

## THE MARIAN CHAPEL: STYLE AND PLACEMENT

The windows all adhere to a Gothic Revival style emphasizing two-dimensional designs, an absence of realistic modeling or figural proportions, and red and blue color harmonies inspired by French thirteenth-century models, such as the cathedral of Chartres and the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris. The Crowning of Thorns, 1245-48, from the Sainte-Chapelle is depicted below. All five of the windows in the apse are completely constructed of glass colored in its mass in deep hues, and present the narrative scene in an upper medallion. At the base of each window are two angels supporting a shield with a monogram referencing Christ or the Virgin. The windows at the side have a single deeply colored medallion set in a lattice of light-colored panes.



Although the images may have been installed in chronological pattern, the windows are accessible from a

variety of entrance points. The visitor may see only the apse windows, or may be fixed at the entrance, in a pew where one or two windows are visible. When a number of images can be seen at once, the viewer's glance frames moments very distant in time. Sight then affirms the power of faith to bring into the present these past moments in Christ's life and to link the worshipper not only with Christ at that moment, but also with the community of the faithful, living and dead, who also meditated on these same moments. The image, by its very static and unchanging nature, allows the passage; the stylized nature of the windows was designed to encourage this timelessness. Because of the windows' minimal narrative structure, the viewer does not "read" the image, but rather "identifies" the subject: static, powerful and evocative. The freedom of the image to operate outside of visual reality reinforces its power to transcend the real world and to open a path to the world beyond.