

Doctors of the Church Project- 12 Stained Glass Windows

Height 12 ½ feet by 4 ½ feet

Location: St Catharine of Siena Catholic Church, Columbus, Ohio

These windows are intended as saints for our own time where light, painterly color and fragmentary images of manuscripts and text come together to create a transcendent figure. They are standing between Heaven and Earth.

“Doctor Ecclesiae” is a special title given by the Church to those visionaries it has singled out for their exceptional contributions to Christian thought and spirituality. In two thousand years of history only thirty-three individuals have been accorded this honor.

The ornamental frieze, which moves horizontally through each window, relates to the stenciled architectural design of the ceiling tiles. The olive leaves along the top and base of each window relate to the resurrection design motif of the east window and transept sacrament windows.

The halos of the saints are based on the mystical ‘illuminations’ of Hildegard of Bingen, a Benedictine abbess and acclaimed prophet, mystic, theologian, poet, composer and healer.



Techniques

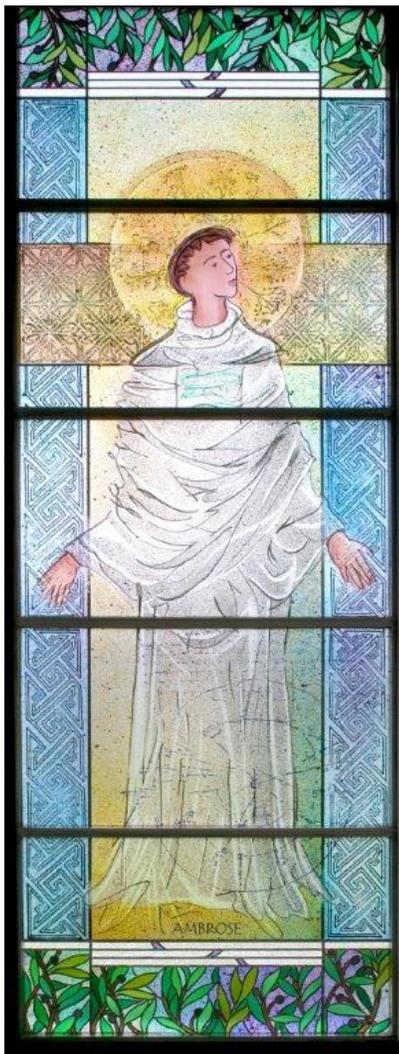
These windows represent innovative techniques in stained glass developed by artist Sarah Hall and her fabrication studio Glasmalerei Peters. They combine screen-printed manuscript imagery in blue enamels that have been fragmented and over-painted with traditional glass paints. The horizontal borders are created in traditional leaded glass techniques, which incorporate hand painted glass. Extensive hand painting with successive firings brings a contemporary, open, expressive and painterly aspect to the figures. Four windows are shown below.

1. Bernard of Clairvaux

In the lower panel there is a cruciform Cistercian church plan from the 12th Century sketchbook of architect Villard de Honnecourt. Bernard had a tremendous impact on architecture in the 12th Century, and his influence continued for centuries after his death.

2. Jerome

Jerome learned languages by studying inscriptions in the Catacombs. He tells us that "it was my custom on Sundays to visit, with friends of my own age and tastes, the tombs of the martyrs and Apostles, going down into those subterranean galleries whose walls on both sides preserve the relics of the dead." Both the halo and the lower panel roundel are reproduced from the Domitilla Cemetery, an early Fourth Century inscription cut into a marble disk in the Catacombs.



3. Ambrose

During his occupation of the Milan basilica, Ambrose is said to have taught his people hymns and chants he had written. These were sung by two choirs, singing alternate stanzas. Ambrosian antiphonal singing remains a treasured legacy and is still a popular form of worship today. Ambrose is shown in the window leading the singing in the Cathedral of Milan. He is wearing his Bishop's chasuble. The lower panel contains a manuscript from Leonardo da Vinci of the city plan of Milan.



4. John of the Cross

Carmelite monk John of the Cross is shown here holding a bird, in reference to his treatise on spiritual life. St. John managed to condense the wisdom of his life into a five-step process, comparing the spiritual quest to the flight of a bird. “The first step is that it flies to the highest point; the second, that it does not suffer for company, nor even of its own kind; the third, that it aims its beak to the skies; the fourth, that it does not have a definite color; the fifth, that it sings very softly.” The manuscript reference is from Leonardo da Vinci’s codex on the flight of birds.

