of Catholic identity in their built environments. Understanding the histories of these campus chapels provides insight into the changing priorities of worship space and the overall role of sacred architecture on Catholic college and university campuses.

The presence of a Catholic chapel on campus denotes the college or university's dedication to faith and its specific religious affiliation. Chapels communicate "religion's enduring significance to the university" and create an emotional appeal to one's spirituality.³⁷ In early college chapel designs, a chapel on a Catholic campus was to be used strictly for Catholic religious purposes—"for worship, meditation, and training in spiritual values."³⁸ Any other type of religious service was considered detrimental to the chapel's purpose. A chapel building was to be designed with impressive beauty and distinction, denoting its importance in the campus landscape. In addition to beauty, the chapel was also to be a place of "harmony and repose, of refuge from the hurry and distractions of campus life" in order to "invite the soul."³⁹ Such a space would become the spiritual center of the campus.

Chapels on Catholic college and university campuses have understandably needed renovations throughout the years for a variety of reasons, most notably to accommodate changes in the missions of Catholic colleges and universities in relation to Church teaching. An example of this is the history of the University of Dayton's Immaculate

³⁷ Margaret M. Grubiak, *White Elephants on Campus: The Decline of the University Chapel in America, 1920-1960*, (University of Notre Dame, 2014), 7.

³⁸ Jens Fredrick Larson and Archie Mac Innes Palmer, *Architectural Planning of the American College*, (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933), 98.

³⁹ Larson and Palmer, *Architectural Planning of the American College*, 101.

Conception Chapel. The chapel was built in 1869 while the University of Dayton was still St. Mary's Institute, an all boys' school dedicated to the mission of Mary.⁴⁰ Its consecration designated the chapel's purpose as a building where the liturgical services of the Catholic Church could be practiced. Its impressive size and situation on the campus allowed the chapel to be a central focal point not only for the school but also for the surrounding community, clearly emphasizing the institution's Catholic and Marianist identity. The chapel is the central axis that the university has grown around, not only in its geographic location but also in terms of its mission and spirituality.

Changes to the original structure of the Immaculate Conception Chapel began at the end of the nineteenth century. Additions to the chapel included the decoration of the interior in 1883, the expansion of the sacristy in 1907, the creation of confessionals in 1919, and further changes to the decoration in 1929 (figure 2). Beyond these smaller projects, major renovations of the chapel occurred in 1948-1949, 1971, and 2014-2015. The 1971 renovation was done in response to the promotion of anti-triumphal sacred architecture in the Second Vatican Council. The chapel's interior was reconfigured, new stained glass windows were installed, a smaller altar replaced the main and side altars, individual chairs replaced the pews, and the dome was painted blue (figure 3).⁴¹ With these modifications the University of Dayton transformed the chapel to accommodate the changing perspectives of the Catholic Church as outlined during Vatican II.

The changes to the chapel as a result of Vatican II served the community for over forty years, but the university eventually needed to implement further change. The

⁴⁰ "A Brief History of the Chapel," University of Dayton, <https://www.udayton.edu/ministry/renovation/history.php>

⁴¹ "A Brief History of the Chapel."

guidelines of the most recent renovation of 2014-2015 were to create a space that meets the requirements of contemporary liturgy, respect the historical significance of the space, create a more harmonious aesthetic in design elements, provide universal accessibility, and construct a LEED-certified project.⁴² The renovation addressed many needs, including seating capacity; sufficient space and quality design to allow for the complete celebration of the full range of liturgical actions called for by the Church; and aesthetics that enhance prayer through beauty, dignity and simplicity (figure 4).⁴³ These changes were made in reaction to advancements in technology in an increasingly modern society as well as to shifts in Catholic worship patterns.

As is evident by the Immaculate Conception Chapel, Catholic college and university chapels have a history of accommodation to changing their layouts and aesthetic designs for the benefit of a changing society. As a part of an evolving campus culture, today's Catholic campuses face a new challenge of religious diversity and interfaith dialogue. Since Catholic colleges and universities have exhibited the capability of change in its sacred structures, these institutions therefore are capable of future changes in their built environments to accommodate the diversifying student demography and to nurture interfaith dialogue.

VI. A Survey of the University of Dayton's Sacred Spaces

While it is evident that religious spaces hold great importance to Catholic college and university campuses, generally providing prominent architectural landmarks and symbols for a given institution's mission, spirituality, and community, the issue remains

⁴² LEED signifies Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and it is a third-party certification program that promotes "green" building design.

⁴³ "Vision Statement," University of Dayton, <https://www.udayton.edu/ministry/renovation/vision-statement.php>.

whether the addition of new spaces or the appropriation of existing spaces stands to augment or diminish this importance. A survey of the University of Dayton's current sacred spaces sheds light on how a sample Catholic university is approaching the increasing reality of religious diversity through its available sacred spaces.

With an increase in the number of international undergraduate students at the University of Dayton, religious diversity has increased as well. As an example, to reference just one group, there has been a significant increase in Muslim students. Between 2010 and 2015, the number of identified undergraduate Muslims has risen from 20 to 128. In this same period the total percentage of identified non-Catholic undergraduates rose from 20 to 27%.⁴⁴ While there is not a one-to-one correspondence between international students and religious diversity, it is arguable that a rising international student population does raise the prospect that religious diversity will also increase.

As the University of Dayton has a Catholic identity, the university has a majority of Catholic spaces. The main worship space is Immaculate Conception Chapel. There are also other smaller chapels on campus that are used for additional daily as well as special religious purposes. Small chapels exist in each student dormitory as well in some academic buildings. Like the main chapel, these smaller chapels have all of the necessities of a Catholic space: altar, an ambo, and religious imagery. One of these Catholic chapels, however, is also used for Protestant worship. What is significant is that a single space is being used for different religious purposes, even though Catholicism and Protestantism have some similarities as both fall under the larger identification of

⁴⁴ Banner ODS, *Fact Book 2010, 2015*, University of Dayton Office of the Registrar (2010; 2015), 2.

Christianity.

Other sacred, or broader meditational spaces on campus exist beyond the Catholic context. Serenity Pines is an outdoor space, secluded from view, that is intended for reflection (figure 5). While a statue of Mary is near its entrance, the statue is not actually a part of the Serenity Pines space. Aside from quotations from Father Chaminade, the founder of the Marianists, Catholic imagery is not present in any way. The result is that the space is open to any and all people, available for personal reflection, meditation, or prayer.

The most recent addition to the University of Dayton's sacred spaces is the Reflection Room in the 1700 Building on the university's satellite River Campus.⁴⁵ This space was created as a multi-faith room in which people of diverse religious backgrounds can pray, meditate, or worship in their own ways. The room is devoid of any religious symbols.

The University of Dayton has also created a general Prayer Room in its Rike Center that is open to all students but is primarily used by Muslim students (figure 6). For Muslim purposes there are rugs oriented in the direction of Mecca, a room divider for men and women, Arabic script on the wall, and books on the Muslim faith. Also included in this space is a set of special sinks for Muslims to perform ablution, a ritual cleansing of the body, before prayer.

The Prayer Room has undergone its own transitions as the University has adapted

⁴⁵ The Reflection Room was created and finished in 2015. Campus Ministry director Crystal Sullivan oversaw the designs for the space. This room was created because faculty and staff who worked in the Patterson Building could not easily get to the main campus for daily mass or prayer. The Reflection Room was designed so that the Patterson Building could have its own sacred space. The space allows for any person to use the space for personal, spiritual use.

to the changing needs specifically of its Muslim students. Even before its establishment, and in specific response to the needs of Muslim students, the University of Dayton took several actions with regard to providing available space for Muslim prayer. Around 1988, the University set aside a small space set in the lower level of Founders Hall specifically for Muslim students. While this was a modest space, it served its function since the Muslim student population was much smaller than it is at present. By 2007, the Muslim student population had grown considerably with the result that the University needed to take new action.⁴⁶

To accommodate this increased number of Muslim students, a second prayer space was created in the lower level of Alumni Hall. That space was available for use twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.⁴⁷ While the creation of that new space alleviated the immediate issue of limited space, there arose new problems. In that space there were no adequate places to perform ablution, and this deficiency required students to go to a nearby bathroom in a situation that was messy, crowded, and inconvenient. There was also no room divider to separate men and women during prayer. Typically in a mosque and in times of prayer, Muslim women should be out of the sight of men.⁴⁸ This separation preserves the dignity of women so they can comfortably move through the different prayer postures during *salat*.⁴⁹ While a partition is not required for prayer, some

⁴⁶ 2007 was the year in which key card access was implemented for the residence halls, Founders Hall being one of them. Because of this, Muslim students were not always able to gain access into the building to go to their sacred prayer space.

⁴⁷ Crystal Sullivan, Interview by author, Dayton, OH, July 23, 2014.

⁴⁸ There are different ways to achieve this separation. Screens can be used to separate the two groups, women can sit behind the men, or women can pray in a completely separate room.

⁴⁹ Robert E. Van Voorst, "Encountering Islam: The Straight Path of One God", In *Relg*, (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2013), 316.

women feel more comfortable going through the different postures of prayer without having to worry about the immediate presence of men.

For a few years, Muslim students conducted daily prayer in the Alumni Hall space, but that space itself soon proved too small to accommodate a growing population of Muslim students. This was especially problematic for the Friday *jumah* prayer at which greater numbers of students sought a place to pray. This Friday prayer was eventually conducted in Kennedy Union or, on occasion, in the Women's Center in Alumni Hall. Then in 2011, renovations were being made in the Rike Center to accommodate a move to that facility of the University's Center for International Programs. It was at this time that ablution sinks were installed in two rooms that could be set-aside for Friday prayer. These renovated rooms, which together formed the collective space of the eventual Prayer Room, would be used mainly for classes and meetings during the week, but on Fridays Muslim students were able to use the rooms to conduct their requisite prayer.⁵⁰

Even though after 2011 both designated and occasional prayer space of a larger nature was made available for Muslim students in various locations on campus, the population of Muslim students continued to increase and create demand for more space to accommodate prayer. Eventually the Muslim Student Association, a group supported by Campus Ministry, asked for more space, and since Campus Ministry was already planning to create an official prayer space, the students' wish was in effect granted.⁵¹ In

⁵⁰ Sullivan, Interview.

⁵¹ Several groups within the University of Dayton made the transformation of this space possible. There was collaboration among the Office of the Rector, the Center for International Programs, Campus Ministry, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of the President. While the initial creation of the Prayer Room meant sacrificing classroom

January 2014, the two rooms in the Rike Center that had earlier been made available for occasional prayer were officially joined and designated officially as a prayer room.

Notably it was declared that this space would be available for use by people of all faiths, all days of the week. Further changes to this space were made in the spring of 2015.

Small renovations were made to make the space more functional as a worship space and to reduce the intrusive visual presence of elements like white boards and stark white walls that revealed the space's former purpose as a classroom and conference room. A permanent rug was installed that has rows oriented toward Mecca, the walls were painted, and hooks and shelves were added to allow for more storage during prayer.

Even though the Rike Center room is identified as a Prayer Room, evidence of its larger dedicated purpose in support of interfaith worship is found on a sign that Campus Ministry installed at the entrance of the space. The sign states: "We hope all will find here a space for worship, private prayer and reflection, meditation, and holy reading...Please be respectful of the traditions of others when using this space." This space was thus created as an interfaith space to accommodate all students of any and all faiths. Notwithstanding this stated intention, Campus Ministry clearly understood that the room would be used mainly as a Muslim prayer space.⁵² The reason why the room was not specifically designated as a Muslim prayer space is because Campus Ministry did

space, the parties involved agreed that this space was worth the sacrifice as it meant giving a sense of comfort and a signal of welcome to students beyond the Catholic faith.

⁵² The room's upkeep is overseen by Campus Ministry, and there is also a Prayer Room Advisory Committee consisting of students, faculty, and staff who meet and discuss the continued needs of the space.

not want it to seem as though it were favoring the Muslim students over students of other non-Catholic faiths.⁵³

While the Rike Center Prayer Room is an important space for students on campus, and it is certainly more suitable than what was available to Muslim students in the past, there remain certain problems with the room. One of these is the overall aesthetic of the space. Even though there are multiple aspects of the room that make it suitable for prayer, the space lacks a quality of permanence and seems as though it is still undergoing modification; it looks part classroom, part prayer room, and not wholly one or the other. To create a truly dedicated atmosphere for prayer, more attention would need to be given to the design of the room so that it could serve as a permanent sacred space.

To transform a secular space into a sacred space, especially one that communicates permanence and dedication, there should be the possibility that those who enter experience a sense of awe in the physical space itself.⁵⁴ For example, when entering a dedicated cathedral or mosque, there is a clear sense that one is immersed in the purposefully sacred. In this circumstance a person experiences an important transition from the outside, secular world to the interior, sacred environment, all of this being done in no small measure by architectural intention and directed design. While a sacred place is in some respects an intermediate space in which people can connect the earthly and the spiritual realms, it needs to be a space that is clearly recognizable in earthly terms as distinct and special.⁵⁵ Again, to create a shared sense of awe in such a space, there must

⁵³ Sullivan, Interview.

⁵⁴ Karla Johnson, "The Multi-Faith Center: Practical Considerations for an Important Campus Facility", *Planning for Higher Education*, Vol. 41, (2012), 301.

⁵⁵ Thomas Barrie, "Sacred Space and the Mediating Roles of Architecture," *European Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2012), 80.

be a clear, intended design. Attention to the lighting or even the use of a high ceiling can help inspire a feeling of the sacred.⁵⁶ Both natural and artificial lighting, when positioned with purpose, can benefit a space. Highlighting certain architectural features through light can emphasize a room's beauty and inspire contemplation and prayer. When a sacred space is forced into an old classroom or office for the sake of available space, wherein the space's former use can still be detected, a feeling of the sacred is diminished. Reminders of the secular world distract the senses from the spiritual world.

The major problem with the Rike Center prayer space lies in the actual purpose of the room. This space is intended to be an interfaith space, a place in which any person of any religious background can go for prayer or meditation. Yet one logically asks where is the interfaith space in this space? All of the features of the room make it dominantly a Muslim prayer space and not even a permanent or wholly adequate one at that. There are no other representations of or accommodations to different faiths in the space other than Islam; indeed, the presence of such representations might well diminish the effectiveness of the space for certain religious groups, particularly the Muslims. And since the space is so dominantly Islamic, students of different faiths are unable to recognize or effectively use the space as their own. While partially conducive to Muslim practices, the room lacks an all-faith encompassing quality.

It is clear that the University of Dayton has not yet established a clear and unambiguous way of accommodating the spiritual lives of its students of different faiths. This is understandable. Such a complex change to the campus climate and built environment takes time to develop. Art and architecture are not always made fully

⁵⁶ Johnson, "The Multi-Faith Center", 301.

formed or perfect; they are more often the result of change, compromises, and developmental processes. The Rike Center Prayer Room is demonstrative of such compromises, and as such it remains in a state of transition and located between two ideas and ideals: a prayer space for Muslims and an interfaith room for all faiths. For further transformations to occur the University of Dayton must look to other examples of multi-faith sacred spaces.

VII. Diverse Sacred Spaces at Other Catholic Campuses

To date the University of Dayton has responded to changing student demographics by making worship space available for its non-Catholic students. In order to determine where the university stands in the larger arena of interfaith accommodation, it is appropriate to study how other Catholic institutions have approached similar situations in the past and at present. In addition to UD, this research surveys Loyola University in Chicago, the University of Notre Dame, Georgetown University, and Villanova University. Since the main focus of this thesis is the University of Dayton, these additional universities were chosen to survey because their similarity to Dayton in their numbers of full-time undergraduate students as well as, by contrast, their varying Catholic affiliations.

Loyola University is a Jesuit institution. Having an undergraduate population of approximately 11,000, Loyola University enjoys far greater religious diversity than the University of Dayton. About 48% of Loyola's identified undergraduates are non-Catholics. Loyola's campus ministry offices exist in Loyola's student union, and it is in those offices that there is also a variety of prayer rooms. As almost half of Loyola's student population is of different religious backgrounds than Catholicism, Loyola's

prayer rooms act as a form of accommodation for those students to fulfill their religious needs.

In Loyola's student union, there exists a Hindu prayer room, a Jewish prayer room, a Muslim prayer room, and an Arab Christian prayer room (figure 7). These places are used for general fellowship and prayer. The decorative elements of the Hindu, Jewish, and Arab Christian spaces are nonspecific to these religious traditions. With neutral colored walls and carpets, these spaces hold couches and chairs, prayer pillows, storage space, and even minimal kitchen utilities. It appears as though the student groups who use these rooms have been free to decorate as they see fit, adding details such as candles, religious imagery, and tapestries to accentuate their religious suitability. The Muslim prayer room is equipped with even more specific elements that are necessary for Muslim prayer. The room has carpets oriented toward Mecca, a room divider so that the men and women can pray separately, and sinks for ablution.

Beyond the student union at Loyola, the institution has other spaces for diverse worship. There is a general university space called Palm Court (figure 8). Palm Court is a multi-purpose room that can be used for conferences or meetings, but it is also a space in which Protestant groups come to pray or be in fellowship. This demonstrates how Loyola University is allotting certain general spaces for spiritual use. Also as Loyola is situated in the culturally diverse city of Chicago, students have access to official religious spaces like mosques, temples, and chapels in the surrounding area, but this opportunity, however valuable, slightly removed the obligation of the university to provide either specific religious or interfaith spaces on its campus. Loyola is obviously aware of its religious diversity and has worked to accommodate its students. The university has

provided separate spaces for separate student groups, giving them what they need without compromising the institution's Catholic identity or modifying the Catholic use of its traditional spaces.

The University of Notre Dame is a Holy Cross Catholic institution. Of Notre Dame's approximate 8,000 undergraduates, only 17% are non-Catholics.⁵⁷ Notre Dame has plenty of space for its Catholic population. There are over sixty chapels on its campus. In addition, there is also a very Catholic sacred space that is essential to the Notre Dame campus: the Grotto (figure 9). The Grotto is an outdoor place of prayer in which there is a statue of Mary, an altar, and an open space for people to gather.

Regardless of the dominant Catholic presence at Notre Dame, the institution has space for students of other faiths to go for prayer. In the campus ministry building, there is a Meditation Room (figure 10). This is essentially a multi-faith space, being a neutral space with a soothing fountain at its entrance. While the fountain can be regarded as conducive for meditative purposes, it also doubles as a feature that allows people to practice ablution. Additionally, there are pillows and rugs that can be used for prayer or meditation. The walls are bare except for a large removable cross on the main wall. This cross is the only religious symbol in the room. Instead of creating separate spaces for each represented religion on its campus, Notre Dame has created one space that can be used for multiple purposes by people of diverse backgrounds.

Georgetown University is a Jesuit Catholic university. Of the roughly 7,500 undergraduate students at Georgetown, about 50% are non-Catholics.⁵⁸ In its campus ministry, Georgetown not only has Catholic and Christian directors but also a Muslim

⁵⁷ Pricilla Wong, Interview by author, South Bend, IN, July 11, 2014.

⁵⁸ Brian Lewin, Interview by author, Georgetown, D.C., June 30, 2014.

imam, a Jewish rabbi, an Orthodox Christian chaplain, and an interfaith coordinator.

Georgetown has similarly dedicated several spaces to multiple faiths. In a sophomore residence hall, there is the St. William Chapel, which is a Catholic chapel, but Protestants also use the space for their services (figure 11). Directly beneath the St. William Chapel is the Crypt Chapel, also a Catholic space, but it too is used by another religious group. In this case it occasionally doubles as a space for Orthodox Christian use (figure 12). Toward this double purpose the space is adorned with icons that are used in Eastern Orthodox worship.

While Georgetown has repurposed or augmented several of its Catholic spaces for other religious uses, the university has also allotted more general spaces for other religions. Makom is a multipurpose space on campus that is located in the student union (figure 13). This structure is used for Jewish student group meetings, Shabbat, social events, and cultural programs central to the needs of Georgetown's Jewish community. Nonetheless, there are hardly any visual clues within Makom that denote that this is a Jewish prayer space, but Jewish spaces are typically not reliant on overt ornamentation. What is important is that this space includes multiple chairs and tables that can be used as needed, books about Judaism, and plenty of versatile space. This space is primarily used for Jewish purposes, but Makom is also used as a general multipurpose room for interfaith group meetings and even Hindu Puja.

Georgetown University also has a Muslim prayer room for which there has been a conscious effort to decorate the space as a Muslim space through the painting of the walls, a rug oriented toward Mecca, calligraphic script, and an architectural niche (figure 14). This space, however, does not have an ablution sink for cleansing. What is notable

about this space is that the university created this room with an intention of Muslim prayer, whereas the other spaces are repurposed Catholic spaces.

Finally Georgetown University has the John Main Center that was established in 2005. The Main Center hosts a space for meditation and inter-religious dialogue. This space is located in Remembrance Hall, the oldest building on campus, and the second level of the building is open throughout the week for private meditation as well as for group meditation as scheduled.⁵⁹ This meditation space has bare walls, windows for natural light, and a carpeted floor. The John Main Center also has meditation pillows for use in the space.

Georgetown University's campus proves to be diverse not only in its student body but also in its available spaces for different religious groups and for interfaith dialogue. Georgetown has both repurposed Catholic spaces and created new multipurpose spaces. The university clearly has been accommodating religious diversity by providing various spaces for worship and hosting a variety of religious persons on staff.

Villanova University is an Augustinian Catholic institution. At Villanova there are about 6,000 undergraduate students, and roughly 25% of these are non-Catholics.⁶⁰ Villanova has a variety of Catholic spaces, ranging from small chapels to outdoor spaces, but there are also spaces for students of a non-Catholic background to use for worship or fellowship. There is a community room in Villanova's campus ministry building that is used for group meetings and Protestant services (figure 15). While there is Catholic

⁵⁹ "John Main Center," Georgetown University, <http://johnmaincenter.georgetown.edu/about.html>.

⁶⁰ Joseph Calderone, Interview by author, Philadelphia, PA, July 1, 2014.

imagery in the room's stained glass windows, the space itself was never a designated space for worship.

Villanova University also has two small spaces for Muslim students to pray. One of these is in an academic building, and it used to be a used as a classroom (figure 16). The only element that denotes the space as a place for prayer is in the presence of a few prayer rugs. Otherwise, the room is empty. Students must use a public bathroom down the hall for ablution. In addition, there is a corner sectioned off for prayer in Villanova's international student room (figure 17). In this corner are, again, a few prayer rugs.

Besides these spaces, Villanova like Loyola University relies on surrounding religious communities and spaces in Philadelphia to offer worship space to students who do not have space on campus. While Villanova supports an interfaith coalition and diverse student religious groups and even has a campus minister for ecumenical and interfaith outreach, there has not been action to intentionally repurpose or create religiously diverse spaces on campus. In this way, Villanova does not place importance on its campus' religious spaces but rather places emphasis on offered services.

Religious pluralism on Catholic campuses is still a relatively new topic. The way in which the University of Dayton and these other institutions are handling this new diversity is now at a stage of preliminary action. The current solution is to make a variety of separate sacred spaces designated for specific groups, catering to multi-faith needs and not necessarily to interreligious purposes. With its Prayer Room, the University of Dayton is attempting to make a space that is open to all, but aesthetically the space has been given over to Muslim needs, unintentionally excluding those of different faiths. Loyola, Georgetown, and Villanova universities have appropriated several diverse sacred

spaces, but again, the specification of each space creates a divide amongst each of the religious groups, providing accommodation but not necessarily an opportunity for interfaith dialogue. Notre Dame's Meditation Room comes closest to an ideal interfaith space. Aesthetically, the room has not been given over to any specific religious imagery or needs, making it open to all.

These universities have the opportunity to work toward continued change by transforming their campuses into truly interfaith campuses. This would require the creation of new, intentional spaces that could be visually welcoming to any religious group and that could be used for interfaith-based programming such as retreats, community gatherings, or colloquia. In the creation of such spaces, Catholic universities should avoid the presence of specific religious imagery and architecture to be accommodating to all as well as provide a new environment that would be dedicated to crossing boundaries of diversity to create an inclusive, open, and ultimately innovative sacred space that can be supported by the Catholic perspective of interfaith dialogue.

VIII. The Rothko Chapel as New Model for “Interfaith” Space on Catholic

Campuses

In view of the challenges discussed above and those within the Catholic Church with regard to interfaith dialogue, the Rothko Chapel can provide a model for the future imagining, construction, and use of interfaith spaces on Catholic college and university campuses. This is so because of the Rothko Chapel's own evolutionary history that provides an important link to Catholicism, to Vatican II, and even to a Catholic university campus. This layered past has demonstrated the flexibility of this sacred space, and the

Rothko Chapel's continued development in its programming can parallel a Catholic institution's potential for future accommodation and furtherance of interfaith dialogue.

The Rothko Chapel is currently aligned with interfaith dialogue as it is open to people of any or of no faiths. The chapel's original intention, however was actually to serve as a Catholic chapel at the University of St. Thomas, a Catholic university in Houston, Texas.⁶¹ This original identification with a Catholic university, and the steady evolution of the chapel into an interfaith space make the Rothko Chapel a viable model for the promise of interfaith dialogue on a contemporary Catholic campus.

The history of the Rothko Chapel began with the involvement in Houston of John and Dominique de Menil with a local Catholic institution, the University of St. Thomas. The involvement of the de Menils with the University of St. Thomas occurred at a significant time in history as the 1960s were the golden years for higher education in the United States, and Catholic schools flourished as Vatican II was opening windows in the Church.⁶² The University of St. Thomas was established in 1947 as a Basilian institution. In the 1950s, St. Thomas professor Father Edward Sullivan approached the de Menils to become involved with the University's new building program.⁶³ The couple agreed and suggested that the institution engage internationally known architect Philip Johnson to design the campus landscape. The de Menils agreed, and they themselves engaged Johnson to create a master plan for the University that he completed in 1957. The de

⁶¹ The University of St. Thomas is a private institution that is dedicated to the liberal arts and the tradition of Catholic higher education. The Basilian Fathers founded the University in 1947.

⁶² W. Andrew Achenbaum, "The Spiritual Landscapes of Dominique de Menil," *Journal of Religion, Spirituality, and Aging*, (2009), 151.

⁶³ Susan J. Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel: An Act of Faith*, (Houston: The Rothko Chapel, 1989), 41.

Menils involvement with the campus did not end there. Throughout the 1950s and the 1960s, the couple gave funds for teaching positions in French, economics and classics, helped recruit faculty, and underwrote the art department. The de Menils were heavily involved and interested in developing the art department, and they appointed their friend Jermayne MacAgy to become its founding chairman in 1959.⁶⁴ Working with MacAgy, the de Menils were originally interested in creating a university museum. However, MacAgy died in 1964, and due to the sadness felt by this loss, the de Menils turned to their faith for comfort and decided to place their focus on the creation of a chapel for the university.

Like the university as a whole, the architecture of the chapel was assigned to Philip Johnson with paintings for its interior commissioned from Mark Rothko.⁶⁵ The de Menils wanted a contemporary painter to be involved with the project because they wanted art and religion to reunite for a unified purpose to foster spirituality. With the support of the de Menils, Johnson and Rothko worked together to create a cohesive environment.⁶⁶

The plan for the chapel transformed as Johnson and Rothko collaborated to make a contemporary Catholic space. Johnson wanted the chapel to dominate the campus landscape with regard to its physical height and its placement on the campus mall; he

⁶⁴ Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 42.

⁶⁵ Rothko was chosen for the project after the de Menils had seen and appreciated his work for the Seagram Building in New York; Rothko also enjoyed a friendship with Jermayne MacAgy. The de Menils officially reached out to Rothko on April 17, 1964. (Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 42-43.)

⁶⁶ The de Menils were followers of the *Art Sacre* movement within the Catholic Church, led by Dominican Father Marie-Alain Couturier. Couturier believed that contemporary art would help to regenerate the Church spiritually. (Sheldon Nobelman, *The Rothko Chapel Paintings*, 34.)

further wanted the chapel to be positioned at the end of the mall so that all buildings would point to the chapel. Johnson envisioned a square building surmounted by a tall pyramid.⁶⁷ Rothko, however, suggested an octagonal shape for the interior as such octagonal, central plans were used in Early Christian architecture.⁶⁸ Rothko may also have been responding to the symbolism of the number eight within the Catholic Church, as eight represents the Final Judgment and paradise. Additionally, beyond symbolism, an open, octagonal plan would also facilitate the participation of the audience during mass, a feature that was soon to be promoted by Vatican II.⁶⁹

Johnson conceded to Rothko's octagonal plan, but the two men often disagreed on details for the overall design. It became clear that the architect and the artist had two different ideas for the chapel design, and ultimately, the de Menils leaned toward Rothko's plans as Johnson's vision for a grand building did not coincide with the "new anti-triumphal stance that the Catholic Church had repeatedly affirmed at the Second Vatican Council."⁷⁰ Ultimately Johnson withdrew from the chapel project in 1967, and architects Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry took his place, keeping the floor plan that Johnson and Rothko had created together.⁷¹ The plan would include the agreed-upon octagonal shape with addition features of a northern apse, a narthex for entry, and two vestries.⁷²

⁶⁷ Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 79.

⁶⁸ Rothko was inspired by the old baptistery in Torcello, Italy (Dore Ashton, *About Rothko*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 171).

⁶⁹ Dominique de Menil, "The Rothko Chapel," *Art Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 3, (1971), 249.

⁷⁰ Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 82.

⁷¹ Lee Seldes, *The Legacy of Mark Rothko*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 63.

⁷² de Menil, "The Rothko Chapel," 249.

In the middle of the planning stages, the University of St. Thomas questioned the overall project. Quite simply, the institution began to feel that it would not have the resources to care properly for the chapel as the university would eventually be responsible for the preservation of the structure and Rothko's works. The de Menils understood the University's concerns, but they still wished to finish the project. Therefore, in 1969 the de Menils approached the Institute of Religion and Human Development, located in Houston's Texas Medical Center, to suggest that the chapel plans could continue with this new affiliation.

This was a significant step toward the eventual interfaith nature of the Rothko Chapel as the Institute of Religion and Human Development is an ecumenical institution devoted to the clinical aspects of pastoral training.⁷³ The connection to this institution was not random as John de Menil had a friendship with its president and was then also serving on the Institute's board. The offer was officially accepted in 1969.

Instead of being placed at the University of St. Thomas, the chapel would be built under the auspices of the Institute of Religion and Human Development in the neighborhood west of the University of St. Thomas, an area that is now considered Houston's museum district. This neighborhood was chosen because there was not enough available space to build the chapel on the Texas Medical Center property. Conveniently, the de Menils also owned the plot where the Rothko Chapel would be built. The area was deemed close enough to the Texas Medical Center so that the chapel could be used by the Institute of Religion and Human Development, and it was also still close enough to the University of St. Thomas. This change in affiliation ultimately led to

⁷³ Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 106.

the chapel's decidedly ecumenical purposes at present. The octagonal shape remained as did Rothko's murals, which were completed in 1967 two years before this change of affiliation (figure 18).

The Rothko Chapel was dedicated in February 1971. Members from the art world as well as from different religious organizations were present for the chapel's opening. This latter group even included a Cardinal from Rome, who served as a Papal emissary, several Bishops representing both Protestant and Greek Orthodox churches, a Muslim Imam, and Jewish Rabbis.⁷⁴ It was therefore made clear at its very opening that the Rothko Chapel would be welcoming to people of multiple faiths. Indeed, in her opening address at the chapel's dedication, Dominique de Menil stated:

[This Chapel] is rooted in the growing awareness that love and the search for truth are unifying principles. It is rooted in the growing hope that communities who worship God should find in their common aspiration the possibility of dialogue with one another in a spirit of respect and love. This hope, this nostalgia, explains the Chapel, as it explains many spontaneous initiatives of brotherhood coming up all over the world today among religious people.⁷⁵

Although Catholic, the de Menils were personal supporters of ecumenism. They had been inspired in this commitment by Yves Congar⁷⁶, a Dominican theologian who was a pioneer in advancing contemporary ecumenical theology in the twentieth century. Again,

⁷⁴ Seldes, *The Legacy of Mark Rothko*, 139.

⁷⁵ Dominique de Menil, *The Rothko Chapel Writings on Art and the Threshold of the Divine*, (Houston: The Rothko Chapel, 2010), 21.

⁷⁶ Father Congar was born in France in 1904. He completed his studies at a Dominican seminary and became a priest at Le Saulchoir. At that point he devoted himself to studying ecumenism and the divide between all Christians. In 1937, he published his book, later translated into English as, *Divided Christendom: Principles of a Catholic "Ecumenism"*. Congar comments on the necessity of understanding and respect. Later in life, he was a part of the theological commission that prepared historical texts for the bishops to consider during the Second Vatican Council. Congar's influence aided the writing of *Nostra Aetate*. His work has had great impact on the ecumenical movement within Catholicism. (J.P. Jossua, "The Ecumenical Developments of Father Congar", *Cristianesimo nella Storia* (2014))

in her address at the chapel's dedication, Dominique de Menil said, "In January 1936, Father Yves Congar delivered eight lectures on ecumenism that marked the beginning of his ecumenical career. I had the privilege to hear him, and it marked me for life."⁷⁷

The affiliation of the Rothko Chapel with the Institute of Religion and Human Development and the Texas Medical Center was short lived. The break with these institutions occurred in 1972, just one year after the chapel's dedication. The Institute's trustees and its administration agreed that the Rothko Chapel should become autonomous, allowing its potential to expand in the community in and beyond Houston. Therefore, in October 1972, the Institute's Board of Trustees approved a resolution transferring the title of the chapel to the Rothko Chapel, Incorporated.⁷⁸ In the incorporation charter, the Rothko Chapel is defined as:

...a place of meditation and prayer for people to gather and explore spiritual bonds common to all, to discuss human problems of world-wide interest, and also share a spiritual experience, each loyal to his belief, each respectful of the beliefs of others.⁷⁹

Since its incorporation in 1972, the Rothko Chapel has thus been a space open to people of all religions but belonging to none. Its eventual purpose could not of been imagined at the time of its commission in 1964, beginning as a Catholic chapel for a Catholic university. However, transformations did occur, and it is in that evolutionary history that has made the Rothko Chapel a space that can testify to the potential for changing purposes in sacred architecture, both on and off Catholic college and university campuses.

⁷⁷ Dominique de Menil, *The Rothko Chapel Writings*, 20.

⁷⁸ Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 108.

⁷⁹ Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 108.

The Rothko Chapel's artistic design, although initially conceived with Catholic intentions, wholly satisfy various religious purposes, making it universal to the human spirit and inclusive to all. The space has an octagonal shape with fourteen of Rothko's paintings. There is a dark stone ground, neutral colored walls, a number of benches that can be placed in or out of the space dependent upon worshiping needs, and a muted skylight to let in natural light to the space. The plainness of structure allows the visitor's focus to be on the expansive paintings and on the act of worshiping or reflection. Since there are no forms or images present, the space becomes neutral to any and all religions. The skylight is the only portal in which an element from the outside world enters the space. The light changes as the weather and the seasons change, creating different views and experiences of the paintings as varying light alters the appearance of color.⁸⁰ Every element and detail of this space, from its lighting to its simplicity, was consciously created in order to nurture spirituality and reflection.

The Rothko Chapel has nineteen place-making patterns, defined as spatial or physical characteristics that create a sense of place, that contribute to its overall sacred design: 1. Center; 2. Bounding; 3. Direction; 4. Descent; 5. Ascent; 6. Passage; 7. Numeric order; 8. Geometric order; 9. Spatial order; 10. Anthropomorphic order; 11. Ordered nature; 12. Celestial order; 13. Differentiating boundaries; 14. Ordered views; 15. Materiality; 16. Elementals; 17. Light; 18. Ceremonial order; 19. Unity.⁸¹ The chapel exhibits these various patterns, and there are select characteristics that are significantly

⁸⁰ James E. Breslin, "Mark Rothko's Chapel in Houston," *The Threepenny Review*, No. 55, (1993), 27.

⁸¹ Arsenios Rodrigues, "Developing the Pattern Matrix as a Guide for Creating the Extraordinary in Place: A Study of Phenomenological Differences in Design Principles between the Sacred and Secular in Architecture," *Design Principles and Practices: An International Journal*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, (2010), 114.

noticed throughout the space and that contribute to its universal feeling of spirituality. The octagonal plan, while conducive to and common in Christian worship, creates a centering experience for all. The eight walls create a surrounding boundary from the outside world, evoking a feeling of peaceful containment. People are cut off from the world and its suffocating multiplicity, able to wander in the infinite.⁸² With the repetition of the walls and paintings, there is also a cyclic process of movement. The symmetry of the space creates a sense of direction and axiality. The earth-toned materials, like the dark floor and neutral walls, contribute to a feeling of grounding and materiality as though the visitor is connected to the earth. This grounding is also the experience of descent. The opposite feeling of ascent occurs with the presence of the skylight. Natural light floods into the room, moves down the sloped ceiling, and creates an ambient atmosphere. The oculus also creates an opening to the sky above, drawing the eye upwards. This play of light creates a celestial feeling. Overall the space is unified. All components work together to create one cohesive, sacred space. These characteristics demonstrate how a physical space can feel spiritual and sacred without specific religious imagery. The intentional quality of the chapel's design thus allows for people of any or no religious tradition to experience a sense of the sacred. As the space evokes a universal feeling of spirituality, the chapel is a suitable place of worship for people of any faith, making it conducive to interfaith dialogue.

Not only does the overall design of the Rothko Chapel contribute to the feeling of sacredness, but Rothko's paintings play a significant role in the creation of spirituality in the space. Each of the eight walls holds a different painting or grouping of paintings. In

⁸² Wessel Stoker, "The Rothko Chapel Paintings and the 'urgency of the transcendent experience,'" *International Journal for Philosophy and Religion*, Vol. 64 (2008), 90.

total Rothko produced fourteen works for this space. There are three triptychs and five single paintings. All of the paintings have varying dark hues, ranging from black to maroon to plum.⁸³ Unlike Rothko's past work, with their round-edged rectangles seemingly floating in the color fields on the canvas, these paintings have hard and straight-lined edges that create more definition and clear boundaries within each work.⁸⁴

These paintings were created on a large, monumental scale. The largest painting is approximately eleven feet wide and fifteen feet tall. The large-scaled paintings "evoke an intense understanding of one's own smallness in the 'actual' space in the viewer, who feels like a small speck in an immeasurable cosmic space."⁸⁵ The size of these paintings forces the viewer to stare straight into the void of the beyond. This experience of smallness contributes to a universal feeling of spirituality, further adding to the Rothko Chapel's ability to be a successful interfaith space.

Even though each painting in the chapel is unique, the pieces complement each other and are hung in a symmetrical manner. There are two groups of paintings in the chapel: seven black rectangular paintings and seven monochromes. Within these two groups, there are also two different types of hanging on each of the eight walls: three groupings of triptychs and five that are each on their own walls. There is a triptych of monochrome paintings on the north wall as well as two black triptychs on the east and west walls. The two triptychs on the east and west walls are slightly different than the one on the north wall for that the central painting of these two triptychs are slightly elevated above the adjacent paintings. The elevation of the central painting suggests an

⁸³ Steven Johnson, "Rothko Chapel and Rothko's Chapel," *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1994), 11.

⁸⁴ Breslin, "Mark Rothko's Chapel in Houston," 26.

⁸⁵ Stoker, "The Rothko Chapel Paintings," 93.

abstract form of a cross. While this is logical for the Chapel's beginnings as a Catholic space, this triptych's form also suggests a feeling of universal spirituality for its upward movement or ascent. There are four paintings on the four diagonal walls of the octagon, each being different monochromes. Finally, the canvas on the south wall is a black field painting.⁸⁶ The dark tones of these fourteen paintings create great contrast against the lighter walls of the structure.

These large canvases hold no forms or shapes. The rigid borders of each painting enclose the colors within each individual canvas. The mere size of these paintings encompasses the viewer, creating a dark and endless space. As a viewer attempts to focus on a single painting, a person cannot help but see the adjacent pieces in his or her peripheral vision.⁸⁷ No matter to which wall the viewer looks, no matter to which way the viewer turns or moves about within the space, the dark and deep colors of Rothko's paintings are unavoidable. The viewer in the space is constantly surrounded by the work of art. Rothko's paintings "need to be seen not only in themselves but also in their mutual coherence...they form a whole, an interactive system."⁸⁸ Visitors can neither individualize nor unify the paintings, and because of this viewers lose their ability to command the space in the typical viewer-art object relationship.

The encounter with transcendence is not found in specific religious symbolism in the Rothko Chapel but rather with the sublime quality of the whole. The space and paintings of the chapel evoke the human experience in terms of one's self-capacity to go deeper. The arrangement and size of the paintings can make the viewer understand his or

⁸⁶ Breslin, "Mark Rothko's Chapel in Houston," 26.

⁸⁷ Breslin, "Mark Rothko's Chapel in Houston," 27.

⁸⁸ Stoker, "The Rothko Chapel Paintings," 92.

her own smallness in the actual space as well as within the greater universe, evoking a finite experience in the midst of the transcendent. Rothko's focus on the universality of the human experience allows for people of all or no faiths to join together and experience the spiritual in one unified space. For this reason Rothko's paintings, although originally intended for a Catholic space, now effectively serve the chapel's interfaith purposes.

Since its opening in 1972, the Chapel has provided diverse materials and programs to engage audiences intellectually, artistically, and spiritually.⁸⁹ For individual purposes, there are benches for people to sit on and reflect, but there are also prayer rugs and pillows available for use. The chapel also provides books, both religious and secular, available for use inside the space.⁹⁰ The chapel is therefore purposefully open in design and inclusive and flexible as possible in its appointments, all of which encourages multi-faith worship and interfaith dialogue.

The Rothko Chapel is also available for diverse programming. Groups can request that private and specific services be held in the space. The chapel prefers to have these special services held in the evening, after the chapel is officially closed, so as not to limit the openness of the space. Approved events include weddings, memorial services, baptisms, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and other events ranging from Catholic Ash Wednesday

⁸⁹ Visitors come to the Rothko Chapel from all parts of the world. According to the Community Engagement Director, the chapel receives more international visitors than domestic visitors. Of those international countries, the chapel receives many visitors from Mexico and France. (Ashley Clemmer Hoffman, interview by author, Houston, Texas, July 17, 2015.)

⁹⁰ Holy books available in the Rothko Chapel are: Kordeh Avesta, Torah, Bible, Quran, Bhagavad-Gita, Principal Upanishads, Tripitaka: The Lotus Sutra, and Baha'i Prayers and Meditations. Other secular books include those published by the Rothko Chapel as well as select books on art and architecture.

service to a Jewish Shabbat.⁹¹ Along with these private services, the chapel also hosts around sixty public programs each year. These programs include, but are not limited to, monthly meditations, music performances, and an annual interfaith Thanksgiving celebration. The importance of this diverse programming is that the chapel truly provides an open and welcoming space for worship and dialogue.

Not only is the Rothko Chapel dedicated to contemplation, but the space also is committed to action. As stated in the chapel's website, "Action takes the form of supporting human rights, and thus the chapel has become a rallying place for all people concerned with peace, freedom, and social justice throughout the world."⁹² To this end, the chapel has housed different colloquia to further dialogue on interfaith and human rights issues.⁹³ Participation in these colloquia has included people from various countries and cultures, creating dialogue from multiple perspectives. The chapel also promotes peace and understanding through its recognition of peacemakers. In 1981, the chapel initiated human rights awards for commitment to truth and freedom, and in 1986 the administration of the chapel created a second type of award to honor the spirit of Oscar Romero. A third type of award, the Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize, was initiated in 1991 on the chapel's twentieth anniversary. Through these events and

⁹¹ Hoffman, Interview.

⁹² "About", Rothko Chapel, last modified 2015, http://www.rothkochapel.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=31.

⁹³ The Rothko Chapel has hosted six different colloquia since its opening in 1972. These six are: "Traditional Modes of Contemplation and Action," *July 22-30, 1973*, "Human Rights/Human Reality," *December 8-9, 1973*, "Toward a New Strategy for Development," *February 3-5, 1977*, "Islam: Spiritual Message and Quest for Justice," *October 21-25, 1981*, "Ethnicities and Nations: Processes of Inter-Ethnic Relations in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and The Pacific," *October 28-30, 1983*, "Christianity and Churches on the Eve of Vatican II," *January 12-15, 1991*.

awards, the chapel has brought to Houston leaders like Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and the Dalai Lama. The Rothko Chapel, therefore, provides a space for people within and without the Houston community to come together, despite their differences, and to work toward a common good.

Clearly, the Rothko Chapel is more than just a chapel or even an art museum as it has been transformed in affiliation and function beyond its original Catholic association and its more famous identification as a concentration of Mark Rothko's paintings. Increasingly since 1972 the chapel has been assigned a much broader role as a context for general spirituality and the discussion human rights among various cultures and religions. To this end, the chapel's mission is to "inspire people to action through art and contemplation, to nurture reverence for the highest aspirations of humanity, and to provide a forum for global concerns."⁹⁴ Combining art, spirituality, and human rights, the chapel is a sacred space that allows for equal worship and dialogue, contemplation and action for all the people of the world of any background.

IX. The Rothko Chapel within the Catholic Tradition of Interfaith Dialogue

Not only is the Rothko Chapel a generally successful interfaith space, but it is also a successful interfaith space from the Catholic perspective, meeting each of the four types of interfaith dialogue discussed above. These four, again, are the dialogue of life, action, theological exchange, and religious experience. In the first form, people join together in the joys and sorrows of life, essentially coexisting in peace as humans should regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion. In the Rothko Chapel, people of all backgrounds can come together to appreciate art, meditate, enjoy music performances, and celebrate life. In the

⁹⁴ "About."

second form, people work together to support and liberate others, to seek out the common good. The chapel accommodates this form of interreligious dialogue through its dedication to human rights activism. The chapel's colloquia, world-renown speakers, and awards allow for the acknowledgement and discussion of critical issues plaguing the contemporary world. People of diverse religious backgrounds can come together in this space to contribute to the overall conversation and seek solutions to problems that threaten fellow humans. These conversations not only promote contemplation and discussion but also action, moving people to participate in social justice. These colloquia similarly contribute to the third form of interfaith dialogue: theological exchange. Past topics have included Islam and Vatican II, topics that have allowed experts to come together and share their research on specific religious insights. The chapel's programming therefore allows for the intellectual exchange around diverse theological thought.

Finally the Rothko Chapel is most conducive to the dialogue of religious experience. In its daily functions, the chapel allows people, no matter what religious background, to pray in the same space. People are not forced to pray the same prayers or to participate in the same services, but rather they can choose to engage with the space however they see fit. People can pray or meditate in their own ways, staying true to their spirituality while also observing and respecting the practices of others. By seeing others pray and reflect, people learn more about diverse religious philosophies and practices while also coming to a greater understanding of their own spiritualities.

As the Rothko Chapel meets each of the four types of interreligious dialogue as defined by the Catholic Church, it would not be unreasonable for such a space to be

present on a Catholic campus. The chapel's mission and programming does not violate any Catholic teaching or perspectives. As the chapel upholds the Catholic perspective of interfaith dialogue and practices, the chapel further proves its viability as a model for the future of interfaith spaces on Catholic college and university campuses in America.

X. Conclusion

American Catholic colleges and universities embrace the difficult challenge of balancing the sacred with the secular within their twofold identity as both "Catholic" and "university." As this thesis has reviewed, Catholic institutions of higher learning have undergone significant change since their original foundations. These institutions have transformed from places of strict religious education to broader environments that are eager to embrace diversity in their search for knowledge and truth while seeking to better the world. This evolutionary history demonstrates that Catholic colleges and universities are capable of change to remain relevant and pertinent to the evolving society.

Contemporary Catholic institutions, and certainly the Marianist University of Dayton, encourage the development of the whole person and engage in challenging dialogue to respect the dignity of each diverse member of the university community. The acknowledgement of these past changes demonstrates how Catholic colleges and universities are capable of future transformations in the sacred provisions of their campus environments.

Attention to interfaith dialogue and any resulting creation of diverse sacred spaces do not go against Catholic values. In fact, the Church recognizes goodness in diverse religions and embraces dialogue with people of different religious backgrounds. The Catholic Church, however, does not yet have any literature on the creation of physical

sacred spaces to engage properly in interfaith dialogue. Therefore, Catholic institutions of higher learning do not have a clear set standard or set of instructions for the creation of such spaces.

Without specific guidance from the Church, Catholic colleges and universities have struggled with the appropriation and/or creation of diverse sacred spaces on their campuses. Works of sacred architecture, specifically Catholic chapels, have become symbols of Catholic identity on these campuses, and so Catholic institutions have understandably struggled to incorporate new and diverse spaces within the already existing built environment. The survey of current spaces at the University of Dayton, Loyola University Chicago, the University of Notre Dame, Georgetown University, and Villanova University demonstrates that there is no one solution for the issue of providing diverse accommodation of sacred spaces. These institutions have created separate spaces and some shared spaces. But are these solutions successful in their aims to nurture interfaith dialogue, or are they simply the means for basic accommodation? These universities have done their best to provide for their students of different religious backgrounds, but further transformation of these spaces can be made.

As an intentional sacred space the Rothko Chapel is currently conducive to and successful in nurturing interfaith dialogue. Those responsible for the next stage of diverse sacred space design should look to the Rothko Chapel as a model for an inclusive environment. The chapel's evolutionary history, from its beginning with its Catholic roots to its transition to its present state of interfaith spirituality, demonstrates how the chapel is relevant to the contemporary issue of envisioning diverse sacred spaces on Catholic college and university campuses. By having this type of sacred space on

campus, contemporary Catholic universities can accommodate their religiously diverse students and promote interfaith dialogue as encouraged by the Catholic Church while remaining true to their Catholic identities.

While it is impossible to recreate the beauty of the Rothko Chapel, the chapel's interfaith and generally humanistic focus on art, spirituality, and human rights is what can be recreated. The creation of an intentional interfaith space on a Catholic college or university campus could similarly provide a sacred environment open to all through art and design. Such a space could accommodate diverse religious worship needs through its openness to all and its ability to provide specific worship services to groups. Finally, as in the Rothko Chapel, such a space at a Catholic institution could foster dialogue through specific colloquia and programming, providing a distinct space for interfaith dialogue.

The adaptation by Catholic colleges and universities of the ideas that form the core of the Rothko Chapel could pave the way to the future of interfaith relations at pluralistic Catholic colleges and universities. By looking beyond or to the logical extension of the Catholic tradition, those responsible for the future sacred spaces at Catholic colleges and universities could imagine innovative spaces and programming. The Rothko Chapel as a model for the future of Catholic university spaces provides a fresh perspective for architectural design that could revitalize the Catholic spiritual mission of interfaith dialogue. Such an innovative space would allow Catholic colleges and universities to put this concept of interfaith dialogue into action. Looking to this model, the university environment could act as a distinct arena that is capable of testing new boundaries and creating new spaces to encourage interfaith dialogue and understanding. More ambitiously still, Catholic institutions of higher learning could

engage with this model to provide a model themselves for peaceful religious relations in American society, easing religious tensions that currently plague the nation and the world. The Catholic campus landscape will always change, and by embracing such change, appreciating diversity, and accommodating interfaith dialogue, Catholic universities like the University of Dayton can lead to the future of the interfaith campus.



Figure 1:
Exterior of the Rothko Chapel
Photo: author 2015



Figure 2:
Interior of the Immaculate
Conception Chapel in the
first half of the twentieth
century
Photo: udayton.edu 2016



Figure 3:
Interior of the Immaculate Conception
Chapel after its 1971 renovation
Photo: author 2014



Figure 4:
Interior of the Immaculate Conception
Chapel after its 2014-2015 renovation
Photo: author 2016

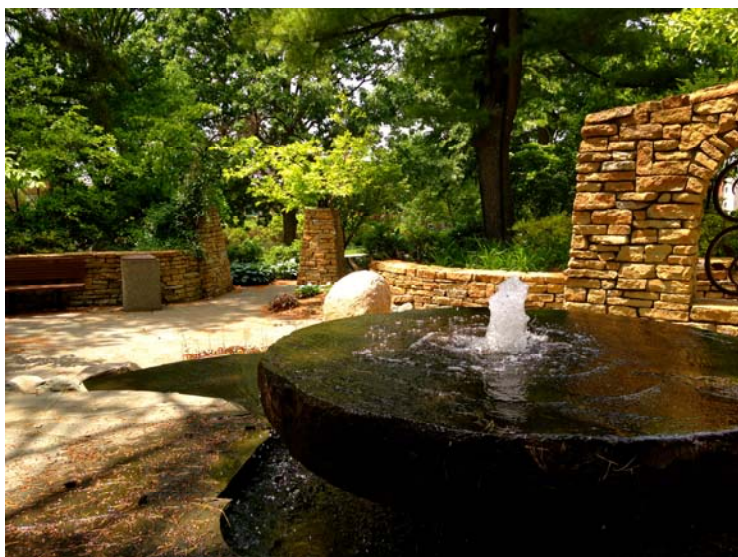


Figure 5:
View from Serenity Pines
Photo: author 2014

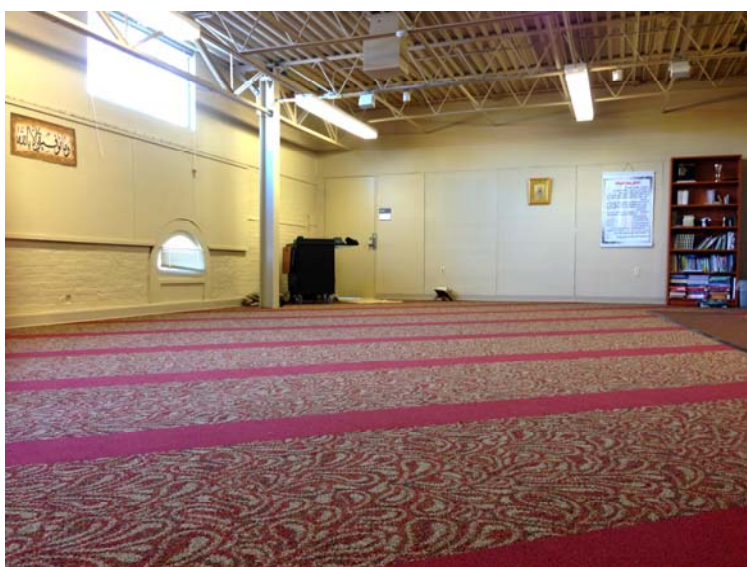


Figure 6:
Prayer Room in the Rike
Center
Photo: author 2016



Figure 7a:
Hindu prayer room at Loyola
University
Photo: author 2014



Figure 7b:
Jewish prayer room at Loyola
University
Photo: author 2014



Figure 7c:
Muslim prayer room at
Loyola University
Photo: author 2014



Figure 7d:
Arab Christian prayer room
at Loyola University
Photo: author 2014



Figure 8:
Palm Court at Loyola
University
Photo: luc.edu 2014



Figure 9:
University of Notre Dame
Grotto
Photo: author 2014



Figure 10:
Meditation Room at the
University of Notre Dame
Photo: author 2014



Figure 11:
St. William's Chapel at
Georgetown University
Photo: author 2014

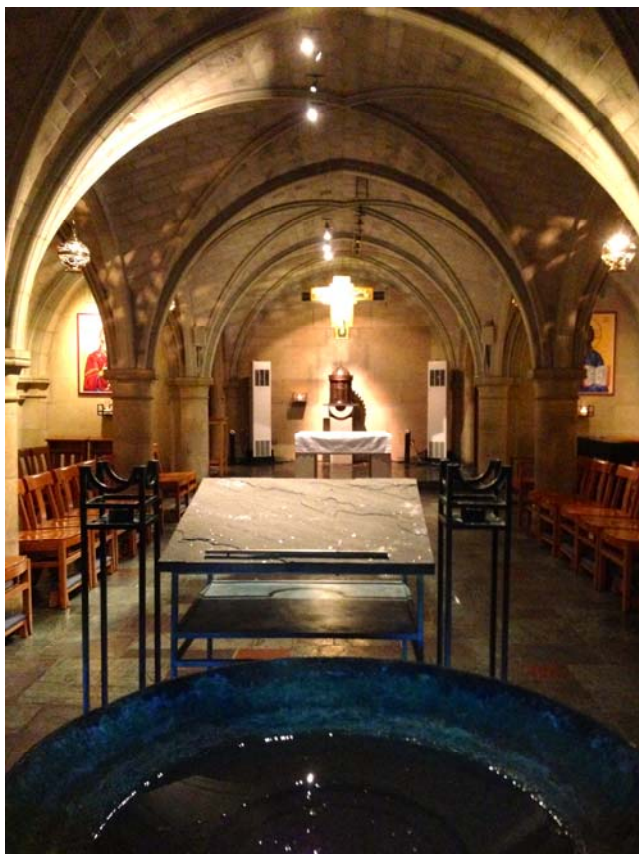


Figure 12:
Georgetown University's Crypt
Chapel
Photo: author 2014



Figure 13:
Makom at Georgetown University
Photo: author 2014



Figure 14:
Georgetown University's Muslim
prayer room
Photo: author 2014



Figure 15:
Protestant space in St. Rita's Hall at
Villanova University
Photo: author 2014



Figure 16:
Repurposed classroom used for Muslim
prayer at Villanova University
Photo: author 2014



Figure 17:
Designated corner for Muslim prayer in
Villanova University's International
Student Room
Photo: author 2014



Figure 18:
Interior of Rothko Chapel
Photo: rothkochapel.org
2016

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