

REFLECTIONS ON THE ARTWORK IN SAINT ANTHONY'S CHURCH

“How lovely is they dwelling place,

Oh Lord of hosts!

My soul longs, yea, faints

For the courts of the Lord;

My heart and flesh sing for joy

To the living God”

~ Psalm 84

FORWARD

In drafting a paper of this nature, a certain amount of reading, writing, and rewriting is involved. Furthermore, when one examines an artistic piece such as a statue, painting, or window created in an earlier time, some imaginative interpretation or speculation is drawn in.

The author accepts the full responsibility of any errors involved in the work at hand and invites thoughtful criticism.

Finally, he gratefully acknowledges the corrective guidance and encouragement given by Father Ed Botkin, Scripture professor at Saint Ambrose University, and the proofing corrections offered by Jon Ripslinger, friend and colleague.

All scripture references are taken from the Revised Standard Version and the Jerusalem Bibles.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Scott, parishioner

REFLECTIONS ON THE ARTWORK IN SAINT ANTHONY'S CHURCH

From the beholder's point of view, the purpose of good art should be to lift the spirit, excite the heart and engage the mind. The art work in Saint Anthony's fulfills admirable these ends. Regrettably, most of us pass too hastily through the church on Sundays and holy days to benefit from the windows, paintings, and statues that look down upon us. It is the purpose of this paper to encourage all parishioners and visitors to take a closer and perhaps a meditative look at what the art works is saying to us. We must acknowledge forthwith that the craftsman borrows as fits his needs from other artists and from church history. He also takes from religious and even pagan symbolism; and most importantly, he uses Sacred Scripture (SS)—and then synthesizes these disciplines into creation of the medium at hand. The end result should be the quickening of our love and devotion for what or who has gone before and is even now unfolding in our faith. It is hoped that we will consequently look to one another—priests, religious, and lay—for a lively exchange of personal impressions.

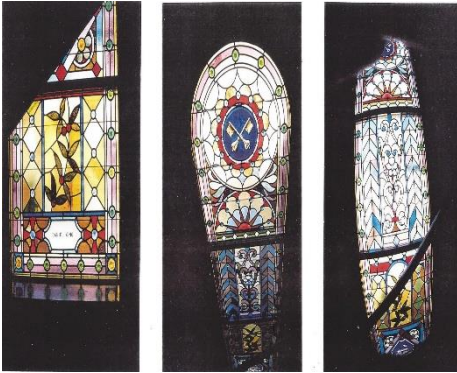
Before looking closely at each work, it would be helpful to walk around the interior of the church to get an overall impression, remembering that as early as the 13th century art was considered an independent form of liturgy as it taught and inspired. Note the symmetry of the windows in the nave, so representative of the order and inner harmony for which the official Church has so long had a passion. Note, too, the colors: greens, golds, reds, whites, pinks, violets—all liturgical colors reflected in the vestments and altar dressings throughout the year and coming to us from as far back as the 12th century. There are even blues (the Marian color), originally the color of the Epiphany and Ascension, but now suppressed in vestments. We even see somber brown and black where the craftsman felt their use appropriate. As we look closely, we will note likewise that there is a good amount of repetition in the figures in the windows. This suggests that they were put in at different times, as indeed they were, with but minimal regard for what went before. What is now the nave was the original 44' x 84' church of the 1850s. The transept was added in the 1880s, and the sacristy and behind the altar area added even later—the 1940s; consequently, we see repetition in the window figures, which is unfortunate.

Some things you can't say or see too often, but there is an inherent risk of boredom. One can only wish that the designers or artists or pastors would have expanded the bestiary specimens or used some of the multiple figures that could have been borrowed from the Christian or Jewish scriptures. This criticism notwithstanding, let us begin, and as you examine the windows and paintings keep a bible with you. It will help.

For purposes of orientation, I would like to examine the windows first and consider them in the order: the transept or wings, the behind-alter area, the sacristy, the vestibule, the choir loft, the nave or auditorium, and finally the above-alter area. I propose taking a look at the ceiling painting and ending with the statues and stations.

If you stand at the foot of the sanctuary just below the animal figures depicted on the ceiling and look up to the left and right, it might seem that the balconies were put in as an afterthought to satisfy the needs of a growing church, because the windows in those sections are cut in half by the balcony floors. This is most likely not the case, however. The architect wanted uniformity of size as seen from the outside and hence the apparent cut-in-half windows as seen from the inside. Let's go to the north balcony.

Daniel King Window



On the north side, NW corner, we see an ark and a dove carrying an olive branch (Gen 6:14; 8: 6-11). The figurative language of the Old Testament (OT), New Testament (NT), and even profane literature suggests that the primary force of the frequent dove symbols show God's love of all mankind. The olive tree survives the flood (Gen 8:11) and is the most honored of all trees (Jgs 9:8) and highly esteemed (Dt 8:8; 2 K 18:32), and throughout Palestine it grows most readily in Galilee. This is the regions looked down upon by the Jerusalem Jews (Jn 1:46; 7:52), but where Jesus spend most of his life and ministry. Further, the olive tree is an evergreen, as Christ's grace is ever efficient. The color is symbolic

of hope. At the top of this window, we see crossed keys, an allusion to the keys of the kingdom which Jesus gives to Peter (Mt 16:19 and perhaps Rev 1:18).

Holy Rosary Society Window



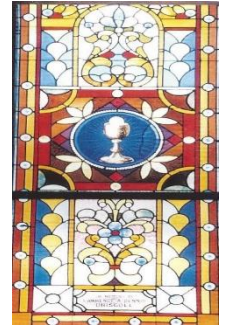
On the north wall in the NE corner is the Marian window. At the bottom are the initials AM (Ave Maria) with a simple cross behind them. Mary – either in picture, statue, or window—is rarely found alone. Nearly always, there is some reference to her mission: here the cross where her son would meet his death on earth. The lilies that we see nearby are resurrection flowers. At the top of this window, we see at the balcony level a bird of prey standing on a book. This creature is an allusion to either (a), the fables bird (Phoenix) resurrecting from its own ashes (Ps 103:5) or (b), an eagle, the apocalyptic Saint John from Rev 4:7-8. The latter is probably the correct suggestion because the bird has a halo and is standing on the book (of Revelation). Furthermore, the eagle is a scriptural symbol of John the evangelist (Rv 4:7).



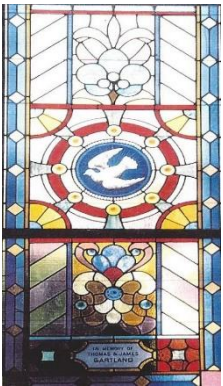
Lawrence and Dennis Driscoll Window



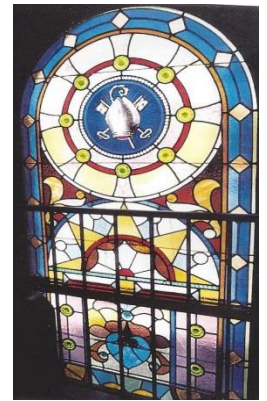
On the east side, NE corner, we see a chalice and an altar bread downstairs, and at the balcony level, we see another chalice. The chalice recalls various NT passages where Jesus mentions the cup that he must taste and from which his disciples must likewise drink (Mk 10:38; 14:23 ff; 14:36). These passages come together each day at the Eucharistic sacrifice and invite our close reflection. The unleavened host of course speaks to us of the Mass, but also recalls the Jewish exile when bread was made in haste and without leavening (Ex 12:33 ff). Now Jesus gives it new a fulfilled meaning as he “hastens” to his death.



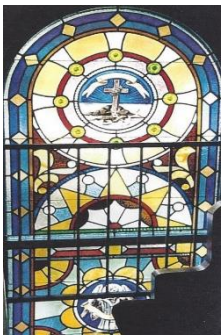
Thomas and James Gantland Window



On the east side there is a window with a dove downstairs and at the top a bishop’s mitre, crozier, and crossed keys again. The mitre’s tow points symbolizes the knowledge the bishops must have of both the OT and NT. His crozier, or pastoral staff with which he guides his flock, reminds us of his task to keep us together; the keys are symbols of his borrowed authority.



School Children Window



At the top of this window, we view a rock pile surrounded by water. There is an anchor secured to a cross with a chalice and communion bread to the right. The cross has a garland hanging from it—not a garland of thorns as we might expect—but of long, slender olive leaves. The garland is borrowed from pagan sources. It is a sign of victory and is associated here with the crown of thorns Christ wore (Mt 27:29). Above the cross there is a banner with the words IN HOC SIGN VINCES (In this sign you will conquer), words associated with Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor.

Lawrence and John Kealey Window



Also on the west side, NW corner, is a window with a simple golden crown at stair level and a monstrance at balcony level. Both of these items will be discussed later.

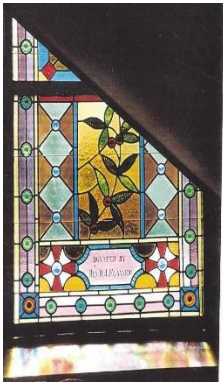
J.A.M. Pelamourges Window



In the north end of this balcony, there is a fan window, distinctive only for its symmetric design and beautiful colors, including a grey—a seldom seen color in windows.

Rev. D.J. Flannery Window

Let's go over to the south balcony. In the first window, we will examine the one you notice at foot level on the north wall, a lamb holding a banner and reclining on the Torah, or Law, (The first five books of the OT) in which there are seven seals. The lamb, or really Christ, (Jn 1:29) holds a scroll. Christ has renewed the Torah covenant through his sacrifice. This is an



allusion to Rev 5:1-14. The document contains the events that occur as the lamb breaks the seven seals (seven being the Hebrew number, which symbolizes fullness or perfection). By the way, the science of numerology comes to us from the Fathers of the Church, most especially Saint Augustine, who held that all number were but the thoughts of God. Hence, all numbers we meet in the bible should be treated thoughtfully, because they touch upon the divine plan. At the top of this window, we see the initial A.M. (Ave Maria). As noted earlier, it is rare to see Mary, or the initials, either in stature or glass, without reference to her divine son. Here the reference point is below—the Lamb of God.

The use of abbreviated words comes from a far earlier time when the interest of economy of space only initials were used. There is also a fleur-de-lis just below the initials—a real curiosity.

In the southwest corner of this balcony there is an eye looking in upon the church-goer. This is a very popular symbol in OT literature of a part representing a whole, an artistic device known as synecdoche. The fixated eye signifies both attention and intention—favorable and unfavorable (Ps 25:15; 13:3, our eyes) and God's eyes which observe all things (Pr 15:3; Ecclesiasticus 23:28).

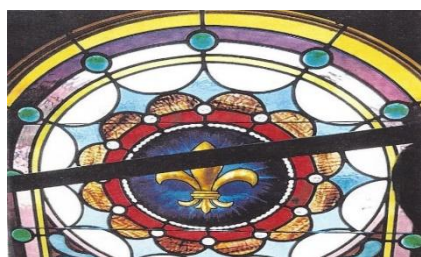
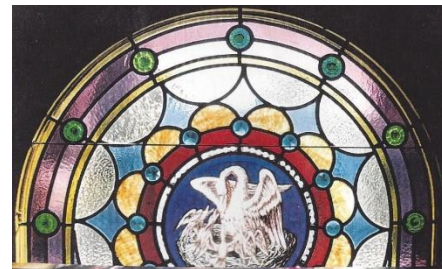


Rev. Maurice Flavin Window



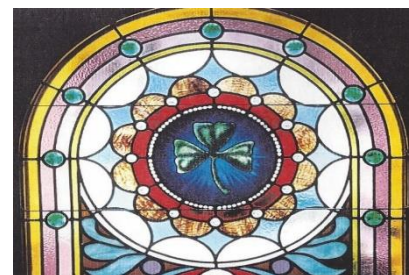
On the south side, there is a simple fan-shaped window that is in perfect balance to the Pelamourges window across from it.

At foot level in the last window on the south side, we see a pelican feeding its young its own blood from a wound in its breast. The pelican is obviously a Christ figure and dates to the 6th century or even earlier. This symbol is an excellent example of folk myth drawn from the Bestiaries, books in which paganism and Christianity were blended. These myths reached their zenith in the 13th century.



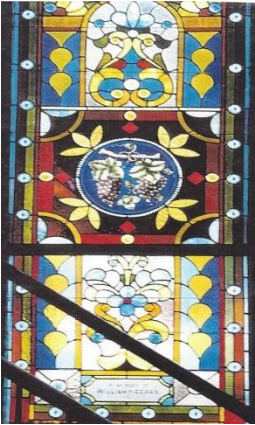
In the southeast corner, there is a simple window with a fleur-de-lis, celebrating the first resident pastor of St. Anthony's, Father Pelamourges (d. 1875), a French native.

Finally, in the northeast corner we see a green clover recalling the Irish immigrants and priests and sisters who have been a part of this church. The clover is frequently associated with Saint Patrick, patron of Ireland. Folk tales tell us that he used it as a teaching symbol of the Triune God, but we must remember that many of these stories come to us as pious elaboration of a later age.

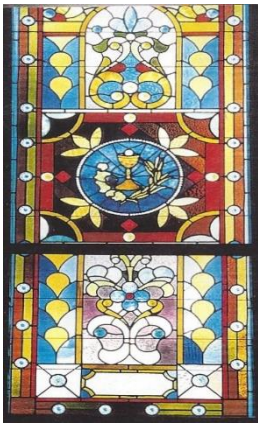


Directly across is another window bearing the initial SM (Sancta Maria or Holy Mother) with a cross between them.

William Keegan Window

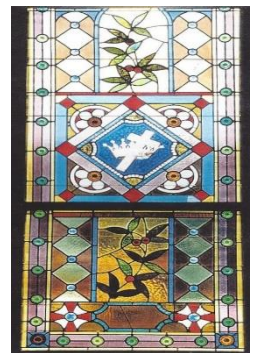


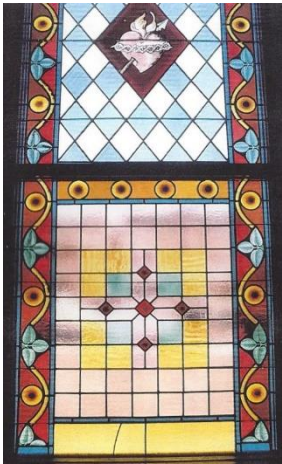
In the southwest corner downstairs, there is a window in the center of which is a branch with grapes and green leaves. The purple (sacrificial color) grapes are fermented to become alter wine, which, when consecrated, becomes the blood of Christ, our hope—hence the green. The grape harvest was a time of festival in OT times (Jgs 21:19-21; Is 16:10), and Jesus, in comparing himself to the vine and his disciples to the branches (Jn 15; 1 ff), signifies the close union between himself and them; and he reminds them and us that we can only achieve success in the Christian life in vital union with him.



In the northwest corner there is a window presenting a chalice and one large host, recalling the final meal of Christ with his apostles (Lk 22:19 ff). These two liturgical items are surrounded by wheat and grapes, gifts of nature, which remind us that we should see God in the beauty of his creation (Wis 13). One begins to sense that the artists who are crafting the windows are as skilled as the theologians in their spiritualizing of material objects. For the theologians as far back as the Middle Ages, all nature was a symbol, and living things were the expressions of the thoughts of God. Even though these windows weren't constructed until the 19th century, the artist is the heir and partner of the theologian and inherits the talents and genius of his forbears.

In the southeast corner, we see a cross and crown reminiscent of an era when spiritual and temporal powers were united—for better or worse—usually worse.





Moving to the walkway behind the high altar, there are three windows, but only the south one has any really religious or liturgical interest. Here we see a heart bound with thorns with a spear through it. The heart, to the ancients, was the center of emotion, character, appetite, and intelligence in various ages and is used in both OT literature (Ps14:1; Pr 16:9; Os 44:20) and in Christian Scriptures (Jn 7:37-38). The patristic tradition is that the Holy Spirit flows from the side of the crucified Jesus (Jn 19:33-37), and that his human and even his divine love, found its origin in his heart. Hence the pierced heart, an anatomical jump from the side to the heart—but understandable—realizing the personal devotion and piety of the 14th and 15th centuries, which emphasized Christ’s passion. The crown of thorns, of course, comes to us from Mt 27:29; Mk 15:17 and Jn 19:2.



In the sacristy, there are but two windows, yet they are worthy of attention. The first is a pelican window, the significance of which has already been discussed. The second is disturbingly simple — a lectionary proclaiming the scriptures with a stole draped over it and a chalice upon it, all articles of the priestly office. There is no distraction in these windows. The message is clear and as the presiding priest vests he can reflect on it: tend, feed and preach. (Jn 21:15 ff: Mk 16:15).



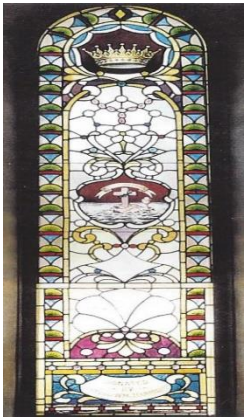
Moving out to the vestibule in the entrance of the church, we see a Saint Anthony Window, small but very impressive. He is holding the Christ child. The church’s patron (d. ca. 1231) was a Franciscan friar, preacher, and doctor of the Catholic Church who showed a profound knowledge of sacred scripture and who abidingly cared for the poor, a practice zealously followed on a daily basis by the current pastor of at St. Anthony’s Church.

Michael Jones Window



Let's move up to the choir loft. On the north side, we note light pinks, blues, and greens but for the first time somber brown and black are introduced. There is an anchor below (the Pauline symbol of Hope); and above there are artifacts of the crucifixion: sponge (Mt 27:48); spear (Jn 19:34); nails (Jn 20:25; a hammer; and a rare tool in modern church art, at least—a nail extractor. These last two items are not found in the passion writings, but the hammer's use is implicit in the killing act and the extractor was used in the recovery of the horrible, costly nails by practical executioners.

Mary and William Harrigan Window



On the north side of the organ, there is a window depicting an island surrounded by water with a cross erected on it and again an anchor with a banner above it. This time there is a slight but appreciated change in design. On the rock pile (the island), we see a sprig growing. No doubt it is the young olive tree from which the dove (cited earlier as the love image through SS and even in modern poetry) will grasp a leaf and return to Noah (Gen 8:11) as the sign that hope springs anew. That Hope ultimately rests in Jesus Christ's cross (Mt 17:22) as he suffers, dies and rises. To that divine, salvific act, we "anchor" all our hope as Peter so well expressed it: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (Jn 6:68). We notice again the Constantinian banner and above that a golden crown. There is much to be seen, studied, and contemplated in this beautiful window. It provides an exciting mix of OT, NT, early church history, myth, doctrine, and symbolism.

Mrs. James F. Halligan Window



On the south side, we see a window showing a serpent slithering up a tree and taking an "apple" from it, which is a curious allusion to Gen 3:6, where no apple is mentioned. Not only that, the serpent did not seize the fruit—Eve did. At the top there is a chalice again, and a host, surrounded by wheat and grapes.

Cavanaugh Window

On the south side of the choir loft, we see in a window the three words “Faith, Hope, Charity,” the three theological virtues, charity being the one which will endure into eternity after faith and hope are left behind on earth. Charity, or love of God and of one’s neighbors, is the greatest commandment of the Law. Jesus quotes Dt 6:5 and Lv 19:18 in Mt 22:34 ff. The two commandments to love God and neighbor are placed on an equal plane, and here our notion of Christian charity rests. Lk goes a step further (10:29 ff), and therein lies the revolutionary aspect of charity—to love even one’s enemies because God loves one’s enemies. This is the essence of Charity: to love all people because God loves all people. Above these words there is a simple cross, above that a crown of thorns surrounding the Roman letter INRI “Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum” (Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews) from John’s gospel (19:19).

T.J. O’Meara Window



Descending now to the nave and beginning on the north side with the window closest to the altar, notice immediately the matching designs and colors of the opposite window. In the center, we see the familiar cross and crown, the marriage of temporal and spiritual powers from times past. At the top there is a shock of wheat (alter bread).

Thomas Gilloly Window



Right across the aisle is a window showing us a golden crown in the center that reminds us of the kingdom (Dan 7:27; Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2). At the top is a shock of wheat with a sickle and broom, tools of the harvester’s trade. Harvest was a time of feasting and rejoicing in times past (is 9:3). The harvest is a symbol of the growth of the kingdom (Mt 9:37) but we must also ponder that in our end-time we will be gathered for judgement as the harvest is gathered (Mt 13:39 ff; Rev 14:15).

Margaret Gundaker Window



Moving toward the back of the church on the north side, we see several bunches of grapes in the next window. At the top there is a closed book resting on a cushion. Upon the closed book, there is another on lying open and inscribed "Holy Bible." I submit that this is testimony to the structure of the medieval university where all the faculties (closed book) were arranged under the "queen of sciences," or theology, (the open book—or Bible).

James Gannon Window



Opposite, we see once more the chalice surrounded by springs of wheat and grape clusters, and at the top the now familiar anchor and cross.

Mary Buckley Window



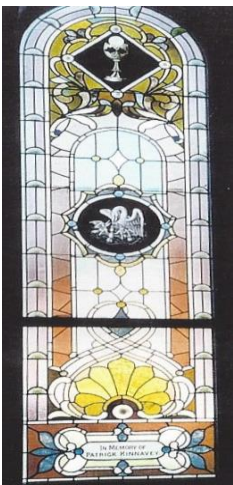
In the center north-side window, we see a lamb holding a banner and cross. At the top, there is an angel with a scroll. In both OT and NT literature, the angel is sometimes no more than another term for divine communication or operation; hence, perhaps the presentation of a scroll on which is unfolding the reality of God's plan.

Winfred Darcey Window



Opposite this window is one on the south side, which depicts two stone tablets inscribed with Roman numerals 1 through 10, an obvious depiction of the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments. (Ex 34:28; Dt 4:13; 10:4). At the top there is an anchor, cross, and burning heart, the latter being a symbol of redemptive heart of Jesus burning with love, calling us back to a Medieval devotion as noted earlier.

Patrick Kinnavey Window



On the north side, second to the last toward the rear, we see once more the pelican image and at the top another chalice and host. The entire window bespeaks heavenly food.

Daniel Carroll and Family Window



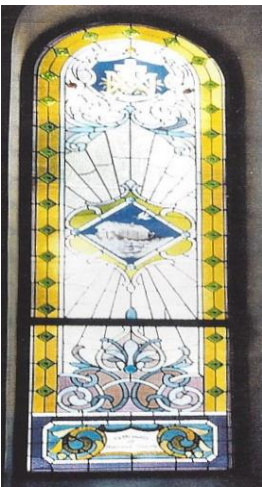
Across from that is a window at the center of which is a cross with the Constantinian standard and a chalice and bread. At the top, is the lamb, with its Christian banner, reclining on the book with the seven seals that we spoke of earlier.

Leonard Sr. Window



In the last window on the north side, we see a monstrance in the middle and thurible, or censer, at the top. The former is a vessel usually made of precious metal and used in para-liturgical rites for viewing a large consecrated host during periods of public adoration. This practice was popularized in the 14-15th century France and Germany and came to this country early on. The thurible is a little more frequently seen today. It is a vessel, which carries the hot coals to light incense. It is used on high holy days, during liturgical funeral rites, and ‘holy hour’ devotions when the consecrated host is exposed in a monstrance on the altar (Nm 16:17; Is 60:6; Mt 2:11).

Margaret O’Brien Window



And lastly across from that is one more Noah’s Ark window and again the now-familiar dove with olive branch returning to the ark to be received through a hatch at the top (Gen 8:6-11). This last embellishment is not noted in the first ark window.

In walking back up the aisle toward the sanctuary, we are caught up once more by the colors, the symmetry, the simply stunning beauty of these windows in the nave. This was once the whole of Saint Anthony’s Church, before there was a transept, an aspe, or a sacristy, all of which are later additions.

Murt Burns Window



There are four windows above the high altar. From left to right as we face them, we see the following: a white-haired Saint Patrick (d. ca. 461) with the episcopal crozier, miter, stole and chasuble. In his right hand, he holds a clover and underfoot there is a snake. Legend has it that he drove all the snakes out of Ireland. The color green predominates in this window in association with the emerald isle.

Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Crowley Window



Next, we see Saint Anthony (d. ca. 1231) carrying the Christ child. Anthony is dressed as the Franciscan monk he was and is wearing a brown robe and sandals. He carries a lily and there is a rosary at his waist. The rosary may be an anachronism since it did not become a devotional prayer until the late 15th century, although its origin extends to ancient roots in many religious traditions. Popular piety attributes its modern form to Saint Dominic, a contemporary of Saint Anthony. The lily is a symbol of Anthony's virginity.

John and Sarah Naven Window



Next to that on the inside, right is a Marian (?) window. She is dressed in traditional blue and white and it appears that this is an assumption window. There is a crescent moon beneath her (Rev 12:1). John may have taken this apocalyptic figure from the pagan world in part, or he may have borrowed from the Jewish scriptures (Gen 37:9; 1:16; Ps 104:1-2). Then, too, he may have written from a collective standpoint and may have seen Mary in this woman. She is crushing a serpent underfoot, an accommodation of Gen 3:15, which was her seed crushing its head. We really want to see in this scene a reference to Mary, the mother of Jesus, but we may be stretching to make this accommodation. It is more fitting to see in this woman the people of God, the Church, the true Israel of the OT and NT. Early Christianity made no clear distinction between Israel and the church. The Messiah springs from the 12 tribes of Israel (Rev 12:5); these people are directed by the 12 apostles, and these same people are truly the mother of those who believe in Christ (V 17; Is 54:1-3). By the Middle Ages, however, it was widely held that the woman in Ap 12:1 is Mary, the Mother of Jesus, difficult as it may be for scholars to accept this interpretation, and that notion has held in popular devotion to this day. Frequently added to this depiction are 12 stars over the woman's head.

Bridget Gallagher Window



The final window to the far right presents Saint Aloysius (d. 1591). He is dressed in a white alb, or surplice, over a priestly gown. He was a Jesuit priest. He is seen in a field of lilies (purity) and is contemplating the crucifix, which he holds in his hand. To his left there is a book with a human skull on it. We have to speculate about the crucifix and the skull, but we suppose that he is looking to his own death as he nursed the sick during the plague of Rome in 1591, in which effort he died. He is remembered for his strong devotion to the Eucharist, interior prayer, service to others, and is a model of purity—especially to those entering holy orders (hence, the book).

While we are in this area of the sanctuary, let's take a look at the bas-reliefs under the three "old"



alters. Leonardo da Vinci's painting has inspired the one under the main altar. It is a plaster likeness of the artist's famous Last Supper scene, recounted in all four gospels (Mt 26:20 ff; Mk 14:22 ff, Lk 22:14 ff; Jn 13:2 ff).

Beneath the Saint Joseph Altar is a scene of the dying foster father with Jesus and his wife Mary attending him. This is purely legendary and has no scriptural reference



point. Opposite, beneath the Marian altar, we see the angel Gabriel inviting Mary to become the mother of God. We see a radiating dove, here representing the Holy Spirit, through whom this marvelous pregnancy will come about one she has uttered her fiat (Lk 1: 26-38).



And now, finally, to the ceiling paintings. There are three large classic works done on canvas at the top of the nave, and they are certainly worth a close look.



The one on the east end portrays Christ ministering to a number of sick and lame (Mt 4:23; Mk 2:10; Lk 4:40; Jn 6:20).

The center painting is an artist's imaginative rendition of the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven. There is no actual scriptural account or reference to this occurrence, but it is a defined dogma. SS tells us of only one person who was assumed bodily into heaven, i.e., Elijah in 2k2:1-12. However, belief in the bodily assumption of Mary dates to the late 5th or early 6th century and does not begin with patristic testimony but as a conclusion to what theologians call the argument of fittingness. The theological formula is "putuit, deuit, fecit," which translates roughly, "God could do it, it was fitting that He do it, and He did it." The Assumption became a fest day in Rome in the 7th century along with other Marian celebrations. The "sensus fidelium," or actual belief of all western Christians, was already in place, but it was not until the 20th century that Pope Pius XII declared the bodily assumption of Mary a dogma (Munificentissimus Deus—1950).



In the west canvas we see Jesus raising someone from his or her grave.



The most oft-cited is the Lazarus miracle. In this painting it is easy to imagine that we see Mary (and perhaps Martha) standing with Jesus as he calls Lazarus forth (Jn 11:43). There is lacking a certain textual exactness if we wish to accept this as the Lazarus story (Jn has him entombed in a cave, not in a coffin). More likely, it is the story of the raising of the son of the widow of Nain in Lk 7: 11-16. Here we can see a bier, and the one woman in the foreground would be the mother.



In the center of the transept there are four more ceiling painting inspired by Rev 4:7-8. On the south side, there is a creature with the head of a bull (strength). Below this creature is the Latin inscription “Quoniam Quidem Multi” (Seeing that certain other have undertaken to tell this story, the opening words of Luke’s gospel).



To the west is a creature with the head of an eagle (swiftness) representing John and under it the Latin inscription “In principio erat Verbum” (In the beginning was the word, the opening of his gospel).



On the east side, there is a creature with a lion’s head (nobility) and the beginning words of Mark’s gospel in Latin: “Initium Evangelii Iesu Christi” (This is the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ).



Finally, on the north side we see a creature with the head of a man (wisdom). This is the Matthean symbol, and the Latin inscription from his opening chapter identifies him: “Liber Generationis Iesu Christi” (the genealogy of Jesus Christ). In the book of Revelation, these animals are considered to be “principal” creatures, which direct our world, as we know it; but since the days of Saint Irenaeus (d. ca. 200), we have come to know them as symbols of the four evangelists.

This Revelation grouping is an allusion to Ezekiel 1:10. These four creatures represent the whole of God’s creation and to minds of that day the most splendid in animal life. To some extent all this is lost to our technical world, as is the Latin language to most of the ecclesial and lay world.

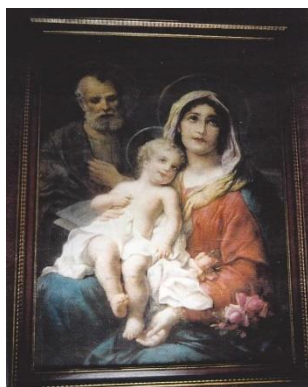


In the north transept there is a small icon of our Lady of Guadalupe, an image revered by Mexicans especially, recalling the apparition in 1531 to an Amerindian, Juan Diego, on the outskirts of Mexico City.



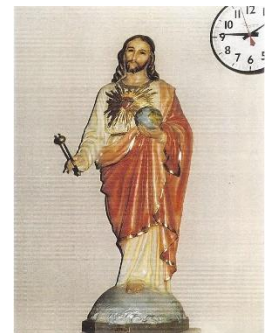
Next to this is a small image of Pope John Paul II.

Before finishing our survey of the artwork in Saint Anthony's Church, we really should spend a bit of time on the statuary. The statues have a lot to say to us as they stand in mute testimony to what and who has gone before. Many parishioners and visitors spend time on either a sporadic or regular basis contemplating the lives and events portrayed here.



In this wing, there is also a print of an older Mary and Joseph with their infant son. In all likelihood, they were probably much younger than they are shown to be in this print.

The last piece of artwork in this north wing is a statue of Christ the King/Sacred Heart combination (note no wounds in his hands.) Christ holds a scepter and an orb, symbols of his kingship.



In the sanctuary, the first statue on the left as we face the altar is that of Mary Queen of Heaven. She is crowned and hold in one arm her divine son, who in turn holds a dove, and in the other hand a rosary.



On the main altar to the left we first see a statue of Saint Augustine (354-430), a doctor of the church and renowned theologian who holds immense influence in both Catholic and Protestant circles.





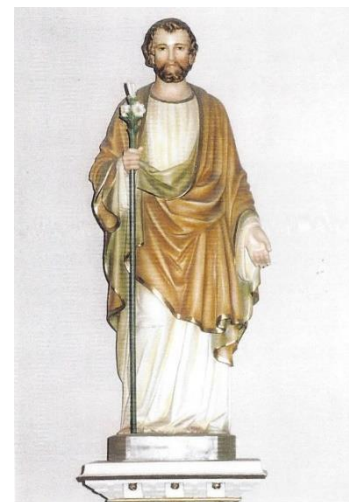
In the center of the high altar is a statue of the risen Christ/Sacred Heart (note wounds in hands). By now, it must be obvious to even a casual observer that the Sacred Heart devotion must be quite important in popular devotional practices. This is anchored scripturally in Jesus' statement that living water would flow from his heart (Jn 7: 37-39).

On the right side of the main altar is a statue representing John the evangelist. He is shown poised to write.



Surmounting the altar is an "Ecce Homo" work. This is the crowned-with-thorns, richly robed and soon-to-be-crucified Jesus (Jn 19:5) standing before Pilate. He stands shown with two sorrowing angels at his side.

Above the Saint Joseph altar is a statue of that namesake holding a staff from which a flower is blooming. This flower is an allusion to the Protevangelium of James, an apocryphal gospel written in the second century which relates that Joseph was selected to be the husband of the virgin Mary by the temple priests because, although all of the eligible men in the region were called in and told to carry their staffs, Joseph was favored by the "sign" of the dove that came out of his staff. The dove, in time, a sign of his election in the Protevangelium, became a white flower, a sign of his chastity. Most statues and paintings of Joseph show him to be a much older person than his wife. This also comes from the Protevangelium where he was a widower, an "old man" with children of his own and perhaps beyond the age where a sex drive was terribly vital to his new marriage when he took Mary to his home.



In the south transept, we find two walls lined with statuary. It is here that many people come to petition and meditate before and after masses on Sunday and, indeed, throughout the week.

The first statue is of our Lady of Fatima in honor of her apparition to three children in Portugal in 1917. She identified herself as the “Lady of the Rosary” and asked for its daily recitation.

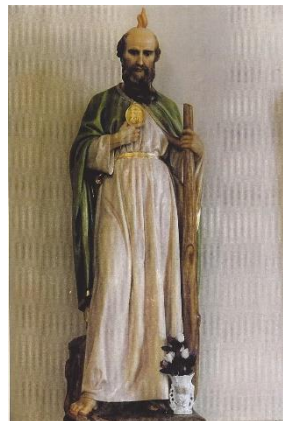
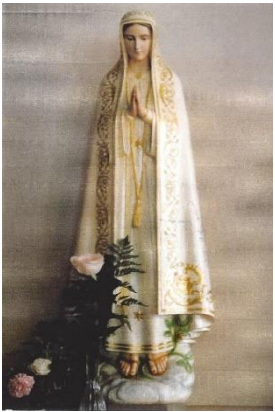
The next statue is of Saint Rita of Cascia (1387-1457), wearing the habit of an Augustinian nun. She is contemplating a crucifix. During her convent years, she devoted herself intensely to the care of others and to prayers for those who were remiss in their religious duties. She is known as the saint of desperate cases throughout the Spanish world.

Next to that, is the statue of the infant of Prague, depicting the Child Jesus robed and crowned as king, an image popularized since 1628.

The next statue is of Sainte Therese de Lisieux (1873-1897) and better known as Therese of the Child Jesus, of the “Little Flower.” She is the author of a slender book on spirituality, The Story of a Soul. She is co-patron with Saint Francis Xavier of missionaries.

Next to this work is a statue of Saint Anthony (1190-1231), the patron of Saint Anthony’s Church. A Franciscan priest and Doctor of the Church whom we described earlier, he is seen here holding and gazing at the Christ child, a popular legend of late origin, probably 17th century. He is remembered for his work with political prisoners of his day and even heretics, but most of all, as said before, for his love of and work for the poor.

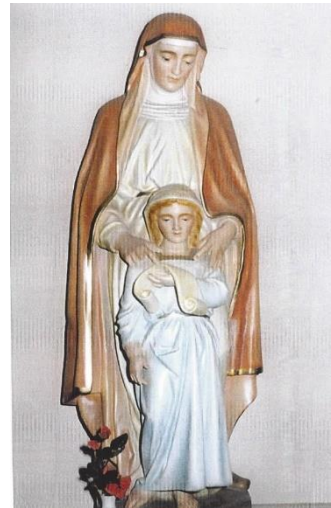
The next statue represents Saint Jude. He is portrayed with a tongue of fire over his head and a staff in hand. Jude was an apostle of Jesus and identifies as Thaddeus in Mt. 10:3, and the son of Alphaeus (Lk 6:16). The tongue of fire shows him to be one of twelve who were in the upper room on whom the Holy Spirit descended in the form of fire (Acts 2: 3-4). The staff further identifies him as one of those whom Jesus sent forth to preach the good news (Mt. 28:19; Mk 16:15).





On the wall next to this statue is a print of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, holding her divine child. The original Byzantine painting was brought to Rome in the 15th century, and the Virgin has been venerated under this title, as well as others, ever since. Above the head of Christ, we see the identifying Greek initials IC XC (Jesus Christ), and to the left and right above the Virgin's head MP (matēr, or Mother) and OY (Theou, or of God). Above the angels there are the identifying Greek letters O APM (Michael the archangel) on the left and to the right O APT (Gabriel the archangel). Gabriel is associated with the annunciation to Mary (Lk 1:26 ff) and Michael is known to us as the assistant to Gabriel and protector of the Jews (Dan 10:12-21) and the leader of angelic hosts in Rev 12:7.

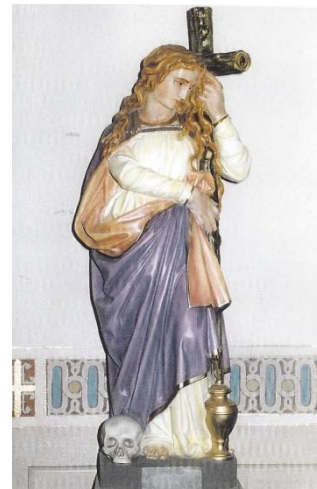
Beside the painting is a stature of the child Mary (one day to be the mother of Jesus with her mother, popularized piously as Saint Anne, and about whom nothing is known through SS. The Protevangelium of James has given her this name as well as that of her husband, Saint Joachim.



The next largest work in this wing is the famous Pieta, a depiction of the dead Christ in the lap of his sorrowing mother. Versions of this scene have been made by famous sculptors since the Middle Ages, and they excited the piety of devout people since that time. Although this scene is not specifically mentioned in SS, it is in all likelihood a reality since Mary was at the foot of the cross as He died (Jn 19-25), and she would most fittingly accept her dead son as he was taken down from the cross.

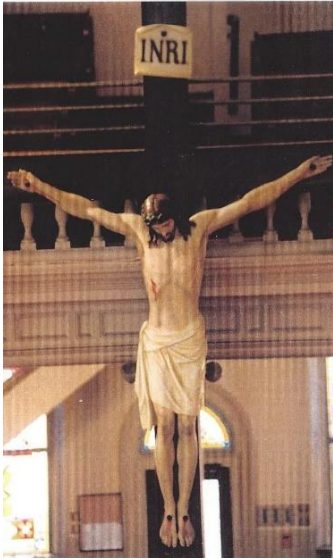


Mary Magdalene is the next subject. She was a close friend and follower of Jesus and in Lk 8:2 was healed by him of demonic possession. She was present at the crucifixion (Mt. 27: 55-56; Mk 15:40; Jn 19:25), and she was one of the women who found the empty tomb on Easter morning (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1; Jn 20:1). It should be noted that she is not the sinful woman of Lk 7: 36-50 who anointed Jesus, nor Mary of Bethany, who also anointed him (Jn 11:1). These are later and erroneous traditions. Shown next to her is a skull, symbolic of her place at Golgotha (place of a skull), where Jesus was crucified (Mt. 27:33). She is leaning on, or clutching a large cross and to her left there is a perfumed oil jar associated with her self-appointed and loving task to anoint her beloved Jesus (Mk 16:1) after his death and the Sabbath had passed.



The last statue in the south transept is that of Mary Queen of Heaven or Queen of angels, beautiful in its stark simplicity. This is the only work in the church in which Mary is shown without any reference to her divine son.



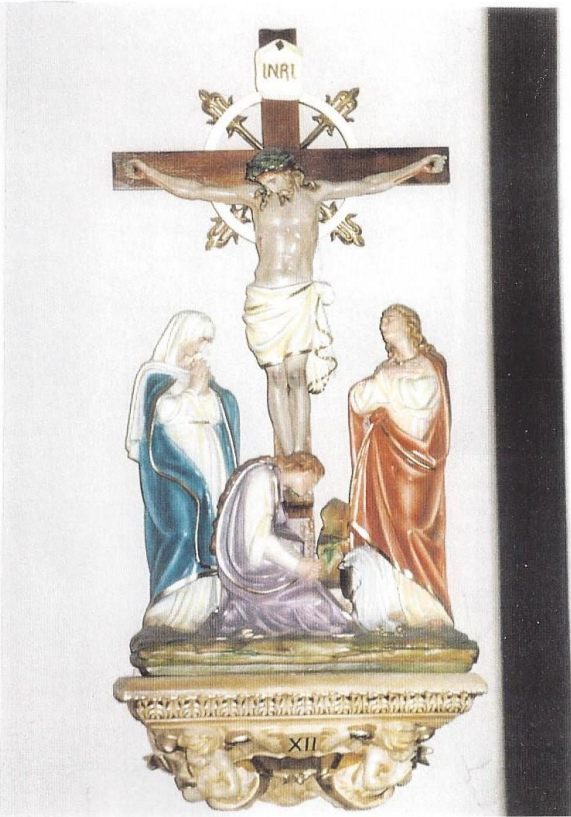
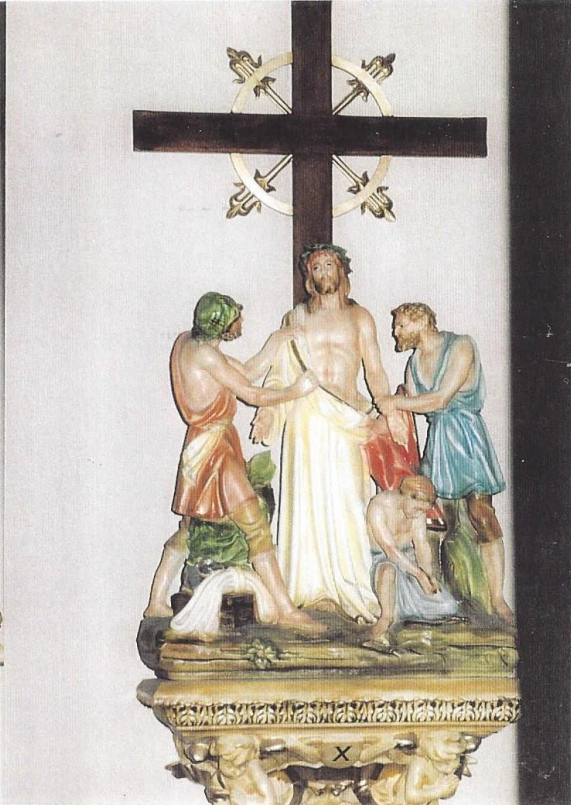


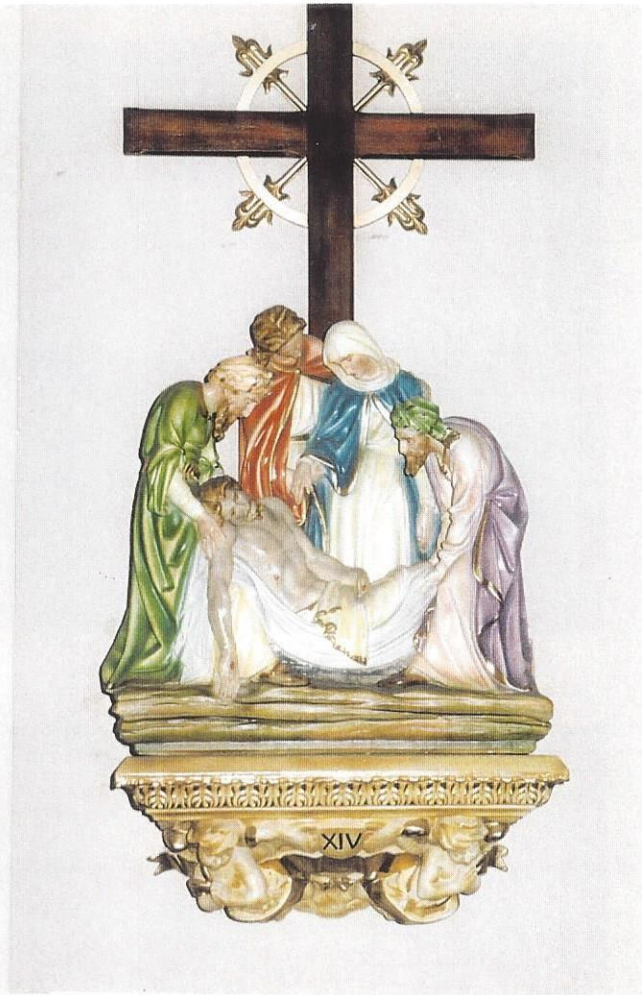
The large crucifix, which hangs from the north balcony, is worth our attention, too. Primitive Christianity never portrayed a crucified Jesus. At that time, people were apparently too close to the occasion, and the image of a crucified Jesus was too horrible to view or contemplate. This must be true despite Saint Paul's words to the Galatians (6:14); to the Corinthians (1-1:17; 1:23; 2:2). By the early 4th century the cross appears as a sign of Christ's triumph, however, and by about the year 1000 Romanesque Art was representing Christ on a jeweled cross with a triumphant crown. Beginning with the 13th century and thereafter, we see less of the glorious Christ and more of the human Jesus—eyes transfixed in death or closed, a drooping dead corpus. The appeal is obviously to the heart and not to the head and was most popular until recent days when theological reflection has influenced the production of a risen Christ on the cross, eyes open, fully clothed, and oftentimes extending a hand in blessing.



The Stations of the Cross likewise bring many people to private devotions during the week and of course during the penitential season of Lent. This practice finds its origins in pilgrims' visits to various sites in Jerusalem close to Jesus' death march and final hours. By the 12th century, many wealthier people wanted to bring this devotion back to their churches, especially for those who could not afford to go on pilgrimage. The Franciscans were the chief promoter of the cult. All but station 3 (Jesus falls the first time; station 4 (Jesus meets his mother); station 6 (Veronica wipes his face); station 7 (Jesus falls the second time); and station 9 (Jesus falls a third time) are scripturally verified in the NT by the evangelists. The others have come to us through early legend and may or may not be factual.







In summary, beauty and Church history abound in Saint Anthony's Church, leaving us much to ponder. We can all profit immensely from whatever time we can find either alone in private devotion or with a friend as we search to know more about our faith and how the artwork we look at helps us sustain that faith.