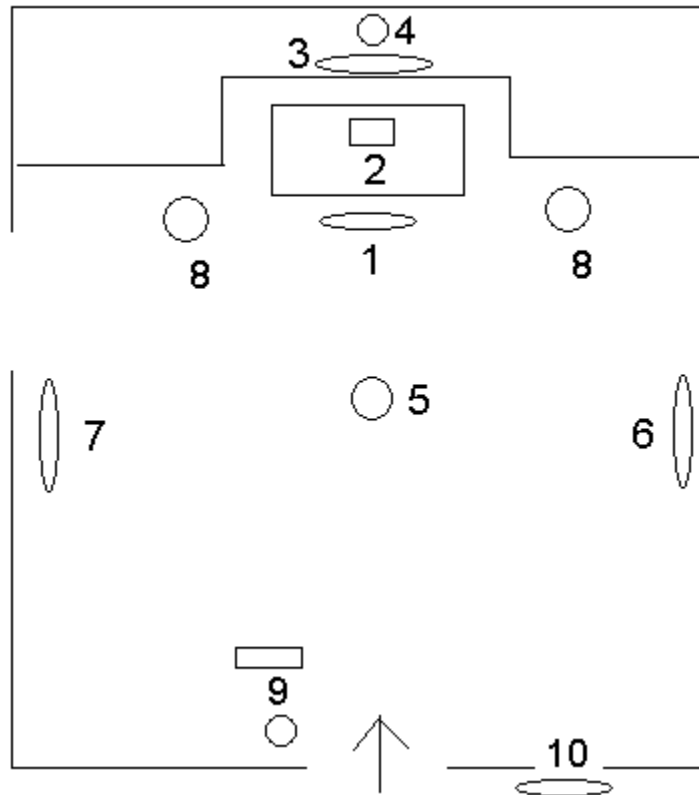


## THE CHAPEL (08 E)



This room is bathed in silence and peace and reflects the character of William of Beaufort-Spontin, Head Canon at the Cathedral of Namur, who had it fitted out in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He received permission from Mgr Berlo, Bishop of Namur, to open the chapel to all residents of the hamlet of Freÿr to avoid them climbing 5 km to the parish church at Onhaye. He centred the iconography on God's presence in the Tabernacle acting through His Love.

- (1) Under the altar Christ's heart crowned with thorns and Mary's heart pierced by a sword are united into one single heart. Around it a carved and gilded wooden antependium describing the theme of the Mystic Lamb giving himself in the Eucharist. It is further symbolized by wheat sheaves (bread) and grapes (wine).
- (2) The Good Shepherd on the tabernacle door carries the wounded sheep. It depicts God loving us as we are with our weaknesses and wounds while the cross above the tabernacle recalls this sentence: "Forgive them" It is a sign that we do not find any more in front of a vengeful God, but a merciful God.
- (3) The believer is invited to accept this love. The best example of this acceptance lies in the figure of Mary in the painting overlooking the altar and representing the Holy Family. This painting from the Italian Renaissance is divided following two axes:

- a. The horizontal axis shows us the Holy Family as described in the Gospel of St. Luke: Mary meditates in her heart, John the Baptist leaps for joy and Joseph is full of admiration;
- b. The vertical axis refers to the Holy Trinity: the rays of light at the upper edge represent God the Father; below we see the dove of the Holy Spirit, and finally Christ the Child.

Using this cross composition, the artist announces the ordeal of Christ on which Mary reflects, without having to draw it.

- (4) Another important symbol: the Pelican, allegory of paternal love because it was believed to feed its little ones from its flesh and blood. It was to become a symbol of Christ who feeds members of the community during the Eucharist.
- (5) Eucharistic Mystery takes place under the action of the Holy Spirit represented at the centre of the ceiling by a radiant (symbol of truth) dove (symbol of peace).
- (6) The stained glass windows on the garden side are coming from the former Monastery of Waulsort dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Nativity is from the Rhine school.
- (7) The stained glass windows on the yard side date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Next to them you see a painting from the school of Rubens.
- (8) The 18<sup>th</sup> century woodwork (Regency style) hides two sacristies. Inside one of them was laid to rest the body of Gilda of Laubespain who, with her husband Francis Bonaert, strived to restore this house. In front of the sacristies you will see a stand made of 'dinanderie' (copper) and an old chasuble. Above the pelican the yellow cloth creates a buffer between the bedroom above and the chapel.
- (9) In front of the holy-water basin (18<sup>th</sup> century) stands a removable confessional grid. Above the door you discover a Jansenist crucifix.
- (10) When leaving the chapel you discover to your left a painting of St. Jerome in the wilderness (17<sup>th</sup> century Venetian school). Christ asks a question: "Jerome, do you think you have abandoned everything to follow me?" Answer: "Yes, I left everything to live alone in the desert, where I fast, wake and pray. Unfortunately the temptations remain. To combat them I strike my chest with a stone or whip myself (both visible in the painting)." "And yet you still keep something for yourself. Give it to Me." Jerome sought and did not find it. Christ ended: "Jerome, give me your sins. I will carry them for you. That is why I died out of love for you."

Please take a text about the gardens in the rack in the Chapel Hall. Be sure to visit them.