

# Sacred Treasures The East Window

Church of the  
Immaculate  
Conception



# The Life of Jesus

The stunning East Window is set inside an arch and divided into five distinct lights, each depicting an important liturgical event in the life of Jesus, namely the Nativity, Baptism, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension.



## Mary and her Angels

The circular stone shape at the apex of the window shows Mary resplendent in all her glory. This echoes the carving in the tympanum above the door at the main entrance to the church. This is an image of the Immaculate Conception and shows Mary with her foot on the serpent's head. She is clothed in white and blue, colours symbolising her purity and chastity. The central trefoil illustrates a woman or an angel holding a cloth with the face of Jesus imprinted on it. On either side of the trefoil there is an inscription on the glass which reads 'Macula Non-Est Te'. This translates from Latin to mean 'There is no stain in thee', another reference to the Immaculate Conception.

## The Nativity

This light illustrates the story of the Nativity, the birth of Jesus. The main figures are Mary and Joseph who are gazing attentively at the child Jesus who is lying with outstretched hands. There are three angels, two of whom are playing musical instruments. The ox is a reminder that Jesus was born in a stable. The figures are set within a backdrop of white medieval canopies, typical of Mayer of Munich windows of this period.



## The Resurrection

This slender light shows Christ risen from the tomb. He stands triumphant, showing his pierced right hand and with a staff in his left hand. His white tunic is covered by a red cloak, the traditional colours of Jesus, representing love and the blood of Christ. The skill of the artist has rendered this in a three-dimensional manner. Two Roman centurions are positioned at the entrance to the tomb. One is sleeping, the other has sprung up and appears startled with fear. The blue background shimmers with gold as we see Christ moving towards his final resting place.



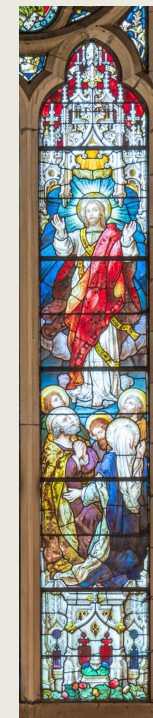
## The Baptism of Jesus

The light depicts the figure of Jesus standing in water with his head bowed in humility. He wears a rich crimson robe and underneath a white tunic embroidered at the bottom with gold brocade, signifying his divinity and godliness. John is standing on a grassy bank and in his right hand, a shell is being used as a receptacle to hold water to baptise Christ. An angel dressed in a purple cloak gazes reverently at the figure of Jesus. A descending white dove, symbolising the love of the Holy Spirit, sits near the top of the window.



## The Ascension

Jesus is very much the central figure here, positioned prominently above a host of saintly figures. The rays of light behind his halo symbolise the wholeness and completion of Jesus' reunion with his divine Father. Colours play an important part in the symbolism of stained glass and the colours here, red, white, blue and gold are all representations of God in heaven: love, purity, holiness and hope.



## The Crucifixion

This is the largest light – to accommodate Christ's outstretched arms. Jesus is rightfully the most prominent figure in the scene. On his head he wears a crown of thorns but it is encircled here by a halo showing his divinity. Jesus' body is wrapped in a white cloth with shimmering green, signifying rebirth and a victory of life over death. There are three other figures in the scene: Our Lady in blue and white, Mary of Magdala kneeling and wearing robes of green and gold to represent growth and rebirth and the apostle St John in a red cloak, signifying his strong love for Jesus.



## By Appointment, Pope Leo XIII

The large Mayer & Co stained glass windows in the Church of the Immaculate Conception are in a pictorial style, full of beautiful images inspired by Renaissance paintings. The jewelled colours are vibrant and rich, the amount of white (clear) glass is kept to a minimum. The images are highly detailed, the faces emotive and angelic, the robes exquisite and the background intricate. Many of the images are crowned with delicately worked canopies.

The company was founded in 1847 by Franz Mayer, whose aspiration was to create a company dedicated to 'a combination of fine arts, architecture, sculpture and painting...'

When Pope Leo XIII awarded the company the title Pontifical Institute of Christian Art in 1892, Mayer became the foremost supplier of stained glass to Irish churches, both Catholic and Protestant.

Photo of P. McMenamin courtesy of Mrs Bridie McGilligan



## Patrick McMenamin J.P. (c.1848-1924)

Many people, including the local community, donated towards the building of the Church which opened in September 1895. One of the most generous donors was Patrick McMenamin who was born in the townland of Stroangibbagh, Co. Donegal during the Great Hunger. He came to Strabane in 1860 as an apprentice shop boy to John Browne's business in Castle Place. Patrick not only donated the money for the East Window above the altar but he also contributed one thousand pounds towards the organ and along with his employer Mrs Browne, paid for the concrete surrounds and metal railings outside the church.

Patrick died in Dublin on 19 March 1924. His remains were conveyed by the GNR train from Dublin to Strabane and after his funeral mass Patrick McMenamin was buried in the Browne family grave in Melmount.

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*Sacred Treasures: Restoring, Illuminating, Cataloguing & Maintaining project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to restore this iconic window as a key element of our 2024 project.*

## Sacred Treasures Project

This initiative has preserved these stunning artworks for future generations, which was also supported by The National Churches Trust, The Benefact Trust, The Kathleen Graham Trust and our local parish community.

The Sacred Treasures project has both showcased the beauty of these irreplaceable windows and deepened our appreciation and understanding of their historical and cultural significance, ensuring they remain a cherished part of our community's heritage.

Lorraine Gallen, Project Manager

[www.camusheritage.com](http://www.camusheritage.com)

