

2-5-1961

Notes: Chapel Window Dedication: Christianity and the Fine Arts (Fragments), 1961

O.P. Kretzmann
Valparaiso University

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DATE 2/5/61 OCCASION Window dedicationTHEME Christianity & the Fine Arts

1. We are gathered here this morning for a rare & singular purpose - ^{simply} ~~crudely~~: to dedicate a window to the glory of God and the welfare of men - and to express our gratitude to the men and women who made this ^{occasion} possible -
2. Someone here is this really God? Spending all this money for a window - would it not be better if we supported some missionary with these funds? Is this really God's will for us? To be here in these majestic surroundings while millions are still without Christ? To this misgiving - several answers:

a) Not an either-or matter - the men & women who gave us this money have also given generously & beautifully for missions - they have seen the Church, the Body of Christ, in its totality - not only active in the world - but also immeasurably and magnificently beautiful - beyond all beauty of earth and time - giving us here a small foretaste and a little glimpse of the glory of heaven - a window which lets the Eternal through - our vision of God has always come through sight and sound gathered around the Word and the Sacrament - the organ and the window - the choir and the hymns are channels for the Spirit of the living God through which He brings us not only to grace but also to glory - His Grace - "fore taste of heaven"

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Great artists always walk by faith as they give us sight - they always know and trust the power of the transcendent eternal which comes through the things we touch and hear and see - all man's greatest creations laid, year by year, and moment by moment, at the feet of Him Who is fairer than all the children of man.

b) And so ^{it is} altogether fitting and proper that our first window should be dedicated to the second person of the Holy Trinity - here is the heart and center of our faith ^{what is in the window} - the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension ^{judgment} - these are the great themes of these pieces of glass - fitted together - telling us again that the God whom we worship is the God Who came here - who was here and is here - and that He touches all the human ways - art & music & architecture - by which we remind ourselves that He has done more for us than any sermon or any window or any organ can possibly tell. Before this window was installed we could look out and see the temporal world - now we look at it and see the real world, the eternal world, the world which has been made ours by our Lord Jesus Christ - the world beyond the window has been honored in the incarnation and the atonement - the world inside is the Body of Christ - living and saving the world beyond the window -

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7. There is more than a touch of eternity in all truly Xian art - its basic imperative is from above. The Holy Spirit Who calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps the Church still broods over our boat world with warm breast and bright wings - all great art is the work of God the Creator - all Christian art is not only that but, it is also the work of the Holy Spirit Who persuades men to give their greatest and best to advance His glory and His power in the hearts of men - instruments of His creative and sanctifying power in the world -
8. So - this window is our offering to God and at the same time a reflection of His work in us - in our worshipping and surrendered hearts - in our willingness to show our love for Him with our eyes - our lips - our hands - this is our experientia into God - all great Christian art has an element of revealed
9. A hundred years ago - young organist in a Cathedral in Berlin.... if I had not moved etc. this is the secret of all Christian art - yes, finally of the Christian life - to move from the organ bench, to let him play the melody of our lives - to let Him sing and play & paint and build in us and through us - so that men everywhere will see also these good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven -