

SAINT BENEDICT'S CHURCH
304 N. SHEPPARD STREET
RICHMOND, VA.

Augustt 28th, 1944

Mr. A. L. Pitassi
5345 Penn Avenue
Pittsburg. Pa.

My dear Mr. Pitassi,

I am enclosing with this letter a corrected copy of
of the schema for the windows of St. Benedict's Church.

Father Michael was not quite satisfied with our summation
of the less dominant saints for each window nor was he sure of
historical accuracy, so he had our first copy sent to St. Vincent's
for historical criticism. Sure enough we did have some things wrong
and some less important saints substituted for some more important
ones.

The inclosed manuscript is the corrected one and the
final one, I hope. I hope that you will not send it back to me and
tell me to do some more work on it. If you ask me to do more historical
research on symbols etc etc, I'll go crazy.

I trust that you enjoy the idea that we are trying to
put into glass. Father Michael will be pleased. I hope that you will
also. Let me hear from you soon.

Cordially yours,

Leo Friesson O.S.B.

Father Leo Friesson, O.S.B.

The following schema for the stained glass windows in St. Benedict's Church, Richmond, Va., as outlined by Father Michael in conference with me, Father Leo Frierson, pastor of St. Benedict's Church, intends to portray the history and development of the Benedictine Order from the time of St. Benedict to the present, by presenting in each window one outstanding Benedictine Saint representative of a period in the development of the monastic, intellectual and spiritual growth of the Order in the various countries of Europe. This single dominant Benedictine Character, outstanding in each window, is to be surrounded by four less dominant Saints who contributed to the development of the work of the major Saint, not by figure or picture but by name in clear letters in the stained glass with, perhaps, a symbol of the work he has done.

In each window therefore is to be one large medallion surrounded by four small ones, the design to be worked out by Mr. Pitassi and presented to Father Michael and myself.

The name of the donor of each window is to be in clear letters (by "clear" I mean readily legible) in the bottom of each window. The letters are not to be too large or blurred but easily readable.

Of course the first window would naturally be St. Benedict.

-1-

ST. BENEDICT FOUNDER OF THE ORDER

St. Maurus

St. Placidus

St. Benedict was the founder of the Benedictine Order and built his first permanent monastery, now of international fame, at Monte Cassino. This Benedictine Saint and Monastery was the "Cradle of Christianity," for Western Europe from the time of the death of St. Benedict which happened in the year 540. With St. Benedict have always been associated his first two favorite disciples, St. Maurus and St. Placidus. These two monks - first later became Abbots of the new Benedictine foundations in the spread of the Order in France and Sicily.

The following four Benedictine Saints were also founders of various branches of the Benedictine Order in other parts of Europe in the course of the centuries.

- St. Romuald, Founder of the Camaldolese in 1020 (White Habit)
- St. Sylvester, Founder of the Sylvestrines (Blue Habit)
- St. Peter Celestine, Founder of the Celestines (White Habit)
- St. Bernard Ptolomeus, Founder of the Olivetans 1348 (White Habit)

-2-

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT, POPE 604
Apostle of England

The purpose of this window is to portray the contribution of the Benedictine Order to the Papacy. Many great Popes were Benedictines. The first was St. Gregory the Great. He himself was a monk and later abbot of St. Andrea, Rome, and as the first Benedictine pope, helped the spread of the Order in the West.

Four other great Benedictine Popes were:

- all 0.5.85*
- ST. Leo IV Pope 855 ~~defended~~ Rome against the Saracens and built the "Leonine City" (Vatican City)
 - St. Gregory VII 1085 Hildebrand
 - ~~St.~~ Pius V Pope 1823 defender of the Church against Napoleon established the See of Richmond, 1820
 - Gregory XVI 1846 last Benedictine Pope who died a few ~~years~~ MONTHS after the Benedictines came to America 1846

III

ST. SCHOLASTICA ST. SCHOLASTICA, Sister of St. Benedict

As St. Benedict was the founder of the Benedictine Monks of the West so was St. Scholastica, his twin sister, the Foundress of the Benedictine nuns of the West. Great convents were ruled over by Benedictine abbesses and usually a nunnery was adjacent to a Benedictine monastery with the nuns complementing the work of the monks by providing avenues of spiritual activities for women and girls of tender age.

The following are four saints, Abbesses, of Benedictine Convents who carried on the work of St. Scholastica.

St. Hildegard, Abbess
St. Walburga, Abbess
St. Mechtilda, "
St. Gertrude of Nivelles, Abbess

IV

ST. AUGUSTINE O.S.B. of Canterbury

Benedictine monks spread all over Europe and carried with them Benedictine monasticism and Catholicism. Inspired with the ardent desire of Pope St. Gregory the Great to make the "Angles" "Angels", St. Augustine with a band of forty monks journeyed to England and settled in Canterbury. St. Augustine became the first archbishop of Canterbury.

Four famous Benedictine Bishops of England:

St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York
St. Benedict Biscop, Abbot of St. Augustine's,
at Canterbury
St. Cathbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne
St. Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne

V

ST. BEDE, Monk and Scholar

With the growth of monasticism in England came the monks and scholars of the Middle Ages. The monks opened schools, started libraries and copied manuscripts on durable and lasting parchments beautifully illuminated and transcribed. Thus the Holy Bible and all ancient sacred and profane literature was preserved for the world. These monks and scholars built the foundations of modern education.

St. Bede is listed as the first scholar of England and his book, "The Ecclesiastical History of England" is the first of a long series of English classics. Other outstanding Benedictine scholars and leaders are

St. Egbert
St. Elphege
Simon of Langham, who fought the errors of Wyclif
St. Lanfranc, opposed King William Rufus.

*St Bede should be pictured at a
stand working on a manuscript*

VI

ST. BONIFACE OF GERMANY

Catholicism and Benedictine Monachism was carried into Germany by St. Boniface who is called the Apostle of Germany. He was to Germany what St. Augustine was to England and St. Patrick to Ireland.

Four other Benedictine Saints, abbots and bishops, carrying on the work of Boniface are:

St. Winnibald, Abbot of Heidenheim
St. Willibald, Bishop of Eichstatt
St. Ansgar, Archbishop of Hamburg, Apostle of the North
Bl. Rhabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz

VII

ST. ANSELM, Archbishop of Canterbury

The fame of Benedictine learning and scholarship reached its climax in St. Anselm in the twelfth century. Benedictine erudition, sacred and profane, begun by the scholarly manuscripts of St. Bede in the 7th century, culminated in the great intellectual movement of Scholasticism in which St. Anselm was the Benedictine pioneer. He is noted for his profound Ontological Argument for the Existence of God. Anselm opened the way for the burst of sacred learning of the 13th century.

Four scholarly Benedictine Saints building to this ideal:

Bl. Alcuin, Abbot and scholar
St. Wolfgang, of Ratisbon, Bavaria
St. Peter Damien, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia
St. Thomas Aquinas, Educated at Monte Cassino.

VIII

ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

In France in the twelfth century the greatest fame of the Benedictine monasteries reached its apex under the leadership and influence of St. Bernard. He came of a noble family and founded the monastery of Clairvaux, from which chains of monasteries of great repute spread all over France. Spiritual leadership in the West was centered in St. Bernard during the period of the Crusades. St. Bernard wore a white habit. From this tradition come the Benedictine Trappists of the present day.

Four dominant Saints of these French monasteries:

St. Robert of Molesme
Bl. Eugene III Pope
Bl. Otto of Freising
Bl. Benedict XII Pope

IX

ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT

As the Benedictine monasteries multiplied and generated sanctity and influence in Europe, Benedictine convents also spread thru the West. Many great and saintly women become prominent in the life of the Church. Among these was St. Gertrude, the Great, Abbess. It was she who first began the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Four other abbesses of medieval fame:

St. Lioba St. Ethelreda
St. Hilda St. Thecla

BISHOP LEO HAID, ABBOT OF BELMONT ABBEY

To link St. Benedict's Church of Richmond with the glorious Benedictine chain of the past centuries Father Michael chooses this window to be dedicated to Bishop Leo Haid, Abbot of Belmont, Belmont, N.C. and at the same time Bishop of the Vicariate of North Carolina, whose death occurred in 1924. Bishop Haid was a monk of St. Vincent's Archabbey in Penna. and became the first Abbot of Belmont Abbey. Bishop Haid and the Community at Belmont Abbey assumed the responsibility of the growth and progress of the old St. Vincent's foundations at ~~the~~ St. Leo's Abbey in Florida and also at Savannah, Ga. and Richmond, Va. Under the direction and subsidy of Belmont Abbey, St. Leo's Abbey and the priories and colleges at Savannah and Richmond developed to their present size and splendor.

Associated with Bishop Haid will be the four names, the Abbey from which he came and the Abbey and priories which he virtually founded and developed.

St. Vincent's
St. Leo's
Savannah
Richmond

XI

THE BOMBING OF MONTE CASSINO

Father Michael believes that the last window ought to portray the Benedictine present in which we live. With the rise of world chaos in the present global war Benedictine life is being destroyed and religious institutions all over Europe turned to ruins. The sadness of this state could be pictured by the destruction of Monte Cassino in stained glass. It is naturally a world catastrophe and the Benedictine life is deeply saddened. Such a scene would bring the art glass story of Benedictine history up to the present in which we live and stamp the fame of the artist on a point in time.

How the artist and Father Michael intend to portray the bombing of Monte Cassino, I do not know; but Father Michael spoke of the picture of the famous Abbey on top the high mountain with ~~knives~~ bombs from moving planes in the process of descending upon the Abbey. Monks flanked by German soldiers are seen descending the hill and the American star is seen on the tail of the flying planes. Monte Cassino has been destroyed and rebuilt before.

Pope Gregory II O.S.B.	rebuilt the monastery after the Lombard invasion.
Pope Victor III O.S.B.	again rebuilt Monte Cassino after its destruction by the Saracens
Pope Alexander II	consecrated the Abbey in 1071
Pope Pius XII	witnessed its destruction in 1944