Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church

2115 Jefferson Street, Mandeville

In the mid-19th century, the Archdiocese of New Orleans, which included St. Tammany Parish, grew rapidly under the leadership of Archbishop Antoine Blanc. Our Lady of the Lake Church, the third parish in western St. Tammany, is evidence of that growth. Originally called The Church of Mandeville, it recorded its first baptisms and marriages in 1850, performed by Rev. Joseph Outendirck, a missionary from Belgium.

The present-day Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church, an imposing brick structure with a prominent Romanesque bell tower, is only the third home for this parish. In 1950 the priest at Our Lady of the Lake requested a new church because the current one was tied together with hog-chains . . . [it] has become top-heavy because the hog-chains do not sufficiently hold the walls together. Todays church was designed by the firm of Cazale and Bendernagel of New Orleans, and the cornerstone was laid in 1952.

The 49 stained glass windows all date to shortly after the construction of the new church (1954-1958) and were designed and produced by the Franz Mayer Studio of Munich, a familiar name to connoisseurs of New Orleans glass (e.g., St. Joseph Catholic Church on Tulane Avenue). Large windows in a neo-Gothic style portray famous events in the life of Christ. Beneath them are pairs of smaller windows depicting Old and New Testament scenes that reinforce the message of the large windows above. Our Lady of the Lake probably contains more Old Testament figures than any other place of worship in the New Orleans area. Individual descriptions of the windows are presented in a tour prepared by the church; see the separate publication.

These windows provide excellent examples of typologythe juxtaposition of scenes or events, one foreshadowing the otherwhich has been traditionally used in Christian art. These pairings of Sunday school stories are an effective, imaginative technique for teaching the religious message.

The priest at the time of construction was a native of Munich, and the gold-and-brown mosaic Stations of the Cross, like the windows, are also from the Mayer studio. The crucifix, thought to be Spanish and to date to the 17th century, was rescued from an old chapel that was dismantled to make way for the Morganza Spillway.

Our Lady of the Lake figures prominently in the art of the eponymous church. A statue of her over the entrance welcomes worshipers, a painting is on the back wall, and the freestanding meditation chapel honors her in stained glass. The last was made by the Attenhofer Stained Glass Studio of Metairie in 2020.

*Visited*

*May 17, 2003*

*November 4, 2017*

Notes:

Individual descriptions of the windows are presented in a tour prepared by the church.

See the separate publication.

See also: *Our Lady of the Lake Parish, 1850-2000.* Published by the church in 2000.

When citing information from this document, please acknowledge the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, 2021.