



## Master Plan for Immaculate Heart of Mary

**Honoring the legacy of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Viridian's master plan restores the natural ecology of their 280-acre campus and supports their community's changing needs.**

The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary have always considered their grounds to be sacred space - a place for them to connect with nature and with god. Sustainability and self-sufficiency were part of the founding ideals of the order. Viridian's transformative master plan for the site honors this legacy and supports the order's aging population with new spaces for healing and growing.

By converting 11 acres of grass lawn into a Certified Wildlife Habitat, the property is attracting pollinators, restoring native species, and lowering the maintenance costs and carbon emissions associated with lawns. The restorative meadows contribute to the integrated, comprehensive stormwater management program Viridian devised, which also includes bioswales and a constructed wetland. Modeled after natural systems, the new wetland purifies waste and greywater produced on site and reintroduces it into the natural water cycle. As a whole, the property now diverts nearly one million gallons of water per year from the city's sewer system.

The earth's natural systems are also used to heat the building. Viridian worked with a team of engineers to install a geothermal system under the main meadow, carefully navigating the 100-year-old root system of the site's rare oaks. Rocks unearthed during the process were repurposed for a new entry and parking area, while the entry drives were converted to pedestrian pathways. Since the property is widely used by the surrounding community, which includes on-site secular housing, the Sisters taught neighbors the benefits of a resilient landscape.

At a more intimate scale, Viridian designed the main building's courtyard as a safe and secure place where sisters with Alzheimer's can enjoy nature. We designed the space to be open yet comforting, ensuring that no one gets lost, and filled it with familiar things, including plants gifted by visitors that we collected from around the property. It is a true sanctuary-within-a-sanctuary.

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**Location:** Monroe, Michigan  
**Client:** Sisters, Servants of Immaculate Heart of Mary  
**Size:** 280 acres  
**Cost:** \$2 million  
**Status:** Completed 2003