

Tour of the Neo-Gothic Stained Glass Windows

Eglise Saint-Hubert

Aubel



Catalogue and Explanations

Preface

With the construction of the cathedrals from the 12th century onwards, the installation of stained glass windows in churches began to develop. The emergence of the Gothic style in the 13th century then made possible the creation of large glazed surfaces filled with stained glass of many colours.

In our parish churches, often rebuilt after the religious wars of the 17th^e century or modernised in the 19th^e century, the "Golden Age" of stained glass opened up, blending Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Neo-Gothic styles.

In the new St-Hubert church in Aubel (1907-1910), a Neo-Gothic church by the architect Emile Deshayes from Charneux, the Church Council and Dean Vandenberg gave free rein to the master glassmaker **Camille Ganton-Defoin**. The artist then put all his heart and skill into creating a unique ensemble in the province of Liège: **more than 40 stained glass windows!**

Details abound in the various panels: an apple tree laden with fruit, common people in the background of many scenes, mountains, castles, a town, the rich harness of St Anthony's donkey, vivid expressions, candlesticks, whips, hay, musical instruments, the many tools of St Joseph, rich priestly vestments, ...

Camille Ganton's work contains scenes of exceptional beauty. In the window dedicated to **St-François-Xavier**, it is all the **warm splendour of Asia** that takes the viewer in the footsteps of the saint in India and Japan (window 20).

Saint Vincent de Paul, brings three children to the nuns. In the background, a significant town can be made out. But the **most**

beautiful scene is at the bottom of the window: a sister teaches a lesson to three pupils. A small boy is deep in thought, a second is writing while a girl repeats the letters of the alphabet shown to her by the nun (Window 19). **We experience the scene alongside the painter!**

Thus, Paul Gerardy's present guide allows such works by a great artist to be discovered and appreciated at their true value. It also helps to ensure the lasting preservation of this fragile heritage.

Thomas Lambiet, Historian

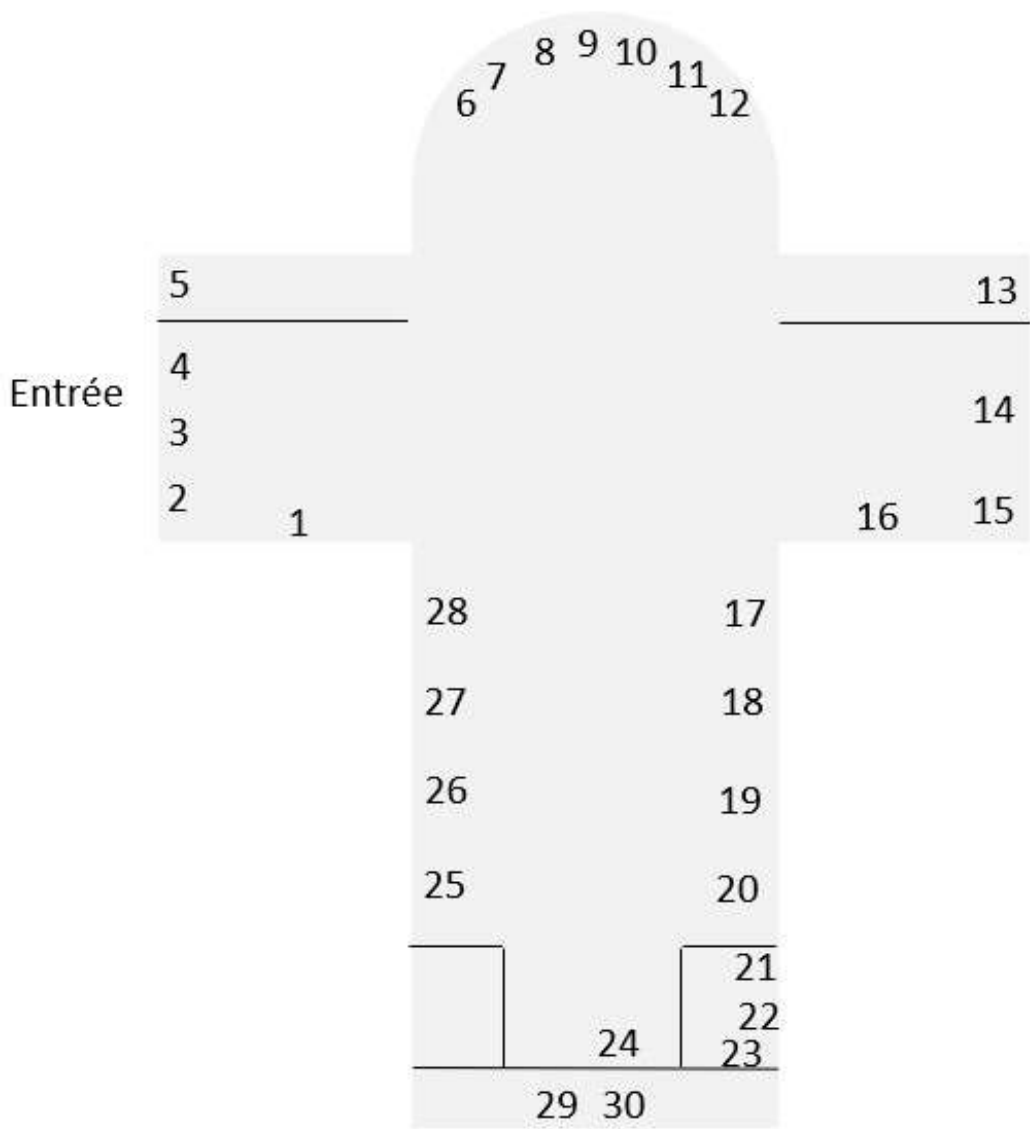
My thanks go to **Thomas Lambiet** for the preface and the many pieces of information he shared with me, as well as to **Jean-Pierre Poncelet** and **Guillaume Fossion** for the quality of the photographs of the stained glass windows.

To deepen your discovery, I recommend the book by Thomas Lambiet « L'Eglise Saint-Hubert d'Aubel » (only available in French) available at the tourist office at the municipality of Aubel.

Paul Gerardy, for Aubel Archives (archives@aubel.be), June 2026.

"Light passes through glass as grace passes through the soul — it colours it, illuminates it and transforms it."

Map of the stained glass windows



- Window 1 : The Church and its Reforming Saints
- Window 2 : Generosity towards the most destitute
- Window 3 : Saint Hubert, patron of the parish of Aubel
- Window 4 : Saint Hubert (continued)
- Window 5 : a college of six apostles
- Window 6 : a college of six male and female saints
- Windows 7 to 11 : the Holy Rosary

Window 12 : divine protection against the evils of the world

Window 13 : the college of the Apostle Martyrs

Window 14 : thanksgiving to the Virgin Mary

Window 15 : the defenders of the weak

Window 16 : at the bedside of the suffering

Window 17 : Our Lady of Lourdes

Window 18 : united in hardship

Window 19 : Saint Vincent de Paul

Window 20 : Saint Francis Xavier

Window 21 : the universality of salvation

Window 22 : the Baptism of Christ

Window 23 : the baptism of a newborn

Window 24 : the Teaching Brothers

Window 25 : Saint Isidore

Window 26 : Saint Anthony

Window 27 : Saint Catherine

Window 28 : Saint Marguerite-Marie Alacoque

Window 29 : the Holy Trinity

Window 30 : the Rose of Saint Cecilia

Composition of a stained glass window

Each stained glass window is topped by a circular section called "the oculus".

The two lower sections are called "lancets". They contain the main figures or narrative scenes.

The "central register" designates the middle zone of a stained glass window, located between the upper and lower sections, where the main scene generally takes place.

Window 1 : The Church and its Reforming Saints



Oculus : it contains the keys of **Saint Peter** :

- the **golden** key — spiritual power,
- the **silver** key — earthly power.

Left : **SANCTUS ANTONIUS** - Saint Anthony the Hermit, (3rd^e century), patron of domestic animals.

- a **piglet** is at his feet : traditional symbol of Saint Anthony,
- robe of **brown sackcloth**,
- holds a **small bell** : classic attribute of Saint Anthony the Abbot.

Right : **SANCTA THERESIA** - Saint Teresa of Ávila (16th^e century), patroness of Spain, of Catholic writers and of the Carmelites.

- she holds a **book** and a **feather**, symbols of her mystical writings,
- **reformer** of the Carmel, great mystic and Spanish writer,
- she wears a **carmelite** brown and white habit.

Window 2 : Generosity towards the most destitute



Oculus : it brings together the attributes of Christian charity : the rosary, the Bible and the roses of Saint Elizabeth.

Left : **Saint Elisabeth of Hungary** (13th century), patroness of the poor.

- Hungarian princess who became a Franciscan,
- she holds roses; she is celebrated for having distributed her wealth to the poor and the sick.
- The **miracle of the roses** : her husband forbade her to bring bread to the poor. One day, surprised by her husband while she was carrying bread to the poor, the bread was miraculously transformed into roses when she opened her cloak.

Right : **Saint Martin from Tours** (4th century), patron of knights and of the poor.

- he holds a sword and his cloak,
- the **coat miracle** : on a cold night, he cuts his cloak in two to share it with a beggar who turned out to be Christ.

Window 3 : Saint Hubert, patron of the parish of Aubel

This window is a complete chronological narration of the life of Saint Hubert (7th^e-8th^e century), patron of hunters.

1. **Pious childhood** (oculus)
2. **Vision of the stag** (centre)
3. **Episcopal consecration** (lower)



Oculus : **Young Saint Hubert**, educated near Saint Ode.

Central register : **The miracle of Saint Hubert**

The knight Hubert is kneeling before a majestic stag;
his hunting dog turns towards him, frightened;
lost in the forest, Hubert is miraculously guided towards Maastricht and is converted.

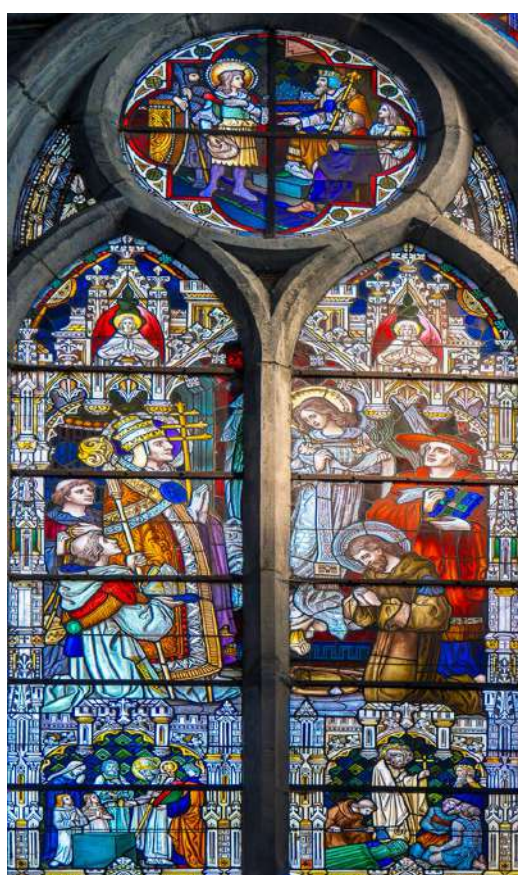
Lower left : Hubert confesses to Saint Lambert and asks forgiveness for having hunted on Good Friday.

On the right : Hubert is forgiven by Saint Lambert.

On the scroll next to St Hubert : "Observa diem sabbati et sanctifices eum" = "*Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy*".

This scroll is explained by the fact that Saint Hubert was hunting on Good Friday. He was not literally violating the Sabbath (Saturday) but was committing a **sin** by hunting on a day of mourning and penance.

Window 4 : Saint Hubert (continued)



Oculus : **Adolescent St Hubert** is educated by **Pepin of Herstal**, Charlemagne's great-grandfather.

Central register

Left : in 708, the **Pope Serge 1st** appoints Hubert bishop of Tongres-Maastricht.

Right : **Saint Hubert** is kneeling, dressed in a brown penitential habit.

An angel gives him **the silk stole white**, a sign that his mission as bishop was of divine origin.

Lower left : Saint Hubert baptises two young pagans.

Lower right : Saint Hubert destroys pagan idols.

The **white stole** was believed to cure or prevent **rabies** through a ritual called **the cut** : a tiny fragment was inserted into the skin of the forehead of the bitten person to obtain a cure.

The custom of Saint Hubert's cut was practised until the **19th century** against rabies. The discovery of the rabies vaccine by Pasteur in 1885 made the taille obsolete.

Window 5 : a college of six apostles (1st century)



Oculus : « IHS » « **I**esus **H**ominum **S** » : Jesus, Saviour of Men, recalling that it is in the name of Jesus that they bore witness.

Upper left : **St Petrus** - St Peter, patron of the Universal Church.

He holds two keys :

- the **golden** key — spiritual power,
- the **silver** key — earthly power.

Upper right : **St Paulus**, patron of missionaries. Saint Paul was beheaded by the sword in Rome around the year 67 under the Emperor Nero. The sword therefore recalls the instrument of his martyrdom.

Middle left : **Saint André**, patron of sailors and of Scotland. He holds the X-shaped cross on which he was crucified.

Middle right : **Jacobus Major**, Saint James the Greater, patron of pilgrims. His tomb at **Santiago de Compostela** in Spain is one of the greatest Christian pilgrimage sites.

Lower left : **S. Joannes**, Saint John the Evangelist, patron of writers. He is always depicted as very young, beardless. He holds the chalice with the serpent, symbol of the poison from which he was preserved.

Lower right : **S. Thomas**, patron of architects. He had to see to believe in the resurrection: « My Lord and my God ».

He is associated with a lance because he was martyred in India by means of a lance and a set square because, according to legend, he drew the plans of a palace for a king in India, but distributed to the poor the money that was intended for the construction.

The choir

The seven choir windows can be admired from the **altar platform**. Please respect this sacred space.

Window 6 : a college of six male and female saints



Upper left : **Saint Charles Borromeo** (16th century) cardinal and Archbishop of Milan, patron of seminarians.

Upper right : **Saint Leonard de Noblat** (6th century), patron of prisoners and women in labour.

Centre left : **Beata Angelina**, blessed Angeline (15th century), patroness of consecrated religious life. Mystic founder of a female branch of the Franciscan order.

Centre right : **Santa Julia Virgo**, Saint Julia the Virgin (4th century), patroness of Corsica. A noble Christian woman reduced to slavery; she was crucified in Corsica for refusing to take part in a pagan festival.

Lower left : **Sanctus Winandus**, Saint Winand (or Winnoc), (18th century), patron of millers. Prior of the convent of Maastricht, he is known for his ascetic life and his gifts of healing. A local saint much venerated in the region of Liège and the Herve countryside.

Lower right : **Sanctus Dionysius**, Saint Denis (3rd century), patron of France. A (Roman) bishop sent to Gaul, he establishes a Christian centre in Paris. Persecuted, he is beheaded. Legend has it that he walked on, holding his head in his hand ! He is invoked against migraines.

This window teaches that holiness is accessible to all:

- The **powerful** (Charles Borromeo, cardinal)
- The **humble** (Leonard, friend of prisoners)
- The **local** (Winand, saint of the Herve countryside)

The Holy Rosary

The following 5 windows are part of the Holy Rosary, which tells of the significant events in the life of Jesus. They are called **mysteries**.

The complete Rosary is composed of 4 series of 5 mysteries:

Series	Day of prayer	Theme
Joyful Mysteries	Monday, Saturday	Childhood of Jesus
Luminous Mysteries	Thursday	Public life of Jesus
Sorrowful Mysteries	Tuesday, Friday	Passion of Christ
Glorious Mysteries	Wednesday, Sunday	Resurrection & beyond

The Rosary of the Church of Aubel does not include the series of **Luminous Mysteries** because they were added by Pope **John-Paul II in 2002**. They meditate on the public life of Christ, traditionally recited on Thursdays.

The windows above therefore represent the 3 other series of Mysteries.



In order on the windows :

1. Glorious Mysteries (top, from left to right)				
2 ^e Ascension	3 ^e Pentecost	1 ^e Resurrection	4 ^e Assumption	5 ^e Coronation of Mary
2. Sorrowful Mysteries (centre, from left to right)				
1 ^e	2 ^e Flagellation	5 ^e Crucifixion	3 ^e Crown of Thorns	4 ^e Carrying of the Cross
3. Joyful Mysteries (lower, from left to right)				
1 ^e Annunciation	2 ^e Visitation	3 ^e Nativity	4 ^e Presentation at the Temple	5 ^e Finding in the Temple

We examine the windows below by series of Mysteries, horizontally, beginning with the top series, then those below.

1. The Glorious Mysteries

(top, from left to right)

The **Ascension** (2^e Glorious Mystery)



Jesus ascends into heaven before the eyes of his disciples and Mary.

Left : the Virgin Mary surrounded by holy women and apostles.

Right : a group of haloed apostles, prostrate (Saint Peter and Saint Paul).

The Pentecost (3^e Glorious Mystery)



Fifty days after Easter, the **Holy Spirit** descends upon the Virgin Mary and the Apostles gathered in the Upper Room.

Right : we see a **radiant dove**, the specific symbol of the Holy Spirit.

The Resurrection (1st Glorious Mystery)



Christ emerges from his tomb; an angel has moved the door that sealed it. Christ is clothed in **red and green**, the colours of life and the Resurrection

He holds the **white banner with a red cross**, the banner of the Resurrection.

This window is particularly **dynamic** — the contrast between the **upright and radiant Christ** above and the soldiers below creates a powerful vertical opposition between **divine life** and **the defeat of death**, which is the very heart of the Christian Easter message.

The Assumption (4th Glorious Mystery)



Mary was taken up to heaven **body and soul** at the end of her earthly life. She ascends to heaven, carried by the angels.

The apostles contemplate her elevation at the empty tomb. On the left, **Pieter** is kneeling and **John** holds his Gospel.

The Coronation of the Virgin Mary (5th Glorious Mystery)



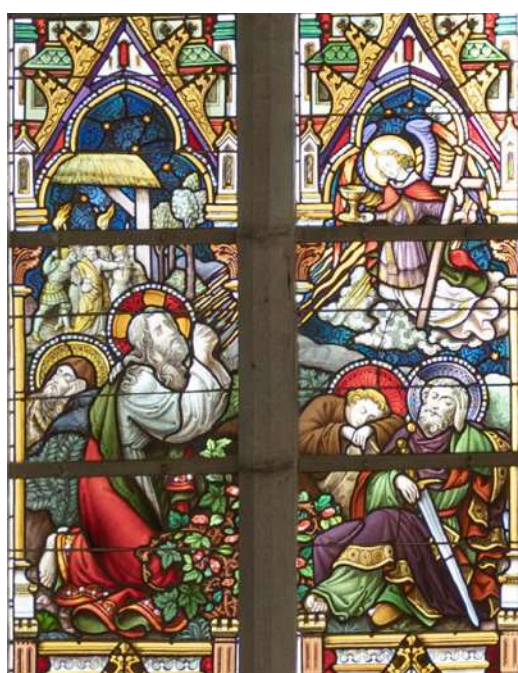
Left : **Jesus** in a red cloak. The **Virgin Mary** is kneeling, crowned as **Queen of Heaven**. She is raised in glory beside her Son.

Right : the **Holly Father** is beneath the radiant dove of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Sorrowful Mysteries

(centre, from left to right)

The **Agony in Gethsemane** (1st Sorrowful Mystery)



We see **Jesus**, in the garden of the Mount of Olives. He prays looking at an angel who presents him with the cross and the chalice : the symbols of the sufferings accepted for the salvation of the world.

There are **3 sleeping apostles** : James, John and Peter. Peter holds his sword; he will cut off the servant's ear at the arrest.

The **Flogging** (2nd Sorrowful Mystery)



Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, ordered **Jesus to be flogged** before the crucifixion.

Left : Jesus is bare-chested, awaiting his ordeal.

Right : a Roman soldier raises a leather-strapped whip and another, on his knees, prepares a reed whip.

The **Crucifixion** (5th Sorrowful Mystery)



We see the **Virgin Mary** (hands clasped in prayer) On the right, **Saint John the Evangelist**, holding a book (his Gospel).

Notable symbolic details:

Right : the **crushed serpent** with an apple in his mouth at the foot of the cross, symbol of original sin vanquished by the death of Christ,

Left : the **sun**, symbol of divinity and divine light, and the **shell** at the very top, symbol of pilgrimage or rebirth.

The **Crown of Thorns** (3rd Sorrowful Mystery)



Right : **Jesus** is seated, dressed in a red drape. The red evoking here the **purple cloak** with which he was clothed in mockery, in imitation of royal cloaks.

Left : Pilate's soldiers mock Jesus by crowning him with thorns. A soldier wearing a pointed red hat mocks him, a theatrical gesture.

Another figure, kneeling, appears to bow before Jesus, simulating a royal reverence, a reference to the sarcasm reported by the Gospels: "**Hail, King of the Jews !**"

The Carrying of the Cross (4th Sorrowful Mystery)



Left : bent under the weight of the cross and crowned with thorns, **Jesus** meets the gaze of his mother **Mary**, supported by **Saint John**.

This moment of shared suffering between mother and son is one of the most poignant scenes of the Sorrowful Mysteries.

On the sign above the cross : « Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judeorum » = **Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews**.

3. The Joyful Mysteries

(lower, from left to right)

The Annunciation (1st Joyful Mystery)



Left : the angel **Gabriel** bringing the lily of purity announces to Mary that she will conceive the Son of God.

Right : the **Virgin Mary** replies: "*I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.*"

The dove and the golden rays symbolise the descent of the **Holly Spirit** upon Mary.

The Visitation (2nd Joyful Mystery)



The **Virgin Mary**, after the Annunciation, goes in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth to greet her.

Left : the **Virgin Mary** and **Joseph**,

Right : **Elisabeth** and **Zacharie**.

Elizabeth's head is surrounded by an orange halo — a gesture evoking these words: "*Blessed are you among women*".

The Nativity (3rd Joyful Mystery)



Left : an angel holding a scroll "**Gloria in Excelsis Deo**" "*Glory to God in the highest*".

The Virgin Mary is kneeling before Jesus, Joseph with his halo.

Right : **The Adoration of the Shepherds**

- one, **young**, kneeling in green, in a gesture of humble adoration,
- the other, **older**, standing with a red hat and a bagpipe.

The Presentation at the Temple (4th Joyful Mystery)



Forty days after the birth, Mary and Joseph present the child according to the Law of Moses.

Left : The old man **Simeon** carries **Jésus**.

Right : the **Vierge Marie** and **Joseph**, in a red cloak. He carries a cage with two pigeons, the offering prescribed by the Law for modest families.

The Finding in the Temple (5th Joyful Mystery)



Mary and **Joseph** find the child Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem.

Lost for three days in Jerusalem, the child Jesus is found in the Temple, seated among the doctors of the Law who marvel at his wisdom. To Mary who questions him, he replies: "*Did you not know that I must be about my Father's affairs?*"

The **Luminous Mysteries** not represented on the windows are :

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. The Baptism in the Jordan | Matthieu 3, 13-17 |
| 2. The Wedding at Cana | Jean 2, 1-12 |
| 3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom | Marc 1, 14-15 |
| 4. The Transfiguration | Matthieu 17, 1-8 |
| 5. The Institution of the Eucharist | Luc 22, 14-20 |

The names of the donors at the bottom of the windows

Window 7

At the bottom we read : **CONFRATERNITAS S.S. ROSARII D.D.**

This means:

- **CONFRATERNITAS** = Confraternity
- **S.S. ROSARII** = "Sanctissimi Rosarii" = of the Most Holy Rosary
- **D.D.** = *Dono Dedit* = "given as a gift"

This window was therefore donated by the **Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary of the parish of Aubel** — exactly the same confraternity mentioned on **cross 28** of the cemetery (Jan Cove, 1679).



Lower right : the logo of artist Camille Ganton (who made 90% of the church's windows) : a bear walking on a lawn surmounted by a large 4.

Window 8

We read: **ASSOCIATIO S. FAMILIAE D.D.**

This means:

- **ASSOCIATIO** = Association
- **S. FAMILIAE** = *Sanctae Familiae* = of the Holy Family

Translation : this window was donated by the Association of the Holy Family of the parish of Aubel.

Window 9

We read: **PAROCHIANI AUBELENSES D.D.** = The parishioners of Aubel have given as a gift.

Window 10

We read: **CONGREGATIO B. MAR. VIRG. D.D.**

This means:

- **CONGREGATIO** = Congregation
- **B.** = Beatae / Blessed
- **MAR.** = Mariae / Mary
- **VIRG.** = Virginis / Virgin

Translation : The Congregation of the Blessed Virgin Mary donated this window.

These Marian congregations were very active in Belgium around 1900. They :

- gathered men or women separately,
 - practised devotion to the Rosary,
 - organised pilgrimages,
 - funded parish works such as stained glass windows.
-

Window 11

We read : **CONFRATERNITAS ORDINIS D.D.**

This means:

- **CONFRATERNITAS** = Confraternity
- **ORDINIS** = of the Order

Translation : The Confraternity of the Order donated this window.

It is the Confraternity of the Order of the Rosary.

Window 12 : divine protection against the evils of the world



SANCTUS VICTOR of Marseille (3rd century), Patron of **soldiers**. A Roman officer beheaded for refusing to renounce his faith, depicted as a soldier with lance, sword and shield.

SANCTUS GULSILMUS — Saint Ghislain (7th century), Patron of **mothers and children**. A monk who founded an abbey in the Belgian Hainaut, depicted in a habit with a model of his abbey church.

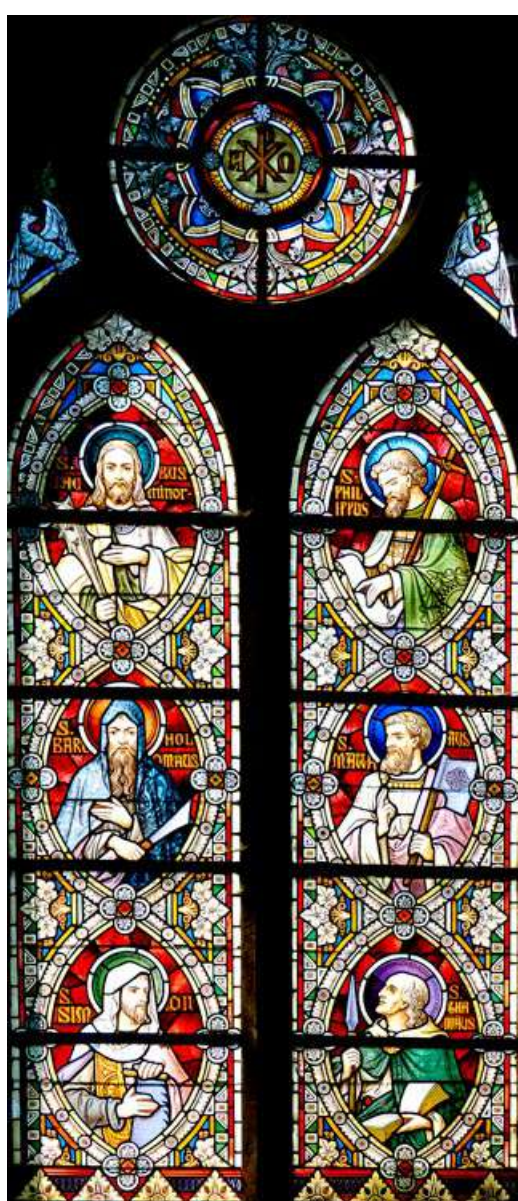
SANCTA GERTRUDIS — Saint Gertrude of Nivelles (7th century), patroness of Belgium and of gardeners.

SANCTA ROSALIA — Saint Rosalia (12th century), Patroness of Palermo. Invoked against **plague and epidemics** — her popularity exploded after she is said to have ended the Palermo plague in 1625.

SANCTUS HENRICUS — Saint Henry (11th century), patron of Benedictine oblates. He is Emperor Henry II of the Holy Roman Empire.

SANCTUS FELIX — Saint Felix of Thibiuca (2nd-3rd century), bishop of North Africa, beheaded under Diocletian for refusing to hand over the Holy Scriptures to the Roman authorities. Holding the sword of his martyrdom, the episcopal cross and a palm of victory, he embodies absolute faithfulness to the Word of God.

Window 13 : the college of Apostle Martyrs (1st siècle)



Oculus : The Alpha-Omega Chime — monogram of Christ (Chi-Rho) framed by the letters Alpha and Omega. Drawn from the Book of Revelation (1:8): "***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End***", symbol of his eternal divinity.

S. JACOBUS MINOR — Saint James the Lesser, patron of weavers.

S. PHILIPPUS — Saint Philippe, patron of hatters and grocers.

S. BARTHOLOMÄUS — Saint Barthelemy, patron of surgeons and butchers. He holds a cleaver : he was flayed alive then beheaded in Armenia.

S. MATTHÄUS — Saint Matthew, patron of bankers and accountants. He holds the axe of his martyrdom.

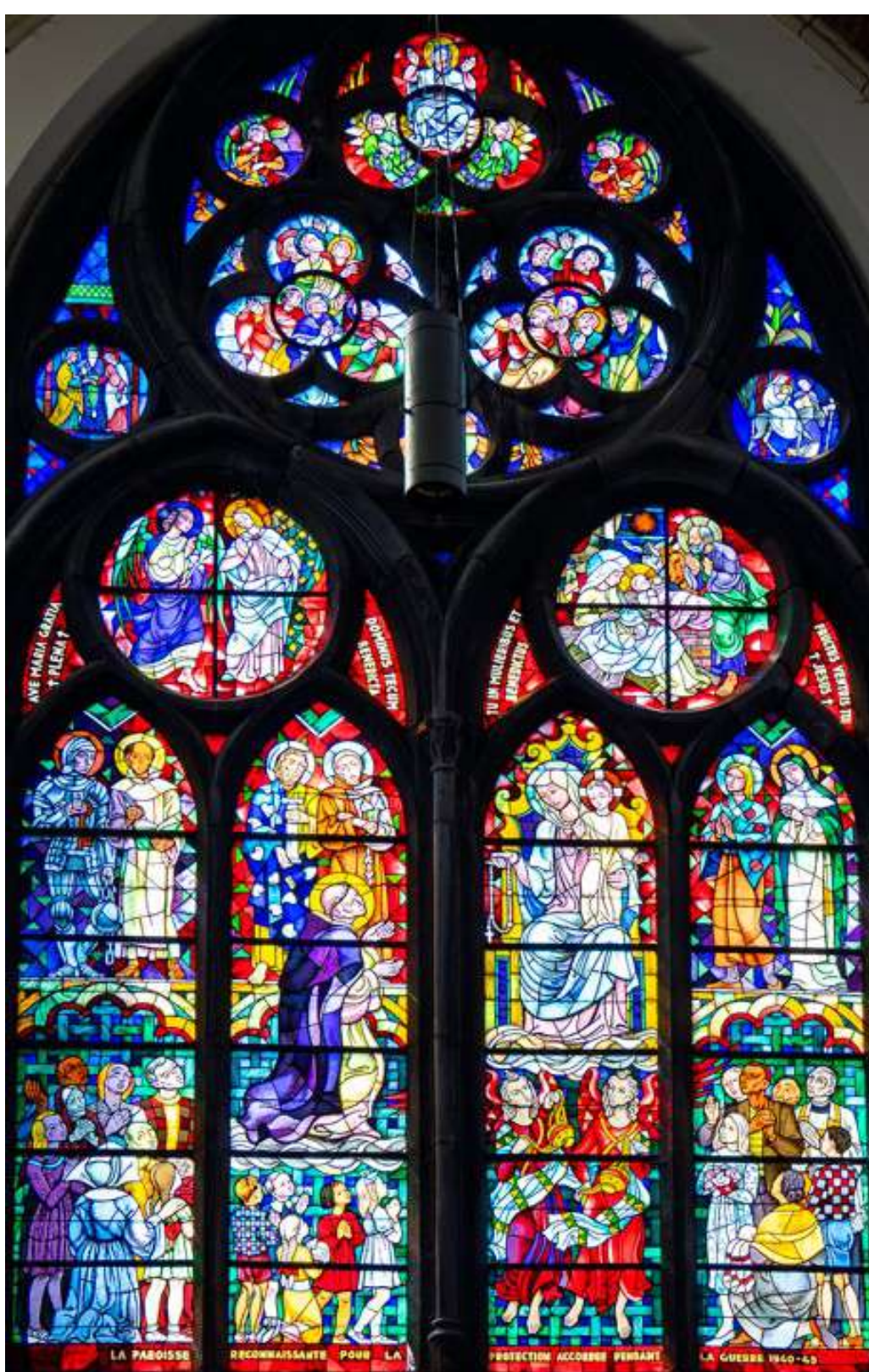
S. SIMON, patron of woodcutters and carpenters. He holds a saw : he is said to have been sawn in two in Persia.

S. THADDÄUS — Saint Jude Thaddeus, patron of hopeless causes. He holds an open book : the Epistle of Jude.

Window 14 : Thanksgiving to the Virgin Mary

As indicated by the inscription at the bottom, this window was created to thank the Virgin Mary for having spared Aubel during the Second World War.

This window is the work of Valère Saive (1908-1987); the execution is due to the workshop of O. Condez of Liège (signature lower right).



Left oculus : visit of the **Announcing Angel** to Mary.

Right oculus : the **Nativity**.

The scrolls around the oculi : **Ave Maria**

Fragments of the Marian prayer can be read:

"AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA" (left) — *Hail Mary, full of grace*

"DOMINUS TECUM BENEDICTA" (centre left) — *The Lord is with you, you are blessed*

"TU IN MULIERIBUS ET BENEDICTUS" (centre right) — *among all women, and blessed*

"FRUCTUS VENTRIS TUI JESUS" (right) — *the fruit of your womb, Jesus.*

Central register

Two lancets on the left :

- **Saint Louis 9th** The crusading king in armour, very devoted to Mary. He holds the red key of the relics of the Passion and the flail of the Christian knight.
- **Saint Bernard of Clairvaux** The great champion of Marian devotion, author of the celebrated "**Memorare**" dedicated to Mary.
- **Saint James** with his blue cloak covered in scallop shells.
- **Saint Francis of Assisi** in a Franciscan habit.
- **Saint Dominic** with a blue cloak kneeling on a cloud, receiving a rosary from the Virgin Mary.

Two lancets on the right :

- **Jesus** and the **Virgin Mary** giving the Rosary to Saint Dominic,
- A female saint with a cloak covered in red circles (unidentified),
- **Saint Catherine of Sienna** in green and white. She wears the mystical ring.

Lower register — The protected parishioners

This is the most moving and unique part of this window:

Two lancets on the left :

- parishioners and a nun of St Vincent de Paul — arms raised to the sky in gestures of supplication and thanksgiving,
- young children with hands joined.

Two lancets on the right :

- two thurifer angels (= carrying the censer),
- a group of parishioners with a priest.

Window 15 : the defenders of the weak



Oculus : the Christian fish (**ICHTUS**), universal symbol of Christ.

- ICHTUS (Ιχθύς) in Greek = fish
- Acronym for:
 - Iésus = Jesus
 - **Christos** = Christ
 - **Theou** = of God
 - **Uios** = Son
 - **Sotér** = Saviour

Left : **SAINT FREDERIC** (9th century), patron of defenders of Christian morality. Bishop of Utrecht, martyr, assassinated during Mass. He is depicted pierced by two swords.

Right : **SAINT NICOLAS** (4th century), patron of children.

Visible attributes of St Nicholas :

Three golden balls on a plate, evoking the three sacks of gold he secretly gave to three poor girls to provide them with a dowry and save them from prostitution.

A **barrel** containing three naked children — the scene from the legend of the **three resurrected children** : according to tradition, an innkeeper had killed and pickled three children : Saint Nicholas miraculously resurrected them. That is why he is the **patron of children** and the origin of his popular feast on 6 December, the day of his death.

Historical context

Saint Nicholas was bishop of Myra in Lycia (present-day Turkey).

The life of St Nicholas unfolds under the Roman emperors:

- Diocletian (284-305) — period of great persecution of Christians; Nicholas is said to have been imprisoned,
- Constantine (306-337) — the Edict of Milan (313) grants religious freedom; Nicholas can freely exercise his episcopate.

Window 16 : at the bedside of the suffering



Oculus : the two keys of St Peter :

- the **golden** key — spiritual power,
- the **silver** key — earthly power.

Left : **S. ROCHUS** — Saint Roch of Montpellier (14th^e century), patron of pilgrims. One of the saints most invoked against **plague** in Western Europe.

Right : **S. BRIGITTA** — Saint Brigid of Ireland (6th^e century), patroness of Irish farmers and co-patroness of Ireland with Saint Patrick.

At her feet, a **cow** lying down. Brigid possessed a wonderful cow whose milk never ran dry.

Window 17 : Our Lady of Lourdes



Oculus : the archangel **Saint Michael** drives Adam and Eve out of Paradise with his flaming sword, while God pronounces the first promise of Christ and Mary: "*She will crush your head*".

Central register : **Bernadette Soubirous** (19th^e century), patroness of the sick and the poor, sees the Virgin Mary appear.

"VOLO HIC TURBAM MAGNAM VIDERE" "*I want a great crowd to come here to see me*" are the words spoken by the **Virgin Mary** to Bernadette Soubirous during the apparitions of Lourdes in 1858.

Lower left : Pilgrims or sick persons carried on stretchers towards the grotto — the **pilgrimage of the sick** that has characterised Lourdes since 1858.

Lower right : a **collective prayer scene** around lighted candles — the torchlight processions or vigil at the grotto, an emblematic ritual of Lourdes.

Window 18 : united in hardship



Oculus : **The death of Saint Joseph.**

Surrounded by Jesus and Virgin Mary, attended by angels, Joseph passes away peacefully among white lilies.

Central register :

"ORA ET LABORA" "Pray and work"

Motto of Saint Benedict (6th^e century), patron of **students** and protector against **poison**.

His motto is foundational to the entire spirituality of manual work in the Western monastic tradition. Here applied to the Holy Family of Nazareth : **Saint Joseph** is in his carpenter's workshop and is helped by **Jesus**. The **Virgin Mary** sews.

Lower left : the **betrothal of the Virgin Mary and Joseph.**

Lower right : the **flight into Egypt.**

D.D. R^s D^s J. Lahay : donated by the Reverend Dom J. Lahay.

The context of the flight into Egypt

The **Magis** who came from the East asked Herod where to find "*the king of the Jews who has just been born*" — which threw Herod into a jealous rage. He ordered the **Massacre of the Innocents** — all boys under two years of age in Bethlehem — to eliminate this potential rival.

Warned in a dream, Joseph took Mary and the Child and **fled to Egypt** in the night.

The Benedictine motto "**Ora et Labora**" recalls the very nearby **Cistercian abbey of Val-Dieu** in Aubel, whose spirituality profoundly permeates the parish.

Window 19 : Saint Vincent de Paul

Saint Vincent de Paul (17th century), patron of all charitable works. He is :

- the founder of the **Daughters of Charity** (nuns in black cornets),
- celebrated for having organised the **care of abandoned children**.



Oculus : **Frederic Ozanam** (1813-1853), founder of the Conferences of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul in 1833, visits the poor sick. He was beatified in 1997.

Central register : **St Vincent de Paul** brings a child to the orphanage.

Lower left : This is a **mission scene in China**, linked to the priests of the Mission of Saint Vincent de Paul (**Lazarists**), who were very active in China from the 17th century onwards.

Lower right : This scene represents the educational work of the Daughters of Charity founded by **Vincent de Paul** et **Louise de Marillac** (1591-1660), who created **free schools** for poor children. Louise de Marillac was beatified in 1920.



Lower right : here we see the logo of artist Camille Ganton-Defoin (who made 90% of the church's windows) : a bear walking on a lawn surmounted by a large 4.

Window 20 : Saint Francis Xavier

Saint Francis Xavier (16th century), patron of universal missions.



Oculus : Death of Francis Xavier at the age of 46 (1506-1552) on the island of Sancian, a small island off the coast of China. He died of fever and exhaustion on the island of Sancian, at the gates of China which he never reached.

Central register : Francis Xavier at the court of the **emperor of Japan**.

Lower left : apparition of St Jerome to St Francis Xavier. Padua – Rome – Bologna. **St Jerome** appeared to the young Xavier in these three cities to invite him to renounce his brilliant academic career and devote himself entirely to God.

Lower right : **François Xavier** among the Indians. He probably baptises Paravas, pearl fishermen from Goa in India.

This Spanish missionary is co-founder of the **Society of Jesus** (Jesuits) in 1540. He baptised tens of thousands of people and evangelised in **India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Japan**.

Window 21 : the universality of salvation



This window depicts one of the **first baptisms** recorded in the New Testament.

Philippe le Diacre (1st century) patron of Ethiopia :

- a haloed figure, holding a staff,
- he was chosen around 33 AD as one of the seven first deacons of the early Church.

The Ethiopian eunuch

- a figure bending to receive baptism,
- senior official of Queen Candace,
- the first African to be baptised, he brought the Gospel to Ethiopia, one of the first Christian countries in the world.

The universality of salvation. On the road to Gaza in Palestine, Philip baptises a senior Ethiopian official. This is the first testimony proving that the Gospel is destined for all peoples, without exception.

Window 22 : the Baptism of Christ



Jesus (haloed, on the left), kneeling, receives baptism in the Jordan.

Saint John the Baptist (on the right), patron of baptisteries and shepherds, holds his staff and pours the water. One can make out the famous « Ecce Homo » on his banner.

The dove represents the **Holy Spirit** descending upon Jesus; one can also see the radiant hand of **Holy Father** above.

Window 23 : the baptism of a newborn



At the bottom of the window :

"EN VÉRITÉ EN VÉRITÉ JE TE LE DIS NUL S'IL NE RENAÎT DE L'EAU ET DE L'ESPRIT NE PEUT ENTRER EN LE ROYAUME DE DIEU"

« Truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.»

Exact quotation from the **Évangile de Jean (3:5)** — words of Jesus to Nicodemus.

This verse recalls that every baptism fulfils this word of Jesus to Nicodemus: rebirth through water and the Spirit!



This is the coat of arms of the **Coemans** family, generous donors to the church of Aubel.

This window was donated by this family in 1928.

Window 24 : The Teaching Brothers



Saint John Baptist de La Salle surrounded by two pupils — founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and pioneer of free education for poor children. This window from 1880 bears witness to the presence of the Brothers in Aubel.

P.P.N. = Patronus Puerorum Nostrorum = Patron of our children.

John Baptist de La Salle (17th-18th century), patron of all educators :

- French priest, founder of the **Brothers of the Christian Schools**,
- pioneer of **free education for the poor**,

- invented **simultaneous teaching** (the whole class together),
- canonised in 1900,
- declared **patron of all teachers** in 1950.

This window dated **1880** confirms that **Brothers of the Christian Schools** were teaching in Aubel at that time.

Window 25 : Saint Isidore



Oculus : The **death of Saint Isidore** (12th century), patron of farmers, with Dean Vandenberg.

Centre : **Saint Isidore** the Farmer prays under an apple tree. He is

- always depicted in peasant dress,
- celebrated for praying while an angel ploughed in his place.

Lower left : **Saint Isidore receiving communion**

Every morning, before going to his fields, Isidore attended Mass.

Lower right : **The marriage of Saint Isidore**

Isidore and his wife Mary kneel before Dean Vandenberg who blesses their union.

This window (donated by the **Boerenbond**), celebrates the ideal of the Catholic peasant : marriage, Mass and work in the fields.

Dean Jacques Vandenberg – an important figure of Aubel



Dean Jacques Vandenberg is depicted twice in this window (oculus and lower right).

He was born of Belgian parents in Kettenis on 9 November 1854. On 7 October 1891, he was appointed **parish dean of Aubel**, a post he would hold for 31 years.

His **work is very significant** as he took into account both the social and the religious. Less than three years after his installation, on his initiative, the « **Société Coopérative Caisse d'Epargne et de Crédit d'Aubel** » was founded. The date was 24 June 1894. This bank was subsequently renamed « Caisse Rurale » and is now called « Crelan ».

The parish dean is also part of the movement that founded on the 1^{er} March 1900 the « **Boerenbond d'Aubel** » under the patronage of Saint Isidore. Dean Vandenberg is of course also one of the fathers of the **new Saint-Hubert church**.

He retired to Moresnet-Chapelle on 16 August 1922 and died there on 2 December of the same year at the age of 68. His body was brought back to Aubel to be buried in the shadow of the Saint-Hubert church, his child.

The **Boerenbond** (Farmers' League) is a Catholic association active in Flanders and the Belgian Eastern Cantons , whose aim is to bring together agricultural entrepreneurs and rural inhabitants and to defend their interests. The Boerenbond was founded on 20 July 1890 in Louvain, Belgium.

Window 26 : Saint Anthony



Oculus : **Saint Anthony of Padua** (13th century), patron of lost objects. Kneeling before the Gospels, Anthony receives the miraculous visit of the Christ Child.

Central register : **the Miracle of the Blessed Sacrament of Saint Anthony.**

It is one of the best-known miracles of Saint Anthony of Padua:

A heretic (Bonvillo) challenged Anthony, saying he would believe in the Eucharist if his **starving mule** knelt before the host rather than before his oats.

What we see in the window :

- **Saint Anthony** holding the monstrance with the host,
- the **mule kneeling** by a miracle.

Lower left : **Saint Stanislas Kostka** (16th century), patron of Catholic youth. Gravely ill, this young Jesuit novice miraculously receives communion from the hands of an angel.

Lower right : **Saint Tharcisius** (3rd century), patron of altar servers. A young Roman acolyte, he was beaten to death for refusing to hand over the Eucharist to pagans.

Window 27 : Saint Catherine



Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria (3-4th century), patroness of philosophers.

Oculus : The relics of Saint Catherine are miraculously transported by the angels to **Mont Sinai**.

Centre right : **The ordeal of the wheel**

- Saint Catherine **kneeling**, hands bound,
- a **spiked wheel** (instrument of torture) burned by divine lightning.

Lower left : **The mystical marriage of Saint Catherine**

The Virgin Mary presents Catherine to the Christ Child who places a ring on her finger, making her his spiritual bride. This mystical vision is one of the most celebrated in the Christian tradition.

Lower right : **The dispute of Saint Catherine with the doctors.**

Summoned by Emperor Maxentius before fifty philosophers to renounce her faith, Catherine convinces them by the force of her arguments. Confounded, they convert to Christianity and are immediately condemned to death by the emperor.

Historical context

Catherine is a young Egyptian noblewoman of the 4th century. She defied Emperor Maxentius who ordered her to **sacrifice to the Roman gods**. Catherine categorically refused to renounce her faith. She publicly defied Emperor Maxentius by converting his own philosophers, his wife and his generals à to the Christian faith. She was tortured and died beheaded.

The **Saint Catherine Monastery of Sinai** is the oldest Christian monastery in the world still in activity. Built in the 6th^{ème} century at the foot of Mount Sinai in Egypt, it houses priceless historical treasures, including the Chapel of the **Burning Bush** (which surrounds the area of the burning bush) and a vast collection of ancient manuscripts.

Below is a photo of the monastery and Mount Sinai.



Window 28 : Sainte Marguerite-Marie Alacoque



Oculus : **Jesus blesses the children**

Central register : **Apparition of Jesus to Marguerite-Marie Alacoque** (17th century), patroness of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Kneeling in ecstasy before Jesus who shows her his burning Heart, Marguerite-Marie Alacoque receives the revelation of the Sacred Heart — a message of God's infinite love for humanity. She was canonised in 1920.

Inscription at the top of the lower register : Apparition of Jesus to Marie Alacoque.

Lower left :

Scroll : « **Jesus raises the young man of Naim** »

- an evangelical miracle (Luke 7, 11-17) where Jesus raises a young man at the moment of his burial,
- his widowed mother is in tears.

Lower right :

Scroll : « **Jesus grants forgiveness à to Mary Magdalene** »

We see Mary Magdalene kneeling, wiping the feet of Jesus with her hair.

Placing these two figures side by side in the same window is no coincidence — they together illustrate the theme of **divine mercy** :

- Marguerite-Marie receives the **revelation of divine love**,
- Mary Magdalene receives **forgiveness**.

Two feminine faces of **devotion to the Sacred Heart** !

The four scenes together celebrate **the mercy of Jesus** :

- love of **children**,
- revelation of the **Sacred Heart**,
- victory over **death**,
- forgiveness of **sins**.

Window 29 : the Holy Trinity



Inscription : « *Sancto Spiritu
Benedicamus Patrem et Filium Cum* »

« With the Holy Spirit let us bless the
Father and the Son »

The **Holly Father** carries the dove of the **Holly Spirit** on his chest and the **Son** is mentioned in the text. We therefore find the three divine persons of the Trinity.

This window is just above the entrance door. It can be seen from a short distance back.

Window 30 : the Rose of Saint Cecilia



We must return to the choir to admire this remarkable work.

At the centre : **Sainte Cecilia** (2-3rd century), patroness of **musicians**, is surrounded by **six musician angels** from Cluny who represent the ancient modes of music.

Saint Cecilia was a young Roman Christian noblewoman. She was martyred around 230 under Emperor Alexander Severus.

Why patroness of musicians?

Tradition has it that at her wedding: " *While the instruments played, Cécile sang in her heart—for God alone* ".

The musician angels of Cluny

The musician angels in this rose window are copies of the angels found at Cluny Abbey. They are on celebrated carved capitals depicting **angels playing various instruments** — lute, harp, zither, flute — considered the finest examples of Romanesque musical art. Copying them in the Aubel window is a tribute to this masterpiece of medieval art.

There are eight angels at Cluny and only seven at Aubel. The artist omitted an eighth mode : he contracted into one mode the seventh and eighth modes of Cluny. That said, this ensemble is remarkable for its colours and its arrangement in a very musical rose window, above the 1913 organ.

Here are two of the musician angels from Cluny Abbey :



† ♦ †

To all visitors :

May the beauty of these stained glass windows have touched your heart — thank you for your visit.