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Stained Glass as a Vehicle for Spiritual Growth

Among the Faithful in the Post-Second Vatican Council Catholic Church

by Richard Gross



This thirteenth-century “Last Judgement” window (left) from the Cathedral of St. Etienne, Bourges, and this much-more modern series of windows by Jeff Smith at St. Bridget Catholic Church, while extremely different from a craft standpoint, are quite similar from a function standpoint. That is, both of them function as a servant of the Church, and both of them engage in the holy task of calling God’s faithful people to conversion. (“Last Judgement” photo courtesy of the SGAA Slide Library; St. Bridget nave photo by Chris Eden/Eden Arts.)

Many people, not the least of whom is Charles Connick writing in *Adventures in Light and Color*, believe that stained glass reached the height of its achievement in the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. To appreciate fully the depth and truth of this view, it is necessary to examine stained glass not in terms of subject matter or craft techniques, but in terms of purpose, specifically *service to the Church*. The view that medieval stained glass achieved what it did because it was able to serve as a sort of “picture Bible” for the illiterate masses is widely held but is largely inaccurate.

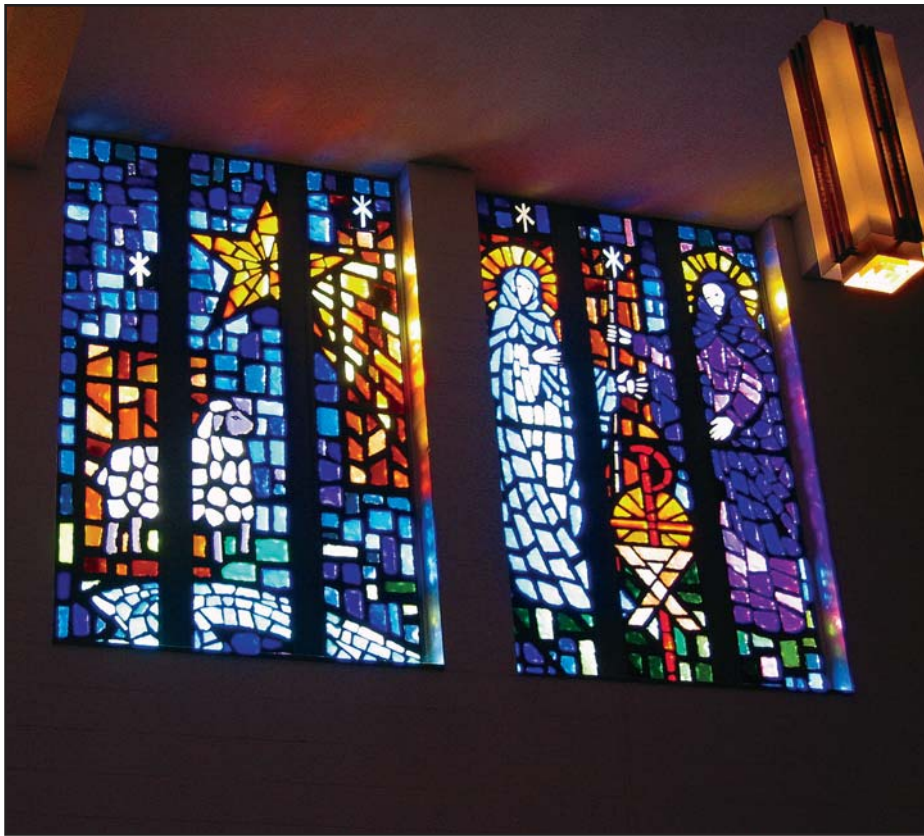
The people of medieval Europe were mostly illiterate and uneducated, yes, but they were far from stupid. The great windows of Chartres spoke to them not as “picture paintings” of far-away Bible stories but on a much more

immediate and, importantly, personal level. In this regard, medieval stained glass achieved something that is entirely possible with modern stained glass in our highly educated and widely literate Western world: it served then as it can serve now as a vehicle for God’s call to conversion and as a lens through which this call can be more fully understood... and answered.

The Church Fathers at the Second Vatican Council, writing in *Lumen Gentium*, considered at length the universal call of God’s faithful people to strive toward holiness and sanctification. They stated, significantly, that “all the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state. Indeed they have an obligation to so strive. Let all then have care that they guide aright their own deepest sentiments of soul.”²¹ This holiness to which all are obligated to strive

was described by the Council as being capable of being expressed in many ways by the individuals of the Church and that all of the various ways in which it can be expressed would manifest in the individual in the tendency toward the perfection of charity.²

Of course, Christ is the perfect model of the holiness that should be the goal of the individual. Jesus, when asked to give the greatest commandment, also gave a powerful guide for the individual’s growth in holiness. He said, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”²³ Also, it is important to realize for a healthy and mature spiritual understanding of the



In these dalle de verre windows by Hopcroft Stained Glass Studios, installed at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Raytown, Missouri, the designer has combined two different but anagogically related topics — Psalm 23 and the Nativity — into a series of panels that reads as one composition. Some who view this window see it as simply a Nativity window, but as one grows in understanding of Christian teaching, it becomes clear that there is much more going on in this composition. The theme of God as Good Shepherd is present in both the Old and New Testaments; the combined presentation of those themes in this composition serves not only as a translation from the presentation of windows designed around Old Testament themes to the left of this window to those that come after this window and depict New Testament topics but also as a visual link between the proleptic imagery of Psalm 23 and the Nativity.

concepts of growth in holiness that this growth originates and is perfected not in the individual's will alone, but by genuine cooperation with the grace given by God and by the working of the Holy Spirit, Who guides the individual human person toward a love that has as its most perfect example the love of Christ; the combination of the individual's intellect and will, the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit combine to create a force that compels the

individual to an ever-expanding love of God and of neighbor.

"They are justified in the Lord Jesus," the Council Fathers wrote, "because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then, too, by God's gift, they must hold on to and contemplate in their lives the holiness they have received. They are warned by the Apostle to live 'as becomes

saints' and to put on 'as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience,' and to possess the fruit of the Spirit in holiness. Since truly we offend in many things we all need God's mercies continually and we all must daily pray: 'Forgive us our debts.'"⁴

To these cornerstone virtues for growth in holiness — namely, mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience — we can add the evangelical counsels⁵, of which the Church Fathers also spoke in *Lumen Gentium*. So, too, can we add prayer, for which the Church Fathers call. These elements are counted among those central to the faithful Christian's spiritual life and are some of the elements that Holy Mother Church works to instill and develop among those faithful. A well-ordered spiritual life is vital to an individual's growth as a Christian because "spirituality refers to any religious or ethical value that is concretized as an attitude or spirit from which one's actions flow."⁶

The connection of these virtues and actions to spiritual growth was recognized by the Council Fathers. Writing in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes*, the Council noted that "the arts are also, in their own way, of great importance to the life of the Church. They strive to make known the proper nature of man, his problems and his experiences in trying to know and perfect both himself and the world."⁷

Thus, in this striving to "know and perfect both himself and the world," it can be fairly said that any good object capable of helping each individual human person better understand and develop his spiritual life has a proper place in the Church. This point was emphasized by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their document *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship*, which

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Stained Glass as a Vehicle for Spiritual Growth

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provides an excellent definition of a “good object” in the section entitled “Components of True and Worthy Art,” where it states:

Authentic art is integral to the Church at prayer because these objects and actions are “signs and symbols of the supernatural world” and expressions of the divine presence. While personal tastes will differ, parish committees should utilize the criteria of quality and appropriateness in evaluating art for worship. *Quality* is perceived only by contemplation, by standing back from things and really trying to see them, trying to let them speak to the beholder. *Quality* is evident in the honesty and genuineness of the materials that are used, the nobility of the form embodied in them, the love and care that goes into the creation of a work of art, and the personal stamp of the artist, whose special gift produces a harmonious whole, a well-crafted work.

Quality art draws the beholder to the Creator, who stands behind the artist sharing his own creative power, for the “divine Artist passes on to the human artist a spark of his own surpassing wisdom.” This is true of music, architecture, sculpture, painting, pottery making, textiles, and furniture making, as well as other art forms that serve the liturgical environment. The integrity and energy of a piece of art, produced individually by the labor of an artist, is always to be preferred above objects that are mass-produced.

Similarly, in the construction of new church buildings, there is no



This “Lamb of God” window by Johann Thorn-Prikker can be seen at St. George’s Church, Cologne, Germany. It presents a very mature and developed interpretation of the Lamb of God theme that is full of imagery and invites the viewer to a deeper consideration of the spiritual implications of this theme. (Photo courtesy of the SGAA Slide Library.)

standard pattern for church art, nor should art and architectural styles from any particular time or culture be imposed arbitrarily upon another community. Nonetheless, the patrimony of sacred art and architecture provides a standard by which a parish can judge the worthiness of contemporary forms and styles.

Appropriateness for liturgical action is the other criterion for choosing a work of art for church. The quality of *appropriateness* is

demonstrated by the work’s ability to bear the weight of mystery, awe, reverence, and wonder that the liturgical action expresses and by the way it serves and does not interrupt the ritual actions which have their own structure, rhythm and movement. Since art is revelatory, a gift from God, a truly beautiful object stretches “beyond what the senses perceive and, reaching beneath reality’s surface, strives to interpret its hidden mystery.” Nonetheless, there is always the chasm between “the work of [the artist’s] hands” and the “dazzling perfection” glimpsed in God’s creative moment. Art that is used in worship must therefore evoke wonder at its beauty but lead beyond itself to the invisible God. Beautiful, compelling artworks draw the People of God into a deeper awareness of their lives and of their common goals as a Christian community as well as of their roles and responsibilities in the wider world. Art that fulfills these qualities is art *worthy* of the Christian assembly.

Worthy art is an essential, integral element in the sacred beauty of a church building. Through skilled use of proportion, shape, color, and design, art unifies and helps to integrate the place of worship with the actions of worship. Artistic creations in the place of worship inspire contemplation and devotion. Sculpture, furnishings, art glass, vesture, paintings, bells, organs, and other musical instruments as well as windows, doors, and every visible and tactile detail of architecture possess the potential to express

the wholeness, harmony, and radiance of profound beauty.⁸

For a stained glass installation to fulfill its proper role, it must be no mere bauble but a good and faithful servant of the Church by acting as a lens through which the faithful can more fully understand and come to live the vital elements for growth in holiness as they develop a sound spirituality that will allow them to “become as saints,” recognizing their individual dependence on God’s mercies and allowing them to forgive – and seek forgiveness – as becomes a true disciple of Christ. To understand how this is possible, it is necessary to first understand the individual elements of growth in holiness involved and then to understand how stained glass can, indeed, act as an element that *God can use* in His call to conversion.

The understanding that it is God who makes this call to conversion and that He can do so through myriad means is vitally important. It should in no way be interpreted that somehow it becomes the responsibility of the stained glass artist to design a universal call to conversion into his windows. The designer is not being charged with any superhuman task; instead, the task that has always been present to him in designing for church installations is simply being restated: to design a worthy window that performs “a mediating role, analogous, we might say, to the role of the priest, or, perhaps better, that of Jacob’s Ladder, descending and ascending. Art is meant to bring the divine to the human world, to the level of the senses, then, from the spiritual insight gained through the senses and the stirring of emotions, to raise the human world to God, to His inexpressible kingdom of mystery, beauty and life.”⁹

We know that the individual can trust in salvation because he can trust in God’s mercy. The individual can also



The theme of the Sacrament of Marriage is boldly addressed in this Hopcroft Stained Glass Studio composition in terms not just of the indissoluble and eternal union of Holy Trinity, a union that has perfect love as its foundation, but also in terms of its relationship to other Sacraments, especially Baptism, and its similarity to the Covenants between the people of Israel and God.

come to a better understanding of what it means to be merciful himself by examining what is involved in God’s mercy. Once the statement “be holy because God is holy” (cf. 1 Peter 1:16) is accepted as true and mercy is understood as an element of holiness, it is a simple exercise in logic to see that the statement “be merciful because God is merciful” is also true.

Dominum et Vivificantem, Part Two, Article Four, states that “The Holy Spirit, who in the words of Jesus ‘convinces concerning sin,’ is the love of the Father and the Son, and as such is the Trinitarian gift, and at the same time the eternal source of every divine giving of gifts to creatures. Precisely in him we can picture as personified and actualized in a transcendent way that mercy which the patristic and theological tradition, following the line of the Old and New Testaments, attributes to God. In man, mercy includes sorrow and compassion for the misfortunes of one’s neighbor.” Saint Thomas Aquinas

similarly defines mercy in man as a “heartfelt sympathy for another distress, impelling us to succor him if we can.”¹⁰ In subsequent Articles, Aquinas defines mercy not only as a virtue,¹¹ but is the greatest virtue among those that relate man to his neighbor.¹²

The stained glass artist who presents mercy as his theme has at his disposal a vast catalog of possibilities to make this complex idea present to viewers. From great, abstract presentations of the Holy Spirit capable of embracing the viewer in light and warmth to more concrete, realistic presentation of the spiritual¹³ and corporeal¹⁴ acts of mercy, the possibilities are limited only by the experience, imagination and inspiration of the capable designer.

Kindness is a happy theme for the stained glass artist. Unlike the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, or the themes of meekness and humility, which are looked at with distaste by many in the modern

world,¹⁵ kindness is always in season. Kindness is that aspect of charity put into action to which Christ speaks in the second part of the Greatest Commandment: *The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*¹⁶ Kindness as an act of love demonstrated by concrete actions that are manifestations of spiritual beliefs represents the rejection of bigotry and prejudice; of hostility; and of empty, boastful speech.¹⁷

The stained glass artist has ample opportunity to illustrate kindness in the many actions of Christ, in whose actions we see the premier examples of kindness. Christ showed great kindness in healing the lame, giving sight to the blind and speech to the mute. Christ provides many other concrete example of kindness by His constant example, in which He put the spiritual and corporeal acts of mercy into practice.

Humility and meekness are both signs of a greatly advanced spiritual life; further, these elements of growth in holiness both are motivated by kindness.¹⁸ If we consider the examples of what kindness is *not* that is presented in *Ecclesiam Suam*, quoted above, then one can see that the rejection of bigotry and prejudice is motivated to a great degree by humility; that the rejection of hostility and empty, boastful speech finds great motivation in meekness.¹⁹

Meekness “suppresses the movement of anger,”²⁰ and humility serves as a brake on impulse and gives the individual human person the ability to practice moderation in the face of moral temptation. Aquinas considers humility to be a twofold virtue that serves “one, to temper and restrain the mind, lest it tend to high things immoderately; and this belongs to the virtue of humility: and another to strengthen the mind against despair, and urge it on to the pursuit of great things according to right reason; and this is magnanimity.”²¹

Christ calls his followers to meekness and humility. Matthew 11: 29 tells that Christ bade His followers to hold to His example, for He is meek and humble of heart, seeking only the glory of God. For the stained glass artist seeking to illustrate meekness and

The role of stained glass as a Church art can only be fully realized if those artists who design stained glass windows for the Church fully appreciate the theological importance of their artwork in the greater goal of the Church.

humility, the examples of Christ remain the greatest source. Also, many fine examples can be found in the lives of the saints who do not admonish people to simply behave as they themselves behave, but encourage us to instead turn to God’s mercy as they turned to God’s mercy, so that we might learn what the saints learned and so become like them.

The often-quoted phrase that “patience is a virtue” is often offered to people as an explanation why something cannot be done *right now*. However, this is an unsatisfactory and incomplete understanding of what patience *truly* is. Saint Thomas Aquinas would agree that patience is a virtue.²² Aquinas saw patience as that virtue that safeguards human reason against sorrow, lest reason give way to despair.²³ This means that patience is that virtue that allows a person to per-

severe in his growth in spirituality and holiness in the face of opposition to that growth. Patience allows the individual to show mercy in the face of cruelty, to practice kindness in the face of wickedness, to be humble in the face of haughtiness, and to remain meek in the face of arrogance. Patience comes by grace and is born of charity, which loves God above all things.²⁴

Patience is a concept that can, at first, seem difficult to communicate with a stained glass window. This is because patience is generally made manifest across the passing of time; thus, it seems, at least initially, to be something almost impossible to portray in a single presentation that is, at its core, pictorial.

Of course, we are all familiar with the popular *Christ Knocking at the Door* windows, which do, indeed, illustrate patience in terms of the patient call of Christ. However, a stained glass window that can successfully communicate perseverance in any other virtue in the face of opposition will successfully illustrate the virtue of patience as well. While it will not necessarily be immediately obvious to the viewer of the window that patience is a theme addressed, nevertheless it is always true that not all are at the same stage in their spiritual journey. The stained glass artist need only provide the seed from which understanding can grow; from this, it is well within the power of the Holy Spirit to bring forth that growth in the individual.

The evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience also play a part in the individual’s growth in holiness. Though these are frequently considered only in terms of the vows taken by those in a religious order, nevertheless, the Church Fathers at the Second Vatican Council stressed that all of God’s faithful ones are called to these counsels, each in a degree proper to his own life. They wrote, in *Lumen*

Gentium, Chapter Five, Article 39, “in a very special way this (holiness) appears in the practice of the counsels, customarily called ‘evangelical.’ This practice of the counsels, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians, either privately or in a Church-approved condition or state of life, gives or must give in the world an outstanding witness and example of this same holiness.”

Father Jordan Aumann also stresses the importance of the evangelical counsels in his book *Spiritual Theology* when he states, “The soul that wishes to attain perfect abandonment to the will of God must be disposed to practice the evangelical counsels. Religious make a vow to practice certain counsels in their daily life; lay persons are not called upon to do this, but they should *observe the spirit of the counsels and carry them out in practice when the duties of their state in life permit*. However, it would be an error for the laity gratuitously, to assume a manner of life proper to religious; the first duty of the laity, whether married or living singly in the world, is to fulfill the duties imposed by their particular vocation.” (Emphasis added)

That all are called to observe to the spirit of the evangelical counsels is not difficult to understand in terms of the spiritual life; however, illustrating the evangelical counsels in stained glass relies on an understanding²⁵ of what they entail. Chastity, for example, need not be understood as synonymous with celibacy; instead, it represents the control of one’s sexual appetites. Therefore, the chastity that is proper to the married laity is found in faithfulness to one’s spouse whereas the chastity proper to the ordained priest is found in celibacy. It may be surprising to some in the stained glass field that a *Sacrament of Marriage* window could, indeed would, include as key to its faithful

depiction of the sacrament the concept of chastity; nevertheless, such a concept is well within the teachings of the Church and should be included in any such window.

We can consider also the *spirit* of poverty and obedience, for it is the spirit that is key and not the logical extreme. The bishops of the Second Vatican Council wrote in *Lumen Gentium* that “There are some who, in their freedom as sons of God, renounce their own wills and take upon themselves the state of poverty. Still further, some become subject of their own accord to another man, in the matter of perfection for love of God. This is beyond the measure of the commandments, but is done in order to become more fully like the obedient Christ.”²⁶ This desire to “become more fully like the obedient Christ” is the central element to growth in holiness, and it is to this end that the spirit of the evangelical counsels motivates the individual.

In practice among the laity, poverty need not be embraced in a vow; the spirit of poverty is one that refuses to make an idol of money. The same is true of obedience; to follow the spirit of obedience, one need not take the monk’s vow. It is sufficient to refuse to make an idol of self-reliance. For the stained glass artist charged with depicting the evangelical counsels, one need not be overwhelmed by the idea of offering in glass these abstract concepts if one realizes that each of these concepts has its finest example in Christ and its most perfect motivation in the individual’s love for God and the recognition of the created as being dependent on the Creator.

Finally, if the virtues and the evangelical counsels seem abstract and difficult concepts to visualize in stained glass, then prayer – which can be expressed as an action – must certainly be easy to express in glass. One must wonder, in the more than 1000-year

history of stained glass, how many committees have asked for a prayer window and been shown designs for Jesus praying in a *Garden of Gethsemane* window.²⁷

However, prayer is more than posture and words; prayer is a concept that goes to the very heart of the mystery of man, God and redemption in Christ. This mystery represents a depth that is surpassingly difficult to communicate in art. “Prayer is the ‘raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.’ But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or ‘out of the depths’ of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; *humility* is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that ‘we do not know how to pray as we ought,’ are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. ‘Man is a beggar before God.’”²⁸

If humility is the foundation for prayer, and humility, the twofold virtue, works in part to strengthen the mind against despair (as described above), then it is not unreasonable to conclude that a significant part of prayer must be to reinforce and advance man’s recognition of his dependence on God as being the source of all good things. The man of humble heart will not despair of God’s mercy in answering the prayer of petition.²⁹ For those at an early stage in their journey to holiness, prayers of petition are the most common. As one advances in holiness, one begins to express one’s love for God through prayers of adoration. Those even more advanced will make frequent prayers of intercession.

Each advancing stage of prayer shows a growing in humility and a deepening of love. Thus, each stage, being more refined than the stage that preceded it, is a successively harder concept to present in stained glass.



These windows represent two completely different approaches to a Creation theme. Jeff Smith's window (left) is a more playful and yet spiritual approach to the topic than is seen in the more direct Hopcroft Stained Glass Studios window on the right. While it is not the goal of this article to suggest that one approach is better than the other, it is important to realize that both approaches meet a given set of criteria and do so in a way that allows the window to also act as a servant of the Church in its work for the sanctification of souls. The role of stained glass as a Church art can only be fully realized if those artists who design stained glass windows for the Church fully appreciate the theological importance of their artwork in the greater goal of the Church.

Nevertheless, the stages can be addressed in terms of the virtues necessary for proper prayer: humility, of course, and also patience, mercy, kindness and meekness, but especially in terms of grace, which comes not from the individual but from God alone. Because "Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and He Himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The 'spiritual battle' of the Christian's new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer."³⁰

If a stained glass window can become a tool for God's constant call to conversion, then it is a good and valuable servant of the Church. Conversion is an ongoing process in which one experi-

ences God's love and mercy and by that experience is called to even deeper conversion. (cf. *Dives in Misericordia*, Article 13) This call to conversion is properly answered by God's faithful by a growth in holiness; it is an ongoing process that ends only at the end of one's life, and then judgement.

If the goal of the Church is the sanctification of souls,³¹ then any element that can serve to advance that goal has a proper place in the Church. The sacred arts in general and stained glass specifically, by virtue of their ability to play a part among God's faithful people in the call to conversion and holiness, have an important part to play in the job of sanctification of souls. This role can only be fully realized if those artists and craftsmen who design stained glass windows for the Church fully appreciate the theological importance that their artwork has in the greater goal of the Church.

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IPT Director Professor Douglas Bushman, whose instruction, guidance and feedback is greatly appreciated.

Notes

1. *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter V, Article 42
2. *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter V, Article 39
3. Matthew 22: 36-40
4. *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter V, Article 40
5. Those are poverty, chastity and obedience.
6. Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology*, online edition
7. *Gaudium et Spes*, Article 62
8. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on the Liturgy, *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship*, Articles 146-149
9. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on the Liturgy, *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship*, Article 142.
10. *Summa Theologica*, Second Part of the Second Part, "Question 30: Of Mercy," Article One
11. *Ibid*, Article Three
12. *Ibid*, Article Four. Saint Thomas Aquinas allows, however, that among all virtues, charity considered as a divine attribute unites man to God and excels mercy.
13. The Spiritual Acts of Mercy are to instruct the ignorant; to counsel the doubtful; to admonish sinners; to bear wrongs patiently; to forgive offenses willingly; to comfort the afflicted; to pray for the living and the dead.
14. The corporeal Acts of Mercy are to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to visit the sick, to ransom the captive, and to bury the dead.
15. The sad origin of the distaste for these themes stems largely from a misunderstanding of what they truly mean and from the all-too-common misunderstanding of happiness often encountered in the modern world. If happiness is defined in terms of freedom *from* – as in, freedom from all repression and moderation, freedom from repercussion as a result of speech, or freedom from the consequences of one's actions – instead of in terms of freedom *for* – as in, freedom for growth in holiness, freedom for

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study and an increase in understanding, or freedom for the expression of charity – then freedom becomes nothing more than license. Certainly, the clever linguist can change freedom from all repression and moderation to freedom for excess and vice, but the simple fact remains that a Christian definition of happiness finds its origin not in describing the absolute limits before one faces prosecution in a court of law, but in delineating the expected modes of thought and behavior for responsible growth in holiness as a human person.

16. Matthew 22: 36-40
17. *Ecclesiam Suam*, Article 79.
18. Of course, *all* aspects and elements of the growth in holiness are in some way related. It is in the nature of that which is good to support that which is good.
19. When one considers that kindness motivates meekness and humility, while meekness and humility, in their turn, advance kindness, it is particularly striking how kindness is so universally embraced by modern society, and yet many people will outright reject humility and meekness as something for which to strive. The easy conclusion is that everyone wants to receive kindness, but few are willing to give it. However, the truth is always much more complex than the easy conclusion. There are many who long to give kindness, but do not know how. A person will recognize kindness when he sees it, and he will offer it when he is able but because so many lack a basic understanding of the root of kindness, it frequently becomes difficult for one individual to offer kindness to another.
20. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Second Part of the Second Part*, "Question 161: of Humility," Article Five
21. *Ibid*, Article One

22. *Summa Theologica, Second Part of the Second Part*, "Question 136: of Patience," Article One
23. *Ibid*.
24. *Ibid*, Article Three
25. The artist needs to have a theological understanding of what he portrays if that portrayal is to be a fully successful and original work of art. Otherwise, the window is merely a reproduction the same images drawn from a somewhat worn catalog of religious concepts and cannot rightly be considered art in its truest sense.
26. Article 42
27. Generally, it is interesting to note, this depiction is of a serene Jesus praying peacefully in the moonlight. Typically, one does not see the Jesus of the Gospels, who was described in Matthew 26 as possessing a soul "sorrowful unto death" or who in Luke 22 is reported to have been in such agony and prayed so fervently that his sweat became "as drops of blood falling to the ground." Though the Garden of Gethsemane windows certainly do illustrate Jesus in prayer, they, through the serenity they offer, often fail to illustrate the depth and profundity of the obedience that Christ is offering to God when He asks that this cup pass from him, but "not my will but Yours be done."
28. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2559
29. Of course, the prayer must be properly made, which means it must be made from the heart properly conformed to God's will.
30. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2725
31. Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology; Part 1, Chapter 2: The Goal of Our Striving*, Online edition





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