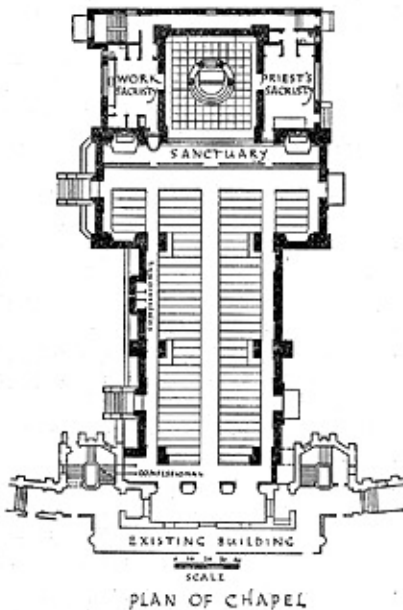


tion as well as admitting light. The Stations of the Cross are of colorful glass mosaic.

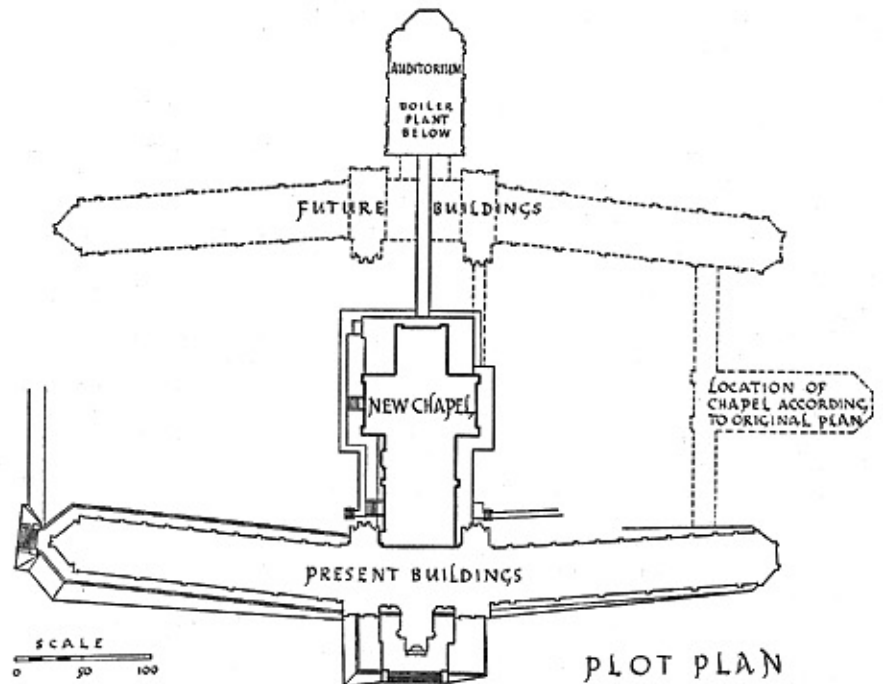
The ribs and ceiling vaults, springing from the huge piers and massive walls, are formed of acoustic tile in red, blue, green, and gold with a background of variegated shades of buff. The floors are laid out in large squares of red, green, and ivory terrazzo. The floor of the sanctuary is of Tennessee marble.

One of the great problems of church design consists in providing an adequate



PLAN OF CHAPEL

and efficient system of lighting while preserving the dignity and beauty of the interior. In this chapel the architects have used a combination of direct and indirect lighting. Reflectors were placed in the vaults, casting a flood of direct light to the floor. These reflectors were wired on three circuits and lamps of



PLOT PLAN

three different intensities used, allowing for flexibility in the amount of light used—varying from early morning services to those held at night. Reflectors were also placed below the sill lines of the windows and in the ducts behind the walls which enclose the radiators. These reflectors were directed at the ceiling, thus providing an even, reflected light throughout the chapel. The high altar and the side altars are flood-lit by means of reflectors located in the barrel vaults of the transepts.

The high altar and its baldacchino conform in every way with liturgical requirements, and its bold lines harmonize with the monumental height of the interior, thus frankly dominating the chapel as its focal point.

made in the case of the plastic arts which, for no valid reason, are expected to reach us mainly through story-telling. If the rôle of art was to make things recognizable, it would perform clumsily the same function that words do easily and thoroughly. If an original contribution is to be that of art, it must be independent of the medium of words; the painted goods must be self-illuminative without need of a label.

A thesaurus that lists words by meaning will have an entirely different arrangement from a dictionary that lists them by spelling, though both follow a thoroughly logical plan. The artist, whose field is the visible only, that is to say what Poussin calls "solids," will sort the things of the universe by shapes, colors, light and dark, suggested textures. This results in a new encyclopedia different again from both dictionary and thesaurus. Within his craft, the artist is not able to distinguish between good and evil, one should even say between beautiful and horrible, to use layman's terminology. But though it lacks the benefit of other traditions, the physical has a logic all its own, and one not devoid of horizons.

We must consider that the Creative Act took into consideration the shapes of things and that, in the same way that man (body included) was made in the image of God, all creatures reflect in their shapes some particular virtue of His substantial thought. Thus it may

Catholic Art, Its Quandaries

JEAN CHARLOT

THE WORLD man has been put into to enjoy as his own has been inventoried in many unrelated ways—astronomy, microscopy, dictionaries, etc. Each results in listings so unrelated from those obtained by another way that only God can fill the gaps between

them and thus observe His Creation as a unit. No one considers one science invalid because its findings are independent of some other science. In fact each branch of knowledge is expected to deal in its own way with the universe, unduplicated by another. An exception is

not be accident, as Delacroix remarks in his Journals, that the cracks to be observed in dried mud have a shape and logic similar to the formation of tree trunks and branches. It must mean something, for example, this insistence on the sphere — spherical cells, spherical eye, spherical planets. Or this relation of a pine branch lovingly mimicking the outline of Mont Saint Victoire, miles away, as observed by Cézanne. Innocent of other terminologies, the artist does pick from all fields and gather together within his own plastic scheme things up to then unrelated.

One should not try to impose outside standards to the artist's own world; true in everyday experience, they become falsified in his case: giving to sculptured or painted bodies the biological and moral attributes of real bodies has resulted in much iconoclasm and witch-burning. One should rather proceed by respecting the laws peculiar to this plastic world, which, possessed of a hierarchy all its own, presents an orderly image of the universe as "decent" as, though different from, other interpretations.

THE DICTATORSHIP of man and of man's thoughts in literature is hardly to be matched within the plastic arts, for while literature can delve into psychology and metaphysics, painting and sculpture are bound to "think" in terms of solids.

Thus in painting it is not the story itself that communicates its drama. In this specialized sense, one may say that the clothes are more than the body, the accessories more essential than the hero. In the martyrdom of Saint Andrew or Saint Peter, in the Crucifixion of our Lord, the human shape remains subservient to the carpentered cross. A Deposition needs the pyramidal ladders to acquire plastic existence. The Resurrection, the Ascension, to acquire flight need as a starter the square, stolid shape of the tomb. Giotto, steeped as he is in Saint Thomas, paints a world at peace under the guidance of God, but it is not through soulful expressions on people's faces that he achieves this mood. He prefers to use the great architectural backgrounds to the monastic scenes, the solidity of conical mountains poised as a proposition of the *Summa*. Mainly through those inanimate things does he communicate the equivalent of men's thoughts. Man's body as Giotto portrays it is disguised into the semblance of trees and mounds under the heavy folds

of cloaks whose texture is nearer to bark and soil than to any known cloth.

It is not always possible to keep equally intact both illustrative and plastic properties; their relative importance shifts with time and fashion. When Greco tucks his personages into bodies which medical science pronounces in the last stages of exhaustion, when his brush distorts the face of our Lady as if it was made of ectoplasm, he sins against story-telling, and this made his work a scandal for at least three centuries. Yet if one pays attention to his line and color, one gets the full impact of his mysticism.

Most of the devotional images used to-day in churches depict pious attitudes, eyes rolled into ecstasies, but the choice of shapes and colors often tells an entirely unrelated story of bad art and of mercenary aims, which is sinful, at least within the craft.

Why should the churchmen of to-day sponsor such a photographic art? A representation of the saints that would be wholly satisfactory to the senses, suggesting their actual presence, would be puzzling to the faith, because of this lack of differentiation between original and copy. Few of the miraculous devotional images have stuck close to realism. The black log Virgins of old world sanctuaries, those of Spain and Mexico hidden under stiff pyramids of brocade, the axe-hewn, blood-drenched Santos of New Mexico are but the thinnest of veils between *orans* and Recipient of the prayers.

When Rubens painted our Lady fat and Greco painted her thin, the Inquisition did not pounce on them (for that reason at least), for it was then well understood that this was not our Lady but a symbol of her; a German will paint her Germanic, an Italian as Italian: the Chinese does paint her Chinese with specific approval of the Holy See. There are besides this racial geography individual stylistic climates for which allowances must also be made. If we may pry into our Lady's own opinion on the matter, it may be pointed that she herself, in her apparitions, modifies her appearance according to the recipient.

THE WORLD we paint is not the world we know, but only its mirrored reflection within our eye. It is perhaps a not negligible point for those who are sticklers for nature's ways that this image in fact is upside down. The illiveness of such a vision dovetails strikingly with Saint Paul's allusion to "things seen in a mirror and symbols."

Only a crass materialist would check on the correctness of the mirrored image and overlook this other assertion, that it must also stand as symbol. Were art as real as the model itself, it would mean a thickening of the walls around us, the closing tight of this material prison; it would sink art into matter. Rather than reflecting barrenly back the object of its reflection, the work of art must open a passage for mortal things to the spiritual world within its looking glass.

It is the very difference between the painted object and the natural object that best expresses its spiritual import; here are things detached from their everyday uses: plants without growth, people without action, light without twilight. Time ceases to exist. From our transient world we move into the perennial. It is as if Judgment had already been passed and all values were arrested into timelessness. This permanency is in itself a spiritual asset, as if all the busy Marthas of this world, all those creatures, animate and inanimate, whose reason to be is to serve, each in its capacity, were suddenly freed from this servitude and transformed into so many immobile, contemplative, God-loving Marys. It is then a Catholic's duty to respect the artificiality of art and to orient his pictures toward a greater goal than successful make-believe.

Such a well-rooted scruple should not be magnified so far as practically to annul the creative instinct. Some Catholics cling timorously to well-trying styles, Byzantine or gothic, or to their modern revivals. Their abhorrence of photographic art becomes an artistic phobia of things pertaining to the third dimension. Their creed may be summed thus: How is it licit to take a material true to its own identity and to transform it into the pretence of other illusive materials and objects? Is not this postulate so against nature that no positive addition in the final result may outweigh the initial subtraction? Is not the magical assumption on the canvas or wall of a sense of depth a lie, and as such, evil?

Laudable as those tenets are, there is bound to be discordance in the results. If a love of truth forces us to keep our picture within two dimensions, how much of Saint Peter (if such be the subject) will remain after we have steam-rolled him flat upon our canvas? Is not the disservice shown the Saint as bad a feature as the disrespect one would have shown the material, by painting enough space into it to make

place for a more rounded Peter? Why not let the artist create as much depth as he may? Be he Raphael or Bosseron-Chambers, painted means are so limited that none will take the result for a reality. If it be a lie, it remains a very white one.

When God gave to man the world for his own usage, the gift was intended also for the artist. The work of art must not be cut too harshly from the outer logic and beauty. A picture that reflects liberally God's creation must reflect also some of His good. Asceticism is a nonsense within the craft of sculpting and painting, for both deal with bodies, and their maker cannot shut up his senses without weakening the usefulness of the result. It may be, it is even probable, that the higher reaches of spiritual life have no need for the plastic arts; but at our imperfect level sensuousness remains for the plastic artist the one proper approach; an animal gusto, not metaphysics, is what makes the craft tick.

The world is not only a dry nomenclature of things, fit for the statistician; when all and each is weighed, counted, and labeled, what better than paint can express the admirable residue? One cannot imagine the convincing portrayal of a butterfly's wing in words. In that sense, though the thought be paradoxical, Rubens is an eminently religious painter. He endows the objects he paints with those supererogative attributes which God intended for each — sheen of silks, lusciousness of fruits, sensuousness of bodies. There is in his lack of inhibition a truly Catholic attitude, attuned to his profession.

However engrossing are theoretical considerations, Catholic art is so tied up with practical problems that its artist cannot afford to rent an ivory tower or suffer a pathological inflation of ego. The art-for-art artist proceeds on his own, brushes his pictures as he wants, and let the chips fall where they may. But the Catholic artist is at one end of a kind of tug of war, the Catholic worshipper at the other — or, to be realistic, the ecclesiastic that handles the parish money. If these were the only participants in the sport, the artist would have no choice but to bow abjectly to the aesthetic ideas of the non-artist; but it happens that this is a three-cornered proposition, with God as the referee. Before serving the Catholic flock or its pastor, the artist must give obeisance to God: he must not break the rules of sound aesthetics under penalty of ceasing to be a good man.

Stained Glass and Ecclesiastical Timidity

The Reverend M. A. COUTURIER, O.P.

IT IS hardly necessary to visit many churches in this country — Catholic or otherwise — to notice that the art of the stained glass craftsman is subject to the same decadence as it is in Europe. The average output is not any better; there are windows that are as ugly as many found in Europe (as a matter of fact, these windows often come from European studios). Moreover it is not apparent, in spite of a certain technical progress, that there is any great effort to effect a true revival, such as independent artists in Europe have achieved or striven after with courage and vigor, as witness the work of Nicolas in Holland; Cingria, Poncet, Stocker in Switzerland; Marguerite Huré, Barillet, Stevens and Rinuy in France. So, on the whole it can be said that the situation is the same, with a certain backwardness, as far as Europe is concerned, in the movement of renewal which, springing up about twenty years ago, makes slow headway.

American craftsmen in glass have always loved and admired the old windows in the French cathedrals; they agree with us in seeing the high point of this art in the thirteenth century, at Bourges, at Beauvais, and particularly in the north transept at Chartres, where, seven hundred years ago, a man of genius invented the most powerful and audacious composition of color and line that any artist has ever created.

Since we are all in agreement concerning the masterpieces and the old masters, no doubt we will agree on the reasons for the decadence and on the means to emerge therefrom.

We say *renaissance of the art of stained glass*; let us have the frankness to say *resurrection*. What we see in our churches, ninety nine times out of a hundred, as far as windows are concerned, are not works of art; they are simply a combined product of archaeology and commerce. And in such works art was killed . . . and *died*. It must not be denied that many of these windows give evidence of considerable erudition and good qualities of technical execution

and therefore of professional integrity (commercial or scientific) but *art* is another matter and we are obliged to affirm that the *art* of stained glass is dead when we compare most present day work, without originality, without freshness, without boldness, and — we might as well admit it — without value and without soul, to the freedom, to the freshness, to the infinite diversity of the masterpieces of the past.

I WOULD like to show that what has killed this art, in which archaeology and commerce triumph, is precisely archaeology and commerce. First archaeology. It may be noted at once that the demise of stained glass, in our modern times, is simply one of the effects of that ecclesiastical conservatism which has also killed religious architecture and other branches of Christian art. The priest who, each morning, in going up to the altar says "Unto God, who giveth joy to my youth" does not seem to be at ease except in buildings wherein are copied, to the minutest detail, the vaults and walls of a thousand years ago. And the more faithful the copy, the more the illusion of antiquity is complete, the better.

No, this is *not* better; in fact, it is positively bad. First of all, such an attitude bears witness against the catholicity of the Church; I mean the power of catholicity *in* the Church. After all, what is this "catholicity" which is incapable of assuming the forms of the times in which it lives and remains a stranger to them through being chained to the forms of the past? An art so mummified is not an art sufficiently "catholic." And, as a sign and a testimony, this already somewhat hinders the apostolic flowering of the Church, although the Church, fortunately, possesses many other means of apostolic action. But in the domain of art, here is death, pure and simple. Regardless of the importance of tradition, the work of art is not born, does not live of the past, but of the *present*. Every work of art is vitally and organically united to the *life* of the artist and to the

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