

**MODERN
ECCLESIASTICAL
ART**

Modern Ecclesiastical Art

International Exposition
Chicago 1933

Germany

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The community of Christ alone is building the church.
God sends his workmen. If only there is a community
that lives in prayer and in the Holy Sacraments, there
will be an end to all need and distress.

Rudolf Koch

Protestant Department

Otto Bartning

Winfried Wendland, Berlin

Kunstdienst, Dresden—Berlin

Catholic Department

Hans Herkommer, Stuttgart

Berthold Müller-Oerlinghausen, Berlin

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Christliche Kunst, München

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"There shall be nothing happening in this house,
it be that our Dear Master speaketh to us
through his Holy Gospel and we shall speak to
him through prayers and hymns"

From a sermon of Dr. Martin Luther.
Given at the inauguration of
the chapel of the Castle of
Torgau, in the year 1544.

Statue of Luther, wrought in copper by Hans Wissel,
Havelberg



It is with great satisfaction that I have welcomed the realization of a plan to show a sector of the creations of German religious art of the last years on the premises of the World's Fair in Chicago. Need and distress of various kind have weighed heavily on the German people, but the German soul has not succumbed. Every true artist creates out of the sources of true belief; that is why the need of our time has led the German artist more and more to turn to the religious subject.

The exhibit shows a section of Protestant religious art. What is being shown here, may give the world at large and especially the American people an idea of how the German Protestant in deep sincerity struggles with holy unrest and experiences the deep joy which has entered his soul through the Gospel and strives for artistic expression.

D. Dr. KAPLER

President of the Protestant Supreme Church Council
and of the German Protestant Executive Committee.

Crucifix, wrought in copper by Hans Wissel, Havelberg



Church of the Ascension in Essen, Exterior, architectural details
by Otto Bartning, Berlin

CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

In what relation, then, do Church and Church Construction stand to our main philosophy? . . .

It is not the divinity bound to the space, the spring, the image, the relic that stands for the sanctification of the space, but: The Communion of Human Beings, who experience the omnipresence of God in their midst; it is this communion which creates and sanctifies this space.

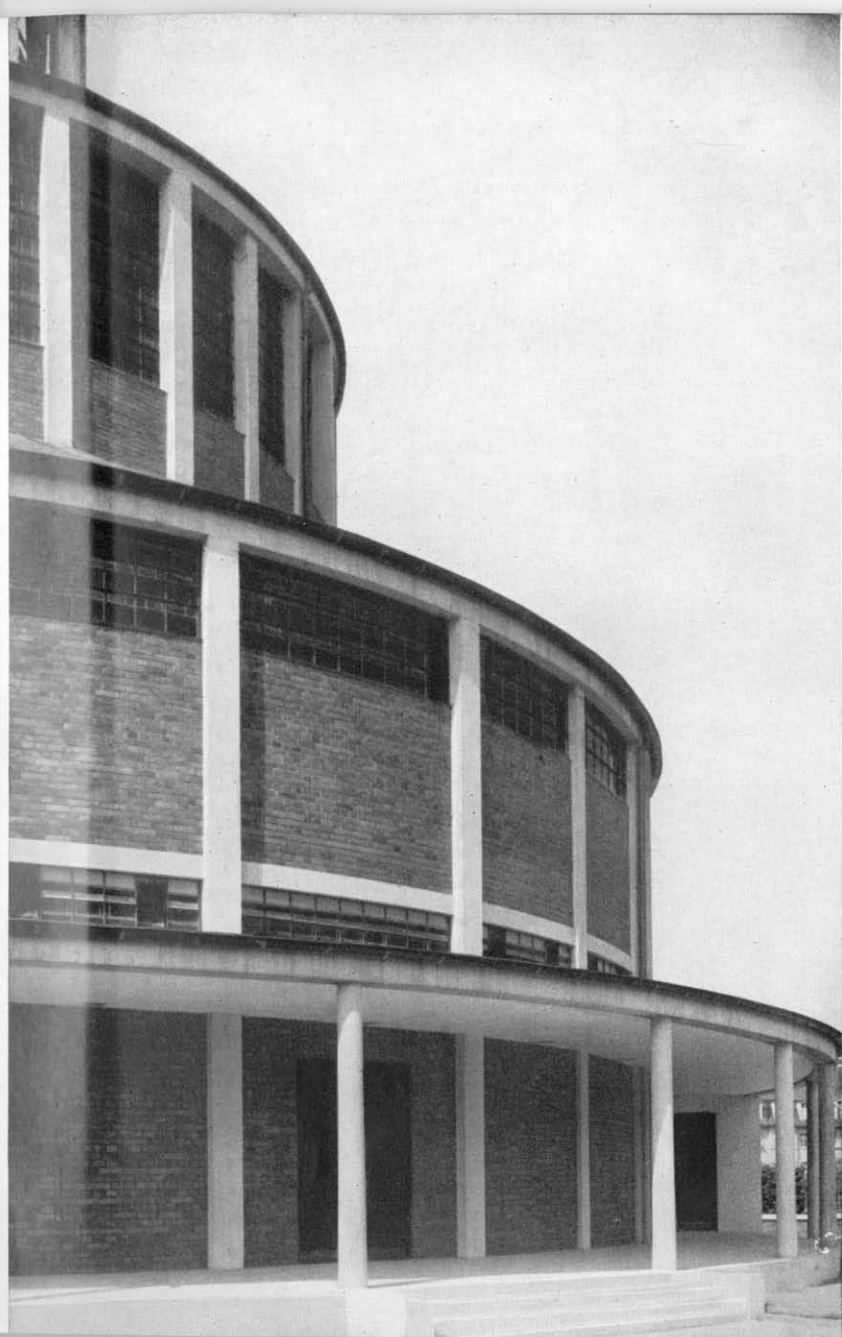
Communion grows up out of the ancient longing of man who, in his individual isolation feels lonely and starving, and at the same time feels that power has been given him to help his fellows. The need of the individual and the divine power and desire to help and to love — that is what creates communion.

Only he who has been through a storm can appreciate the calm of the ocean. Only a person who has experienced the complexity of our modern days knows the beauty of simplicity.

For this peace, for the simplest certainties dwelling within it, we live, and strive and die.

. . . What is the aim of all our striving?

The simple certainty that all our actions, every thought, every breath, every word is a building-stone in eternity.



At the heart of all unrest lies the peace that sur passeth understanding.

In this eternity in the midst of the evanescent, in this sense in the midst of senselessness, in this calm in the midst of the storm, in our longing for peace we are one, we know, help and love each other.

What derive the Church and Church Construction from this? Architecture fulfils its practical programme in factory building in traffic (railroad &c.) construction, in apartment building.

Architecture receives its spiritual tension out of every lull in the storm, out of the Spirit of the Age, sometimes in factory-building, in traffic constructions, in apartment building.

Church construction increases this tension with the least lose of freedom, if instead of clinging neither historically nor romantically to retrospective mood values it looks boldly and frankly into the future, plans and builds.

The more a Church rests upon that main philosophy, the more a church community experiences within itself the omnipresence of God, the more will the church be the sacred edifice in a higher, freer sense.

For the present, solitary works of art, solitary buildings are cries of the longing for divine communion: we should appreciate them and hear their call.

Otto Bartning

Interior of the Gustav Adolf Church in Berlin, Photo of model
by Otto Bartning, Berlin

Church of the Protestant Community in Lissabon, Portugal,
Photo of model
by Otto Bartning, Berlin



SIMPLICITY
MODESTY
VERACITY

This is the spirit in which the "Kunstdienst" as a free community endeavoured to interest the german public in new ecclesiastical art. In a traveling exhibition which took its way through a great number of german cities the "Kunstdienst" showed in photos and models the best postwar churchbuildings. New ecclesiastical implements from german artistcraftsman und craftshops were assembled and exhibited.

In this fashion the "Kunstdienst" tried to win the congregations for the new art, and trough this art get wider circles interested in matters of the church. It eagerly sought the cooperation of many artists whom the "Kunstdienst" interested and stimulated through problems given to them as artists or craftsmen. The result of these efforts can be looked upon eas preparatory work of great importance for this protestant department.

Kunstdienst, Dresden-Berlin

Wallhanging by Hohenhagens weawingghops, Bremen

Altar by Zschiesche, Dresden

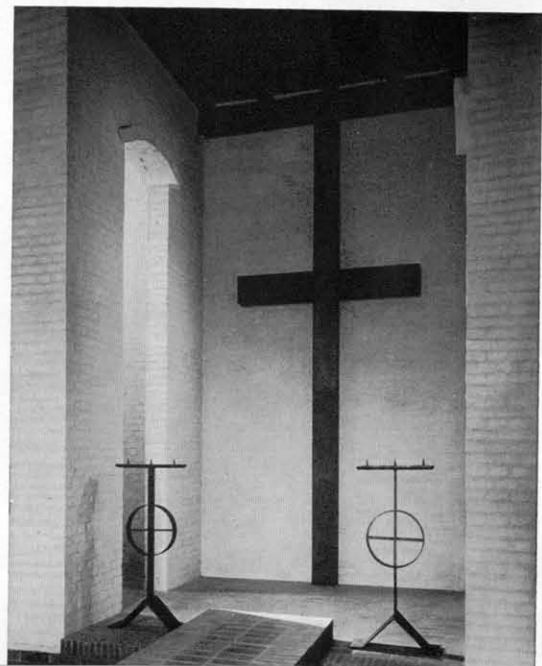
Chalice by Bauer-Saar

Chandelier by Dohrn-Sattler, Hellerau

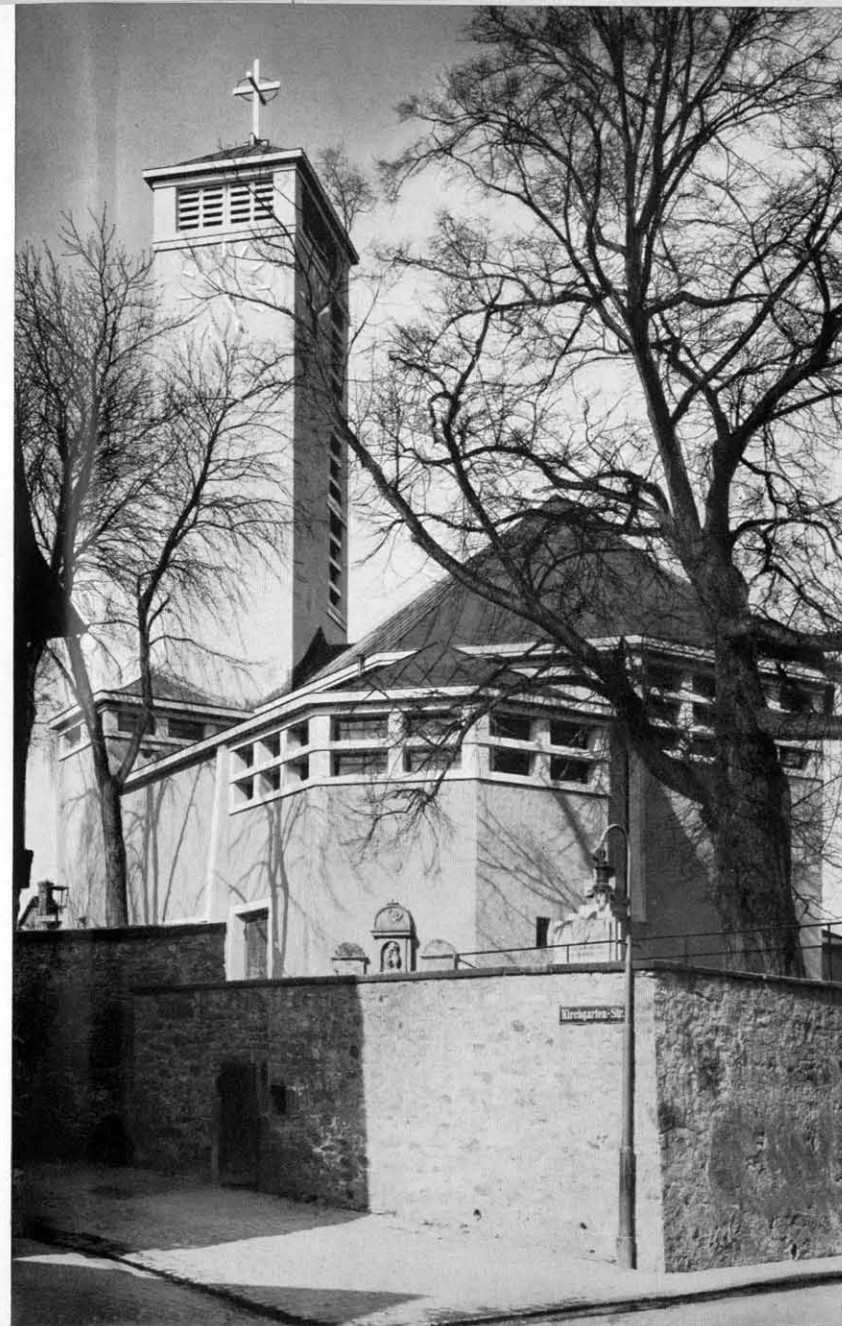


Church in Wohltorf near Hamburg by Benzel and Kamps,
Hamburg

A cemetery chapel in Bebra, space for the bier in interior
by Baecker and Sirrenberg, Cassel

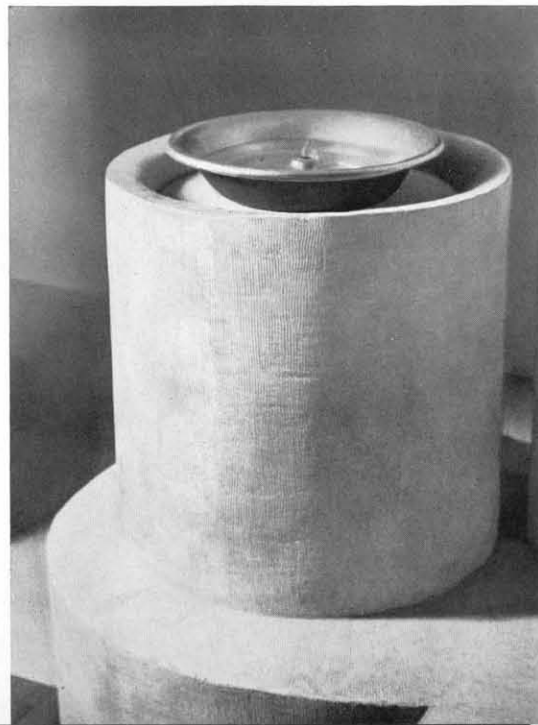


Church in Niederursel near Frankfurt a. M.,
by Martin Elsaesser, Frankfurt a. M.



Cemetery chapel by Winfried Wendland, Berlin

Baptismal Font, fed from a spring, in the Elvese Chapel
near Hamburg by Gerhard Langmaack, Hamburg



Altar cross and chandelier, ebony and brass, nickel-plated, Workshop of the "Rauhes Haus" in Hamburg



With thin hard pencil lines, I pointedly drew on the canvas thirteen people: the Saviour and his twelve disciples, sitting round a table in a warm spring night, the night preceding the great passion of Christ. This was the hour when Christ revealed his great idea of Deliverance to the beloved disciples; when he spoke those deeply felt words that have come upon us in his sacraments. John lowered his head to the bosom of the divine friend . . .

I followed the irresistible desire to represent this strange deep spirituality, religion and fervour, but without any definite direction of will or knowledge, and without planning. Only a few heads of disciples and one head of Christ I had drawn. I stood before the outlined canvas almost in fear, not a natural model present, and I was to paint the most mysterious and inmost event in the history of christian religion. Christ's face transfigured in the realisation of his Holy Mission, the wreath of his disciples, sitting before him and at his side in deep emotion. The picture was completed, — the Holy Supper.

EMIL NOLDE



The "Holy Supper" Painting by Emil Nolde
Galery of Orts, Halle

"The Singer"

Head of a sculpture for Catherine's church in Lübeck
by Ernst Barlach, Güstrow



Group of angels, mosaic
by Babberger, Karlsruhe



Detail of a chandelier by Esser, Berlin



Church in Hedelfingen near Stuttgart
by Volkart and Trüdinger, Stuttgart





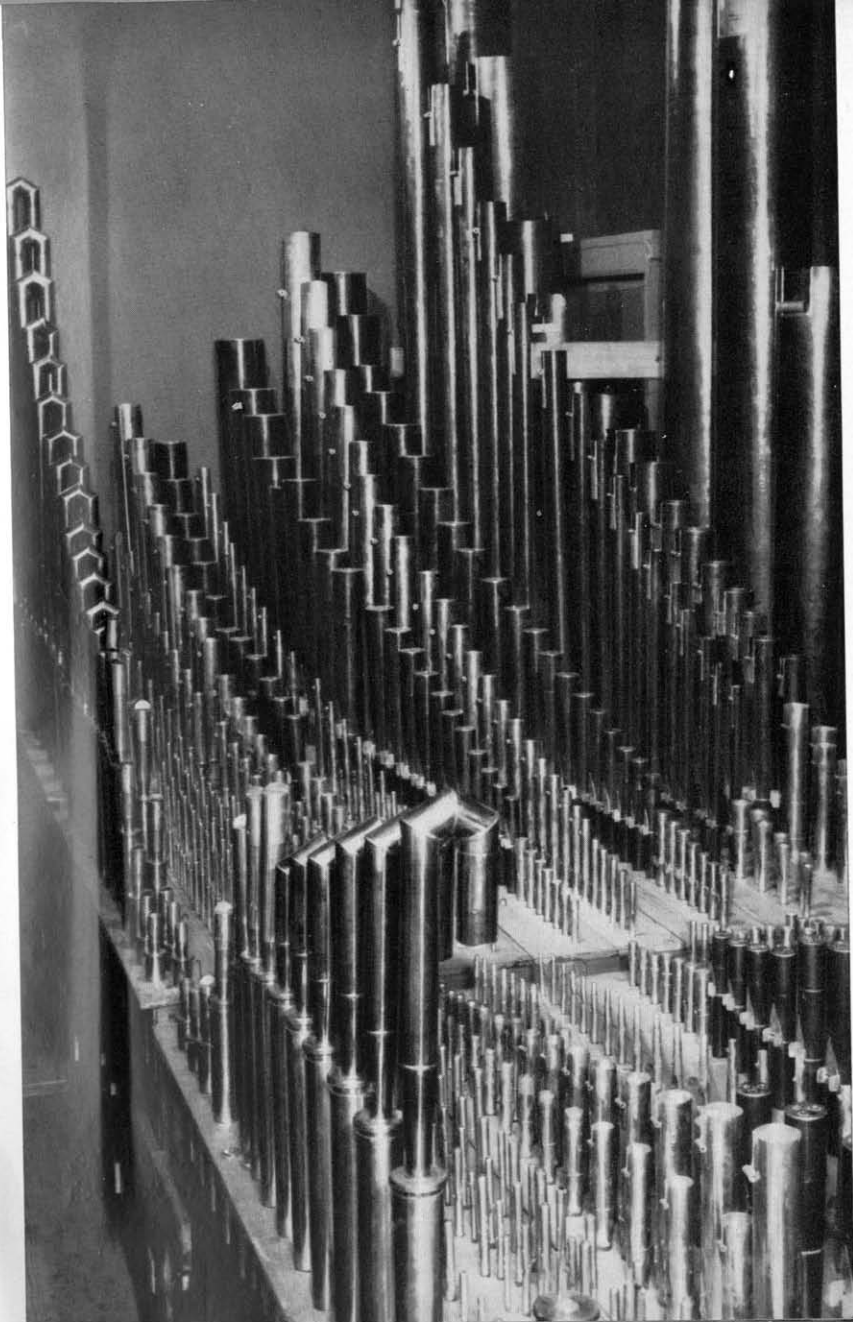
Joh. Seb. Bach

Score and script from the fugue in B-Minor by Joh. Seb. Bach, copied from the original by Paul Koch, Offenbach

The records of sacred music, played at the hall of exhibition, are manufactured by the firms:

Die Kantorei
Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft
Elektrola

Up to the present the organ has been hidden behind a decorative row of mute pipes. Recently this decoration has been omitted with very good results and it has thus been made possible to give an insight into the interesting and complex organism of copper, tin, zinc and wood pipes.



THOUGHTS FROM "CHURCH AND ARTIST"
BY DR. CONRAD GRÖBER, ARCHBISHOP
OF FREIBURG IN THE BREISGAU (BADEN)

We are wont to define the word "artist" in a general sense as indicating a person accustomed to regard the world and himself in his own individual way and to project a sector of nature or human life through the medium of his temperament into literature and creative art.

The real artist's "different way" of regarding life is an intensified, deeper and largely creative form of contemplation.

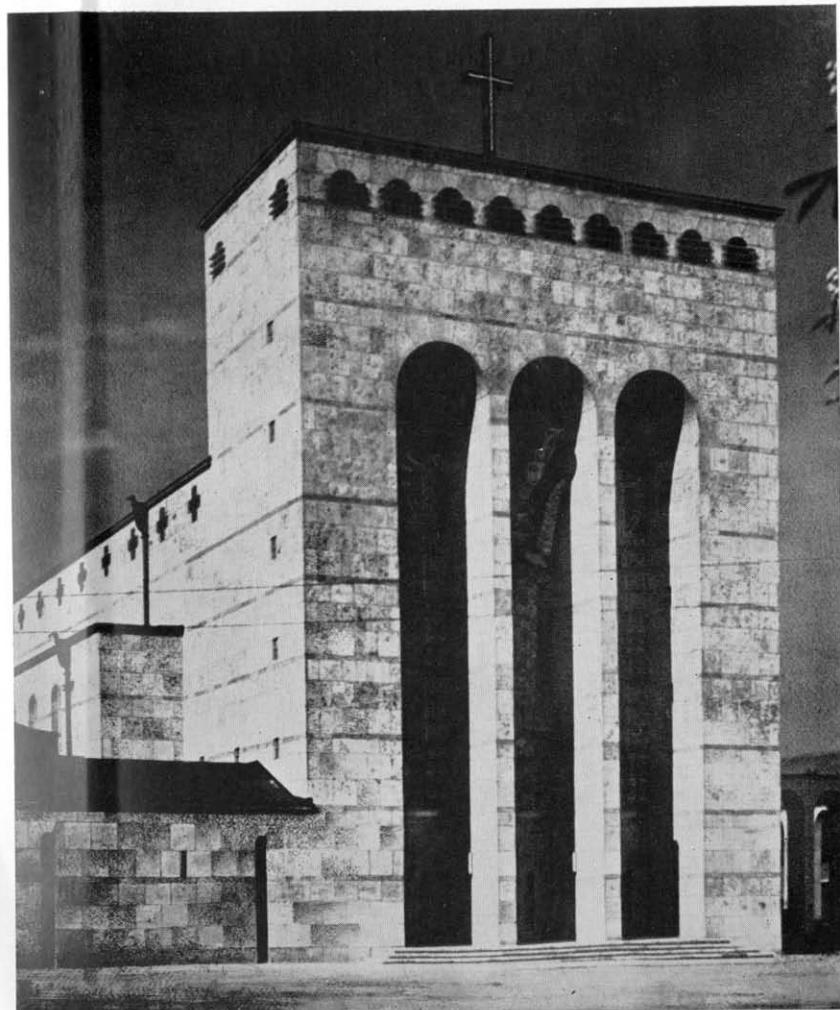
Domenichino was wont to say that a painter should never put on canvas what he has not first spiritually created and thought out in every detail. The artist thus has the inward vision, he sees and hears with his soul. The Lord Creator has blessed him as one who first

D. Böhm, Köln on the Rhine,
Hospital Church in München-Gladbach



conceives the beautiful as his very own, spiritually creating it before giving it to the world at large. The artist is characterized by the ability to give visual form to thoughts and emotions that to him have become revelations of the soul, so that they may be a true reflection of an inward experience. It is in this that the artist differs from the technician, even if the latter may also work in the field of fine arts. The one is the man of vision and of ideas, the other is of the surface and the purely technical. The one has warmth and spiritual depth, the other is the hero of the day and has the glamorous success of the moment. The one creates real beauty, the other produces the purely intellectual. The real artist can be compared with the Midas of legend. Whatsoever was touched by his genius was transformed to pure gold. The artist is creator, the warmth of the earth and the breath of God are essential for his creation. But he himself is only an image and a likeness and a "living soul".

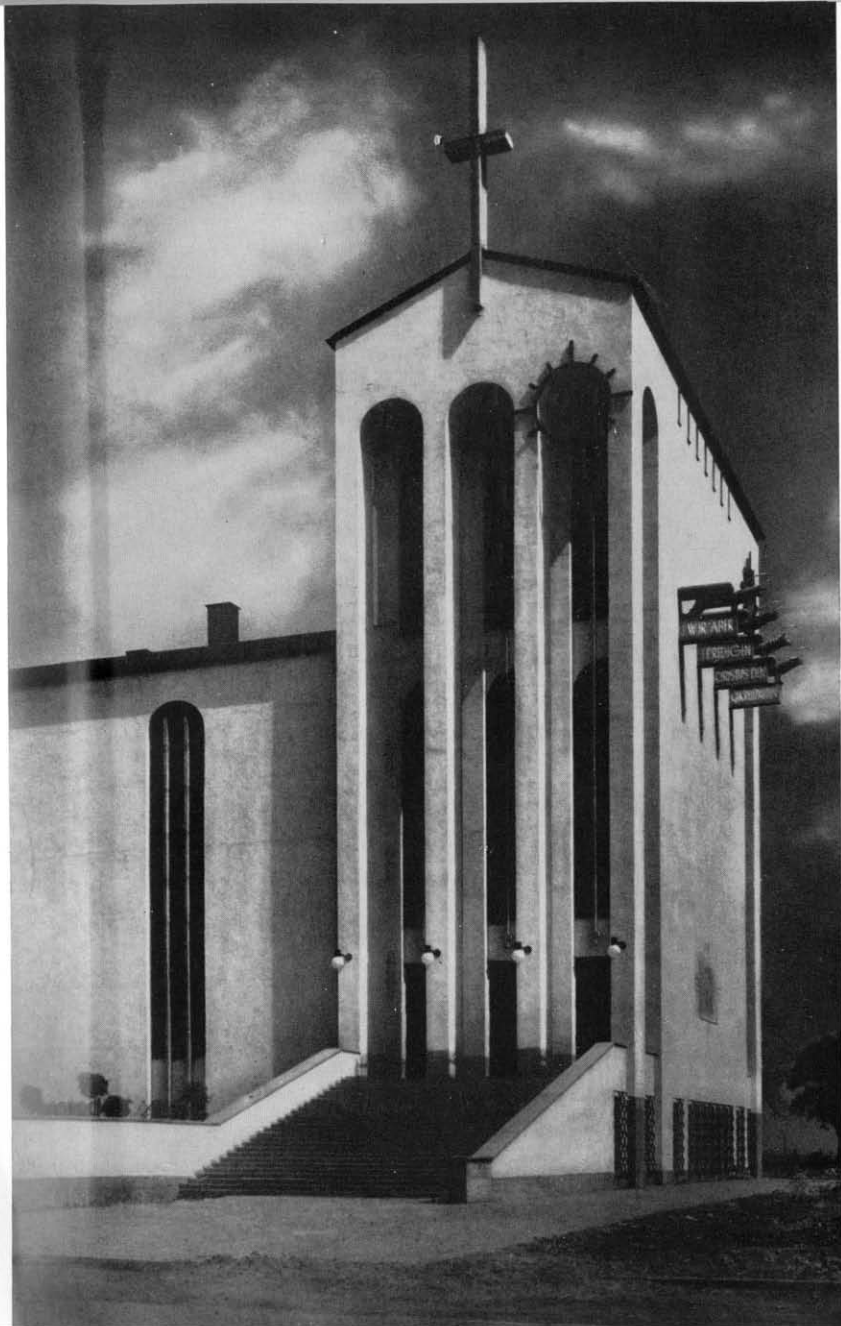
H. Herkommer, Stuttgart,
Church of Our Lady, Frankfurt on Main



It is for this reason that we can also regard art as the conveyor of Grace. Herein lies the deeper meaning of the following parabel, written many years ago:

"Once upon a time, when the angels were still walking the earth, there was a man who resisted God Almighty. But the Lord took mercy on him and sent to him the Angel of Truth, that he might be enlightened. And the Angel descended to earth and knocked at the window of the defiant man, craving entrance. "Who are you and what is it you wish?" demanded the man impatiently, slightly opening the window. The Angel of Truth told him of his request, but the man slammed the window and the Angel stood outside not knowing what to do. He waited a long time, walking up and down before the house, knocking again and again at the door, but nobody opened. So he flew back to Heaven and was very sad indeed, because his visit had been without result. Presently his sister, the Angel of Beauty, saw him and asked the reason for his distress. The Angel of Truth told of

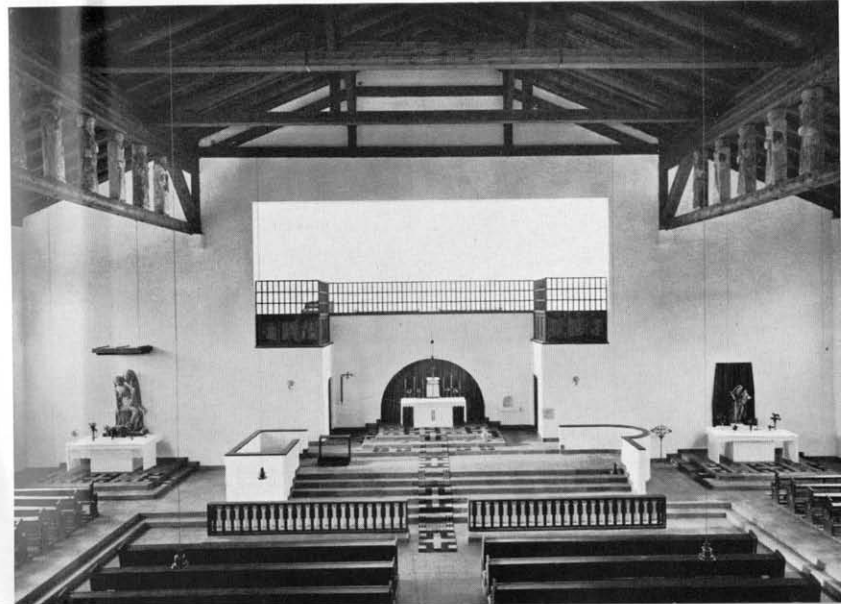
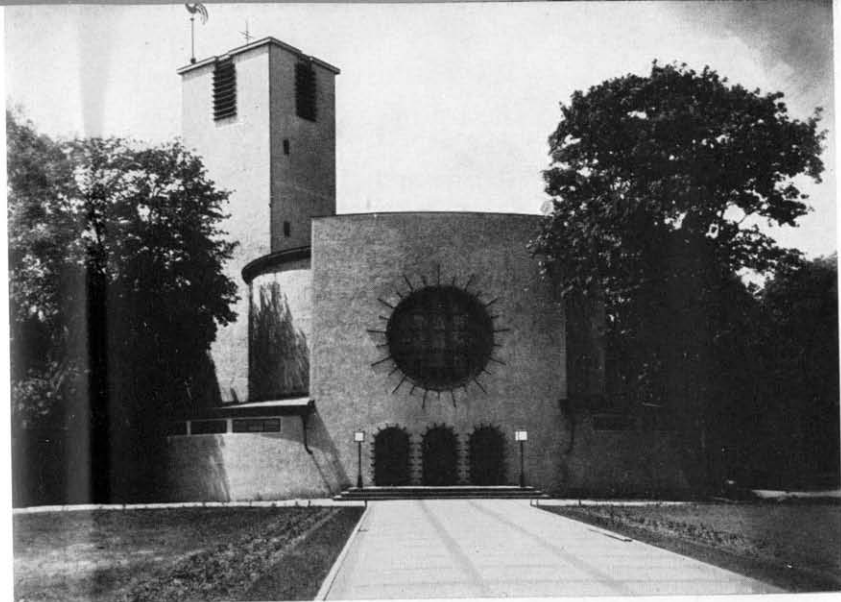
M. Weber, Frankfurt on Main,
Church of the Holy Cross, Frankfurt on Main



his grievance. "Take courage, brother", she said, "what you could not achieve alone, we will accomplish together. And so they both glided down to earth through the hanging garden of beautiful stars. When they came in sight of the man's house, the Angel of Beauty said to the Angel of Truth: "Wait awhile", and she went to the window and knocked. But the man thought it was again someone come to disturb his peace and grumbled angrily. Then the Angel of Beauty knocked again, and it sounded like the sweet tones of a harp and the window shone in many-colored radiance like the stained-glass windows of a cathedral. And the man listened and looked up in astonishment from his work, and when he saw the Angel of Beauty standing before his window the frown disappeared from his face and his heart was glad. He quickly opened the window, asking "who are you, my beautiful child?" "I am Beauty," said the Angel. "Oh come in and be welcome," said the man,

Th. Burlage, Osnabrück,
Memorial-Church, Connewitz-Leipzig

Cl. Holzmeister, Vienna,
Church in Merchingen, Saar-District



opening the door wide. "I should like to enter," said Beauty reluctantly. "I think I should enjoy being with you. But —" "There is no but," said the man, "whatever you wish for you shall have. Come in." "Very well," said the Angel of Beauty, "but I have my brother outside. Do you see him? Have you room for both of us?" "Room for a dozen children as charming as you." And the Angel of Beauty flew to the Angel of Truth and said "come," and so Truth and Beauty took possession of the heart of the defiant man."

M. Kurz, Augsburg, Church of St. Joseph, Augsburg



MODERN CATHOLIC ECCLESIASTIC ART

Art has at all times been a true reflection of its period, and has always found, as it were, the visionary expression for future developments. It is for this reason that, to understand the art of a certain period, we must first understand its spiritual background. Consequently we can only appreciate modern art if we realize and understand the problems of modern life. We are at the present witnessing a great change in all branches of science, politics, industry, art and religion. There is a constant flow and development and we seem to stand right in the midst of an essentially new creative period. But what we see today cannot as yet be regarded as a definite result, while, on the other hand, it would seem foolish to reject all that is new and different only because it has not yet achieved perfection. In bygone centuries the spiritual

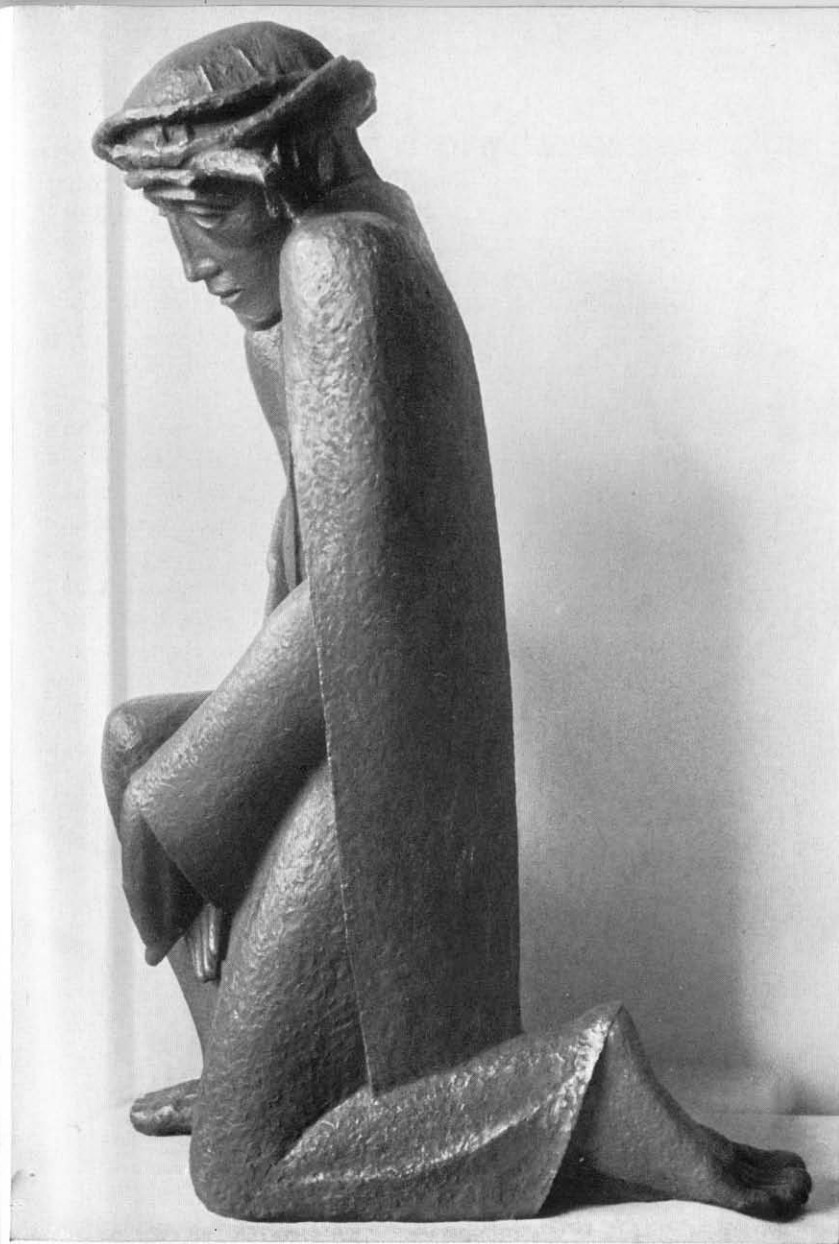
Müller-Oerlinghausen, Berlin, Disciples of Amos



development of a period and its adequate expression in art ripened throughout a considerable number of years, as, for instance, from the first indication of a new style to its climax and eventually to its decay. Even if we take into consideration the speed of our time, we nevertheless cannot expect to omit the first faltering steps and begin with the climax of development. But let us now consider which are the characteristics and aims of our period.

The dramatic element, decided contrasts and strong tensions are the outstanding factors. The impulse of the moment, passion and elementary force, are overruling the purely spiritual, thoughtful and harmonious. But strong instincts, passion and tension were never adverse to art development. If these forces are spiritualized, can they not as a unit help to build up the foundations of the new expression of our time in profane as well as in

H. Dinnendahl, Münster, Ecce Homo



ecclesiastic art! Was not the Gothic style once regarded as barbaric? The Baroque as lacking in form? Furthermore, we see today in all branches of life a remarkable parallel of facts and aims. In natural science we have, for instance, relativity and unity. The plurality of visual forms of expression can be traced back, to an entity. As a parallel, we have in art the unity of material, energy and of soul. With the help of this entity we have in a number of profane buildings been able to lend a clear and definite expression to our time. Why then should it not be possible to solve the problem of ecclesiastic art by the same methods? Can we not in every period trace an exact parallel between profane and ecclesiastic art? Never throughout the centuries do we find that they vary pronouncedly in style, but rather that they have both always been a perfect expression of their time.

E. Sutor, Karlsruhe, Crucifix

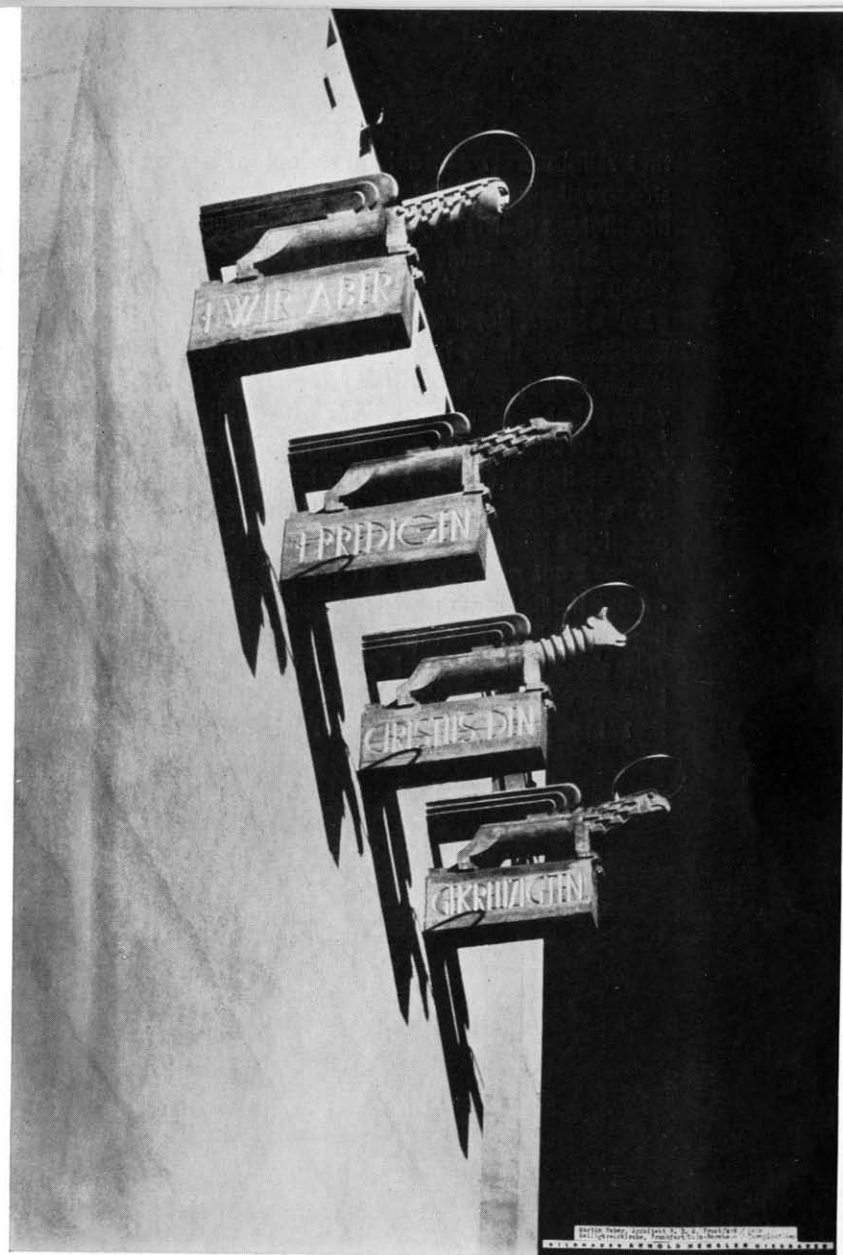


If, as we have found, science leads us from relativity to unity, philosophy is striving from relative to absolute values.

In art we again find a parallel development. Here also, the tendency leads away from the subjective to the objective, from naturalism to abstraction. The stress lies more on the expression of inward emotions than on the outward forms of classic beauty.

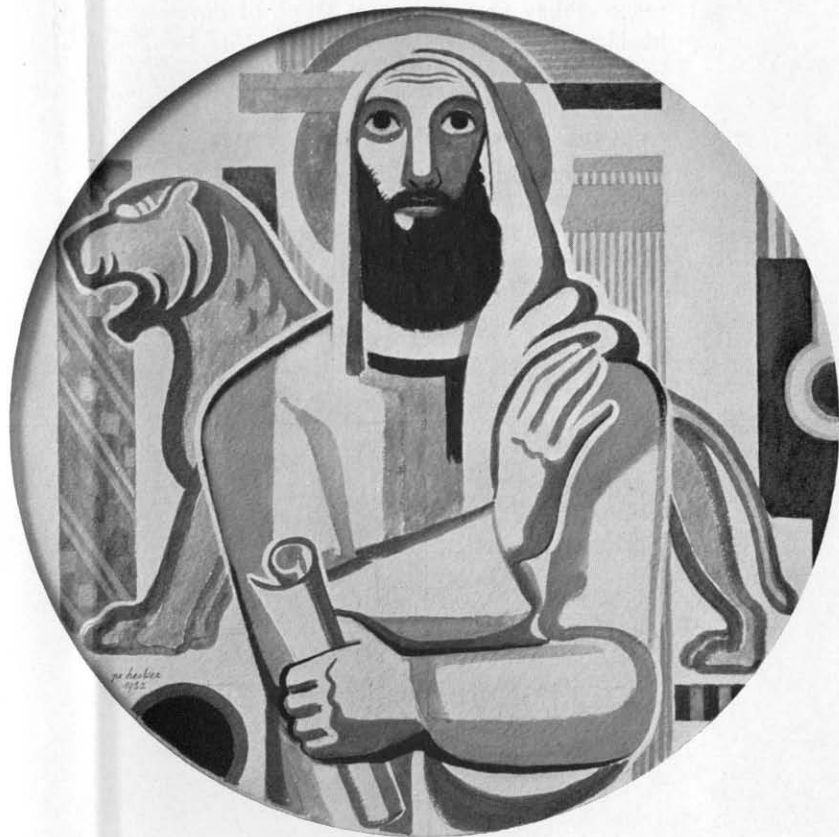
And lastly, in the religious life of today, we also find these strong contrasts: Sincere belief, striving toward the spiritual, on the one side, absolute lack of belief, indifference and even antagonism on the other. Now the Catholic Church has at all times realized the spiritual value and even the necessity of the creative art expression born out of the spirit of the period. She also acknowledges that art has a right to its own time-connected expression. The Church therefore purposely sponsors the ecclesiastic art of today. But we realize

A. Hensler, Wiesbaden, The Evangelists



that religious art can only grow out of a sincere and strong religious conviction. The regeneration of spiritual life that we feel is growing within and around us leads us back to the community spirit, to the Gospel, to liturgy, which in this connection does not indicate a reawakening of old forms, but a regaining of the true spirit of early Christianity. There is a demand for clarity of thought, strength of speech, brevity of form. And it is for these values that modern ecclesiastic art with its simplicity of form and intensity of expression finds the most adequate presentation. This shows clearly that modern ecclesiastic art is by no means an individual, purely esthetic, or one-sided intellectual matter, but a natural growth developed out of the religious spirit and social necessity of our time. Modern art is deeply connected with our life and spiritual background.

This should be realized and must be realized by the layman as well as the clergy. It is in this connectoin that the priest has a special mission and a great



P. Hecker, Cologne on the Rhine, Medallion, from
the Cathedral of St. Hedwig, Berlin

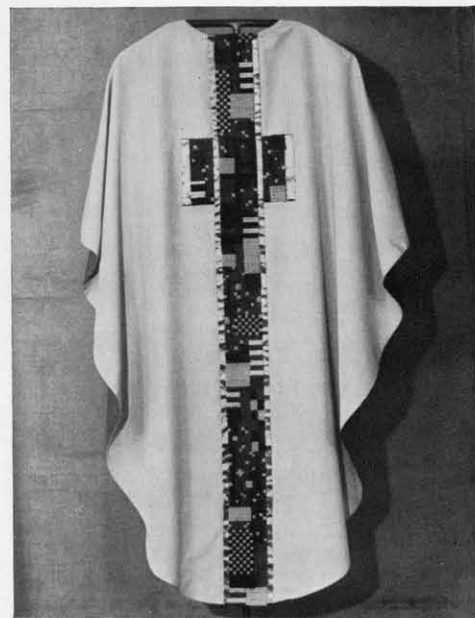
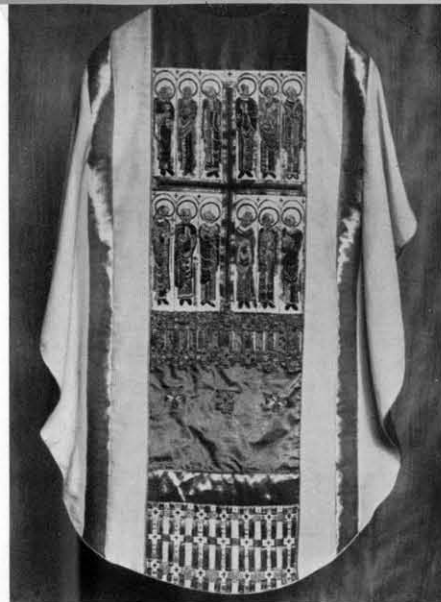
responsibility at the present stage of development. If he himself sees clearly the deep spiritual connections he will also be able to educate his community to these ideas and the layman will gladly follow his leadership. As a result, the priest will work with the architect to create a perfect entity of thought, spirit and form. It is he who will from his theological standpoint inspire the artist, furnish the theme, the thought, the symbol around which the House of God will be erected. And the artist, who will be free to follow his artistic conviction, will be led to a deeper understanding of the religious and consequently will devote himself with still greater intensity to his task. Only after priest and artist have found themselves in perfect understanding and harmony, will we again be able to live up to those unforgotten epochs in history, when the Church was the great inspirer of art and the artist found the most absolute and perfect expression for religious thought.

H. Breinlinger, Berlin, Pietà

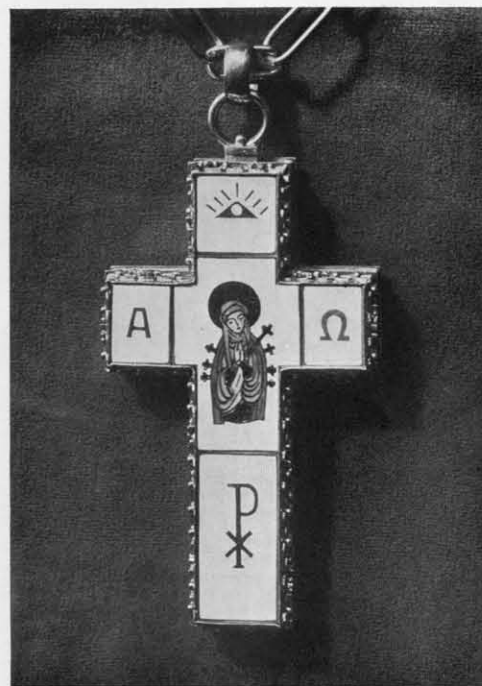


Art- and Craft School of Cologne (Jungmann), Casel,
Priests Robe

Art- and Craft School of Cologne (Horndasch), Casel,
Priests Robe



F. Möhler, Gmünd, Bishops-Cross



E. Freund, Cologne on the Rhine, Priests Robe, from
the Cathedrale of Cologne



