

UTS Stained-Glass Windows Given a New Home

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Stained-glass window featuring the young Saint John Baptist De La Salle as a young man in Reims, France

A visitor to the chapel of the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York, today will open the door, and the first thing that hits him or her will be the light. The visitor's eyes will be drawn to shafts of light streaming down from 16 brand-new, double-paned, tinted, argon-gas-filled, segmented windows. Gone are the 100-year-old stained-glass windows installed in 1930 by the Christian Brothers, a Roman Catholic service order. In their place are modern windows designed by Chad Hoover (UTS 1980), an architect and member of the UTS Board of Trustees.

"The natural light gives an open, vertical feeling that wasn't there before. It changes the character of the chapel in a good way," said John Redmond, former CFO of UTS, who was involved in the transfer of windows.

Another good part is that the new windows were "swapped" for the antique windows, courtesy of the Christian Brothers order, in effect netting the seminary a \$650,000 upgrade to its physical plant. Some of the stained-glass windows depict the life journey of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of the Christian Brothers order in the late 17th century. Other windows re-create sacred scenes from the Bible but incorporate portraits of La Salle's early patrons, according to Redmond. He added, "The fact that the Christian Brothers stepped up gave us a fortunate opportunity."

The stained-glass windows removed in March today are in the hands of Manhattan College in New York City, where they will be reinstalled by March 2016. As the Manhattan College website tells it, "The 10 scenes in the 8 windows portray the panoply of La Salle's life as it was developed over the course of time among the Brothers'

community. These windows are absolute treasures. In an exciting acquisition, Manhattan College will be entrusted with a collection of exquisite stained-glass windows originally installed at the Brothers' Novitiate in Pocantico Hills, N.Y., and moved to the chapel at the Brothers' Novitiate in Barrytown, N.Y., in 1930. The windows portray scenes from the life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, from his childhood in Reims to his death and subsequent glorification in heaven."

"It is a win-win situation. The Christian Brothers got their sacred history, and we get handsome, double-paned, asbestos-free windows that will last another 80 years," said Dr. Michael Mickler, UTS church history professor and a manager of the windows swap. Chad Hoover said, "Since some of the windows were cracked or broken, a retrofit of the whole set would have been required in the next 10 years, costing UTS more than \$650,000."

Was the swap worth it? Visitors to the UTS graduation ceremony at Barrytown on Saturday, May 23, at 3:00 p.m. can judge for themselves. "It's in the eye of the beholder," said Hoover. "Some argued that we could never get rid of the stained-glass windows." Yet there likely are hundreds of students who passed through the UTS campus over the years who often wondered about the topics depicted in the windows but never found out. I was one of them. Some say the muted light of stained glass draws the visitor's attention to the altar, whereas now your eyes notice the light from the portals.



Detail of one of the windows conveyed to Manhattan College depicting St. John Baptist de La Salle and his supporters. Photo courtesy of the Manhattan College in New York City



UTS Chapel with scaffolding during installation of the new, double-paned, asbestos-free windows

The stained-glass icons revered by the followers of LaSalle are fitting symbols of the 40-year period in which the campus hosted the Christian Brothers Novitiate in Barrytown. Now, as UTS celebrates its 40th anniversary in May, the face-lift of the Chapel may stimulate stewards of UTS' next 40 years to look up, sense the direction of the light and open their minds to new possibilities.