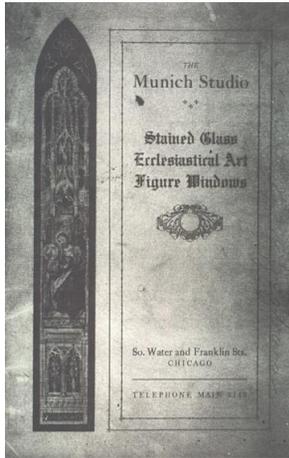


The Munich Studio of Chicago and the Stained Glass Windows of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church

Seeing an artistic creation is looking at it with intellectual vision.



Studio catalog

We have looked at the windows in our church for many years, but have we seen all that is in them? Our windows predate most of us in this parish; they were installed early in this century when our church building was

newly erected by the parishioners themselves. Our windows were fabricated by a major stained glass studio in Chicago; but this company was composed of individual skilled and dedicated craftsmen and artists, now long gone, for whom the creation of this enduring art was their livelihood. History is a looking into the past to find one's place in the present. We know who we are only if we know who we were. Though the creators of our windows are a part of history, their creations still speak to us today and have done so for more than 75 years.

In researching the history of the stained glass windows of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, certain questions were kept in mind. Why were these particular scenes

chosen for our windows? Who chose the scenes? Who paid for the windows? How much did they cost? What artisans crafted them? Are there other churches in Cleveland with similar windows?

The windows are so important because they represent an artistic investment of our founding parishioners. They are a vital part of our church's history because they date back to its early years. They are at once religiously and patriotically inspirational. They teach Biblical faith and Polish heritage. If the eyes are the windows of the soul, then our windows are the beacons of our church's heritage.

The history of the stained glass windows of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church has its roots in the rapid expansion of the Polish population in Cleveland in the beginning of this century. As our growing congregation outgrew the original wooden combination church and school, a larger and grander, separate, brick and stone building was contemplated. Reverend Marion Orzechowski was pastor of the Church of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as the church was then known, when our present church building was erected in 1914. This building is a replacement for the original wooden structure, damaged by fire,

which dated from the founding of the parish in 1894. With the new building came our beautiful windows, many of them signed, which were installed from 1914 to 1918.

In the early years of this century, Chicago, [more so than Cleveland,] experienced a rapid increase in Middle European ethnic populations. These resettled immigrants brought with them highly talented artists and craftsmen, many skilled in the art of stained glass creation.¹ This fact and the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 led to the establishment of many outstanding stained glass studios in Chicago and helped propel Chicago to its status as the art glass capital of the Midwest.²

Between the time of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which destroyed the city's business district, and 1933, when the city hosted the Century of Progress Exposition, Chicago's artists, craftsmen, and architects were responsible for some remarkable innovations in the decorative arts and architecture.³ It was in this period of feverish reconstruction after the Great Fire of 1871 that the Chicago stained glass

industry experienced a period of rapid expansion which carried it beyond the production of church windows to the creation of stained glass for a variety of decorative uses. The sheer volume of post-Fire construction in Chicago had encouraged experimentation with new decorating schemes for churches, public buildings, and residences. Concurrent technological advances, such as the use of natural gas and steam-driven machinery, made the production of glass in America economically feasible and led to the development of new types of glass, such as opalescent and cathedral glass.⁴ Opalescent glass was a machine-rolled multicolored glass with a milky-textured, iridescent appearance. By itself, opalescent glass was somewhat porcelain-like in appearance, but, against the light, and at certain angles, it had much of the fire and changing hues of opals.⁵ American-made cathedral glass had a textured surface.⁶

While the term stained glass covers "colored, enameled, or painted glass", Chicago's pioneer "glass stainers" were primarily glass painters who used dark brown vitreous oxide and silver stain to paint designs on pieces of colored and/or

¹ Sharon S. Darling, *Chicago Ceramics & Glass: an Illustrated History from 1871 to 1933*, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 128.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

opaque white glass. After the kiln firing the pieces were assembled like fragments of a puzzle and connected to each other with strips of malleable lead - called comes - which were fitted and soldered around each piece to create the full window.⁷

This same procedure for creating stained glass windows was also followed in Germany, England, and France, where the art of glass staining had been revived earlier in

A PARTIAL LIST OF CHURCHES GLAZED WITH OUR WINDOWS

St. Mary's, Kas	Immaculate Chapel
Chicago, Ill.	St. Bridget's
Chicago, Ill.	St. Agnes'
Dubuque, Iowa	St. Joseph's College New Chapel
Grand Forks, N. D.	St. Michael's
New Munster, Wis.	St. Alphonsus'
O'Neill, Neb.	St. Patrick's
Boreman, Mont.	Holy Rosary
Cedar Falls, Iowa	St. Patrick's
Louisiana, Mo.	St. Joseph's
Rutland, Ill.	Sacred Heart
Lynn, Iowa	St. Boniface's
Davenport, Iowa	St. Paul's
Detroit, Mich.	Our Lady of the Rosary
Kansas City, Kas	Holy Name
Chicago, Ill.	St. Phillip's
Cleveland, Ohio	Holy Rosary
Mapleton, Iowa	St. Mary's
Karlsruhe, Ill.	St. Mary's
Mary Hill, Iowa	Visitation
Cleveland, Ohio	Holy Rosary
Hilltop, Mont.	St. Patrick's
Sparta, Wis.	St. Patrick's
Chicago, Ill.	Our Lady of Sorrows
Rock Island, Ill.	St. Joseph's
Chicago, Ill.	St. Dominic's
Tiffin, Ohio	St. Joseph's
Tiffin, Ohio	St. Mary's
West Point, Iowa	The Assumption

the 19th century. Windows were occasionally imported from abroad although local craftsmen were capable of making nearly identical ones because many had been trained in European methods.⁸ Some of these

imported stained glass windows, known as Munich windows, came directly from that German city. Destined for churches, these windows were primarily pictorial, depicting saints and heroic figures and incorporating elaborately painted detail.⁹ Such was the case

⁷ Ibid., p. 102.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 109.

with the founder of the company which fabricated our windows. He came from Munich, Germany and the influence of that city's art glass techniques can be easily seen in our windows. Today these windows are found in churches in [both] Chicago's [and Cleveland's] old ethnic communities for they were favored by the German, Polish, and East European immigrants who gathered together in these neighborhoods.¹⁰

While domestic art glass dominated much of the market,

A Few References Selected at Random:

Dacota, Wis.	Father C. Flisch
New Munster, Wis.	Father J. H. Schiefel
Rutland, Ill.	Father F. B. Dickman
Anton, Iowa	Father Geo. Cooke
Chicago, Ill.	St. Dominic's
Waterloo, Iowa	Sacred Heart Church
Worthington, Iowa	Father J. H. Schilmoller
Mapleton, Iowa	Father A. J. Wagner
Chicago, Ill.	St. Agnes Church
Mt. Carmel, Iowa	Father F. H. Hoesmann
Schuyler, Neb.	St. Augustine's Church
Chicago, Ill.	St. Bridget's
Walton, Ill.	Father C. F. Conley
Milwaukee, Wis.	St. Augustine's Church
Detroit, Mich.	Chapel St. Francis' Home for Boys
Cleveland, Ohio	Father M. J. Orzechowski
Warren, Pa.	Father L. A. McBride

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ecclesiastical commissions remained the mainstay of many of the city's older firms and became the focus of several new ones. Churches were constantly being built, remodeled, expanded, torn down, and

rebuilt, bringing hundreds of commissions to the dozen or so studios which specialized in church and memorial work. A combination of factors, including building budgets and the preferences of pastors and/or building committees, determined the final choice of windows.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 143.

Generally, 5 to 6 percent of the cost of a church was specified for windows "...for a good grade of glass, with figure subjects in the prominent windows". Windows were generally graded according to their use. The sanctuary contained the best or first grade of glass, the vestibule the second grade, and the tower windows the third, or lowest, grade.¹² This window budgeting can be seen in the use of non-pictorial opalescent windows in the relatively non-public sacristies and vestibules of our church, and in the choir loft windows.

The architect and contractor of the present church building,



Max Guler house

Anthony F. Wasielewski, had designed and built nearly two dozen churches by the time he had been contracted to build ours. The Church of St. Anthony, completed by Mr. Wasielewski in 1911, in Lismore, Minnesota, bears a remarkable resemblance to ours, both in outward appearance and in the commission of the studio for its stained glass windows. Its art glass windows, which cost \$2,200.00, were supplied by *The Munich Studio*, the

same company which fabricated ours.¹³ *The Munich Studio* specialized in Germanic Baroque-style European memorial windows.¹⁴

After 1900, the competition among Chicago firms for church and secular commissions increased as more glass shops opened in the city.

By 1920 at least fifty manufacturers were at work.¹⁵ The



Denis Shanahan

founder of *The Munich Studio*, Max Guler, was of middle-European extraction, as were the congregations of many of the churches who commissioned his firm for their windows. Guler

came to Chicago about 1896 from the city of Munich, Germany where he had studied China painting. In 1898 his name appears in the Chicago city directory as an artist. Four years later the firm of Guler, Kugel and Holzchuh, presumably a small glass shop, is listed; and in 1903 the Chicago city directory first lists *The Munich Studio*, stained glass, 222 W. Madison, 5th flr., with Guler as

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Diocese of Cleveland Archives.

¹⁴ Darling, op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

president, Denis Shanahan as secretary, and L. Holzchuh as treasurer.¹⁶

Prior to his association with *The Munich Studio*, Holzchuh was an



Sample window

experienced bookkeeper. Shanahan, later manager, came to *The Munich Studio* with considerable sales experience from another Chicago stained glass

manufacturer.¹⁷

Although *The Munich Studio* did make some domestic windows, its business dealt primarily with churches and its advertisements and brochures were directed to the attention of the clergy. No prices were listed and prospective clients were invited to negotiate directly with the management or to write to the satisfied clergymen whose glowing testimonials were featured in catalogs.¹⁸ One of its catalogs, circa 1915, humbly enumerated reasons for its yearly increase in clients:

* That the work is uniformly good and our dealings with the clergy, fair and honorable.

* That we give always more rather than less than we agreed to deliver under the contract, on the assumption that a well-satisfied customer is our best asset.

* That we use in the production of our windows, only imported antique glass, on which is put the very best efforts of competent artists, trained in the techniques of the leading Munich Stained Glass Studios.

* That we devote every care and attention to make windows that will not fade or be affected by the agencies of time.

* That we ask a reasonable price for our work.

* That we send samples and suggestions of suitable subjects for windows, without charge or obligation to purchase, to intending purchasers.¹⁹

Partial catalog listings from



St. Margaret School

1910 to 1925 note thirty-two major church installations in Chicago; and ninety-six in out-of-state cities²⁰, including

¹⁶ Erne R. and Florence Frueh, "Munich Studio Windows at Chicago's SS. Cyril and Methodius Church," *Stained Glass*, (Summer, 1979), 110.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Stained Glass Ecclesiastical Art Figure Windows*, catalog issued by The Munich Studio, circa 1915.

²⁰ Frueh, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

Holy Rosary Church here in Cleveland, St. Dominic Church in Columbus, Ohio, St. Joseph Church and St. Mary Church in Tiffin, Ohio and Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Youngstown, Ohio. The 1915 catalog lists a reference to Reverend M. J. Orzechowski of our parish as well as to Reverend John W. Becha of St. Adalbert in Cleveland, Ohio.



St. Lucas Cemetery

antique glass for the stained glass and 1/4" rough plate glass for protection

glass. All were to be put in place in the church by June 1, 1906. This following statement quoted from the contract stands in humble testimony to the pride of artistic and technical quality of their windows! "Windows must be better than those put in by *Von Gerichten*²¹ in every respect." D. S. Shanahan, secretary and business

²¹ The Von Gerichten Art Glass Company was located in Columbus, Ohio.

manager of the company, signed the contract worth \$750.00 to *The Munich Studio*.²²

In 1913 the company moved from Madison Street to larger



Mt. Carmel Cemetery

quarters at 300 West South Water Street (now Wacker Drive), and in 1923 to 111 West Austin

Street (now Hubbard Street), at that time employing over 30 craftsmen, seven doing only glass painting.²³

The Munich Studio continued to prosper until 1930 when the Great Depression brought all building to a near standstill. Since it depended primarily upon the construction of new churches for its business, this blow, coupled with the sudden death of Shanahan upon whom Guler relied for all business matters, forced the company's closing.²⁴ *The Munich Studio* ceased operating in 1932.²⁵

After the closing, Guler and several of his key associates went to work for the Drehobl Brothers Art

²² Contract between The Munich Studio Company and St. Joseph Church, Tiffin, Ohio, dated February 24, 1906.

²³ Frueh, loc. cit.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Darling, op. cit., p. 146.

Glass Company of Chicago, which not only designed and executed windows, but restored and repaired them as well. Drehobl Brothers is still in operation today under the management of Frank J. Drehobl, Jr., the son of one of the founders.²⁶

Mr. Drehobl vividly remembered Guler and his co-workers. Guler was a short, stout man whose greatest enjoyment was



Guler cartoons

to sit at his drawing board dreaming of new ways to express a Biblical event or quotation.²⁷

Guler was able to devote his time to the design and execution of "pictorial windows beautifully grouped in rich, gorgeous colors".²⁸ He was not only a remarkably gifted artist-designer, but also thorough technician, able to assist in any phase of operation.²⁹

Peter Kugel who was associated with Guler since 1902, specialized in portraiture and flesh tinting; Herman Schulze composed landscapes and floral designs and

was also adept at painting cloth



Guler door window

textures and drapery folds; and George Wieroeder and Joseph Lazar were skilled at cutting, firing and leading glass. All worked as a team to execute Guler's beautiful, meticulous and detailed pencil drawings, opaque water color renderings, and large cartoons drawn in broad, graceful sweeps, examples of which are still in the possession of the Drehobl

studio. All lived to an advanced age, drifting one by one into retirement.³⁰

According to Drehobl, *The Munich Studio* imported most of its glass from France and Germany. Domestic glass was supplied by several firms in Indiana and West Virginia. Like medieval stained glass, these glasses were painted only with iron oxide and "yellow stain" and then fired in ovens.³¹

²⁶ Frueh, loc. cit.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Darling, loc. cit.

²⁹ Frueh, loc. cit.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

While most of *The Munich Studio's* windows depicted traditional biblical themes, a few expressed patriotic or ethnic aspiration, making them unique expressions of their culture and their time. It was not uncommon to find national patron saints or heroes portrayed in stained glass.³² This is evident in several of our windows. The windows of our church abound with Polish saints and ethnic themes. Each of our windows has at its foot a flowing memorial scroll identifying the sponsor of that window.

Guler's art, which was essentially Baroque, reflects that style's dramatic contrasts of light and shadow, infinite attention to realistic detail, asymmetrically planned groupings of figures, an abundance of architectural forms, and intricate decorative elements. He was also influenced by the etchings of Hieronymus Bosch and the paintings of Bellini, Tintoretto, and Titian, reproductions of whose works he kept in a permanent file to which he frequently turned for inspiration.³³

Looking at the windows of our church reveals many of the characteristics of windows done by *The Munich Studio*. In the large window to the left of the pulpit we see Christ preaching from a boat. Our eyes are drawn to the central

figure of Christ, not immediately, but secondarily through the vibrantly arresting color of the robed figure with the outstretched arm, pointing to Christ, Who with His outstretched arm, completes the transition. The abundance of small figures on the left is balanced by the imposing presence of Christ and the fishers in the boat. The aura of the setting sun surrounds and intensifies the aura of Christ's halo. Our eyes are again drawn to Christ through the subtly decreasing height of the mountains in the background which reach minimum near the brightest portion of the sky. In a realistic aside, a small child playfully reaches for a bright butterfly in a bush; the color contrast of red on green accentuates the diminutive insect. A richly ornamented arched frame - a favorite Guler device - encompasses the entire composition [in this and in each of the other windows].³⁴

Profuse architectural details, almost as important as the central figures themselves, draw the viewer's attention to focal points,³⁵ such as the richly ornate gold altar behind the figure of Christ in the Sacred Heart Window; the gold monstrance on this same altar serves to echo Christ in His Eucharistic Presence; the heavy stone arch in the Cyril and Methodius Window substantiates the

³² Darling, loc. cit.

³³ Frueh, loc. cit.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 113.

³⁵ Ibid.

theme of these "pillars" of the Slavic people; the heavily detailed stone walls of the chapel in the St. Adalbert Window magnify the presence of St. Adalbert; the substantial mass of the structure in the Holy Family Window bespeaks the fundamentalism of the family unit.

As in many Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, a small section of landscape appears through an opening somewhere;³⁶ in the Poland in Chains Window the city of Warsaw lies across the Vistula River, behind the central figures at the foot of the cross; in the St. Adalbert Window, high upon the rear chapel wall behind the figure of St. Adalbert, we see clear bright blue sky, the light from which shines through his halo; in the Childrens' Offering Window we can see what could be a Polish village in the left background; and in the left sanctuary clerestory window can be seen a small castle or fortification behind the priestly figure. The roses, lilies, irises, and the leaves of palms and other trees and shrubs are realistic and precise.³⁷

Facial expressions and costuming often complement each other.³⁸ Boredom, curiosity, incredulity and wonder mark the

countenances of the group of disciples in the Christ Preaching Window; the faces of the children are not even turned toward Christ, they being more intent on playful wading; look at the amazement in the face of the small child reaching for the butterfly. In the Calming of the Storm Window the viewer can almost feel the fear and mortal terror captured in the strained faces of the apostles in the boat. This is a window of contrasts - light and dark, divine peace and natural violence, calm and fear, royalty and commoner. King Boleslaus' slightly bowed head and seated position in the St. Adalbert Window reveal his willful submission of earthly power to Christ's authority symbolized in the proclaiming figure of St. Adalbert, the central figure of the window. This jewel-like window with its strikingly complementary red and green colors is most beautiful in sunlight and contrasts sharply with the Poland in Chains Window to its left, a brooding scene even in bright light. Each of the maidens in the Assumption Window wears a unique emotion on her face - wonder, awe, acceptance, thanksgiving, reverence, adoration, honor, love. They are adorned with gorgeously colored and embroidered robes, almost tactile in execution. The rays of the gloria surrounding Mary point to a wonder hidden from the viewer's gaze, the place of her heavenly Assumption.

Max Guler used some color

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

combinations reminiscent of the Italian masters, but also created a number of his own. Among them are: bronze-gold against translucent milk white; dark olive against light mauve or purple (Holy Family Window); ruby against smoky gray (Storm Window and Poland in Chains Window); and brick red against sharp blue (Holy Rosary Window), accented with gem-like flashes of red, yellow or emerald.³⁹

Mr. Drehobl remembered that his father often tried to interest Guler in the newer style of the late 1920's. Guler, however, refused, to change, saying that to do so would be to lose his artistic integrity.⁴⁰

Even though congregations are dwindling in numbers and old ethnic churches are disappearing, many still remain, facing the uncertainty of maintaining treasured buildings with scarce funds. The stained glass window art of *The Munich Studio* and of other firms, which began, as did our parish, nearly 100 years ago, are only now beginning to be recognized and preserved as an important part of our diverse and distinctive artistic heritage.⁴¹ Artists seem not to be recognized while living; it seems only after a lifetime or two that their greatness is appreciated. So it is with

our windows. They are familiar because they have always filtered our view of the world from this church; they are also novel because now we can look at them with historical perspective.

- Glenn Sobola, IHM parish historian

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³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.