

The Message of the Gospel in the Window



The upper half of the window:

Stained glass windows in churches were originally designed to educate the congregation about the Christian Faith.

This means that from a Christian point of view our primary concern is not so much with the history of the window or the technical competence of its makers but the message it bears to the Glory of God.

In Christ Church Longford the window presents an opportunity for us to explain the Gospel of salvation and this I suggest is its primary purpose.

At the apex of the window, we see the dove symbolic of the Holy Spirit, and the ministry of Jesus was initiated by God the Holy Spirit.

Below, the Alpha and Omega on one side (meaning the beginning and the end) and the IHS on the other side.

The alpha and omega reminds us of the eternal purpose of the Good news of Jesus, and the IHS is symbolic of the charge Pilate placed the charge on the cross as 'The King of the Jews'.

This title goes beyond the confines of the passion in that Jesus is the ruler of the universe and king of the whole earth.

Between these lights in the window are the symbols of our Lord's passion, the scourging and the cross. The cross is the place of sacrifice, it tells us that Jesus died for our sins.

Below this row, the crown of thorns and the tunic remind us of the Trial 'by His stripes we are healed' (Isaiah 53:5), and this healing is completed in the resurrection and now we are healed from sin and rebellion against God.

Below this passion section, the 4 figures of the Revelation of St John tell us of the eternal significance of the Good News of Jesus.

These figures also represent the character of the Gospels whose writers are in the lower part of the window and are represented by: the character of man (Jesus humanity in Matthew), lion (Christ's kingship in Mark), the ox (sacrifice in Luke), and the eagle (illustrating the flight of theological insight) in John's Gospel.

The presence of these figures above the corresponding gospel writers remind us of the eternal significance of the message of salvation offered in the passion of Jesus the Christ.

Between these four figures of the angel Gabriel and Mary reminding us of the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus.



The Lower half of the window:

In the lower half of the window, the Gospel writers are presented beneath their character symbols in the upper half.

The figure representing Luke has the book open because the Gospel story continues in the Acts of the Apostles and to this present time.

We are invited to respond to the message as we look at this open book, are we prepared to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord of our lives?

John is represented as a youth, but if the youth mentioned in Mark's Gospel is the writer it is more likely that Mark was the youngest.

However, the youthful image of John reminds us that John outlived all the others and became the bishop of Ephesus.

In the centre of the Gospel writers Jesus stands with the orb and sceptre symbolising the eternal divine nature of Jesus who is God from all eternity and for all eternity and who has complete sovereignty over the universe and especially in the judgement of humanity.

The symbol of worldly power and authority below are there because all power and authority must ultimately surrender to Christ.

Before God all humanity is equal 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23)

If you would like to know more about the Good News of salvation, forgiveness of sins, freedom from guilt and shame and eternal life in Jesus you might like to meditate on John chapter 5 verse 24:

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
(Joh 5:24 ESV)