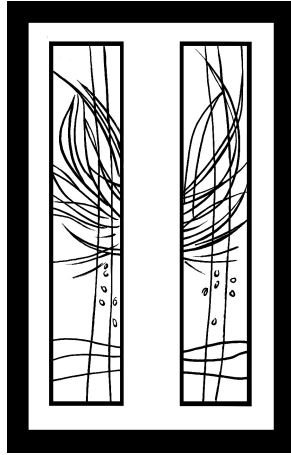


The Stained Glass Windows at the Catholic Center at USF



THE CATHOLIC CENTER CHAPEL

Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley, of the Diocese of St. Augustine, presided at the Mass of Dedication for the Catholic Student Center at the University of South Florida in Tampa on September 24, 1967. The Catholic Center's physical plant included office space, a library, a small Chapel and a social hall in which to host dances and other events for USF students.

As the student population grew in the 1970's the social hall began to be used regularly for Sunday Liturgy. In 1989 the interior of the social hall was remodeled to make it more suitable for permanent use as a Chapel. The Chapel seats approximately 275 people, and is used on a weekly basis by the Catholic Center community.

The Chapel building is typical of the modern style of design that was popular in the 1960's. The arrangement of the windows, and other architectural details, displays the "double T" motif that was common in Mid-Century Modern architecture.

The stained glass window design by Sue Obata, of Obata Studios, took into account the simple, modern character of the building. The windows were designed to integrate with the existing architecture while enhancing the congregation's participation in Liturgy.

THE WINDOW DESIGN

Christian literature from as early as the Second Century A.D. attests that congregations faced east when they gathered for liturgy on the Lord's Day (Justin's *Apologeticum*). The floor plan of the

oldest extant Christian church building, the Third Century house church in Dura Europos, exhibits this traditional orientation.

In the ancient world, the east was considered to be the “source of light,” as it was the direction of the daily sunrise. Christians saw in this common reference an allegory for the saving truth revealed in Jesus' life and death. The eastern sky became a metaphor for Jesus' resurrection: just as the sun rises to bring light to the world, the Son of God rose from the dead and enlightened humanity. The eastern sky was also used as a form of religious iconography; it became a mystagogical tool to remind believers of their eschatological hope of resurrection.

As the Catholic Center Chapel was adapted from a design for social events, it is rather non-traditional in many ways, including its orientation. The redesign in 1989 placed the congregational seating facing north. In order to maintain some sense of the traditional layout of a Catholic Church, the window design for the eastern wall depicts resurrection themes. The western wall design depicts illustrations and examples of the theological virtue Hope.

The windows are composed of a combination of different types of mouth blown antique glass. Most of the glass pieces that comprise the windows are flashed glass and shaded glass. Flashed antique glass is mouth blown with two or three distinct layers. For example, blue, clear and white opaque layered flashed glass is a predominant feature in the western wall windows. The white opaque layer diffuses and reflects sunlight and heat, while the blue layer illuminates the Chapel interior with a cool, peaceful light.

Shaded antique glass is mouth blown to produce differing color values. The shading adds a visual texture and variety to the design that makes the overall appearance deeper and richer. The varying color values of the glass in the rising sun image on the eastern wall give the impression of actually seeing a sunrise.

Portions of the windows are made with transparent glass. Transparent glass transmits light without obstruction, and allows the viewer to see objects outside the building.

The distinct physical and optical properties of each type of glass coordinate to produce multiple effects. The quality of the light, and the appearance of the windows, inside the Chapel change throughout the day as a result of the changing intensity and direction of the day's sunlight. The window design can also be seen clearly from outside the building because the flashed and shaded glass reflect light, while the transparent glass does not.

THE EASTERN WALL WINDOWS

The principal image in the eastern windows is a rising sun made of magenta, orange and amber glass. The color and shading of this glass reproduce the visual effects of a typical Florida sunrise. The central pair of windows contain a depiction of Calvary, and the empty tomb, made of gray opaque glass and magenta transparent glass. There is a Cross shaped of clear transparent glass in the left window of this central pair. The two short windows located over the emergency

exit doors continue the rising sun theme.

The single window on the far left contains a representation of the Crown of Thorns in magenta transparent glass. The fourteen thorn-like projections, arranged linearly in the window, are made of opaque white glass, and refer to the fourteen Stations of the Cross.

The single window on the far right contains a winding shape made of transparent green glass. It is a reference to the winding path of discipleship, and also brings to mind the "vine and branches" metaphor from John's Gospel. The Greek letter Omega can be seen in the winding shape; this is paired with the Greek letter Alpha in the Eucharist window on the west side.

THE WESTERN WALL WINDOWS

Faith, Hope and Love are called theological virtues, not because they are abstractions, but because they have God as their ultimate reference and goal. The windows on the west side of the Chapel depict the theological virtue of Hope as the practical and metaphysical result of Jesus' resurrection. There are seven individual designs that comprise the western windows. Each of the seven illustrates a passage of Scripture that refers to Hope.

The predominating image in the western windows is the "Tree of Life," a common baptismal metaphor. The Tree of Life image originates in the pair of windows just to the right of the center of the western wall, and continues into the windows on the left and the right.

The gray glass at the bottom of the windows represents the earth; this design element continues throughout the windows on the western wall. The trunk of the Tree is seen in the vertical elements in this pair of windows. The branches and leaves are represented by the green and amber glass at the top of the windows. This image was inspired by Romans 15:11-13, "And again, Isaiah says, 'The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him'."

On the left side of the Tree of Life is a pair of windows inspired by Psalm 119:81, "My soul longs for your salvation; I put my hope in your word." The windows depict an open book of the Scriptures. God's Word, recorded in the Scriptures, conveys the Gospel of Hope preached by the Apostles. The Greek text written on these windows is taken from the Prologue of John's Gospel.

Another common scriptural theme appears in the next pair of windows to the left. "Be strong and take heart, all you hope in the Lord." (Psalm 1:24) The sense of strength and peace that Hope brings is represented by the image of a rock.

The next pair of windows to the left contains an image of particular pertinence to a college campus. Youth is often used in the Scriptures to describe the joy experienced by God's faithful people. These windows were inspired by Psalm 71:5, "You are my hope, Lord; my trust, O God, from my youth." The upward reaching elements in this pair of windows depicts the growth and strength of a young plant. Seeds, the beginnings of new life, fall from the upward reaching

branches. The individual seeds were produced by removing the layer of blue from this flashed glass; the outer layer of white opaque glass remains. This design has been adapted for use on a new baptismal font for the chapel.

The single window, on the far left, contains wing-like images inspired by Isaiah 40:31, “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

The pair of windows immediately to the right of the Tree of Life windows is situated above the baptismal font and adjacent to the ambry. The scriptural text refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in baptism. The windows depict this with representations of flowing water. “And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” (Romans 5:4-6)

The single window on the far right is adjacent to the tabernacle. The amber and purple glass represent the wheat and grapes, the bread and wine, that are the eucharistic elements. “Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) Amber and orange glass forms the Greek letter Alpha, which is paired with the Greek letter Omega, in the final window on the East Wall.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Catholic Center community would like to thank all those who brought this stained glass project to completion. Sue Obata, of Obata Studios, produced a beautiful, thoughtful and inspired design. Norbert Sattler and his studio, Sattler’s Stained Glass, fabricated the designs and installed the windows with meticulous attention to detail. We are very grateful to them for their suggestions, guidance and dedication.

We are also grateful to those who contributed so generously to this project. A dream of a beautiful place to worship was brought to fruition by your unselfish support.