

Let there be light!

An Expression of the Divine at Chartres

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Meet the artists: Hundreds of artists and craftsmen worked under the supervision of masters that featured first the Romanesque style (characterized by exaggerated features) and in the 1200s Humanist style.

Meet the subject: 167 stained glass windows of Chartres Cathedral, built 1190-1220 CE just outside of Paris, created the most complete group surviving anywhere from the Middle Ages.

10 Pages



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An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)



Notre-Dame de la Belle-Verrière (The Blue Virgin)

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An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)

Meet the artist:

The makers of the 167 stained glass windows of Chartres Cathedral, built 1190-1220 CE just outside of Paris, created the most complete group surviving anywhere from the Middle Ages. Some windows are from the mid-1100s while over 150 survive are from the early 1200s. The windows include rose windows, round oculi and lancet windows.

Meet the subject:

A 12th-century window, the most famous at Chartres, is the *Notre-Dame de la Belle-Verrière* (The Blue Virgin). It is in the choir near the south transept. Notre-Dame de la Belle-Verrière includes a larger image made up of multiple panels. This window is a composite; the upper part dates from around 1180. The Virgin is shown in a blue robe, sitting in a frontal position on a throne, "The Throne of Wisdom," with the Christ Child seated on her lap, hand raised in blessing.

The Artist:

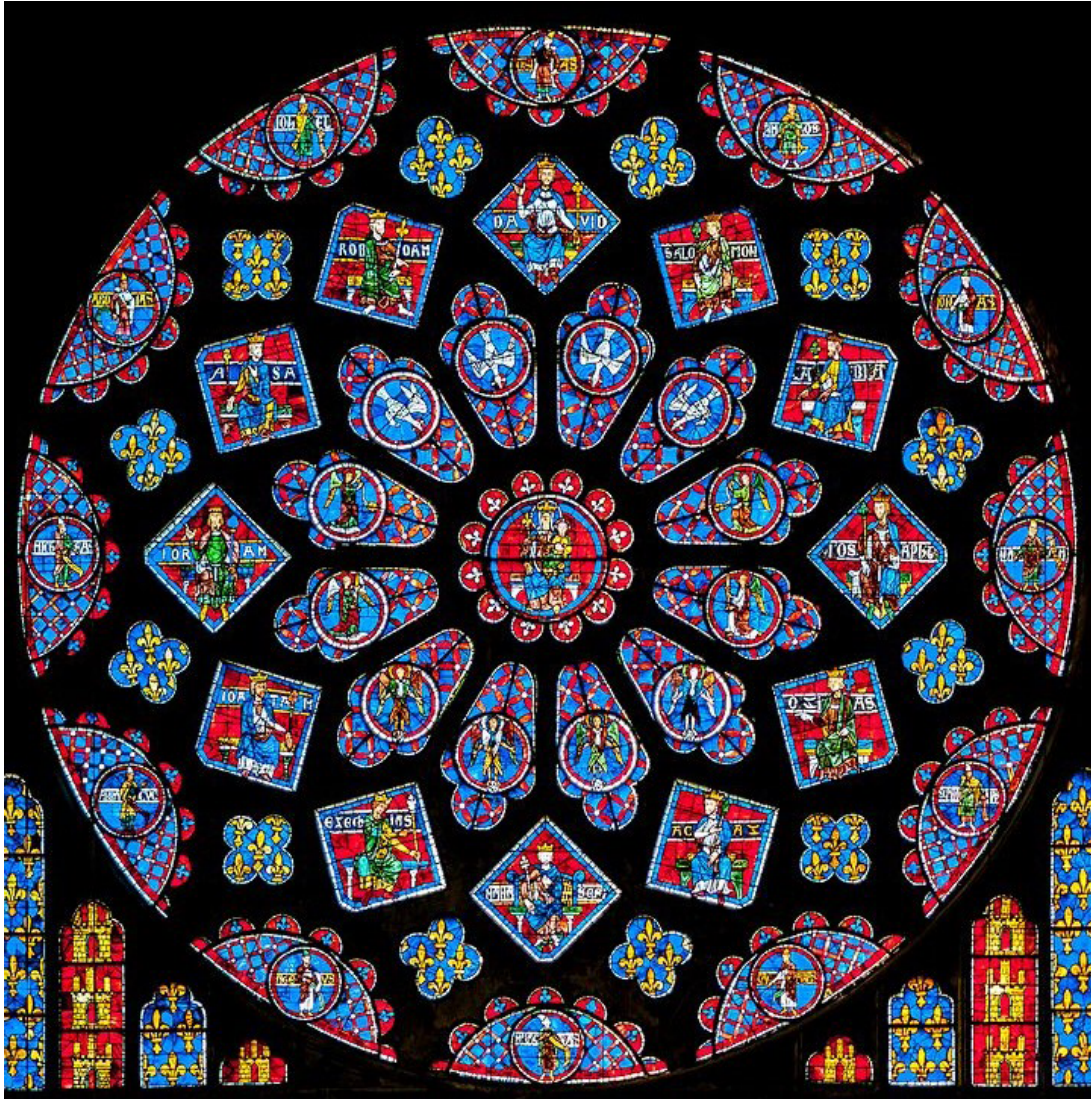
Hundreds of artists and craftsmen were required. They worked under the supervision of masters that featured first the Romanesque style (characterized by exaggerated features) and in the 1200s Humanist style (with more natural postures and correct proportions). Each workshop used its own particular colors to create an atmosphere; the location in the cathedral would dictate a choice of blue, more radiant for the north side, or red to filter out light on the south side. The creators used religious scenes to tell the faithful the key stories of the Bible as well as countless depictions of saints, kings, queens, nobles, knights, and priests.

Curious fact:

Chartres' merchants sponsored 42 of the windows; their guilds are included in many small scenes with the full array of medieval professions from barrel-makers to butchers.

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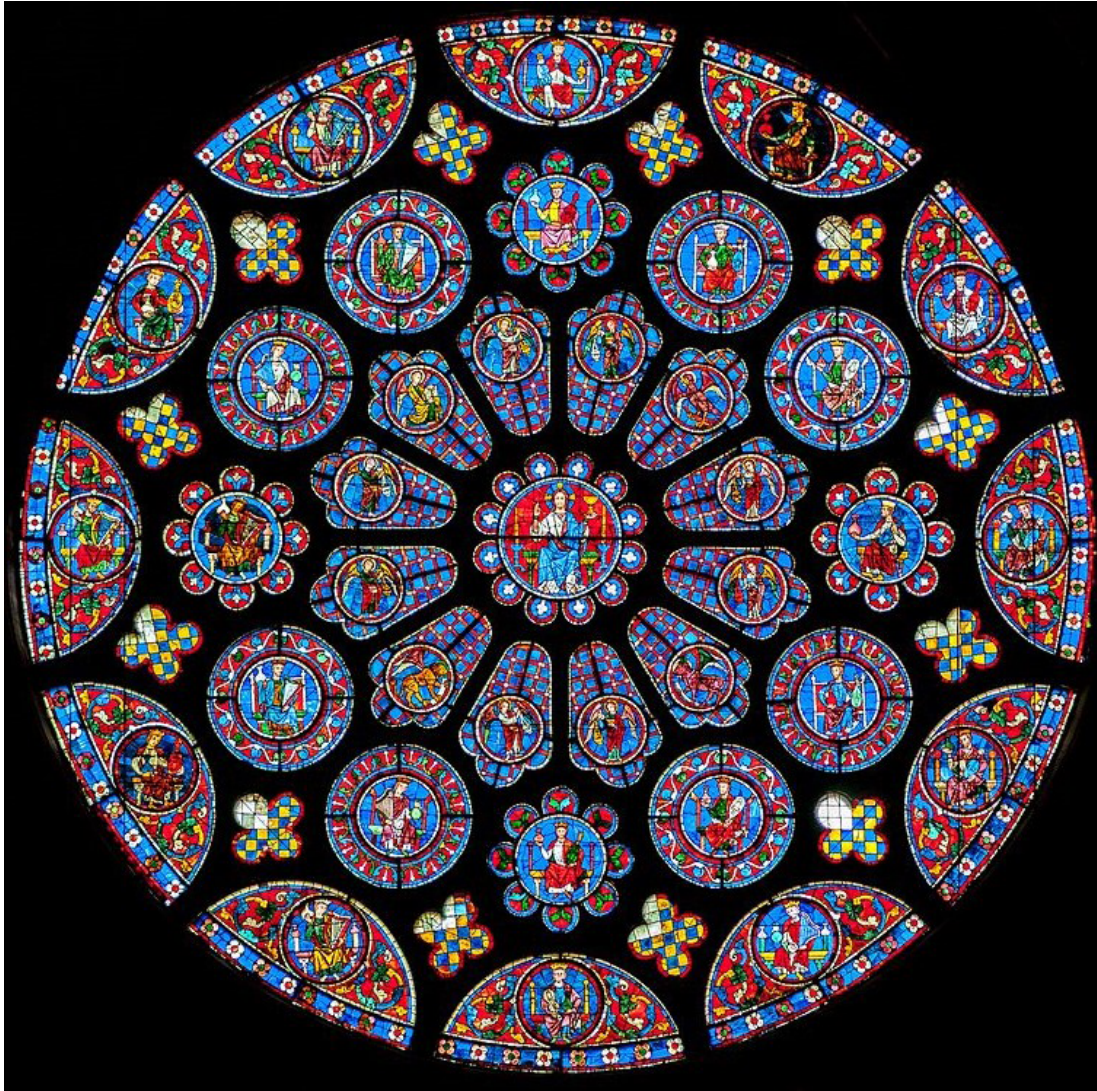
An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)



North Rose Window

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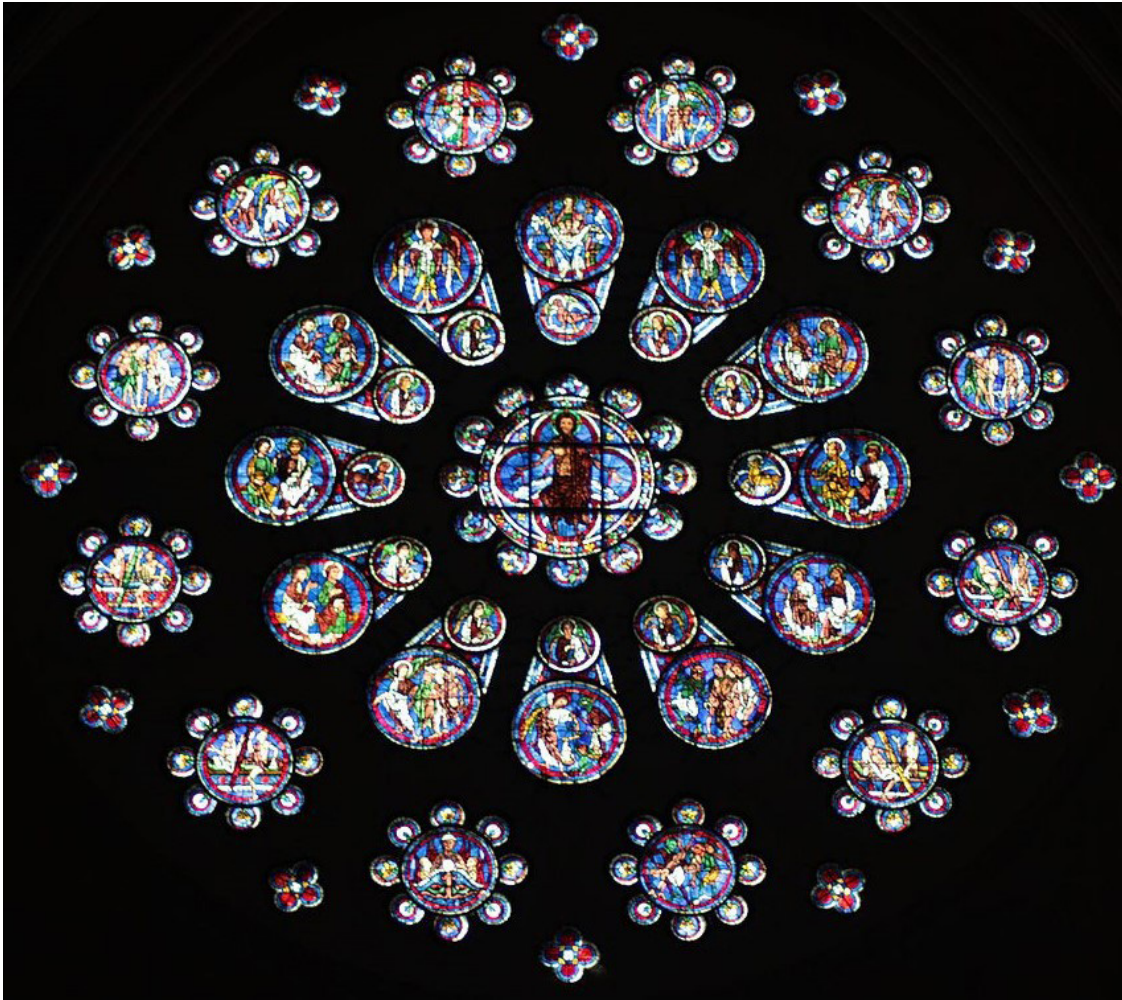
An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)



South Rose Window

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An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)



West Rose Window

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An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)

More info-bites:

- Secular life took center stage when attention was paid to objects such as tools, clothing and everyday activities of Medieval life.
- A 1417 chapel was dedicated by Louis, Count of Vendôme, who was captured by the British at the Battle of Agincourt and fought alongside Joan of Arc at the siege of Orleans.
- The “book of Chartres,” displays the whole text of the bible through the sculpture and windows, its binding is the architecture.
- The guilds sponsored windows with the understanding that their trades would be depicted



The Blacksmiths Guild

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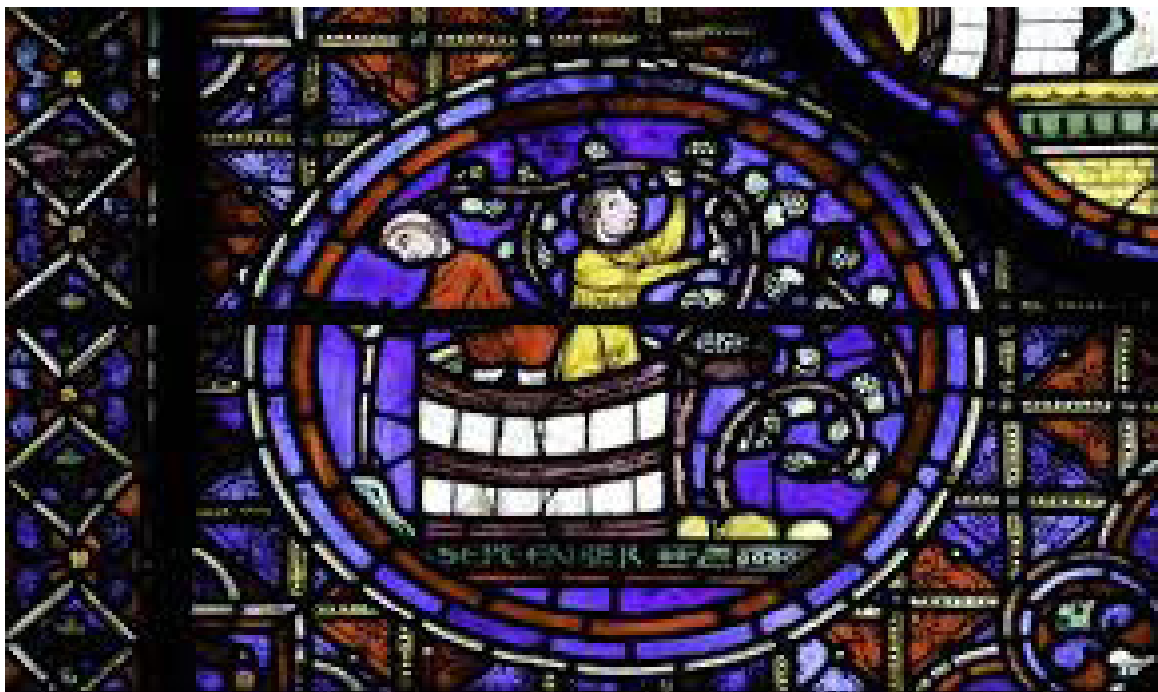
An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)



The Shoemakers Guild

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An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)



The Winemakers Guild

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An Expression of the Divine at Chartres (continued)

How was it done:

The art of making glass specifically for windows and in specific colors is well described in this video ***Capturing Magic: The making of stained glass*** (about 4 minutes)

Link: <https://vimeo.com/112377265>

Want to learn more?

See a schematic of all of the stained glass windows, with links to views of each small element, all described clearly: Link: http://www.medievalart.org.uk/Chartres/Chartres_default.htm

Visit YouTube and watch: UNESCO – Solemn World of Light – Chartres Cathedral (3 minutes)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9727p6ozlYo>

Discussion about the Cathedral, the Gothic architecture, and the windows (19 minutes)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk3VsinLgvc>