Notre Dame Seminary

2901 South Carrollton Avenue

This seminary building, in the French Chateau style, is a monument to the energy of Archbishops John W. Shaw and Joseph F. Rummel. Before 1923, when the Notre Dame Seminary was completed, priests for the New Orleans Archdiocese were trained at several locations, including the Assumption Seminary in Plattenville, St. Stephens Church on Napoleon Avenue, and St. Benedicts Abbey on the North Shore. Today, St. Bens, as it is frequently called, serves as a Minor Seminary, graduating many who will complete their studies for ordination at the Notre Dame Seminary. Laymen seeking to become permanent deacons, teachers, and parish workers also earn advanced degrees here.

Archbishop Shaw was able to raise funds for the new seminary within just two years, and construction took only 16 months. Gen. Allison Owen served as architect (as he did for St. Francis of Assisi Church), and the builder was the Fromherz Company. At the time, the only stained glass in the building was the window in the library, a gift from Charles I. Denechaud, Sr., who had received it from French citizens in gratitude for his work as a leader of Catholic relief efforts after World War I. The identity of the figure and the age of the glass are still mysteries.

In the early 1950s, Archbishop Rummel began a program to expand the seminary complex and to renovate the chapel. Curtains in the chapel were replaced by stained glass windows portraying events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. Created by the Rambusch Studio of New York, these windows are of a style unique in the New Orleans area. The leading that characterizes stained glass windows is found only at the top; rather, these are paintings on large pieces of glass. The rectangular panes give the feeling of looking through house windows onto the Biblical scenes. They are also unusual in the generous use of brown, which is lightened by bright yellow silver-stained areas, usually in halos. The light that streams through creates a mellow feeling.

The window portraying Christ healing the sick gave rise to a discussion between Harold Rambusch, of the stained glass studio, and Archbishop Rummel about how best to portray these miracles. Mr. Rambusch proposed to show Christ as he heals the lame, the blind, and the leper, rather than after the cure. Do you not think, with me, that it will be hard to get the idea across, if Christ is pointing at some people who are cured. If we showed them in the act of being cured, I should think the message would be clearer. (Would that more conversations between stained glass artists and the church representatives were preserved!)

Hurricane Katrina damaged the windows, as well as destroying the resident of the archbishop. Cynthia Courage of Attenhofer Stained Glass Studio, was able to gather up some shards before the National Guard cleaned up. She commented on number of trace lines still visible, despite several firings of the glass.

 **Windows**

 Altar

Christ the King Coronation of Mary

Christ at Emmaus Annunciation

The Last Supper Nativity

Christ giving keys to Peter Boy Jesus in the temple

Jesus Sending out His apostles Baptism of Jesus

Sermon on the Mount Christ healing the sick

*Visited March 30, 2008*

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