



# *Self-Guided Art Tour*



**Franciscan Renewal Center**

Peace. Renewal. Good.

# Explore the Beauty Art as a Sacred Journey

In the Franciscan Tradition, Beauty is more than what we find pleasing to the senses. "(It) is a transcendental attribute of being, unifying the true and the good... Beauty is essential to human wisdom and an integral part of the journey toward the divine... the foundational human experience that unites mind and heart, spirit and body, activity and passivity, beyond time, beyond culture, beyond point of view." (Sr. Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J., *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition*)

We invite you to explore Beauty in these Franciscan artworks and allow them to touch your mind, heart, spirit, and body. You can view them all in one visit or return often and spend as much time as you need pausing, gazing, contemplating, and participating where possible. Take time to pray *The Canticle of the Creatures*, by St. Francis, the poem that inspired the theme of Beauty and Creation in the church.

*Beauty is the deepest  
foundation of  
reality. Beauty can  
be another name for  
God.*

Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J.

This guide is designed to orient you to the pieces located around the campus, with a numbered map that corresponds to information about each item. While the information often contains the intention of the artist, this is an opportunity for personal reflection and experiences unique to you on your journey toward the divine.

May you find Beauty everywhere.

Since 1951, the Franciscan Renewal Center  
(the Casa) has been renewing lives through:

## Spiritual Growth

*The Casa provides a safe place for the spiritual growth of all people. Lives are changed here!*

## Healing and Transformation

*The Casa is a welcoming center for prayer, healing, and transformation. We help people enrich their lives with spiritual meaning, a sense of belonging, and connection.*

## Service to Others

*Following the model of St. Francis, the Casa nurtures people— especially the most vulnerable – by supporting, healing, and empowering lives.*

# How to use this guide

Inside this guide are descriptions of artwork found on the Franciscan Renewal Center campus. The artwork is numbered on the maps on the following pages to guide your exploration. As you enter the church, please follow the guide clockwise around the building.

## Artwork Inside Our Lady of the Angels:

- 3 - 17 Fifteen works of art are located on the inside of the Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Angels. Within this group, there are eight works inspired by St. Francis' *Cantic of the Creatures*. Read the poem on page 5 and discover which art pieces connect with the poem.

## Artwork Outside Our Lady of the Angels Church

- 1 - 2 Four highlighted works are on or immediately adjacent to the exterior of the church.

18 - 19

## Artwork throughout the Franciscan Renewal Center Campus

20 - 33

- These art pieces are located throughout the 25-acre property. Explore the lobby, grounds, and dining room to see them all.

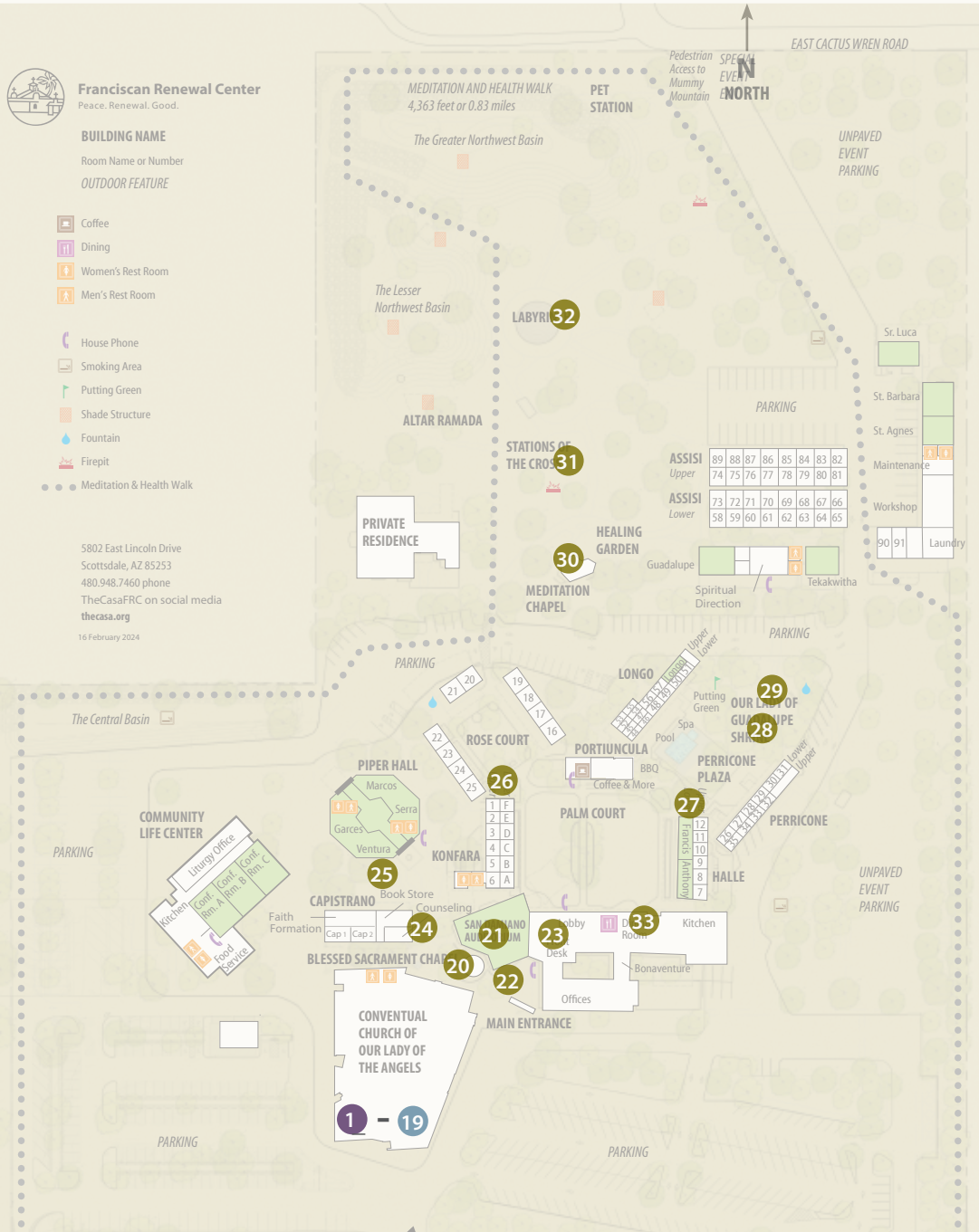
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Front cover photo by Peter Jordan Photography



Photo by Peter Jordan.

# Property Map



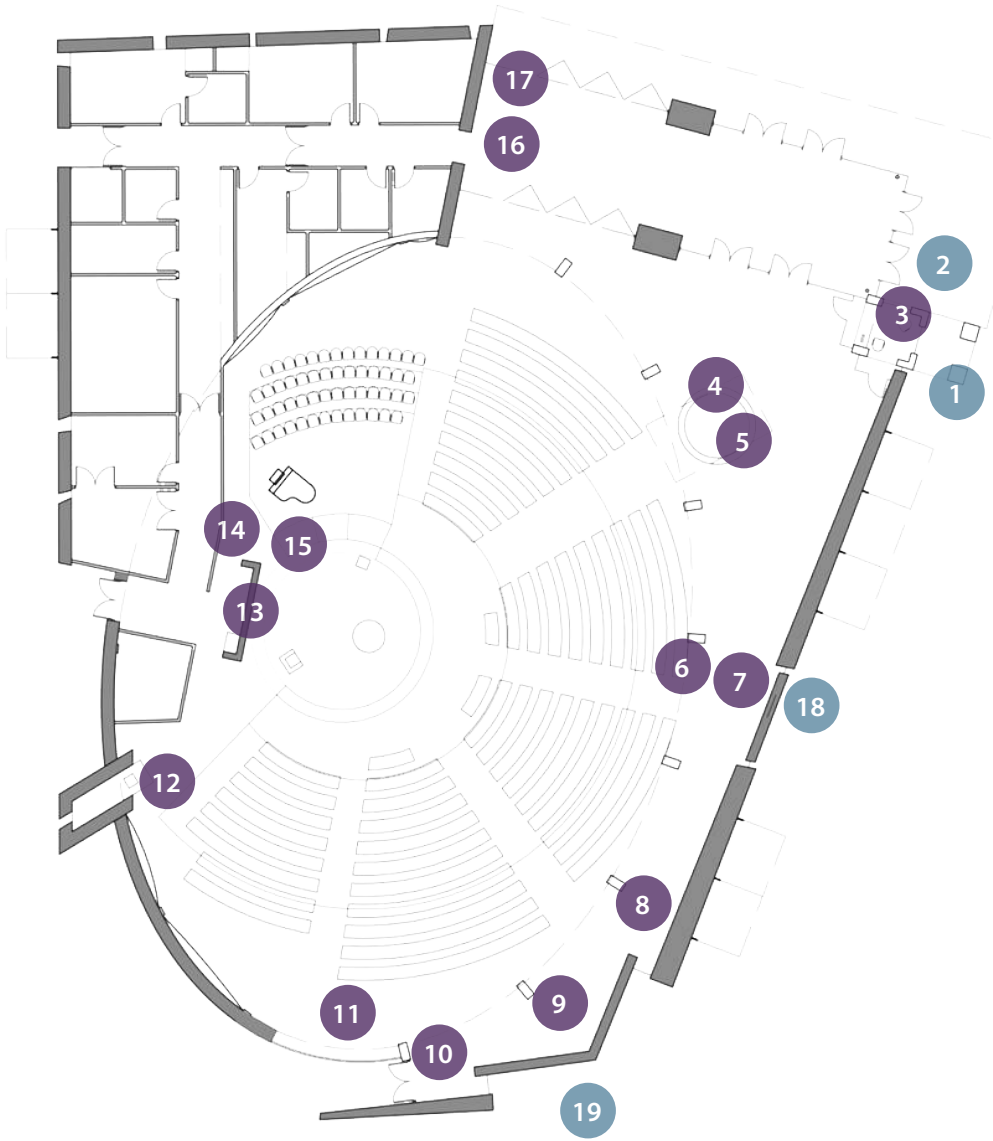
**Franciscan Renewal Center**  
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Scottsdale, Arizona 85253

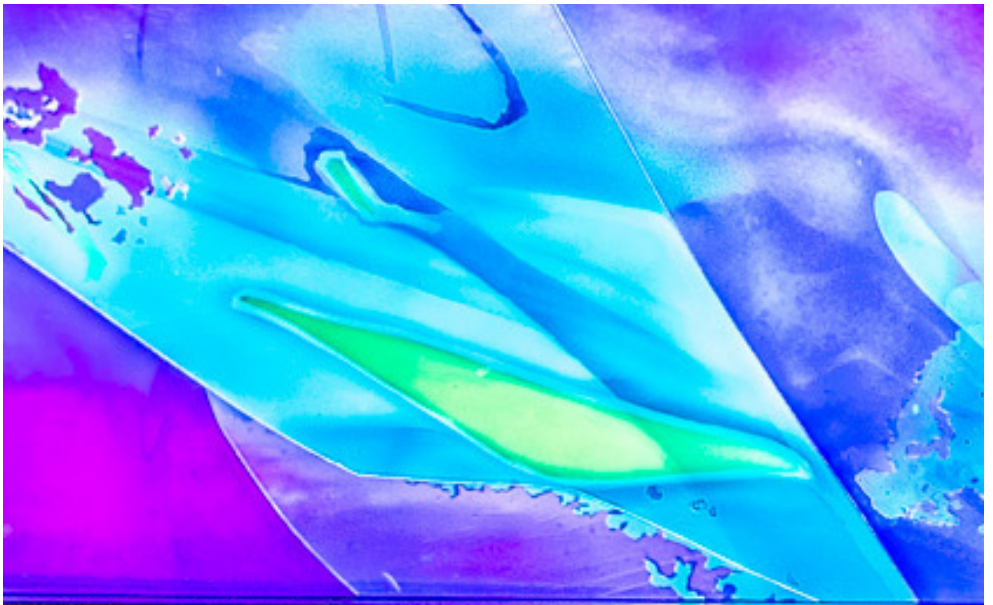
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All are welcome.

## Our Lady of the Angels Church Map



*The church is open 6:30 am – 7 pm, except when in use for liturgies/prayer services.*



# *The Canticle of the Creatures*

By St. Francis of Assisi

As you explore the art in the church, we invite you to discover which art glass windows correspond to the stanzas in the poem below.

**Most high, all-powerful, good Lord,  
Yours are the praises, the glory,  
and the honor and all blessing.**

To You alone, Most High, do they belong,  
and no human is worthy to mention your name.

**Praised be You, my Lord,** with all Your creatures,  
especially Sir Brother Sun,  
who is the day and through whom You give us light.  
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor,  
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

**Praised be You, my Lord,** through Sister Moon and the stars;  
in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

**Praised be You, my Lord,** through Brother Wind,  
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,  
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.

**Praised be You, my Lord,** through Sister Water,  
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

**Praised be You, my Lord,** through Brother Fire,  
through whom You light the night,  
and he is beautiful, and playful and robust and strong.

**Praised be You, my Lord,** through our Sister Mother Earth,  
who sustains and governs us, and who produces  
various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

**Praised be You, my Lord,**  
through those who give pardon for Your love,  
and bear infirmity and tribulation.  
Blessed are those who endure in peace  
for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

**Praised be You, my Lord,** through our Sister Bodily Death,  
from whom no one living can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin.  
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy  
will, for the second death shall do them no harm.

**Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks,  
and serve Him with great humility.**

## Bell Tower and Bells

The bell tower serves as a visible, welcoming invitation of the call to worship. Church bells symbolize the elevation of the human spirit toward the heavenly realm. The textured rough-hewn sandstone of the bell tower symbolizes the earth in contrast to the ethereal limestone material of the five intersecting crosses symbolizing heaven. Hanging in the belfry of the bell tower is the elegant curvilinear shape of the three bronze bells.

Our Franciscan heritage inspired the naming of these bells. The largest bell is named for Franciscan Friar, Blessed John Duns Scotus (1226-1308), considered to be one of the most influential philosopher-theologians of the Middle Ages. The middle bell honors St. Agnes of Prague (1211-1282) who gave up wealth and nobility to become a Poor Clare sister. Her correspondence with St. Clare is inspiring for its spiritual insights. The smallest bell relates to St. Katherine Drexel (1858-1955). An American, she founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and fostered equal education for Native Americans and African Americans. She, along with three Franciscan Friars, started the St. Michael Mission school on the Navajo Nation in Arizona.

Commissioned in 1956 by Christ Episcopal Church in Bellevue, New Jersey, the three bells are 80 percent copper and 20 percent tin. The bells were manufactured by the Verdin Company of Cincinnati, Ohio and cast and tuned by the royal Bellfoundry Petit & Fritzen in the Netherlands. The designs on the bells are beautifully crafted.



Photo by Peter Jordan



Photo by Kathleen Fitzpatrick.



Photo by Frank Baselice.

2

## Cornerstone

Frank Baselice

To the left, approaching the eastern door to the church, one finds the beautifully carved Cornerstone with inspirational words from the *Rule of St. Francis*, giving gentle guidance as to our spiritual journey.

At the top of the stone there is a new rendition of the traditional Franciscan Coat of Arms. The spiritual journey can be seen in the powerful symbolism of the art and architecture of Our Lady of the Angels Church.

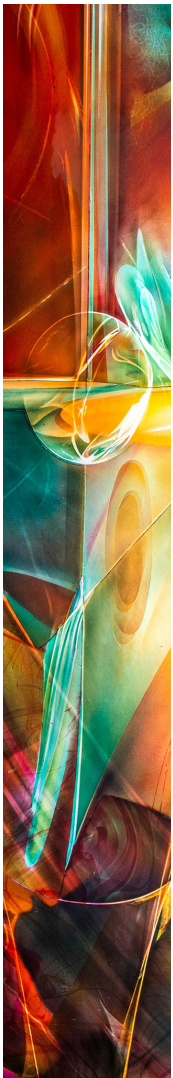


Photo by Frank Baselice.

3

ONE OF THE CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES WINDOWS

## Those Who Forgive

Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

What looks real and what looks abstract? Abstraction is juxtaposed with Realism in this work of art, in which one recognizes true-to-life objects. Here in this window, one sees the realistic image of the cross with the abstraction of energetic circles surrounded by subtle veil-like colors and forms. In this vertical art glass, the cross symbolizes forgiveness and reconciliation.

St. Francis wrote the forgiveness stanza of the *Canticle of the Creatures* to stop an ongoing quarrel between the Bishop of Assisi and the Mayor of Assisi. The Bishop had excommunicated the Mayor, and the Mayor forbade the townspeople to sell, buy, or enter into a contract with the Bishop. After hearing the inspiring words of the Canticle, the Bishop and Mayor were reconciled by forgiving one another.





Photo by Peter Jordan.

4 ONE OF THE CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES WINDOWS

## Sister Water and Brother Fire

Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

This circular window sits above the baptismal font in the church. In the window, locate the red robust colors of Brother Fire and the precious chaste blues of Sister Water as described by the *Canticle of the Creatures*.

The beauty of baptismal symbolism in the circular window will inspire all those who witness and participate in the Sacrament of Baptism. Early Christians were baptized in rivers and fonts. Water symbolizes the cleansing and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit. Flames of fire indicate the presence of God and the flame of faith.



5 Altar, Furnishings, and Baptismal Font

Fr. Mark Joseph Costello, OFM Cap

The altar furnishings and the baptismal font incorporate a stylized hay motif inspired by the Nativity at Greccio, the old hill town where the first Christmas nativity scene was created by St. Francis. Hay imagery is referenced in wood and stone carvings as well as actual hay incorporated into the plaster of two wall segments inside the church (below the Mother Earth window and below the Greccio window) and in the frosted design on the narthex glass.

Fr. Mark Joseph has a unique background with degrees in art and architecture from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, liturgical training as a Capuchin Franciscan, and work in church design, renovation, and construction.



Photo by Peter Jordan.

6

## The Nativity

Deborah Luke

The three-part format of the Nativity scene, called a triptych, shows a large bas relief sculptural panel flanked by two smaller bas relief panels. The vertical alignment of the radiating star and the Holy Family seem to come alive through the rejoicing of the angels as they celebrate the birth of Christ. The upper part of the composition shows the angelic joyful jubilation while the lower part of the composition is peaceful and calm. Moreover, the triangular depiction of the holy family symbolizes the strong family bond of Joseph and Mary as they adore the Holy Infant.

The golden color of the halo indicates the divinity of Jesus born into humility and poverty as signified by the hay. The animals in the scene further enhance his lowly birth. We look to the side panels for other important events of that Nativity story. The left panel shows the shepherds in awe of everything surrounding them. The Magi on the right panel bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Holy Child.

To all Franciscans, the Nativity represents the concept of the humility and poverty of the Incarnation and how Christ became a man because of his deep love for us. In this triptych and elsewhere on the walls, altar furniture, and baptismal font, hay becomes a symbolic reminder of the poverty and humility of Christ's birth and of God's love for us.

Deborah Luke's works center on the life and passion of Christ bringing to life art pieces inspired by Holy Scripture and informed by the needs of worshipping communities.



7

ONE OF THE *CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES* WINDOWS

## Sister Mother Earth

**Scott Parsons, M.F.A.**

Showcasing the Southwestern Arizona ocotillo plant with the brilliant red flowers, which bloom only after a rain, this window alludes to land, plants, water, and living things vital to our life on earth. Sister Mother Earth envelopes all creatures with love and nourishment through her praise of God.

The Arizona colors used by artist Scott Parsons enhance the praise of Sister Mother Earth to God through all her lifegiving attributes to sustain our lives here on earth. Explore the jeweled tones and textures of the mosaic-like small cut glass pieces of blues, oranges, greens, and yellows, reflective of plants and other living creatures.

## Sister Death

Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

Observe the upward movement of artist Scott Parson's depiction of the eloquent transition of the soul from earthly life to heaven. St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), one of the biographers of St. Francis, wrote about the death of St. Francis. "One of his brothers...saw his soul under the appearance of a radiant star being carried aloft in a shining cloud...on a direct path to heaven."

According to the *Canticle of the Creatures*, written by St. Francis, dying is an act of praise to God. This last stanza of the *Canticle* was written as he was dying. The first death refers to the challenging journey of penance and forgiveness leading to a true relationship with God. With a successful relationship with God, the second death is beautiful, easier, and welcomed. St. Francis, at the moment of death, called out, "Welcome Sister Death!"



Photo by  
Peter Jordan.



## Francis and Clare

Karen Schmidt

This imaginary scene shows St. Francis at the end of his life, weak and overcome with pain. St. Clare, a follower of St. Francis, is in the role of healer. Look for the circular bowl gently placed on top of the masterful folds of the towel. Feel the wood texture lines on the chair. What is the focus of the communication between St. Francis and St. Clare? Notice the implied line connecting the intense gaze of St. Francis, full of pain, and the compassionate response of St. Clare as they both look upon the stigmata, or wound of Christ, on the hand of St. Francis.

See how artist Karen Schmidt communicates a spiritual truth with emphasis on gesture and figural form. The three-dimensional sculpture of Francis and Clare invites the viewer to slowly walk around the art object exploring the open and closed spaces.

10 ONE OF THE CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES WINDOWS

## Brother Wind

Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

Follow the sky-blue-hued diagonals of wind that blow over land and water bringing life-giving rain to the beloved earthly creatures and all of God’s creation. Importantly, Brother Wind brings us the weather that sustains all of God’s creatures with distribution of water and seeds for plants, animals, and humankind to survive. Movement and color serve to emphasize the key essence of the message of the Brother Wind window.

This window features an artistic style called abstraction, a visual language that uses shapes, color, form, and line, almost like a poem, to show an aspect or a feeling inspired by a real object.



Photo by Peter Jordan.

11 ONE OF THE CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES WINDOWS

## Our Lady of the Angels

Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

With energized spirals and radiant color, the beauty of Sir Brother Sun is evident in the upward movement from the horizontal space at the lower portion leading to the curvilinear shape of a rising Virgin Mary. This elegant Mary of the Angels recalls both the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven and “... the woman clothed with sun.” from Revelations 12:1 in the New Testament. Continuing ever upward, the realistic depiction of a galaxy from the Hubble Space Telescope captures the glory of our ever-expanding heavenly universe.

Franciscans treasure the title of Our Lady of the Angels as it was the name of a small church, Our Lady of the Angels of the Portiuncula, located near Assisi, Italy. It is here that St. Francis founded the Franciscan order and where he met Sister Death.

*Note: The central architectural glass pane, 12’ high and 4’ 9” wide, is the single largest architectural glass pane in North America.*



Photo by Peter Jordan.

12

## Beacon of Light

Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

Guided by the remarkable compositional elements of color and movement, the Beacon of Light window compels the viewer to look upward from the energizing flames to the elongated blue color transitioning into an ever-increasing ethereal transcendent light.

As Christians, the Beacon of Light, with St. Francis as our role model, sends us to carry the light of Christ outward to others promoting the Franciscan mission of spiritual growth, healing, and transformation. Flames symbolize the light of Christ that calls us to take the message of Christ into the world with the emphasis on serving others.

Note the alignment of the aisle beginning with the Reconciliation Chapel and Baptismal Font to the Altar and Tabernacle ending with the Beacon of Light window. This unique architectural design is called the Sacramental Aisle.

Photo by  
Peter Jordan.

13

ONE OF THE *CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES* WINDOWS

## Torches in the Night

Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

To the right of the Greccio window, one finds the vertical window called Torches of the Night. Follow the orange-yellowish color of the multifaceted abstract shapes of torches and candles, shown from a variety of viewpoints (sides and tops), against the dark background. At the top, one sees the realistic beauty of Sister Moon and the stars as described in the *Canticle of the Creatures*.

Both friars and townspeople came on foot to see the recreation of the Nativity scene on Christmas Eve, 1223. One description of the scene can be found in the writings of Thomas of Celano, one of St. Francis' early biographers, "The friars gathered, the people flocked; the wood echoed with voices, and that venerable night became resplendent with lights, solemn and resounding with harmonious lauds."

Photo by  
Peter Jordan.



14

## Greccio

Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

How does the artist imagine the very first nativity scene created by St. Francis in the hillside town of Greccio in 1223? Notice the realistic animals on the right of this horizontal window. One recognizes the Nativity with realistic images of the ox and ass, as well as abstract shapes, color, and lines which describe the birth with energy of holiness and spirituality. As you continue to examine the horizontal window, find the triangular shape depicting the blue star-filled night. Notice the surrounding liveliness of vivid color and various shapes, which provide a background for three emerging figural forms, followed by a large circular shape highlighted with beige acid-etched lines.

St. Francis created the first Nativity scene to honor the circumstances of poverty and humility of Christ's humble birth. Led by St. Francis, with an ass, an ox, and a manger, the townspeople and friars honored the "Babe of Bethlehem" in a nearby grotto. It is said that those present saw a child in the manger.

In this famous event, St. Francis wished to impact the lack of religious faith of that time by bringing attention to the true meaning of God's love evidenced in the Incarnation and humble birth of Jesus, which has influenced the Nativity and Creche scenes in homes into our modern times.





Photo by Frank Baselice.

15

## San Damiano Crucifix

Fr. Vincent Nguyen, OFM

Highlighted against the interplay of a light penetrating and light reflective wall of iridescent Venetian plaster, the wooden San Damiano Crucifix follows the icon tradition of Byzantine and Eastern churches. An icon depicts Jesus and other holy figures as a devotional aid to religious truth communicated in a visual manner. Notice the triumph of the glorified Christ with the expressive eyes and halo of brilliant gold against lines and colors of the background.

The narrative of events can be analyzed in the gestures and expressions of the angelic and historical figures that surround Jesus on the cross. Of interest is the upper portion illustrating Christ's ascension and the lower portion showing a seated Virgin Mary with archangels highlighting an Arizona scene with cacti and Camelback Mountain in the background.

The outstanding Franciscan artist, Fr. Vincent Nguyen, OFM, was inspired by the original San Damiano Crucifix created around 1100 CE, now located in the Basilica of St. Clare in Assisi, Italy. St. Francis, while praying in front of the original San Damiano Cross in the Church of San Damiano near Assisi, heard the following words, "Francis, go, repair my house, which as you can see, is falling completely to ruin." From the miracle of Christ's words, St. Francis began to literally repair local churches. Later, he understood his call to be rebuilding lives in Christ and thus rebuilding the Catholic Church.



Photo by Frank Baselice.





Photo by Peter Jordan.

16

## Nativity/Creche Set

Emanuele Fontanini

*Only publicly displayed seasonally.*

A three-dimensional nativity scene is called a crèche. St. Francis is credited with creating the first live Nativity scene in the town of Greccio, Italy in the year 1223. Nativity scenes symbolize the Incarnation, where God comes to us as a poor, vulnerable human infant. Reflection on the crèche can reveal the depth of God's love for us and all of creation.

Our nativity set includes the infant Jesus which was created by Master Sculptor Elio Simonetti. Other parts of this Fontanini Crèche include an adoring Mary, a devoted and caring Joseph, and an alert but calm donkey.

The Fontanini tradition dates back to the late 1800s when company founder Emanuele Fontanini began creating crèche figures in the little town of Bagni di Lucca located in Tuscany, Italy. Today, it is run by Emanuele's great-grandchildren. Each new figurine or nativity set piece is created as part of an artistic process that can take up to two years to complete. Only master painters have the honor of bringing the figures to life by painting their eyes, mouths, and other distinctive features. The Fontanini sets are so popular around the world due to their beauty, their details, and their durability.

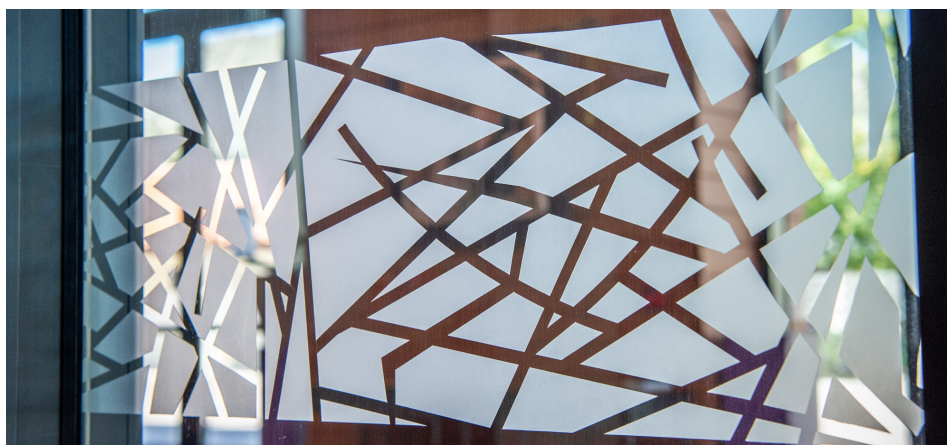




Photo by Peter Jordan.

17

## Donor Recognition Wall

Frank Baselice

Consisting of a single, 84" square pane of glass, all financial donors who contributed to the Renewing Lives Campaign are gratefully acknowledged. Their names are laser carved into the "first surface" of the glass (closest to the viewer), then filled with dark brown. The back, or "second surface" of the glass features the Renewing Lives "swirl" logo, which represents various individuals and groups coming together.

Metaphorically, the people who made it financially possible to construct the new church, Community Life Center, and other elements included in the fundraising campaign are shown as a group in the design of the swirl. In addition, through the non-sand-blasted portions of the glass, one actually sees the stone of the church, the physical representation of well-intentioned individuals and organizations coming together to the Glory of God with grateful hearts.



18

## The Resurrection

Deborah Luke

A magnificent bas relief composition in bronze depicts a large, monumental, resurrected Christ powerfully emerging from the tomb encircled by four welcoming angels. A bas relief is a type of low relief sculpture where figures and designs are raised from a flat surface to give a three-dimensional effect. Six narrative vignettes of post-resurrection events surround the risen Christ to complete the compositional elements.

The vignettes on the left are:

1. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.
2. Jesus joins two disciples on the road to Emmaus.
3. Thomas doubts that it is truly Jesus until touching the wound.

The scenes on the right are:

1. Peter hauls in fish with a net at the suggestion of a man on the shore.
2. The Disciples breakfast with Jesus.
3. Jesus questions Peter and commissions him to tend his lambs and feed his sheep.

Deborah Luke's works center on the life and passion of Christ bringing to life art pieces inspired by Holy Scripture and informed by the needs of worshipping communities.



## Saint Francis Preaching

Thomas Bollinger

Observe the welcoming hand gestures and interested gaze of St. Francis who wears the traditional habit of the Franciscan friars. Bollinger skillfully captures the religious persona of St. Francis through the detailed facial features which describe the dedication, the charisma, and the strength of character of St. Francis.

St. Francis was known for his devotion to Christ and the Gospel, sometimes preaching in up to five villages a day. In addition, he is famous for his preaching to the animals. When captured during the Fifth Crusade and brought to the Sultan of Egypt, Malek al Kamil, the sultan expressed admiration for the preaching of St. Francis. Today, the legacy of St. Francis sharing the gospel message lives on through the influence of dedicated Franciscan friars, Franciscan sisters, Secular Franciscans, and Franciscan-hearted lay people world-wide.

The bronze sculpture of St. Francis Preaching by Thomas Jefferson Bollinger is one of the masterpieces at the Franciscan Renewal Center.



Photo by Frank Baselice.





Photo by Peter Jordan.

20

## Saint Clare Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Designed by Colab Studio: Maria Pensiero-Salenger and Matthew Salenger

The St. Clare chapel creates a wonderful space for quiet meditation. Along the outside of the inner wall, St. Clare's words give us instruction in contemplation. Not only did she have a special devotion to the Eucharist, she lived a contemplative life in a cloister. There are only five writings attributed to St. Clare – four of them letters to Blessed Agnes of Prague. In one of those letters, she encourages Agnes to a material separation from the world and into contemplation:

*Place your mind before the mirror of eternity.  
Place your soul in the brilliance of glory.  
Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance.  
And transform your whole being into the image  
of the Godhead itself through contemplation.*

These words are found on the stone slab to the east of the chapel. This stone slab was once the altar in the church. The outer wall encircling the chapel is to symbolize the walls that surrounded the cloister at San Damiano. St. Clare defended the monastery of San Damiano in Assisi from an army of Saracens with the Most Blessed Sacrament. From high atop the monastery wall, she prayed fervently for God's protection.

A mysterious voice coming from the Host said: "I shall always watch over you." Immediately panic seized the besiegers. A ray of brilliant light which emanated from the Blessed Sacrament had dazzled them. They fell from the walls and fled from the place. The design on the outer wall shows St. Clare holding a candle as her name means light.





21

## San Damiano Auditorium Rooftop Sculptures

On the top of the Auditorium, which was originally the Our Lady of Solitude Chapel, you will find eight statues of saints blessing the Franciscan Renewal Center.

Each saint has a connection to the Franciscan Order or to a contemplative space.

**Fr. Junipero Serra**

Early Franciscan Missionary

**St. Clare of Assisi**

Founder of the Poor Clare order

**St. Francis of Assisi**

Founder of the Franciscan order

**St. Thomas More**

A Secular Franciscan

**St. John Baptiste Vianney**

A Secular Franciscan

**St. Ignatius Loyola**

Patron of Retreats

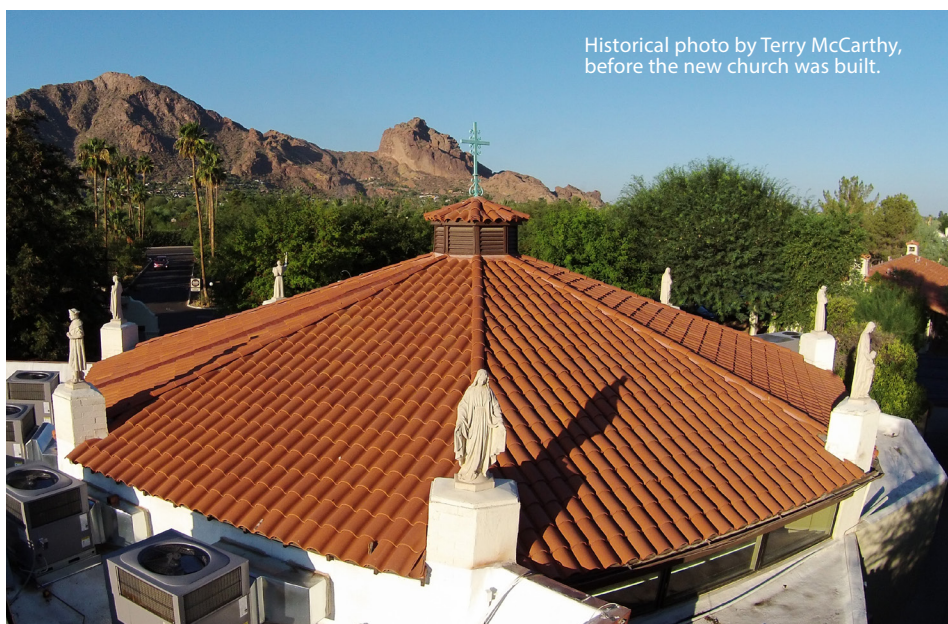
**St. Anne**

Mother of Mary, for whom

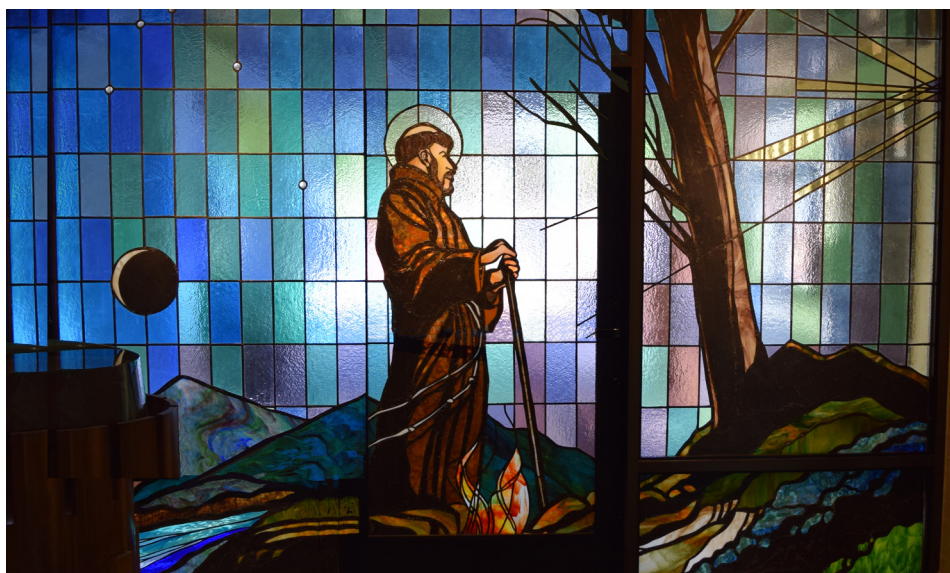
Franciscans hold great reverence.

Another name for Mary

**Our Lady of Grace**



Historical photo by Terry McCarthy, before the new church was built.

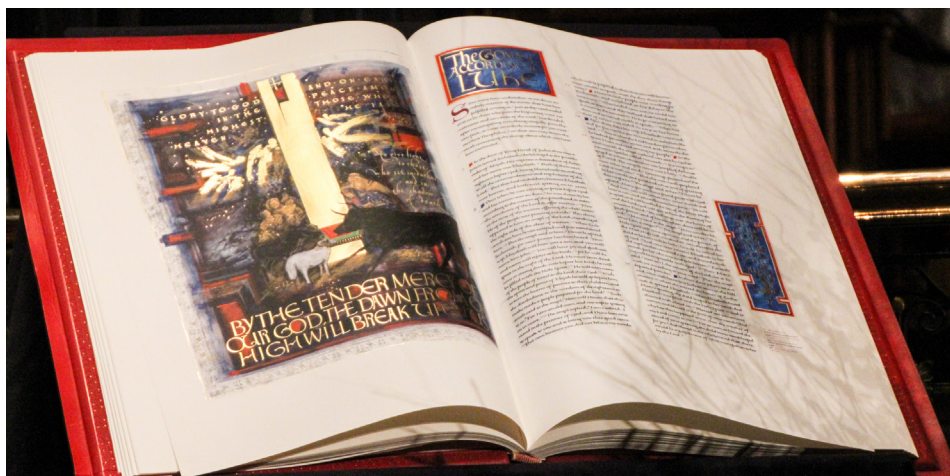


22

## Canticle of the Creatures Art Glass Window

Created by Power Brothers, a Phoenix Company

This piece of stained-glass art decorated the front doors of the Franciscan Renewal Center until the renovation of the old church into an auditorium. The stained glass depicts St. Francis amidst God's beautiful creation. The elements in the *Canticle of the Creatures* (sun, moon, stars, water, fire, wind, and Mother Earth) are depicted in the window.



23

## The Saint John's Bible

*The Saint John's Bible* is the first completely handwritten illuminated Bible commissioned by a Benedictine Abbey in over 500 years, since the invention of the printing press. A Biblical Illumination takes the Word of God and glorifies it by transforming the word into a complementary art form employing illustration, color and design. *The Saint John's Bible* is meant to inspire and be a prophetic witness to the glory of the Word of God and to humankind's God-given dignity.

(con't on the next page)

## Saint John's Bible (con't)

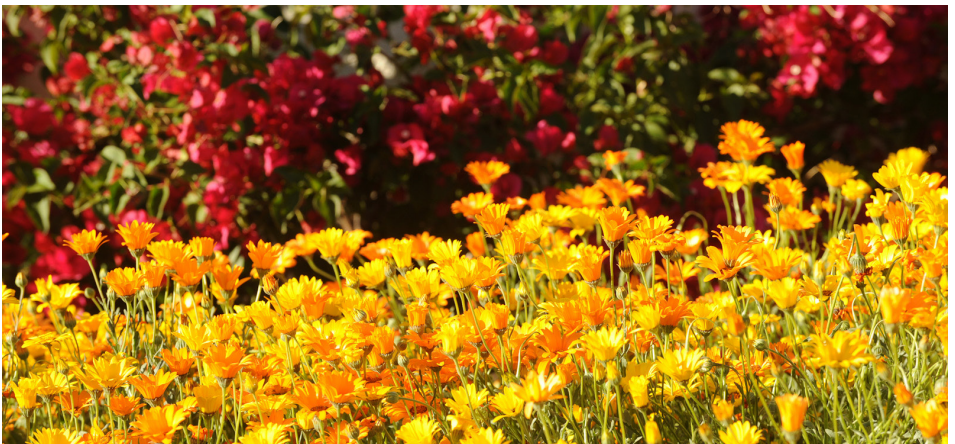
This contemporary Bible was created by a group of 23 scribes, artists, and assistants in a scriptorium in Wales under the artistic direction of Donald Jackson, Senior Scribe to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Crown Office at the House of Lords. The team worked in conjunction with a committee of theologians, scholars and artists from St. John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota. This bible incorporates many of the characteristics



of its medieval predecessors: such as being written on vellum using quills, and adorned with gold leaf, silver leaf and platinum gilding. After 15 years of work the pages were completed in 2011 and given a permanent home at St. John's Abbey and University.

The Franciscan Renewal Center was gifted one of 299 fine art reproductions of the original known as the Heritage Edition. An Arizona link is that the Heritage Edition utilized Roswell Bookbinding in Phoenix, Arizona. The Bible is on display in the lobby.

**Creation**, Donald Jackson with contribution by Chris Tomlin, Copyright 2003, *The Saint John's Bible*, Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Used by permission.







24

## ***L'Iniziazione* Mosaic**

**Enzo Aiello**

The mural's name points to the introduction of the Stigmata (wounds of Christ) that St. Francis received at Mount La Verna. Usually in the history of art, the Stigmata is depicted in a dramatic, sad, and painful way. However, the protagonist of this artwork is the landscape for here something important would happen. In the background is the Portiuncula, Francis' favorite church that he asked to never be destroyed.

It is interesting to be reminded that any kind of spiritual experience is always an invisible action. We are unable to see the act while it's occurring, rather only seeing the effects.

The figures in this piece:

- St. Francis who receives the Stigmata,
- Seraphim Angel who is the Transmitter
- Two witnesses who protect the action between God and Francis
  - St. Clare, who is holding up the monstrance by which she turned away an attack on the convent by Saracen soldiers, and
  - The donor, Joe Perricone. According to the tradition of the Italian artists, donors are often depicted in the painting they fund.

The glass used in the *L'Iniziazione* is called smalti. The pieces are "broken" from a large pizza shaped piece of glass, which produces irregularly shaped pieces. The glass contains metal oxides which produce an almost infinite range of color possibilities. The color will not fade over time. There is no grout used in this work and no grout used in most smalti mosaics.

## Mary with Joseph Holding the Christ Child

Jessica and Buck McCain



The lifelike stand-alone sculptures depict the Holy Family. The two figures, Joseph holding the baby Jesus with Mary, the mother of Jesus at his side, approach the viewer with purposeful strides illustrating their spiritual journey and dedication to their divine role of raising the holy child Jesus. Mary has a youthful inner strength, while Joseph seems purposeful, responsible, and strong. The Holy Family is a role model for

all families. The Franciscan Renewal Center recognizes the importance of the family as initiators of each child's faith journey and supports families with tools necessary to help them on this spiritual journey.

The humanity of this holy family shines through and results from a collaboration of two Arizona artists, a father and daughter team, Buck McCain and Jessica McCain. Jessica McCain created the hands and faces while Buck McCain concentrated on the fabric draping and technical support.





Photo by Frank Baselice.

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## Saint Francis of Assisi Mural

Hector Rios

The mural depicts a young St. Francis through symbols that speak to the major aspects of his entire life. The two most important churches in his life, the Portiuncula and San Damiano, are pictured in the artwork. The walking stick, road, and shoulder bag point to him as an itinerant preacher. The rough cloth habit, rope belt, and Tau cross are still worn by Franciscans today. On his left hand, you can see the stigmata, which he received in 1224. Note the red poppies, included because they are abundant in the valley below Assisi.

The mural is created with acrylic enamels, nova color hues, gold metallic lettering on stucco and sealed with clear coat sealant. The artist used the technique of perspective drawing to give the viewer the perception of distance.

Hector Rios was commissioned by the Franciscan Renewal Center in 2011 to create two outdoor murals in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the retreat center. Hector is a well-known muralist and graffiti artist from the Los Angeles area. He is also known for his work in teaching inner city youth and ward-of-the-court minors how to create graffiti art and murals.





Photo by Frank Baselice.

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## Saint Clare Mural

Hector Rios

St. Clare is pictured as a young woman. She holds an olive branch depicting the branch given to her by the Bishop of Assisi on Palm Sunday 1212 as a sign that she could join St. Francis in his ministry. The large church is San Rufino where St. Clare was baptized and where she would have heard Francis preach in the piazza in front of the church. In the background is the church of San Damiano where Clare would start the order of the Poor Clares and live until her death at age 59. Perhaps this is Palm Sunday before Clare escaped from her home to join Francis. Notice her long blonde hair which St. Francis cut as a sign of her joining a religious order. Clare and the other sisters practiced a ministry of prayer, service, and strict poverty.

The mural is created with acrylic enamels, nova color hues, gold metallic lettering on stucco first sealed with clear coat sealant. The mural uses lines, color, and texture to move your eyes through the art piece.

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## Guadalupe Shrine

Fr. Luigi Sciocchetti



Photo by Peter Jordan

In 1531, Mary appeared to Juan Diego on a hillside near Mexico City. Mary asked that the local bishop build a church in her honor. When the bishop asked for a sign, Mary gave Juan some roses growing in winter. When Juan arrived back to the bishop, on the inside of his mantel there appeared an image of the Blessed Mother. Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patron saint of the United States as well as the name for the new combined

province of the Friars Minor. Fr. Sciocchetti is famous for his liturgical ceramic art. He received his art training in the Vatican. The shrine is crafted in the Della Robbia style reflecting the work of the Renaissance artist Luca Della Robbia who became famous for the medium of glazed terracotta. Della Robbia ceramic art is found at the Franciscan church on Mt. Laverna. (See the Stations of the Cross for more on the artist.)



Photo by Frank Baselice.

## Saint Juan Diego Preaches to his People

Lisa Fitzgibbons

On the north side of the Guadalupe Shrine is a painting of St. Juan Diego. In this painting, Juan Diego shares his story with his community. The artwork is created with mixed media of oil and acrylic on composition board.

Artist Lisa Fitzgibbons experiences an intense relationship with the spiritual as she creates. She describes this as a deep spirituality and the sense of the miraculous in the process of creating her art ... a peacefulness and realization of the miraculous.



Photo by Peter Jordan.

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## Meditation Chapel

Located in the middle of campus, the Meditation Chapel offers calm respite and a place to relax, center and pray. Immerse yourself in the coolness, as the light diffracted through the beautiful stained glass dances through the space and enhances the serenity.



Photo by Peter Jordan.

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## Labyrinth

Designed by Taffy Lancer

Praying with a labyrinth is a form of walking meditation, a physical expression of the interior journey toward Christ that characterizes all Christian meditation. Like a pilgrimage, a walking meditation evokes our earthly journey toward heaven while simultaneously giving us time and space to listen and respond to God.

The earliest examples of labyrinths go back nearly 5,000 years, but the use of labyrinths in Christian prayer emerged during the Middle Ages. The most famous example of a Christian labyrinth intended for prayer is the stone labyrinth inlaid on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France.

## Stations of the Cross

**Fr. Luigi Sciocchetti**

*Underwritten by Frank Longo and participants  
in the Married Couples Retreat*



Photo by Peter Jordan.

Early pilgrims to the Holy land began walking the path Jesus walked to his crucifixion. Through the original meeting of St. Francis and the Sultan Malik al Kamil in 1219 during the Fifth Crusade, the Franciscans were eventually granted the privilege of permanent custody of Christian sites in the Holy Land in 1342. In 1686, the Franciscans received the privilege of erecting Stations of the Cross inside their churches by Pope Innocent XI.

Then in 1731, more churches were allowed to have interior Stations of the Cross erected with the understanding that a Franciscan friar would build the Stations. By 1857, all churches could build Stations of the Cross within their church without a Franciscan friar involved. Many saints through history were devoted to the Stations of the Cross, but no one did more to promote it than St. Leonard of Port Maurice, Italy (1676-1751). As a Franciscan priest, St. Leonard preached the Way of the Cross at missions for forty-three years and reportedly set up stations in 571 locations throughout Italy, including the Colosseum in Rome.

Fr. Sciocchetti, famous for his liturgical ceramic art, received his art training in the Vatican. The Stations of the Cross, completed in November 1953, were crafted in the Della Robbia style. These Stations were originally in Palm Court. However, they received water damage over the years and were removed, restored, and then placed in the Desert Walk at the back of the FRC campus.

The Della Robbia Style is named after Luca Della Robbia (1399 -1482) who is famous for the medium of glazed terracotta. Using a more reflective glaze applied to the kiln-fired terracotta and then firing the glazed object again in a kiln, he created sculpture and narrative reliefs with reflective surfaces. Della Robbia and his family specialized in liturgical art and are highly admired and well-known for visual clarity in their works. Della Robbia ceramic art is found at the Franciscan church on Mt. Laverna.



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## The Life of Saint Francis

Gregory Zoltowski

The collection includes 14 mixed media works depicting the major life moments of St. Francis of Assisi. The mediums are pencil, watercolor, gouache, and pastel crayon on paper. There is a booklet in the dining room that shares the life of St. Francis through the artwork.

The frames of the paintings were created by Fr. Gino Piccoli, OFM.

## *Acknowledgements and Thanks*

The material for this booklet was primarily provided by Mardelle Mikus, a noted art historian and Fr. Joseph Schwab, OFM. The original design of the booklet and material on the art glass was provided by Frank Baselice. Patti Sills-Trausch edited the brochure.

## *Docent-guided Tours*

Let the Franciscan Renewal Center art docents give you a more in-depth tour of the art at the Casa. Visit [thecasa.org/art-docent-tours](https://thecasa.org/art-docent-tours) for more information and scheduled tours.

## *Discover the Vision*

To learn more about the Franciscan Renewal Center and the Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Angels, attend a one-hour Discover the Vision event. These tours are scheduled on the first Thursday of each month, at 11:00 am. Consult [thecasa.org/discover-the-vision](https://thecasa.org/discover-the-vision) for more information or to RSVP.



# How did the Casa's Art Glass Come into Existence?



Scott Parsons, M.F.A.

“I am inspired by the idea of place, of defining a space with a sensitivity that can transform, celebrate, and engage the redemptive qualities of metaphor for the profoundly personal and communal in peoples’ lives.”

~ SCOTT PARSONS

## Inspiration

Inspired by the design brief written by the Church Design Committee (chaired by Norbert Zwickl, director of liturgy and music at the Franciscan Renewal Center) and augmented by his own research, international, award-winning glass artist Scott Parsons, M.F.A., created and presented preliminary sketches for the nine liturgical stained glass windows to the Committee. Scott wanted to represent the Casa community's longstanding traditions of hospitality and invitation into the processes of grace and renewal. These conceptual works were then refined, approved and sent to the artisans at Derix Glasstudios (founded 1866) in Taunusstein, Germany.

## Glass Making

The glass itself was crafted at Lamberts Glassworks (founded in 1906) in Waldsassen, Germany, near the border with Czechia. The glass is blown into the shape of a large bottle (about 30" tall, with a diameter of about 18"), with the glass blower forming the glass at the end of a blowpipe, by swinging it back and forth in a gas heated channel in the floor, while rotating the bottle and blowing into the glass to increase the volume while maintaining the symmetry. Various forms are also utilized to help ensure consistency of size and shape. Different chemical elements are included in the glass at this point (for example, the red glass in much of the Our Lady of the Angels window incorporates gold to achieve the red color) and, when the correct size and shape are achieved, the top and bottom of the bottle are cut off and a vertical slice is made. This is then laid in a kiln so the glass opens into a flat panel.



Glassblowers at Lamberts Glasswork.



## Glass into Art

Scott Parsons and representatives of Derix Glasstudios went to Lambert's and selected the many individual panes of glass to be incorporated into the Casa's windows. These panes were carefully shipped to Derix (located in the mountains north of Frankfurt), where master glass painter Olaf Hanweg applied numerous layers of stains, paints, sand blasting, and enameling to

achieve color gradations. Once painted, the panes were acid etched by Roman Olichowsky. Different acid strengths and time duration of the glass exposed to the acid before it's rinsed off yields different color gradients and intensities. The glass pieces were also carved by Karl Heinz-Traut, and subsequently ground and fit by Johanna Feltes, during the production process.

## Art into Magic

Full size, color print outs of the final art work are laid out on light tables, and the glass work in progress is laid on top to ensure accuracy of the translation of the creative work to glass, as well as perfect alignment of the artwork from pane to pane. When complete, multiple panes are fused to a carrier glass to maintain alignment, durability and structural integrity.

The streaks, surface textures and bubbles which naturally occur in the artisanal glass blowing process are integrated into the design and texture of the final product.

Derix employs master cabinet makers to design custom wooden crates to protect and transport the art glass. These crates were flown to Phoenix and trucked to the Casa. During construction of the new church, each window opening, frame, and mullion had to be precisely crafted to accommodate the already-completed panels produced 5,600 miles away. Once the artglass is out of the crates, each pane must be lifted and perfectly fit into each opening with mere millimeters of tolerance. Neither the dimensions of the window opening nor the dimensions of the art glass could be modified!

## Awards

- **2019 Honor Award** – Liturgical/Interior Design: Faith & Form Magazine and the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art, and Architecture (IFRAA)
- **2018 Design Awards in Religious Art Visual Arts** | Faith & Form Magazine and the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art, and Architecture (IFRAA);
- **2018 CODAawards** – Liturgical Art

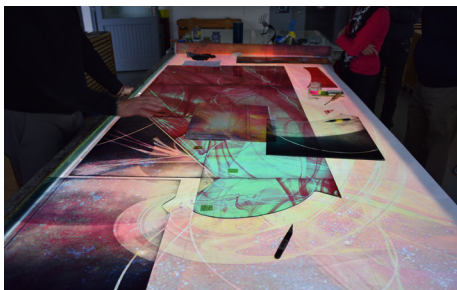
*This article and photography submitted by Frank Baselice.*



Olaf Hanweg, Master Glass Painter at Derix Glasstudios.



Olaf Hanweg, Roman Olichowski and Norbert Zwickl.



Our Lady of the Angels work-in-progress on the light table at Derix.



Olaf Hanweg, Master Glass Painter at Derix Glasstudios.



Roman Olichowski, Glass Etch Artist at Derix Glasstudios.



Karl Heinz-Traut at Derix Glasstudios.