St. David Catholic Church

5617 St. Claude Avenue

Stained glass windows fill the sanctuary of St. David Catholic Church with a bold symphony of color.

The parish of St. David was established in 1937 to serve the spiritual needs of African-American Catholics in the area. It was named in honor of the father of the priest who had donated generously toward the church construction. The 1937 wooden building was enlarged, faced in brick, and renovated in 1992, when the *dalle de verre* windows were added.

The name *dalle de verre* derives from the French for glass slabs or flagstones, and the technique dates back only to World War II. It incorporates thick slabs of faceted glass (sometimes over an inch thick) in a matrix of epoxy or cement. The resulting windows produce sparkling colors, with the subjects clearly outlined.

Priests from the Josephite Order have staffed the church from the very beginning. Father Frank Hull, SSJ, was priest at St. David Church during the renovation and explained the selection of the window themes. On the left are six of the seven sacraments; the remaining sacrament, Eucharist, is portrayed in the left window behind the altar. The windows on the right side of the church are more difficult to decipher; many of them include Afro-Catholic symbols.

A tree with strong roots and emerald-green leaves dominates one window. It is an acacia tree, which grows in Africa and is known for its resilience. Noahs ark is said to have been built of acacia.

The second window from the right front shows flames, weapons, and 22 jeweled rectangles representing the martyrdom of 22 Ugandan Catholics who refused to renounce Christ or to commit immoral acts that the king had demanded. This martyrdom, along with that of 23 Anglican converts at the same time (1885-1887), led to the conversion of Uganda, where over two thirds of the population is now Christian.

The lamb, which often symbolizes Jesus, is known here as the Liberating Lamb because it stands over the broken chain of bondage.

**Windows**

Symbols of the Eucharist Book, Candle

(symbols of the Word)

Altar

Penance Holy Family: Carpenters square, Lily

Confirmation Ugandan saints

Anointing the Sick Heart of Jesus

Baptism Liberating Lamb (broken chains)

Holy Orders Acacia tree

Matrimony Crown of David

crying room choir room

Noahs ark Chi Rho

foyer

Crucifixion (thorns, nails) Rosary

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