



SUBJECT - MATTER BY NUMBERS.

1. Christ ascending.
2. Adoring angels.
3. Angel holding linen used in the entombment.
4. Angel holding Veronica's veil.
5. St. Peter holding the missionary's staff with the Keys.
6. Angel bidding Peter to start on his Mission.
7. St. James the Apostle, representing Pilgrims and Missionaries
8. Angel giving St. James his pilgrim's staff and water gourd.
9. Our Lady of Sorrows, as center of the Church on earth.
10. A prophet, representing the Old Testament, and angel dictating prophecies.
11. John the Evangelist, representing the New Testament, and angel dictating his Gospel.

Fresco In The Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Farmington

By tradition, the art painted in the Sanctuary, here on its apsidal wall, refers to Christ in his Mysteries, even when the title of the Church refers to Our Lady. Stained glass windows in the church already described the sorrows of Our

Lady, I looked for a sorrow of hers not included in the traditional series, and linked directly to Christ's Mysteries. The Ascension of Our Lord, glorious in nature, nevertheless represents a parting of Mother and
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FRESCO IN THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS, FARMINGTON.

Son, and thus, from Mary's point of view, a Sorrow. This double nature of the Mystery, glorious and sorrowful, allows a striking visualization based on contrast. The white of Christ ascending is framed in yellows suggesting the full light of Heaven. The black of Mary is frame dbetween the gray silhouettes of the departing Apostles, in a subdued light that suggests dawn or dark.

Even in the glorious scene above, the title of the Church is further suggested by the two angels holding accessories of the Passion; on the left, some of the linen used in the entombment, and on the right Veronica's veil. These allude to the Passion, and to Mary's Compassion.

On earth the theme of the Ascension follows the inspired text. Angels appear to the Apostles, and bid them be on their way to evangelize the world. On the left, St. Peter, holding the traveller's staff to which are attached the keys,

receives instructions from an angel. On the right, St. James, chosen here as patron of missionaries to far-flung lands, is dressed up in the traditional cloak and wide-brimmed hat of the pilgrim. An angel gives him the pilgrim's staff, from which hangs the water-gourd needed on his long voyage.

Left of Our Lady, a prophet holding a scroll symbolizes the inspired writers of the Old Testament. Above him an angel, his finger pointing to the scroll, illustrates the fact of this inspiration.

Right of Our Lady, St. John Evangelist, holding a book, represents both himself and the other Evangelists. The book, a more modern form than the scroll, refers to the New Testament in visual terms. Above John, an angel also represents the inspiration from above.

The center of the whole panel, and thus the center of the whole fresco, including the ceiling panels, remains Our Lady. The chalice she holds symbolizes her Sorrow. Her Sorrow, is not passive. Though static in the midst of action, she represents the meditative facet without which action cannot bear fruits.