



**Pittsburgh, PA Architect & Author Publishes Book on Working for the Vatican**

**In This Book Famed Architect Astorino Writes about His Time Designing The Chapel of the Holy Spirit for the Vatican**

*A Pencil in God's Hands: The Story of the Only American Architect to Design a Building in the Vatican*, a new book by Louis D. Astorino, has been released by Dorrance Publishing Co., Inc.

The Chapel of the Holy Spirit is within the Vatican walls and is built adjacent to the Domus Sanctae Marthae, a hotel for visiting clergy. In 1993, Pope John Paul II made the decision to have a hotel and chapel constructed at the Vatican in order to accommodate visiting clergy year round, but most especially during a Papa Conclave, when cardinals housed at the Vatican Museum where they slept on cots in the halls with bedpans by their side. The Pope was determined to bring the accommodations for the Conclave into the twenty-first century. With no vacant land within the Vatican walls, the Pope made the decision to have an older building directly across from St. Peter's Cathedral demolished for the new structures. The location of the new hotel and chapel would allow the cardinals to attend Mass in sequester, then go directly through St. Peter's Basilica and into the Sistine Chapel to vote. Today, that chapel- The Chapel of the Holy Spirit- is used for the more than sporadic Conclave. Pope Francis celebrates daily Mass there and also uses it for gatherings and audiences with groups of visiting clergy, the Swiss Guard, and the families with special needs children.

From the author: "As you read the story of my journey from Pittsburgh to the Vatican, pencil sketch to blueprint, construction to dedication, I hope you will share in the inspiration, awe, and strengthening of faith that I experienced during this remarkable journey. In order to put this story in context let us travel back in time."

**About the Author**

Louis D. Astorino, FAIA founded L.D. Astorino and Associates in 1972 and let it to prominence at an international level until his retirement in 2016. Among the hundreds of projects adopted by the firm, several stand out as witness to the Astorino reputation for excellence. These include the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, PNC Park baseball stadium which is home to the Pittsburgh Pirates, the Trimont condominiums, PNC First side Center and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's branches in Palermo Italy and Hyderabad, India. The Firm also completed Ambulatory Clinics and Disease Prevention Centers in Abu Dhabi for SEHA.

These impressive commissions stand alongside the role of the Astorino firm in the restoration of the Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece, Fallingwater. Chosen by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the family of Edgar Kaufmann for this work, Louis Astorino has lectured extensively on Wright's achievement in the design of the world-renowned house.

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Mr. Astorino is a much honored individual and member of the architectural profession, he is an inductee of his South Hills High School Hall of Fame, he was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1987; received the Alumni Achievement Award of the College of Arts and Architecture from the Pennsylvania State University in 1989; was made an Alumni Fellow by the Pennsylvania State University in 1991; he received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University in 2006 and was Commencement Speaker at the College of Arts and Architecture in 2010.

He served as president of both the Pittsburgh chapter of the AIA, the Pennsylvania Society of Architects and co-founded the AIA Pittsburgh Architects Workshop.

Called to multiple forms of public service, Lou was appointed to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Board and the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial Commission by Governor Ed Rendell. He served on the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce as well as the Civic Light Opera and Roberto Clemente Foundation.

Outreach to charitable organizations includes service to Holy Family Institute, the Little Sisters of the Poor, Christian Leaders Fellowship and the Make a Wish Foundation. He invoked his cordial relations with the Vatican leaders to develop the only know replica of the illustrious Christmas Creche that is displayed in the Piazza of the Basilica of St. Peter each year. It is estimated that a quarter of a million visitors visit the extraordinary Nativity scene annually which is exhibited on private corporate property in the city center of Pittsburgh.

Together with his wife, Jean, and their children, Louis P. Astorino and Christine Astorino, Lou continues to nurture the essential bonds of family and the faith that brought him to fulfillment both personally and in his profession. It is this consciousness of a calling that was expressed in his secular profession that inspired this narrative of the creation of the Chapel of Holy Spirit inside the Vatican enclave.

*A Pencil in God's Hands: The Story of the Only American Architect to Design a Building in the Vatican* is a 156-page hardcover with a retail price of \$54.95. The ISBN is 978-1-4809-9990-9. It was published by Dorrance Publishing Co., Inc of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. For more information, or to request a review copy, please go to our virtual pressroom at [www.dorrancepressroom.com](http://www.dorrancepressroom.com) or our online bookstore [www.bookstore.dorrancepublishing.com](http://www.bookstore.dorrancepublishing.com).