

# Aesthetics, architecture, and worship: An iconography experience

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## ABSTRACT

Demonstrated in this project is the religious design and symbols inside and outside the Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ, which had many referents and associations incorporated into intricate symbolic complexes-what some have called “webs of significance”. The purpose of this study is to offer an approach to the interpretation of aesthetic and architectural design and symbols by describing the various referents and associations of a particular item in the culture of which it is a part and by applying this referential complex to the interpretation of specific literary and iconographic examples. It also explored how it represents and re-creates the divine realities in a temporary place in the real world. In its attempt to understand the interplay of aesthetics, architecture, and worship - this study has been limited to the functions of the church design and content with reference to bishop interviews, church photos, and written literature. By providing analysis, the iconographical design within the parish church will contribute to the body of knowledge on Christian Charismatic Renewal’s beliefs and practices.

## 1. Introduction

This project is an attempt to explore the connections between architecture and religion. The idea that in religious experience and spirituality, or understanding of the eternal, or awareness of the sacred - whatever, we may put it - houses, locations, spaces, and objects play a role is one that is increasingly articulated. In general, such ideas remain undefined notions, never systematically researched, organized, or placed within some coherent theological scheme of views. In part, these can be philosophical issues (although they are seldom discussed in theology). Nonetheless, no one concerned with religious architecture can afford to neglect concerns about the influence of church structures, church artifacts, light, and shade features, space differentiation, symbolism, values, and ideas, and a slew of other small and large pieces. As my work proceeded, one September morning, during my class at Pasig Campus of Rizal Technological University, I observed our neighboring church how they celebrate the Christmas season. With millions of faithful worldwide, the Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ are closely located where I work as a teacher. As a Catholic, I was marveled at what I witnessed in their religious practices; that’s when I compromised to answer my query.

The Philippines prides itself on being the only Christian country in Asia. Over 86 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, with 6% belonging to various nationalized Christian sects and another 2% belonging to one of more than 100 Protestant denominations. In addition to the Christian majority, the southern islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan became the focus of a

vigorous 04 percent Muslim minority. The remaining 02 percent adopt non-Western tribal values and traditions distributed in remote mountainous areas. While not statistically significant, the Chinese minority has a cultural influence in coloring Filipino Catholicism with Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism's values and traditions.

The study of the sacred architecture of Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ was determined by its several intentions and acknowledged through this presentation. The purpose of this study is to offer an approach to the interpretation of aesthetic and architectural design and symbols by describing the various referents and associations of a particular item in the culture of which it is a part and by applying this referential complex to the interpretation of specific literary and iconographic examples.

This research explores how it represents and re-creates the divine realities in a temporary place in the real world. The questions raised in the explorations of patterns in the various forms of iconography through subjects and placement are: Were these church aesthetics and sacred architecture merely to fill space? Were they random choices by the patrons and the parishioners?

In its attempt to be understood due to the interplay of aesthetics, architecture, and worship- this study has been limited to the functions of that design and content as determined by bishop interviews, church photos, and written literature. This paper is neither too detailed nor too abstract for the reader to understand. To achieve this objective, it opens the critique of the subject (Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ) in a way that has not been done by any related literature or has been previously published. According to the bishop, the church has not been exposed to any studies, and the palatine role of the church was not taken into account yet.

## **2. Theoretical basis**

Durandus, Neale, and Webb's (2008) basic and compelling conviction that the "church" has two meanings. There is a spiritual church, and there is a material church. The former is the believers' flesh; the latter is a material building. By his imagery, he immediately distinguishes the two: the human church is a "spiritual fabric," and the material church is created by the junction of stones, just as the junction makes the spiritual church of men. The church's construction can be said to be the truth of the church. For all his theories, it lies in the ambiguity of scriptural quotations and references. This grasp of "church" and "church" was not new or original to Durandus.

Yet Broadbent (1965) demonstrated his point of view on the nature of architecture and how to make the most of this theory by suggesting that the buildings, despite the best or worst intentions of the architects, were to symbolize anyway. He thought that knowing how they were to do so would help the architects design them better. In his discourse, he presented Peirce and Saussure's theory; both wanted to create a general idea of meaning, so they wanted to state how one thing, whatever-a word, an image, a diagram, a rain cloud, a smoke, or a building - "reminds us for," a theory they called Semiotic or Semiology. Charles Morris divided this (semiotic) area into three levels: pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic. The pragmatic deals with the uses of origins (by those who produce them) and the impact of signs on those who perceive them within the full spectrum of action in which they exist; the semantic: deals with the sense of signs in all modes of signifying, with how they are.

Thomas (1995) notes that the Sacralist (the concept of religious buildings and holy places), the Secularist (thinking which considers all areas as equally distinct realms), and the Cosmological are the fundamental three religious architectural theories and boards of view. In whole or in part, a building or significant site is seen as symbolic or characteristic of the divine world. These three groups do not consider other hypotheses held by practices other than Christianity and Western religion. While religious adherents who traditionally have a religious architectural view must

create such theory as a deliberate act using a rational process, they are most often unconsciously assimilated. Individuals' thoughts and ideas are influenced by the theory, whether they are aware of it or not.

While Theory of Signs by Broadbent (1965) provides a clear and convenient guide to the concept of signs in architecture by offering a considered discussion of architectural semiotics and argues that architects deliberately design meanings in their buildings; moreover, he said that architects such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Mies, Charles Moore, Brent Brolin, Charles Jencks, and historians such as Giedion, Nikolaus Pevsner, and J. M. Richards, had told us most forcibly that architecture shouldn't be a matter of mere styling, applied cosmetically to the outside of buildings. He admits that all towers symbolize or at least "carry" meaning. Whether the architect intended it or not, every structure creates associations in the minds of those who see it (Pevsner, 1976).

### **3. Methodology**

The church history has been gathered; hence historical method was used. Panofsky (1972) presented his approach as three stages of iconographic analysis. The two strata were used in this study. The first stratum requires us to do what he calls a "pre-iconographic analysis." This is the most basic level of understanding images. At this stratum, one perceives the work in its most pure form. It could begin by describing the image which will be useful for an everyday experience. The study collected the preliminary photographic evidence and (if any) historiography of the church. This means that we must first describe the visual elements in the image to create a systematic study of its physical entity. According to Panofsky (1972), we are supposed to do this without allowing our minds to connect the image to any mental construct we might have regarding its meaning. The second is making an iconographic analysis by combining the image with a "known story or recognizable character." This stratum goes a step further and brings to the observation, cultural and iconographic knowledge. Textual knowledge or earlier visual experiences are necessary for this. For textual evidence, I included the interview of the Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ bishop. For iconographic evidence, I had the historical analysis /biblical narratives. At the same time, art historian Professor Danim R. Majerano analyzed the method I used. He even suggested specific questions directly relevant to this study and proposed a thought for the conventional activity that writers like me find helpful. The church itself was the primary source of iconography. During my research, I often visited the church, taking photographs of the various forms of iconography and noting their placement in the interior and exterior. As mentioned earlier, I have consulted other sources such as catalogs, websites, and parish church guides.

### **4. Result and discussion**

#### ***4.1. Historiography of religious belief and knowledge of CDCC***

The Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ, Philippines Incorporated was founded in Pangasinan, in the seaside city of Saint Fabian, which is nestled along the waves of the Lingayen Gulf. The CDCCCPI is located in Nibaliw, Magliba, a tranquil barrio. On September 27, 1955, Mons. Rufino S. Magliba, the congregation's Founder and Supreme Pontiff, created it and registered it with Manila's Securities and Exchange Commission. Msgr. Both Christians and non-believers will be inspired by Rufino S. Magliba (Apo Rufing). According to believers, it is the Holy Spirit's symbol in the end times. They say he is the "Second Comforter," the "Living God," who will save those who obey God's laws. Since he began his ministry, many have requested him to treat their sicknesses, and he has done so: the crippled can now walk, and the deaf can now hear. With his naked sight, he can see every ailment or condition that a person may have. Even if he's on the other side of the world, he can analyze the patient's condition by separating the patient's name, address, and age on a blank sheet of paper (<https://www.philstar.com>).

In the vicinity, he started to cure the sick. As a beautiful healer, Apo Rufing became more popular than a fisherman. Nibaliw West's sleepy barangay became a pilgrimage spot. People lined up each day to worship and heal in a bit chapel. People witnessed in him wonder after marvel. Lives were changed; everyone who had gone to him came with another miracle to share because of confidence in power. The newly-organized church with the government had been prepared to register.

It spread rapidly through neighboring provinces. Evangelical missions in nearly every town were carried out at Tarlac. Now, 22 organized chapters and thousands of devotees have been organized in the Tarlac archdiocese. Because of its double-crosses and the majestic crowns above its cupolas, the concrete churches are quickly identified as Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ of the Philippines, Incorporated. In the evangelical missions, also Nueva Ecija was included.

The multi-billion-peso church and convent in San Juan, La Union, has been built along the beach with a multifunctional hall. The local chapter is the largest church ever founded except for the central church. A magnificent CDCCPI church of seven levels has given a stunning view of the region in the city of Baguio, along Moran St., Mines View. It is used as the congregation's summer cathedral. Two chapters are La Union and Benguet.

Apo Rufing and his missionary party also obtained the provinces of Ilocos Sur and Abra further north. The Archdiocese of Ilocos Sur/Abra has eight chapters in the city. San Nicholas was not enough to cure the masses at Ilocos in 1957; two days of continuous preaching and healing in San Lorenzo. On the second day, hundreds of sick people also fell in the dark and longed for Apo Rufing's remedy. In his usual manner of healing, Apo Rufing could not accommodate it. He stood on a platform to hold up their hands to those ill. And the people shouted back, 'Apo, yes!' He told the sick to hold back or touch their affliction in their right hands. He asked the crowd if they still believed in him as God's second comforts man. The people were following, and Apo Rufing looked up and prayed. He blessed the people and healed many of the faithful.

The number of members had risen to one million by the fifth year after the official registration of the church. More priests and ministers were sent to work and supervise the existing community churches in the different provinces. The most senior priests were consigned as Bishops. As the church grew every year and the faithful increased, Bible mission invitations came. Msgr. Msgr. He could not comply with the necessity of Rufino S. Magliba himself anymore and empowered all of his bishops and priests to carry out the Mission of the Bible. On May 25, 1963, he was awarded the Most Excellent Rural Prediger in Luzon by all the Central Luzon Governors.

At the end of the 1970s, Manila Metro missionaries started to spread the will of God. In the 1980s, a faithful family in Caloocan converted their own homes into a temporary ministry chapel. The congregation bought a lot in Pasig City in July 1991. The lovely and elegant Cathedral of Mutya ng Pasig serves as the home office of the Archdiocese of Manila Metro and Tagalog Provinces, comprising ten chapters fully organized.

It was in Hawaii, Columbia, London, Singapore, Rome, Naples, Milan, Canada, and Taiwan, where Mons. Magliba has taken his country's mission. They say God's inspiration and verbal guidance were granted to him to all of the church's doctrines.

In Nibaliw Magliba, San Fabian, a gigantic and majestic Central Temple, was built for the congregation. The fulfillment of this magnificent temple reveals God's continuing guidance. On the top of its altar cupola, the elegant crown indicates the church, which overcomes all odds.

#### 4.2. Aesthetics, Architecture, and Worship (Graphical Evidence)



**Figure 1.** (left) Mons. Rufino S. Magliba (The Founder)

Source: (left) Image retrieved from <https://hi-in.facebook.com>

Source: (right) The Founder's icon; location: above the porch. Author's photo

According to Bishop Layda, the Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ is the first Filipino religion founded by pure-blooded Filipino. Nonetheless, this is the first time research has been done on them. Mons. Magliba (founder), made a declaration to its members to stop observing December 25 as the birth of Christ in 1969. Since then, September 25 has been celebrated as Christmas for the Crusaders. They believe that December is a winter season, which would be impossible for people to stay outside, especially for a newborn child, to withstand the temperature. Cesar Augustus mandated the Roman world to conduct the census.

Nevertheless, the Roman rulers knew that taking a census in winter would have been impractical and unpopular for people to travel to their hometowns during winter. Generally, a census would have taken place after the season, around September. According to the expected dates for the census, Christ's birth season would be. Joseph and his wife Mary, who was then about to give birth, also went to Joseph's hometown for that census, and they had to travel for long days to reach the place.

But one of the most favorite questions directed to the bishop of Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ has been about using the flag in the worship space (right photo). The recurring question is not flags themselves but the Philippine national flag. According to Bishop Layda, their basis came from the Bible, and he has mentioned a few verses that says one must set up a banner for those who fear you, that they may flee to it from the bow (Psalm 60:4). Also, when a banner is hoisted on the mountains, people who live on the ground will see it, and when a trumpet sounds, they will hear it (Isaiah 18:3). He further claims that a provision in Proclamation No. 321, signed by former President Quirino on June 12, 1950, speaks of the flag flying above the church pennant to signify God above the country (Official Gazette, 1950).

Many Lutheran churches in America display the American and Christian flags in the sanctuary, most often on the chancel. Contrary to popular belief, the flag did not enter the First World War primarily as a symbol of loyalty among German immigrants but rather arrived unnoticed alongside the service flag and remained there through the Second World War and beyond. It was sometimes used in conjunction with church construction or renovation. The concept of banal nationalism is used to investigate such flag use, which appears to be a violation of the separation of church and state. These flags are "unwaved," remaining static in the sanctuaries of many Lutheran churches today, creating a distinct type of civil religion in America (Nickodemus, 2021).

This statement clarifies that where the national flag is displayed together, their placement symbolically implies where supreme loyalty is placed by the body assembled there. In churches that display national flags over any sacred art to make it clear that for them, allegiance to God is the same as their allegiance to their nation.

The flag is an excellent symbol for any country. It has tremendous emotional value, particularly for veterans and families who have lost their loved ones in war and armed conflict under that symbol. To most, the flag has a tremendous political meaning as a symbol of what they consider to be a friend of our country.

There are ways to honorably display a flag in a church building while still honoring the main worship room and its Christian symbols. The flag may be placed in the worship space or another suitable location. Adding flags to the fellowship or Community Hall, gymnasium, or any other large gathering room used by municipalities such as display agencies or civic activities such as voting allows the flag to fulfill its representative role for the nation without any conflicting core symbols of Christian belief. Congregations that have war memorial chapels, plaques, remembrance books, and the like and that wish to display the American flag may want to consider putting the flag in their building near those places rather than in the space of worship.

It was customary for the American flag in many congregations to stand on one side of the Worship Formation & Liturgical Resources: the altar and the sometimes-named Christian flag stand on the other. Flags are more likely to be becoming more popular in Lutheran churches as immigrants felt compelled to demonstrate unwavering allegiance to their new country, especially as many of these immigrants were still worshipping in their native tongue.

In the early twentieth century, when Christians in America decided to stress their allegiance to this country, the use of flags in our churches received an impetus. Often a sense of pride contributes to displaying and honoring flags in public areas (Renewing Worship 2, 2002).

The impulse to display and revere flags in public settings stems from patriotism. Yet *Renewing Worship 2* (2002) states that the flag may be a source of controversy in a worship space: flags signify national loyalties. They can become divisive, suggesting that the Christian way is associated with a specific national identity. Flags have no permanent place in the primary worship center, although necessary in other church complex areas and as part of some national occasions (*Renewing Worship 2*, 2002).



**Figure 2.** Cecilia Magliba (Wife)  
Location: Chancel

Source: Author's photo

The bishop argues that women played an essential role in the history of various faiths as religious figures. He recognized Cecilia Magliba not just as a wife but as a partner and associate

throughout the establishment of Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ. Stationed at the chancel, Mrs. Magliba has left the impression of the role of women in church history, where she played several roles in Christian life, most notably as contemplatives, health caregivers, educators, and missionaries. In most denominations, women have been the most church attendees since early in the Christian era and into the present (Murrow, 2011).

Women later came to play an essential role in Christianity as religious sisters and nuns in convents and abbeys and have remained active throughout history, especially in the establishment of schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and monastic settlements. Women make up the vast majority of consecrated life members of the Catholic church, the oldest Christian church. Women's ordination has become more widespread in some Protestant churches in recent decades. Laywomen have also been very involved in the broader life of churches, assisting parishes in their community service (Murrow, 2011).

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, has a unique position of reverence in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, which has held a model of maternal virtue central to their vision of Christianity. Marian's dedication, on the other hand, is not often associated with Protestantism.

While Krueger (2019) argued that the goal of resurrecting Eve and Mary for theological anthropology stems from the belief that rejecting dehistoricized and polarized interpretations of each woman reminds readers that they, too, are human. They are humans within the same metanarrative of cosmic redemption that women are a part of today. Reinterpreting Eve and Mary thus empowers a shared history and advances eschatological realization as each woman acts in her particularities as one who knows, has unqualified being, and names.



**Figure 3.** Front view of the church

Source: Author's photo

A porch is a term used in architecture to describe a space or gallery situated in front of a house's entrance, forming a low front and positioned before the building's facade that it commands. It can be described more simply as a projecting building that houses the entrance door or a vestibule. In religious architecture and secular architecture, the porch exists and is found in various forms and structures, constructed worldwide from different materials (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).

A lancet arch is several pointed arches in which the arch's arcs or curves have a radius longer than the arch's width. It takes its name from being shaped like a lance's tip. In Gothic architecture, the lancet window is typical of early English (13th century) periods (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).



While a traditional cruciform church looks like a cross when viewed from above, its layout shares much in common with ancient temples, in which the further you go into the building, the holier the sections of the building are.

The first cross declares the welfare of Jesus Christ after his crucifixion, and the second cross represents the holy spirit, according to Bishop Layda.

A cross (such as a Latin Cross or Budded Cross) with an additional cross-beam is the Patriarchal Cross, with or without a body. This additional cross-beam has many interpretations or hypotheses that can also be used on similar crosses (such as Orthodox and Loraine crosses). It may also be referred to as the “Metropolitan Cross.” The “Metropolitan” is the head of an ecclesiastical province in the Greek and Eastern Orthodox church, ranked only below the Patriarch. The “Metropolitan” counterpart is an archbishop in England and the Roman Catholic church (Symbols - stories for cultural life, n.d.).

One of the most common reasons for the cross’s shape is that the upper beam on the top of the crucified Jesus, also seen on the Russian and Eastern Orthodox crosses, reflects the INRI plaque. But there are also other hypotheses for the additional beam, including ideas that may remember the death of Jesus in the first beam and his Resurrection in the second. The shaft may have symbolized the Byzantine emperors’ strength (in the 9th century, this was a political symbol used by Byzantine clerks and missionaries). This cross was accepted as a cross for the Patriarch with the Good Shepherd image in mind and included in the archbishop’s heraldic arms.

At the west end of the nave, several parish churches have a tower. Some have spires on top of them. The tower may have been built as part of the original structure or later added to or expanded. Between the chancel and the nave, some churches have a tower with a transept on either side. The area within the church at the intersection of the nave, chancel, and transepts is referred to as the crossing in this case. The church bells or crosses are often found in the tower. The cross is a universal Christian emblem that serves as a reminder of Jesus’ death (Resurrection). Several crosses have been used throughout history, and many of them can still be seen in our churches.



**Figure 4.** Interior of church

Source: Author’s photo

Looking at Figure 4, you can see a cross shape in this simplified, generic floor plan. Worshippers enter through the narthex, a Greek word meaning “entrance hall.” They sit in the nave. The term “nave” has the same root as the word “navy” and refers to a boat. The church is like Noah’s ark - it rescues us from the flood of sin. (The church’s ceiling may resemble the wooden hull of a boat turned upside down on the building.)

Crossing the head of the nave are the two transepts. “Trans-scept” means “cuts across.” The two transepts from the arms of the cross in the floor plan. A traditional church has the altar



at the east end of the building, so the transepts are labeled by their compass directions (even if they aren't oriented that way).

Next comes the chancel, where the robed leaders of worship are. It is separated from the nave by steps. The chancel has two sections, the Choir, where the choir sits (and often where the organ console is usually located), and the Sanctuary, where the altar is located. The sanctuary is separated from the choir by the altar rail, where communicants stand or kneel to receive Holy Communion. The altar itself is on a raised platform, traditionally with three steps.

These are the primary sections of a traditional, cross-shaped church: the narthex, nave, transepts (and crossing), and the chancel, including the choir and the sanctuary. Attached to the church are often the vestry or vesting room where the clergy and others put on their vestments (robes) and the sacristy where the sacred vessels for communion are kept, washed, and dressed with their appropriate cloth items used in worship.



**Figure 5. Dome**

Location: Intersection of church's nave and transept

Source: Author's photo

Bishop Layda mentioned the appearance of onion-shaped domes on top of the Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ building. According to him, its installation speaks of Jesus' success which is rooted in Zechariah 6:12-13, which pronounces, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and they shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both".

Orthodox domes' colors are incredibly variable. The onion domes of the Annunciation Cathedral in Moscow, for instance, are pure gold. Simultaneously, Saint Basil's Cathedral is topped with domes painted in several different vivid blues, green, red, and yellow patterns in the same area. Some architects prefer black-painted domes.

The significance of Orthodox domes' colors is not strictly given, but the laws that govern Orthodox art can be extrapolated. For example, gold represents God's light and his holy nature in Orthodox iconography. Traditionally, red is a reminder of Jesus and the martyrs' zeal and suffering and represents the Resurrection and everlasting life. Green is the color of the Holy Spirit, the natural

world, and new creation. At the same time, blue is a color associated with Mary, the “God-bearer,” or Jesus’ mother. White is another symbol of God’s light and signifies justice, purity, and holiness.



**Figure 6.** Interior of Dome

Location: Intersection of church’s nave and transept

Source: Author’s photo

As stated by Bishop Layda, the positioning of Adonai in the octagon shape ceiling embodies profound meaning. The octagon is a religious symbol of salvation and redemption. It has been used in baptismal fonts, big and small, in many churches. While in China, the octagon was a confusing collection of references. Even we may assume that its meaning was chiefly warding off evil entities and being a tool for the advent of good health and good fortune (Akpabio, 2003). Eight was seen as representing celestial harmony and everlasting life in the number symbolism of Medieval Europe. Cooper (1978) believes that the baptismal fonts were octagonal since the octagon signifies restoration, rebirth, regeneration, and change. Kappraff (2003) states that the star octagon, an ecclesiastical emblem, signifies resurrection. In medieval number symbolism, eight signified cosmic equilibrium and immortality.

The octagon was seen as the “intermediary” - the connecting shape - between the circle and the square inside the Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ. The three types were traditionally drawn vertically, with the loop at the top symbolizing the heavens and the square at the bottom symbolizing the planet.

As the shape that connects the two, an octagon was drawn between them. The octagon was sometimes used as a symbol for infinity. The octagon has been described as a circle attempting to become a square and a square trying to become a circle. This concept was realized entirely in the Hindu vasta-Purusha mandala, an ancient architectural form.



**Figure 7.** Sacred Logo and Symbols

Location: Churchyard

Source: Author’s photo

In turn, the logo is the visual symbol of the Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ. It is a critical element of the communication between the church and the public. A new logo will rebrand the church and help give it an up-to-date feeling that will appeal to the existing members and encourage others to seek a place of worship.

In the context of JHS, Hardon (1980) says it's IHS, not JHS; there's no "J" in Latin. IHS stands for Iesus (Jesus) Hominum Salvator, more or less Jesus Savior of Men. It is a defective Latin transliteration of the first three letters of Jesus in Greek (IHS for IHC).



**Figure 8.** Adonai  
Location: Chancel

Source: Author's photo

Adonai is the ancient name of Christ. As pointed out by Bishop Layda. Moses' declaration of "I am who I am" means Jehovah in Hebrew. Letter J represents Jesus, letter E for Emmanuel before His reincarnation, gladness for letter H, Omega in Greek or climax. Virgo symbolizes Virgin Mary giving birth to Jesus Christ and Alpha as the beginning. Worship has to do with real life, the first thing we experience. It's not a mythical interlude in a week of reality. Orr (1915) says that Adonai is a sacred name, translated "Lord," and meaning, from its derivation, "sovereignty." Its vowels are found in the Massoretic Text with the unpronounced Tetragrammaton "YHWH." When the Hebrew reader came to these letters, he often substituted the term "Adonay." In pronunciation, its vowels combined with the Tetragrammaton form the word "Yahweh".

Also, the church bishop says that they worship the Holy Spirit. Their sign of the cross is slightly different from Roman Catholics. The right-hand moves from the right shoulder to the left shoulder and then to the chest and the forehead. He says there are many meanings for the cross's sign: the forehead symbolizes heaven, the solar plexus (or top of the stomach), the earth, the shoulders, the position, and the sign of strength. It also recalls the Trinity and the Incarnation. Beale (2013) says that Pope Innocent III (1198 - 1216) does the sign of the cross with three fingers because the signing is done together with the invocation of the Trinity. From above to below, and from the right to the left because Christ descended from the heavens to the earth. There are some variations: a person may first place his right hand in holy water, for instance. After moving the hand from one shoulder to the other, it can be returned to the stomach's top. The recitation of prayer can also follow it (e.g., the Jesus Prayer or only "Lord have mercy"). In some Catholic regions, such as Spain, Italy, and Latin America, it is customary to kiss one's thumb after a gesture (Beale, 2013). Simultaneously, in the Philippines, this extra phase developed into a thumb, quickly reaching the chin or lower lip. While the role or title given to the members of Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ is like the traditional Catholic churches. The bishop is the chief pastor of that area and an ordained minister with the fullness of the sacrament of orders. Priests and ministers assist the bishop. These three together make up the holy orders of such churches.

An 'eye' sign flanks Adonai's right hand. The Eye of Providence (also known as God's all-seeing eye) is a Christian symbol that depicts an eye surrounded by clouds, sunbursts, light

rays, or glory and usually covered by a triangle (<https://religionfacts.com>). It represents God's watchful eye on humanity (the concept of divine providence).

On Adonai's left hand, an 'ear' icon also appeared. As the ear and hearing signify the acceptance of truth, notice, and compliance, therefore the first and the last of faith, it was so often said by the Lord, He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear (Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 14:35).



**Figure 9.** Virgin Mary, Veronica & Virginia (Location: Chancel),  
Our Lady of Everlasting Succors (Location: Chancel), and  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Location: Churchyard)

Source: Author's photo

For early Christians, the virginal ideal was a unique way of life in which one devotes oneself entirely and forever to God and His kingdom, which was believed to be at hand. With its eschatological vocation and a new life in Christ with its transformative force, the Gospel message was the most significant expression of this extraordinary phenomenon (Keroloss, 1996).

Veronica and Virginia, also known as 'the virgins', were church servants, according to Bishop Layda. They are considered nuns as Catholic counterparts. In the study made by Keroloss (1996), he proves virginity's motives and meanings in the early church.

Although the obedience of the Virgin Mary to the will of heaven, as she had been expressed to her by the angel Gabriel's letter, was no less willing in her affirmation than the disobedience of the virgin Eve in her negation. It is Mary who is the bridge between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament documents God's scheme for man's redemption in His plans to make the earth ready for the Incarnation. Of all the tribes of the world, He has selected a people to whom He reveals Himself. He nurtures and teaches them by His prophets to remember the Son of God when it was time for Him to come (Hunt, 2000).

To achieve this, He brings these people to Himself in a bond of the covenant by creating worship based on sacrifice and preparing them to recognize the supreme gift that the Son of God must give for man's salvation. For these people would be the direction by which Son's message would be brought to the earth. And when the time was right, from amongst many people, he chose a woman from a particular pre-ordained family, the house of David. She wanted to be set apart in her purity and morality, not to make the Incarnation of the Son of God a sacrilege. She was born without original sin and set apart in a sacred state of abstinence and eternal virginity.

For decades, many Christian women have led a life of great faith. As Bishop Layda mentioned, they are often used ceremonially as an element of their Christian ritual called procession. Most of them are not remembered outside their families, but some have been officially recognized for their commitment and devotion. In the 10th century, a process of canonization, acknowledgment, and naming of a saint was placed in place. The method of canonization still occurs within the Catholic church today.

Often recognized as Our Lady of Everlasting Succors (middle photo), the universal church is celebrated on June 27. The Mother of Perpetual Help icon is of this kind. The angels carrying the Passion instruments have their hands sealed with a mantle of protection to display modesty in handling sacred objects. The Child Jesus is seen with an adult face and a high forehead, suggesting His holy mind of infinite wisdom. As God, He realized that the angels' arrival was prophetic of His future passion. But in His human nature as a little boy, He is terrified and runs to His Mother for safety.

Our Lady Perpetual Help (rightmost photo) quickly gathers Him and cradles Him in her arms. The Lord's right foot is nervously wrapped around the left ankle, and he is in such a rush that his right sandal is loosened and hangs by a single strap, demonstrating this gesture. The Boy Jesus clasps His Mother's right hand with both hands, holding on to Our Lady's thumb, demonstrating further action. Our Lady's face exudes unfathomable majesty and calm, but her large, partially closed eyes express an indescribable sorrow and compassion. Our Lady looks at us rather than at Jesus to express compassion for our worries and woes.



**Figure 10.** St. Joseph and St. Peter (Location: Chancel) and St. Paul (Location: Chancel)

Source: Author's photo

Saint Peter (on the left), keeping the keys to heaven, means that Jesus has granted great dominion to Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

The main symbol has no exact meaning-the definition changes based on age, the region, and even the painter. From the early days of Christian history, the church's fathers understood the importance of religious representations holding sinners on the road to redemption.

When language was insufficiently divine to complete the definition of a revelation, symbols were used for heavenly teaching, and familiar images drawn from the known were intended to mirror the unknown spiritual truth (Hunt, 1906).

The icon below left St. Peter is St. Joseph, Mary's husband. The Bible pays Joseph the highest compliment: he was a "just" man. Value meant a lot more than loyalty to paying debts. The just man was simply, merrily, unreservedly faithful to God-in, marrying Mary, naming Jesus, shepherding the adorable pair to Egypt, taking them to Nazareth, in an unspecified number of years of quiet faith and bravery.

The Book and the Sword are typical attributes of St. Paul (right photo). He is also considered the most influential person after Jesus in Christianity's history. He is sometimes



represented with a sword for two essential purposes. The first explanation is that he is well known for his epistle to the Ephesians, where he famously explains the “armor of God.” He uses the armor traditionally worn by a Roman soldier to describe a spiritual armor that prepares a Christian to “stand against the devil’s wiles.” He frequently wears a sword because of a long-standing tradition of representing saints as martyrs. He was not qualified to be crucified as a Roman citizen. Instead, he was beheaded by a sword outside the walls of Rome.

For this reason, St. Paul is often represented with a sword while also carrying a book, the “word of God,” which makes an artistic connection to these passages of the Scriptures.

## 5. Conclusions

Within the last few years, the study of church architecture has become so prevalent and a love for it so pervasive that whereas in a previous generation it was a task to excite either, it is now an object direct both (Durandus et al., 2008). The bishop interview demonstrates that members of both urban and rural parishes, who appeared to be moderately affluent, contributed to the upkeep of their parish churches. Many Christians and many pastors overlook a philosophy of church facilities until they walk into a worship space that brings purposeful architecture to the worship experience’s forefront. This research and analysis will clarify that these particular types of iconography’s survival are due to complex and variable circumstances. From the designs and symbols of the church’s interior and exterior iconography, the research has built a detailed picture of church aesthetics and sacred architecture that could have been in place and add to the understanding of appropriate themes and subjects and their placement. The discussions here also added to the body of knowledge about the possible interior and exterior decoration of the church and the parishioner’s engagement with their religious teachings.

Evidence has emerged from this research about the parishioners’ choice of iconography within the churches; it has shown that they were somehow involved, among other activities, with the maintenance of their parishes dedicated to their founder and some saints who were more than likely to have been displayed within Crusaders of the Divine Church of Christ. The idea is that aesthetic factors - the areas discussed in Result - may play a role in the lack of architectural and aesthetic experience. One challenge is that the parishioners’ level of involvement implied a level of control over the parish management, which had little or nothing to do with the order, purpose, and planning to underlie this abundance of iconography. The sacred architecture shows a strong display of women’s role inside the church, as reflected in the Virgin Mary’s likeness, which sets a significant role in a holy state of purity and perpetual virginity. It is also clear that where the national flag is displayed together, their placement symbolically implies that supreme loyalty is placed by the body assembled there. In churches that display national flags over any sacred art to make it clear that for them, allegiance to God is the same as their commitment to their nation. Valuable insights on the iconography of the ‘eye of providence,’ which represents the eye of God watching over humanity, and the ‘ear’ signify the reception of truth, notice, and obedience. In both literature and iconography, the saints’ diversity may have indicated its importance to the parishioners, and my findings confirmed the intertwining of iconography and sacred architecture.

Wilson (2020) believes that pastors, church leaders, and active Christians must be assisted in moving beyond current, inadequate definitions of growth to envision new signs, symbols, and structures for individual and congregational human flourishing rooted in Jesus’ life and ministry. Identifying the semiotic limitations of a progressive ideology will allow pastors to imagine new ways of understanding how to make disciples and grow churches. The iconography developed into with a defined purpose - worthy of further and future research for this church’ iconography is encouraged in a similar manner.

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