St. Rita Catholic Church

2729 Lowerline Street

This buff-colored building is actually the third home of the St. Rita congregation. Founded in 1921, the congregation first worshiped in a home on Audubon Boulevard and then in a church built to resemble a house, located where the playground for St. Ritas School is now. Todays church was built in 1953.

This is a neighborhood church. As the church bell tolls, parishioners scurry from their homes for Mass. A statue of St. Rita of Cascia, once in the second church building, looks down on the worshipers who hurry into the peaceful sanctuary.

A stunning display of color on each side greets those who enter, and it continues in the choir loft with a large rose window. This church is a feast of Connick Studio windows, installed over several years, beginning in 1957 and continuing as fund-raising drives met success.

When you hear the name Charles Connick, think medieval. His Boston studio, now closed, was the modern master of the medieval style of figural stained glass. These windows, with their host of fascinating details, are stellar examples of Connicks stained glass artistry.

Two massive windows face each other: The Queenship of Mary on the Epistle side and the Kingship of Jesus on the Gospel side. Each measures 256 square feet. These windows need to be studied in detail to appreciate the figural and symbolic messages. Most of the smaller windows on each side also relate to either Mary or Jesus.

An unusual feature of St. Rita Church windows is the presence of three popes and two American women saints, all from the twentieth century.

Excellent acoustics in the sanctuary complement the organ, which dates to 1971 and is one of three area organs in the area built by Art Schoenberger. Its tonality is Baroque in style. Dr. Elise Cambon, former choir master at St. Louis Cathedral, and Betty Blanq compiled the specifications. After Hurricane Katrina, workmen repairing the church damaged the organ, but Roy Redman returned it to good condition.

*Art notes by Harriet Murrell*

**Windows**

Pope Pius XI Pope Pius XII

Kingship of Jesus Queenship of Mary

Nativity Apparition at Guadalupe

Christ Child in the temple Our Lady of Prompt Succor

Pilate washes his hands Apparition at Lourdes

Crucifixion Apparition of Fatima

Triumphal entry into Jerusalem Nativity

Three oclock, Good Friday Mary and John at the empty cross

Herod and the Wise Men Annunciation

King David: Be glad and rejoice Holy Family (Behold a virgin shall conceive)

St. Peter and the Tradition of Keys Adam and Eve (She shall crush the Serpents Head)

Jacob blessing his son Judah

Rose window

St. Frances Cabrini, Pope Pius X, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis Xavier,

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

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