Germigny-des-Prés

Continued from Page One

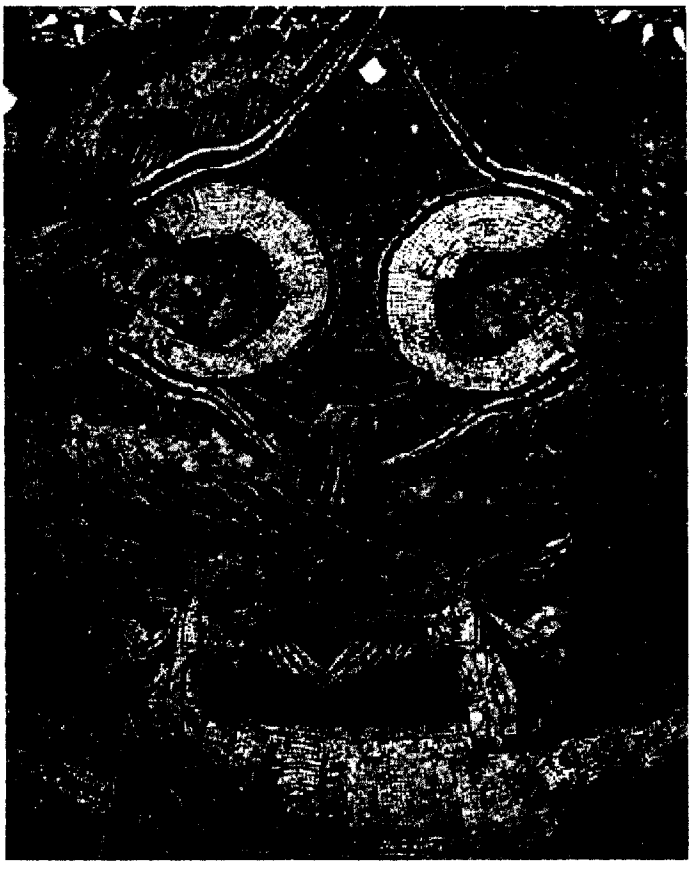

Figure 2

composition are of various colors — gold, silver, blue, green, purple, and red, on a gold ground. The figures are believed to follow a pattern dictated by Theodulfe himself. Two angels with their wings entwined hover over the scene. The hand of God is descending from the sky between the halos of the angels. The Ark of the Covenant stands below, surmounted by two small cherubim.

The 6.70 franc (1.02 euro) stamp portrays one of the angels. (Scott 2759 maxicard, Figure 1). Figure 2 reveals the whole scene.

Latin verses are inscribed in mosaics around the base. Translated — "Observe the holy oracle and the cherubim, contemplate the splendor of the Ark of the Covenant and in this light, think to move by your prayers the Master of Sinai and mention, I pray you the name of Theodulfe."

Some of the mosaics have been lost during renovations of the oratory. The ceiling as a whole, however, with its modern lighting is more resplendent than it must have appeared to worshipers in 806.

We kept wondering if the oratory was now a parish church. Who would know better than the curé at Germigny?

We were delighted to receive a letter from Madame Michèle Moreau of Germigny-des-Prés answering our inquiry. The aged priest had turned our letter over to Madame Moreau, who is responsible for the maintenance of the church.

There is a severe shortage of priests in the region and the curé is obliged to serve twelve parishes. Many baptisms and marriages are performed in this oldest church in France, but mass is celebrated only once a month on a Saturday evening.

Most of the 110,000 people who come annually to Germigny-des-Prés will also visit the church museum and patronize the gift shop for books and souvenirs.

Figure 3 offers a view of the exterior of the church seen from the east. This includes the apse that contains the mosaics. The first day cancellation repeats

this same scene .

The photo of the south side (Flgure 4) reveals the length of the nave added in the fifteenth century.

Scott 2759 is the fourth and last in the French

Figure 3