

# “The Grande Window”

## A Masterpiece in The Gleaming Sun

The faceted glass façade window is truly a masterpiece in symbolic theology. It tells the story of “Salvation History” as seen through the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas, parish patron. This is arguably the greatest work done by artist Conrad Pickel.

Born in Munich, Germany, Conrad grew to become a proven master of the aesthetic use of faceted glass techniques (slab glass embedded in epoxy). He studied and designed for many European and American Studios. Since 1949 he has owned studios in New Berlin, Wisconsin bearing his name. Conrad was commissioned to create our window that measures at 60’ by 50’. The Salvation History theme of the window suggests the theological adaption of St. Thomas’ five steps to the existence and knowledge of God.

Causality: “The Necessity of Salvation” or  
“Why Salvation?”

Motion: “The Prophecy and the Preparation  
in the Old Testament”

Design: “The Divine Plan: Incarnation  
and Redemption”

Contingency: “The Means of Grace:  
The Sacraments”

Law and Order: “The Church as the Risen Christ”

*Causality* - Adam and Eve created disharmony and disorder by failing God. Adam’s sin decided the fate of mankind. “It was through one man that sin came into the world” (Rom. 5:12).

The gate and flaming sword in the window symbolize the fall of man: “The Lord sent him forth from the Garden of Eden... and at the East of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24).

*Motion* - Divine Revelation tells us that He, who could have redeemed helpless humanity in many ways, set humanity’s salvation in motion through the age of prophecy. God called Abraham to be father of the Chosen People.

The Stars in the window symbolize God’s promise that Abraham’s descendants would be “as numerous as the stars of heaven.”

The hands of Moses receiving the tablets from God symbolize the covenant of the Law of Moses. Moses is a type of Coming Redeemer. “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you” (Deut. 18:5).

*Design* - The design for our redemption by the infinite mind of God the Father is found in the Incarnation of His Son and the Revelation through Him.

The radiance of the Alpha in the stylized crib expresses “Beginning” and symbolizes the Nativity of Christ. This Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin shares the mystery of the Incarnation. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God” (John 1:1’).

Three purple crosses above the Crib symbolize the atonement for sin through His passion and death on Calvary.

The focus of the window is the resurrected Christ, the Word Incarnate. The skyline of the modern City at the bottom of the window symbolizes that he is present now and always, living with us throughout our daily lives.

Christ’s left hand is placed over the Holy Eucharist and the water of regeneration flows from the baptismal shell into the “City of Man.” Christ’s right hand points to heaven and He speaks, “Through the Bread of Life and the waters of regeneration you shall have life everlasting.” Thereby the gates of paradise are reopened.

The relevancy of Christ in the affairs of humanity is further emphasized by the scientist, artisan, factory worker, parents and children gazing at Christ in amazement.



Daniel Verson, Verson Photography

On the far right, parents are leading their children to Christ. The linking rings with flames of love symbolize matrimony and mutual love as the foundation of the Christian family. The gears in the father's hands, the expressway and the suspension bridge symbolize our Christian responsibility in this new era of rapid change and communication. The faces in the window represent all races, cultures and ages of history. The scientist is surrounded by atomic and electronic orbits, a rocket and a sputnik, all symbolizing a surging stream of scientific activity. The artisan is shown carving out culture and enlarging the horizon of human achievements.

*Law and Order* - This is the foundation of peaceful existence that Christ came to bring. He founded the Church to extend His mission on earth and lead and inspire people to law and order. He gave much power to His Apostles: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20). The Lord chose Peter to be his successor the head of the church: "Upon this rock, I will build My Church" (Matt. 16:8). This is symbolized by the dome of St. Peter's Basilica.

The dove stresses the supernatural element in the Church, the divine guidance, promised by Christ: "The Councillor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send you in my name, he will teach you all things" (John 14:26).

#### Conclusion

As members of the *supernatural* and visible church, we gain the right to heaven and the vision of God by professing the true faith, partaking in the sacraments, obeying the laws of God, and performing works of charity. As we look at the figure of Christ pointing to heaven, we hear His promise: "In my father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2-3). What we understand now only in part, we shall then fully understand: "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face" (1. Cor. 13:12). "Through the Bread of Life and Waters of Regeneration you shall have life eternal."

**The priests and parishioners of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish gratefully acknowledge the memorial gift of Mr. & Mrs. Louis Novak. The gift of the "Grande Window" to the parish church will be a lasting memorial to the faith and generosity of two wonderful friends and former St. Thomas Aquinas parishioners of many years.**

**May the blessings and consolations of today be with you always.**



Photo by Tom Gennara