



Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel

Our lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel is the crown jewel in the diadem of buildings which comprise the Marist College campus.

When the chapel was built in 1953, its circular design was one of the first for a Catholic church in the United States. The altar dominates the center with the congregation intimately flowing completely around it. It was not until the Second Vatican Council in 1965 that churches began to move their altars into a similar relationship with their parishioners.

Acting as contractor and using simple building techniques, Brother Nilus built the chapel with Marist Brothers' labor. Poured reinforced concrete buttresses and walls support the laminated wood beams holding up the roof.

Instead of stained glass windows, Brother Nilus borrowed an idea of Eastman Kodak that he had seen displayed in Grand Central Station. He lined the upper inner perimeter of the chapel with photographic images of the Virgin Mary. On sheets of heavy plastic he embedded the images of a model portraying the Madonna with accompanying quotes from scripture. The plastic sheets were suspended on springs which compensated for the expansion from the sunlight and the contraction during the night.

Depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary was a professional model, Rita Hunt. She and her husband were friends of Brother Nilus and she did the work gratis. In a subsequent photo of the Descent of the Holy Spirit on Mary and the Apostles, taken for the adjacent study hall, the photographer used the same model along with some Marist Brothers construction workers as the apostles. The photographic session had to be repeated because one of the Marist apostles had forgotten to take off his wrist watch!

Unfortunately, over the years, the images have faded through the bleaching action of the sun.

Through its serenity and spirituality, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel forms the core, the anchor and the inspiration for the Marist College campus.

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Homepage**

Construction

**Outside
Views**

**Inside the
Chapel**

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