

22. Gregory Wolfe, *Sacred Passion: The Art of William Schickel* (Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 1998), pp. 162, paper \$48.00, ISBN 0-268-0176-3, 168 full-color illustrations.

Seldom does one see such an exquisitely produced book as *Sacred Passion*. We should be grateful to the publisher for providing so many full-color illustrations in the paperback edition. This volume deserves a place in the libraries of monasteries, religious houses, seminaries, and universities as well as on the shelves of all who are interested in contemporary art, both religious and secular.

Gregory Wolfe does an excellent job of documenting the life of American artist William Schickel of Loveland, Ohio. His early years as a student at the University of Notre Dame were shaped by such luminaries as Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson, and Yves Simon. Schickel was introduced to these philosophers as well as writers and poets like Gerard Manley Hopkins, Georges Bernanos, Evelyn Waugh, and Graham Greene in the classes of Frank O'Malley. His courses on "The Philosophy of Literature" and "Contemporary Catholic Writers" were crowded to overflowing, and students often had to audit. Schickel was fortunate to come under the influence of O'Malley at Notre Dame at this time in his life.

With the advent of World War II, Schickel spent a short time in the infantry. After six months he received a medical discharge because of the lingering effects of his earlier struggle with polio. At this point he returned to Notre Dame, where he became an unpaid apprentice to the Hungarian sculptor Eugene Kormendi, who had been brought to the university as artist-in-residence. After a year or so he decided to finish his degree at Notre Dame in the fine arts program. The head of the department introduced him to the work of a stained-glass artist named Emil Frei, Jr., who lived in Saint Louis. He became an apprentice of Frei, a decision that changed the course of his life. He eventually

met, fell in love with, became engaged to, and married Emil Frei's daughter, Mary, in 1947.

After two years at the New York State School of Design, where he worked as a teaching assistant, he decided against taking on a full-time teaching position, which was offered him thanks to the encouragement of his wife. Instead they settled in Loveland, Ohio, mainly because it was close to a lay Catholic organization known as *The Grail*. The Schickels survived on subsistence farming, raising their own food, including cows, chickens, pigs, and honeybees. These were hard but happy years for the Schickels, who would parent eleven children.

Meanwhile Schickel developed his skills, inspired by such contemporaries as Marc Chagall and Joan Miro. His reputation continued to grow in liturgical design circles, especially with the Grailville Oratory. In 1966 he was approached by two brothers from Gethsemani, asking him to help in the renovation of their monastic church (a minor basilica) as well as the cloister and garth. He began by designing furniture that the monks could make in their shops, such as stools, chairs and desks. The abbot and community were so impressed that it was not long before he was contracted to do the entire renovation program following the liturgical changes of Vatican II. The chapter on Gethsemani's renovation is thorough and shows how well such a collaboration worked out in practice.

Since then, Schickel has been asked to assist in many other projects, including the renovation of the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art and a creative fountain for the "Roofless Church" at New Harmony, the old Harmonist Village restored in recent years through the efforts of Jane Blaffer Owen. The last section of the book deals with Schickel's fascinating painting, sculpture, and tapestry design in recent years.

It is a tribute to the collaboration of William Schickel, Gregory Wolfe, and the University of Notre Dame Press that we have this remarkable book, which deserves a wide audience.

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