

Baptistry and Its Windows

**Power Point Presentation
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The Baptistry

The Baptistry structure housing the windows is extraordinary - a Gem.

Octagonal in plan with eight thin-walled arches of complex geometry⁽¹⁾; tilted inwards at 10 degrees; joined together as walls enclosing the windows.

A ceiling of curved pleats joins the arched bays together.

The tall slender spire crowns this jewel.

⁽¹⁾ Hyperbolic Paraboloid



The Baptistry

Before we look at the windows from inside –

The sixth window in the centre and the seventh on the left have smaller proportions of glass than the fifth on the right.

Why?

I have heard a story that, as he worked on the fifth, the artist realised that he would not have enough glass to complete the remaining windows.

There was not enough time to import more glass from overseas.

So, he used larger proportions of mortar and less glass in the sixth and seventh windows.

True or false?





Marriage Baptism Reconciliation Anointing

Windows 3,4,5,6 as seen from entrance - not the 'traditional' order of Sacraments

Structure of Baptistery Windows

- The technique used to construct the windows is described as “**Dalle de verre**“ - **French for "slab of glass"**.
- It uses thick, coloured glass pieces—up to 3 cm thick—cut or broken into shapes, then faceted to catch the light.
- They are arranged into a design and set in a matrix of cement-resin mortar forming vibrant, mosaic-like panels.
- It is more durable than traditional stained glass.
- It has a jewel-like quality when light passes through it.
- **The technique, Dalle de Verre, was first used in France for the Church of Notre Dame Le Raincy, built in 1922–1923.**

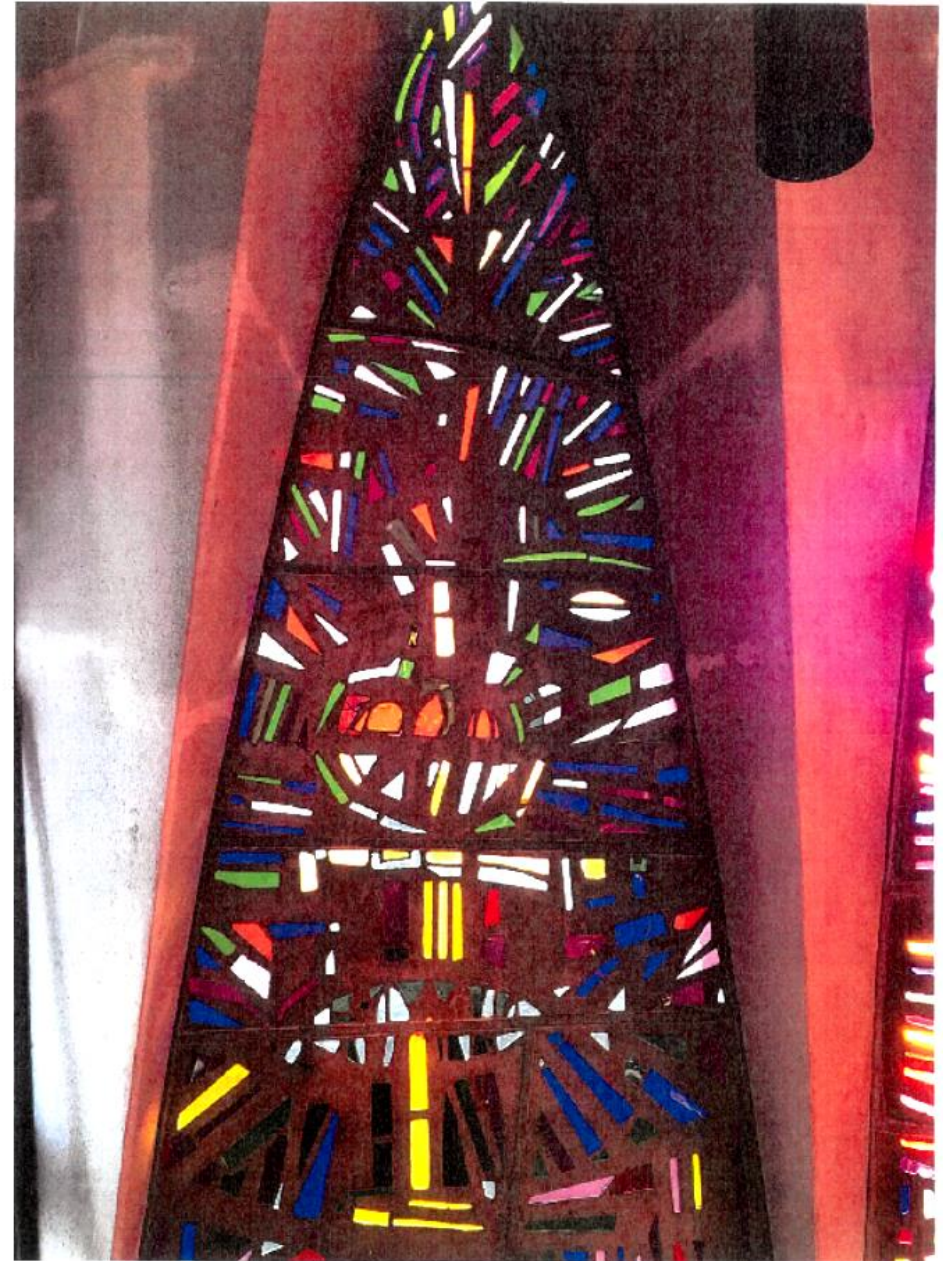
1 Eucharist

Loaves at mid-height >>

Cross / Altar >>>>>>>

Fish below >>>>>

**Fish an early Christian Symbol
Miracle of loaves and fish?**



2 Confirmation

Dove at mid-height >>>

**Shield of Faith below
(Soldier of Christ) >>>>**

Gifts of Holy Spirit >>>>



3 Marriage

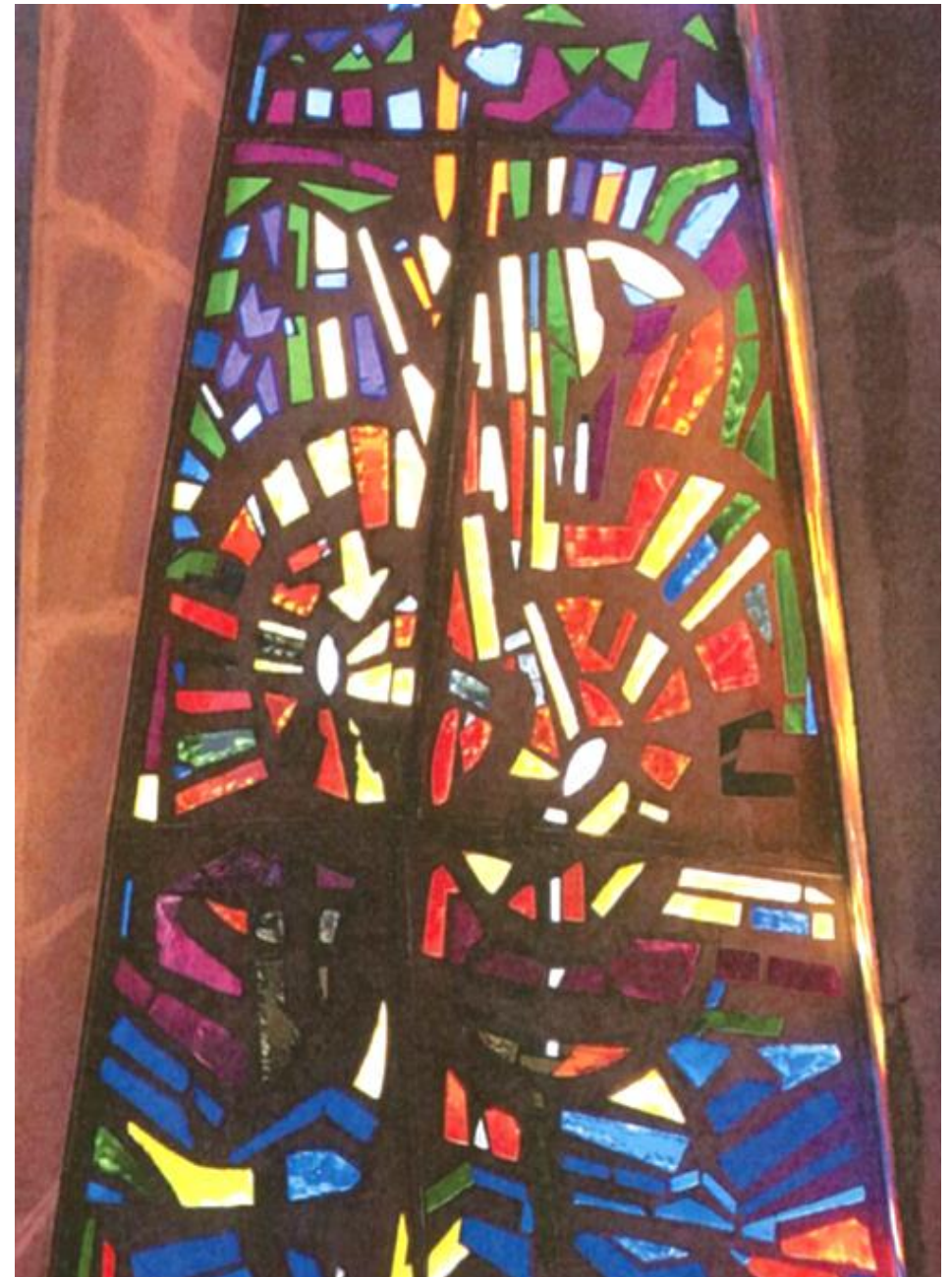
Cross above (mortar)
>>>>>>

Interlocking Rings at mid -
height >>>>

Arrow???

Is that a blue heart above
the cross???

Stormy waters below???



4 Baptism

Chi-Rho symbol of Christ
above (mortar) >>>>>

Shell pouring water at
mid-height >>>>>>>

Water >>>>>>>

Fish below = new
Christian in waters of
Baptism >>>>>>>>>>>



5 Reconciliation

**Above - Hand of God ^^^^
(mercy)**

**Three drops of blood refer
to Christ's Passion >>>>**

**Mid-height - Hand of Priest
giving Absolution enclosed
in large Cross (mortar)**

**Also, Key shape = Keys of
Kingdom >>>>**



6 Anointing

**Above - Candle = the light
of Christ; >>>>>>**

**with small mortar crosses
= anointing the senses**

**In vessel for oil at mid-
height >>**

**Below, green olive leaves
give oil for anointing
>>>>>>>>**



ANOINTING

Vessel for oil >>>

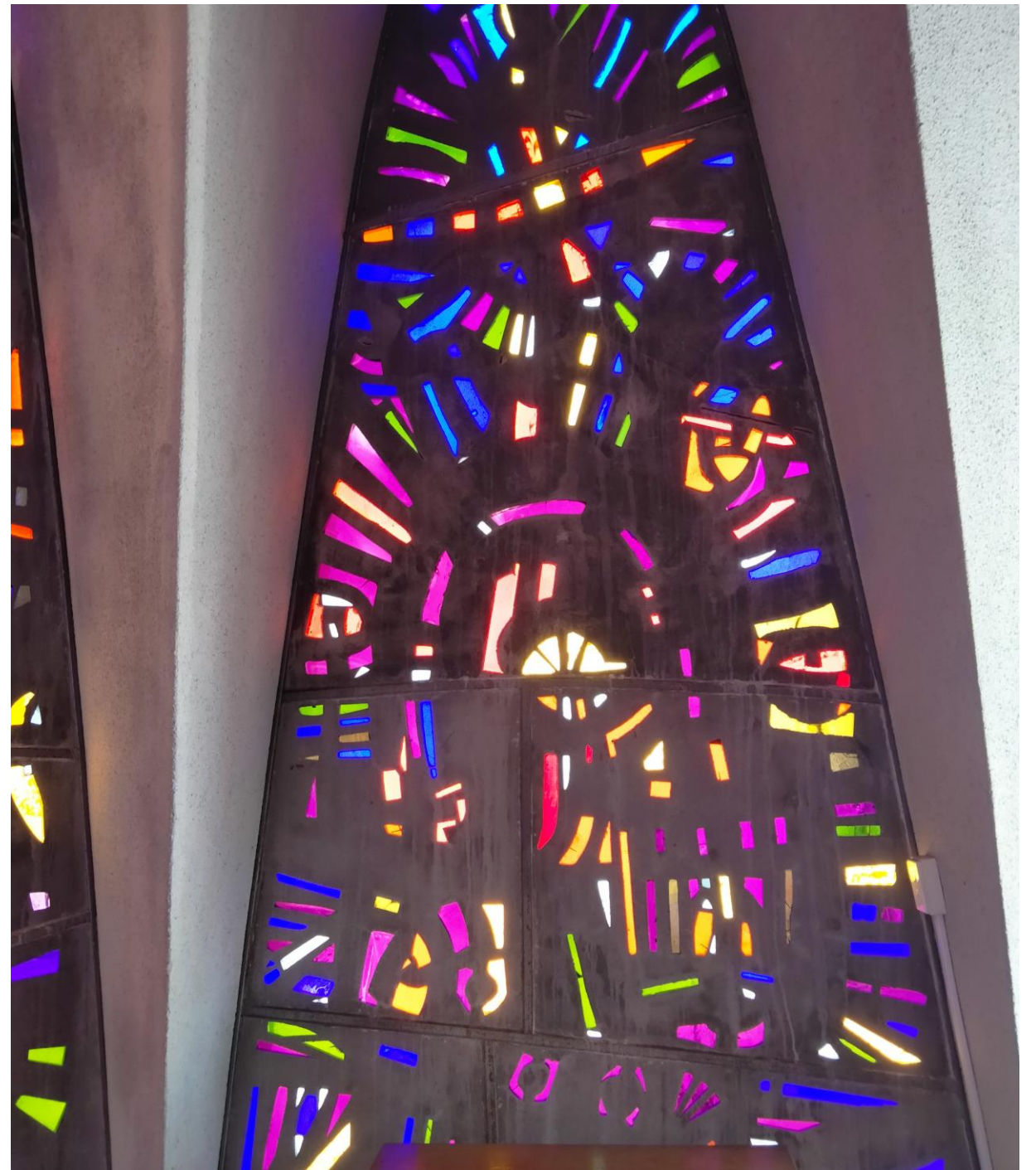


7 Ordination

Above, Cross in the heavens >>

**At mid-height - Stole for
Sacramental Ministry
>>>>> enveloping Chalice**

**On left, leaves of books -
Ministry of the Word >>>>**



The Artist – Andrew Sibley

- The design of the Baptistery Windows was by Queensland artist, Andrew Sibley (1933 – 2015).
- He migrated to Australia from England after World War II.
- After early success in Brisbane in the 1960s, he moved to Melbourne.
- **The Baptistery Windows are Andrew Sibley's only known work using Dalle de Verre.**
- Andrew Sibley is one of Australia's most celebrated 20th century artists.
- His work is shown in all major national, state, and regional collections in Australia.
- Also is held in private collections in Australia, Europe, Asia, and the United States.

Some Homework for you

- How many Catholic Churches in Australia have a Baptistry structure that is separate from the Church Structure?
- When did Baptism by pouring – ‘affusion’ - become the usual manner of administering baptism in Western Europe, instead of Baptism by ‘immersion’?

**You are invited to go and
enjoy the windows
yourself**

**The Baptistry will be unlocked for as long as
there are visitors**