

## William Rawn Associates Architects, Inc.

Community of Jesus » Orleans, Massachusetts

*Architect*

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The Community of Jesus, an ecumenical monastic community in the Benedictine tradition, overlooks a harbor. Seven new buildings encircle a monastic center, while retaining an existing friary, convent, and guest house: the Church of the Transfiguration, Chapter House, Refectory, Retreat Center, Pastorium, Bethlehem Offices, and Bell Tower. A Common or green organizes gathering and movement at the heart of the Community, like a New England town



common. Courts and gardens organize internal spaces between buildings. Major buildings are warm yellow limestone evoking permanence, and the complementary sands of Cape Cod. Support buildings are white New England clapboard and shingle. Of the seven new buildings, the spiritual heart of the community is the church, which begins at the edge of the Common with an outdoor atrium that focuses gathering and procession on central bronze doors, celebrating the beauty of God's creation: Adam and Eve mark the beginning of the Christian walk. Inside, visitors encounter a glass wall sculpture interpreting the event of the Transfiguration, and the font, the literal rite of entry into the faith. The iconography of the floor, walls, and apse, recounts the biblical story of salvation through hand-crafted mosaic

and fresco images and stone sculpture. The strong basilica form inspired by early Christian churches reflects the community's monastic identity and ecumenical vision. Columns and arches visually "process" towards the altar in the apse to the east. The unique placement of the organ chambers in the side aisles, allows the organ to speak throughout the church.

### Jury Comments

*This project for a monastic community allows its members to perform their liturgy surrounded and shaped by beauty, which is reflected in the architecture and iconography. The buildings express an interesting profile above the harbor, where it can be seen as a landmark. It has a very well-thought-out plan and there is a remarkable array of artwork that supports the architecture. A remarkable expression of place.*