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Stained Glass Window Symbols and Explanations

With the crucifix at the front, begin in the sanctuary, facing the right side, moving left to right:

Window #1

- x Rex Gloria
King of Glory

- x Latin Cross Inside an Oval Archway
The oval shaped archway, or vesica, represents Mary's womb, from which Christ came, the cross signifies Christ. Together they represent the birth of Christ.

Window #2

- x Gladiolus
This flower represents the incarnation, the word made flesh. The green leaves symbolize survival and renewal; they are emblematic of the Savior.

- x Anchor Cross
This symbol was carried over from the days of persecution, before Constantine. Early Christians had to conceal their religious practices; the anchor was their disguised sign of the cross. It was symbolic of Hope in Jesus Christ, "this hope we have, as a sure and firm anchor of the soul ... " (Hebrews 6:19)

Window #3

- x Circle
The circle is eternal without ending; this is symbolic of eternal existence.

- x Agnus Dei
Lamb of God

- x Lamb
This is the symbol of Jesus, taken from the gospel passage that proclaims Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Window #4

- x Circled Latin Cross
The Latin cross has a longer upright than a crossbar; it resembles a person with arms outstretched. It was chosen because it represented Christ's death in Jesus' life and his resurrection. Joined with the circle, this symbolizes Jesus' eternal existence.

Window #5

- x Lux Mundi
Light of the World
- x Crown of Thorns
This is known as the mocking crown, symbolic of humiliation and defeat which ultimately gave way to Christ's glory in his resurrection.

Facing the left side of the sanctuary, moving left to right:

Window #6

- x Chalice and Host
The host is a flat round piece of unleavened bread which is symbolic of the manna given to Jews in the desert. Its name comes from the Latin word "hostia" meaning victim. The chalice is the cup of salvation, the source of never ending sustenance. When a host is shown above the chalice, it symbolizes the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.
- x Grapes
This fruit is used to make the Eucharistic wine and is symbolic of the blood of Christ and his sacrifice; Christ called himself the "true wine" (John 15:1).
- x Wheat
This symbolizes bread, the staff of life from which abundant blessings flow.

Window #7

- x IC XC
These are the first and last letters of the Greek word for Jesus.
NI KA
This is the Greek word for conquers. Together the above means Jesus Christ conquers.
- x Staff and Serpent
The brazen serpent collided around the cross refers to John 3:14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up."

Window #8

- x Triangle
This is the most popular symbol of the Holy Trinity, it is usually an equilateral triangle. It represents the three equal parts of the Holy Trinity.
- x Basket and Bread
The number three denotes the Holy Trinity. The bread, which contains marks, symbolizes Christ's sacrifice.
- x Fish
Fish were used as a symbol of Christianity as a time when Christians were persecuted for their beliefs. Since fishing was a way of life, the fish was a common sight. Christians could identify each other by drawing a fish in the sand; fish were also used to point the way to Christian services in the catacombs. A single fish represents Christ, several fish represent faithful Christians.

Window #9

- x Chi Rho Cross
This is the monogram of the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ: CHI (X) and RHO (P). The letters are the abbreviation for the name of Christ.
- x IXOYC
This is the Greek word for "fish;" the fish was used to point the way to underground worship services at a time in history when the Christians were persecuted for their religious beliefs. The letters stand for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

Window #10

- x Water
This is a symbol of the sacrament of Baptism which was instituted by Christ. The old life is washed away and the new life is sanctified in baptism.
- x Pebbles
Early Christians and monks would gather up pebbles in the desert to use as a rosary. There are seven of these pebbles; seven is a significant number: seven tribes, seven loaves and fish, etc.

With the crucifix at the front, begin by facing the right side of the Chapel, moving left to right.

Window #11

- x Carpenter's Angle and Hammer
This is to symbolize St. Joseph, the carpenter.
- x Chi Rho Cross with the letter "M"
Symbolizes that Mary is the "Mother of Christ"
- x Scales of Justice
Mary was called the "Mirror of Justice" and Joseph was referred to as a "just" man. Scales are an emblem of the archangel Michael, regarded as guardian of the church and its members. He weighs the souls of men and women on the Last Day.
- x Lilies
These flowers denote the "Mother Most Pure;" this comes from the Litany. The white, three petaled lilies symbolize purity and innocence; they are a symbol of Mary's virginity and innocence.

Window #12

- x Three Intertwined Circles
Circles have no apparent beginning or end. The three circles symbolize the Holy Trinity, the eternal nature of each person in the Godhead. They are intertwined to show unity between the three Godheads.
- x Three Candles
They represent Jesus, the light of the world. Three candles refer to the Holy Trinity.

Window #13

- x Sunflower
This flower denotes the soul turning to Christ, just as a sunflower turns toward the sun.

Window #14

- x Some symbols are used several times; this window repeats the use of the Chi Rho cross and the equilateral triangle.

Window #25

- x Descending Bird
Symbolizes the Holy Spirit descending upon God's people.

- x Ark of the Covenant
This is taken from the Litany to Mary; she was referred to as the "Ark of the Covenant" because she was the vessel which carried Jesus forth into this world for all to behold. The color purple used on the Ark signifies mourning, penitence, humility, suffering, sympathy, and fasting.

Window #26

- x Chalice with Host
These two objects symbolize the body and blood of Christ, his sacrifice for us. The bread meets our physical needs and the Holy Eucharist meets our spiritual needs.

- x Candles
The candles refer to the light of the Word, Jesus and his faithful followers.

Window #27

- x Equilateral Triangle within a Circle
The circle has no beginning or end; it stands for eternity and signifies eternal existence. The circle surrounds the triangle which symbolizes the Holy Trinity, the three equal parts joined as one.

Window #28

- x Volumes of Closed Books
These books were possibly used to symbolize Elizabeth Seton who founded the first native American religious community for women, the Sisters of Charity. She also opened the first American parish school, and established the first American catholic orphanage.

- x Sun
This is a symbol of Jesus Christ. Sun of righteousness shall "rise with healing in its wings." Both the Son and the Sun bring light and life to the world. There is a triangle attached to one of the sun's rays representing the Holy Trinity. Through the Holy Trinity, you will find the light.