

MATER DEI CHAPEL

Stained Glass Windows | Self-Guided Reflections

Prepared by Marge Kloos, SC

This prayer reflection is designed for a 10-minute reflection each day during the academic year. View the window for that week and pray for 10 minutes with the reflection question or Scripture indicated. There are 32 weeks of the academic year and 28 windows.

During the third week of Lent, you are encouraged to simply experience the cross in the sanctuary, followed by the fourth and fifth weeks of Lent, when you can walk around the Chapel and experience the Stations of the Cross.

The week following Easter presents itself as the perfect time to close your eyes and see how your own imagination reveals the Resurrection. Resurrection is the central mystery within Christianity. Artistic renderings of resurrection are perhaps best left to the imagination and the work of the Spirit.

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

Window #1 | Week 1

Symbols Rex Gloria: King of Glory

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.

Reading 1 Timothy 6:15

Revelations 19:16

Luke 11:27 - Blessed is the woman who gave you birth and nursed you.

Reflections Jesus, ordinary human, becomes the glorious one sent from God, through the womb of a woman, to be the way, the truth and the life. How do you praise God for such a great mystery?

Window #2 | Week 2

Symbols	<p>Gladiolus: This flower represents the incarnation, the word made flesh. The green leaves symbolize survival and renewal; they are emblematic of the Savior.</p> <p>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)</p>
Reading	<p>Hebrews 6:19</p> <p><i>John 1:14 - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Begotten who became from the Father, full of grace and truth.</i></p>
Reflection	<p>Jesus, flesh and bone, found humanity to be appealing enough to come and live as one of us. In what ways do you welcome Jesus into the fleshy earthy real situation into your life?</p>

Window #3 | Week 3

Symbols	<p>Circle: The circle is eternal without ending; this is symbolic of eternal existence.</p> <p>Agnus Dei: Lamb of God</p> <p>Lamb: This is the symbol of Jesus, taken from the gospel passage that proclaims Jesus as the Lamb of God.</p>
Reading	<p>John 1:29 - <i>"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"</i></p>
Reflection	<p>Jesus is merciful, forgiving, and always ready to give of his life on our behalf. How has Jesus' mercy presented itself to you?</p>

Window #4 | Week 4

Symbols	<p>Circled Joined to the 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 atonement in Jesus' life and his resurrection. Joined with the circle, this symbolizes Jesus' eternal existence.</p>
Reading	<p>Rev. 22:13 - <i>I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.</i></p>

Reflection Jesus, with God always, present at creation and in every creature. Jesus' eternal existence, tangled in the cross of salvation, is our great hope as Christians. For what are you eternally grateful?

Window #5 | Week 5

Symbols Lux Mundi: Light of the World

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.

Reading John 8:12 - *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Reflection We know light because we experience darkness. Discipleship is a willingness to be pilgrims on a journey with Jesus, living the mission of the gospel. For whom am I light in the darkness?

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

Window #6 | Week 6

Symbols Chalice and Host: The host is a flat round piece of unleavened bread, which is symbolic of the manna given to the 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 the host is shown above the chalice, it symbolizes the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.

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 15:1-8).

Wheat: This symbolizes bread, the staff of life from which abundant blessings flow.

Readings John 15: 1-8

John 6:35 - *Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

Reflection Jesus is an inviting companion, who invites us to the table of life. If we live ecologically, we come to realize that Jesus sustains every creature, in all times and places, through a cleaver web of relationships. How do you experience Jesus' sustaining presence in your relationships with humans and non-humans?

Window #7 | Week 7

Symbols	<p>IC XC: These are the first and last letters of the Greek word for Jesus.</p> <p>NI KA: This is the Greek word for conquers. Together the above means Jesus Christ Conquers</p> <p>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."</p>
Reading	John 3:14
Reflection	Jesus was once tempted in the desert. At different points in our lives, all humans live in the desert dealing with a cleaver and seductive serpent. When has God guided your heart away from the temptation? Did you experience gratitude?

Window #8/Week 8

Symbols	<p>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.</p> <p>Basket and Bread: The number three denotes the Holy Trinity. The bread, which contains cross marks, symbolizes Christ's sacrifice.</p> <p>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.</p>
Reading	Matthew 16:9 - <i>Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?</i>
Reflection	Jesus is not one to do the work alone ... the Christian journey is one of filling and distributing baskets! What baskets are you filling with the charity of Christ?

Window #9 | Week 9

Symbols	<p>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.</p> <p>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."</p>
---------	---

Reading John 21:6 - *He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.*

Reflection Jesus "fills our nets!" Abundance fills our life – abundance of relationships, opportunities, commitments. For what abundance are you grateful?

Window #10 | Week 10

Symbols 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.

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.

Reading Matthew 3:13 - *Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.*

Reflection Baptism grounds us in the activity of the Spirit, awakening us to God's original blessing that animated the world. Are you alive with God's blessing?

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

Window #11 | Week 11

Symbols Carpenter's Angle and Hammer: This is to symbolize St. Joseph, the carpenter.

Chi Rho Cross with the Letter "M": Symbolizes the Mary is the "Mother of Christ."

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.

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.

Reading Matthew 1:20 - *An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."*

Reflection Jesus say to the disciples after the Resurrection, do not be afraid. Joseph models courage that was required of the post-Easter Church, struggling in the throws of injustice and persecution. For what must you be courageous?

Window #12 | Week 12

Symbols 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.

Three Candles: They represent Jesus, the light of the world. Three candles refer to the Holy Trinity.

Reading John 1:4 - *In him was life.*

Reflection Goodness and grace fill the otherwise dark earth. Life comes from the Source of all Life. How are you living your life in light of God's goodness?

Window #13 | Week 13

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

Reading Psalm 15:16 - *Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.*

Reflection Mary turned to Elizabeth at the time of Jesus' conception. Jesus turned toward the mercy of God on the cross. Many turned toward Jesus as he offered comfort from the struggles of human situation. Who is turning toward you, searching for the graciousness of God's mercy and compassion?

Window #14 | Week 14

Symbols Some symbols are used several times; this window repeats the use of the Chi Rho Cross and the equilateral triangle.

Readings Luke 9:23 - *Then Jesus said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, that person must deny him or herself and take up the cross daily and follow me."*

1 Cor 1:13 - *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

Reflection The cross gives us access daily to the power of the saving God. In what ways is the ordinariness of your life, the cross you take up daily, calling you to trust God's saving action in your life?

Window #15 | Week 15

Symbols	<p>Olive Leaves: These leaves signify the peace of God made with human beings. In the story of Noah, the dove brought back an olive branch as a sign.</p> <p>Laurel: This is a symbol for triumph; in ancient times victors were adorned with a crown of laurel leaves.</p>
Reading	<p>Genesis 8 - <i>When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth.</i></p>
Reflection	<p>God's fidelity is in the green of Earth, even in the death of winter. How does God's faithfulness "green" your soul?</p>

Window #16/Week 16

Symbols	<p>Chi Rho Cross Within in a Lily: This window utilizes a symbol of Mary and a symbol of Christ, one within each other, to represent that Mary is the Mother of God.</p> <p>Lamb: Used again to symbolize that Christ is the Lamb of God.</p>
Reading	<p>Luke 1 - <i>"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."</i></p>
Reflection	<p>God is the maker of miracles. Awake and know that God is knitting together miracles within your very life. How will you give birth to Christ in our wounded world?</p>

Window #17 | Week 17

Symbol	<p>Heart with Inserted Dagger: "Sacred Heart of Mary" the heart is the symbol of love, the center of being, unifying life principles.</p>
Readings	<p>Matthew 11:25 - <i>"Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart."</i></p> <p>Luke 2:19 - <i>"Mary kept in mind all these things, pondering them in her heart."</i></p> <p>Luke 2:35 - <i>"Your won soul a sword shall pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."</i></p> <p>John 7:38b - <i>"From his heart will flow rivers of living water."</i></p>

Reflection Compassion flows into our world from the heart of a loving, tender God. Beating, pulsing rhythm of God's life runs through our veins and gives us life. What moves me to compassion in our world?

Window #18 | Week 18

Symbol This is the window dedicated to St. Thomas Aquinas; there is a portrait image of St. Thomas wearing the scholarly vestments. St. Thomas was one of the great teachers of the Medieval Catholic Church. His greatest contribution to the Catholic Church was his writings. St. Thomas believed that reason was a divine gift which would be highly cherished.

Reading Eph 1:17 - *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

Reflection Mindfulness, the art of critically and creatively thinking in the very act of being, leads us intentionally and consciously to God. What keeps you mindful of God's living dynamic presence?

Window #19 | Week 19

Symbols Open book: This symbolizes the Holy Bible, the Word of God, the open book symbolizes that the Bible is accessible throughout the most of the world. It is published in more than 1,000 languages.

Seven Red Flames: They are used to denote the tongues of fire representative of the Holy Spirit.

Reading 1 Cor 12-28 - *And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.*

Reflection To each, a special gift is given. Knowing self means knowing the gift! Self-reflective consideration of our lives is part of our discipleship. What is the gift that is giving you life and purpose?

With the crucifix at the front, face the left side of the Chapel, moving right to left:

Window #20 | Week 20

- Symbols**
- Jesse Tree: This represents Jesus's royal genealogy. "Come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse (David's father) and a branch shall grow out of his roots. Jesse is the roots, Mary is the rode, and Jesus is the fruit.
- Single Candle: This represents Jesus, the light of the world.
- Crown: A crown is used to signify Mary, the Queen of many things.
- Refection**
- Refer to the beginning of this reflection for guidance during Lent.

Window #21 | Week 21

- Symbols**
- Tower of David: This is from the Litany of Mary. Mary is sometimes referred to as the "Tower of David."
- Mystical Rose: The "Mystical Rose" is also from the Litany to Mary. The Christmas rose survived the cold and snow of winter and bloomed at Christmas. "... despite wars which shake the whole earth, there still exists a mighty power which can shape a rose or lead shepherds to a king." The Christmas rose is a symbol for the nativity and Messianic prophesy.
- Reading**
- MT 27:53 - *They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went in to the holy city and appeared to many people.*
- Reflection**
- In the midst of death, new life. This is the center of Christian belief. The human Jesus remained in the tomb for three days, but like a rose in December, amazingly "blooms" against all odds. Ancestors too are raised up and mingles among the living. How has the resurrection changed your life? Have there been miracles in the dead of winter?

Window #22 | Week 22

- Symbol**
- Gates of Heaven: This is another title given to Mary in the Litany. She is the "Gate of Heaven."
- Reading**
- JN 19:25 - *Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother.*
- Reflection**
- Mary carries Jesus courageously as they flee those who would kill her newborn. Mary courageously stood at the foot of the cross as those who would kill Jesus had their way. She does not block access to Jesus. She invites our presence. In what ways do I seek access to Jesus?

Window #23 | Week 23

Symbols	Moon: Symbolic of Mary Chalice with Open Book: This represents the Blood of Christ and the Word of God which is available to all people.
Readings	Isaiah 30,26; 60,19; Revelations 21, 23; Revelations 12,1
Reflection	Mary is perhaps the most revered and the most debated character in Christian history. “Wrapped in silence,” the gospels are remarkably unrevealing. She is Theotokis, God Bearer. Within the core of her being, the salvific power of God is planted. She is the most faithful of all the gospel companions, powerfully doing the will of God – not talking about it! She encounters the Word of God, in her flesh, and all of humanity is destined to be rendered speechless as the power of God is revealed. Can you be in the presence of God, silently?

Window #24 | Week 24

Symbols	Morning Star: This is taken from the Litany to Mary. The five pointed star directs us to our Lord’s Epiphany. It is more commonly known as the Star of Bethlehem which symbolizes divinity, supremacy, and the eternal. The star is suggestive of a man, arms outstretched and standing, who is both true God and true man in one person.
Reading	Phil. 2: 7-9 - <i>...taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.</i>
Reflection	Jesus’ nature, however mysterious, is charismatic, inviting, nurturing, embracing, forgiving, sustaining, empowering and fascinating. He is one of us... Who is Jesus in your life, at this moment?

Window #25/ Week 25

Symbols	Descending Bird: Symbolizes the Holy Spirit descending upon God’s people. 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.
Reading	Luke 3:22 - <i>and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”</i>

Reflection The power of a dove was fascinating to the desert people who followed John the Baptist. Such grace and powerful gliding. So powerful are the dove's wings that they can be heard. The ancients imagined God somewhat like this...and only in the descent could the connection be made with the earth-bound creatures. God's swooping power and energy was sensed and listened for ... Are you hearing God's voice?

Window #26/ Week 26

Symbols 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.

Candles: The candles refer to the Light of the Word, Jesus and his faithful followers.

Reading Luke 22:19 - *And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

Reflection Remember. Give thanks. Break. Eat. The Christian pilgrimage is not without direction and sustenance as we encounter the daily cross. What do you remember of the Christian journey that is cause of giving thanks, even in the midst of brokenness and hunger?

Window #27 | Week 27

Symbols 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.

Reading JN 14:26 - *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit; whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

Reflection Humans are part of the circle of life, the ongoing renewal that is timeless. God's imaginative creativity has connected all life, like a web without beginning or end. How do you experience the largeness of God in nature?

Window #28 | Week 28

Symbols	<p>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.</p> <p>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 ray representing the Holy Trinity. Through the Holy Trinity, you will find the light.</p>
Reading	<p>Rev. 1:16: <i>...His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.</i></p>
Reflection	<p>Jesus' face must have been exquisite, somehow conveying love, tenderness, compassion, forgiveness, and genuine interest. We will never know what the face of Jesus really "looked" like.. .but this simile gives us a helpful insight. The sun is too bright to stare at...brief glimpses, however give us a warm feeling of hope in tomorrow. In what ways do you hope for as you take brief glimpses at the face of Jesus?</p>

The symbolism of the windows was researched by students Vanessa Torbeck, Robert Wichman, Danette Clark, and Jeannette Jackson during the 1989-1990 academic year. They were guided by Professor William Schutzius, long-time faculty member and colleague to Sr. Augusta Zimmer.