Chateau de Notre Dame

2832 Burdette Street

Be with us, Our Lady must have been the prayer of the residents of the Chateau de Notre Dame as Hurricane Katrina approached. Our Lady did protect the 185 residents as they evacuated to Baton Rouge, and the staff and residents must have felt Her presence during the tediously slow reclaiming of the building from the 18 inches of water, followed by a serious mold infestation, that Katrina brought.

Fortunately, none of the religious art was damaged.

This worship space, designed by James R. Blitch of Blitch/Knevel Architects, was incorporated into the building in 1978. Residents of the assisted living facility are able to watch Mass from the second floor.

Several Italian firms were commissioned to provide the liturgical artwork. Ars Liturgica of Morris Plains, NJ, served as consultants, and Sergio Papucci of the Guido Polloni Studios of Florence directed the construction of the windows. (These two companies worked together to produce the stained glass at St. Edward the Confessor, St. Ann (Metairie), and St. Charles Borromeo (Destrehan).) Mr. Papucci also designed the mosaics, the Stations of the Cross, the altar and the ambo. The mosaics were executed by Ferrari and Bacci and the altar by Battelli. J. Ronald Blitch, son of the designer, reminisced about seeing the pieces being constructed when he was a graduate student in Italy in 1976. He recalled that the cost for the windows and religious furnishings was $200,000 then.

True to the name of this religious complex, the focus of the worship space is the Blessed Virgin. The windows depict many of the Mysteries of the Rosary. The five on the left depict the Glorious Mysteries: Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Assumption of Mary, and Coronation of Mary. On the right side of the altar, reading from the outside in, are the Joyful Mysteries: the Annunciation, the Visitation by Mary to Elizabeth, the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, and Finding the Boy Jesus in the Temple.

*Based on the text by Harriet Murrell.*

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