

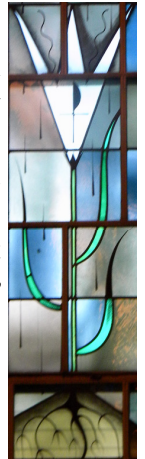
St. *Philomena* Parish
bringing faith to life and life to faith

The Story of Our Stained Glass Windows

*Written by Fr. Joseph Gerber,
first pastor of St. Philomena
from 1946-1970*



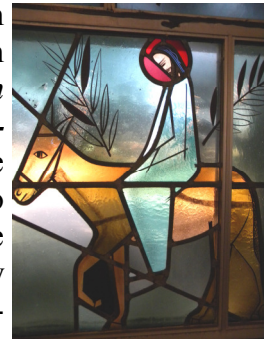
1 The first window is the Advent window. This is the first season of the year; the time before Christ. Here we show the parched earth and the spiritual darkness before Christ. At the bottom of the picture nothing is growing – it's not very productive. But God in His mercy finally comes to our aid, and at the top of the window we see a big cloud and coming from it are drops of rain. This fulfills what was said by the prophet Isaiah: "let the clouds rain down the just one. Let the earth be opened and bud forth the Saviour." And this is what is happening during the season of Advent. So the water strikes the parched earth and brings it to life, as it were, and now it produces fruit. ***The first fruit of the mercy of God is the lily that we see, and this represents the Blessed Mother.*** And inside the lily you can see the Chi Rho. This is the symbol of Christ symbolizing that Mary is carrying Christ in her womb. And so we have the quotation, "Let the earth be opened and bud forth the Saviour."



We go on to the next window which ushers in the season of Christmas. In this window we see on top the word "Gloria," symbolizing the words of the angels singing "Glory to God in the highest and peace to men on earth." And then, down a little bit lower, "Christ is born to us; come let us adore." We have on the right hand side the staffs which represent the shepherds who were the first ones to come and adore. ***On the other side we have three crowns representing the three wise men who came from the East, led by the Star of David to the stable, and came to adore also.***

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3 The next window is the Lenten window and the Holy Week window. We see, down below, Palm Sunday; Christ coming to Jerusalem. Kind of a victorious celebration which will soon be changed, however, during the week. ***Christ comes in triumph seated on a donkey, and the people have palms in their hands and they are shouting, "Hosanna in the highest."*** And then we have the Holy Thursday remembrance – the chalice representing the Holy Eucharist and the bread along side of it. But you also see that, from the cross of Christ, there is a stream of blood that is going down into the chalice symbolizing that Christ's suffering and death on the cross is one with the Holy Eucharist, one with this celebration with His Apostles when He instituted the Holy Eucharist changing bread and wine into His body and blood. Then there is the cross itself symbolizing Good Friday. Here Christ dies on the cross. Above, the sun is darkened – it doesn't give its light as it did at the time of Christ. The inscription is "My people – what have I done to you?" Christ suffers and dies, and we are asked to carry our cross as well. This quotation is a lamentation from the Old Testament which is applied to Christ when He reproaches the people, saying "My people – what have I done to you?"



4 The next window is the Easter window. It symbolized the triumph of Christ over sin and death. We have the same cross of Christ in the form of the Chi Rho. Here Christ has risen gloriously. It's a flaming red Christ now. In the past window we saw Him carrying His cross, and we also saw the many little crosses which represent our crosses, and how we carry our cross; different feet and everything else. But here it's Christ who has risen from the dead. And, of course, in a sense we also rise with Him. ***You'll notice the tomb, below on the right hand side, is open. The part that is black on this window is the inside of the tomb.*** You can also see that the other part that is not black is rolled back. There is a Chi Rho there because He was lying there in the tomb. The inscription in this window is "this is the day the Lord has made, Alleluia."



how we live the life of Christ through the liturgy and how we live the life of Christ in our own lives.”

On the other side of the church, in the back, we see the Pentecost window. The coming of the Holy Spirit. **On the left hand side, above there is again the triangle, symbolizing the trinity of God, the Godhead, and from it is coming, the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the dove.**

5 The circle below symbolizes the earth, and the earth is literally set on fire by the Holy Spirit. The fire is the love of God, and so the inscription is “the spirit of the Lord has filled the world.”



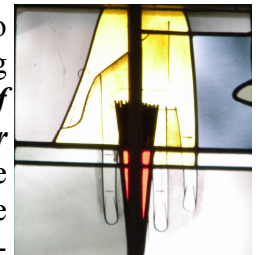
The next window is actually part of the whole life of the Church. It's the obligation of the Church to evangelize the world, to bring the knowledge of the truth to all people. The Church year closes with the end of the Pentecost season, which goes up to Advent and starts all over again. But here is one of the things that the Church does all parts of the year. Here you see the Trinity above, and coming down is the

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word of God. **There is a church below with a circle around it. The circle is the world. This church represents the church of Christ. It's not actually a picture of St. Peter's, but it represents the teaching authority of the Church.** You see the arrows going out in all directions, which has been the mission of the Church. The Church has been fulfilling this mission from the first century of the Christian era – going out and bringing the knowledge of the truth to all people. The words we have there are this command of the Christ “Going, therefore, teach all nations.”



7 The next window presents the sacramental life of the Church; how the Church brings to us, through the sacraments, the graces and the helps we need to live a life in keeping with the will of Christ, and according to the command of Christ. **We have the hand of God coming down, and from it there is a continuous stream, like a stream of water coming down.** In this stream we see the symbols of the seven sacraments. The first one we see is an inverted cup or sea shell. This represents baptism with water dripping from it. The next one is the form of the dove. This represents the Holy Spirit, so this refers to the sacrament of confirmation which gives us strength in our spiritual life.



Next are the interlocking rings. This symbolizes marriage, how a man and a woman are united in holy marriage. **Next we have the keys which represent the sacrament of Holy Orders, the priesthood, which includes the pope, the bishops and priests.** This is the sacrament which gives to each one in their particular state the authority to teach and carry on this mission of the Church. **Then we have a vial of oil which is used in the sacrament of the sick.** When someone is sick and in any danger of death we administer this sacrament which gives comfort to them and helps them to prepare for the journey from this life to Heaven, if that is the will of God. But it can also help them to get well.



Down below, there is the chalice which represents the Holy Eucharist. We saw from the picture of Lent, how from the cross of Christ His blood flowed into this chalice which is used in the Holy Eucharist. We receive the body and blood of Christ as a strengthening power in our life, and which represents the sacrament of Penance, because the priest wears a purple stole in the administration of this sacrament. Then this stream, with all these sacraments, which give us strength, flows over into the other side moistening the roots of a vine, and the fruits on this vine are the fruits in our good works by using the seven sacraments. Now look at that fruit! Look at the large grapes that it produces which have been fertilized by the graces of these sacraments. The inscription on this window is “He who abides in me, bears much fruit.”

8 The last window was the most difficult to design because it is supposed to represent the end and all of everything that went before – all this preparation in the Old Testament and now in the New Testament through the birth of Christ and the sacraments and the redemption of Christ. These all should lead us to Heaven. How do you depict Heaven? It's practically impossible. It's like trying to draw a picture of God as He is. We cannot see a spirit. Heaven is the place of perfect happiness with God. The best we could do is have a bright light on top. We used yellow glass that would look rather bright, even on a dark day. When the sun is shining it really looks very bright. There are two angels on each side in adoration. ***Then we see those three groups of saints in Heaven; the blessed in Heaven who are thanking and praising God all the time.*** They're in love with God and He's in love with them. They have perfect happiness. There is nothing that can increase their happiness. We may have different capacities for happiness, but whatever capacity we have will be completely filled. This is the end, and is the most difficult to depict. Whatever you need for perfect happiness you will have in Heaven.

