

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

"...who owe their birth neither to human blood, nor to physical urge, nor to human design, but to God. And the Word became man and lived for a time among us, and we viewed His glory..."

St. John 1:13-14

"...who satisfied you throughout life with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Psalms 103:5

It was just one hundred years ago that this window depicting St. John the evangelist, was installed and dedicated at Christ Episcopal Church in Albion. During the fall of 1889 the interior of Christ Church was remodeled with a new wooden ceiling supported by Gothic beam work. This was designed by Thomas Nolan an architect from Rochester and constructed by Edwin Burgess. Consequently the walls were repainted and stenciled by H.H. Brooker and two memorial windows by Leo P. Frohe of Buffalo were installed. Verse 14 of Isaiah (Vol XI No. 14) foretells the coming of a messiah ("For to us a child is born...His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6).

On the opposite wall the window of St. John declares the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled. Hence the inscription on this window from St. John 1:14 "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Here we see St. John in a spirit of contemplation as his eyes in this beautiful portrait are focused toward heaven. Long locks of hair cascade on to his shoulders from his head, behind which is a halo of veneration for this "Beloved Disciple." In one hand he holds a quill pen and in the other an open book.

These are the two most common symbols associated with St. John which denote his great writing ability. However, a third symbol also appears which is the eagle by his side. The eagle may generally be interpreted as a symbol of the Resurrection. It is said to have the ability to soar until it is lost to sight, and still retain its ability to gaze into the blazing mid-day sun. For this reason it has come to symbolize Christ. Because St. John in his Gospel, gazed upward in his contemplation of the divine nature of Jesus, the eagle became his symbol. In a more general sense the eagle stands for the virtues of courage, faith, and contemplation. Aside from these, the eagle also symbolizes generosity because it was believed that no matter how great its hunger, it always left half its prey to the birds that followed.

St. John, the Evangelist, was the youngest of the twelve Apostles and so therefore, is always depicted beardless as seen in this window. In the apex of the window you will notice the crown and cross which suggest the reward of the faithful unto death and "I will give thee the Crown of Life" (Rev. 2:10). In a similar circular design at the base of the window is a decorative cross around which are arranged lilies, symbolic of immortality.

The color scheme in the window is remarkable. Its overall effect is gold and red with highlights of turquoise and browns which make it most striking in character. St. John is dressed in a golden robe signifying the goodness of God. Over this is draped a red mantle with a white lining, the red denotes love, the white purity. A sapphire sky suggests heavenly truth. About a third of the way up on a small piece of red glass the makers name, Leo P.



Frohe appears in very small script. At the base of the window is the memorial inscription which states: "To the Glory of God in Memory of Hiram W. Preston, Adele C. Preston." Mrs. Hiram Preston gave the window in memory of her husband and daughter. Hiram Preston was an Albion jeweler for many years.