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## THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS OF THE BASILICA (FROM THE 12TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY)



Picture 1 — Stained glass window of the crucifixion: the Virgin Mary (towards 1180) — photo Jean Diblik



Picture 2 — Stained glass window by Jacques Simon — photo Jean Diblik

The stained-glass windows of the Saint-Remi Basilica – a former abbey church classified as Historical Monument in 1840 and entered on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1991 – are a unique set characterized by their ancient age, and the restorations and creations.

### The choir

The stained-glass windows were initially created under Pierre de Celle (abbey from 1162 to 1181), then replaced by clear glass windows in the 18th century (for more light), and then put back into place – first in the second half of the 19th century, and secondly from 1928 onward, after the destructions of the World War I. Between 1953 and 1992, they were restored by the Simon Marq glass-artist workshop.

In the higher windows, there are 33 lancets. In their upper parts, prophets and apostles can be seen surrounding the Virgin Mary; they each have a book in their left hands; the scenes are strictly organized, with the Virgin in the centre and, on each side, 6 apostles, 2 evangelists, and 8 prophets.

In the lower parts, a procession of bishops is surrounding Saint-Remi – from the origin to Henri de France; they all hold short crosiers, and wear supple chasubles and mitres.

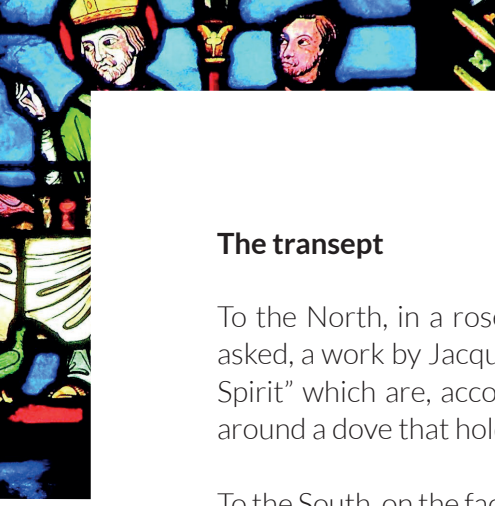
In the tribunes, the celestial court is shown – that is figures that mostly evoke the precursors of Christ (the kings of Juda) and a few saints. In the centre, the Crucifixion or Calvary of Jesus is represented (around 1180). Restoration works took place from 1980 onward.

### The axial chapel

The stained glass windows were made by Charles Marq from 1976 to 1981. They are composed of geometrical lines or strokes that make a perspective effect. The windows have been referred to as “architecture within architecture” or “translucent forest”, which conveys an expressive search for light owing to the use of silver salts.

### The nave

The windows, of Roman origin, were modified in the twelfth century, and then between 1850 and 1870. They were definitely put back into place from 1931 onward. They represent 12 royal figures, 7 prophets, 1 apostle and 1 bishop.



## The transept

To the North, in a rose that was pierced in 1602 according to what Bishop Philippe Dubec asked, a work by Jacques Simon was put up in 1958; it is dedicated to the “talents of the Holy Spirit” which are, according to Isaie 11.2, wisdom, respect and intelligence and which stand around a dove that holds the Holy Bulb.

To the South, on the facade by Robert de Lenoncourt, a work by the Simon/Marq workshop can be seen, with a yellow and blue gamut of colours which shows stylized birds (some of them hold the Holy Bulb in their beaks) and, in the tympanum, lily flowers on a blue background.

## The backside of the western facade

Louis Charles Auguste Steinhel (1814-1885), a painter and cardboard and glass maker, made all the stained glass windows after 1843, following the 1774 and 1793 fires. His works, dedicated to the life of Saint Remi, were totally cleaned in 2015. The central rose shows 16 saints, and Christ the Redeemer in the centre.

## The meaning of the stained glass windows

In the twelfth century, stained glass windows had both a spiritual and political role. There was an interaction between the architecture (elevation) and the stained glass windows (characters) that was meant to be symbolic.

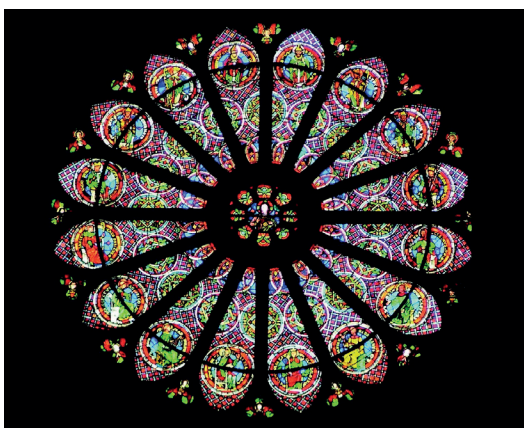
The stained glass windows evoked the precursors of Christ and the ancient Alliance (in the choir); the celestial Kingdom and the Church of Christ; and royalty and priesthood.



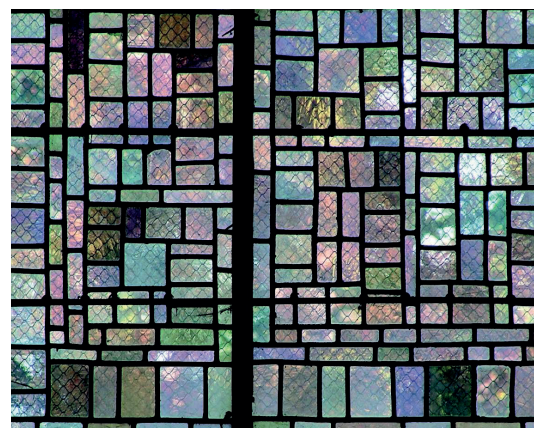
Picture 3 — Saint Remi at lunch in Cernay (when water was changed into wine) — photo Jean Diblik



Picture 4 — Wouldn't that be Saint Paul, a Roman and Jewish citizen who was converted on his way to Damas? This is a plausible interpretation but it cannot be ascertained — photo Jean Diblik



Picture 5 — The central rose of the nave — photo Jean Diblik



Picture 6 — The lower windows of the Saint Remi chapels — photo Jean Diblik