PRINCIPLES OF ORDER:
AN URBAN MONASTERY IN NEW ORLEANS

introduction:

In a fictitious construct, Saint Joseph Abbey across Lake Pontchartrain in Saint Benedict/LA with a community of 32 Benedictine monks has decided after the extensive recent flooding and the destruction of many of its buildings to move part of the monastery to New Orleans and establish an urban outpost for a smaller group of monks. Since the Benedictine order allows each community or monastery within the order to maintain its own autonomy, the New Orleans outpost will concentrate on working with the poor and will house a community outreach program with a soup kitchen as part of the monastery.

program:

The interior life of the monks finds outward expression in the work they do - seeking balance between spiritual life and work - ora et labora. Monastic reflection and community outreach are superimposed vertically on an urban lot, a transformation of the traditional horizontal typology of a monastery. The program mix asks for a careful look at thresholds and overlap, connections and separations, all embedded into the context of an inner-city site.

pedagogy:

The building will have a size of ca. 50,000 sq.ft. with a range of enclosed and open spaces. The studio will place emphasis on design ideas, material expressions and spatial concepts. It will concentrate on sectional explorations in drawings and digital + physical models - with the intention to develop a highly resolved architectural project with integrated structure, mechanical and material systems as required for a comprehensive studio.