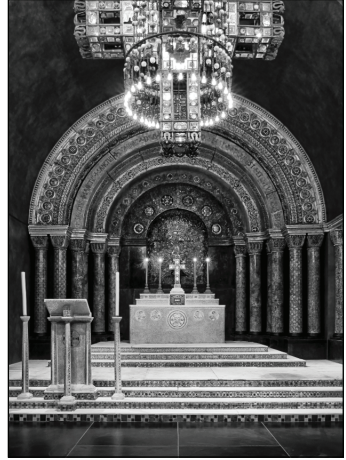


THE CHAPEL

In 1893, Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) created a chapel interior for the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company exhibit at the Chicago world's fair, which was officially called the World's Columbian Exposition. A tour de force of design and a virtuoso performance in the arts of mosaic and glass, the chapel was a sensation and brought the already successful designer to even greater heights of popularity both in America and abroad.



After the fair, Tiffany reinstalled the chapel at his studios in New York City. Then it was installed in a substantially different form in 1898 in the crypt of New York's Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, which was still under construction. Though used for services for about ten years, the chapel eventually fell into disrepair, its very existence threatened. In 1916, Tiffany reacquired the chapel, restored it, and installed it in a small building at his Long Island estate, Laurelton Hall. In 1959, twenty-six years after Tiffany's death, Jeannette and Hugh McKean acquired the remains of the chapel at Laurelton Hall. In the years following,

they reassembled virtually all of the furnishings and windows that had been dispersed when the estate was sold.

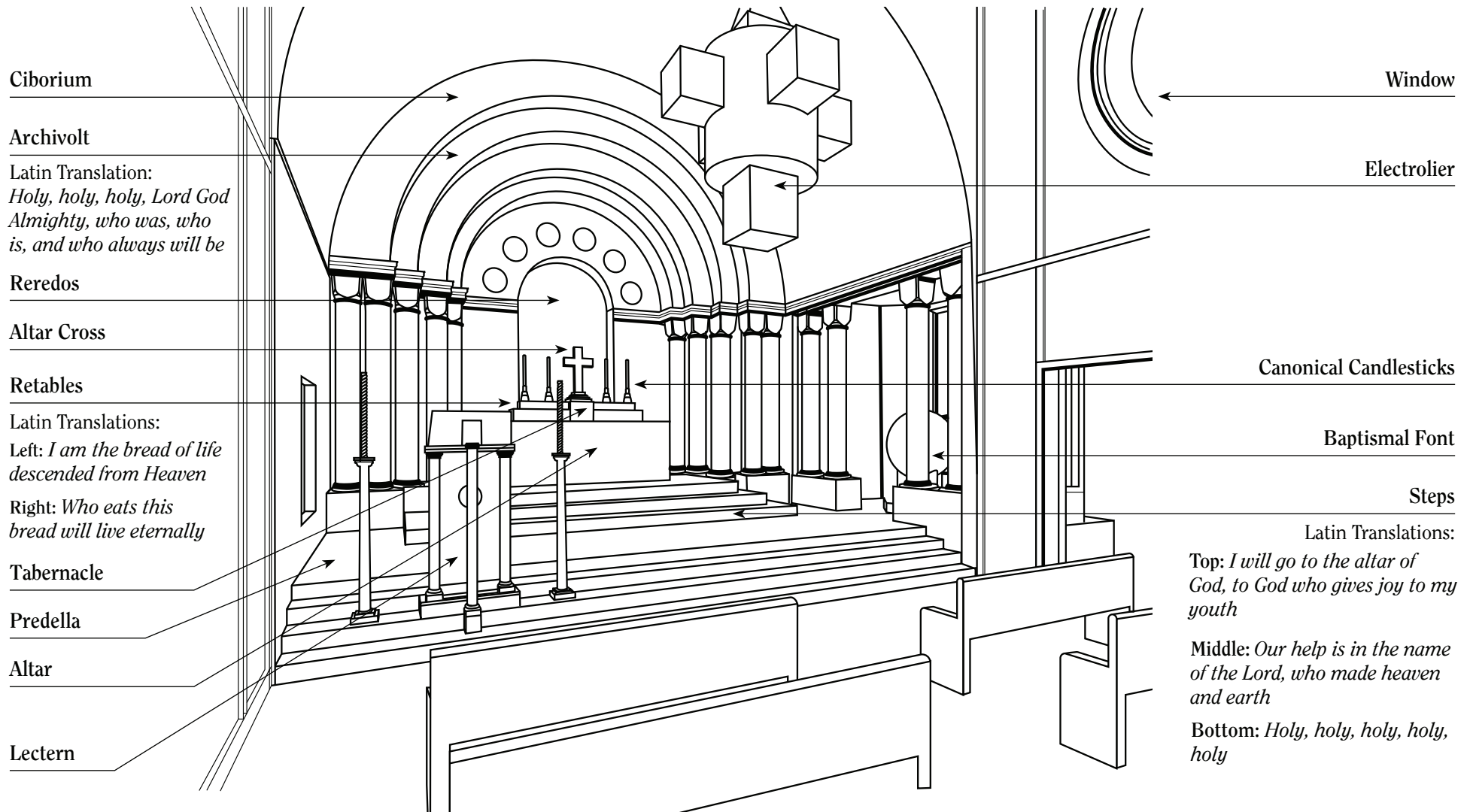
With the exception of two of the four benches, all of the elements in the Museum's chapel exhibit are original to Tiffany and most date from Chicago, 1893. These include the decorative moldings, altar floor, carved plaster arches, marble and glass-mosaic furnishings, four leaded-glass windows, sixteen glass-mosaic encrusted columns, and a ten-foot by eight-foot electrified chandelier. The nonhistorical parts of the chapel—walls, nave floor, and ceilings—are based on available knowledge of Tiffany's installations at Chicago and Laurelton Hall.

Above: View of 1893 Tiffany chapel interior reassembled at the Morse Museum of American Art. Photograph by Jimmy Cohrsen.

The Chapel Elements

"The chapel was his favorite among all his works, not least because it was a trial run, a proving ground for nearly everything he made later."

Hugh F. McKean



Ciborium

Archivolt

Latin Translation:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who always will be

Reredos

Altar Cross

Retables

Latin Translations:
Left: *I am the bread of life descended from Heaven*

Right: *Who eats this bread will live eternally*

Tabernacle

Predella

Altar

Lectern

Window

Electrolier

Canonical Candlesticks

Baptismal Font

Steps

Latin Translations:

Top: *I will go to the altar of God, to God who gives joy to my youth*

Middle: *Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth*

Bottom: *Holy, holy, holy, holy, holy*

Note to visitors: An automated lighting system in the chapel cycles through four two- to three-minute settings, each a new visual interpretation of the space. The lowest light setting shows the chapel at its most mystical, suggesting the experience of the million or more visitors who saw it at the 1893 Chicago world's fair.

The Chapel Windows

The various windows in the chapel feature the latest improvements and discoveries in glass and methods of construction for the period. They are built using the mosaic technique. In one window alone, there are more than ten thousand individual pieces of glass. No paints or enamels have been used in these windows except in the flesh of various figures.

Baptistry:

Field of Lilies,
c. 1892/1916
Leaded glass
(U-071)



Above chapel door:

Adoration,
c. 1900–1916
Leaded glass, copper
Gift of Adelphi College,
Garden City, New York
(74-020)



Circular windows:

Christ Blessing the
Evangelists, c. 1892
Leaded glass
Gift of Adelphi College,
Garden City, New York
(74-019)



The Story of the Cross,
c. 1892
Leaded glass
Gift of Adelphi College,
Garden City, New York
(62-037:1–3)



All objects and architectural elements in the chapel were designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany or one of his artists and made under the name of one of his companies in New York City.



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