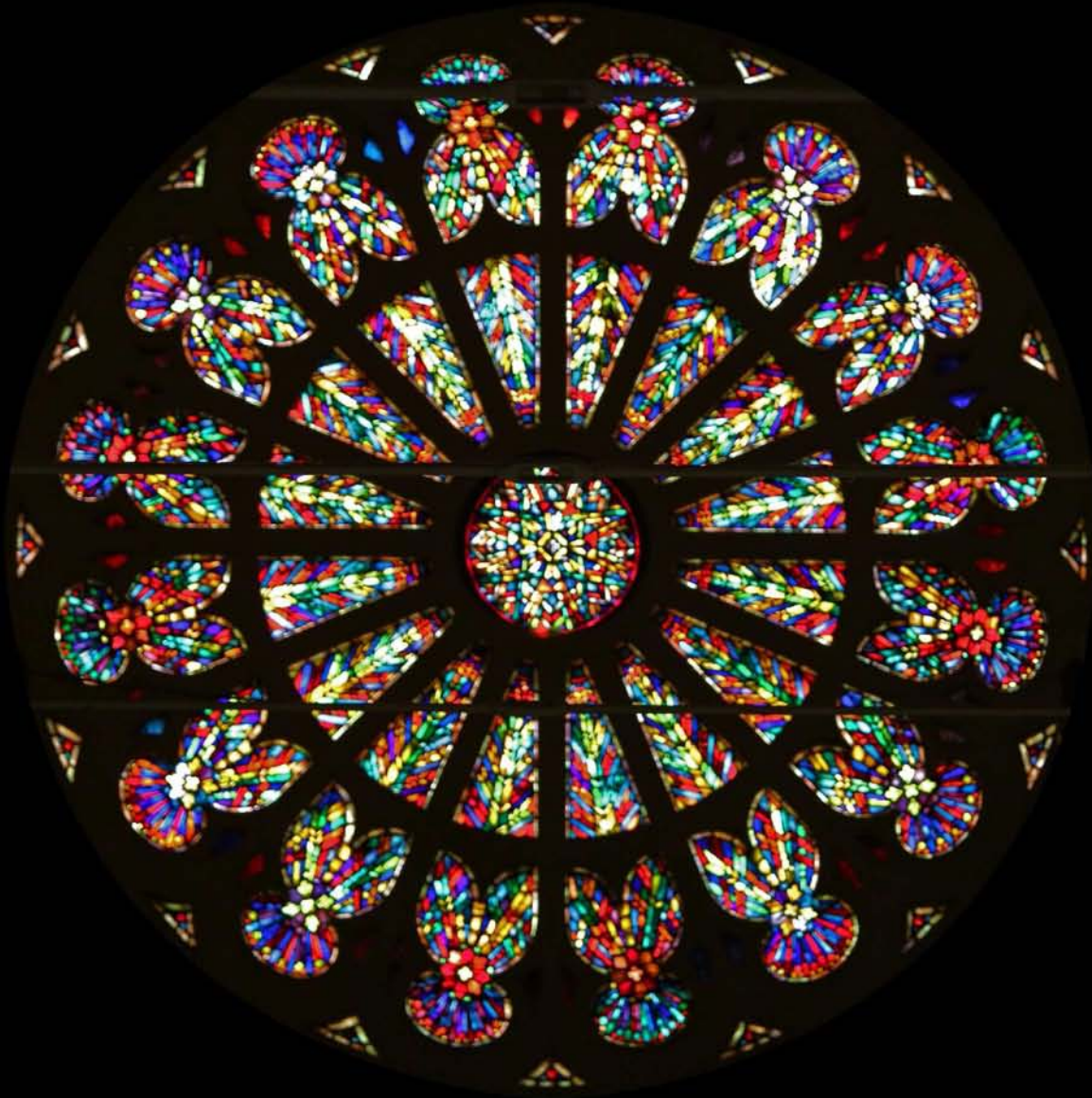


# Portals To Prayer

The Stained Glass Windows of Blessed Sacrament Church, Chatham, Ontario





Portals to Prayer,  
The Stained Glass Windows of Blessed Sacrament  
Church, Chatham, Ontario

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ISBN # 978-0-9920911-0-1

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This book is dedicated  
To all,  
That they may hear the call.

Welcome all who come to pray,  
To see the stories we portray.  
For wonders and mysteries our windows do share;  
Come enjoy,  
Our Portals to Prayer.

## **Portals to Prayer: The Stained Glass Windows of Blessed Sacrament Church**

### **An Introduction**

The stained glass windows of Blessed Sacrament Church are beautiful works of art, but even more, they were designed to teach the faith of the Church. A life long member of this parish remembers his grandmother taking him by the hand and leading him around the church as she explained the stories that were contained in each window.

“Genuine sacred art draws man to adoration, to prayer, and to the love of God, Creator and Savior, the Holy One and Sanctifier.” (CCC 2509) It is the goal of this committee to draw attention to these exquisite examples of sacred art by exploring the many layers of meaning that one may not see by casual observation. Many of them contain familiar stories, while some require further study. Hopefully this book will spark a renewed interest in the windows as an educational tool and a means of inspiration in prayer."

Napoleon Theodore Lyon is the artist that designed most of the stained glass windows at Blessed Sacrament. We know that he was an Irish Catholic, trained in England, and came to Canada

about 1861. He joined the firm of Joseph McCausland in Toronto as a designer and painter.

In 1881 he set up his own studio in Toronto in direct competition with McCauslands, soon becoming the second largest stained glass firm in the city. N.T. Lyon's work can be seen throughout Canada and parts of the United States. The company was bought out and absorbed by the Robert McCausland Company in 1942. N.T. Lyon's signature can be found on the lower right corner of window #4 on our chart, the Fourth Joyful Mystery, The Presentation. It is dated 1925.

Mr. Lyon's window designs include elaborate architectural details simulating carved canopies over statuary. These canopies serve as a frame for each scene portrayed. Upon closer examination, great detail is found to contain multiple symbols of the Trinity, such as tiny shamrocks. Shamrocks were used by St. Patrick to explain the Trinity to the Irish. There are many other patterns of three that can be found in the canopies.

Lyon's canopies, gothic in style, include fleshy Acanthus leaves. These large curling leaves are often used symbolically in art and architecture, notably at the top of columns. Acanthus is an herbaceous shrub that represents immortality or heaven. Because the bush is quite thorny, it also



signifies pain and punishment for sin.

The stained glass windows of a church appear black, dull, and shapeless from the outside. “But when one enters the church, their whole splendor is revealed.” This quote by Goethe describes more than windows; it speaks of the life of the church, where one must enter into relationship with Jesus Christ through the Sacraments to experience the glory and wonder of the life of faith. May the stories of these windows assist us all on our journey of faith.

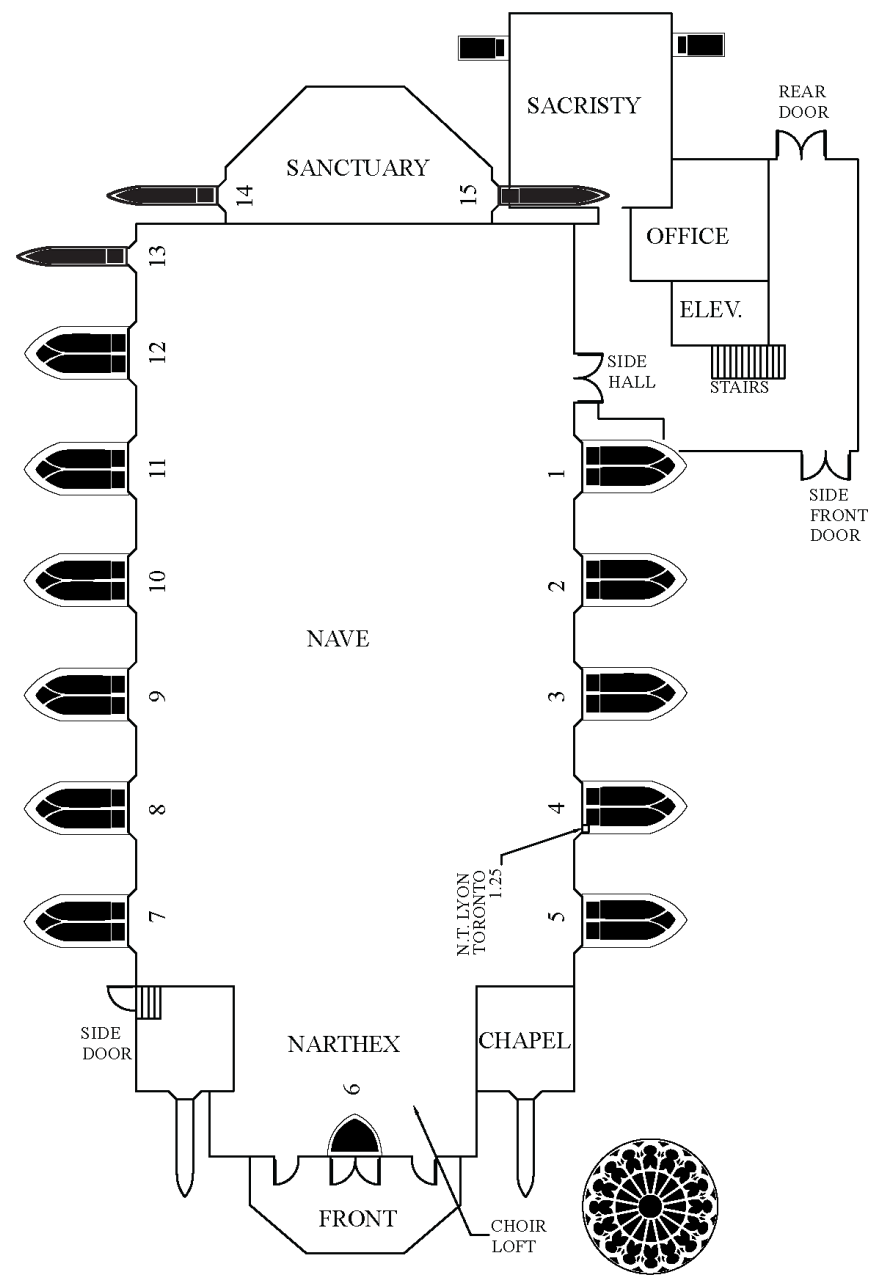


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Church Layout





### **The Rosary Windows, The Five Joyful Mysteries, An Introduction**

The windows of the Joyful Mysteries of the Holy Rosary are located on the right aisle of the Nave. The prayers of the Rosary in their current form have been an important devotion in the Catholic Church for nearly 800 years. The wonderful story of our salvation unfolds through the recitation of each mystery as one prays with the true model of our faith, the Blessed

Virgin Mary.

The Rosary itself is a string of beads consisting of five sets of decades, ten small beads and one larger bead. A Crucifix with two large and three small beads are added. Each decade is associated with a mystery of the faith, twenty in all. The mysteries are divided into four sets: the Joyful Mysteries,

the Luminous Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries, and the Glorious Mysteries.

Each set of mysteries consists of five parts. The Joyful Mysteries, portrayed in our windows, include the Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel, the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, the Birth of Jesus (the Nativity), the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. Why did the builders of Blessed Sacrament Church choose the Joyful Mysteries? Perhaps they were chosen as a way to draw the family of faith into making the Rosary a regular part of their prayer life. We can think of the Rosary as a “Portal to Prayer” for deepening our faith.

For a brief description of this lovely devotion, one begins with the sign of our faith, the sign of the Cross. The Apostle’s Creed is then recited while looking at the Crucifix.

Holding the first bead, the Our Father is prayed for the intentions of the Holy Father. The next three small beads are prayed for the intention of an increase in Faith, Hope, and Love while praying a Hail Mary on each bead. Then the first mystery is introduced, followed by an Our Father on the larger bead. A Hail Mary is recited on each of the ten small beads while meditating on that particular mystery.

Why beads? And why so many Hail Mary's? The beads give a rhythm to our prayers and help us to concentrate on the words of the prayers. Think of each Hail Mary as a pondering in your heart with Our Lady. Mary's desire is, and always has been, to lead us to Jesus. These prayers are very comforting on our journey of faith.

And why are they called mysteries? In theology, an assumed truth that cannot be comprehended by the

human mind is called a mystery. Take time to ponder the mysteries, knowable by little children, yet deep enough to continue surprising even the most learned minds.

