

ICONOGRAPHIC ARTISTIC MASTER SCHEDULE - MARY, QUEEN OF THE ANGELS

From time to time, as appropriate you may recall that I am accustomed to giving updates on where we are on, not only construction, but also the on-going artistic work within the church and chapel.

I am happy to inform you of yet another addition of a newly created beautiful stained glass window in the chapel. The work is inspired by the intention to continue to have Marian themes associated with much of the artistic works of our church and chapel. The window in the side niche of the chapel is entitled Mary, Queen of the Angels, a title given to Mary throughout the rich history and tradition of our Catholic Faith, which states as dogma, that **Mary** is assumed into heaven and is with Jesus Christ, her divine son. **Mary** should be called **Queen**, not only because of her Divine Motherhood of Jesus Christ, but also because God has willed her to have an exceptional role in the work of eternal salvation.

Mary the Mother of Jesus, has received many different titles over the centuries. Some come from her personal life and her role in our salvation: "Mother of God," "Mother of Sorrows" or "Our Lady of the Assumption." Some of these titles come from the tradition of asking Mary to pray for us in intercessory prayer to God for our needs. Examples of these would be "Mary, Refuge of Sinners" or "Mary, Mother of Good Counsel." Sometimes these titles refer to her appearance in a famous apparition such as "Our Lady of Guadalupe" or "Our Lady of Lourdes" or "Our Lady of Fatima." The title of "Our Lady Queen of Angels" refers to Mary's place of honor with her Son in the Kingdom of Heaven where Christ is King and Mary is Queen Mother. It is a place of honor because she is placed over the wonderful creatures of God called angels who serve as God's messengers and as guardians for individuals.

The close connection between the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Holy Angels is one we see throughout her life on Earth: at the Annunciation, the Nativity of her Divine Son, her Assumption into heaven, and finally her Coronation as Queen of Angels and Men. The first invocation of her as Queen in the Litany of Loreto is as "Queen of Angels."

So much has been written about the angels but suffice it to note that the Catechism of the Catholic Church states the following:

The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition. (338)

The angels are spiritual creatures who glorify God without ceasing and who serve his saving plans for other creatures: "The angels work together for the benefit of us all." (350) St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas Aquinas goes on further in his famous treatise on the faith, the Summa Theologica, to explain about the nine choirs of angels as garnered from scripture and tradition: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, archangels, powers and angels.

The following description is a citation from an article entitled, "The Nine Choirs of Angels," from Catholic Online.org

Seraphim - These are the highest order or choir of angels. They are the angels who are attendants or guardians before God's throne. They praise God, calling, "Holy Holy Holy is the Lord of Hosts". The only Bible reference is Isaiah 6:1-7. One of them touched Isaiah's lips with a live coal from the altar, cleansing him from sin. Seraphim have six wings, two cover their faces, two cover their feet, and two are for flying.

Cherubim - Cherubim rank after the seraphim and are the second highest in the nine hierarchies or choirs of angels. The Old Testament does not reveal any evidence that the Jews considered them as intercessors or helpers of God. They were closely linked in God's glory. They are manlike in appearance and double-winged and were guardians of God's glory. They symbolized then, God's power and mobility. In the New Testament, they are alluded to as celestial attendants in the Apocalypse (Rv 4-6). Catholic tradition describes them as angels who have an intimate knowledge of God and continually praise Him.

Thrones - Thrones are the Angels of pure Humility, Peace and Submission. They reside in the area of the cosmos where material form begins to take shape. The lower Choir of Angels need the Thrones to access God.

Dominions - Dominions are Angels of Leadership. They regulate the duties of the angels, making known the commands of God.

Virtues - Virtues are known as the Spirits of Motion and control the elements. They are sometimes referred to as "the shining ones." They govern all nature. They have control over seasons, stars, moon; even the sun is subject to their command. They are also in charge of miracles and provide courage, grace, and valor.

Powers - Powers are Warrior Angels against evil defending the cosmos and humans. They are known as potentates. They fight against evil spirits who attempt to wreak chaos through human beings. The chief is said to be either Samael or Camael, both angels of darkness.

Archangels - Archangels are generally taken to mean "chief or leading angel" (Jude 9; 1 Thes 4:16), they are the most frequently mentioned throughout the Bible. They may be of this or other hierarchies as St. Michael Archangel, who is a princely Seraph. The Archangels have a unique role as God's messenger to the people at critical times in history and salvation (Tb 12:6, 15; Jn 5:4; Rv 12:7-9) as in The Annunciation and Apocalypse. A feast day celebrating the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael is celebrated throughout the Church Sep 29. A special part of the Byzantine Liturgy invokes the "Cherubic Hymn" which celebrates these archangels and the guardian angels particularly.

Of special significance is St. Michael as he has been invoked as patron and protector by the Church from the time of the Apostles. The Eastern Rite and many others place him over all the angels, as Prince of the Seraphim. He is described as the "chief of princes" and as the leader of the forces of heaven in their triumph over Satan and his followers. The angel Gabriel first appeared in the Old Testament in the prophesies of Daniel, he announced the prophecy of 70 weeks (Dn 9:21-27). He appeared to Zechariah to announce the birth of St. John the Baptist (Lk 1:11). It was also Gabriel, which proclaimed the Annunciation of Mary to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour. (Lk 1:26) The angel Raphael first appeared in the book of Tobit (Tobias) Tb 3:25, 5:5-28, 6-12). He announces, "I am the Angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the throne of God." (Tb 12:15)

Principalities - In the New Testament Principalities refers to one type of spiritual (metaphysical) being which are now quite hostile to God and human beings. (Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:10, 15) Along with the principalities are the powers (Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 1 Pt 3:22; 2 Thes 1:7); and cosmological powers (1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; Col 2:15); Dominions (Eph 1:21; Col 1:16) and thrones (Col 1:16). The clarity of the New Testament witness helps see that these beings were created through Christ and for Him (Col 1:16). Given their hostility to God and humans due to sin, Christ's ultimate rule over them (ibid) expresses the reign of the Lord over all in the cosmos. This is the Lordship of Christ, which reveals God's tremendous salvation in conquering sin and death at the cross, and now takes place in the Church. (Eph 3:10)

Angels - These angels are closest to the material world and human beings. They deliver the prayers to God and God's answers and other messages to humans. Angels have the capacity to access any and all other Angels at any time. They are the most caring and social to assist those who ask for help.

The cost of the entire window was completely covered by a generous couple of the parish. I am deeply grateful for their commitment to our parish and dedication to the Catholic Faith. I am confident that this window will be a source of spiritual inspiration and motivation for all those who gaze upon it.