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LOCAL NEWS

'Remembered Light' Showcases Stained Glass From World War II

BY CAROL MIKITA
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The "Remembered Light" exhibit is telling a poignant World War II story.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – An art exhibition in Salt Lake City is telling a poignant World War II story many people have likely never heard.

What an army chaplain collected during the war is now preserved for people of all faiths to appreciate and remember. It's an exhibit of stained glass saved from the remnants of European churches during the war.

A quiet space on the ground floor of the Walker Center, 19 E. 200 South, is attracting people from all walks of life to see "Remembered Light."

Frederick McDonald was a U.S. Army chaplain who served under General Omar Bradley through war-torn Europe. He was heart-broken at the destruction of so many churches, so he collected shards from the shattered stained glass windows.

"Such destruction has happened in every continent of this world. Every society has suffered this. What I like about this exhibit is that sense of hope that it presents to us."

In a video produced by his family, he told the story of his life and what he saw and felt during World War II.

"I picked up quite a number of these broken pieces that were deeply smoked by the explosion of the bombs," he said. "I put them away and then mailed them home."

Josie Stone, who is from England, is chair of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable. She spoke in front of a piece of art created from fragments of glass McDonald found at Coventry.

"I found it incredibly poignant that he obviously picked up those fragments because it meant something to him..." she said. "It was some years before he was in a position that he felt they could be restored into some kind of an art form that would be able to bring that message to other people."



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In fact, the McDonald family chose 13 artists who turned the fragments into individual pieces of art.

The Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable and the Salt Lake Rotary Club are sponsoring the exhibit.

Indra Neelameggham is a member of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable.

"Such destruction has happened in every continent of this world," she said. "Every society has suffered this. What I like about this exhibit is that sense of hope that it presents to us."

On March 8, 1945, McDonald entered the gothic Church of Our Lady in Trier, Germany. He wrote of seeing the fallen crucifix on the floor with a statue of the Virgin Mary looking down at it.

The artist, who placed 43 shards of stained glass into his piece, chose to also place McDonald in it, looking at the sacred symbols.

"The shards represented something deep that you want to remember about this," McDonald said in the video.



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That "something deep" is the concept of light that all faiths share.

The Rev. Jerry Hirano, a member Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, also represents the Buddhist Churches of America.

"My particular sect of Buddhism talks about the Buddha of Infinite Light," he said. "You go to the Jewish Concept of

Tikkun Olam (bearing responsibility to improve the world), and even the Muslim talks about Mohammed and light."

Even today, the Interfaith members said, there is much that divides us.

Brian Farr, a Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable board member, has cared for the exhibit since it first came to Salt Lake City with the Parliament of the World's Religions.

"In times of division, I think it's good to step back and look at things that we have in common," he said. "The things that united us, and one of the most powerful of those, is shared wisdom (and) shared light."

"It's often the little thing that can bring back a flood of memories into your head," McDonald said.

The chaplain, who died in 2002, and his artists hope that these little things – shards of glass from sacred houses of worship – will make us all remember the destruction of war and the light that can follow.

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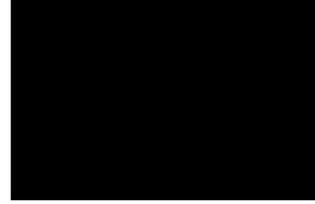
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