Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church

6363 St. Charles Avenue

The 1884 Cotton Centennial, held in what was to become Audubon Park, led to a rapid population expansion uptown. This, in turn, brought about the need for additional Catholic churches in the area, leading Father John OShanahan, S.J., of Immaculate Conception Church, to request permission to create a new parish. Once Archbishop Francis Janssens authorized the new parish (on the condition that the Jesuits found a college and house of retreat there), Father OShanahan purchased the lakeside portion of the Foucher Plantation in 1886. Four years later the new parish was established. At that time it was sometimes called Most Holy Name of Jesus, though now it is often shortened to Holy Name.

The first church, a frame structure built of local wood by skilled Jesuits, was dedicated in May 1892 and at first welcomed a parish of only seventy souls. It was known as the Little Jesuits, to distinguish it from the older and larger Immaculate Conception Church, fondly referred to as Jesuits on Baronne. In 1910 the frame church was moved on rollers one block uptown to accommodate the construction of Loyolas Marquette Hall and Thomas Hall. (See the description of Thomas Hall, which also has stained glass windows.)

Soon the original church building was too small to minister to the needs of its growing parish. Ground was broken for the present church in 1913, and the dedication dates to 1918. A gift of $150,000 from Miss Kate McDermott covered almost all the costs. (The frame church was dismantled and, in 1922, moved across the river to Westwego, where it continues to serve as Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church.)

Holy Names Tudor Gothic structure houses a spacious interior, large enough to hold 1500 worshipers. The gleaming Carrara marble altar, a gift of restauranteur Lawrence Fabacher, and the elegant pulpit draw the viewers eye.

In short order, however, the magnificent stained glass competes for attention. The main floor windows by John Morgan and Sons of New York and the Emil Frei Studio of St. Louis were created in 1917 and the 1920s. The two sets are intermingled here but can be distinguished by subtle but clear differences in color and style. The 1941 windows on the second level have a geometric pattern and a distinctive coloration.

The Virgin Mary, Patroness of the Jesuit Order, is a commanding presence in the windows immediately above the altar. In one of the large windows in the nave, she is featured as Queen of the Society of Jesus. The remaining windows depict Jesus as the central figurefor example, with the elders in the temple, as the Good Shepherd, and with the little children.

The interior color scheme of soft cream, medium blue, and dulled Pompeian red, dating to the mid-1970s, is exceptionally attractive, and the spatial volumes render a majestic quality. In all, Holy Name of Jesus Church is an impressive experience.

**Windows**

Apse, above

Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles

Ascension of Christ Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

Wedding Feast at Cana Resurrection

Apse, below

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

Transept

St. Margaret Alacoque Views Melchezidek

the Sacred Heart of Jesus Adam and Eve

Nave

Child Jesus in the Temple Good Shepherd

Jesus on the Waves Jesus and His Disciples

Virgin Mary with St. Ignatius Loyola Agony in the Garden

(holding the *Spiritual Exercises)*

and St. Francis Xavier

Jesus and the Children Jesus Raises a Woman from the Dead

Choir Loft

*Visited September 22, 1996*

*The Covid-19 epidemic of 2020 prevented a visit to the choir loft to identify the large windows there.*

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