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Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research

Peggy L. Roske

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, proske@csbsju.edu

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2006 photo by the Archivist – linked from Buildings page


Note: The Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research became the **Collegeville** Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research in 2006.

ECUMENISM IN THE UNITED STATES

In the United States, although religious prejudice, racial discrimination, national hatreds, and social conflict between classes, is as great as it is in Europe, very little has been done on a large scale to promote a better understanding between Catholics and Protestants, Christians and Jews, Whites and Negroes. The first Ecumenical Dialogue ever to be held in the United States between Catholics and Protestants was organized by the American Benedictine Academy and held at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota in 1960. At this meeting five Protestant leaders and five Catholic Priests were invited to sit down behind closed doors and discuss frankly the issues which divide Catholics and Protestants in the United States.

1963

1960



Box 1594:1 1963 Bishop Malone (Nebraska) document, p.4, with 1960 photo of Ecumenical Dialogue at SJU

A document authored by Godfrey Diekmann in 1957 was put to use in 1963

IV. A Liturgical Institute

July 25, 1963

MEMORANDUM to Fr. Abbot, about future work of Fr. Aelred (and the Liturgical Institute)

~~Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, and others, have recently called~~ *has been called* attention to the relatively low incidence of American Catholic scholarship. There is no field in which this is more ~~palpably and appallingly~~ true than the field of liturgy; and what makes this more significant is the fact that liturgy is so eminently a Catholic topic, one in which Catholic scholarship would be expected to be especially interested and competent. ~~The only person in U.S.A. who even approximates scholarship in liturgy is the Jesuit, Rev. Gerald Ellard.~~

~~We at St. John's have been identified in the national mind with a certain amount of leadership in the liturgical field. Our liturgical apostolate, as represented by the Liturgical Press and by WORSHIP,~~ *is* looked upon as a major and important contribution to Catholic life, not only in the U.S., but also in other English-speaking countries. The fact that more than twice as many registrations from out-of-state ~~have been~~ *have* received for the Liturgical Week here, than in any previous Liturgical Week, is evident proof of expectations centered on St. John's.

~~WORSHIP and the Liturgical Press have been in existence for 32 years. During all that time, our output has been merely "horizontal" - popularization; we have merely given to others what we ourselves have received from European scholarship. No doubt fault can be assigned; but in general, nobody at St. John's has been equipped, nor has had the time, to do a single piece of scholarly liturgical research. That it is high time such research take place, and that America begin to make its contribution in depth to the liturgical movement of our times, should scarcely need proof.~~

Box 1594:1 1957 Diekmann document, heavily edited for later use

With a due sense of pride and adventure I want to lay the following matter before you. Five years ago when I was in my first year at Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, I initiated, in cooperation with Father Paul Marx, O.S.B., a dialogue between the students and faculty of Luther Seminary and the same of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. At that time the climate for such a dialogue was not anything like it is today; what was then exceedingly difficult to get started is now taken for granted. The election of a Catholic President, the appearance of a number of pertinent books, and the current Vatican Council have all together brought about a climate which fosters such dialogue. This year I was back for the weekend of dialogue at which theological papers were presented and discussed and quite frankly, I was astounded at the progress that has been made in five years of such activity. Not least of all was I impressed by statements from members of the St. John's faculty and student body to the effect that this dialogue has transformed the entire theological attitude of the Abbey. Part of the same effect has been felt at Luther Seminary, an institution of over 500 students. At both institutions

Box 1594:1 1963 April 11 Eichhorst letter to Dr. Howard Reed (p.2) mentions JFK



May 14, 1963

Professor D. Ernst Kinder
59 Melcherstrasse
Muenster/Westfalen
West Germany

Dear Professor Kinder:

You will be happy to hear that the dialogue with our brethren at St. John's has continued to progress in a very fine manner. I was again able to participate this year, the fifth year since its beginning. You again were remembered with thankfulness and we are confident that your presence with us the second year was decisive in setting the tone for the whole dialogue. You perhaps heard that Father Godfrey was very seriously ill but he has now recovered quite well. He and Professor Hans Knang (who will be with you at Muenster) were banned from speaking at Catholic University Washington, D.C. This proved to be an interesting event in American Catholicism and will eventually result in much good because it has given some American bishops and archbishops an opportunity to take a stand with the courage which they gained at the II Vatican Council.

In our work with St. John's we are embarking on a new venture. After being there this last February, I proposed to St. John's and Luther Seminary that a Library for Catholic Studies be set up at Luther and a Library for Protestant Studies be set up at St. John's. I am now acting as chairman of this project and we hope to obtain money from some philanthropic foundation to establish these libraries.



Calvin ("Jack") Eichhorst

1594:1 1963 May 14 Eichhorst letter to Kinder p. 1 & 2; photo from SJU Archives

We hope to organize and continue such initial steps in an Ecumenical Study Center in the new St. John's Library. A collection of basic ecumenical reference works, journals and publications will be assembled and made available to theologians and visiting scholars. Guest lecturers will be invited to foster the ecumenical spirit in the faculty, student and public community. With ecclesiastical approval, plans are underway to establish a first-rate Protestant library of ecumenical works for the use of competent scholars. Luther Seminary will, in turn, establish a similar library of Catholic works. We need financial assistance to realize the development of this new and vitally important apostolate for the advancement of Christian unity in our times.

**Plans for
resources
in the
library**

**...and
fundraising
for them**

3. MONEY FOR THE PROJECT: Jack Eichhorst reported that he had sent letters of inquiry to seven foundations to see if giving a grant for such libraries as we propose would come within the scope of their philanthropy. From Kresge, Three M, Kellogg, Hazen, and Danforth he received a negative reply. No word has yet been received from Dayton's and Bean of Minneapolis. Father Colman suggested that the libraries might be started on a small scale with funds we may be able to get from The Catholic Aid Association and Lutheran Brotherhood. It was pointed out that such a joint project is unique to this area where Catholicism and Lutheranism have been forced to flourish together. He suggested that

Box 1594:1 undated document (top) and 1963 May 28 Luther Sem Mtg p.2

MEMO

March 20, 1964

The following is a proposal from Father Paulin:

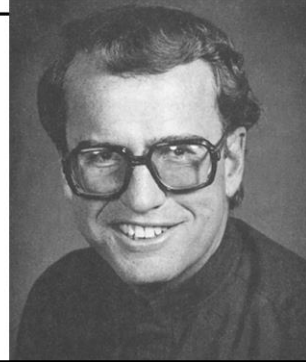
"... Might I suggest that someone like that might be the one to tap for a project I shall very briefly describe as an "Institute for Ecumenical Studies" set up on the same basis as Princeton's Advanced Institute of Studies. It involves provision of a small permanent staff, a building, and very large annual stipends to be offered top-notch scholars who seek to do advanced study in the area involved, and money for the publication of their research. This would be the kind of 'institute' which would most aptly make use of our resources, help build up ones which would complement our graduate study program, our monastic and theological interests, and which would most likely have a national impact and therefore be something a person with money and 'big ideas' might willingly finance."

Memo from Fr. Arno
(SJU President
1958-1964)
To Abbot Baldwin

**A shift to something bigger than a
library collection...**

**Fr. Paulin = Michael Blecker, OSB
(SJU President 1971-1982)**

1980 Abbey Directory



29 1594:1 1964 March Arno Memo

"Just in case you might be interested in the "Institute for Ecumenical Studies":

1. we have the perfect director for such an institution, Father Godfrey—director's job mainly selecting who is to get stipends on basis of research project submitted;
2. it would involve no more of our man power than a director and at most a part time assistant;
3. since it would be a research center there would be no class work taken or given by the men involved but residence on campus would be part of the contract and thus our own faculty as well as students would have opportunity to get in contact with such people;
4. as a research institute Protestants et al would be attracted, could be on campus and without involving delicate matters of episcopal permissions for someone formal teaching etc., could be a part of our academic life and be influenced by it;
5. Institute would have to provide offices and some if not all 'apartments' for those involved, thus we would get a building out of it of handsome proportions;
6. since 'institutes' for study or research have status, and since 'ecumenical institutes' are to be found in Europe, but mostly on a teaching, apparently, rather than research basis, such a project would be of contemporary significance. In fact, excuse me, of ecumenical significance."

Fr. Arno, O.S.B.



Godfrey
Diekmann, OSB

Abbey Photo

**Fr. Arno's memo (quoting Michael Blecker) continues—
envisioning what the Institute will become**

Box 1594:1 1964 March Arno Memo; Abbey photo of Fr. Godfrey

Something bigger meant more fundraising

23 January 1967

Mr. George Dayton
Cedarhurst
Wayzata, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Dayton:

Please permit me to thank you for your kindness and generous sacrifice of your valuable time in coming to lunch with Harry Holtz and me on Friday. I enjoyed our visit very much, and especially appreciate your interest and genuine Christian foresight in the possibilities opening before us all in the Ecumenical Research Center which Minnesota will soon have.

I look forward to welcoming to Saint John's you and your wife and the other guests we may be able to interest in hearing about this ecumenical adventure. You know how welcome you will be. We will have a good time, I promise you.

Under separate cover you are receiving a loaf of Saint John's Bread. It comes with every best wish from the O.S.B.'s!

The practice of giving away Johnnie Bread existed even back then!

Sincerely yours,

Colman J. Barry, O.S.B.

Box 1594:1 Colman Barry letter to Dayton

"A" List

...aiming high!

Edgar M. Bronfman
President and Director
Seagram & Sons, Inc.
375 Park Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Edgar

Mr. Joseph F. Cullman
President and Director
Philip Morris, Inc.
100 Park Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Joe

Mr. Robert Lehman
Lehman Brothers
1 William Street
New York, New York

Dear Bobbie

Mr. Harold D. Uris
President
Uris Buildings Corp.
850 Third Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Harold

Mr. Gustave L. Levy
Goldman Sachs & Co.
20 Broad Street
New York, New York 10005

Dear Gus

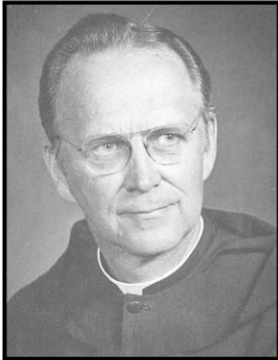
"B" List

Mr. David Rockefeller
President
Chase Manhattan Bank
1 Chase Manhattan Plaza
New York, New York

Dear David

Box 1594:1 (undated, but presumably from 1963) – A and B Lists

Grants totaling \$320,500 from various foundations, associations and individuals have been received to date, including a major gift of \$259,000 from the Butler Charitable Trust, St. Paul, Minn.



*Kilian McDonnell, OSB
1980 Abbey Directory*

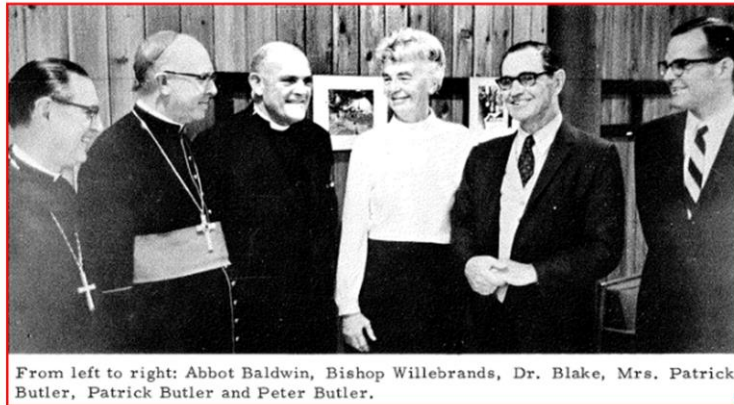
Enter Fr. Kilian McDonnell

The Butlers had funded Fr. Kilian's studies of Protestant Theology in Germany.

Rev. Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., director of the new Institute for Ecumenical Research, will be assisted in his direction by a national board of directors made up of members from the academic and business communities. Still in the formative stage, the board already includes: Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan of Yale University; Dr. Horton Davies, Princeton University; Dr. Alvin Rogness, president of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.; Dr. Louis Gunnessmann of United Theological Seminary, New Brighton, Minn.; Mr. James O'Doherty, president of Kelly Nason Advertising, New York City; and Peter Butler of St. Paul.



1967 Press Release

Text from Box 1557:3 1967 press release, p. 2; photo from 1980 Abbey Directory
From Kilian 2011 March 16: "In the late 1950s the Theology department decided to do something on ecumenism, but they needed someone to be trained/do a dissertation in Protestant theology. My thought was, 'We don't have time to teach the students Catholic theology!' But they wanted me to do it, so I sent a two-page proposal to ten foundations. Two funded my studies; one was the Butlers."



1594:2 Newsletter v. 1 p. 1 November 1968

From Kilian 2011 March 16: "I wrote them a newsy letter twice a year; tried to make it interesting. I was invited to their home for lunch. Mr. Butler had taken my letter and copied it and sent it around to his friends. He asked, 'Where do we go from here?' I talked to fellow monks and came up with the idea for a post doctoral degree, and waited a year, then called Mr. Butler. I told him that there was currently a popular wave of ecumenism that should be capitalized upon. Butler gave me a check for \$250,000." (And when that proved to be less than needed, he donated an additional \$100,000.)

<p> SAINT JOHN'S UNIVERSITY Collegetville, Minnesota</p> <p>SAINT JOHN'S PLANS INSTITUTE FOR ECUMENICAL RESEARCH</p> <p>Rel. No. 3-67 Date: January 16, 1967</p> <p><u>First of its kind in the U.S.;</u> <u>Marcel Breuer Named Architect</u></p> <p>Do Not Release Before: 12:00 Noon (CST), January 23, 1967</p> <p>Collegetville, Minn. (SPECIAL) - Saint John's Abbey and University announced today the establishment of an Institute for Ecumenical Research on its Collegetville, Minn. campus, the first of its kind in the United States.</p> <p>Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, O.S.B., described the planned institute as a residential center where ten Protestant, Orthodox and Jewish scholars will live with their families to form a community of scholars engaged in research, carrying on theological dialogue with one another and with Uni-</p>	<p>Breuer was tapped to design yet another building for St. John's</p>
<p><i>(more on Breuer to come...)</i></p>	

1557:3 1967 0118 Press release p. 1; photo from
<http://www.marcelbreuer.org/At.SJ.html>

Protestants Back Ecumenical Institute at St. John's

By DAVE MONA
MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE (last 1000)
COLLEGEVILLE, Minn. — A group representing the most strongly Protestant area in Minnesota will go to a Benedictine Abbey here today to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Reformation with a monetary gift to a center for ecumenical research.

The money from 11 Al-

most 150 congregations — 10 Protestant and one Roman Catholic — will be used to support the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, scheduled to open in December.

St. John's Abbey, upon whose grounds near St. Cloud, Minn., the institute is being built, is the largest Benedictine monastery in the world and is an acknowledged leader in ecumenical research.

THE INSTITUTE will house Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Jewish scholars who will work with St. John's University and the community.

Marcel Breuer, Hungarian-born Lutheran architect who designed the library, church and science building on the campus, also designed the comfortable one-level apartments on the north side of artificial Lake Watah.

The Rev. Kilian McDonnell, who teaches graduate courses in Protestant theology, originated the idea of the center.

He has been assisted by the Rev. Ephrem Kaufman, who at 55 is 10 years older than Father McDonnell.

Father Kaufman is a converted agnostic and Father McDonnell, in jest, maintains that "he's still a good part agnostic."

THEY BOTH deny the fact that St. John's is best known for its bread and football teams, but it is their teamwork on crucial issues that is gaining recognition for the study center.

Father McDonnell last

year published a book earlier this year on "John Calvin, the Church and the Kickstart."

His study in Europe had been financed by the Butler Family Foundation of St. Paul, in early 1965 he went back to the Butler family and asked if they would be interested in helping to fund the center.

He received a commitment from the Aimee Mott Butler Charitable Trust for \$350,000.

FROM the Lewis W. and Maude Hill Family Foundation he received promises of \$7,500 in "active ready-

project, asked Father Kaufman to join him.



IN JANUARY of this year Brewer's sketches arrived and construction began in

depth the cause of the split in the church and see how we can bring the churches closer together," he said.

He said he sees the Albert Lea contribution as the kind of support the venture wants and needs.

"Since the Reformation represents a period in

THE INSTITUTE, EQUIPPED FOR SCHOLARS AND THEIR FAMILIES, IS UNIQUE IN THE

Father McDonnell recalled his explanation of the center to some "Eastern scholars."

"They said it was very interesting but that it would never work to exclude wives and children. They told me it was the kind of scheme only an unmarried priest would think of," he said.

Minneapolis Tribune Oct. 19, 1967

Box 1593:4 - Minneapolis Tribune Oct. 19, 1967, p. 1B



Saint John's offers the scholar and his family the experience of life at a large Benedictine monastery with its emphasis on the intellectual life and the search for relevant forms of worship. For the family accustomed to life in a city or at a large university, the institute offers the novel experience of country living in the heart of the Minnesota lake country with three institutions of higher learning within a radius of twelve miles. Within easy commuting distance is the metropolitan area of Minneapolis-Saint Paul with the research facilities of the University of Minnesota, fine stores and the cultural opportunities afforded by a nationally known symphony, the Tyrone Guthrie Theater, the Walker Art Center, and the Saint Paul Art Center.

“Country living in the heart of Minnesota lake country”

Box 1557:3 promotional brochure p.9

Three miles from Saint John's is a large Benedictine convent which conducts the College of Saint Benedict, a liberal arts college for women which is closely associated with Saint John's. The opportunity to share in the life of Saint Benedict's, with its full program of intellectual and cultural activities and the excellent new Benedicta Arts Center, should be an added attraction for the wives of the scholars who participate in the institute. In addition the faculty wives of Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict have an organization of their own and welcome the wives of scholars into their activities. Wives interested in returning to school will find a wide range of academic subjects to choose from at Saint John's, the College of Saint Benedict and Saint Cloud State College. The Tri-College Program of the three institutions offers stimulating weekly evening sessions for interested auditors. For the scholar or his wife who would want to do some teaching, there will normally be the possibility of teaching a class or conducting a seminar.



Text from 1557:3 promotional brochure, p. 6-7; photo linked from Buildings page

The work of the Institute began in earnest at the end of August. Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Swidler, both Fellows of the Institute, and Dr. and Mrs. William Jerry Boney arrived with their children to take up a year's residence.

Dr. Swidler is professor of religion at Temple University, a state institution in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has advanced degrees from Tübingen and the University of Wisconsin. He is co-editor and founder of the Journal of Ecumenical Studies and has published four books and a large number of articles. His research project while at the Institute is a study of reform in the American Catholic Church in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Mrs. Swidler is managing editor of the Journal of Ecumenical Studies, national chairman of the Church Communities Commission of the National Council of Catholic Women and member of the Working Group of Representatives from the National Council of Churches and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. She has an MA from Wisconsin and has published extensively in magazines and journals. Although her principal concern has been the role of women in the Roman Catholic Church, one of her most significant projects while at the Institute is work on ecumenism for children.

The Institute's First Scholars



Newsletter November 1968 p. 2

Dr. and Mrs. Swidler with Eva and Carmel.

ABBAY AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The library designed by Marcel Breuer and completed in 1966 houses the Monastic Manuscript Microfilm Library and an outstanding collection on liturgy. Each scholar will have a private, air-conditioned study in the area of the library adjoining the microfilm collection.



Box 1557:3 1968 promotional brochure, p.4;

ABBAY AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The library designed by Marcel Breuer and completed in 1966 houses the Monastic Manuscript Microfilm Library and an outstanding collection on liturgy. Each scholar will have a private, air-conditioned study in the area of the library adjoining the microfilm collection.

**Private...
and windowless...
in the
sub-basement...!**



Box 1557:3 promotional brochure, p.4; photo 20110412 by the archivist

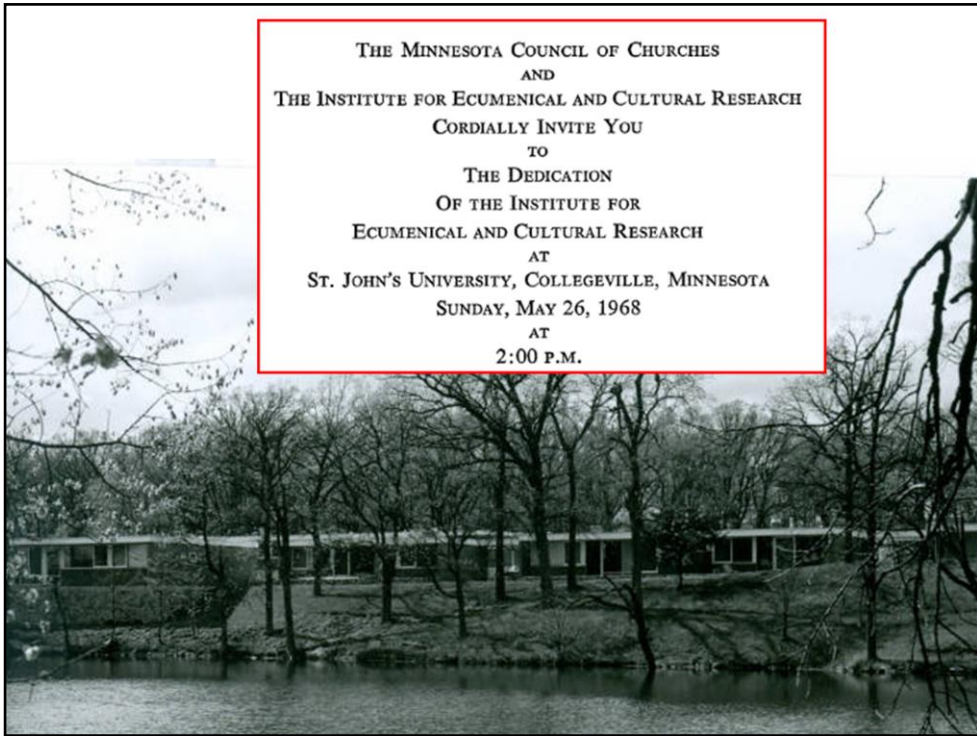
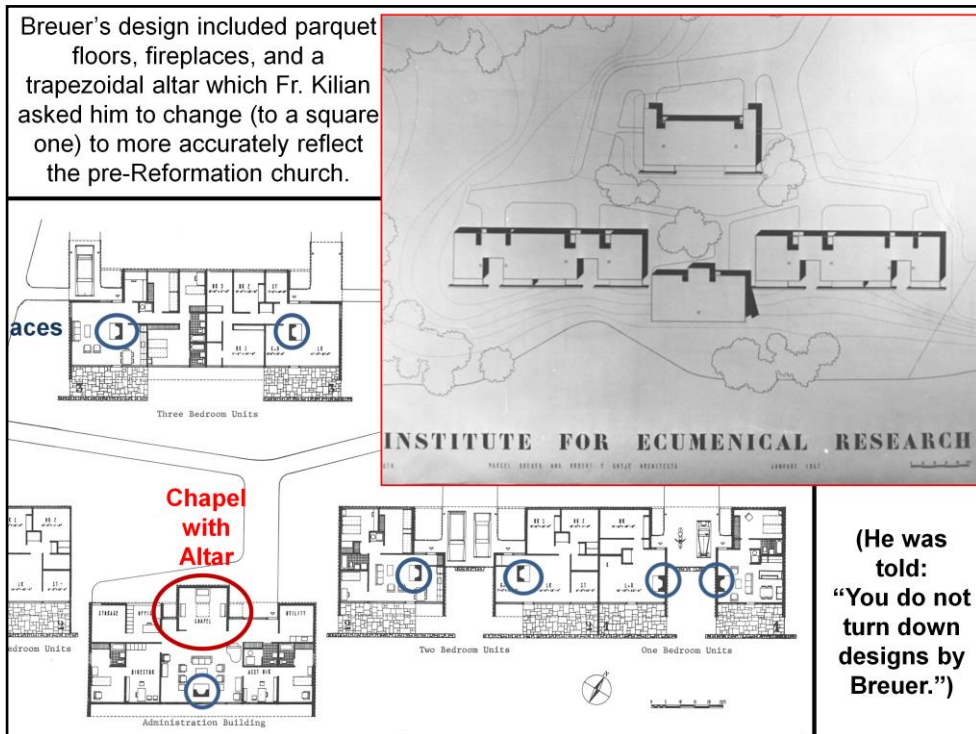


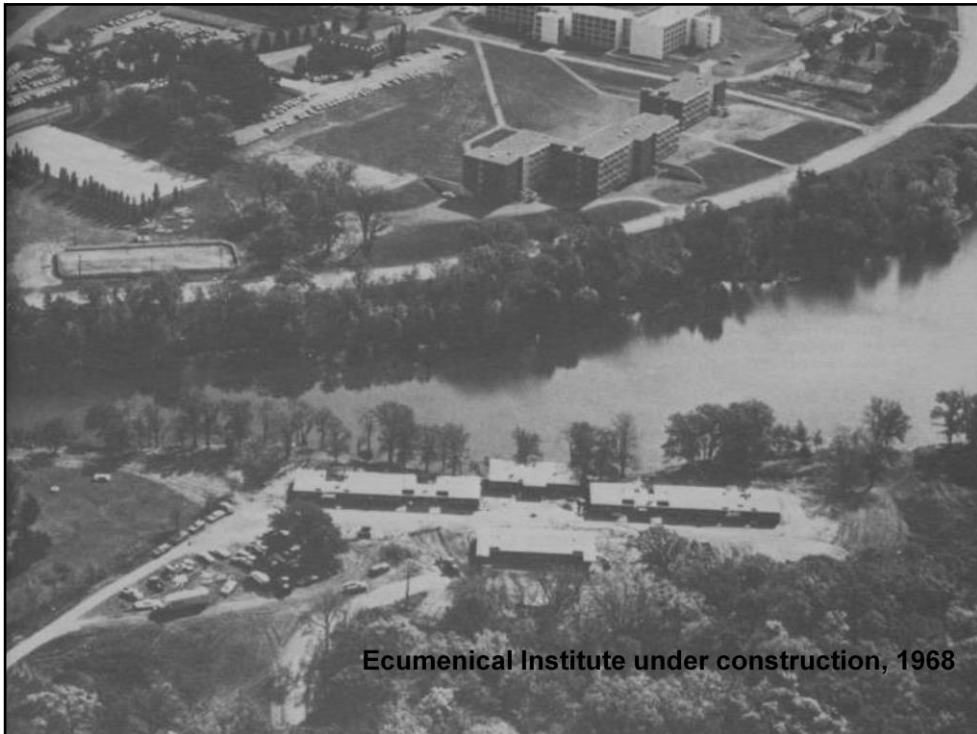
Photo linked from Buildings page; invitation in 1594:2



Box 1594:2 Drawing 2 and 1557:3 p. 10 (floor plans)

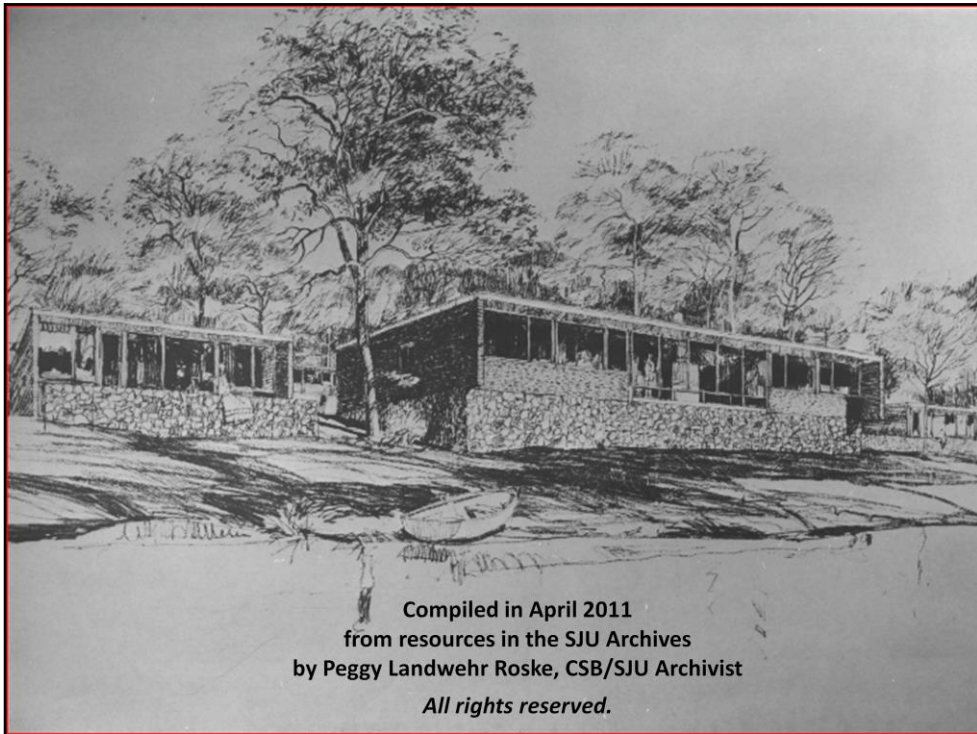
From Kilian March 16 2011: "I did not ask for parquet floors – but we got them. I did not ask for fireplaces – but we got them. Breuer made those choices. I was delighted to have them.

I asked for an altar – not specifically a Catholic one, though. Breuer designed a trapezoid stone altar that I didn't particularly like. I asked for a square one, like those used in the early church, but I've never been completely happy with it; it looks like a butcher's block. I was told, by someone in Breuer's office who had been here, that 'You do not turn down designs by Breuer.'"



Ecumenical Institute under construction, 1968

1968 aerial view from <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?/SJUArchives,5893>



Design Drawing - Box 1594:2

Note: The Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research became the **Collegeville** Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research in 2006.