

ABOUT OUR WINDOWS

Christ's light and life shine into the cathedral through the craftsmanship of William Willett. This artisan, known for reviving and perfecting rich colors in transparent stained glass, was commissioned to create the 22 large medieval style windows throughout the church building.

A century ago, the prevailing taste in ecclesiastical windows was for opalescent glass. Willett thought this went against the primary reason for a windows existence: the admission of sunlight. He rediscovered a technique used in the Middle Ages called the pot metal process, which produced very deep colors without inhibiting transparency. By dissolving certain metal oxides into glass in its liquid state, he learned the molecular structure of the solution absorbs wavelengths of certain colors. Particles of gold, for example, dispersed in the glass, gave it a ruby red color. Iron oxide, on the other hand, makes glass green. The color process Willett perfected technically and aesthetically was such an improvement over what was being produced at the time it sparked a new age of stained glass and gave the Willet studios in Philadelphia an international reputation.

The Cathedral contains Willett's earliest and finest work; his *Life Of Christ In The Early Church* series of windows begin with the nativity in the back of the north wall, wraps around the back of the sanctuary/apse, and marches back down the other side of the nave. There is an intentional chronological error in the apse windows where the Lord's carrying of his cross on Good Friday is inverted with the institution of the Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday. This was done in order to honor the event in Christ's life from which the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament takes its name. It also draws attention to the altar wherein the Lord's Supper is extended into our time.

In lancet windows beneath the New Testament history, the procession of Saints series of windows depict heroes and heroines from every era of Christendom; these holy women and men join those assembled on earth in one great communion.

The north window, called the Holy Name window, is an excellent example of how pot metal glass produces rich jewel like colors. Such depth of color means there may be as many as three layers of pot glass in a single facet. Records indicate this window alone took a year to complete it depicts the great liturgy at the end of time where in Christ will gather around him the souls of the just in an endless symphony of praise.

WINDOWS IN THE NORTH WALL OF THE NAVE

WINDOW ONE - The Nativity of Christ

The center panel shows the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Divine Infant while the shepherds bow in adoration to the immediate right and left. In the outside panels, angels proclaim the birth of the Savior on that first Christmas night. The text reads: "Christ, the Lord Savior, who is born to you." Beneath the principal panels stand St. Gregory the Great, St. Ambrose, St. James the Elder, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome.

WINDOW TWO - Christ in the Temple

This window reconstructs the scene when Christ, at the age of twelve, was found by His mother and foster-father in the Temple. The center panel shows Him standing unafraid in the midst of the doctors and lawyers of the Jewish Law, "hearing Him and asking questions." In the panel at the left are Joseph

and Mary, to the right, the Jewish teachers. The text reads: "Jesus advances in wisdom and grace with God and men." In the lower panels are St. George, St. John, St. Nicholas, and St. Christopher.

WINDOW THREE - The Wedding Feast at Cana

Here is portrayed the first public miracle of Christ when, at the request of His mother, He turns water into wine lest the young newlyweds suffer embarrassment before their guests. In the center panel Christ invokes His divine power on the stone water jugs while Mary stands to the left. The words, spoken by Mary to the stewards, are below: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." In the lower portion of the window are St. Veronica, St. Ursula, St. Andrew, St. Catherine of Bologna, and St. Barbara.

WINDOW FOUR - Christ Blessing the Little Children

On one occasion the women of the country in which Christ was preaching pressed their children upon Him that they might receive His blessing. When the Apostles tried to restrain them, the Master rebuked them, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The first part of these words form the text of the window. In the center is Christ and to his left and right can be seen the children and their delighted mothers. St. Peter is in the extreme left panel and St. John at the extreme right. Beneath are St. Philip Neri, St. Philip the Apostle, St. Athanasius, and St. Boniface.

WINDOW FIVE - The Transfiguration

Here stands the Lord, transfigured with the glory that is right fully His. To His immediate right is Moses and to the left Elias. On the extreme left are James and John, overcome by the glory before their eyes. On the extreme right is St. Peter, equally dazed by the splendor that radiates from the Redeemer. The text recalls the words of the Heavenly Father, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him." In the lower panels are St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernard, St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Dominic, and St. Anthony.

WINDOW SIX - The Founding of the Church on St. Peter

In this last window in the north wall of the nave, we find Christ again predominant with St. Peter to His immediate right. The Prince of the Apostles is shown receiving the Keys of the Kingdom from his Master. Eight of the apostles occupy the other panels. Beneath are found St. Martin of Tours, St. Paul the Apostle, St. Benedict, and St. Paul of the Cross.

WINDOWS IN THE NORTH TRANSEPT

THE HOLY NAME WINDOW (inserted note: Quite a few of the original notes here are incorrect. See underneath. Updated notes in parenthesis.)

This window, all but filling the north transept, is a revival of what is called a "Worship of Praise" and is found in many of the great cathedrals of Europe. Its five great lancets, reaching to the roof of the church, are filled with a galaxy of colors. Here are ruby and amethyst, emerald and glorious blues highlighting hundreds of (more accurately: over a hundred) reverent faces. The artists of the Willet Studios spent more than a year in the creation of this window alone.

The central upper portion pictures Christ enthroned, seated before a seven-branch candlestick (lower left) and vested in His richest regal robes. (With the earth his footstool.) Above His throne, God the Father looks down in benediction. Beneath the resplendent Christ are the adoring angels; beneath them, saints kneeling humbly around the empty tomb. (? - We see no tomb.) In the side panels are the human

family, the holy men on one side and the holy women on the other. They reach out reverently to share in the ineffable glory of the Savior. Fathers and sons, kings, philosophers, monks, and prelates press forward to the Beatific Vision. St. John the Baptist and St. Joseph are the figures closest to Christ (rather: near Christ - at top) ; St. Joseph bears the budding rod, symbolic of Christ's origin. In the opposite panel are the adoring women: St. Catherine with her wheel (?), nuns and abbesses, martyrs and virgins, and at the apex the Blessed Virgin Mary with the sword of sorrow piercing her heart. In the extreme side panels is the angelic host on guard, protecting the heavenly abode from evil (and actively engaged in musical praise of the King.) In the traceries above, cherubs fill (Do they?) the heavenly blue.

Below the main window are five smaller panels. In the center, Christ is shown during His temptation in the desert, another reason to revere the Holy Name: "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him alone shalt thou serve." To the immediate right (actually left) is depicted Goliath, giant of the Philistines, who was slain by David for blaspheming the Holy Name. He lies prostrate while men of all ages adore the Divine Majesty. In the opposite panel is Jeremiah, great prophet of the Old Testament, weeping at the spectacle of the Daughters of Israel worshipping a golden calf.

In the extreme right (actually left) panel under the angelic host, Noah and his family offer sacrifice to the Almighty after leaving the Ark. They are surrounded by a (pink) rainbow, symbol of God's covenant with men. On the extreme left is the Psalmist singing praises to the Holy Name, (and perhaps) Hannah teaching the young Samuel to pray. (Alternately, this could be David's wife Bathsheba and son Solomon.) ~~and Sidrach, Misdach, and Abdenago praising God in the midst of the fiery furnace into which they had been thrown after refusing to blaspheme the name of God.~~ Above the arches (or: also included) is the (pink) rainbow which ties together the entire composition. This window was the gift of the Holy Name Society of Blessed Sacrament Parish.

(Inserted Notes here from a Michigan State stained glass expert, Michael Surdyk:

What becomes a problem is that the description of the entire window is out of character with the description of all the others. This description reads like it was done by the artist or someone from this church that worked with Willet on the making of this window. This is a description made by someone beyond my abilities.

Which brings me to the problem -- first of all, the story about Sidrach, Misdach, and Abdenago is just not in this window at all. Which leads to the possibility that at some point in the design of this piece of the window there was a change. So the part about Hannah and Samuel might also be wrong.

Instead of David, Hannah and Samuel is it Bathsheba, David and their son Solomon? The rainbow which signifies a "Covenant" would be the "Covenant of David" -- God acting through the prophet Nathan told David that his son Solomon would succeed him as King of Israel and that God was tired of moving around and living in a tent and Solomon was to build Him a permanent house (first Temple of Solomon). I really do not know which is correct: Hannah-Samuel or Bathsheba-Solomon.)

WINDOWS IN THE SANCTUARY

WINDOW SEVEN - The Agony in the Garden

The windows in the apse represent the chief events in the Passion and Death of Christ. At the extreme left, we see in the first panel the sleeping apostles, weary of watching with the Master. The second panel represents Our Savior in His agony and bloody sweat. In the next St. Peter is shown sleeping, and finally there is a picture of Judas pointing Christ out to the soldiers. The text reads: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death."

WINDOW EIGHT - Christ Carries His Cross

At the left Simon of Cyrene assists Christ in carrying the heavy cross; in the next Christ appears alone, bent over with the weight of it. Mary and St. John are seen at the right, heartsick with grief and sorrow. The last panel shows the two thieves who were crucified on either side of the Redeemer. They are leading the way to Calvary, prodded on by a soldier on horseback. The text is our Lord's own words to the women of Jerusalem: "Weep not for me but for yourselves."

WINDOW NINE - The Institution of the Holy Eucharist

The chronological sequence of Christ's last hours is here broken to give central emphasis to the Holy Eucharist in whose honor the church is dedicated, and which is celebrated daily on the altar beneath. The chief figure is Christ sitting at a table with His apostles in the upper room where they had assembled for the Last Supper. St. John leans upon His breast. Our Lord holds the chalice in one hand and the host in the other while about His head and shoulders gleams a light symbolic of His divinity. In the panel to the extreme left Judas can be seen sneaking, out of the gathering with a money bag clutched tightly, in his hand. In the other panels are grouped the rest of the apostles listening, intently to Our Lord's prophecy of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Hovering above these lancets are angels with shields that symbolize the different instruments of the Passion of Christ.

The Latin text beneath this window carries the words of Jesus to the unbelieving Thomas; "Blessed are they who have not seen and believed." In the smaller panels beneath this and the other four windows of the apse, march a triumphant procession of saints of the early church--martyrs, confessors, popes, bishops, priests, virgins--all with their faces toward the source of their joy and holiness as He sits at the table with His chosen few.

WINDOW TEN - Christ Dies on the Cross

Here the chronological sequence of the Lord's Passion is resumed. In the first panel, ministering angels stand ready to heed the call of their Lord. The second panel represents the Blessed Virgin and Mary of Cleophas as they gaze upon the crucified Christ. The Savior hangs upon the cross and at its foot Mary Magdalene kisses the wood that supports her dying, Redeemer. The last panel shows St. John, St. Peter, and Joseph of Arimathea who watch helplessly as the blood flows from the body of Christ. The text here is one often associated with the Mary of Sorrows, "O see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow."TM

WINDOW ELEVEN - The Burial of Christ

The disciples and holy women prepare Christ's body, for burial in the tomb given by Joseph of Arimathea. The first panel depicts the women with spices for the embalming. In the second Mary Magdalene weeps disconsolately, in the third the Sorrowful Mother holds the body of her dead Son in her arms, The last panel pictures Joseph of Arimathea. The text is from Scripture; "Therefore they took the body of Jesus."

WINDOWS IN THE SOUTH WALL OF THE NAVE

WINDOW TWELVE - The Resurrection of Christ

Here Christ stands in shining glory. Angels with swords stand on the extreme right and left on the two inner panels the Roman guards cower in fear, overcome by the dazzling glory, of the Risen Savior. The text reads: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Beneath the main panels are St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Sebastian, St. Louis, St. Lawrence, and St. Patrick.

WINDOW THIRTEEN - Christ Appears to the Holy Women

In the center panel, Mary Magdalene appears at the left hand of the Lord. In the other panels stand the holy women who had come with Mary to complete the anointing of the crucified Christ. The text is taken from the words that Christ spoke to Mary Magdalene on the first Easter Sunday: "Do not touch Me for I am not yet ascended." The lower panels represent St. John the Baptist, St. Anthony the Hermit, St. James the Less, and St. Paul the Hermit.

WINDOW FOURTEEN - The Supper at Emmaus

On the afternoon of Christ's Resurrection, two of His disciples, dejected because they thought their Messiah had been a failure, were on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus. A stranger joined them on the road and began to explain the Scriptures to them. That evening as they supped with their companion, they finally recognized him to be their Master "in the breaking of the bread." The center panel shows Christ, and on either side the disciples who had journeyed with Him. In the outer panels are serving maids who attended the table that evening. The text is from the Gospel narrative: "And their eyes were opened and they recognized him." In the lower windows are St. Stephen of Myret, St. Justin, St. Charles Borromeo, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Simon Stock.

WINDOW FIFTEEN - Christ Gives the Apostles the Power to Forgive Sins

On Easter Sunday evening Christ appeared to His apostles in the upper room where they were hidden behind locked doors. In the center panel Christ holds the chalice in His hands. He has just drunk from it to prove He is not an apparition, but His own authentic self. The apostles occupy the other panels, their faces transfixed with the wonder and joy that the sudden appearance of their Lord has inspired. He has just given them the power to forgive sins. The text contains His admonition: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached." The saints below are St. Agnes, St. Bridget of Sweden, St. Jude, St. Clare, and St. Helen.

WINDOW SIXTEEN - The Ascension of Christ

To remove any possible doubt about His complete victory over death, Christ appeared many times to His disciples during the forty days after His Resurrection. Here Christ rises to heaven, His work fully finished. In the center panel we see the Ascension. In the other windows are the apostles with their charge to teach all nations. The text is from the Acts of the Apostles: "A cloud received Him out of their sight." Below are St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bartholomew, St. Ignatius, and St. Sylvester.

WINDOW SEVENTEEN - The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles

Pentecost Sunday marks the birthday of the Church. It was then that Christ, as He had promised, sent the Holy Spirit upon them. Now they were prepared to preach the Gospel to all nations, confidently and

courageously. The central window portrays Mary with the Holy Spirit hovering over her in the form of a dove. The apostles fill the other four panels. Most easily identified are St. Matthew, St. Bartholomew, St. James the Elder, and St. James the Less. The text is: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit." In the lower panels are St. Vincent de Paul, St. Timothy, St. Matthew, St. Barnabas, and St. Alphonsus Ligouri,

IN THE BACK

THE ROSE WINDOW

More a color study than a picture, the great Rose Window is entitled, "The Cherubs in Glory." More than a hundred small tracery openings are woven of stone. The small quatrefoil in the center contains the head of a cherub. From it radiate out through the jewel-like pieces of stained glass a brilliant variety of colors, light yellows and golds flaming into rubies and crimson and finally blending into rich blues and purples. Delicately traced into the glass are Pontifical hats, bishops' mitres, and various ornamental shields. Thousands of glass fragments have gone into the creation of this window, their color and variety best seem as the afternoon sun streams through the window bathing the interior of the cathedral in their iridescence.

IN THE CHAPEL

THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY WINDOW

A portrayal of the glory and rejoicing, that greeted Mary when she was assumed into heaven, body, and soul. In the center Mary receives from her Son the reward of her sinlessness. To her right and left are some of the heavenly hosts who sing her praises as she comes to rule them as Queen of Heaven. Standing before Mary are her cousins, St. Elizabeth and St. John the Baptist. At the extreme right is St. Anne, Mary's mother, with the young "chosen one of God" standing before her. The text sounds a familiar note: "The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women."

THE GENEALOGICAL TREE OF CHRIST

Magnificent in scope and meaning is the window that all but fills the south wall of the transept. Predominant is the figure of Mary holding the Divine Infant in her arms. Beneath her is one of her ancestors, Solomon, holding a small model of the Temple he built in Jerusalem. Under him is his father, King David, chief author of the Psalms, source of earthly royalty in the ancestry of Christ. In his hand is a harp, symbol of his poetic genius. At the bottom of the center lancet is David's father, Jesse. From him proceeded the royal line that was to reach its zenith in the Redeemer. To the right can be seen St. Joseph, husband of Mary and foster-father of Christ. Immediately to the left of center is Jacob, the son of Abraham who was the father of the Jewish people. In the smaller panels are represented the visions of Noah, Isaiah, Abraham, and Malachias. All look ahead to the coming of the Messiah, the Son of David who was to be born of a Virgin. This Jesse Window is a graphic portrayal of divine providence preparing human flesh for the Redeemer.

THE ST. CECILIA WINDOW

A church organ used to reside below this window. In it is represented is the beatification of St. Cecilia, one of the most widely revered saints of the early Church. Along with her princely husband, she suffered martyrdom in the third century. Patroness of church music, she appears here with an organ. With uplifted face she listens in rapture to the heavenly chorus while on both sides the angelic host come

with harps of gold to join in her song. On one side can be seen St. Therese, the "Little Flower", in the habit of the Carmelite Sisters. In her hands she holds the cross entwined with roses and passion flowers. On the opposite side we see St. Rose of Lima, born in Peru of noble Spanish-American parents. Beneath the chaplet of flowers that adorned her head, she always wore a crown of thorns that pierced her flesh. In the smaller panels beneath this window are two angels holding a musical scroll with songbirds to the right and left. In the traceries above are smaller angels playing upon musical instruments. The text is from Psalm 150: "Praise the Lord in His holy ones." This entreaty is echoed throughout the figureless windows amid the procession of saints throughout the nave.