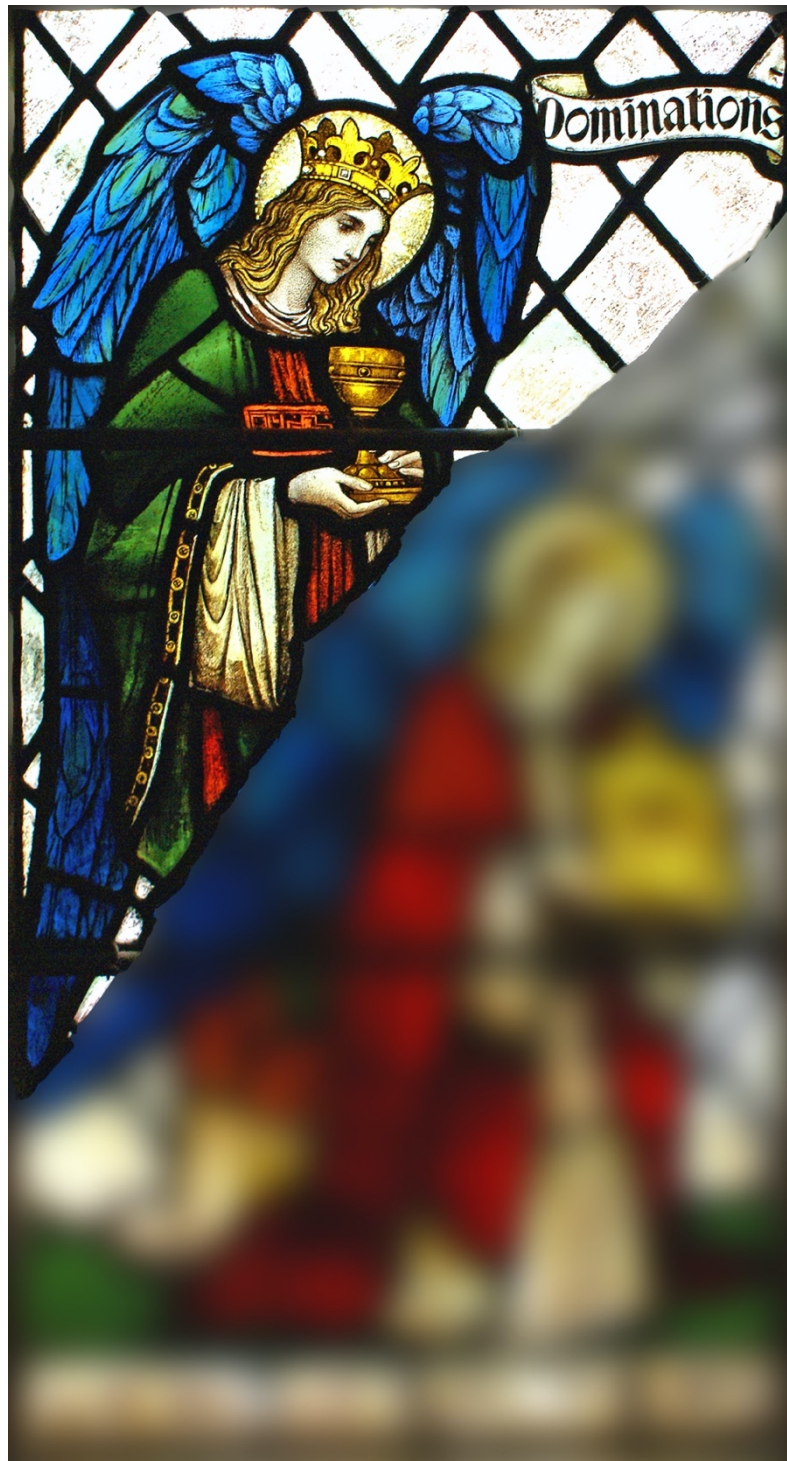


Lent Reflections on the Stained-Glass Windows



Dominations

Monday in Week 1 of Lent

Reading: Psalm 103: 1-4, 13-end

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits —
who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust.

As for mortals, their days are like grass;
they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it
is gone, and its place knows it no more.

But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children,
to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his
commandments.

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom rules over all.

Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding,
obedient to his spoken word.

Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will.

Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul

Commentary

The middle ranks of angels consist of Dominations, Virtues and Powers. Dominations (also called ‘dominions’ or ‘lords’) are referred to by St Paul in his letter to the Colossians (1:16) “for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or **dominions** or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.”

Dionysius the Areopagite, he who formed the schema of the ‘nine ranks of angels’ hierarchy, says, in a lovely phrase, that ‘they voluntarily and with joy serve God unceasingly.’ Dominations are ready to fly to the ends of the world to accomplish God’s will and stand in the presence of God eager to catch the sound of His voice and the least expression of His will.

In many ways Dominations are a kind of ‘middle management:’ they receive their orders from God through the seraphim, cherubim and thrones and then direct the lower order of angels to carry out God’s will. They are also associated with inspiring and supporting prudent government and wise management on earth, as well as self- control in individuals and communities so that dissolute desires and passions may be overcome. Dominions deliver God’s mercy to people, especially those in positions of leadership and authority.

Traditionally, Dominations are depicting wearing green and gold, as in our stained-glass window, where there is also a crown as a symbol of rule – their authority over other angels. Usually, they would hold a

sword or a sceptre to denote their lordship, but in our window the angelic Domination holds a chalice.

Dominations are the opposite of what their name may suggest. They are not domineering or dominating. Maybe that is why this Domination is holding a Chalice, for it was at the Last Supper that Jesus Christ showed His disciples that His Lordship would be known in the washing of feet, in the humble service of others and in that greater love through which He gave Himself on the Cross. In this costly offering, Christ's body is broken, and blood outpoured for the sins of the whole world.

Meditation

“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Dwell on these words, looking at Jesus as he deals so patiently with his quarrelling apostles, with his Church nowadays, with ourselves in all our fickleness. Look at Christ as he washes my feet, as he dies for us on the Cross. Look in wonder and deep gratitude and feel within yourself the urge to trust him more and more.

Prayer

Lord, help me to have a humble and caring attitude towards all the people you put in my path and to recognise your loving presence in them. I pray for the grace to give of my time without the anticipation of receiving something in return, confident that I will receive my real reward in your heavenly kingdom. Amen