

The Windows of St. Mary's Church

This presentation originates from the working notes of Barbara Nancy Voege, M.D., (1928-1995) as she presented the history of the windows of St. Mary's Church in 1990 to the Alton Area Landmarks Association, Inc. Dr. Voege's substantial contribution was included in our parish publication, "Celebrating a Century of Worship St. Mary's 1895-1995." The text below includes slight edits of that 1990 document.

The windows of nave, sanctuary, and choir are the ecclesiastical glass artistry of the Conrad Schmitt Studio of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The sixteen foot Gothic casements are of lead came construction and consist of quarries of stained painted glass arranged in pictorial, symbolic, and geometric medallions.

The heads of these lancets exhibit bar tracery. The rose window of the east façade is contained in stone tracery.

Two early windows (1895) remain and can be seen in the second floor of the belfry which contains at its apex the familiar bells of St. Mary's.

The windows can be best appreciated when studied in three divisions: sanctuary, nave and choir.

SANCTUARY WINDOWS

The four windows of the sanctuary were the first of the "new" windows. In January 1943, Monsignor Brune began to work with the Conrad Schmitt Studio to design windows which would serve as a constant tribute and "Visible" prayer of adoration to the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of our church, by depicting the holiness, the humanity, the humility, and the honor of Mary's role in our faith. The sixteen medallions of these four sanctuary windows indeed accomplish this goal.

Windows One and Two are to the left (south) of the main altar and Windows Three and Four are to the right (north) of the main altar.

1. WINDOW ONE includes the following representations:
 - a) Annunciation
 - b) The Immaculate Conception
 - c) The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise
 - d) The Espousal of Mary and Joseph
2. WINDOW TWO includes the following representations:
 - a) The Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus, and John the Baptist
 - b) The Blessed Virgin Mary among the Holy Women (This panel also shows the holy women holding a lily and a rose. The lily is the symbol of purity and the rose the symbol of love.)
 - c) The Nativity
 - d) The Presentation
3. WINDOW THREE, right (north) of the main altar, includes the following representations:
 - a) Visitation
 - b) The Coronation of Mary
 - c) Flight into Egypt
 - d) Jesus in the Workshop of Joseph
4. WINDOW FOUR includes the following representations:
 - a) Mary Kneeling before Jesus in Intercession
 - b) Mary, Help of the Afflicted
 - c) Finding of the Child
 - d) The Death of Joseph (*In 1944, Monsignor Brune suggested to the artist at the Conrad Schmitt Studio, "...to me it would seem a fitting climax. St. Joseph died while they were in Nazareth." The events (in*

other windows of the Holy Family) would show the flight into Egypt, the finding of the child in the temple, the child Jesus in the workshop of Joseph, and finally the death of Joseph in the presence of the Blessed Mother and his son.

NAVE WINDOWS

Work on the design of the twelve windows in the nave (Windows Five through Sixteen) was begun in 1945. These windows are dedicated to the twelve apostles and twelve martyrs of the church who are named in the Roman Canon of the Mass now called the Eucharistic Prayer Number One.

Note: The saints included in the prayer are portrayed in windows beginning with the window nearest the Blessed Virgin altar then across the aisles to the window nearest St. Joseph and continuing in a crisscross pattern to the back of the church.

"... In union with the whole Church we honor Mary, the ever-virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God. We honor Joseph, her husband, the apostles and martyrs Peter and Paul (Window #16), Andrew, James (#5), John, Thomas (#15), James, Philip (#6), Bartholomew, Matthew (#14), Simon and Jude (#7); we honor Linus, Cletus (#13), Clement, Sixtus (#8), Cornelius, Cyprian (#12), Lawrence, Chrysogonus (#9), John and Paul (#11), Cosmas and Damian (#10) and all the saints. May their merits and prayers gain us your constant help and protection, through Christ our Lord. Amen..."

The center medallion depicts the apostle or martyr. The lower medallions are symbols of their work, life, or method of their martyrdom for their faith. The upper medallions are ecclesiastical of Christianity used either generally or specifically as it applies to the individual window. The medallions of ten of the twelve trefoils or quatrefoils depict a crown, the symbol of highest honor, authority or reward. In this sense it is the crown of martyrdom, the reward of eternal life for those who died for their faith. Sixtus the Second said, "Soldiers of Christ are not killed, but crowned."

Beginning on the north side of the nave, nearest the St. Joseph Altar:

WINDOW FIVE: ANDREW AND JAMES THE GREAT

Andrew was the first called of the Apostles of Christ. He was the son of Jonas, a fisherman, and a fisherman himself. He was brother to Simon Peter, also a fisherman. The lower medallion shows crossed fishes, a symbol of faithful Christians as well as their calling to be fishermen of men. He was also a follower of John the Baptist prior to joining Christ as His apostle. His evangelistic mission took him to Russia and Scotland. He became and remains a patron of Scotland. St. Andrew was martyred by being tied rather than nailed to a decussant cross.

The cross of St. Andrew is the x-shaped cross with the lily of purity of faith in the center. James the Great was the brother of John, sons of Zebedee and Salome. James was also a witness to the Transfiguration of Christ. He was with Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. James visited Spain at some time in his Apostolic mission and he is the patron of Spain. It is said that his remains were taken to Spain following his martyrdom. Centuries later the spot of his burial was revealed to a monk by a bright and shining star pictured in the upper panel. He was martyred by decapitation at the order of King of Herod Agrippa.

WINDOW SIX: ST. JAMES THE LESSER AND PHILIP

While Jesus was "across the Jordan," He called Philip to serve as an apostle. Philip, who was from Bethsaida, was with Christ at the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. When Jesus, having crossed the Sea of Galilee to shores of Tiberius, asked of Philip: "Where should we buy bread for these people to eat?" Philip's simple but earnest response was "not even two hundred days of wages could buy loaves enough to give each of them a mouthful." The lower medallion of the loaves and fishes commemorates this miracle. It was to Philip that Jesus said at the last supper, "whoever has seen me has seen the Father." His martyrdom is thought to have been by crucifixion in an up-side-down position.

James was the son of Alphaeus. He became the first bishop of Jerusalem and established the doctrine that gentiles who accept the faith need not be circumcised. He was also known as James, the Just, symbolized in the upper medallion as the scale, because of his constant prayer for the necessities of his people. His death was due to the blow of a club as depicted in the lower medallion. James had been placed on the pinnacle of the temple where he was stoned until he would deny Christ. When he refused to deny Christ's teachings, he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and beaten to death with this club.

WINDOW SEVEN: SIMON AND JUDE

Simon and Jude were missionaries to Mesopotamia and Persia. Simon is also referred to as Simon the Zealot. Jude is sometimes referred to as Thaddaeus. In John 14:22 Judas asked the question of Jesus, "Why it is that you reveal yourself to us and not the world?" In Jesus' answer the coming of the Holy Spirit was predicted. The lower medallion shows the book, fish, and axe. The axe symbolizes the method by which he met martyrdom, presumably by dismemberment. The medallion of the sailboat is the mark of Jude.

WINDOW EIGHT: CLEMENT I AND SIXTUS II (above the Fourth Street side entrance)

Clement, the successor to Peter as Pope, is depicted here wearing the papal mitre and holding a crozier with the three armed cross of the western popes. Clement was banished by the Emperor Trajan to work in a quarry where he labored for his fellow Christians. During this time he wrote his letter to the Corinthians which is a homily on Christian life, emphasizing the need to persevere in the faith, and to remember that the weakest member of the community may be the greatest in the eyes of the Lord. Clement is known as an Apostolic Father because he lived and wrote under the direct or very close temporal influence of the apostles. The method of his martyrdom is not known. The lower emblem of this window shows the anchor cross and rose, which signify the messianic hope. Sixtus II was the 23rd successor to Peter in the years 257-258 A.D., during the period of persecution of priests and bishops by the Emperor Valerian. Sixtus II and four of his deacons were seized during celebration of a Mass held in subterranean seclusion. They were publicly decapitated. Sixtus II believed that "soldiers of Christ are not killed, but crowned."

WINDOW NINE: LAWRENCE AND CRYSOGONUS

Lawrence was one of the seven deacons who were serving the Church under Sixtus II and during the persecution of Valerian. As deacon, Lawrence's responsibility was for the goods of the Church and distribution of alms to the poor. When Lawrence was arrested, he was ordered by the Emperor to assemble the treasures of the Church. He assembled the treasures as he understood it – the poor to whom alms had been given. Because of this insurrection, Lawrence was roasted to death on a grid which is shown in the lower medallion. His constant prayer and slow, agonizing death were responsible for the conversion of many important people in Rome to Christianity. He was venerated for his sanctity, and the reign of Constantine a church in Rome was dedicated to him which is indicated in the upper panel.

Crysgonus lived in the year 304. Little is known of his public ministry; however, he was imprisoned at a time of persecution of the Church by Diocletian, and Crysgonus was thought to be the spiritual father of Saint Athanasius, a doctor of the Eastern Church. It is reported that Crysgonus was killed by the sword by being beheaded. A stone was tied around his body and he was cast into the sea. The lower medallion depicts the stone and sword.

The trefoil of this window shows an open book and a lily, symbolic of the word of God and purity of faith.

WINDOW TEN: COSMAS AND DAMIAN (nearest the north side confessional)

Cosmas and Damian are mentioned together in the Mass and are thought to be twin brothers. They had skill in medicine and were kind and generous to all who sought their help; they were known for their charity and Christian zeal. The lower medallion depicts three apothecary jars with a Latin cross above. The medallion in the lower right corner shows a sword and crossed arrows. It is said their martyrdom came from many attempted

ways – crucifixion, stoning, being shot with arrows; finally they were killed with the sword. The upper medallion is the six-pointed star of God the Creator. The medallion in the upper right side shows the chalice and host, symbolic of the body and blood of Christ for which they gave their lives. A church, named in their honor, has been in Rome since the year 530.

WINDOW ELEVEN: JOHN AND PAUL (across from Window Ten, nearest the south side confessional)

John and Paul were martyrs to the Faith. John and Paul were brothers who, at the time of Constantine, served as major domos in the house of Constantia, daughter of Constantine. The victory of the Roman General Gallicanus over the Scythians, and his conversion to Christianity, is attributed to John and Paul. The brothers would not serve Emperor Julian, successor to Constantine, because of his disloyalty to the Faith. Under his edict, they were executed in their house on the Eoelian hill. The Church later constructed over this site by Emperor Jovian was given by Pope Clement XIV to the Passionist priests, and that church remains in Rome today. The upper panel depicts the Church constructed in their honor. The lower medallions are symbols of the Apostles James and John, sons of Thunder, and of the Apostle Paul.

WINDOW TWELVE: CORNELIUS AND CYPRIAN

Cornelius and Cyprian knew each other, and were friends who lived and worked through the years of the early church for the preservation of faith. Cornelius, the 20th successor to Peter as Pope, is shown in the papal mitre and carrying a triple cross of the western popes. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, carries a crozier of his bishop's rank. The symbol of the lower medallion is the face of the ox, the symbol of Jesus Christ who was able to carry many burdens. However, during his papacy Cornelius was troubled by the rise of the first Anti-Pope. He died in exile in the year 253. The medallion above Cornelius, the Ark of the Covenant, is symbolic of both the Old Testament worship, as well as the symbol of God our Savior. The arches of the cherubim wings are symbolic of the arch of salvation.

Cyprian was one of the great leaders of the African Church. He encouraged the faithful to persist in their faith and was martyred because of his dedication to the Work of God, the book in the lower medallion. The gate in the upper medallion symbolizes Christ as the gate of heaven.

WINDOW THIRTEEN: LINUS AND CLETUS

These two popes and martyrs were second and third successors to Peter (A.D. 67-88). The three-armed papal cross and the cathedra are symbols shown in the lower medallions. Little is known of the events in their patriarchy. The upper medallions show a church and a rose as symbols of the perpetuation of the church and the love of God.

WINDOW FOURTEEN: BARTHOLOMEW AND MATTHEW

Bartholomew is sometimes referred to as Nathaniel. Philip and Bartholomew were friends, and it was through Philip that Bartholomew was brought to Christ and included among the apostles. After Pentecost, tradition has it that he preached in India when he met a cruel martyrdom by being flayed and then beheaded. The lower medallion is that of a flaying knife. The upper medallion is that of chrismon, "chi rho." Matthew, a publican, a tax gatherer for the Romans, was called by Christ from his booth as a tax collector to "follow me." The Pharisees questioned Jesus as to why he would associate with the tax collectors as he did at Matthew's house. His beautiful teaching, "I have come to call not the self-righteous, but sinners" was the answer given to their inquiry. Matthew, the author of the first gospel of the New Testament, is shown with his pen and long scroll. The upper panel shows the cup of Christ's sorrow from which they were willing to drink.

WINDOW FIFTEEN: JOHN AND THOMAS

John was author of the fourth gospel of the New Testament, chosen apostle of Christ, present with him at his Transfiguration in the garden of Gethsemane, and at the hour of his death, and witness with Peter to the resurrection of Jesus. John is the only apostle thought not to be martyred. He lived to an old age in Ephesus,

where he wrote the fourth gospel. The lower medallion shows the eagle which is the sign of this evangelist, for his writings are said to be "like an eagle soaring to the throne of grace." The upper medallion represents the scroll of his gospel writings.

Thomas was a Jew, probably a Galilean who had great love for Christ. Because of his love, he was willing to accompany Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead. It was to Thomas that the Lord stated, "I am the way and the truth, and the life; no man comes to the father but by me." After Pentecost, Thomas was thought to evangelize India where he was made a slave of King Gendafor. He was ordered to construct a palace for the King which was never completed because he spent all of the money on charity and care of the poor. Thomas was martyred. He converted the wife of a king and was ordered to be killed. His method of martyrdom was either by spear or by arrow which are shown in the lower medallion.

WINDOW SIXTEEN: PETER AND PAUL

Peter was appointed by Christ as the first Pope of the Catholic Church when the Lord said, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It was Peter who was in the period between the Ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost kept the group of apostles and Holy women together. He escaped the first attempt on his life by the help of angels, but was finally crucified during the reign of Nero. The crossed keys in the lower medallion are the symbol of Peter as leader of the Church. This is the other window which does not have a crown in the quatrefoil.

Paul was called by Christ to become an apostle at his conversion to Christianity. He became the apostle to the Gentiles. He made four known missionary journeys. He is the author of letters to his converts to Christianity. Paul is shown here with the open book, the work of God. The lower medallion shows the open book with the inscription *Spiritus Gladius* meaning "Sword of the Spirit." Paul met martyrdom by the sword and decapitation.

The quatrefoil shows the anchored cross and a single fish. Peter and Paul were martyred and are now honored as anchors of the early church and representatives of our savior, symbolized by a single fish.

CHOIR AND BELFRY WINDOWS

The Rose Window of the Choir was begun in June 1944 and installed in September 1945; it is also the work of the Conrad Schmitt Studio. The harp, the symbol of joyful worship and heavenly joy, occupies the center of the rose from which radiates the eight petals of the rose itself. At the periphery of the rose the choir of angels sing their praise to God. Saint Cecilia, patroness of the choir, and King David, harpist, are shown below the rose. It is in David's Psalms that we are admonished (150:3) "Praise him with trumpets blast praise him with lyre and harp" and (147:7) "Sing to the Lord with Thanksgiving, sing praise with harp to our God."

In the belfry tower to the north side of the rose window can be seen the oldest and original windows of the church dating to 1895. The central pattern of these windows is a flower within the flower. The four petals of the outer flower each contain the five petaled white or Christmas rose, symbol of the nativity. The anchor cross and crown of glory are seen at the heads of the windows.

WINDOW SEVENTEEN: JOACHIM AND ANNE

To the south of the rose window is the window depicting Joachim and Anne, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They were childless for many years to their sadness. Because of this Joachim fled to the desert to pray. His lamentations reflect, "If I beget either male or female, I will bring it as a gift to the Lord my God, and it shall minister to him in holy things all the days of its life."

The quatrefoil shows a shamrock and the lower panels depict three doves in a basket and a doorway with open doors.

WINDOW EIGHTEEN: JOSEPH AND MARY

This window depicts St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin, parents of our Lord. The Triumphant Lamb and Book with Seven Seals is displayed in the quatrefoil. Carpenter tools of St. Joseph and a scroll inscribed with Ma Di are displayed in the lower panels.

NARTHEX WINDOWS

The Narthex (or "Vestibule") areas on both sides of the main entrance contain smaller windows not previously described.

Inside the vestibule on the south side, leading to the stairs that go to the church basement, are four windows depicting St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory Nazianzus, and St. Crysostom.

Saint Athanasius of Alexandria began his leading role against the Arians as his bishop's assistant during the First Council of Nicaea. He is a renowned Christian theologian, a Church Father, the chief defender of Trinitarianism against Arianism, and a noted Egyptian leader of the fourth century.

St. Basil the Great was Bishop of Caesarea and an influential theologian who supported the Nicene Creed and opposed the heresies of the early Christian church. Basil was also known for his care of the poor and underprivileged. He established guidelines for monastic life which focus on community life, liturgical prayer, and manual labor. Basil is recognized as a Doctor of the Church.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus, a Doctor of the Church, made a significant impact on the shape of Trinitarian theology and is remembered as the "Trinitarian Theologian". Much of his theological work continues to influence modern theologians, especially in regard to the relationship among the three Persons of the Trinity.

St. John Chrysostom was an important Early Church Father. He is known for his preaching and public speaking, his denunciation of abuse of authority by both ecclesiastical and political leaders, the *Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, and his ascetic sensibilities.

Inside the vestry on the north side are four windows depicting St. Gregory the Great, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. Ambrose.

Pope Gregory I, commonly known as **Saint Gregory the Great**, is well known for his writings, which were more prolific than those of any of his predecessors as pope. He was the first of the popes to come from a monastic background. Gregory is a Doctor of the Church.

Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, was an early Christian theologian and philosopher whose writings influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy. Among his most important works are *City of God* and *Confessions*. He is a preeminent Doctor of the Church.

Saint Jerome was a priest, confessor, theologian and historian, who also became a Doctor of the Church. He is best known for his translation of most of the Bible into Latin (the translation that became known as the Vulgate), and his commentaries on the Gospels.

Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, was a staunch opponent of Arianism and became one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of the fourth century. He was named one of the four original Doctors of the Church.