

UNDERSTANDING SYMBOLS IN CATHOLIC CHURCH ARCHITECTURE + ART

<p><u>CHURCH BUILDINGS</u></p> <p>As we can see within our own parish, there are many styles of churches – <u>but</u> there is only <u>one Truth</u>: (1) The Church is the House of God and (2) a gathering place for the People of God to worship God</p> <p>CATHOLIC CHURCH BUILDINGS ARE DESIGNED TO...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise our hearts, minds, and eyes towards God • Communicate Salvation History -even to the illiterate <p>SACRED ART IS USED TO...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evoke and glorify, in faith and adoration, the transcendent mystery of God (CCC 2502) • Draw man to adoration, prayer, and to the love of God, Creator and Savior, the Holy One and Sanctifier (CCC 2502) <p>"THE VISIBLE CHURCH IS A SYMBOL OF THE FATHER'S HOUSE TOWARD WHICH THE PEOPLE OF GOD IS JOURNEYING" (CCC 1186)</p> <p>Everything is used to reveal deeper truths of the Divine. (<i>design motifs, statuary, murals, mosaics, stained glass, ornamentation, geometric shapes, how many of something there are, colors, where things are placed</i>)</p> <p>The various stained glass, statues, murals all convey deeper meaning beyond the surface. Exploring the depths of their "hidden" meanings can help you unlock doors to even deeper faith.</p> <p>The traditional designs and layouts of Catholic Churches hold significance too - for example: cruciform shape, Nave as upturned boat, orientation</p>	<p><u>SIGNS AND SYMBOLS</u></p> <p>Signs signify, point to, or indicate a specific reality or action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>what you see / what's on the surface?</i> <p>Symbols represent an abstract idea and point to a deeper, hidden meaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>what you think about / what is its meaning?</i> <p>YOU SEE THE SIGN. YOU CONTEMPLATE THE SYMBOL.</p> <p>Symbols often have more than one meaning. Most things are simultaneously <u>both</u> Sign <u>and</u> Symbol.</p> <p>The Seven Sacraments are "<i>Super Special Signs</i>". They are not symbols. ...<i>But</i> symbols are used to represent the Sacraments.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"AN OUTWARD SIGN INSTITUTED BY CHRIST TO GIVE GRACE."</p> <p>The Sacraments are efficacious signs. [<i>efficacious = they produce their intended effect</i>] They point beyond themselves to the invisible activity of God. What they point to, God actually does, through them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water in Baptism actually washes away sin • The Eucharist is actually the Body and Blood of Jesus <p>There are many, many signs and symbols associated with the Liturgy.</p> <p>In the Church's earliest days, Christians used letters as symbols to stand for Jesus (<i>Christograms</i>). Saints are typically depicted with items that represent how they lived, how they died, and/or what they are known for.</p>	<p><u>SAINT MATTHEW PARISH</u></p> <p>The SMP Coat of Arms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 crosses = <i>Looks like those used for the Diocese of Pittsburgh</i> + represent the four parish communities: Etna, Glenshaw, Millvale, and Reserve • The black and gold for Pittsburgh • 2 money bags = St. Matthew as tax collector. • The chevrons = the parish's hilly geography • The book = Gospel of Matthew • Red = the blood Matthew shed for the sake of the Gospel (<i>Matthew was a martyr</i>). <p>The SMP Parish Image:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Matthew instructing a child in the Gospel and Matthew 9:9 = "<i>The Calling of St. Matthew</i>". • We are all called to be followers of Christ and teach others about Jesus. • The new identity of the new Saint Matthew Parish. <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p><u>IN SUMMARY</u></p> <p>When in doubt what something means, a good guess is that it represents Jesus.</p> <p>But no matter what it is – its ultimate point is to point us to God >> <i>To guide us to Him so we can be with Him for all eternity</i> <<</p> <p>Everything shows us the importance of The Church as both the House of God + the People of God.</p> <p>Everything is meant to call to mind God and Salvation History.</p> <p>Everything reveals to us the unfathomable love and mercy of God –in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.</p>
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