

JOHNSTOWN TRIBUNE - Wednesday Evening, Sept. 4, 1918

SPLENDID PAINTING IN ST. COLUMBA'S
IS NOW COMPLETE; ATTRACTS MANY.

General Artistic Treatment
Is Exquisite; Symbolic
of World's Hope

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BY NEW YORK ARTIST

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A painting wonderfully beautiful in rhythm of line and color has just been completed in St. Columba's Church, Broad Street and 10th Avenue, the work of Felix H. Lieflicher, a rising young artist of New York City. For majesty of conception and general artistic treatment it doubtless cannot be excelled in this part of the State.

The fundamental idea underlying the composition is to represent the consolation of religion for distressed and suffering humanity, to impose hope in a war-ridden world. The central figure is a magnificent crucifixion of Christ with Adam and Eve clinging to the foot of the cross; because of their fall the world needed a Redeemer. The background of these figures as well as the cross is of a dark red color, symbolic of passion, blood and suffering. Surrounding this and the cross there is a brilliant orange colored aureola. Rising from the altar's center are strongly conventionalized lines representing smoke of incense of a bluish color. Standing below on steps of a ruined temple is an assemblage of different types of humanity turned towards the cross, each assuming an attitude of hope and supplication, humility and suffering. On the right on the highest step stands a king of earth as an acknowledgement of his dependence on the heavenly king and with bowed head he looks in deepest veneration towards the cross, the emblem of salvation. On the second step is Magdalen, the great sinner and the greatest of penitents, while back of her is the grief stricken mother bewailing the sons who have fallen in battle.

There is also the giant warrior with blood-stained sword who wears the expression of intense weariness, as though his heart were sore over the horrors of war.

At the foot of the steps are the dead bodies of soldiers over which hover crows and vultures and in the background are portrayed dimly marching soldiers. There is also seen some of the havoc of war in the ruined tower of a cathedral which has been fired by the invader. To the left is the figure of a pope with face upturned beseechingly towards the crucified Prince of Peace, asking for a return of peace to the now warring world. Below this is a mother with her infant resting on her arms. Maternity is here represented.

In juxtaposition to the warrior is the brawny workman, representing the toiling masses. This figure has a type of face indicative of centuries of hardship and privation. To the rear of this workman is the shadowy form of the plutocrat, his back to the cross, thus expressing his self-sufficiency and his apparent independence of the Higher Being.

In the lower foreground are shown forth the sorrows and miseries of the poor of the world in a group of children and old men, emaciated of face and body, and slowly starving to death.

The left background represents a scene of great local interest in workmen. Rising up from this world of flame are seen great columns of fire, conventionally treated, which serve a rhythmic purpose and combine the upper and lower halves of the composition.

Encircling the whole upper half and serving as a border to the painting are the prismatic colors of the rainbow. Here is a sign of promise, the fulfillment of which will be realized by suffering humanity through the crucifixion of Christ.

The style of art employed in this painting is really new to this country, being purely decorative. The inspiration, however, is Byzantine, and conformable to modern feeling. Being out of the ordinary line one is accustomed to see in most churches, this painting may not at first appeal to the general public, but, the final attraction will come through the fact that there is the appeal of true art in which the beautiful is involved.

The artist, F. B. Lieflicher, was born in Cincinnati, O. He studied in Munich in the Royal Academy under the famous masters Franz von Stuel; and Carl von Marr. This artist's most notable work is in St. Agnes Church, Cleveland, where he did the apse decoration; in the Cathedral of Mary Magdalen, Salt Lake City, in which a series of grand paintings was executed and in the magnificent Kemdrick Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. The work done in St. Agnes Church, Cleveland created so great a sensation that this church became a veritable mecca for artists and art students.

In painting the picture in the St. Columba's Church, every figure was made from a living model.