David B Meleca has combined his unique expertise of classical architecture and theology to become a national leader in the renaissance of traditional Roman Catholic Church architecture.

### 1.0 Summary of Achievements

As a national leader in Roman Catholic Church design, David B. Meleca has created worship spaces rooted in history while meeting the demands of the contemporary world. Meleca has been inspired by Dr. Dennis McNamara’s argument for a return to the classical tradition, most notably in Catholic Church Architecture and the Spirit of the Liturgy. McNamara writes that post-Vatican II theology has privileged the horizontal over the vertical, the assembly over the celebrant, and the commonplace over the exceptional. Following McNamara’s lead, Meleca’s churches invoke the revelation of Heavenly Jerusalem, substantiate the priest’s role in the revelatory ritual, and deploy a classical vocabulary as the embodiment of the exceptional – truth, beauty, and clarity – that is most accessible to a broad public.

**Exhibit 1**

In his work, Meleca has forged a unique architectural identity that combines an early facility with classicism and a profound Catholic faith. Under the mentorship of Jaquelin Robertson FAIA, Meleca was recognized as one of the top 100 classical practitioners in the book “A Decade of Art & Architecture 1992-2002.” Meleca’s Beaux Art inspired [The Cap at Union Station](#) also led to his presentation at the 2004 National Conference of the Urban Land Institute in Los Angeles, California, a 2005 World Leadership Award, and an international 2006 Congress for the New Urbanism Charter Award. During this time, Meleca developed a personal and professional relationship with Dr. McNamara and dedicated his service to the Church as integral to his architectural vocation.

**Exhibit 2 & Exhibit 3**

The first of Meleca’s large scale Roman Catholic Churches was the [Church of the Resurrection](#) in New Albany, Ohio. At 1,200-1,400 parishioners, the church was significantly larger than most Catholic parishes of the time, and its use of a Georgian vocabulary with traditional liturgical design elements gained Meleca recognition from the Liturgical Institute, a leading voice in the nascent liturgical movement. Shortly thereafter, Meleca was engaged to design the [Church of St. Edward the Confessor](#) in nearby Granville Ohio. Faced with a limited budget, Meleca transformed its existing nave into the narthex of a 900-seat parish with rich traditional detailing behind a stout Colonial Revival facade. It was prominently featured in “Traditional Building” magazine.

**Exhibit 4**

By this time, Meleca had come to the attention of McNamara who championed Meleca’s adaptation of Catholic architectural traditions to contemporary church needs. McNamara’s endorsement lead to the selection of Meleca to design [St. Michael the Archangel](#) in Leawood, Kansas. Again faced with a large congregation and a tight budget, Meleca masterfully deployed yet a third traditional vocabulary, Italian Renaissance, to engage parishioners in the “signs and symbols of heavenly realities” as outlined by the Second Vatican Council. Widely published, the church set a precedent for the return to traditional Roman Catholic architecture.

**Exhibit 6**

Working with one of the largest Catholic Parishes in Ohio, [St. Paul the Apostle](#), Meleca was once again challenged with deploying a recognizable vocabulary to establish a strong connection to the liturgy. Meleca’s Romanesque solution was named by U.S. Catholic Magazine as one of ten Catholic Churches to visit in the United States.

**Exhibit 7 & Exhibit 8**

More recently, Meleca has been commissioned by [Franciscan University](#) to design its new chapel. Currently celebrating masses in a chapel that holds 300 people, this conservative Catholic College was in dire need of church that could hold up to 1,100 people. Much as Meleca’s previous work substantiates the priest’s role in the revelatory ritual, his masterplan for the university put the new chapel in the heart of the campus and gave it prominence as the center of campus life. Looking forward, Meleca’s much anticipated renovation and addition to [St. Elizabeth Ann Seton](#) will be yet another example of Meleca’s ability to transform a secularized space to one that is sacred, a vocabulary that is mute to one that speaks of tradition, and an edifice that allows a loose affiliation of parishioners to one the substantiates a religious community. Here, as elsewhere in his career, David Meleca will impact the lives of thousands of people through his powerful evocations of traditional religious architecture’s revelatory power.