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Each object will guide you to the walkthrough on Google Maps.*



## *Church Map Key*

### Seven Sorrows of Mary

- A) The Prophecy of Simeon
- B) Flight into Egypt
- C) Loss of Child Jesus in Temple of Jerusalem
- D) Meeting of Mary and Jesus
- E) Crucifixion of Jesus
- F) Piercing of Jesus with Spear
- G) Burial of Jesus

### Life of Mary

- 1) Nativity
- 2) Annunciation
- 3) Wedding of Mary & Joseph
- 4) Assumption
- 5) Crowning of Mary
- 6) Flight to Egypt
- 7) Epiphany
- 8) Presentation in the Temple

### Four Gospel Writers

- H) Matthew
- I) Mark
- J) Luke
- K) John

# The Seven Sorrows of Mary

It is only too seemly that any church given the name of “Mater Dolorosa” should feature somewhere within its walls the Seven Sorrows (Dolors) of the Blessed Mother; the Latin phrase “Mater Dolorosa,” after all, translates to “Mother of Sorrows.” The Seven Sorrows, almost all of which are derived from Scriptural events, comprise a devotion which is a common staple of Catholic tradition; the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows is celebrated twice a year, both on the 15th of September and on the Friday before Good Friday. Though Catholic history has always included veneration of the Blessed Virgin, nothing was official until the 13th century, when seven well-to-do gentlemen with a devotion to Mary left Florence, Italy for Mount Senario. There, they sought a place wherein they could, as a community, devote their lives to God. In 1239, on Good Friday, the Blessed Virgin Herself appeared to the seven and communicated her desire that they form an Order dedicated to the Sorrows. Such a request, considering its source, is not one to be lightly denied; the Order of the Servants of Mary (the Servites) was soon founded. St. Bridget, patron saint of Europe, Sweden, and widows, was told in the 14th century (she was born in 1303 and died in 1373) that those who meditated upon the 7 Sorrows would be amply rewarded, receiving the following Seven Graces from Mary Herself:

- 1) I will grant peace to their families.
- 2) They will be enlightened about the divine mysteries.
- 3) I will console them in their pains and I will accompany them in their work.
- 4) I will give them as much as they ask for as long as it does not oppose the adorable will of my divine Son or the sanctification of their souls.
- 5) I will defend them in their spiritual battles with the infernal enemy and I will protect them at every instant of their lives.
- 6) I will visibly help them at the moment of their death, they will see the face of their Mother.
- 7) I have obtained (This Grace) from my divine Son, that those who propagate this devotion to my tears and sorrows, will be taken directly from this earthly life to eternal happiness since all their sins will be forgiven and my Son and I will be their eternal consolation and joy.

The feast day itself was instituted in a synod at Cologne in the year 1413; this was in reaction to iconoclast Hussites (followers of the radical Jan Hus who are reported to have destroyed Catholic icons). The day was originally determined to be the Friday following the third Sunday after Easter, commemorating the sufferings of Mary during Christ’s Passion and Death. Originally kept only in a few countries and on a variety of dates (some fixed, some not), the feast was broadened in certain areas by the termination of the fifteenth century to include either five or, in some cases, all 7 dolors (sorrows). The date was made more uniform in 1727, when Pope Benedict XIII extended it over the entire Latin Church; it was to be celebrated the Friday preceding Palm Sunday. Meanwhile, the Servites had been given their own feast in 1668, whose object was the seven sorrows of the Blessed Mother. The date was the 15th of September; in 1814 Pope Pius VII extended this feast to the entire Latin Church.

## 1st Sorrow: The Prophecy of Simeon

The first of the seven Sorrows refers to the Prophecy made by Simeon, briefly described in Luke’s Gospel as “righteous and devout.” Simeon, having been told by God that he will not die until he has seen the Messiah, sees the infant Jesus in the Temple and, taking him from his mother, blesses God for the fulfillment of His promise. He then turns to Mary and hints at the turmoil that will mark Jesus’ life, ending with the gloomy prophecy that “a sword shall pierce your soul, too.” (It is worth remarking that, in Catholic art, the Seven Sorrows are represented by seven swords in Mary’s heart.) It is also interesting to note that Simeon’s prophecy on the life of Jesus serves as a neat contrast to the joyous pronouncements of the arch-angel Gabriel; it adds the necessary dimension of sorrow to Gabriel’s triumph. In this particular rendition, Mary is portrayed as a young woman clothed solely in white. In Catholic art, white has long since been considered the color of purity and innocence. Although not her typical color (Mary is usually portrayed in azure blue raiments as befits her celestial status), it is nevertheless fitting, considering the Catholic veneration of Mary. In the novena for the Immaculate Conception, Mary is described as having, among other things, “a deep humility, a purity greater than the angels.” Her hands are slightly extended, no doubt reminding the viewer that she has just allowed Simeon to take her child. Simeon himself is, in keeping with his Biblical status, given a rather Mosaic beard, symbolizing his wisdom, age, and general devoutness. (In prior days, one’s elders were treated with considerable respect, and their years were considered venerable.) It is Simeon, rather than Mary, who wears the symbolic blue, though it is rather darker in his case. Royal blue was often used to announce the coming of the King; it is thus fitting that Simeon should wear this color. After all, his role as prophet necessarily announces the greatness of Christ, paving the way for His ministry. Simeon is also clad in a rather reddish vestment. In Catholic art, red is often used to symbolize the Holy Spirit; it is hence the color of Pentecost. Accordingly, Simeon is undoubtedly “moved by the Spirit” during his prophecy, and this divine inspiration is represented accordingly. Simeon holds the Christ Child in his hands; one hand is raised with all the eloquence of Pickwickian oratory as he gives his prophecy. Behind him is Anna, his wife, portrayed as an elderly woman. She wears black with undertones of white; when these two colors are together, they symbolize humility. She appears to be gazing fondly at Jesus, who, like His Mother, wears only white swaddling clothes to emphasize his youth and purity. Behind Mary is her husband, Joseph. One is almost frustrated to see that he too is clad in blue; however, a closer look shows that this move is sensible rather than (as impulse might tell us) merely perverse. Blue, after all, besides being the official color of the Blessed Virgin, is also the color of hope, servitude, and heavenly grace, underlining both Joseph’s humble nature and his blessed status as husband to the Mother of God. One source notes the undercurrent of humility throughout this first Sorrow; this is a point to consider, particularly when one notes the Holy Family Themselves. After all, they have come quietly, only to fulfill their obligation under the Law, and they in no way try to mask their poverty. (One observes the offering of the turtle doves, a sacrifice which was in those days less costly than a lamb and was usually purchased by the poor.) Then, of course, there is the already mentioned point of Joseph wearing blue, possibly to express his humble stature as servant of God, as well as the simplicity of both the Blessed Virgin and Christ himself. Both of them are simply and unobtrusively clad in white, and the extension of Mary’s hands has a distinctly supplicating look, indicating humility. Another aspect worthy of consideration is the differing distinctness visible in the Holy Family’s haloes; while all three members of the Holy Family have one, symbolizing their holiness, one notices that Joseph’s is transparent, more of an outline than anything. Mary’s is more distinct; it is translucent verging on opaque. The Christ Child’s, meanwhile, is definitely opaque and of a brighter, more positive yellow than either of the others. A look at the use of halos in Catholic art shows that there is a specific hierarchy not always strictly observed by artists. Nevertheless, it is plain enough that Joseph’s fainter, less distinct nimbus (another word for halo) is probably a “simple orb,” designated for those given the title of Blessed or Saint. Mary’s brighter, clearer orb does not clearly fit into any category, but it is closest to the “aureole,” which is often used around either the head or body (or both) of the Blessed Virgin. Christ’s brighter, more opaque aureole no doubt emphasizes his divinity. Clustered to the side are three children of unknown name, one of whom clutches a palm. In Catholic art, palms are often associated with martyrdom; Christ is sometimes seen holding one as a symbol of His victory over sin and death. This may also be foreshadowing the events of Palm Sunday, when Christ was hailed as a king, and His subsequent Passion.

## 2nd Sorrow: The Flight Into Egypt

The second of the seven Sorrows of Mary is the flight of Mary and Joseph into Egypt. Perhaps a little background is in order. The perfidious and paranoid king Herod, clearly not acquainted with metaphor, took Christ's title as "King of the Jews" with a painful literalism which left him convinced that the infant was a danger to his power. (This was not the first manifestation of Herod's paranoid cruelty; he had, in the past, murdered several people, including family members, who seemed too close to the crown for comfort. The Emperor Augustus once remarked that it was better for one to be Herod's pig than his son.) Accordingly, he sent the three Wise Men out to locate this competition and begged that they inform him of the child's whereabouts, that he might "do him homage." (This plan was luckily thwarted, as the Magi returned home another way.) However, he soon contemplated ordering the death of every male under age two in Bethlehem; Joseph was accordingly warned of this in a dream, so he and Mary and Jesus fled to Egypt, so that Christ might be saved. (Let it be noted that Egypt was no random destination; it was at the time traditionally considered a place of refuge for those fleeing Palestine, the place of Christ's birth. To begin, this mystery is an interesting vindication of Simeon's prophecy, which said that Christ would be a "sign that would be contradicted." Simeon's foretelling of the turmoil that Jesus' life would occasion was already proving true, even in His infancy. In this particular rendition, Mary is shown on a donkey, presumably being led by her husband to Egypt. In her arms, she holds her child. The whole of it offset by a yellowish desert sky and the beginnings of a city (presumably Bethlehem) behind them. In keeping with the running theme of humility, the donkey on which Mary rides is a prominent part of the picture. Just as with the story of Christ riding on a donkey on Palm Sunday, the animal is symbolic of their poverty and humble status. Also in keeping with the humble overtones of the art, both Christ and Joseph are clad mainly in brown, which in Catholic art is symbolic of humility, earth, and poverty. (For these reasons, it is closely associated with the monastic life.) Here, Mary is clad mostly in white but with a dull blue veil on her head. (Blue, of course, is considered Mary's symbolic color in Catholic tradition, though the blue is usually a more cheerful, delicate azure.) Joseph also wears white over his head—again symbolic of purity—but this strikes one as practical as well as artistic, for white would be best in the hot sun. There appears to be a certain lack of facial continuity; while Mary and Joseph and Jesus are all clearly recognizable, their facial features are nevertheless somewhat different in almost every picture. It is also interesting to note the age of St. Joseph in the last two pictures; he is portrayed as a fairly young man. He may not be a beardless youth, but he is certainly not the withered patriarch some art would have him be. It appears that this more moderate portrayal of St. Joseph is closer to the factual person; scholarly opinion has decided that, at the time of Christ's birth, Joseph was probably in his thirties. This also makes logical sense, as he was chosen to be Mary's protector and aid amidst her difficulties, and said protection and aid would be best accomplished by someone at their physical and mental peak. The idea of Joseph being an elderly man derives from mainly Greek ecclesiastical writers; it has no authoritative basis beyond some apocryphal writings. However, it (the portrayal of old age) has also been used so as to communicate Joseph's virtue (consider the Book of Wisdom's "a spotless life is old age,"), as well as his paternal nature. It was also used to dissuade from any errant minds the idea of Mary not being a Virgin; presumably, the painter sought to impress the Blessed Virgin's purity by making the idea of marital relations between Mary and her husband unthinkable. Nevertheless, Joseph's youth here is most probably more factually accurate, and as a younger man he provides a role model of fatherhood, chastity, and masculinity. Mary, meanwhile, is portrayed in a very simple and human way, reminiscent of the Renaissance era Marian portrayals, wherein the Humanist influences of the time wanted to make Mary more approachable and put less emphasis on her divinity. As is typical of Marian art, her eyes are cast down, suggesting modesty and a certain solemnity; it brings to mind Mary's "reflecting" on things "in her heart." Perhaps this was done to remind the viewer of Mary's human aspect; she, too, suffered in this life, and is thus able to sympathize with us.

## 3rd Sorrow: Searching for Jesus

The third of the seven sorrows constitutes the reverse of the third Joyful Mystery: that of the finding of the Child Jesus. The third sorrow depicts the search for the Child Jesus. The Gospel of Luke (beginning at Luke 2:41) tells us that Mary and Joseph went to the Temple according to "festival custom" for the Passover. Having completed their business there, they then left, unknowingly leaving their son behind. Luke records that they searched, in great perturbation, for three days for their son before finding Him in the temple. Some contemplation has been devoted to the Blessed Virgin's sorrow and distress during this search; St. Alphonsus Liguori postulates that she may have attributed it to "some negligence on her part," while Mary Herself revealed to Venerable Mary of Agueda in the 1600s that "in my great love the uncertainty as to the cause of His withdrawal gave me no rest until I found Him." Renowned Catholic bishop Fulton Sheen says that Mary, having felt "the sting of His absence," she could understand the plight of sinners (sin resulting in a separation from God) and be a "refuge" for them. Further, Sheen moralizes that Mary must serve as an example for us all in that she searched for Jesus; that is, she did not passively await His return. In this particular rendition, Mary is portrayed much as she was in the previous portraits: she is clad mostly in white, the color symbolizing purity and virginity, with a blue veil. Again, the blue is rather darker than the delicate azure so symbolic of Mary; perhaps this darker shade is meant to convey Mary's sorrow. Her eyes are cast toward Heaven, as if in supplication, and one can only imagine her humbly petitioning God to bring back her Son. As noted before, Mary's facial features are not quite the same as in the two other portrayals; the same applies to Joseph. Joseph is here shown as notably older looking than in the previous pictures; though still not the gray-bearded sage that is portrayed in some art, there are unmistakable signs of middle age in the lines of his face and the gray of his beard. He wears a dusty orange garment with a deep green shawl. Green, as used in Ordinary Time, is typically symbolic of new life and general renewal, also of hope; perhaps this can be interpreted as an indication of the joyful reunion to come. Meanwhile, orange symbolizes courage, endurance, and strength, all of which are virtues of an ideal parent and may be intended as a compliment to Joseph's role as husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus. Joseph and Mary are standing outside a brick building (the Temple, probably), and Joseph carries his famous walking stick (though it is not here endowed with its symbolic growth of lilies), no doubt indicative of the long journey he and his wife have undergone and the turmoil of their present situation. Joseph appears to be addressing a bandaged man lying outside the temple: no doubt a cripple and a beggar, ostracized from common society. (Thus, in even addressing him, Joseph and Mary are indicating their humility and freedom from social snobbery.) It is assumed that they are asking him if he knows the whereabouts of their Son. The beggar is emaciated and lightly clad, again emphasizing his humble social status. To bring the viewer's attention to their innate holiness, both Mary and Joseph have a halo, though Mary's, of course, is more opaque and distinct than that of her husband.

#### Fourth Sorrow: Mary and Jesus meet on the Way to Calvary

The fourth sorrow of the Blessed Virgin marks a distinct shift: that from Jesus's childhood to his adulthood. Mary's sorrows become progressively darker; in this one, for example, she meets her beloved Son on His way to be crucified. This particular event, unfortunately, does not have a specific Scriptural reference, but it does have an important place in Catholic tradition; it is the fourth Station of the Cross, prayed throughout the year but particularly during Lent. The scene, as one can imagine, is one of particular horror and sadness; St. Bernard refers to it as "the most sorrowful Mother meeting the Most Sorrowful Son." Mary's own sorrow is evident; she revealed to St. Bridget of Sweden that she knew where Jesus had passed because the footsteps were "marked with blood." With her was St. John, presumably the "disciple whom Jesus loved" and, in Catholic tradition, the writer of the fourth Gospel. Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich, a nun and mystic, tells us that Jesus was seen:

"almost sinking under the heavy weight of his cross...his head, still crowned with thorns, was drooping in agony on his shoulder. He cast a look of compassion and sorrow upon his Mother, staggered, and fell for the second time upon his hands and knees. Mary was perfectly agonized at this sight; she forgot all else; she saw neither soldiers nor executioners; she saw nothing but her dearlyloved Son; and, springing from the doorway into the midst of the group who were insulting and abusing him, she threw herself on her knees by his side and embraced him...A momentary confusion ensued. John and the holy women endeavored to raise Mary from the ground, and the archers [who were assisting in this dreadful procession] reproached her, one of them saying, 'What hast thou to do here, woman? He would not have been in our hands if he had been better brought up.'"

According to Sister Josefa Menendez, in an encounter with Christ He Himself referenced "My Blessed Mother, whose heart is pierced with grief." One can thus infer the way this scene, though not mentioned in Scripture, is entwined in Catholic tradition. In this particular depiction, Jesus is shown bending beneath the weight of the cross gazing into the face of His Mother. He is clad in white, indicating His own purity; as one says in the Eucharistic prayer, "this Holy victim, this pure victim, this spotless victim." The color white was no doubt chosen, as indicated, to emphasize Christ's sinless state as He died for our sins. Before him, bending with hands outstretched in sorrow and a desire to help, is Mary, also clad in white, so that both the innocence of she and her Son are emphasized. Christ also wears a golden yellow overgarment; interestingly enough, yellow with white is often used during Easter, so this perhaps is a foreshadowing of the great triumph to come. The gold tones also have certain royal overtones, perhaps emphasizing Christ's kingly divinity even in His time of trial. Finally, yellow in general symbolizes purity, love, and benevolence. Both Mary and Jesus are crowned with golden haloes. Around them are a great variety of people, a crowd which one is tempted, at first glance, to dismiss as a mere mob. Nevertheless, a few familiar faces can be picked out. The haloed gentleman just behind Mary is most probably St. John, as the halo signifies sainthood and John has traditionally been associated with the Crucifixion. John is portrayed as a young, rosy, bearded man, which matches his typical portrayal as a near youth in Catholic art; despite the beard (which is somewhat unusual in art), he has the ruddy healthiness of youth. John (if it is John) is clad in brown, signifying his own humility and poverty of spirit. It is possible, meanwhile, to suppose that the bearded man holding the cross's front is Simon of Cyrene, who (if the reader recalls) was summoned in the fifth Station to help Jesus carry the cross to Calvary. Simon is clad scantily in green, which is symbolic of new life and freedom from bondage. At Mary's side kneels a young woman with long, red-gold hair; this may be Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene is a well known figure in Catholic (indeed in Christian) tradition; she was a proud beauty when she met Jesus and a notorious sinner, but meeting Him humbled her, and it was she who used her long, lovely hair to wipe His feet. From then on, she faithfully served Jesus, and it was to her that He first revealed Himself when He was resurrected. True to Scripture, Mary is here portrayed as a young, alluring woman with long hair. To imply her turn for the better, she has a faint, transparent halo, and she is clad in green, symbolic of new life (and thus her spiritual renewal.) (In case one is interested, Mary's presence at the Crucifixion is attested positively by both Matthew and Mark and implied by Luke.) One can also discern in the painting a worker going ahead carrying the sign which would be hung on the Cross saying INRI: Iesus Nazareus, Rex Iudiorum. In English, this translates to Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

# The Evangelists Work

Flanking either side of the apse, the four Evangelists eye the silent congregation with expressions ranging from stormy intensity to celestial contemplation to quiet thought, each clad in their different garments and each writing their different Gospels. Though they are, with modern carelessness, often lumped together as one group, nearly one name (“MatthewMarkLukeandJohn”), both their works and their likenesses show their remarkable diversity.

Just as Revelations describes (wherein the “four creatures” surround “the throne”)\*, the writers of the Gospels, being just in front of the altar, surround Christ’s place of enthronement in the church: the Tabernacle. All four evangelists are obviously at ease in the celestial regions, lounging upon clouds even as they scribble away at their Gospels. It is possible that said posture is indicative of motion in the fluid Baroque style. (Baroque art, particularly sculpture, often sought to create with stationary poses the suggestion of motion.) However, further consideration makes it more likely that the relaxed position of the three synoptic Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) as well as the scroll present in each one’s portrait recalls the reclining of the Romans on their tricliniums, thus harkening back to the Old Testament and the Jewish roots of Christianity.

Lastly, it is worthwhile to consider the question of the order of the Gospels: why are they placed in the order in which they are placed? Why, for instance, is it Matthew-Mark-Luke-John and not, perhaps, John-Matthew-Mark-Luke? Or Luke-John-Mark-Matthew? There are a few possibilities, some more historically supported than others. It seems, for example, almost too much of a coincidence that Ezekiel chapter 1 describes the four symbols in canonical order: that is, Matthew’s symbol, Mark’s symbol, Luke’s symbol, John’s symbol. However, New Advent, in its discussion of the ordering of the Gospels, states that the Gospels were given “no less than eight orders” in early times, depending on what the person ordering them wanted to convey. (Some, for example, wanted to place Luke so as to underscore his authorship of Acts, etc.) According to the aforementioned source, St. Jerome’s ordering in the Vulgate is by far the oldest and was done simply by virtue of chronology; Matthew’s gospel was, at the time, considered the first (though a different opinion prevails now) and so it was placed first. John’s was traditionally considered the newest, so it was last, with Mark and Luke in between.

## MATTHEW

Matthew, the Apostle, the tax-collector, wears a distinctly Mosaic beard: long, whitish, and distinguished. It is just the sort of beard that calls to mind the elders of the Old Testament and the solemnity of the Jewish Law; one can infer that this is supposed to indicate Matthew’s emphasis in his Gospel of Jesus as a Jewish man and a fulfiller of the Law. Certainly Matthew is the one who gives us (although with some omissions) the careful tracing of Jesus’ lineage, all the way back to Abraham, the father of Judaism. (When one considers his very Jewish audience, it makes sense that he would be eager to establish Jesus’ credentials.) Like the other Apostles, Matthew’s expression is somewhat celestial; his eyes are raised to Heaven as he writes his Gospel, no doubt taking down every word as it is spoken to him. He wears blue, symbolic of divine grace (recall the Blessed Virgin being clothed in blue), hope, and servitude; he also wears gold, symbolic of immense value and of the presence of God. This should come as no surprise, considering both Matthew’s role as an Evangelist and his lounging on a heavenly cloud. His position, like that of the others, is lounging, as stated earlier. Beside him is an angelic man, again symbolic of Matthew’s emphasis, throughout his Gospel, of Jesus as a human being, rather than just a divinity. It is worth noting that Matthew writes his gospel upon a scroll, rather than a book; while both have similar symbolic meaning (both, in this case, pointing to the learning and the Gospels of the evangelists), a scroll, being a more ancient form of a book, is thus typically given to Old Testament figures; this may be another indication of Matthew’s link to the Old Testament and his conviction of the importance of Jewish roots in Christianity. It has also been said that Matthew is sometimes portrayed as recording, not just his Gospel, but specifically the genealogy of Christ, upon a scroll. The feast day of St. Matthew is the 21st of September.

## MARK

Next is Mark, a man of fewer words than the rather garrulous Matthew. (Compare his 16 chapters to Matthew’s 28.) Mark was not, in his time, believed to have been one of the 12 Apostles; there is some speculation over whether he is the young man described in his own gospel as running naked from the Garden of Gethsemane. Others believe Mark to be the first bishop of Alexandria. What is known is that his gospel is the oldest and that it was written for converted Roman Gentiles. Mark is here portrayed as an older man, as are the other two authors of the Synoptic Gospels, but his beard is less voluminous and dramatic than Matthew’s. Mark is clad in what appears to be a pale purple, in keeping with his emphasis throughout his Gospel on the kingly nature of Jesus; his symbol, after all, is a winged lion, recalling his splendid line about “a voice crying out in the desert” (bringing to mind a lion’s lone roar) and also recalling Christ’s Resurrection. Lions, it is said, are born lifeless, and only enter this world by having the breath of life forced into them by their sires. The wings on the lion come, as do the other Evangelical symbols, from Ezekiel’s description of the four “winged beasts.” (See Ezekiel chapter 1.) Like Matthew, Mark reclines on a cloud, though rather more peacefully than the other. Eschewing Matthew’s more theatrical pose, he bends quietly over his work as one might read the mail; he is pictured with both a book and a scroll. He also wears gold, again in keeping with his holy life and his literal proximity to God. St. Mark drew his Gospel from various sources, including his friend St. Peter, the Church of Jerusalem, and the Church of Antioch. His feast day is April 25th.

## LUKE

On the other side of the Sanctuary and in his own lofty nook, one sees Luke, a man of much proficiency and talent. Believed to have written both his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles and the only Gentile on the Evangelical squad (he was born in Syria), he wrote his gospel somewhere between 70 and 85 AD. His scholarly nature is evident; he was referred to as the “beloved physician” and is rumored to have painted the first portrait of the Blessed Virgin. He’s believed to have hailed from Antioch, and he wrote his Gospel for other Gentile Christians, probably well-to-do. Luke’s unique spin in his Gospel is manifested in its nickname; it is called “The Gospel of Mercy.” It takes particular time to emphasize Jesus’ kindness and compassion to the poor, to sinners, to women (particularly fallen women), to lepers, etc. Accordingly, he makes much of Jesus coming to save everyone everywhere, regardless of rank or disease or gender. Luke, like Mark, also wears a short, well-kept beard; he also looks at his ease on a celestial cloud, the book symbolic of his Gospel open in his lap. Tucked behind him is an artist’s palette and a wooden panel with a faint sketch of a figure on it, no doubt symbolic of his role as a painter and as patron saint of artists. He is also the patron saint of physicians, a fitting role for who was a physician himself in his lifetime. Luke wears gold and green; green in particular symbolizes nature, hope, and bounty. (This may have something to do with the optimistic nature of Luke’s Gospel concerning the universality of salvation.) Behind Luke is an ox, befitting of his evangelical emphasis of atonement, particularly by blood; the ox was known as an animal of sacrifice. By some peculiar paradox, however, the ox is also symbolic of Christ’s role as High Priest: Christ is both the sacrificer and the sacrificed. In keeping with Ezekiel’s vision (Ezekiel 1), the ox is also winged. St. Luke’s feast day is the 18th of October.

## JOHN

Last is John, undoubtedly the misfit among the Evangelists. Among the more traditional style of his contemporaries, John takes a more unconventional, poetic approach, and it sets him apart. His, after all, is the one with some of the most memorable passages. Unlike the others, John is portrayed as a young, beardless man, possessed of almost effeminate good looks. This is in keeping with the way artists typically depict John; he is, as the youngest Apostle (he was the brother of James), usually shown as a young man, as in paintings of the Last Supper which show him as a near youth reclining on Jesus' breast. Catholic tradition holds that John was the brother of James, son of Zebedee, and disciple and particular friend of Jesus; he does, after all, refer to himself unabashedly as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." (It is, however, doubted amongst modern theological scholars that the writer of the Gospel was also the Apostle.) John is here depicted in pink, the traditional Catholic color for joy, worn on both Gaudete and Laetate Sunday in the Church. This may be in reference to the thematic reoccurrence of joy in his Gospel, particularly his repetition of the words "rejoice" and "joy" itself. He also wears green, again symbolic of new life, nature, hope, etc. This last item is fitting, as John stresses the victory of the Cross over death and Christ's ascendancy over Hell itself.. John's symbol is an eagle, mostly representative of the deep or soaring nature of his Gospel, particularly the first chapter. This should be familiar to anyone who has read his Gospel; it is both beautiful and bizarre. Like the others, he rests on a cloud, eyes raised to the heavens above as he thoughtfully writes his Gospel. However, it is worth considering that John, unlike his fellows, does not recline but sits with a ramrod posture, eyes to the heavens as if taking dictation. This serves, in part, to differentiate him visually from the synoptic Gospels; while they lounge at their ease, he is sharply attentive, almost austere. It is also possible that this stems from the slightly mistaken scholarly interpretation of John's gospel before the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. Prior to this time, John's gospel was viewed as substantially less "Jewish" than the others because of the predominance of the Pharisaic view in Jewish writing; until the finding of the scrolls, which were written with a style and viewpoint substantially different from that of the Pharisees, John's gospel was thus thought to be less connected to Judaism. With the finding of the scrolls, however, stylistic similarities were discovered between John's gospel and the Jewish authors of the Scrolls, and scholarly opinion changed. However, as this work was done before 1947, it is very possible that John's posture deliberately separates him from his fellows, in keeping with this misunderstanding. St. John the Evangelist's feast day is on the 27th of December.