

Intermediate SYMBOL CARDS

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“ . . . ‘Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them. . . . So shall your descendants be.’”

—Genesis 15:5b, c (NRSV)

ABRAHAM

The symbol for God’s promise to Abraham is a blue shield with stars. The center star is for the Messiah. The other stars stand for Abraham and his many descendants.

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ABRAHAM

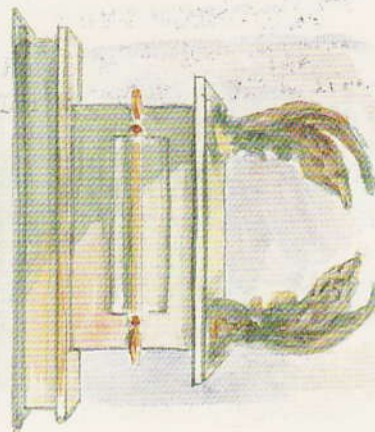
(Moses said) . . . “So I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark that I had made; and there they are, as the Lord commanded me.”

—Deuteronomy 10:5 (NRSV)

ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Ark of the Covenant was a portable chest built according to God’s instructions, containing a copy of the law of Moses. It was kept in the Tent of Meeting, a symbol of God’s presence.

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ARK OF THE COVENANT

“I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

—Genesis 9:13 (NRSV)

THE RAINBOW AND THE ARK

This symbol stands for God’s promise never again to destroy the earth with a flood. The ark is also a symbol for the Church where all creatures find safety.

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THE RAINBOW AND THE ARK

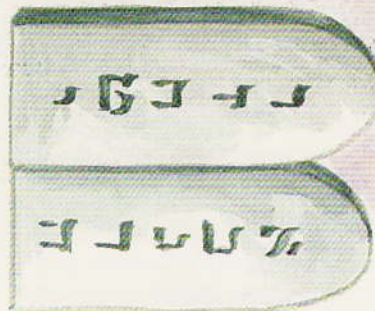
“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.’”

—Exodus 24:12 (NRSV)

TEN COMMANDMENTS

Two tablets of stone with the first ten letters of the Hebrew alphabet represent the Ten Commandments. These became the basis for Jewish and Christian law.

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TEN COMMANDMENTS

“ . . . ‘What share do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, O David.’ . . .”
—*I Kings 12:16b* (NRSV)

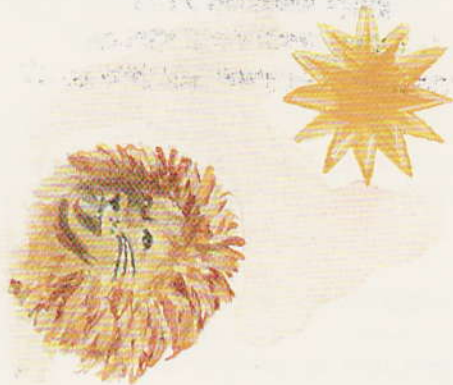
THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

The twelve-pointed star represents the twelve tribes of Israel. The lion is for Judah and represents strength, courage, and kingliness.

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THE DIVIDED KINGDOM



“Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

—*Isaiah 40:5* (NRSV)

THE HAND OF GOD

The hand is the most ancient symbol for God the Father. The hand reaching out of the cloud indicates the limit of our knowledge about God. The rays of light represent God's glory.

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THE HAND OF GOD



“Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, . . .”
—*II Chronicles 3:1* (NRSV)

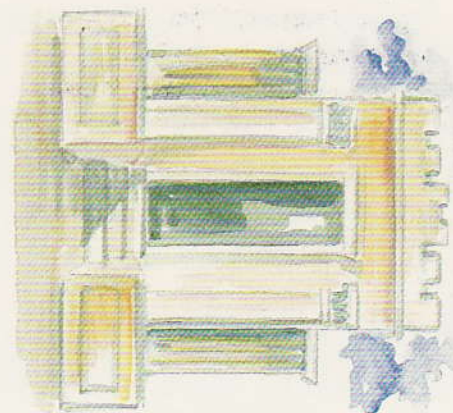
TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

When David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he placed it in a tent. He wanted to build a temple but was unable to do so. Solomon, David's son, built a magnificent temple to the glory of God.

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TEMPLE OF SOLOMON



“By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps.”
—*Psalms 137:1-2* (NRSV)

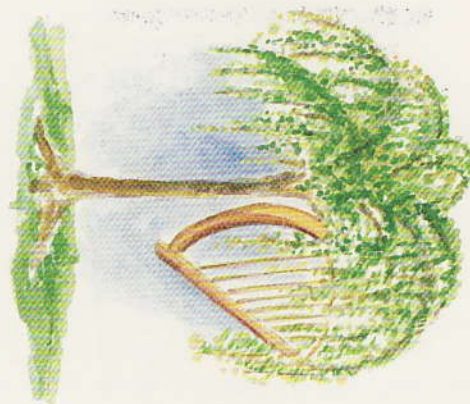
HARP IN THE WILLOW

The willow tree grew along the banks of the waters of Babylon. The Israelites in exile hung their harps on the willow trees while they wept. The harp, a symbol of joy and praise to God, was silent in their time of sorrow.

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HARP IN THE WILLOW



"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

—Isaiah 9:6 (NRSV)

ALPHA AND OMEGA

The Greek letters, Alpha and Omega, are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They symbolize Jesus as the beginning and the end.

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ALPHA AND OMEGA

"The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.'"

—Luke 1:30 (NRSV)

ANGEL WITH LILY

As the Angel of the Annunciation, Gabriel—chief messenger of God—is portrayed with a lily. The lily is a symbol of the Virgin Mary's purity.

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ANGEL WITH LILY

"All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you."

—Psalm 145:10 (NRSV)

SAINTS

The nimbus or halo around a head symbolizes a person of unusual faith, such as an apostle, a martyr, or other saint.

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SAINTS

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

—Isaiah 11:1-2 (NRSV)

SCROLL

A scroll, or rolled manuscript—an ancient type of book—is associated with Old Testament authors.

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SCROLL

"Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

—*Matthew 2:11c* (NRSV)

THREE GIFTS OF THE MAGI

The gifts given to the Christ Child have both ancient and traditional meanings: *ancient*: gold for a king, frankincense for a divine being, and myrrh for death; *traditional*: gold for wealth and energy, frankincense for adoration, and myrrh for self-sacrifice.

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"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for you are my praise."

—*Jeremiah 17:14* (NRSV)

OIL STOCK

The picture on the front is an oil stock, a small container of blessed oil. It is used by a priest for unction—the anointing of the sick. Oil is an ancient symbol for God's grace.

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THREE GIFTS OF THE MAGI



OIL STOCK



"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, . . ."

—*Luke 1:47* (NRSV)

ROSE

The symbolic rose seen here is the heraldic form that is used to represent the Virgin Mary. According to one legend, she is called a "rose without thorns," because she was without sin.

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"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy."

—*Isaiah 35:5-6* (NRSV)

SUN

The sun is the symbol most often used for Christ. It comes from the Old Testament prophecy, "the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings" (*Malachi 4:2*).

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ROSE



SUN



"Jesus said . . . , 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'"

—John 11:25-26a (NRSV)

PEACOCK

When a peacock loses its feathers, it grows even more beautiful ones to replace them. For this reason, the peacock is a symbol for the new life of resurrection.

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"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, . . ."

—Matthew 28:19 (NRSV)

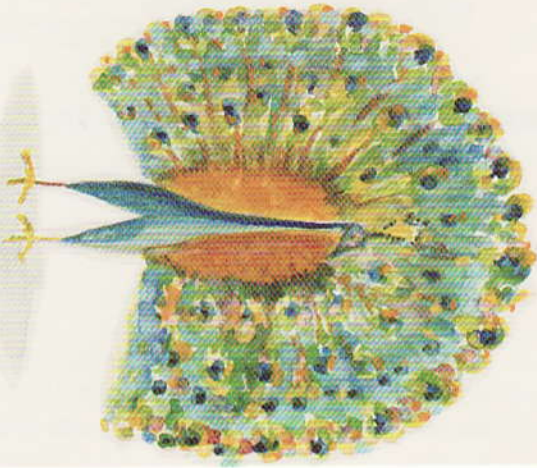
TRINITY

The symbol for the Trinity shown on this card is one of the many geometric shapes used to represent God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The triangle is three equal parts joined into one; the circle holds them together for eternity.

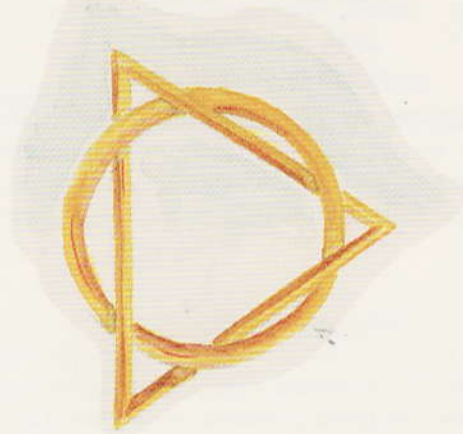
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PEACOCK



TRINITY



"Then (Jesus) said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.'"

—Luke 17:19 (NRSV)

CATHERINE OF SIENA

Catherine of Siena devoted her life to the care of the poor and the sick. Her symbol reflects her faith and her sense of charity.

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"And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'"

Matthew 3:17 (NRSV)

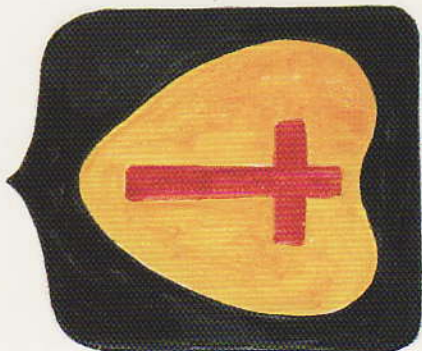
DESCENDING DOVE

The dove has been a symbol for purity and peace since ancient times. It is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, which descended upon Jesus at his baptism.

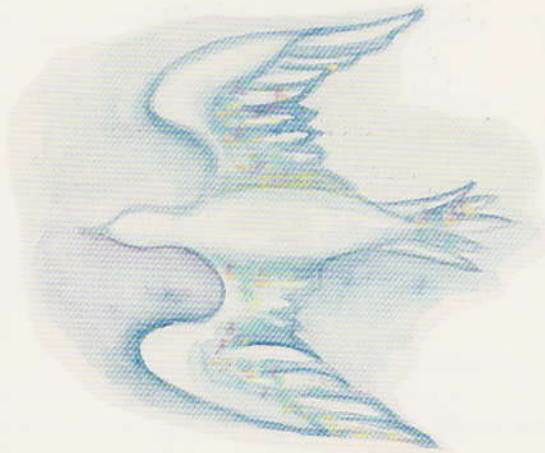
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CATHERINE OF SIENA



DESCENDING DOVE



“Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

—Acts 2:38 (NRSV)

SHELL WITH WATER DROPS

Since early Christian times, the shell has been a symbol of immortality. Water is the symbol for cleansing. When connected, they represent baptism as new life in Christ.

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“For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”

—John 13:15 (NRSV)

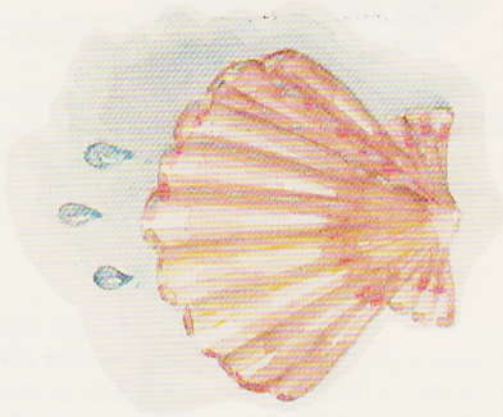
BASIN, TOWEL AND PITCHER

These objects represent the purifying action of water as priests wash their hands at the Eucharist. It also signifies humility as when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples.

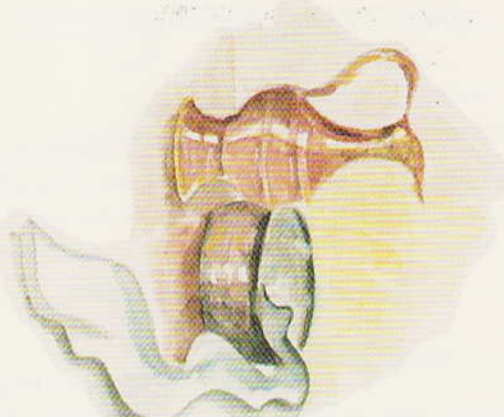
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SHELL WITH WATER DROPS



BASIN, TOWEL AND PITCHER



“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’”

—John 8:12 (NRSV)

PASCHAL CANDLE

The Paschal candle represents the “light of Christ” and is lit each year from the new fire at the Easter Vigil. It is sometimes decorated with a cross. It is lit at services of Holy Baptism.

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“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

—Romans 15:7 (NRSV)

FONT

The Church’s belief in the sacrament of Holy Baptism is represented by the font. Depending on how it is designed, a font can symbolize creation, re-creation, or eternal salvation.

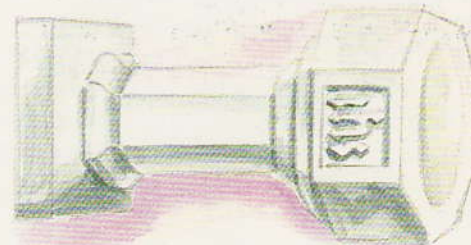
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PASCHAL CANDLE



FONT



"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

—John 20:29b (NRSV)

EASTER CROSS

The symbol on this card is the cross of glory. It is a Latin cross—one of the oldest forms—entwined with a lily, an Easter symbol of new life.

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"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, . . ."

—Romans 5:1 (NRSV)

ST. PAUL

The open Bible in the symbol for Paul represents the Epistles in the New Testament. The inscription *Spiritus Gladius* means "sword of the spirit" (*Ephesians 6:17*). The sword also indicates that Paul fought the "good fight" (*I Timothy 6:12*).

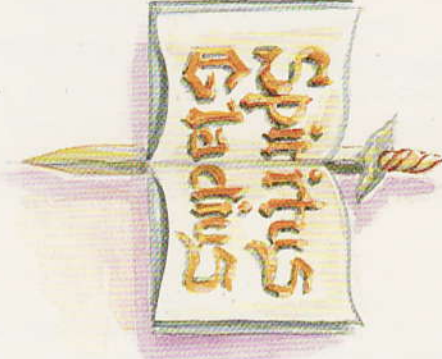
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EASTER CROSS



ST. PAUL



"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

—John 15:13 (NRSV)

CRUCIFIX

Jesus Christ is depicted on a crucifix in these two ways: crowned and robed in glory to show his deity, or with a crown of thorns to show his suffering.

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"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

—II Corinthians 5:17 (NRSV)

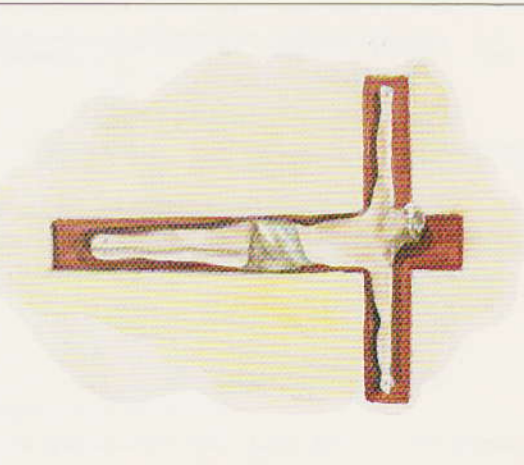
BUTTERFLY

The butterfly is the symbol for the resurrection of Christ. Its three stages of life as a caterpillar, chrysalis, and winged creature, suggest life, death, and resurrection.

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CRUCIFIX



BUTTERFLY




“ . . . because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

—Romans 10:9 (NRSV)

FISH

The fish was an early Christian symbol that stood for Christ. The Greek letters ΙΧΘΥΣ, which spell fish, also stand for the Greek words that mean “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.”

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FISH

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

—I Corinthians 15:57 (NRSV)

BEEHIVE

The beehive is one of the more recent symbols of the Christian Church. It represents the community of Christ working together for the benefit of all.

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BEEHIVE

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, . . .”

—Ephesians 2:8a (NRSV)

ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

This symbol is a combination of the symbols for the two apostles. The keys to the kingdom (for Peter) are interwoven with the sword of the spirit (for Paul).

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ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

—Philippians 4:13 (NRSV)

SHIP

The many stories about boats and ships, in both Old and New Testaments, have led to our use of a ship as a symbol for the Church. In early Christian art, St. Paul is often shown preaching from the bow of a ship.

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SHIP

"But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift."

—Ephesians 4:7 (NRSV)

MYRTLE

In ancient times, the myrtle was associated with love. It came to stand for the Gentiles who were converted to Christ.

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MYRTLE



"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability."

—Acts 2:4 (NRSV)

PENTECOST FLAME

The seven-fold flame is representative of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit that descended upon the disciples at Pentecost.

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PENTECOST FLAME



"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you."

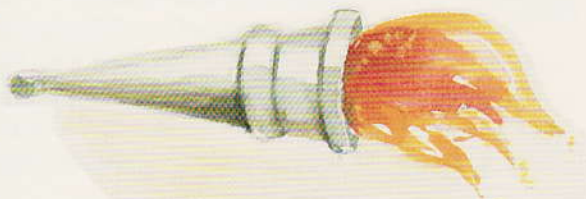
—I Corinthians 16:23 (NRSV)

BURNING TORCH

This symbol represents Christ as the light of the world. Its message is expanded to mean that Christians "let their good works shine" (Matthew 5:16). We pass the torch of faith to one another, from generation to generation.

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BURNING TORCH



"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, . . ."

—Ephesians 5:1 (NRSV)

LYDIA

This symbol represents Lydia, the woman of Philippi, who was baptized by Paul. It is a crown to depict her wealth and status in the community—combined with a murex, a snail from which a rich purple dye was extracted.

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LYDIA

