St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church

2545 Bayou Road

St. Rose of Lima Parish dates to 1857, when Catholic families living in Faubourg Gueno (site of the old Gueno Plantation) petitioned Archbishop Blanc to establish a parish.

The small chapel erected on Bayou St. John was soon replaced by one on Mystery Street. In 1864 a frame church was built on property donated at the present site, and in 1880 a larger structure, beautifully decorated with paintings and statuary, replaced that. Fire destroyed this church in 1913. In two years time a handsome Tudor Gothic brick church, designed by Paul Andry, stood in its place. Interior decoration was delayed until *all* construction debts had been paid off, but in 1949 the decorating was completed.

It was worth waiting for! The patron saint of the church, St. Rose of Lima, is commemorated by the rose placed at the center of the blue dome above the altar, as well as by the charming statue near the front door. She is also depicted in the center panel of the large window above the entrance.

The view of the St. Rose of Lima window from the interior was effectively blocked, however, by the installation of a new organ in 1981. This organ, in its rich acoustic setting, was crafted by the Möller Company of Hagerstown, Maryland, replacing one built by Anton Gottfried of Erie, Pennsylvania.

The theme of the church decorations is the sacrifice of Christ, reflected both in the windows and in the haunting murals on the walls. The most vivid portrayal of sacrifice is in the center window behind the altar, where Christ appears as both victim and priest, and the Lamb of God represents the ultimate sacrifice. The subject matter of the windows always interrelates with the adjacent murals. In the New Orleans area, the entwined relationship of window and wall painting is unique to St. Rose of Lima.

The Conrad Schmitt Company of New Berlin, Wisconsin, was in charge of decorating. The murals were executed in Italy and shipped to the Schmitt firm, which installed them and added finishing details. The apse windows were created by the familiar Emil Frei Company of St. Louis; those in the nave, by the studio of Dr. Oidtmann, of Linnich, Germany, but ordered through its New York office. Oidtmann windows, which emphasize strong shades of red, blue and gold, have been seen at Holy Ghost Catholic Church on Louisiana Avenue, St. Josephs Church on Tulane Avenue, and St. Stephens Church.

 **Windows**

 Christ as High Priest

 Altar

Matthew / Mark Luke / John

John the Baptist / Melchesidek Aaron / Moses

Immaculate Conception Death of St. Joseph

[over door] Joyful Mysteries Glorious Mysteries [over door]

Annunciation Resurrection

Visitation Ascension

Nativity Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and Mary

Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple Assumption of Mary into Heaven

Finding the Child Jesus in the Temple Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven

Archangel Archangel

 St. Rose of Lima

*Toured in March 25 1995*

*Postscript: Suffering from declining numbers and damaged in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, St. Rose of Lima Church was closed and sold to the Southern Repertory Theater, which blocked many of the windows and paintings from view*. *The statues of Mary and Joseph were relocated to St. Clement of Rome Church in Metairie.*

Citations of information from this document should acknowledge the

Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, 2021.