

architects, assigned to produce new church buildings and synagogues, responded by adapting modern architectural forms to religious needs.

One such architect was Douglas Cardinal. He was born in Red Deer, Alberta, the son of a game warden and the great-grandson of a Stony Indian woman. He studied architecture at the University of Texas and absorbed the lessons of modern design. When he began to create buildings on the prairies — he first practised in Red Deer, then moved to Edmonton — he tried to bring together modern architecture and the needs of the prairie setting.

One of his great successes in this way is St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in his home town of Red Deer. It spells out in brick and concrete Cardinal's own view of the architect's role: "Architecture to me is being concerned not with a preconceived idea of beauty but with an organism evolving out of the needs it serves. A building should wrap around its function like a sea-shell around a sea-urchin, and the shape, texture, form, and colour should be chosen not for unrelated aesthetic reasons but to fulfill the physiological and psychological needs of the client."

In this case the client was a church but in a sense it was also a community, and that community's physical surroundings had to be taken into account. For St. Mary's, Cardinal designed a building which would fill all the needs of the church — the baptismal area, for instance, would be separated, according to tradition, from the inner sanctuary, and the whole building would be focused on the altar. But at the same time Cardinal made a building that in design and texture seemed to grow out of the landscape. It sits low and snug on the prairie, and its natural brick walls seem to echo the colours of the prairie sunset.

Cardinal did not follow in every detail the usual outlines of the traditional church: he reversed the normal style and put the altar — a massive six-ton piece of Manitoba Tyndall limestone — at the centre of the congregation rather than at one end. He put above it a skylight that pours natural light onto