Transfiguration of the Lord Church

(St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church)

5621 Elysian Fields Avenue

*Note: This description was compiled for the tour on March 24, 1996. Hurricane Katrina inflicted heavy damages on the church, and it reopened in 2011 as Transfiguration of the Lord Church, combining the parishes of St. Raphael the Archangel, St. Frances Cabrini, and St. Thomas the Apostle.*

St. Raphael the Archangel was established as a parish in 1947, when the Reverend Vernon Aleman was named pastor for the mission chapel located on the Naval Air Field, now the campus of the University of New Orleans. A second church was built in 1948 at the corner of Prentiss and Elysian Fields avenues, followed by a school and a convent, but soon an even larger church was needed.

Reverend (later Msgr.) Aleman was the moving force behind the new church. Irvin Kohler, who also designed St. Dominic Church on Harrison Avenue the same year, was the architect. But what a different feeling between the two churches! Built by Gervais Favrot and dedicated in September 1958, St. Raphael the Archangel welcomes worshipers to a bright and airy interior. The colors are light: pale green marble for the altars and light-toned oak for the fittings, selected by Reverend Aleman. The Stations of the Cross are by the famous Belgian monk, Dom Gregory de Wit, O.S.B., whose humorous work is seen at St. Joseph’s Abbey near Covington.

The windows are large and admit light generously. These were executed by the renowned firm of Charles Connick of Boston. Figurative in content, each depicts one or more angels accompanying a figure, such as Tobias with Raphael himself.

St. Raphael’s windows are eminently “readable” and harmonize well with the overall design of the church. The impact of this contemporary church is modern, but pleasingly so.

**Windows**

St Raphael and Tobias General Judgment

Moses and the 10 Commandments Particular Judgment

Angels Proclaim the Birth of Christ Assumption and Coronation

 to the Shepherd of the Blessed Mother

Guardian Angel Ascension, with the Apostles

 Looking up to Heaven and Christ

Flight into Egypt Resurrection of Christ

Temptation of Christ Mass, with Angels Offering

 the Sacrifice of Peace

*Visited March 24, 1996 Written by Susan Levy*

*The Covid-19 epidemic precluded a return visit to the church to incorporate changes since our original tour.*

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