

# THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS OF RATHFARNHAM PARISH CHURCH



# HOW STAINED GLASS WINDOWS ARE MADE.

Light shines through the translucent glass accentuating the lines of the painted composition and intensifying the depth of the colour. There are two techniques for adding colour to glass:

1. Stain containing silver is painted on the back of colourless glass; the term stained glass comes from silver stain. When fired in a kiln silver stain fuses with the glass and gives a translucent yellow or orange colour. You can see this in the yellow corn and ornamental details in the windows behind the communion table. Can you spot silver stain in other windows?
2. Glass is coloured during manufacture by adding metal oxides to the glass, a method developed by alchemists trying to make glass look like precious stones (e.g. adding cobalt gives blue, copper gives green, selenium gives red, gold gives pink). Many colours have symbolic meanings; deep blue signifies hope, light blue peace, yellow power and glory and red is the symbol of martyrdom, the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus.

At the beginning of the construction process the window is designed and a template made. The size and shape of the individual pieces of glass that make up the design are outlined on the template. The glass shapes are cut out on the template using a glasscutter. Pictures are painted on the front of the pieces of glass with special black or brown paint that has to be fired in a kiln to fix it to the glass. The pictures tell the story and give the illusion of three-dimensional form that gives the composition depth. Two techniques are used in painting, tracing and matting. Tracing is painting lines, for example the details of the faces. Matting is covering the glass with a wash of paint and then removing some of the paint to give tonal differences; this is particularly evident in skin texture and the fall of robes. The pieces of glass are then joined together by lengths of soft, flexible lead that have grooves on either side so that the glass can be slotted into each side of the lead. Where the lengths of lead join they are soldered together and the panel is made rigid and water tight with putty that is pushed under the edge of the lead. The thickness, length and direction of the lead lines play an important part in the composition. For instance the lead lines join the Samaritan to the injured man and separate them both from the Levite and priest, accentuating the message of compassion on one hand and selfish disinterest on the other. As you look at the windows you will see how all these techniques combine together in the lovely compositions that we are lucky to have in our church.

## David Lawrence

The pre-2000 windows in the church were photographed, dated and the artist/studio identified by Dr. David Lawrence in his survey of stained glass windows for the Church of Ireland ([gloine.ie](http://gloine.ie)). The Good Shepherd window, designed by Hubert McGoldrick of An Tur Gloine (Tower of Glass studio set up in 1903 by the painter Sarah Purser) is in his top category of windows i.e. *'windows of exceptional quality, which must be preserved and remain accessible to the public at all costs'*. The Labourers in the Vineyard is in his second category, *'although not of prime artistic or historical importance are nevertheless well above average'*. We thank Dr David Lawrence for his valuable contribution.

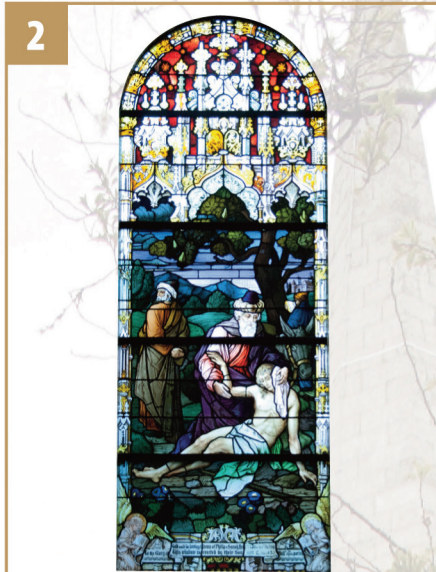
*The Stained Glass Windows of Rathfarnham Church* is written by Joan Forsdyke, graphic design by David Howe, 2015.



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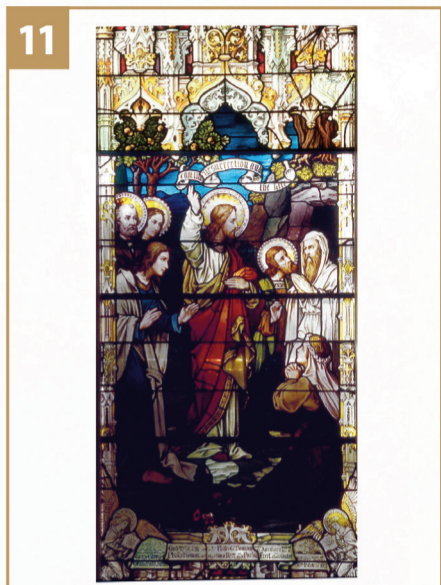
1 Parable of the Sower (left)  
Parable of the lost coin (right)



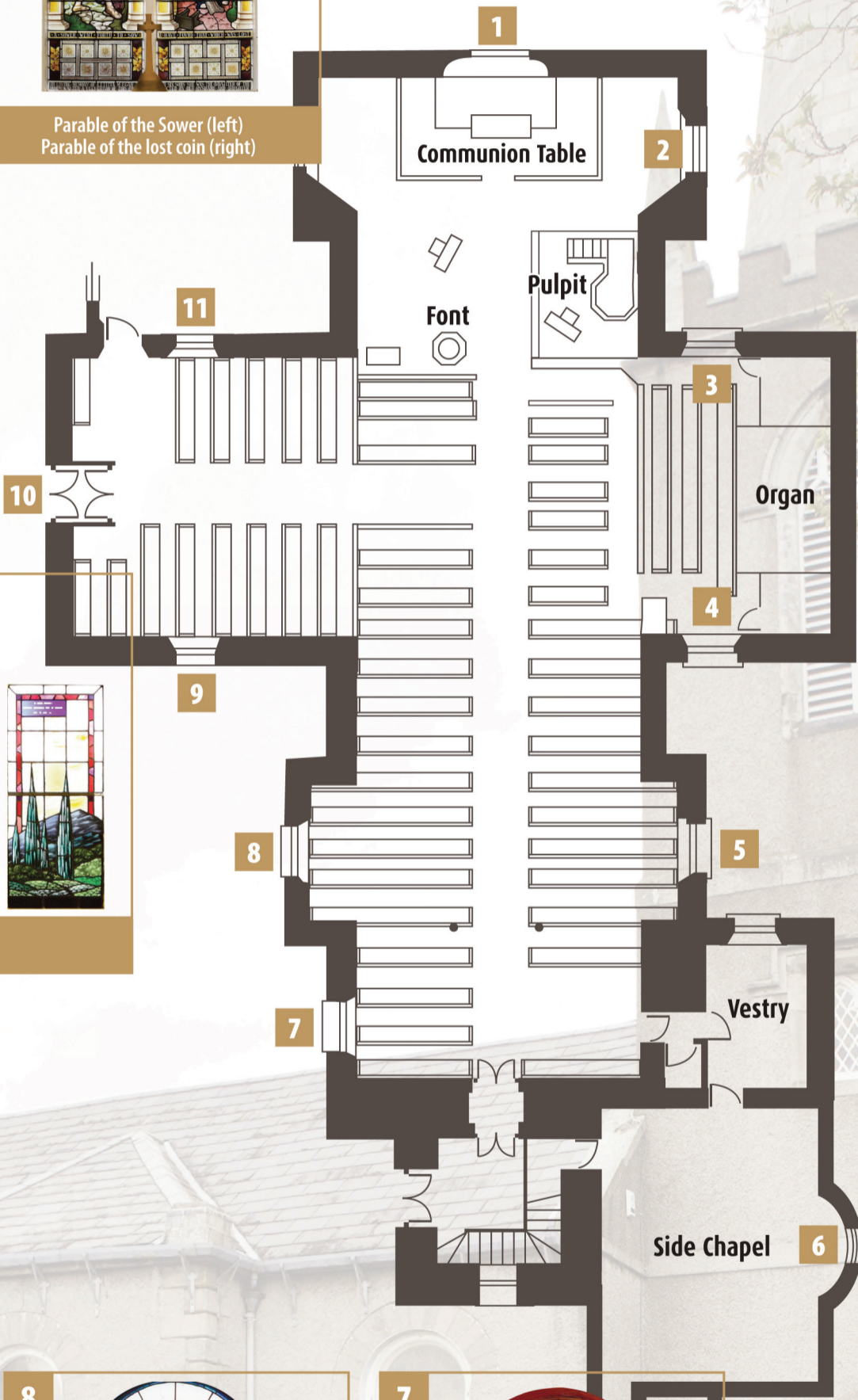
2 Parable of the Good Samaritan



3 Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard



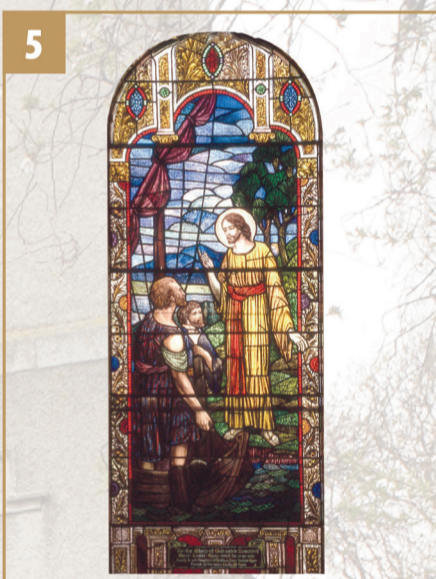
11 Raising of Lazarus



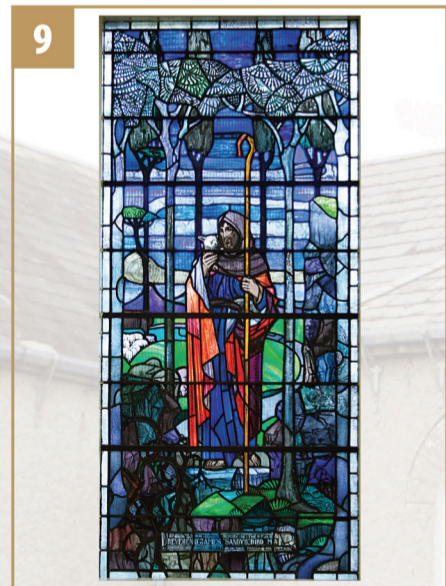
4 Holy Spirit



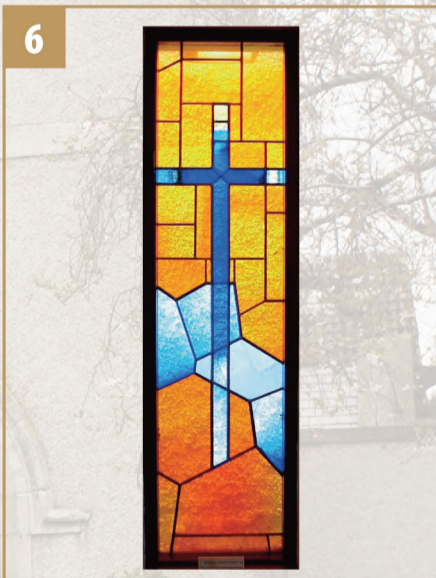
10 St Cecilia



5 Calling of St Peter and St Andrew



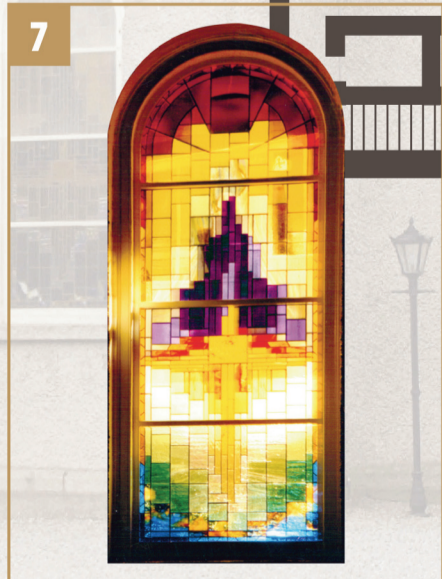
9 Christ as the Good Shepherd



6 I am the Resurrection and the Life



8 St. Luke



7 Psalm 23 v2-3



# THE WINDOWS

## 1. (Left) A Sower Went Forth to Sow.

(Right) I Have Found that which was Lost.

Possibly the work of the Royal Bavarian Art Institute, Munich 1890.

**Inscription:** *In loving memory of Letitia. M. Egan and her Six Sons. She was the daughter of the Honble Walter. A. Yelverton of this parish. Erected by her husband and daughter.* It is unusual to find a window behind the Communion Table that does not depict a scene from the life of Christ. This is because the Communion Table (moved in 1884) was originally where the organ is now. The rhythm and movement in these windows depends mainly on the lead lines. They flow together as their stories interlink. **We are lost like the grains falling on the path, on the rocks and among the weeds, but God searches for us as the woman searches for the lost coin.**

## 2. The Good Samaritan

Possibly the work of Watson & Co, Youghal 1910. **Inscription:** *To the Glory of God and in loving memy of Philip and Sarah Rebecca Jones of 'Balcom Hall' in this parish. The window is erected by their Son Wm Wilward.* Note the delicate painting of the hands, face and feet of 'the man who fell among robbers'. The Levite and the priest ignore him while the Samaritan goes to his aid.

**Christ wants us to be like the Samaritan and help those in need and we are also asked to see the good in those we don't like; Samaritans were enemies of the Jews.**

## 3. The Labourers in the Vineyard.

Royal Bavarian Art Institute (signed by Franz Xavier Zettler), Munich 1891.

**Inscription:** *This Window is erected to the Glory of God And in loving memory of a dear Father and Brother Dr James Sinclair Egan, M.B.T.C.D. who died in 1891, and of his son Bentinck Egan, of New Orleans, died 1882, in that city. David Lawrence writes that it is very unusual to find a window in Ireland signed by Franz Xavier Zettler on behalf of the Royal Bavarian studio (Zettler was not the artist). God loves us all equally whatever our ability or status.*

## 4. The Holy Spirit. I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, John 15:26.

Joan Forsdyke, Dublin 2011. Donated by Dodi Walsh in memory of her husband Brian.

**Plaque:** *In loving memory of Brian Walsh a loyal member of the choir. Rathfarnham Parish Church (1959-2009). Let them sing in joy. Psalm 149.*

**Three movements representing Father, Son and Holy Spirit fuse and 'dance' together, representing unity and the flow of love within the Trinity. At the top of the window God's love, in the Spirit of Truth, overflows to us.**

## 5. Calling of St Peter and St Andrew.

Possibly the work of Early & Co, Dublin 1920. **Inscription:** *To the Glory of God and in Memory of Mary Louisa Egan died Decr 26 1920 dearly loved Daughter of Letitia & James Sinclair Egan. Erected by her niece Cecelia M Egan. Jesus said, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people'. Like Peter and Andrew we are called to follow Christ and be an example of his love.*



## 6. I am the Resurrection and the Life.

Joan Forsdyke, Dublin 2000. Donated by Sheila O'Connor in memory of her husband Denis. **Plaque:** *Denis O'Connor (1949-2000)*. The blue shapes are fragile cells representing our fragile lives. The cross passes through and supports the cells (our lives) and shares our fragility. The empty cross is a symbol of the resurrection and signifies hope and the promise to each one of us of the life to come.

## 7. Psalm 23 v2-3.

Joan Forsdyke, Dublin 2000. **Plaque:** *He lays me down on green pastures, He leads me beside still waters, He restores my soul. In thanksgiving.* The light from the central cross shines downwards into the depths of the still waters and the green pastures and upwards to restore our souls. The cross touches and gives meaning to all aspects of our lives, from the tranquility of still waters and green pastures to the intensity of death and suffering.

## 8. St. Luke.

Irish Stained Glass, Dublin 1971. **Inscription:** *Richard William Shaw MDFFA 1897-1971 presented by his brother and sister.* The symbol for St Luke, the Physician, is the ox portraying untiring work for God. We are all called to work untiringly for God and our neighbour.

## 9. Christ as Good Shepherd.

An Tur Gloine, Dublin, Artist Hubert McGoldrick 1928. **Inscription:** *In loving memory of the Reverend James Sandys Bird M.A. Faithful and devoted rector of this parish 1884-1917. Christ our Good Shepherd seeks each one of us, and like the parable of the lost coin, rejoices when we are found. We should never forget that Christ is searching for us in love.*

## 10. St Cecilia.

Irish Stained Glass, Dublin 1986. **Inscriptions:** Left window: *In loving memory Elizabeth Nightingale wife of Richard. Died June 1986.* Right window: *In memory of Dr Richard Nightingale erected by his wife and children.*

St Cecilia, a Roman Christian martyr, is the Patron Saint of Music because she was said to have heard heavenly music in her heart when she married. St Cecilia's day is Nov 22.

## 11. Raising of Lazarus.

Possibly the work of Watson & Co, Youghal 1903. **Inscription:** *To the glory of God and the loving memy of Philip Gg Homan died 17 April 1902 and of his 4 sisters also of their Grandfath. Rev Philip Homan at one time Recr of this Parish Erect. their sister Mrs Bearne 1903. Rev Philip Homan laid the foundation stone of our church in 1866. The raising of Lazarus tells us that we can all share in the resurrection of Jesus.*