St. Genevieve Catholic Church

58203 Highway 433, Slidell

Driving along peaceful Bayou Liberty, one suddenly comes upon an elevated white church and a small brick adoration chapel, nestled under venerable Spanish oak trees. The chapel dates to 1961, and the main church was dedicated in 2012. Both replace earlier buildings, going back to 1852, when Mrs. Anatole Cousin donated funds and land for a chapel. The beautiful Honduran carvings on the front doors portray the history of St. Genevieve’s Church as seen through the successive buildings.

For more than a century, the parish fluctuated between neglect and mission church status under the wings of varying parishes, particularly Sacred Heart of Lacombe. In 1958 a new church was dedicated, under the name of St. Genevieve Mission. Not until ten years later did it become an independent, full-fledged parish, and the next year the African-American parish of St. Linus merged with the St. Genevieve congregation.

Then came Hurricane Katrina, which lashed the 1958 church with both wind and water. Despite the efforts of the hurricane, the windows suffered surprisingly little. Attenhofer Stained Glass Studio removed them, carried out the necessary repairs, and sized them for their new home, which was dedicated on January 15, 2012.

The white church building is in cruciform shape, well elevated above future flood waters. Beautiful wood, much salvaged from old local buildings, abounds. Images from the baptismal font, perhaps 150 years old, can be seen in the ambo, the priest’s chair, and the altar. Carvings of the twelve disciples encircle the tabernacle while the carved four evangelists adorn the ambo. St. Lawrence Church of Kenner, now closed, provided the Stations of the Cross.

The subject matter of the principal windows–phrases from the Apostles’ Creed– is unique in the New Orleans area. A signature on window 2 reveals that the glass for this set was manufactured in Cologne, Germany, by the Botz-Miesen studio. It was then assembled in Texas, possibly for another church there.

Two small round windows in delicate pastel colors on the transept walls are assumed to date to the 1915 church building. Over the entrance, the portraits of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are made of Kokomo opalescent glass but cannot be assigned a definite date. (The Kokomo company has been making glass since 1888 and still produces the opalescent style.) The windows in the Reconciliation Room, of a stunning mouth-blown blue glass, retain their original leading but are also of unknown origin.

Another memorable window forms the wall behind the altar. It is totally clear so that worshipers and visitors can appreciate the magnificent live oak tree that has stood on this property for, probably, centuries. Recognizing the natural beauty surrounding the church, the planning committee chose to bracket the stained glass with clear panels, adding light, a feeling of serenity, and a glimpse of the scenery outside.

**Windows of St. Genevieve Church**

Altar

2 1 21 20

(above) 1915 round window (above) 1915 round window

music room reconciliation room

3

19

4 17 18 5 16

6 15

7 14

8 13

Entrance

9 10 11 12

1. I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth and of all things

2. In one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father,

3. Who became incarnate by the only Mother, Virgin Mary.

4. I believe in Jesus Christ, true God, was made man . . .

5. That he was born of a virgin conceived without sin.

6. That he suffered for us under Pontius Pilate

7. And that he was crucified and died for our sins

8. I believe that he arose again the third day (according to the Scriptures)

9. Matthew

10. Mark

11. Luke

12. John

13. That he ascended into Heaven

14. And that he shall come again to judge the living and the dead.

15. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life (proceeding from the Father and the Son).

16. I believe in one, holy, Catholic and apostolic church.

17. [Small windows]: keys and cross + book

18. Ship with a cross on the sail

19. Chalice with viper [symbolizes the poison served to St. John the Evangelist]

20. I believe that there is one Baptism for the remission of sins

21. And I look forward to the life of the world to come.

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