



Measurements, art language description

Artist/manufacturer: Owen Doremus (1819-1878) New Jersey United States installed 1863

Photographed by Cathedral Warden Daniel Hall with a Canon EOS 5DS-R, 50.6 megapixels camera and
Canon 28-300 mm telephoto, prime, wide lens on July 27, 2017

Essay "The Chancel Triplet (Crucifixion) Windows" by Jean Libby, member of the congregation for The
Dean and Rector, Officers, Wardens and Members of the Vestry of Trinity Cathedral in San Jose

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The Chancel Triplet (Crucifixion) Windows

The Chancel Triplet windows depicting the Passion of Jesus witnessed by Mary His mother, and John the Evangelist are the signature of recognition of Trinity Cathedral in San Jose. The Mystery of the Trinity -- appositional and complementary lines forming a shield -- at the top of the central window is described by The Rev. Deacon Lee Barford:

Father is the Creator, a continuing work in progress

Son Jesus Christ, sent to Redeem us

Holy Spirit binds us together to understand



The window draws us both theologically and artistically into the center, witnessing the event at the point 'When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home.' John 19:26-28

The Rev. Penelope Duckworth, Artist in Residence at Trinity Cathedral and author of books of meditation and prayer through the life of the Mother of God, suggests that portraying Mary with a brown robe "that of an ordinary Palestinian woman" rather than the traditional blue "Mary's color" is a 19th century American influence. Rev. Duckworth's sermon on December 24, 2017 referenced Henry Ossawa Tanner's "The Annunciation" at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in comparison with the Chancel Triplet window.

All three figures stand on pavement stones that suggest the historic tribunal seat of judgement from which Jesus was condemned by Pontius Pilate. The cross was wedged into the hillside with bricks. The foliage and stones are designed as "earthen, telling us that this was a real event that happened in a real place, not symbols." Rev. Lee Barford

A curved horizontal line and rectangular objects—a railing and a brick wall—lie behind the cross. The artistic interpretation is made by St. Matthew's Church in Northampton, England for a 1946 painting of the Crucifixion that is used in worship: *At the foot of the Cross, the suggestion of a brick wall emphasizes the background of civilization against which Christ is crucified. The little railing serves the double purpose of stressing the sacredness of the event and, at the same time, associating the spectator with what is going on.*¹

Above His Head on the cross are the letters INRI, which is “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” in Latin. According to John (19:22), Pontius Pilate had this placed on the cross above Jesus’ head in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. At the bottom center the element IHS, the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek, is usually obscured by the Bishop’s chair behind the altar. It was moved for this photograph.

The crucifixion portrayal installed at Trinity Episcopal Church in San Jose in 1863 is a serene event, quite in contrast to “many, if not most crucifixion depictions,” according to art historian Thomas L. Libby who provides regular analysis for this series: *It is perhaps significant to note the relatively bloodless, not gory, nature of the wounds. There are tiny traces of blood at the hands and feet, none from the crown of thorns, and relatively little from the thrust of the Holy Lance. Jesus’ face is in no corporeal anguish and He is in overall healthy demeanor...*

The contrast was remarked by Rev. Lee Barford in eulogy when the restored bells tolled for The Rev. Canon Douglas Williams, Canon Preceptor of Trinity Cathedral, San Jose, memorial service in December 2017: *“The congregation looking to the altar sees the humanistic portrayal on the stained glass windows, but what I see looking outward is a crucifix showing Christ’s agony.”*

Rev. Barford makes church architecture in Europe a deliberate study as he pursues seminary training from the University of Wales Trinity St. David. The Trinity Chancel Windows composition of Mary the mother and John the beloved disciple witnessing the crucifixion is frequently seen throughout Europe.

Stained glass windows are textbooks to continue the culture of Biblical authority. For this writer, the stained glass windows at Trinity Cathedral in San Jose are textbooks of early California history—People of the Windows, as Joan C. de Lisle called them—beckon.

Two ecclesiastical leaders who brought the windows from their design and manufacture in New Jersey around the Horn of South America were the first Bishop of California William Ingraham Kip and the first rector of Trinity Episcopal Church Sylvester Smith Etheridge. It is remarkable that Rev. Etheridge accomplished so much because his contribution was greatly affected by ill health upon arrival in California about 1859 and his death in February 1864.

That said, we focus on his life during that period as he nurtured the First Communicants meeting at City Hall on Market Street downtown. Interesting fellow, Rev. Etheridge. We have his primary source accounts of the building of Trinity Cathedral because of reports to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church. In his eulogy at the burial beneath the altar of the sanctuary (now beside the organ), Bishop Kip spoke admiringly that Rev. Etheridge: *“With all the delicacy and refinement which seem distinctive rather of female character, he united an iron will which few of his own sex possess.”*²

A proper Episcopal church was needed at a location that would solidify the community congregation who were leaders in the formation of state and local government. Trinity Episcopal Parish Vestry had purchased land at the corner of 5th and San Fernando Streets. Major Samuel J. Hensley, a bold California pathfinder who had prospered with steamship business, owned a significant estate which had a corner to spare at 2nd and St. John, functioning as his horse corral. Dry goods entrepreneur James Hart stepped in to purchase the San Fernando property. Both Hart and Hensley were members of Trinity Episcopal Parish.³

Funding of the Chancel Triplet window was accomplished by the women of Trinity Episcopal Parish. The individual credited most was "Mrs. S. J. Hensley," a California pioneer with significant participation in the formation of California as a free (non-slave) state in 1850. Mary Helen Crosby crossed the isthmus of Panama carrying the incorporation papers for statehood hidden in her blue silk parasol, which is now at the California State Museum in Sacramento.⁴

The entire wall containing the Chancel Triplet windows was moved to its present location on the west side of the church in 1876: *The building was sliced in half, crosswise, and the front half, which had faced St. John Street, was swung around 90° to face Second Street. A new apse and north transept were added, and the crossing filled in. The wall behind the altar, with the Crucifixion windows, was moved in its entirety from its original location where the organ now is, to its present place.*⁵



Easter 2018 service includes the two clergy who contributed to this article: The Rev. Penelope Duckworth, celebrant, and The Rev. Deacon Lee Barford. Photograph by Lorenzo Carrillo-Arciñiega, member of the Vestry

Stained glass windows are intended to illuminate individual souls with the light from outside. At Trinity, the Chancel Triplet is a call to prayer and renewal. When the Eucharist to which all are invited to partake is celebrated beneath it the experience is directly connected to those who receive it.

References

Penelope Duckworth, *Mary's Hours; Daily Prayers with the Mother of God*. Morehouse Publishing, 2009.

{Joan C. de Lisle} "The Chancel Triplet and Trinity Trefoil." *The Trinity Windows*. Jerry Estruth, editor. The Vestry, Trinity Episcopal Church, San Jose, California, 1978:15.

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Episcopal Church. Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, and Episcopal Church. Board of Missions. [The Spirit of Missions](#). Burlington, N.J.: J. L. Powell, 1836-1939. 1862-1864 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005947667>

"The Umbrella That Made History." *San Francisco Call*. 31 December 1905. The article has been edited and the photo enhanced in online publication by SFgenealogy.org. <http://www.sfgenealogy.org/sf/history/hgumb.htm>

Endnotes

¹ Graham Sutherland was an official artist for the British War Artists Scheme in the Second World War. St. Matthew's Church, Northampton. Church of England in the Diocese of Peterborough. "The Crucifixion. 1946."

² "Death of Reverend S. S. Etheridge," extracts from the address of Bishop William Ingraham Kip at his burial. *The Spirit of Missions*, Vol. XXIX, March 1864:19. The burial of Etheridge, Re. Sylvester Smith (Rector of the Parish) is listed February 20, 1864 in *Trinity Church, San Jose, California, Advent 1860 to Easter 1903*. Trinity Parish Guild.

³ *The Trinity Windows: 10*. See *The Carillon* October 2017 for "The Hart Family Window", expanding the story with interview of descendants Elizabeth Brolly McGlaughlin and Vera Brolly.

⁴ Mary Helen Crosby Hensley is frequently noted as the "daughter of Elisha O. Crosby" a member of the first California legislature. This is unlikely, as Crosby was born in 1818 and Mary Helen in 1830. It is more likely that she was his niece, as it is historically known that E. O. Crosby took responsibility for care of the children of a deceased older brother. See *The Carillon* July 2017 for "The Hensley Family Windows."

⁵ Julie Pifer, "An Oral History." The original Stevens organ at Trinity installed in 1863 was replaced in 1924. Henry Calloway, "In Pursuit of an 1863 Church Organ." *The Trailblazer, Quarterly Bulletin of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County*, Vol. 21, No. 2, May 1981:3-6. Cover photograph "Trinity Church Organ."