

The Art and Symbols

SAINT CATHERINE *of* SIENA

A tour of our Parish Home

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The buildings we make our homes are always unique to each family. They manifest the ever-changing, complex dynamics and diverse natures of the families who live within them. The same is true for the home of God's family, the parish church. The home of St. Catherine's Parish expresses our religious experience of the pilgrimage. We are a people continuing the exodus journey revealed for all humanity in the story of Israel. We are all invited through Jesus Christ to join the pilgrimage to the Promised Land.

The Gateways

In order to capture this image of a pilgrimage journey, the modern church building in our diocese is comprised of three elements: The Narthex, the Sanctuary and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, each with its associated gateway. Each gateway invites us to pass through into the next area, thus physically experiencing the journey.

Gateway of the Catechumens

At St. Catherine's the first gateway beckons the wider world into a new experience of God's grace. It calls us together to become a community gathered and empowered by God.

Approaching the church, the Native American tapestry¹ (visible from outside), which draws upon the woodland tribal experience, depicts the wisdom of the elders. This is a wisdom given to the native peoples and according to their beliefs a gift for all humanity. A gift given to teach us how to live in balanced harmony with the powers governing our earth mother. Placed in the first gateway, this traditional blanket art reminds us that we as a church are a communion of world traditions. United in Christ, the world is invited to share in a universal wisdom offering the hope of a "new heavens and a new earth".

Lucia "**the heralding angel**"² is a bronze sculpture calling us to worship with the sound of the shofar, the rams horn used by ancient Israel. Adjacent to Lucia is a round circular gathering area embedded in the ground called the "**Place of the Sacred Fire.**" The community gathers here at the Easter Vigil to renounce evil, bless the fire, and light the great Paschal Candle. The flame of the Paschal Candle reminds us of the pillar of fire that led Israel out of slavery.

In the shadow of the cross, the doors of the gateway, branded with the alpha and omega³, proclaim that Christ is the beginning and end of our sacred journey. **Abraham and Sarah**, the founders of our faith life, stand on either side of the gateway doors to welcome both the faithful and the prodigal into a rich spiritual family. In the words of the artist,⁴ "*The images are large and created in sepia tones on antique clear glass which give the impression of a family's living memories.*" The act of coming together, united to our memories, brings to life our ancestors who welcome us with joy for "God is not a God of the dead but of the living."

In the stained-glass windows Sarah is depicted holding bread which becomes a central image in our faith journey. She prepared bread for the angels when she was told of the promise of a son even in her old age. Abraham offered the bread to the priest Melchizedek as a tithe to God which prefigured our gifts at the Eucharist. Most importantly for us, bread becomes flesh and is offered to us as our eternal spiritual food. Filled with these images, we realize we are being gathered as one family around the Lord's Table to share in the Bread of Life. In this act we too give birth to the hope of a new future.

After passing through these gateway doors, we enter the **Narthex**. In this space we join together; sharing greetings and grace as we gather to celebrate and grow as the Body of Christ. As part of this gathering, we remember the poverty of our world. The **icons**⁵ of St. Vincent DePaul, Blessed Frederick Ozanam, and Blessed Rosalie Rendu call us to forget not the least of God's children. The grouping of **five icons of St. Catherine of Siena** helps us reflect on the life of our

¹ Made by Pendleton Woolen Mills

² Sculpted by the late Jack DiGiuseppe, parishioner.

³ Designed by parishioner and calligrapher, Susan Kavanaugh; crafted by parishioner, Ron Harwood; gilded by parishioner, Karen Vosburg.

⁴ Artist, Michael Northrop.

⁵ Artist and parishioner, Carol Donnelly

patroness. Each icon depicts a particular dimension of her vocation. Artist Donna Rathert wrote the icons to image Catherine as Doctor of the Church, visionary mystic, ecclesial woman, promoter of peace and example of compassion.

Gateway of the Faithful

The Narthex leads to the Gateway of the Faithful. A sculpture of **John the Baptist**¹ bids us to continue our journey by moving from ancient traditions to the New Covenant. St. John's gesturing toward the **Annunciation Doors** underscores this movement. The artist describes the imagery on the doors thus: "On the left door the angel Gabriel is bringing God's invitation to Mary to give birth to Emmanuel. On the right door Mary is responding to this invitation. She is holding an empty vessel, a symbol of her readiness to accept this invitation."

Immediately inside these doors is the **Baptismal Pool**.² We are reminded that we enter into our pilgrimage through the waters of baptism just as Israel began its journey to freedom through the Red Sea. The great Pascal Candle is maintained next to the waters of baptism reminding us that the fire of God is leading us on our exodus journey.

The **upper basin** of the pool is the original granite baptismal font. The living waters now flow from this basin into the **lower pool**. In these still waters we are born into new life. The fish mosaic symbolizes the Church forming the circle of life surrounding the person who is being immersed into our faith life. The fish is one of the ancient symbols of the Church. The first letters of the Greek words for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior", spell the Greek word "ichthus" (fish). The fish mosaic reminds us of our return to the ancient rites of Christian initiation whereby adults are immersed in the waters of new life. In the pool are three crosses recalling the mystery of the Trinity. Immersed in the sacred waters of birth and marked with a cross, we are joined into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In Him we share in the divine life of the Trinity that is offering humanity salvation. On the upper ledge of the pool is an inscription³ from an ancient catechism on baptism written by St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

Suspended above the font is a silk **baldechino**.⁴ The movement of the painted silk cloth calls to mind the voice of God erupting into our world and declaring us "BELOVED". This baldechino brings to life this revolutionary cosmic and timeless dimension of Baptism. On silk is represented the movement of the universe as it joins with the Christ and processed with Him on the exodus through suffering and death, seen in the Crucifix. It then ascends with Him into the New Life of the Kingdom that is represented in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

Baptismal Baldechino

The Baptism of Christ is far more than the story of an isolated yet powerful religious experience of a historic figure. It is our remembering the culmination of God's plan of salvation breaking into human history in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The story reveals him to be God's Anointed One who is drawing humanity, and with us the entire evolving universe, into a new creation. Our Baptism into the Body of Christ has consequences that transcend our individual spirituality. When we become part of the Christ, we are incorporated into God's plan that is creating a new heaven and a new earth. We are offered a freedom that St. Paul writes will overcome slavery to corruption not only for humanity but for the entire cosmos. (Rm 8:20) In the stories of the Lord's baptism we are told He is named Beloved thus designating him to be the One who is the incarnation of the Creator's Love. He is the Omega drawing evolution into a unity that heals a world shattered by humanity and groaning for newness of life. In our baptism we are plunged into a death that frees us from the matrix of dysfunctional life we have created. When we emerge from the waters we are born into the life of Christ and His mission to reconcile all things in the universe into his person thus giving birth to the new creation.

¹ Artist, Michael Northrop (a work in progress)

² Architect, Bill Cox of Cox Medendorp Olson Architects, Inc

³ "When you went down into the water it was night, you could see nothing. When you came up again it was finding yourself in the day. That one moment was your death and your birth; that saving water was both your grave and your mother."

⁴ Designed, lettered and painted by artist and parishioner, Karen Vosburg, and artist Kim Dixon.

The baldechino brings to life this evolutionary cosmic and timeless dimension of Baptism. On silk is represented the movement of the universe as it joins with the Christ and proceeds with Him on the exodus through suffering and death, seen in the Crucifix. It then ascends with Him into the New Life of the Kingdom that is represented in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

The baldechino is a timeline. It is our remembering the culmination of God's plan of salvation breaking into human history in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The end nearest the door begins with stormy skies, with colors that represent chaos and darkness. As the banner progresses toward the Crucifix, it lightens and opens to the heavens. From chaos to order, from darkness to light, the story reveals Jesus to be God's Anointed One, who is drawing humanity, and with us the entire evolving universe into a new creation. When we become part of the Christ, we become incorporated into God's plan that is creating a new heaven and a new earth. In the stories of the Lord's baptism, we are told He is named Beloved, thus designating Him to be the One who is the incarnation of the Creator's love. He is the Omega drawing evolution into a unity that heals a world shattered by humanity and yearning for newness of life. These symbols, rendered in Greek and Hebrew, are represented in the triangular vertical shape that descends from the baldechino. In our baptism, we are plunged into a death that frees us from the matrix of dysfunctional life we have created. When we emerge from the waters, we are born into the life of Christ and His mission to reconcile all things in the universe into His person, thus giving birth to the new creation.

This artwork is a culmination of an 18-month spiritual journey for artists Kim Dixon and Karen Vosburg. Initially, studies were done of the different artistic elements of the church in order to make the banner consistent in design with the rest of the church art and architecture.

Selections from the Old Testament were made after prayer and consideration, various prayers flags were produced on silk during this contemplation (visio divino) and proved instrumental in developing a deeper connection with the text. Smaller scale prototypes were then produced at one quarter scale, to allow the artists to work out various design elements. The final length of each banner is 26' by 4' wide.

Our sincere gratitude to Father Kevin Covert, Judy Bruzza and Michael Northrop for keeping us focused on this spiritual adventure. We strongly believe that the Holy Spirit was instrumental in the completion of this journey.

On the east side of the baptismal area is the **ambry**, a cabinet housing the Church's sacred oils. These are the Oil of Gladness (Sacred Chrism), the Oil of Strength (for the sick) and the Oil of Wisdom (for Catechumens). These are blessed each year by our Bishop during Holy Week and received by the parish on Holy Thursday when we celebrate the Mass of the Last Supper. On the west wall is the **armaria** which is a cabinet containing the gospel books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The gold coverings were crafted by artisans in Argentina.

The Annunciation doors lead into the Sanctuary which is divided into two areas: The Nave and the Centrum (central liturgical area in the sanctuary). The Sanctuary is a sacred oasis on our exodus journey. It is the place where we gather around the wellspring of life to be refreshed. It is in this place where we hear the sacred stories of our salvation retold. Here we are surrounded by the memories of the communion of saints and the traditions that shape us.

The Nave is where the assembly gathers and may be seated during the celebration of the sacred mysteries. The pews are constructed of African mahogany and designed to enhance acoustics. The floor surrounding the Baptismal Pool forms the center aisle through the Nave. It becomes the floor of the central sanctuary platform and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. It is the road on which our journey continues into a new future. The highly polished Shivakashi granite reflects the stained-glass windows. This reminds us that on the journey we can glimpse the glorious future promised to humanity and made possible through the Christ.

On the west side of the Nave is the **statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe**, placed just outside the Reconciliation Chapel. She is a living witness to the reconciliation and new life God offers each of us and our world. This statue is hand carved and is

a gift from the Sisters of Casa Hogar in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. It is an expression of their gratefulness for our ongoing support of their ministry to abandoned children.

On the tower wall, to the right of the Centrum, is the **Jesse Tree** depicting the earthly lineage of Jesus. It is surrounded by stained glass representing the sky and the earth. The roots of the tree depict the twelve tribes of Israel whose names are written in ancient Hebrew. These roots converge into the trunk of the tree depicting the formation of these tribes as one people under David from whom Jesus will descend. This is represented by the star painted in the center of the tree with the name "David" written in biblical Hebrew. The lineage finds its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth whose name in Greek is "Chi Rho" and is placed in the crown of the tree. Superimposed on this title is the Latin "Christus Rex" which is translated "Christ the King".¹

Holy Family Sculpture

Traditional art of the Holy Family usually portrays a mother, father and child doing some normal family task. They often evoke a sense of serenity, warmth, and reassurance in a world of chaos that is constantly threatening human relationships. These representations have served to be important symbols offering hope that God's grace remains active in this most important aspect of human development: the family. However, further reflection on the Christian tradition of the Holy Family can unlock new insights that could aid us as we continue to confront the darkness of our present age. We can discover that the concept of the Holy Family reveals something more powerful and compelling than happy newlyweds enjoying, with God's grace, their firstborn and the family life that sustains them. Indeed, this was the intent of artist Michael Northrop when he designed this sculpture that is unique to St. Catherine's. Local sculptor Joshua Diedrich executed Mike's design at his studio at the Park Trade Center and parishioner Max Walter constructed the base.

In the scriptural tradition the father/older male often symbolizes the past which has given rise to the wisdom and customs that unite, nourish and strengthen our covenant relationship with God. They represent the faithfulness to tradition that provides the stable foundation upon which humanity can build a future. This is certainly true of the Holy Family where Joseph's age varies but is usually depicted as significantly older than Mary. However, considering the few Gospel accounts of him, his faithfulness has brought him to an older age with no wife or significant family. His life therefore is incomplete and lonely. He can be imagined as a figure who must endure the condescending pity and sympathy of his neighbors, somewhat like Job. His faithfulness has produced a life we might term as unfair. Yet our tradition shatters these normal human assumptions by portraying him as a carpenter whose faithfulness has made it possible for him to experience and embrace the unexpected: Loves incarnation. This sculpture attempts to capture this amazing moment by depicting him kneeling and, with profound joy, cradling in his strong arms and hands the fulfillment of human hope. A Hope who is born of the lineage portrayed in the Jesse Tree painted on the wall behind the statues.

The mother or female in the scriptural traditions often represents the intersection of the present moment with the customs and wisdom of the past. The women, rooted in tradition, are able to embrace the present with a caring tenderness that gives birth to a new life with all of its inherent possibilities. This is certainly true of Mother Mary. However, even a casual review of the gospel stories reveals a disturbing dimension. She is indeed a mother embracing her new child with loving care. But she is not the typical mother. She conceived out of wedlock and so is an outcast who should be shunned and put to death. Yet she remains faithful and accepting of God's grace and so overturns what would be considered the tragic but normal course of human events. In this statue of Mary, she is portrayed standing with a noble dignity even as her world has been turned upside down. In this dignity, despite the scorn of the world, she tenderly touches her unexpected husband and looks with joy at the fruit of her faithfulness.

The child in our tradition represents the many hopes for the future that our covenant with God makes possible in real and concrete ways. In the Holy Family this hope is born into what appears to be very irregular and broken

¹ Written by calligrapher and parishioner, Susan Kavanaugh

circumstances. Yet it is their faithfulness rather than the circumstances of their lives that nourish, protect and cradle this fragile newborn hope.

The image of the Holy Family is far more than a portrait of happy suburban Palestinian family life. It is an earth-shattering image challenging traditional comfortable images and closed-minded expectations. It is the obedience of their faith in God; however, that brings forth hope and life even in the most unlikely of family settings. The Holy Family challenges us to open our eyes in order to behold the infinite possibilities that Grace offers us even in the most unlikely circumstances.

This sculpture, composed of ultra cal uniquely blended with a terra cotta patina, captures this radical earth-shattering aspect of the Holy Family. It does this by offering images that are chosen to reflect St. Paul's statement that our often weak that our often-weak human nature causes us to be like earthen vessels made of fragile clay. Mary is a young woman of African Asian descent. She is dressed, as is Joseph and the infant, in the typical wool clothing of her class and is wearing a working women's head covering. Their clothing is actual fabric saturated with ultra cal. Mary appears to be tired from her work and from the labor of birth. Yet she stands with dignity, Joseph also does not fit into preconceived notions. He is younger, unexpectedly bald and powerful even as he kneels. Yet he holds within his rugged strength a Love that amazes even him. The newborn child is completely dependent on them and so reaches out to these two unlikely parents.

This sculpture proclaims that this couple, ready or not, worthy or unworthy, has been entrusted by God with the incredible task of nurturing a Love that would turn the world upside down. Their faithfulness incarnates God's plan of salvation for humanity in Jesus the Christ who is creating a new heaven and a new earth. This unlikely Holy Family invites us to experience the same grace of God alive within the limitations, possibilities and failures of our own lives and challenges us to respond with the same faithfulness.

The **Dedication Crosses**¹ are found on the north, south, east and west walls surrounding the Nave. These and the **Processional Cross** were crafted in the intarsia art form. This was a popular 14th century woodworking art centered in Siena, Italy at the time of St. Catherine.

The central focus of the Sanctuary is an area designated as the Centrum. The four major components of this area are the Altar, Ambo, Presider's Chair, and Crucifix. The People of God are gathered around this area to renew and celebrate our covenant relationship with the Holy One. His sacrifice has become for us the wellspring of life, nourishing and guiding us on the journey of faith.

Our **Altar** comes from granite and limestone quarries in Canada. The stone was then shipped to Italy where it was carved into its present state. Central Tile and Terrazo supervised the entire process and installed all of the stoneware in the Church. The **Mensa** (tabletop) is made of "Blue Eye" granite, the lower slab is "Blue Pearl" granite, and the columns are of limestone. The altar is 42 inches high, 6 feet long, 4 feet wide and weighs approximately 7,000 pounds!! It is here that heaven and earth meet in the sacrifice of Christ. It is here that death gives rise to life and His love becomes our food.

The **Ambo** (pulpit or "little table") is composed of Blue Eye granite and limestone. This place from which Scripture is proclaimed expresses the essential equality and dignity of Word and Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharistic Sacrifice together form one act of worship for God's people.

The **Presider's Chair** is constructed of African mahogany. This chair represents the tradition of the Church handed down from one generation to the next with the guidance of the Bishops.

The **Crucifix**² is based on a 14th century model painted by Cimabue for Santa Croce in Florence, Italy. The choice to paint rather than sculpt the figure of Jesus comes from the Eastern tradition of the icon. In the west, the figure became more and more realistic until the painted figure gave way to the modern sculpted corpus. Michael Northrop painted the

¹ Constructed by intarsia artist and parishioner, Bob Wood.

² Created by artist, Michael Northrop and carpenter, Rob Bartholomew

crucifix to honor both traditions. The merging of eastern iconic form with developing western realism was a common 14th century style that would have been familiar to St. Catherine. The use of a live model was a hallmark of this period of western art. Live models from our area were used in the painting of the crucifix and most of the art in our church.

Our crucifix reflects the early tradition of crossing each end to create four smaller crosses representing the wounds of Christ. The top of the cross is defined by the “titulus” or title board placed above Jesus by the Romans. Each side of the crossbeam ends in a “terminus”. The fourth cross is created by the foot brace on the lower end of the vertical bar.

On either side of the corpus are two areas representing our world. In these two spaces are four symbols representing the fundamental aspects of creation: earth, air, fire and water. These four symbols are leaf designs representing the Trinity. The circle depicts the infinite nature of God. Within the circle are three grape leaves sprouting from a single vine symbolizing Father, Son, and Spirit, three in one. The depiction of the Trinity in each of the four elements expresses a medieval belief that continues to the present day. It teaches us that the triune God is fully active and involved in all aspects of our physical world. It's depiction on the crucifix is the expression of our belief that the sacrifice of Christ is restoring the world's unity disrupted by human sinfulness. This Trinitarian vine figure is repeated throughout the church.

The use of red and blue on the crucifix draws upon a common medieval tradition. Red represents the dynamic passions of our earth and all of creation; blue is the calming dynamic peace of heaven which gives birth to all of life. The red occurring behind the four symbols represents our creation drawn into the sacrifice of Christ. The use of red on the titulus represents the earthly title of Jesus. The blue on the cross itself indicates the divine origin of our salvation. On the two side termini the blue indicates the interaction between the spiritual and physical worlds. The Lord's body spans the red and blue areas proclaiming His suffering is forging the two realities into one new creation.

The right hand of Christ is in the traditional form of blessing. The thumb crosses the last two fingers to symbolize the Trinity and the two extended fingers represent the two natures of Christ: God and human. We are reminded that within the midst of suffering Christ continues to bless us.

On each side of the cross in the terminus the hand of an angel emerges from the heavens holding a chalice collecting the blood of Christ which will be presented at the altar in the Eucharist. This ancient symbol was in common use in 14th century northern Italy. In the modern church there is reference to the angels presenting the blood of Jesus in Eucharistic Prayer number one. His blood becomes a real part of our Eucharistic Liturgy. The blood from the feet falls upon the altar. This recalls the Old Testament stories recounting the blessing of the altar and people with the blood of the sacrificial victims.

Gold is an ancient biblical symbol because it is purified by fire. In the Church it represents that which is made perfect through trial and suffering. Christ's halo is burnished gold creating a mirror-like surface. This reveals the aura of Christ radiating glory even in the midst of suffering. In the titulus is inscribed¹ “*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*”². The Latin, Greek and Hebrew text, like the halo, are 23 carat gold gilded and placed over the shadow of the traditional Latin initials (INRI).

Jesus is depicted alive and nailed to the cross engaging and embracing us thus transforming the horrors of suffering itself. He is not a passive victim but a determined Redeemer. Jesus said, “No one can take my life from me, I LAY IT DOWN WILLINGLY”. The Book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus has become the great High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, not a priest of human descent. Jesus is both priest and sacrifice, offering himself on behalf of humanity. The blood on Jesus' forehead spells out in Hebrew “q'dosh l'yahweh” (holy to the Lord). These words were written on the diadem the Jewish High Priest wore when entering the Holy of Holies. Jesus' eyes are open to remind us that even in His suffering He chooses to continue to be one with us.

¹ Inscribed in Latin from the gospel of John, the wording and the other lines vary slightly due to the use of Greek and Hebrew.

² The Latin abbreviation of Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews; commonly depicted in art in the later church.

The wood panels that form the side of the crucifix represents the fifty days between the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. The engraved Trinitarian symbols represent the twelve apostles. They were ordained during this sacred time to become the very foundation of the emerging Church.

On the reverse side of the crucifix the Holy Spirit descends as a dove through the Hebrew word for life, “Ch’ai”. This powerful word technically is technically translated “primal and universal life.” On the top of the cross, above the image of the dove, are the shadow letters of the ancient Aramaic Christian prayer “Maranatha.” Its translation “*Even so, come*” is superimposed in gold leaf. This is a prayer petitioning the Holy Spirit to be present despite our failures and sinfulness. On the lower portion of the crucifix is a reliquary containing three relics: two of St. Catherine of Siena and one of the true cross.

Gateway of Mystagogy

The **Third Gateway**, the Door of the Holy Name, opens into the **Blessed Sacrament Chapel**.¹ This chapel represents the hope of a new future, a new heaven and earth, a paradise lost but being restored in Christ. The entrance is surrounded in dark blue mosaic representing Heaven. The male and female archangels are depicted in a position of prayer rather than their usual image of warriors with spears. The archangels are the traditional guardians of the Gates of Paradise. They would not allow Adam and Eve to return but now act as our guardians prayerfully inviting us back to the Garden. The Hebrew inscription above the gate is “Yahweh”, the name of the liberator God of Israel, who is calling us back to the Garden.

These mosaics were created from glass smalti tesserae obtained from a studio in Venice, Italy. Each mosaic was assembled horizontally over paintings of the angels, covered with a facing, cut into pieces, then transported here and placed into their vertical position. Michael Northrop was joined in installing the mosaic by a number of volunteers. Brock Schmid, Megan Schopf, Don Krueger, Kitty Patrick, and Fr. Kevin Covert participated in designing the lay of the tesserae. More than a dozen parishioners and interested faithful participated in the assembly of the mosaics.

In the center of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel stands the **Tabernacle** on the **Altar of Adoration**. The tabernacle² is designed to recall the ancient Ark of the Covenant. It is constructed of acacia wood, the same wood used in the original Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies within the Temple of Solomon. Inlaid in the floor on which the tabernacle altar rests are a large Star of David composed of brushed nickel. It reminds us that the lineage of David gives rise to the Christ and His new covenant.

The **Sanctuary Lamp**³ is designed to resemble the fire of the Shekinah glory above the Ark as depicted in the east window. The flame of this lamp calls us to be aware of the Divine Presence in the Eucharist. The **wrought iron trees**⁴ surround the Tabernacle with vigil lights representing our intentions. The trees with the burning candles call to mind the burning bush in the story of Moses; thus, proclaiming this as Holy Ground.

The **south stained-glass window**⁵ depicts one of the oldest icons of the Church. The Risen Christ is returning to us through the gate of death. Reaching out to Adam and Eve, He calls them to join Him in His Resurrection. They represent humanity being offered new life through Christ’s Paschal Mystery. The dark red on the lower portion of the window represents the center of the earth while the dark blue symbolizes the cosmos. Creation itself is being united in His

¹ The ceiling wood is reclaimed from the original sanctuary. The credence tables on either side of the chapel were constructed by parishioner, Max Walter, woods craftsman.

² This piece was designed by our Art and Design Committee assisted by Michigan Church Supply, crafted in Spain and assembled in Milwaukee, WI.

³ Designed by artist, Michael Northrop and created by glassblowers, Greg and Jean Smith.

⁴ The votive candle trees were crafted in Belgium.

⁵ All windows in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel are designed by artist, Michael Northrop and assembled by Dragon Tears in Mendon, MI.

resurrection. The trees depict the primal garden and in the background the hands of the earth are opened up to receive the new Lord.

The **east window** of the Chapel portrays the Ark of the Covenant, a sign of the ancient friendship between God and Israel. Mary, the New Ark, stands with outstretched hands inviting us to participate in God's covenant offered to us through her Son. She is clothed in the traditional medieval dark blue mantle of holiness. The twelve stars surrounding her head form a crown proclaiming her to be the woman of the book of Revelation. Mary carried the New Covenant within her just as the Ark of the Covenant carried the old written law in stone.

The **west window** illustrates the familiar prophecy found in Chapter 11 in the book of Isaiah. The window illustrates the New Kingdom of God that Christ is bringing to fulfillment. The New Kingdom will be a time when all conflict will cease, divisions be erased, suffering and death overcome, and tears wiped away. Our hope for this universal restoration will be fulfilled when the Lord returns in glory.

Maranatha, Lord!

The Creation Windows in the Trinity Chapel at Saint Catherine of Siena Church

Day 1- (The Trinity Window). "In the beginning..." These stirring words mark the origin of our existence. God stands before the beginning in a place beyond our comprehension. God creates in a place outside of time. Only in creation do we begin to understand his power and majesty.

The traditional symbol of God in many cultures has been the circle. The circle has no beginning or end, which describes the most foundational truth about God. The Trinity Window at St. Catherine of Siena Church has been designed by Michael Northrop, Fr. Kevin Covert, and the Art and Design committee of St. Catherine of Siena and built by Northrop to begin to explain and honor the great mystery of the Trinitarian nature of God. The window is intended to be a devotional aid to the believer and a teaching aid to the seeker.

In the exact center of the Trinity Window there is a faceted clear crystal. At the core of our belief about the nature of God is the understanding that God is One. God is holy, and good. His radiance is experienced as dazzling light. The crystal brings the light of the sun into the chapel, but then breaks it into a beautiful spectrum of color. God is one, but we see many aspects of God's glory.

Surrounding the crystal is a Trinitarian knot. The three points of the design lead us to remember the three persons in the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The knot is composed of two cords, which are intended to remind us of the two natures of Jesus Christ, the son: fully God, and fully Man.

The knot is surrounded by a series of 24 triangles that radiate out from the symbols of the trinity, symbolizing the infinite ways that the power, light, and love of God reach out to us.

The field of the window is composed of forty-eight logarithmic spirals: twenty-four moving clockwise, and twenty-four moving counterclockwise. This type of spiral is based on the "Golden Mean" 1:1.618. It is a ratio that is found in almost all life and has often been called the "fingerprint of God," for Example, the intersecting spirals are found on the head of a sunflower or on a pinecone. The way the glass gets gradually lighter as it gets closer to the edge is designed to make the window visually "breathe out" into a sphere, creating a more dramatic representation of the all-encompassing and infinite nature of God. The spirals intersect at concentric circles. Each circle is larger than the last by the same ratio. Once we enter into any understanding of God's nature, we are led into ever expanding circles of wonder.

Three sweeping arcs of green glass move through the blue and violet field. These represent three streams of grace from a single spring as well as the expressions of the Trinity in creation: creator, redeemer, and comforter. Green is symbolic of the life we receive at the fountain of grace. The virtues of faith hope and love issue forth to us abundantly.

The outside border of the window symbolizes the ultimate expression of the Divine Love. Two circles of twelve color divisions, representing the Old and the New Covenants; the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Church. God's Love and Mercy express themselves in the Covenants that the Divine makes with us. The twelve sections are subdivided into twenty-four subdivisions which should call to mind the passage of the hours in the day. The church exists in time, but God is in the center, outside of the limits of time. The Mercy and Love of God constantly flow out to each of us at every time and in every place. In return, we have opportunity to offer back our faith, hope, and love to its source, once again completing the circle.

It was decided that the Trinity window would stand as day one in the creation story. Light breaks into the darkness. Divine creative energy bursts forth setting the stage for the great drama that is to come.

The following windows were designed and built by Michael Northrop.

Day 2- (right front window). "Then God said, 'let there be a dome in the middle of the waters to separate one body of water from the other.'" With those words the waters above the sky were separated from those below. Suspended between the two was the matter that would make up our world. It was a swirling ocean of potential, origin of all that we know. The colors from the Trinity window are re-formed into a new pattern, symbolizing the hand of God in all that is made.

Day 3- (right center window). "Then God said, 'let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on the earth that bears fruit with its seed in it.'" This window celebrates the fruit of the earth. The abundance that God brings forth from the dry land will sustain all that is created after. In the center of the window the grapes and the wheat remind us that provision for both physical and spiritual needs were put into place by our God before we even existed. At the top of the window a Bird of Paradise flower calls to mind the earthly paradise made by God's hand.

Day 4- (right back window). "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night." The sun governs the day, and the moon governs the night, but all work within the plan of the Almighty. Sun, moon, stars and planets are called into being to mark time and rhythms on the newly created earth. In this window the sweeping energy of the Divine Word swirls about the earth with its abundant vegetation.

Day 5- (left back window). "And God said, 'Let the waters teem with an abundance of living creatures and on earth let birds fly below the dome of the sky.' And so, it happened." In this window the fish populate the seas. These fish are modeled after the fish in an ancient mosaic in the Church of the Multiplication of the loaves and fishes in Tabgha, Israel. God commands the birds and fish to multiply at the beginning, so it is fitting that we recall the miracle of the multiplication of the fish by Jesus.

The Pelican is an image used in many churches since medieval times. It was believed that the Pelican would pierce its own breast if its young were in peril to feed its blood to them. Because of this, the Pelican became a symbol of the sacrifice of Jesus and is often found on Altars and Tabernacles.

The Peacock was a symbol used by the early Christians. It is found decorating the graves of Christian martyrs and saints in the catacombs surrounding Rome. It was believed that the flesh of the Peacock did not decay and as such it symbolizes the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

Day 6- (left center window). "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures." "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This window shows the climactic moment of the story. Every preparation is made. God then brings in the host of animal life that populates our planet. The hoof, claw, and paw prints move across the image. The double helix of DNA at the top of the image is the fingerprint of the Divine that is found in every creature.

Mankind stands in the center, male and female. Adam and Eve are the progenitors of every people and race and as such bare the colors of the races of humanity. The spirals that move out through Adam and Eve refer back to the Trinity window and symbolize the image of God stamped on the heart of every person.

Day 7- (left front window). On the seventh day God rested. The colors of the creative energy that have moved through the windows come to rest above and below. The symbol of the Trinity from the large window is etched in the center. The black glass around the center is intended to reflect the viewer and the windows in the chapel. It was on the seventh day that God reflected and saw that His creation was good. We can look into this window and reflect on how God has provided for us spiritually and physically through creation and we can rest in that assurance.

Trinity Chapel Windows installed 3/13/2012

Artist Statement for the Statue of John the Baptist called "Transitions."

By: Michael Northrop, Sculptor

"A voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord".

The prophet speaks of one coming that will cast aside the standard expectations of society and give himself totally to the LORD. Clad only in a girdle of camel hair and a leather belt, he travels along the Jordan River eating locusts and honey, both the bitter and the blessing. John had miraculous beginnings, but it was his powerful message that drew many to his ministry of change. He confidently walked between covenants. As one living out a semi-monastic vow, he lived the simple life of the ascetic prescribed in the Jewish Scriptures. As a prophet he pointed to a new covenant of grace, he called for each person to be ready to enter into a new testament of Truth. In our statue, John steps across that dividing wall between the Jewish covenant and the emerging covenant of grace, a wall his cousin Jesus was breaking down. As it says in Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall," Ephesians 2:14.

John the Baptist called people into the water to mark their repentance, their turning to a new life. He pointed the way to the water and then beyond. He first publically recognized Jesus as the Messiah saying, "Ecce Agnus Dei!" "Behold the Lamb of God!" We do not have text on our statue, but I felt it was important to portray this strong and attractive message with a strong and attractive messenger. He stops mid step in awe of the divine he witnesses at the Altar. His prayer shawl drops to his arms and he grips his staff for strength.

The statue is cast in Hydrocal, a form of Gypsum cement. The original was sculpted in clay from which a rubber mold was created. The mold was removed from the clay and reassembled upside down. The casting material was then poured from the bottom. The faux bronze patina was painted on the statue after it was installed in the church.

At the entrance of the church in stained glass stand the Matriarch and Patriarch of the People of God, Abraham and Sarah, the ancestors of the first covenant motioning for the seeker to move forward to John the Baptist. John stands just before the annunciation doors where Gabriel motions in an invitation to Mary and to us to accept the plan of God. Chronologically, the annunciation was thirty years prior to John's ministry, but in the Divine plan Mary's affirmative answer to God started the new covenant. John in turn directs us through the Divine incarnation and invites us into the Baptismal font where we are baptized with water and Spirit. He carries a shell to pour the waters of new life on those who surrender to its cleansing flow. All of these figures point us to the altar. All of them call to us to "Behold the Lamb of God", an invitation at each portal that builds with anticipation until we finally have the Messiah touch our hands and lips, breaking down that last barrier of the dividing wall within us.

John steps over one wall and points us toward the final outcome of our faith. Beyond the altar we see in the stained-glass window Jesus breaking down the gates of death and destroying that final barrier. His ability to take us beyond the wall of death allows us to become joint heirs in the new covenant. What is built beyond that final gate is built in peace, trust and faith. It is the kingdom of Heaven.

We will walk past our faithful ancestors' week after week. They will continue to extend their hands in invitation calling us to go just a little deeper on the journey each time until we finally pass through that final gate, fully entering into the promise of our faith.

Stations of the Cross for St. Catherine of Siena Church

The Stations of the Cross were commissioned by St. Catherine of Siena Church with the generous donation of Margaret Pillar in memory of her husband Arnold in 2013. The artist is Michael Northrop who has worked with St. Catherine's over the last ten years with the renovation of the Church and the addition of Trinity Chapel and all of the artwork which adorns our church and chapel. The overall shape of the stations reflects the Crucifix combined with the shape of the resurrection window behind the Crucifix to create this unique set of stations Michael's intention was to have Jesus looking directly at us. He wants us to confront what the suffering of Jesus means to us and for us.

Every element of the images has symbolic meaning. For example, there is a stone wall behind every station until Jesus dies on the cross. This wall symbolizes the separation of man from God because of sin. Through the sacrifice of Jesus that wall is broken down. At the ends of the crossbar on each cross (collectively called termini in Latin) we have symbols that add to the understanding of each station.

Perhaps the most unique element of the St. Catherine of Siena Stations of the Cross is the inclusion of soil from each of the corresponding stations on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem. During the project, Fr. Creagan took a number of parishioners to the Holy Land. They volunteered to collect the soil as they walked the path that Jesus took to Calvary. They brought the soil back. It was sterilized to neutralize any organic matter and then it was pulverized and mixed into the paint. The texture on the ground in Stations One through Eleven and Thirteen, as well as in the mortar between the stones in Station Fourteen is from the corresponding stations in the Holy Land. The soil from the Twelfth Station is included in a small reliquary and is visible in the back of the Crucifix.

The first twelve stations are located in the main church on the brick walls. The crucifix as the twelfth station invites you to progress to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to pray and reflect with the thirteenth and fourteenth station located on the columns behind the mosaic angels.

In the chapel we invite you reflect and complete your prayers filled with the hope of Christ's triumphal ending to a most sorrowful passion.

In the **First Station** Jesus stands before Pontius Pilate. Jesus looks at us asking who we judge Him to be. The symbols on the termini are a pitcher of water and a bowl. Pilate washes his hands of that decision. There are many ways we wash our hands of this decision. This station challenges us to look at how we respond to the invitation that Pilate gives us to "Behold the Man."

The **Second Station** shows Jesus receiving the cross bar of His cross which He will now carry. The images in the termini depict the pillar where Jesus was flogged and the lash that was used to tear His flesh. This beating would have torn the flesh from His back and shoulders making carrying the cross intensely painful. Jesus looks at us and asks us if we are willing to take up our cross and follow Him. The pain of our Lord's experience can make us want to turn away, but He reminds us that His "yoke is easy" and His "burden is light."

Jesus falls under the weight of His cross in the **Third Station**. He looks into our heart and reminds us that when we fall, He is with us and He has been there. His fall was physical, ours may be spiritual, but He will be there. Angels reach out to help in fulfillment of the prophecy, "He will send His angels to lift you up." They remind us of the spiritual help that is all around us.

In the **Fourth Station**, Jesus looks away from us to see His mother. Notice that the cross seems lighter as Jesus is comforted by His mother. We too can find comfort in our most difficult hour by looking to His mother. "Holy Mary,

Mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death.” The Immaculate Heart of Mary, pierced with sorrow and the Sacred Heart of Jesus wounded for us, appear in the termini.

In the **Fifth Station** Simon of Cyrene is pulled from the crowd to assist Jesus. Jesus looks into our hearts and asks if we will stand with Him when asked. According to the tradition of the Church, Simon was an egg dealer. The Passover would be the biggest day of the year for his trade because every Jewish home needed eggs for the Passover table. He had come to the city with his two sons Alexander and Rufus. When he was pulled into the Passion of Jesus, he lost time selling his eggs. He prayed and the Lord turned all of his eggs beautiful colors to make them more desirable and Alexander and Rufus were able to sell all they had. This is the root of our Easter tradition of colored eggs. Alexander and Rufus went on to become saints of the Church. Thus, the basket of colored eggs and the eggs with the names of Alexander’s sons appear in the termini.

Veronica meets Jesus in the **Sixth Station**. She wipes His face with her veil and receives the image of Jesus. Veronica is really not a name, but rather a title. Vero means true and icon is image. She has the true image of Jesus. He looks at us and asks if we are willing to be His true image in the world. The termini show the veil before and after Jesus leaves His image.

Jesus falls a second time in the **Seventh Station**. The blood from His first fall is evident on His left knee. Once again, the angels reach out to Him in the termini.

The **Eighth Station** shows Jesus speaking to the women of Jerusalem. He says, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children.” He speaks to us as well. How often we do not see the dangers around us. We revel in the riches of our world and ignore the spiritual destruction that waits. Jerusalem appears on the termini, a city which was destroyed almost exactly forty years after the Passion of Jesus.

In the **Ninth Station** Jesus falls a third time, this time He is shown on both knees. He is losing strength as He approaches Calvary. Once again angelic help is offered in the termini.

The public disrobing of Jesus in the **Tenth Station** was designed to add to His humiliation. He looks at us weak and nearly naked. We are reminded of His teaching when the people ask, “Lord, when did we see you naked and not clothed you?” He answers, “What you have not done for the least of these, you have not done for me.” Every time we deny clothing to those in need, we become the soldier stripping our Lord. The termini show the seamless robe taken from Jesus and the dice used to gamble to see which soldier would take home the prize.

The **Eleventh Station** shows Jesus being nailed to the cross. This was a very personal painting for the artist. About twenty-six years ago he had this vision during prayer. He had tried to paint it but realized that he couldn’t without training. He studied and became an artist, but never tried to paint this again until now. In the image Jesus looks at us with pleading eyes as flesh and bone are ripped by iron spikes. His face shows pain, but the underlying message is, “I’m enduring this for you.” Those spikes that tore His hands and feet are shown in the termini.

From the beginning it was determined that the crucifix should be the **Twelfth Station**. It is not recommended to replicate images within the church and the crucifix is the defining image of Jesus dying on the cross. The numeral XII in the floor is twenty-four carat gold mosaic tesserae, the same gold used on the mosaic arch at the entry of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. The numeral will be dedicated as the station.

Jesus is taken down from the cross in the **Thirteenth Station**. Here we no longer see Jesus looking at us, we now see His body. This is the body given for us, the body that gives us life. Surrounding the body are all of us who recognize our Lord. In this image we remember Arnold Pillar, in whose memory these stations were created. He stands as Joseph of Aramathea receiving the body of Christ. Nicodemus offers the body. In this image is Father Robert Creagan, pastor, who regularly offers the body of Christ to this parish. Witnessing the event is Jesus’ mother Mary, who is closest to the cross. The other Mary is modeled after Margaret Pillar, wife of the late Arnold Pillar. Mary Magdalene is modeled after

Margaret's sister Helen who passed away in 1946. The termini in this station depict the eclipse that happened at the crucifixion which reminds us of that three-day period of darkness when the Son of God was not with us.

The **Fourteenth Station** shows Jesus in the tomb. This image is meant to reflect the inside of the tabernacle where the body of Christ resides. Behind the body are the tabernacle doors and the angels that stand on either side of the tabernacle. Over the body is the flame, the Shikineh presence of God (pronounced shi-ky-na), the flame indicating the presence of the body. The termini here are empty signifying the emptiness felt by the disciples at the death of their Lord.

There are times when a Fifteenth Station is honored. The resurrection window behind the tabernacle shows Jesus breaking down the gates of death in His resurrected body. His resurrection is the triumphal ending to a most sorrowful passion.

Adapted from Artist Statement for the Stations of the Cross in the booklet distributed for the dedication

By: Michael Northrop, Artist

The Stations were dedicated on the 17th day of January 2015
by Bishop Paul J. Bradley