

The Pitassi Stained Glass Studio
Design Collection
at Saint Vincent College

A Labor in Lead and Light

This booklet contains large print labels for each of the stained-glass drawings and windows. The booklet will begin with the left wall upon entry, moving to the back wall, and then moving towards the front of the gallery on the right wall. Then, the labels for the first center wall section, the one closest to the front of the gallery, will be listed. Lastly the center wall section, closest to the back of the gallery, will be listed.

Table of Contents

- Left Wall 2-19
- Back Wall 20-30
- Right Wall 31-44
- Front Freestanding Wall 45-57
- Rear Freestanding Wall 58-64
- Display Case 65-69

The Left Wall

Leo Pitassi

“Leo” Pitassi was born Angelo Leopardo Pitassi on September 29, 1886 in Pacentro, in the Abruzzo region of central Italy. His education at the Catholic Seminary of Sulmona introduced him to ecclesiastical art from an early age. At age 17, however, Pitassi left Italy by himself to come to America—part of a wave of more than two million Italian immigrants seeking opportunity in the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century.

Pitassi soon found work in the coal mines near Pittsburgh, before his ability to read, write, and draw helped him secure work at the decorating company Leake & Greene. There, Pitassi often copied sketches of artists at the company, quickly developing his own style.

Pitassi apprenticed with several other designers, including William Willet, Robert Leftwich Dodge, and Nicola D’Ascenzo. While at Rudy Studios, Pitassi worked alongside Charles J. Connick, George Sotter, and Lawrence Saint, all of whom imparted their passion for the Gothic Revival on his own designs. After a few years spent further honing his skills at the Carnegie Technical Schools, Pitassi partnered with Sotter, designing windows for a decade with the painter.

In 1926, Pitassi built and opened his own studio in Pittsburgh's Garfield neighborhood (5345 Penn Avenue, now the fitness center G.Y.M.) Here he executed windows for approximately 20 churches between Chicago and Georgia. Pitassi usually received commissions from the monk-architect Michael McInerney, O.S.B., or the firm Comés, Perry, & McMullen. His studio's largest and grandest contract was with Rosary Cathedral in Toledo, Ohio, for which he made over 100 windows, some 18 feet tall. Pitassi died of a heart attack following a long illness in 1947 at the age of 60, leaving several unfinished projects and a vast legacy of excellent craftsmanship.



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Study of Seated Woman and Woman in Profile, 1910

Charcoal and pastel on paper

Leo Pitassi began taking classes in 1910 at the Carnegie Technical Schools, now part of Carnegie Mellon University. These included drawing classes, in which he learned techniques useful for his figural windows, and design classes, which increased his familiarity with architecture and composition.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.500



Pittsburgh Press Photo:

This photograph illustrated a 1939 article about Leo Pitassi published in The Pittsburgh Press. Pitassi is shown working in his studio, cutting glass for the St. Margarita window, seen in the right foreground. Behind him is the window included in this exhibition, displayed opposite these drawings. The newspaper also featured a photograph of a drawing depicting the Archangel Jehudiel, similar to the drawing nearby (in the middle, on the right). The corresponding window illuminates the chancel of Toledo's Rosary Cathedral.



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Study of Michelangelo's "Dying Slave," 1910

Charcoal on paper

Leo Pitassi's talent at the Carnegie Technical Schools was recognized in its *Bulletin of the School of Applied Design* in 1911. The *Bulletin* featured two of Pitassi's drawings, this study of Michelangelo's so-called "Dying Slave" (a celebrated Renaissance sculpture, possibly representing a Christian soul, intended for the Tomb of Julius II) and a study from life. Pitassi also submitted drawings and window designs to exhibitions of the Pittsburgh Architectural Club in the 1910s.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.498

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



Cartoon, St. Margarita, Aisle Window, St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1935

Charcoal on paper

This window features scenes relating to the theme of penance. From top to bottom, the medallions depict: the lesson of the widow's offering (Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4); Moses and Nehushtan (Numbers 21:4-9, John 3:14-15); St. Margaret of Cortona (a Penitent nun and patron saint of reformed prostitutes); a priest hearing a penance; and a penitent pilgrim before a pope.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.440

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, Jehudiel, Clerestory Window, St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1935

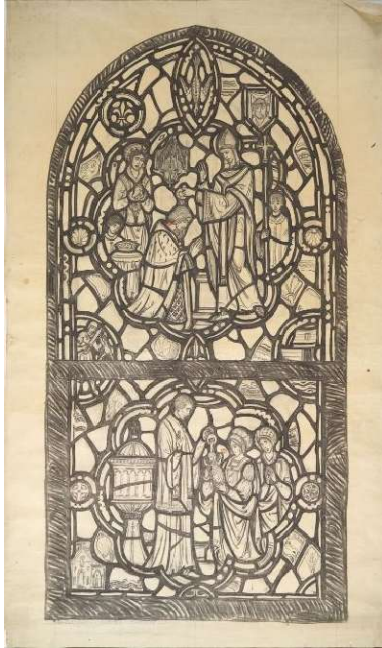
Charcoal on paper



The Archangel Jehudiel (sometimes spelled Jegudiel, Yehadiel, or Iehudiel), whose name means “God is One”, is one of seven archangels venerated by some in the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches. He is mentioned in the apocalyptic Jewish Book of Enoch. Jehudiel is typically depicted with a crown and whip, symbolizing God’s reward for the righteous and punishment for sinners. “DEI ELECTUS” translates to “God’s chosen one.”

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.335



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Presentation Drawing for Baptism, Baptistry Window,
St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca.
1935**

Charcoal on paper

Leo Pitassi likely completed this panel as one of the first windows for his commission at St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, perhaps as a demonstration of his talent. (Priests and architects often used baptismal windows to

test an artist's skill.) Pitassi kept the window in his studio to show clients his skills in cutting, glazing, and leading.

Pitassi effectively proved his aptitude in Catholic symbolism and stained glass with this window's small, delicately painted glass pieces and its depictions. The medallions depict St. Remigius's baptism of Clovis I, king of the Franks, and the baptism of St. Mechtilde of Hackeborn, a Benedictine musician and mystic.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.352

Medallions and Roundels

The medallion was essential to Gothic and Gothic-Revival stained glass and its function as a visual bible. A series of several medallions could convey a complete scene from the life of a saint, a parable of Christ, a story from the Old Testament, or an aspect of modern church life. Medallions vary widely in shape, size, and depiction, but their messages are easily recognizable to the faithful. Roundels (medallions' circular counterparts) emerged in the late Gothic period and were popular in Germany, Switzerland, and the Low Countries.

Leo Pitassi commonly used medallions in his windows, sometimes interspersed around a larger figure of a saint or person from the bible. Pitassi occasionally used roundels, which he decorated with more painted details than his medallions.



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, Stork, Medallion, date unknown

Charcoal on paper

In Scripture, storks are associated with faithfulness, migration, maternal care, transformation, and cleanliness. The Hebrew word for “stork” is “chasidah,” from a root meaning “kind” or “faithful.” Storks were historically seen as symbols of good fortune, new beginning, and springtime.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.228

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, The Conversion of Paul the Apostle, Medallion, St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, Winston-Salem, NC, ca. 1930

Charcoal on paper



Paul the Apostle, also known as Saul of Tarsus, converted to Christianity during a journey from Jerusalem to Damascus to seek out and arrest followers of Christ. The Acts of the Apostles says that Paul encountered a flash of light and fell to the ground. Paul conversed with a divine voice which told him he was persecuting Christ. His fellow travelers stood speechless during the event and then led him to Damascus where he was healed and blessed by Ananias.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.25



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, Cross of Saint Benedict, Medallion, St. Benedict Church, Baltimore, MD, ca. 1935

Charcoal on paper

The Saint Benedict Medal features the Vade retro satana on its obverse. This medieval formula for an exorcism likely originated from Metten Abbey in Bavaria, from which Boniface Wimmer came to establish Saint Vincent Archabbey. The prayer reads:

Crux sacra sit mihi lux / May the Holy Cross be my
light

Non draco sit mihi dux / May the dragon never be my
guide

Vade retro satana / Begone Satan

Numquam suade mihi vana / Never tempt me with
your vanities

Sunt mala quae libas / What you offer me is evil

Ipsa venena bibas / Drink the poison yourself

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.395



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Cartoon, William Byrd, Roundel, Choir Loft Window,
Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1935**

Charcoal on paper

This small roundel is one of eight depicting people associated with sacred music. Others featured St. Cecilia, St. Gregory the Great, and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. William Byrd (1539-1623) wrote religious and secular music during the Shakespearean age in England for voice, organ, virginal, and other instruments.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.341

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Cartoon, Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abednego, Medallion, St. Peter
Catholic Church, Massena, NY, ca.
1929**



Charcoal on paper

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abdnego were three Israelites thrown into a fire after they refused to bow to a statue of King Nebuchadnezzar. Miraculously, they were preserved from harm and accompanied by a fourth man described as the “Son of God.” After leaving the flames, Nebuchadnezzar promoted the three men and decreed that the God of Israel be worshipped (Daniel 3:16-28).

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.62



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, St. Luke, Medallion, date unknown

Charcoal on paper

The ox was a sacrificial animal in ancient Judaism. Since the Gospel of Luke emphasizes Christ's sacrifice upon the cross, the ox became the symbol of St. Luke. Its wings refer to Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1:5-12) and are traditional to the symbols of all the evangelists: a man for Matthew, lion for Mark, ox for Luke, and eagle for John.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.600

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Cartoon, Exorcism of the Gerasene
Demoniac, Medallion, St. Bernard
Catholic Church, Mt. Lebanon, PA, ca.
1934**



Charcoal on paper

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke describe Christ exorcising demons from a Geresene Gentile. The demons, known as Legion, left the man and entered a herd of pigs. The swine then ran off a steep bank and drowned in a lake. Christ commanded the healed man to proclaim the Gospel to the Decapolis residents (Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39).

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.208



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, The Nativity of Christ, Medallion, date unknown

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.441

Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont

**Cartoon, Our Mother of Good Counsel,
Aisle Window, Mother of Good Counsel
Church, Homewood, Pittsburgh, PA, c.
1955.**



Charcoal on paper

Mother of Good Counsel Church was the Pitassi Studio's final project before Louise Pitassi closed the studio around 1960. Stylistically, this church commission departs dramatically from the studio's previous windows. The Mother of Good Counsel windows are not only more modern and simplistic but also feature more natural and earthbound depictions of the story of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.449

The Back Wall

Adventures in Light and Color

Stained-glass ateliers typically made at least one colorful, full-scale cartoon known as a presentation drawing to show to a church's clergy, council, or architect. These drawings gave clients a feel for a window's color, size, leading, and glazing. Made using gouache and charcoal on paper, Leo Pitassi's presentation designs are some of his more stunning works.

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Presentation Drawing, St. Mark and
Jeremiah, Chapel Window, Rosary
Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1931**

Charcoal and gouache on paper



This drawing belongs to a set of fourteen, all designs for windows in the Bishop's Chapel at Rosary Cathedral. Each depicts an apostle or evangelist with an Old Testament prophet. Two designs, including this one, were not made into windows but rather painted onto a wall, since a building blocked the position where a window should have been installed. Mark the Evangelist is paired with Jeremiah since they both presented God's message urgently in difficult times, emphasizing obedience, faithfulness, and hope.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.2

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Presentation Drawing, Mary, Clerestory Window, St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1930

Charcoal and gouache on paper



St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church was Leo Pitassi's second largest commission after Rosary Cathedral. The church contains over 100 windows created by the Pitassi Studio during the 1930s. This window's depictions include (from top to bottom): Christ's raising of Jarius's daughter (Mark 5:21-43); Elijah's despair (1 Kings 19); the Blessed Virgin Mary with two angels; a priest administering the Anointing of the Sick; and Christ with the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53-8:11).

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.111

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Presentation Drawing, Christ, Clerestory Window, St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1930

Charcoal and gouache on paper



This large, three-light window represents the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Each light is dense with symbols representing victory over death or scenes depicting acts of spiritual or mortal healing. The central drawing features a phoenix rising from the ashes, representing Christ's victory over death. Christ is surrounded by seven doves, signifying the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. He is also accompanied by the words VENI AD ME or COME TO ME (Matthew 11:28) and two angels with trumpets. The bottom of the window depicts angels raising souls from Hell into Heaven. Leo Pitassi also included the central figure of Christ in this drawing in the grand North Window at Myers Park Methodist Church.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.113

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**REPLICA Presentation Drawing, Joseph,
Clerestory Window, St. Gregory the Great
Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1930**

Charcoal and gouache on paper



Like many of Leo Pitassi's windows, this design offers a mix of Old and New Testament depictions and scenes from the modern church. From top to bottom, medallions show: Christ's raising of the widow's son at Naim (Luke 7); Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22); Joseph with a lily staff and two angels; viaticum (the administration of the Eucharist to a dying person); and the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

The drawing exhibited here is a replica. The original is undergoing conservation treatment to stabilize old tears to the paper substrate.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.112



Leo Pitassi

1886 Pacentro—Pittsburgh 1947

**Presentation Drawing, The Annunciation, Rose
Window Petal, Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1930**

Charcoal and gouache on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

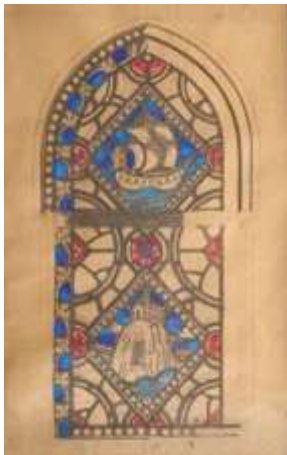
Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.836

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Presentation Drawing, Sts. Jude and Peter, St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1930

Charcoal and gouache on paper



Saints Jude and Peter were apostles of Christ, important in spreading the mission of the church. Jude was a fisherman and traveled throughout Libya, Persia, and Mesopotamia—hence his symbol of a ship. Peter is traditionally known as the rock of the church, resulting from wordplay in Matthew 16:18, when Christ changes Simon’s name to Peter: “...That thou art Peter [Petros], and upon this rock [petra] I will build my church.”

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.545

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Presentation Drawing, Passage to Rectory
Window, St. Gregory the Great Catholic
Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1930

Charcoal and gouache on paper



This window depicts various objects symbolizing martyrdom or Christ's sacrifice. Christ's crown of thorns and scourging whip can be found in two painted medallions. A palm represents Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, as well as the victory of the spirit over the flesh. Pliers represent St. Apollonia, whose teeth were violently extracted during her martyrdom.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.323



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Presentation Design, Christ the Shepherd, Crypt Window, St. Bernard Catholic Church, Mt. Lebanon, PA, ca. 1934

Charcoal and gouache on paper

This presentation design is one of several for the windows of Clairvaux Hall, the crypt of St. Bernard Catholic Church. William Perry, architect of the church, commissioned Leo Pitassi to complete the entire building's windows. But construction dragged on and Pitassi's health worsened. Pitassi died before creating windows for the church's nave. English designer Alfred R. Fisher, M.B.E., designed and created the remaining windows in a Romanesque style that departed from Pitassi's Gothic-Revival tendencies.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.204

The Right Wall

Inspired Iconography

Certain symbols and stories reappear in the Pitassis' windows. The Pitassis often depicted the high priest Melchizedek in windows representing Holy Orders or the priesthood. Melchizedek typically holds bread and wine, a symbol of Christ's sacrifice and the Eucharist. Often, the Pitassis showed Melchizedek blessing Abraham (then Abram) after the latter's victory at the Battle of the Vale of Siddim (Genesis 14).

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Cartoon. Melchizedek, Organ Loft
Window, St. Gregory the Great Catholic
Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1935**

Charcoal on paper



Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.543



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, Abraham and Melchizedek, Medallion, St. Benedict Church, Baltimore, MD, ca. 1942

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.411



Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont

Cartoon, Abraham and Melchizedek, Roundel, ca. 1950

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.539



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, Abraham and Melchizedek, Medallion, date unknown

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.415



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Cartoon, Abraham and Melchizedek, Medallion, Sacred Heart Church, Massena, NY, ca. 1929

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

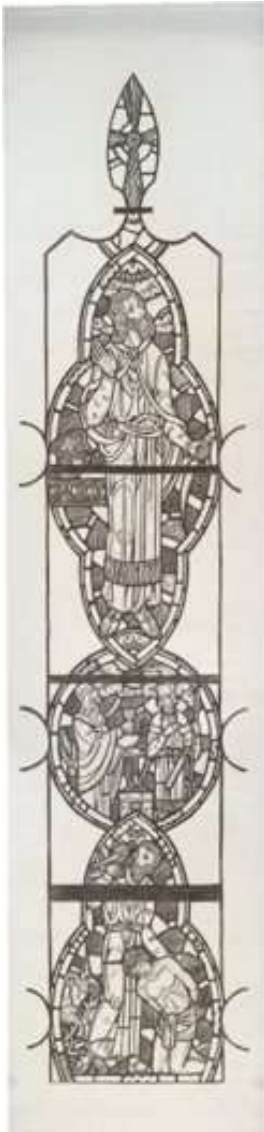
Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.77

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Cartoon, Abraham, Clerestory Window,
Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1935**

Charcoal on paper



Rosary Cathedral features Leo Pitassi's tallest windows, which rose more than seventeen feet high. Such a resplendent display of glass is fitting for the cathedral of Toledo. "The Glass City" has a long history of vitreous manufacturing and was the birthplace of the automatic bottle-making machine. This invention revolutionized the glass industry in Pittsburgh, too, which was also founded on the money and success of glass making.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.142

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



Cartoon, Melchizedek, Aisle Window, St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1935

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.99

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



**Cartoon, Esther, Organ Loft Window,
Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1935**

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.156

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



**Cartoon, Ruth, Organ Loft Window,
Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1935**

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.158

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



**Cartoon, Rebecca, Organ Loft Window,
Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1935**

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.154

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



Cartoon, Eve, Organ Loft Window, Rosary

Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1935

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.153

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



**Cartoon, St. Rose of Lima, Organ Loft
Window, Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca.
1935**

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.155

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



Cartoon, St. Therese of Lisieux, Organ Loft Window, Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1935

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.157

Freestanding Front Wall

Beginning on left side

Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont



Cartoon, Wave, date unknown

Charcoal and colored pencil on paper

As her own style developed, Louise Pitassi's designs became simpler and more contemporary. Larger glass pieces with less painting hint at the limited budgets of churches and artists alike.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.454

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Esther, Panel for Aisle Window, St.
Gregory the Great Catholic Church,
Chicago, IL, ca. 1935**



Pot-metal glass, vitreous paint, and lead

Elegant, attenuated figures; assured outlines; traditional jewel-toned colors: the aisle windows shown here fully display Leo Pitassi's mature style.

This panel is from a larger window representing Matrimony. From top to bottom, it depicts a pair of doves, the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Presentation of Christ, and Esther between symbols of a crown and scepter and bell.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.604

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Presentation Drawing, Children's Rose Window,
Rosary Cathedral, Toledo, OH, ca. 1930**

Charcoal and gouache on paper

Leo Pitassi created this design to present to the clergy and architects of Rosary Cathedral in Toledo, Ohio. The small scale and colorful gouache (an opaque, water-based paint) allowed his clients to understand what the rose window would depict.

This window was the grandest piece of Pitassi's largest contract, commissioned and completed during the height of the Great Depression in the mid-1930s.

Each petal of the rose window portrays a story from the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The scenes are arranged counter-clockwise from top left: the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Presentation, Finding in the Temple, Christ meeting his Mother, Mary at the Foot of the Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Assumption, and Mary's Coronation as Queen of Heaven.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.609

Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh



Mary, Panel for Aisle Window, St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca.

1935

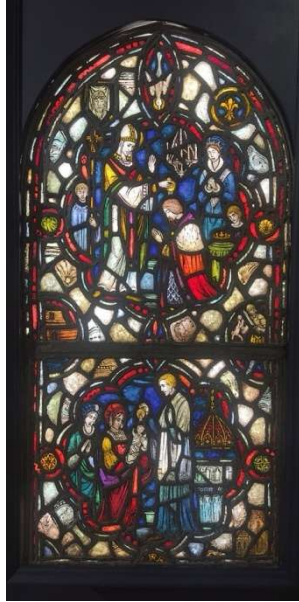
Pot-metal glass, vitreous paint, and lead

This window emphasizes themes of death and spiritual care. Leo Pitassi depicted a burning bush above a scene of Christ's raising of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17). Pitassi also portrayed Elijah's despair after Queen Jezebel threatened the prophet's life (1 Kings 19:4-14). Below is the Blessed Virgin Mary and two angels.

Intended for an aisle window representing the Anointing of the Sick, the commissioning architect or priest rejected this panel for some unknown reason. It combines the iconography from two drawings, also featured in this exhibition.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.603



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Baptism, Panel for Baptistry Window, St. Gregory the
Great Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, ca. 1931**

Pot-metal glass, vitreous paint, and lead

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.832



**Letter from F. Grainger Pierce to Louise Pitassi,
August 11, 1948**

2021.1.729



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Cartoon for The Adoration of the Magi, Aisle Window,
Myers Park Methodist Church, Charlotte, NC, ca. 1930**

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.487



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

**Presentation Design, North Window, Myers Park
Methodist Church, Charlotte, NC, ca. 1930**

Watercolor and graphite on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.5



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Sketches of John Wesley, ca. 1940

Graphite on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.733



Louis H. Asbury

Charlotte 1877—1975 Charlotte

**Blueprint elevations, Myers Park Methodist Church,
1929**

Cyanotype

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.612



Louis H. Asbury

Charlotte 1877—1975 Charlotte

Medallion Subjects, 1929

Graphite on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.817



**Contact between Leo Pitassi, Louis H. Asbury, and
Myers Park Methodist Church, 1929**

2021.1.702

How did the Pitassi Stained-Glass Studio design its windows?

Throughout the design process, Leo and Louise Pitassi collaborated with architects, church members, and clergy to create the best windows for the setting. Sometimes, the time between signing the contract and installing the last window could last up to twenty years. Myers Park Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, was one such commission.

First, Leo Pitassi sent a proposal in 1929 to Louis H. Asbury, architect for the church. Asbury, Pitassi, and the church then signed the contract, approving the initial few windows. Upon receiving blueprints and a list of symbols from Asbury, Pitassi began drafting the window. He started with a small sketch, sending it off to the church for approval or suggestions. Next, Pitassi doodled ideas for window images, before drawing a full-scale cartoon of the window with paper and charcoal. This cartoon guided the cutting, staining, and leading of the glass. Once a panel was completed, Pitassi sent it to Myers Park Methodist, where installers placed the glass in its stone frame.

Louise Pitassi finished this project in 1948, with the final panel of the grand North Window mounted in August of that year. Despite her fine work, church member F. Grainger Pierce nonetheless took issue with Christ's eyes in the North Window.

Freestanding Back Wall

Beginning on front side

In 1941, Leo Pitassi entered a design competition for the Michael “Mike” Manella Mausoleum. A looming Art Deco structure, the mausoleum stands as the tallest monument in Pittsburgh’s Calvary Cemetery. Architect Raymond M. Marlier accepted Pitassi’s \$950 bid for five windows on April 11, 1941. Pitassi produced three drawings for the primary window of the mausoleum. The colored, presentation design is for approval by the architect, the charcoal design guides the painting, and the outline guides the cutting.

The window depicts a seated Christ the King surrounded by the archangels (clockwise from top left) Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael, as well as “EGO SUM RESURRECTIO ET VITA”. The inscription, from John 11:25, translates to “I am the resurrection and the life.”



Leo Pitassi

Pacentro 1886—1947 Pittsburgh

Presentation Drawing, Ego Sum Resurrectio Et Vita, Mausoleum, Calvary Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA, 1941

Charcoal and gouache on paper

Cartoon, Ego Sum Resurrectio Et Vita, Mausoleum, Calvary Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA, 1941

Charcoal on paper

Outline Cartoon, Ego Sum Resurrectio Et Vita, Mausoleum, Calvary Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA, 1941

Graphite and color pencil on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.179, 2021.1.180, 2021.1.458



Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont

Angel Playing Violin, date unknown

Pot-metal glass, vitreous paint, and lead

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.607



Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont

Cartoon for Angel Playing Violin, date unknown

Charcoal on paper

Louise Pitassi likely made this window, which bears her signature in the lower right, for an exhibition or to demonstrate her skill to prospective clients. The speculations surrounding this and other works by Louise highlight the dearth of information on this artist and her stained-glass career.

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.508



Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont

Christ Stills the Tempest, ca. 1950

Pot-metal glass, vitreous paint, and lead

Louise Pitassi created several small panels to enter in stained glass shows or competitions and to demonstrate her skill to potential clients. Like her father, she continued to use antique, Gothic-style glass. Unlike him, she incorporated larger, more modern shapes, rounder forms, and an expanded color palette. This window shows Christ calming the storm over the sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25).

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.606



Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont

Cartoon for Christ Stills the Tempest, ca. 1950

Charcoal on paper

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.456



Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont

St. Catherine of Siena, ca. 1950

Pot-metal glass, vitreous paint, and lead

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.837

Display Case

Louise Pitassi Ellis

Born in 1926 to Leo and Hazel Wright Pitassi, Louise Pitassi devoted her life to music and art. She was first introduced to the stained-glass craft while apprenticing with her father. During her third year at Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 1947, Leo passed away and left the studio with several unfinished projects to Louise.

Louise completed Leo's contracts at Myers Park Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, and at Church of the Assumption in Bellevue, Pittsburgh. She also took on her own projects. Louise maintained a traditional Gothic style for her windows at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Toledo, Ohio, but shifted to a modern technique for her final contract at Mother of Good Council Church in Homewood, Pittsburgh. She closed the studio in 1960, but continued to create stained glass throughout her life, until her death in 2020 at the age of 94.



Hill's Studio, Pittsburgh, active after 1930

Louise Pitassi Ellis, ca. 1944

Silver gelatin print

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.823



Louise Pitassi Ellis

Pittsburgh 1926—2020 Oakmont

**Presentation Drawings for the Nativity of Christ Aisle
Window, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Toledo, OH,
1949**

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.783



Louise Pitassi Ellis, 2003

Inkjet print

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.822



Leo Pitassi

1886 Pacentro—Pittsburgh 1947

Glass Studio Sign, ca. 1924

Pot-metal glass and lead

Saint Vincent Art & Heritage Collections

Gift of Nancy Ellis, 2021.1.839