

COVENANT, JUDGMENT AND REDEMPTION

Please continue scrolling down
to read about the meaning
of each symbol on this window.

Covenant, Judgment and Redemption

-a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Steven Stulp
-located in choir loft, south wall

This is the largest and most complex of our “floating symbol” windows, featuring 12 symbols. Ten of them have red circles behind them. The circle represents eternity; the intense and passionate red color intimates God’s love for all and the blood of Christ shed with love for the salvation of all. Two symbols do not have a red circle: the uppermost symbol of the Chi-Rho for Christ as judge and the center bottom symbol of the red fires of hell. The 12 symbols are divided into three interrelated themes: Covenant, Judgment and Redemption.

Covenant

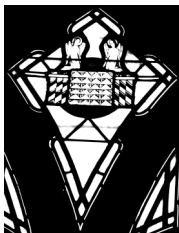
The five symbols for Covenant are interconnected. Two denote the Old Covenant (ark of covenant and tablets), two represent the New Covenant (cross/chalice and dome) and one defines the position of Jesus between the two covenants (the book). A covenant is a solemn agreement between people or between God and the people. During the time before Christ, God established covenants with Noah, Abraham and Moses. The Mosaic covenant included God’s promise to be the God of Israel: “I will be your God and you will be my people”. (Lv 26:12) God gave Moses the law or Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai during the Israelites’ journey in the desert after fleeing from Egypt. The laws defined how the people should live in covenant with God. (Ex 25:10-22)

The prophets prepared the people for the New Covenant that was to be established by the Messiah. “The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt.” (Jer 31:31-32) Jesus, the Messiah, came to establish the New Covenant.

Two symbols on this window form a *typological parallel*. This means the event represented in the first symbol appears to prophesy the event represented in the second symbol. God’s covenant through Moses (ark of the covenant) appears to prophecy the new covenant in Jesus (cross/chalice). Therefore, Moses’ acceptance of God’s Covenant prefigures Jesus, the New Moses, and his establishment of God’s New Covenant. Moses gave the law; Jesus gives grace and truth. Moses gave manna in the desert; Jesus gives the bread of life. Moses lifted the serpent to bring healing and life to his people; Jesus was lifted on the cross to bring eternal life to all. Moses ratified the Old Covenant with the blood of animal sacrifice; Jesus ratified the New Covenant with his *own* blood. Moses had the Ark of the Covenant built to house the Ten Commandments as a place of divine presence; Jesus, the Son of God, is divine presence. Thus, the New Covenant surpasses the Old Covenant because the blood of Christ and the priesthood of Christ is superior to any sacrifice or any priest of the Old Covenant.

God’s Covenant through Moses

God’s covenant with Israel is symbolized with the **ark of the covenant**. It was a small, portable box or chest made of acacia wood overlaid with gold inside and out, carried with poles and containing the Decalogue or Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. The **two angels** or cherubim on top of the ark faced each other, with their wings extended over the top of the ark. It was the place where God’s glory shone. The ark of the covenant was kept in the sacred tent in the center of camp while the Israelites were in the desert. It was carried at the head of the procession as the people traveled through the desert or went into battle. After the Israelites settled in Jerusalem and Solomon had built the temple, the ark of the covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies in the temple. After the destruction of the third temple, the ark was described as being in the heavenly temple. “Then God’s temple in heaven opened and in the temple could be seen the ark of his covenant.” (Rev 11:19)



The New Covenant in Jesus

God made a New Covenant with the people through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. God desired to fulfill his promise of redemption for all through his divine Son. On the night before he died, Jesus instituted the Eucharist, as symbolized by the **chalice and host**. He changed the bread and wine into his Body and Blood, given now as an offering for the salvation of all people. “This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out on behalf of many. I solemnly assure you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the reign of God.” (Mk 14:24-25) “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.” (Lk 22:20) The next day Jesus became the High Priest of the New Covenant, shedding his blood on the **cross**, offering himself as a perfect sacrifice to the Father. After his resurrection, he established his church to continue his work on earth.



The Law of Moses

The **star and rays of light** represent the presence of God with Moses. The two **tablets of stone** symbolize the law of Moses, known as the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue. Through Moses, God gave the ten commandments to the Israelite people as they journeyed in the desert after fleeing from Egypt. Scripture says they were written on tablets of stone: "When the Lord had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the commandments, the stone tablets inscribed by God's own finger." (Ex 31:18) They are the fundamental moral law for Jews and Christians, with the first three guiding our relationship with God and the last seven instructing our relationships with others. (Ex 20:2-17 and Dt 5:6-21)



The Ten Commandments are:

1. I am the Lord, your God, you shall not have other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

The Law of the Church

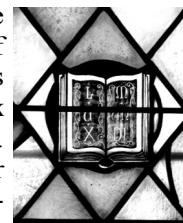
In establishing the New Covenant, Jesus also taught a New Law, which fulfills and perfects the Old Law. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mt 22:37-39) In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus upheld the Ten Commandments and presented a summary of the New Covenant in the Beatitudes (see Beatitudes window). In these ways Jesus invites our response to God's love for us by our service to others. The Church, initiated by Christ, has the teaching and governing authority to establish other laws to assist Catholics in their spiritual / moral growth and to guide our pilgrim journey toward our heavenly home. On this window, the **dome of the Papal Basilica of St. Peter** in Vatican City represents the Catholic Church and its authority to establish Church law for the faithful. The **six circles** correspond to the *six precepts or commandments of the Church*, set in 1589. These six decrees are stated in positive form and inform Catholics of their minimum obligation. At the time this window was created, the wording of the six precepts was:



1. To attend Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation
2. To fast and to abstain on the days appointed
3. To confess our sins at least once a year
4. To receive Holy Communion during the Easter time
5. To contribute to the support of the Church
6. To observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage

Jesus, Word of God, Light of the World

The **book** symbolizes Jesus, the Messiah, who is the Word of God, the Word incarnate. He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man to dwell among us and to accomplish our salvation. The words "**Lux Mundi**" refer to Jesus as the "Light of the World". This symbol is positioned between the symbols for the law of the Old Covenant, the Ten Commandments, and the law of the New Covenant, the Precepts of the Church. It identifies Jesus as the Messiah, the one who assumes the position *between* the time of the Old Covenant and that of the New Covenant, by fulfilling the Old Covenant and establishing the New Covenant. Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come, not to abolish them, but to fulfill them." (Mt 5:17)



Judgment

The four symbols for Judgment remind us of the Church's teaching about life after death. Each person will be judged by God in the *individual or particular judgment*. The person enters heaven, purgatory, or hell. Those who die in the state of grace are assured of their eternal salvation in heaven. However, this may require a time of purification, a process called purgatory. The Church warns the faithful of the reality of eternal death or hell, which is brought about by a person's free and permanent rejection of God and God's love. At the end of time Christ will return in glory. All will be assembled for the *general or last judgment* which will reveal that God's love is stronger than death and God's justice triumphs over all injustice.

Jesus as Judge

The symbol for judgment is at the top center of this window. The **balance scale** represents the Lord's judgment, both *individual judgment* and the *general judgment* at the end of time. The small **red circle** above the balance scale contains a **Chi-Rho** (X with P overlap), an ancient monogram for Christ. It is Jesus Christ who will judge each person, granting an eternal recompense in accord with each person's earthly life. "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, he will sit on his royal throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. Then he will separate them into two groups, as a shepherd separates sheep from goats." The sheep will inherit the Kingdom of God. The goats will be sent to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Mt.25:31-46) This parable continues with Jesus giving the criteria for being rewarded with eternal life—whether one fed the hungry, gave water to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, cared for the sick, and visited the prisoners. "Whatever you did for these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (Mt.25:40)



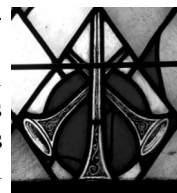
First Judgment

This is another symbol for judgment. The **fiery sword** represents the finality of the judgment of God after Eve and Adam disobeyed God by eating of the fruit of the tree of life, as described in the story of creation in the Book of Genesis. "The Lord God said, 'Man must not be allowed to put out his hand to take fruit from the tree of life.'...(when they disobeyed)...the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden...when he expelled the man, he settled him east of the garden of Eden; and he stationed the cherubim and the **fiery revolving sword**, to guard the way to the tree of life." (Gn 3:22-24)



Final Judgment

The trumpet is a symbol of judgment, particularly the last judgment. "The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and 'all the clans of earth will strike their breasts' as they see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory. He will dispatch his angels 'with a mighty trumpet blast, and they will assemble his chosen from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.'" (Mt. 24:30-31) "The Lord himself will come down from heaven at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and God's **trumpet**: and those who have died in Christ will rise first." (1Th 4:16) "All of us are to be changed—in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet. The trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1Cor 15:52)



Hell

This symbol represents hell with its **fire**. The **serpents** symbolize Satan and his devils, the **pillars** reference the gates of hell. Some of the angels, including Satan, turned against God and were driven out of heaven and into hell. People are tempted to do evil but the power of evil is never greater than God's love and power. St. Paul speaks of judgment and fire. "If we sin willfully after receiving the truth, there remains for us no further sacrifice for sin—only a fearful expectation of judgment and a flaming fire to consume the adversaries of God." (Hb 10:26-27) God does not predestine anyone to go to hell. Scripture and the teachings of the Church emphasize our personal responsibility to accept God's grace, using our freedom to repent and to respond to God's love and mercy.



Redemption

The three symbols for Redemption stress the importance of Jesus' resurrection in our salvation. The sin of disobedience to God by the first man and woman resulted in their banishment from the Garden of Paradise. It also passed original sin to all their descendants and made redemption necessary. Jesus, by his incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection, redeemed all by freeing all from original sin and winning eternal life for all. "Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will come to life again, but each one in proper order: Christ the first fruits and then, at his coming, all those who belong to him." (1Cor 15:21-23) Resurrection is the triumph of Jesus over death on the third day after his crucifixion. The three symbols for Jesus and his resurrection at the bottom of this window form a triangle, suggesting the presence of the Trinity; God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The placement of these three symbols is also important. They surround the symbol for hell. Arranged this way they reflect the overwhelming power of Jesus' triumph over death. They highlight his desire to save all from eternal damnation in hell with his encompassing love and mercy.

Jesus, Rising after Death

Directly above the symbol for the fires of hell is the **phoenix**, portrayed **rising from fire**. It is a symbol for Jesus, his resurrection and eternal life which followed his descent into hell after his death and burial. The phoenix, a mythical bird, lived for a very long time—500 or 1000 years. When it was near death, it would make itself a nest which was set afire with sparks from the sun. The fire would consume the phoenix but in three days a rejuvenated phoenix would rise up from the ashes to enter another cycle of life. As we profess in the Apostles' Creed, Jesus descended into hell, the realm of the dead, from which he called out all the just people who had died before him. He opened the gates of hell so the souls of the just could enter with him into the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven.



Jesus, Rising from the Tomb

The **butterfly** is another symbol for Jesus, his resurrection and eternal life. The life of a butterfly consists of three stages. The larva in the egg becomes the caterpillar which later becomes a pupa in its chrysalis stage and then emerges from the sealed shell as a mature butterfly, with a beautiful new body and colored wings. These three stages resemble the life, death and burial, and the glorious resurrection of Jesus. It also reminds all the faithful that our lives on earth will end with death but we believe Christ shall return in glory on the last day and our bodies shall be changed to be like Christ's glorious body.



Jesus, Living Eternally

The **peacock** is also a symbol of Jesus, his resurrection and eternal life. In an old legend, the flesh of the peacock was incorruptible, never subject to decay. Thus the peacock became a Christ symbol. Depictions of peacocks are found on many of the walls in the catacombs and on ancient Christian tombs to note that all who die in Christ will be raised to a new and glorious life.

