

St. Lucy's Chapel Windows Created by Jim Freeman

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by Sharon R. Fulmer

When Jim Freeman was referred to Sister Mary Elizabeth and the Native American committee at St. Lucy's Church, he didn't know that his work would soon become a part of the historic chapel honoring Kateri Tekakwitha.

Freeman is an industrial arts teacher at Syracuse's Roosevelt Junior High School who spends every spare minute creating designs of stained glass. Little did he know 10 years ago that a kit to build a lamp might lead to a second career.

From the lamp kit, Jim began to study the delicate art of stained glass creations. Reading every text he could find, the owner of Liverpool's Tiffanique (located in the Antique Mart Building) learned the intricate geometric progressions necessary for construction of stained glass windows, lamps and other objects.

Freeman has been working from the Antique Mart building for the past five years and this weekend he'll be willing to discuss the craft with anyone visiting the village.

The creation of the two windows was lengthy and time consuming. When asked how much time was involved, Jim answered, "Two months of evenings and weekends and every free minute I could find." He admits that when completed and placed in the side wall of the chapel they became, "one of my most rewarding jobs."

Saturday morning Jim and his friend Don Frysinger, a teacher at Cicero High School began what was to be a rather complicated procedure of installing the windows.

When they arrived at the St. Lucy location, Jim and Don found the frame to be too small for the window. As the second of four weddings began to form, Jim ground the wood with a router - anxious not only to reach the correct diameter but to do it before the strains of the Bridal March signaled the beginning of the procession.

Freeman will have a little more time to breathe this week but work on orders will find him designing at least three more windows in the coming days.

For Jim Freeman, the stained glass window is not only a delicate form of art found in churches of old throughout the country, but a 1980 expression as well.