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## **Old World Craftsmanship**

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reuses original structure**

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## new marianist retirement facility reuses original structure

In May the priests and brothers of the Marianist Order began moving into their newly rebuilt retirement facility in Cupertino, California just up the street from their previous residences. The move was spurred by their two aging homes' inability to meet their critical-care needs. Villa St. Joseph was so cramped that its 16 residents had to celebrate Mass in the dining room, and Villa San Juan, built on a steep incline, was inaccessible to some residents.

The new Marianist Retirement Center serves the priests and brothers of the Marianist Order on the West Coast and is the only retirement center exclusively for members of the order.

The retirement center was built originally as a formation house —

a place to train young men to be brothers and priests. In the early 1980s as recruits became fewer and fewer, the complex was converted to a retreat center for use by the Marianists. It also was rented to local businesses. Gradually, operating costs for the retreat outpaced the facilities' use. A 1997 study recommended transforming the retreat center into a retirement and assisted-care facility. The Marianist Province of the United States, based in St. Louis, Missouri, decided to transform the property, and the center was closed in 2003.

### adaptive reuse

The original 3-acre complex was constructed in 1976 by the Marianist brothers following a monastic tradition of using “materials at

hand,” which dovetails nicely with one of Nibbi Brothers' core values: to build “in the tradition of Old World craftsmanship.” For example, the trim on the windows and doors was made from redwood wine barrels. The buildings and surrounding landscape provided a park-like setting in a suburban neighborhood.

The original center had three main buildings: a commons building and living units 1 and 2. A cabana also sat adjacent to the pool. The commons building held the chapel, kitchen, dining area, a library and meeting rooms. The living units had bedrooms with shared baths. None of the units were handicapped accessible, and numerous improvements were needed to meet the needs of the elderly and disabled. It was



The residents of the Marianist Retirement Center in Cupertino were completely moved in by May 30.

determined that a new facility, rather than just renovations, would be the best route. Living Unit 1 became St. Joseph Hall, and Living Unit 2 became St. Mary's Hall.

In keeping with tradition, the new facility reused much of the original structure. San Francisco-based Kotas/Pantaleoni Architects was selected to provide design services for the center. The Marianist brothers wanted 27 units with private bathrooms, six of which are nonambulatory rooms for retirees requiring skilled nursing. With only 22 residents transferring from Villas St. Joseph and San Juan, there is room for additional retirees.

Kotas/Pantaleoni Principal Anthony Pantaleoni wanted to preserve the structure's character and exquisite craftsmanship, so he reused as much of the redwood trim as possible. Pantaleoni felt it imperative to preserve the feel of the center, but he also made it practical and adaptable for future residents.

Accessibility was a key issue, so all the buildings and grounds were made to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A collaborative effort, Brother Tom Souda, who relocated from San Antonio to Cupertino for the duration of the project, plied his skill as a master craftsman. He rebuilt outdoor trellises and performed other finish carpentry work, including widening all the bedroom doors for compliance.

The project also included installing utilities. Technological improvements include a wireless nurse call system, computer access from each room and closed-circuit television so that the brothers can watch Mass from their bedrooms.

### **upgraded amenities and efficiencies**

St. Joseph Hall contains seven nonambulatory rooms, a nurses' center and bathing and treatment rooms. St. Mary's Hall is for the retired and active brothers and priests. Each room has a private outdoor patio, and each hall has a kitchenette.

The old commons building was renamed Chaminade Hall and includes the newly constructed chapel, dining room and commercial kitchen. There also are three living areas for games, crafts or television, and a home theater system has been installed. The chapel was redesigned, but the stained glass from the original chapel was cleaned and installed in the new chapel. The kitchen is bigger and has all new appliances, including specialty coffee and soft-serve ice cream machines. There is room to cook and serve all residents at one time, which was not possible before. Adjacent to the dining area is an indoor and outdoor patio area for seating and entertaining.

The existing cabana building has been transformed into a physical therapy room and fitness center. The space also will be rented during the week for community yoga classes. Other improvements include the installation of solar collectors for heating the pool and Jacuzzi, upgraded insulation in the three main buildings and energy-efficient, individually controlled heating and air conditioning units. These measures will reduce overall energy use and operational costs.

### **natural beauty**

Landscaping was an integral part of the project. More than 60 percent of the 3-acre site was open space

and needed to be landscaped. San Francisco-based landscape architects Robert La Rocca & Associates did an analysis of the existing trees and plants, selecting which trees would be removed or relocated. The intent was to provide ample open space to walk, meditate and relax. By using seasonal color and all-season plants, the architects created an environment that changes from one point to another.

"We knew that the outdoor area was going to be heavily used and that a large portion of the residents will rarely leave the facility," says Bob LaRocca, Principal. "We wanted to deliver a variety of landscapes that would enrich their lives." The original vegetable garden and rose garden also have been restored, and a new waterfall pond was built at the back of St. Joseph's Hall.

Included in the landscaping are two new fountains and a pond. One of the fountains is in the southern part of the site and was intended primarily for the brothers who are nonambulatory. The vertical water treatment is a 5-foot-tall column that residents can see from their windows.

The project turned out to be a true learning experience for Brother John Haster, S.M., who led the project for the Marianists. When asked what stands out most about the project, he says: "I have learned so much about the nuts and bolts of construction and what is involved in getting a project to completion. Michael Nibbi was good to work with. He would take the time to sit down and listen to me, then act accordingly. He was good at communicating the potential hurdles that can arise from a renovation project." On August 18, 2006, the brothers celebrated their new home by hosting an open house. 