







HISTORICAL STAINED GLASS

The church of Le Falgoux enables us to admire and decipher a stained glass given by an inhabitant of the town, Jules Maisonneuve of the Fontolive hamlet, whose two sons died on the warfront. After the church reconstruction in 1904, this artwork was entrusted in 1915 to the Haussaire company, Master Glass in Paris. The artist took as a starting point the famous painting of the Italian painter Raphaël (1518) : "Saint Michael Vanquishing Satan". He wanted to point out a decisive event which had just proceeded: the Marne Battle in September 1914.

What gives to the Falgoux stained glass all its historical value, is its singularity compared to the followed model : it represents the fight of the good against the evil adapted to the war.

The stained glass celebrates the Marne victory.

The big winner, the Saint Michael Archangel, stands up dressed as a Roman centurion. Its right foot steps on a man on the ground, whose body is likely to stick in a marsh : recall of the Saint-Hinge Marshes, on a left bank affluent of the Marne, where the German frontline was speared on September 11th, 1914.

The embanked demon of the Raphaël picture took the features of the German emperor Guillaume II, the Kaiser, becoming the evil incarnation. But he is defeated, immobilized by the Archangel who prevented him from recovering. He tries to straighten, the head three-quarters relevelated and the glance turned towards outside without worrying about the spear which is going to strike him. His helmet and his backpack are out of reach. Above, a barrel recalls the German heavy artillery superiority.

In the upper line, the Archangel has his wings spread between a city in ruins and the frontage of the Reims Cathedral in flames (September 19th, 1914). On his right, in the sun rays, we notice the 1914-1916 marking. Since the stained glass was put in November 1915, this date carries the hope, that made raise the Marne victory, of a fast halt to hostilities...

The Archangel is a greyish man with a moustache contrary to tradition which always represents the God soldier as a beautiful and young man. He is close to his sixties, some wrinkles, but he is well capped, a line carefully traced on the left. The swelling of his right eyebrow is very apparent. Which personality can he point out? He is the chief commander who played a main function in this conflict by stopping the German advance, the Joffre General, when he was 62 years old.

This stained glass is a one hundred years old, single and novel artwork become by an artist inspiration a true lesson of History.

For its centenary in 2015, the damaged stained glass was restored by Laetitia Bastien (Mosaic Stained glass Decoration / 15800 Badailhac).

Synthesis starting from the document
The WORK of a MASTER
written and deposited in 2015 by ANTONY CHAMBON
History associated professor - Regional educational inspector

Le Falgoux august 2016

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