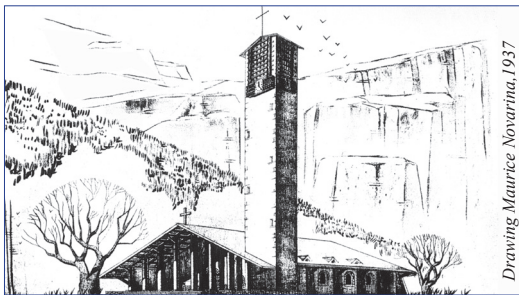




- Historic monument
- Heritage of twentieth century



# THE CHURCH OF NOTRE-DAME-DE-TOUTE-GRÂCE

*Between 1926 and 1937,  
numerous sanatoriums were built on the Plateau d'Assy.  
Canon Jean Devémy, chaplain of the sanatorium of Sancellemoz  
was given the task of building a church  
that would mark the revival of 20th century religious art.  
Following the advice of his friend, Marie Alain Couturier,  
a Dominican priest who believed that « all true artists are inspired »,  
Canon Devémy « put his faith in genius »  
and for the decoration of the church,  
he called upon the participation of the greatest modern artists,  
regardless of their personal religious beliefs or political tendencies*

*That is what we call « **THE LESSON OF ASSY** »*

**ARCHITECTURE :** **Maurice Novarina**, the Savoyard architect, drew his inspiration from the local alpine chalets. 6 enormous pillars support the 5m wide porch roof. The 28m bell-tower draws the eye up towards the Fiz Mountains behind the church. The basic structure is in local green sandstone, the wooden elements are of spruce; the green roof slates come from Brésil (Roof restored in 2011).

**FAÇADE :** It was **Fernand Léger** who created the colourful, 152m<sup>2</sup> mosaic, for the facade. A central medallion portrays the Virgin's face surrounded by 9 symbols from the Litany.

**PLAN - ELEVATION :** A central nave with 4 bays and 2 side-aisles is prolonged into a wide, semi-circular ambulatory choir illuminated by stained glass windows created by **Marcelle Lecamp**. An organ loft runs above the aisles and below may be seen semi-circular sandstone arcades mounted on round, monolithic pillars fashioned from local granite. The altars and the stone floor are limestone and the coffered ceiling is made from of Burgundy oak. 8 ceiling braces, sculptured in Hungarian oak by **Constant Demaison** represent MOSES and ISIAH, the 4 Evangelists, and also 2two Doctors of the Church, IRENAEUS OF LYON and SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX.

**CHOIR.** The tapestry by **Jean Lurçat** hanging in the heart of the choir illustrates chapter 12 of the Apocalypse according to Saint Jean, THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON. 2 enormous trees complete this scene of combat : THE TREE OF PARADISE ON EARTH and THE TREE OF JESSE representing the genealogy of Jesus Christ. The crucifix by **Germaine Richier** portrays a metamorphosis in bronze of « He whose visage was marred more than any man, his form more than the sons of men » (Isaiah 52,14), the arms outspread in a gesture of immense tenderness : « havin loved his own... He loved them unto the end » (St John 13,1). The 2 bronze chandeliers are by **Claude Mary**, Germaine Richier's pupil and assistant.

**LATERAL ALTARS.** **Henri Matisse** created the minimalist ST DOMINIC holding a bible, on the altar of the Holy Sacrament. (The church was entrusted to the Dominican order from 1941-94). On the bronze TABERNACLE DOOR by **Georges Braque**, is a fish, symbol of the early Christians and the monogram IKTUS (Greek letters meaning « Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour »). **Pierre Bonnard**, in memory of his nephew Dr Jean Terrasse, one of the founders of the Plateau d'Assy, donated a painting, for the opposite altar, of ST FRANCIS OF SALES, bishop of Annecy and visitor of the sick.

**WEST WALL.** On the ground level are 5 stained glass windows by **Georges Rouault** : 2 vases of flowers, 2 Christs, and ST VERONICA (inside the chapel). Above, the works of Jean Bazaine evoke 3 patron saints of music: ST GREGORY THE GREAT, KING DAVID and ST CECILIA.

**THE LATERAL BAYS** are illuminated by stained glass windows created by the following artists : **Marie Alain Couturier** (ST THERESA OF LISIEUX and the ARCHANGEL RAPHAEL, **Paul Berçot** (ST FRANCIS OF ASSISSI, ST VINCENT DE PAUL), **Paul Bony** (ST PETER THE APOSTLE), **Adeline Hebert-Stevens** (OUR LADY OF SEVEN PAINS), and **Maurice Brianchon** (ST JOAN OF ARC and ST LOUIS).

At the **BAPTISTERY** entrance stands the work of **Jacob Lipchitz**, NOTRE DAME DE LIESSE, dedicated to « good will among men on earth ». The works of **Marc Chagall** may be admired here : the large, ceramic work CROSSING THE RED SEA, 2 monochrome windows, THE ANGEL BEARING HOLY OILS and THE ANGEL WITH THE CANDLESTICK as well as 2 bas-reliefs in marble, THE LAMENT OF THE WANDERING JEW and THE SAVIOUR OF DAVID. The Carrara marble font was created by **Carlo Sergio Signori**.

At the nave entrance stands a Carrara marble font by **Benoît Coignard** (1994) engraved in Hebrew with the first words of the Book of Genesis.

Below the choir, in the **CRYPT** is THE LAST SUPPER, the work of **Ladislav Kijno**, CHRIST CRUCIFIED and THE TABERNACLE by **Claude Mary**, 2 mosaics by **Theodore Strawinsky** (ST THERESA OF LISIEUX and ST JOSEPH) as well as 16 stained glass windows by **Marguerite Huré** illustrating Eucharistic themes.

## INFORMATIONS

- \* Documentation : brochures, postcards (Éd. Alpes 74)
- \* Parish : Presbytère Villa St Dominique : 33(0)4.50.58.80.61
- \* Site : [www.diocese-annecy.fr/st-francois-dassise](http://www.diocese-annecy.fr/st-francois-dassise)
- \* Text and plan : A.Tobé - L. Dubosson : 33(0)6.81.32.69.18  
[www.passy-culture.com](http://www.passy-culture.com)
- \* Guided tours : Tourist office : 33(0)4.50.58.80.52  
[www.passy-mont-blanc.com](http://www.passy-mont-blanc.com)

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