

## **The East Window – the Story of Jesus**

This stunning stained glass 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.

### *The Nativity*

This panel/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. Mary is dressed in the traditional blue and white of Our Lady, representing love, holiness and innocence. St Joseph is holding the lantern in a caring loving manner as befits a husband and father. 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 windows of this period.

### *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 over 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.

John appears melancholic and is dressed in a violet tunic, a bold colour, symbolizing love, truth, passion and suffering. Above the wooden staff and lilies, there is a cloth with an inscription. The gifted stained glass artist has created the feeling of movement as the cloth appears to billow in the wind. 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 Crucifixion*

This is the largest windowpane – 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, signifying his enduring agony and how he was mocked by the Roman soldiers, 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 her traditional colours of blue and white representing purity and love, Mary of Magdala kneeling and wearing robes of green and gold, showing growth and rebirth and possibly the apostle, St John in a red cloak signifying his strong love for Jesus.

Credit must be paid to the artists who have portrayed the love and grief in the faces of these figures. The initials INRI appear on the Cross representing the Latin inscription IESVS NAZARENVS REX IVDÆORVM (Jesus Nazarene, King of the Jews), which in English translates to "*Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews*".

## *The Resurrection*

This slender light shows Christ risen from the tomb. He stands triumphant with a staff in his left hand and his right hand raised showing his pierced palm. 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 and the gold light symbolism Jesus making his way to heaven.

## *The Ascension*

Jesus is very much the central figure here, prominent above a host of saintly figures. It is apparent from the height of the Christ figure within this light that the artist wants to reinforce the importance of the Ascension story. The rays of light behind the 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.

### **East Window - 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 at the main entrance to the church at the west entrance. This is an image of the Immaculate Conception. Mary is clothed in white and blue, symbols of purity and chastity and you can see her foot on the serpent's head.

The central trefoil illustrates a woman holding a cloth with the face of Jesus imprinted on it. On closer inspection it looks like an angel with closed wings.

On either side of the trefoil there is an inscription on the glass which reads '*Macula Non-Est Te*'. This is Latin and means '*There is no stain in thee*'. This is again a reference to the Immaculate Conception.

These large windows, for many people the focal point of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, were part of the 2024 project, ***Sacred Treasures - Restoring, Illuminating, Cataloguing & Maintaining.***

This project was funded by the National Heritage Lottery, the National Churches Trust, the Benefact Trust, the Kathleen Graham Trust and the local parish community.

The windows were removed, taken to Dublin where they were restored by Cannon Stained Glass and reinstalled in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in November 2024.