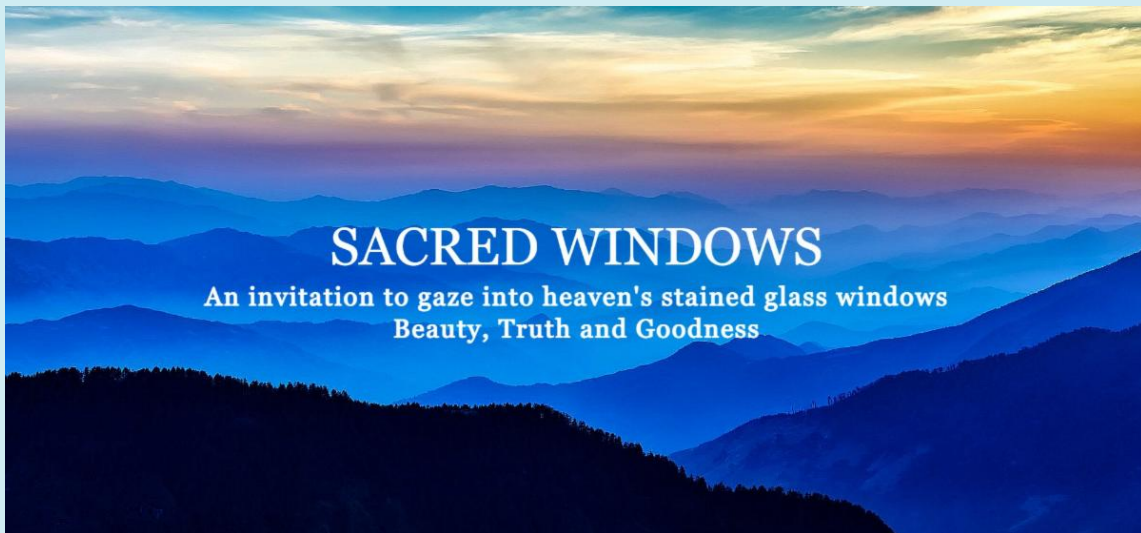


Sunday, February 7, 2021



## Painting with Light

Greetings!

Wonder is everywhere in the natural world. Often you don't even have to look for it. **You just have to receive it.**

This happened to me one evening some years ago as I walked out the side door of the residence where I was staying. The door faced west into the setting sun. It had just rained so the air still felt moist.

I looked up and *the scene stopped me in my tracks.*

It was the sky.

To call the scene a "radiant sunset" would have done it an injustice. I stood lost in wonder, forgetting about anything else I had to do that evening.

**The sky itself seemed to be on fire.**

Piercing reds and oranges shot out from wispy clouds; intense yellows glowed nearest the setting sun; some hint of purple emerged at the sky's farthest edges, and a pallet of blues invaded the spaces between the other colors. Did I even see a faint hue of green?

What was captivating me was actually *the waning light filtering through a zillion water droplets in the air*—the very definition of a diffused rainbow.

God was painting with light. On a canvas of air. Right before my eyes.

## A Tale of Two Windows

For centuries human artists have been trying to capture at least some of the beauty of the Divine Artist's magnificent creation.

I'm sure that explains my love affair with stained glass. This medium, more than any other, is the art of painting with light.

It's the work of creating wonder using the materials of the earth, combining them with natural light, and presenting them to the world **through the prism of human talent.**

I am immediately drawn to any stained glass creations I see, but let me say that there is stained glass... and then there's *stained glass*.

A little comparison may show you what I mean. Call this a **tale of two windows.**



**Exhibit A (left):** *Annunciation*, a local Catholic parish, ca. 2010.

Here we have what we might describe as a typical pane of decorative glass found in many modern day churches.

The Virgin Mary is lovely but (dare I say it?) a bit homely. Archangel Gabriel is rather unimaginative, one-dimensional, and clichéd as he floats on a cloud.

Both figures are clothed in sedate colors, as is the whole window.

**Exhibit B (right):** *Annunciation*, St. Joseph's Church, Terenure, South Dublin, 1930s.

The image of the Virgin Mary lights up your world. She beckons you into her "Fiat" moment of decision.

Look at the incredible details and colors!

We see only the bottom half of the Archangel Gabriel in this detail – he is wearing *blue ballet slippers*!



## Detail, Color, Charm, Truth

As I said, there's stained glass, and then there's *stained glass*.

The second *Annunciation* image is obviously worlds beyond the former in beauty, detail, depth of color, artistry, feeling, and charm.

This detail of Our Lady is only one small area of the larger window that is truly magnificent. It features **the ravishing figure of the Archangel towering above her** vested in deep reds, purples, blues, and yellows. There are other tiny colorful and symbolic images filling the spaces all around the two figures.

For example, if you look very closely, you can see the drawing of **a temple-like structure on a hill** in the two gray panels at the bottom of the detail, between the feet of Gabriel and the upper right arm of Our Lady.

It's easy to miss at first glance. Look again, you'll see it.

A Christian observer will interpret that image as a symbol of Our Lady as the *new Temple of the Holy God*. His dwelling place on earth.

Unsurpassed beauty and delicacy! The ballet slippers are **artistic license at its finest**. The Temple image deepens the **theological truth** of the window.

There are as many ways to create wonder with light-filled glass as there are artists who feel drawn to that medium, but the quality varies, as you may have noticed from this brief contrast.

## The Artist

So who is the artist who created the stunning *Annunciation* window in South Dublin? Who is this man I call "the greatest stained glass artist you've never heard of"?

**His name is Harry Clarke, and he's one of Ireland's finest.** To find out more about him and his life's work, feel free to read our feature article about him.

At the end of the article I've included a gallery of some of his other works, which, I'm sure, will captivate

you as much as they did me when I first laid eyes on them.

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## Our Feature Articles

### The Greatest Stained Glass Artist You've Never Heard Of



### The Delicate Art of Hand-Crafting a Tiffany Lamp



**In case you missed previous editions of the newsletter,  
they are now online!**

**All 2020 & 2021 Sacred Windows Newsletters**

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**Thank you again!**

*Peter Darcy*

*PS-1 – Remember: I post one article a week on the Sacred Windows website and send out this newsletter every two weeks – on Sundays.*

*PS 2 – A heads up for all SW readers – I'll be publishing a book on ANGELS on Easter Sunday (April 4<sup>th</sup>) so stay tuned!*



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#### **TO CONTACT PETER:**

Email: [peterdarcy@sacredwindows.com](mailto:peterdarcy@sacredwindows.com)

Author's Website: [www.petedarcywriting.com](http://www.petedarcywriting.com)

Strength of Soul Books: [publisher@strengthofsoulbooks.com](mailto:publisher@strengthofsoulbooks.com)

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