

The Sending Forth

This artwork depicts a simplified visual of the birth of the early Catholic Church at Pentecost.

When viewing the glass art from the church entrance, to the far left is the mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Symbolically she is proportionally larger than all the other figures because she is the Mother and Queen of Heaven and Earth. Above Mary's head is a flame of fire in the shape of a dove because she is the Spouse of the Holy Ghost. Around her head is a crown of twelve stars like the woman prophesized in the Book of Revelation, Chapter 12. Mary's right hand gently touches her heart where the Holy Eucharist sits and is embraced. This shows that Mother Mary is so full of grace that her heart can only ever follow the Divine Will of her son Jesus Christ. After all, she is the only human being to have spent all 33 years and 9 months of life with Him during His earthly life. Mary humbly stands behind the 12 Apostles in respect of their authority as the first Bishops of the Catholic Church. Her left hand wraps her mantle around them because she is a loving mother, a guiding teacher in union with the Holy Spirit, and a humble protectress of the Holy Catholic Church.

The tongues of fire above each of the heads represent the historical event of the Holy Spirit descending upon the 12 apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary in the upper room. Saint Peter, the first pope, holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven in one hand. With his other hand St. Peter boldly directs the apostles to go out and share The Word of Jesus Christ to the world. The sun sitting above the earth symbolizes the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the World. The Cross of Jerusalem and three nails in the sun signify the Five Holy Wounds of Jesus. In the center of the sun are the letters IHS, which is a Christogram or an ancient monogram symbolizing the Holy Name of "Jesus Christ". Below the Blessed Virgin Mary you will see the moon "under her feet," as proclaimed in Revelation about the woman clothed with the sun. The moon is lit by the reflection of sun; therefore, the Blessed Virgin Mary like the moon reflects her son Jesus Christ.

If we apply this imagery to our Catholic church today, just like the 12 apostles, we are disciples of Jesus in union with the Holy Spirit. As disciples we are called to bring the message of hope, salvation and love to all people we meet, by proclaiming Jesus Christ Crucified and Jesus Christ Risen. Just like the early church, we are called to share our beautiful Catholic faith with the world and the people of our community.

By Marie Elizabeth Micallef, Artist