

ST. MARY'S KNEELERS

St. Augustine's Episcopal Church
Wilmette, Illinois



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank Mr. Philip A. Scheuble, who made available photocopies of Mrs. Scheuble's copious research notes, preliminary sketches, and final black-and-white drawings; Mrs. William F. Babcock, who loaned her own notes, gave a lengthy personal interview, and answered innumerable questions; and Fr. Joseph E. Mazza, who loaned books from his library and explained points of doctrine. Without their help, this pamphlet would not have been possible.

ABBREVIATIONS OF SOURCES CITED

- F Ferguson, George; Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, 1954, New York, Oxford University Press; 346 pp., color plates, black-and-white plates, line drawings.
- K.A.S. Katherine A. Scheuble; working notes and drawings.
- M.A.B. Margaret A. Babcock; working notes and/or information given during interview.
- P Post, W. Ellwood; Saints, Signs, and Symbols, 2nd ed., 1974, New York, Morehouse-Barlow Co.; 99 pp., line drawings.

Numerals following F or P are page numbers.

THE HISTORY OF THE KNEELERS

Early in 1972, Katherine A. (Mrs. Philip A.) Scheuble conceived the idea of making a series of needlepoint kneelers for the Chapel of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Wilmette, Illinois. Because the Chapel is dedicated to St. Mary, Mrs. Scheuble wanted each kneeler to have a design that would symbolize some aspect of the Virgin's character or life. An artist of considerable skill, she intended to design and paint the canvas for each kneeler herself.

To help with the execution of the project, Mrs. Scheuble recruited Margaret A. (Mrs. William F.) Babcock. A member of the Embroiderers' Guild of America, and a founding member of the North Shore Embroiderers' Guild, as well as a member of the National Standards Council of American Embroiderers, Mrs. Babcock would be the teacher for the project, ensuring that every needlewoman involved was properly trained so that a uniformly high quality of workmanship could be maintained.

Eighteen embroiderers, some novice, some experienced, became members of the Needlepoint Guild. Under Mrs. Babcock's tutelage, each worker made a sampler in which she learned 27 stitches, as well as the method of graphing and centering letters and words. Classes began in the fall of 1972, and continued until March, 1973, when all students attended a full day's "shading workshop", conducted by Dorothy (Mrs. Robert) Woodsome, the then President of the North Shore Embroiderers' Guild.

While Mrs. Babcock's students were learning to do top-quality work, Mrs. Scheuble was far from idle. She embarked on a dual research project: first, she searched liturgical sources for thirty birds, animals, and plants which were symbolic of the Virgin Mary. Second, she searched the botanical and zoological literature for accurate data on the forms and colors of the chosen symbols. She took great pains to portray each plant as it appeared in Biblical times. For example, modern

lilies of the valley are white, but in the time of Christ, they were pink, and pink lilies of the valley are still found in Mediterranean countries. As to the Rose of Sharon, Mrs. Scheuble's notes show that she consulted four different authorities before she was satisfied that the Rose of Sharon is in fact a kind of tulip, probably Tulipa sharonensis. Meta (Mrs. Ralph) DeDorest and Ms. Barbara Fee assisted Mrs. Scheuble in the research.

Once a symbol had been chosen and its appearance verified, a black-and-white line drawing was made, and then transferred to vellum. The vellum drawing was placed on a light table, the needlepoint canvas was placed on top, and the design was painted on the canvas in full color. Acrylic paints were used, in tones slightly lighter than the actual colors of the wool, so that skipped stitches could be seen readily. Ms. Barbara Hines assisted Mrs. Scheuble with some of the painting. Great care was taken, and every thread of the canvas was counted, to be sure the design was perfectly centered, and where necessary

(as in the two mandorlas), perfectly symmetrical.

The first painted canvasses were distributed to the workers shortly after the shading workshop, in the spring of 1973, and a new phase of the project began. Each worker kept a notebook which contained a copy of the design she was working, samples and color numbers of the yarns used in each element of the design, and notes of the exact numbers of threads in each section of the kneelers, so that all would be perfectly uniform in size and shape. The Needlepoint Guild met every Monday without fail, and the work done on each piece during the preceding week was checked by Mrs. Scheuble and Mrs. Babcock. If Mrs. Scheuble felt a portion of the design was not working up in wool as well as it had in paint, that section would be taken out and done again, differently. If Mrs. Babcock found ridges in the diagonal tent-stitch, a mistake in the outline of the fleur-de-lis (the single most troublesome design element), or any other stitchery error, the work would have to come out and be re-

done. The workers did not resent or object to these stringent standards. Mrs. Scheuble wanted the work to be perfect, because it was being done to the glory of God, and her sense of dedication permeated the entire group.

The first kneelers were finished in the fall of 1973. Mrs. Scheuble finished the last of the painting during 1974, and the needlework was completed in 1977. A good deal of the boxing - the two inch drops that comprise the edges of the kneelers - was worked by Joyce (Mrs. Warren) Ely. All of the finishing was done by Montoya Upholstery of Wilmette.

The cost of each kneeler to its donor was \$50, of which \$20 was for materials, and \$30 for finishing. The seemingly endless hours spent by Mrs. Scheuble in research, painting, and supervising; by Mrs. Babcock in teaching and correcting; and by the ladies of the Needlepoint Guild in the actual working of the pieces, were all gifts.

Mrs. Scheuble had in mind other needlework projects for the church, such as Bible and Missal markers, and a special kneeler for weddings. Her long illness and untimely death prevented her from carrying them to completion. However, the truly remarkable set of thirty kneelers remains as a lasting legacy from a singularly gifted woman to her church. The people of St. Augustine's will always remember Kathy Scheuble with admiration and gratitude.

GENERAL SYMBOLOGY

BLUE is the color of the sky, standing for Heaven and heavenly love. Because it appears in the sky after clouds have passed, it stands for truth unveiled. Blue has been the traditional color of the Virgin Mary since 1400.

(F, 272; K.A.S.)

GOLDEN YELLOW is the color of the sun, symbolising divinity. It can also indicate innocence of soul, purity, and holiness of life.

(F, 275; P, 14)

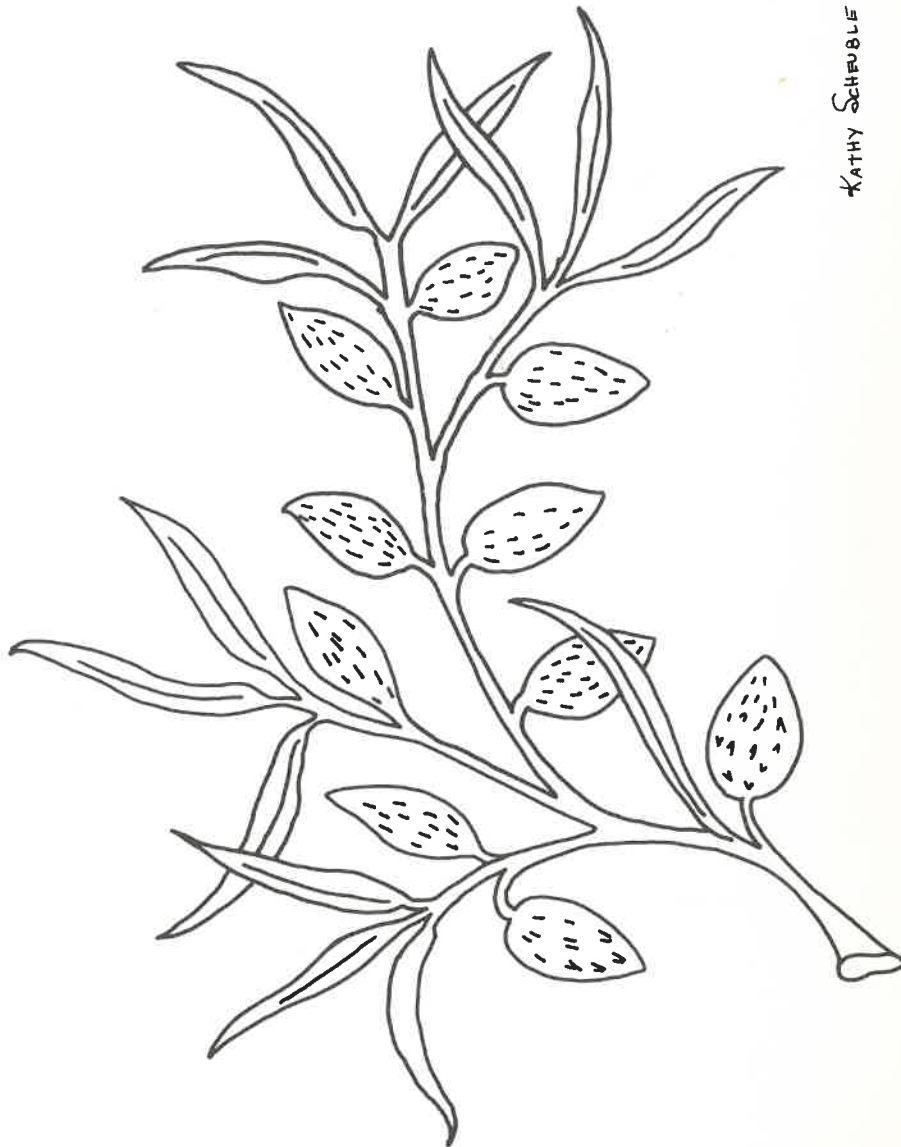
FLEUR-DE-LIS is a symbol of the Virgin Mary both because it is derived from the Madonna lily and because it is an emblem of royalty, given to the Virgin as Queen of Heaven.

(F, 41-2; P, 29)

ALMONDS

In Numbers 17:1-9 we read that Aaron's rod brought forth blossoms and yielded almonds, as a symbol of divine approval or favor. Since the Virgin Mary was obviously approved of and favored by God, the almond has become one of her symbols.

(F, 31)



KATHY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Meta H. DeForest, 1974.

Given by Dr. and Mrs. Ralph DeForest,

in loving memory of their parents,

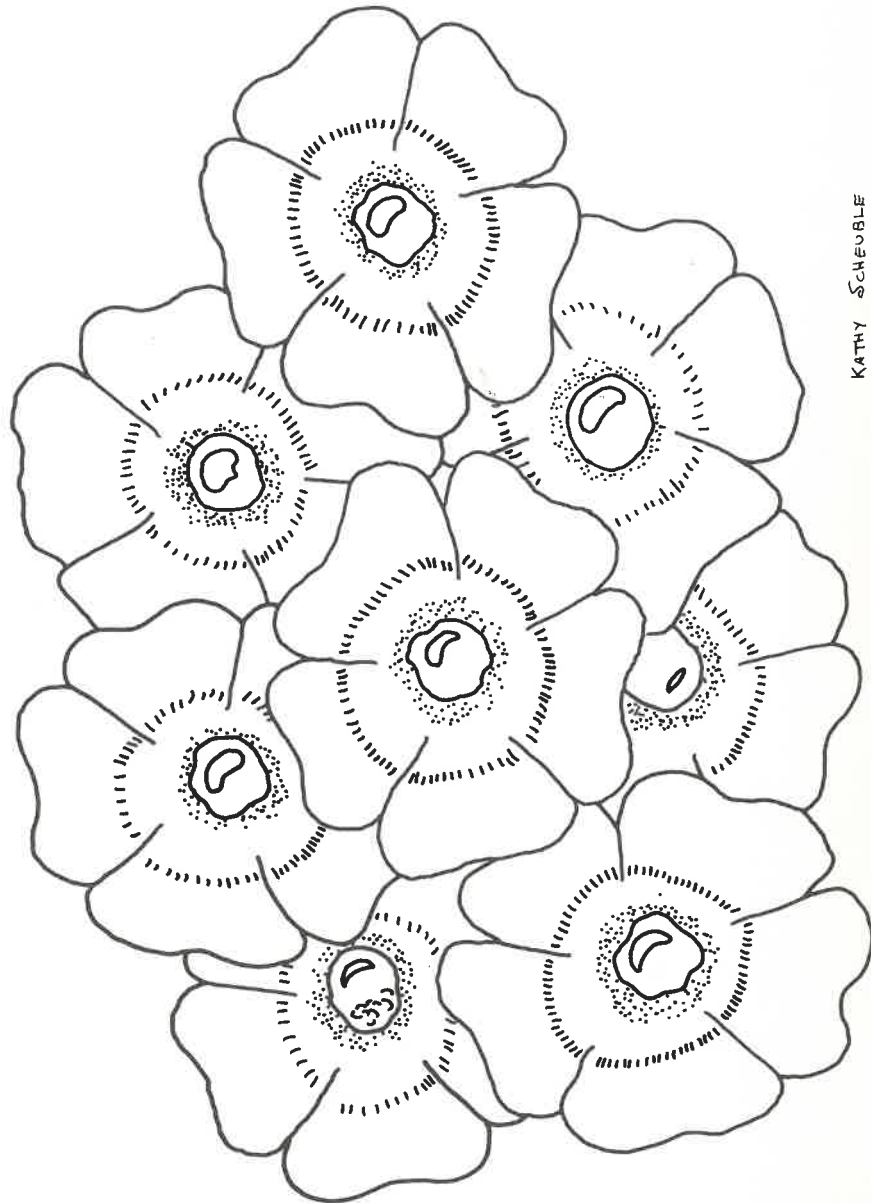
GUSINE J. and CARL W. EPSBERG

HAZEL R. and ALBERT T. DeFOREST

ANEMONES

Anemones are frequently shown in scenes of the Crucifixion, because tradition says that anemones sprang up on Calvary on Good Friday evening. The red spots on the petals symbolize the blood of Christ, and the flowers themselves remind us of the sorrow of the Virgin Mother for the Passion of her Son.

(F, 31)



KATHY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Phoebe H. Maxwell, 1974.

Given by Mrs. Lloyd G. Haines,

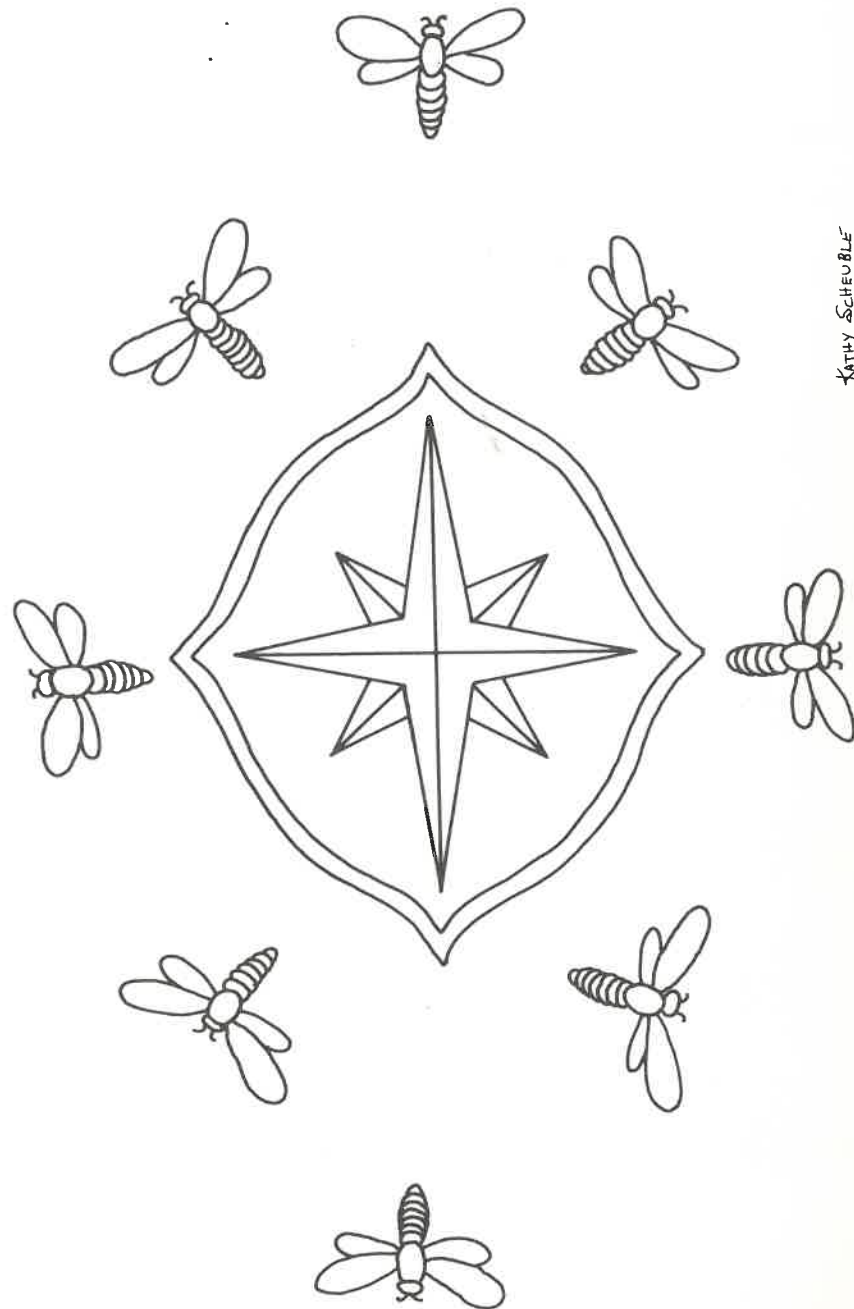
in loving memory of her husband,

LLOYD G. HAINES, 1902 - 1967

BEEES WITH STAR IN MANDORLA

The star represents the Virgin Mary as "Stella Maris", the Star of the Sea. The shape enclosing the star is the mandorla, the almond-shaped halo denoting divine approval or favor, that is peculiar to the Virgin. The bee, because it produces honey - a symbol of Christ - and because of its virtuous habits, symbolizes Mary's virginity.

(F 6, 31, 59, 268)



KATHY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Gwendolyn V. Weidemann, 1973.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Weidemann,

in loving memory of her parents,

CLARA E. and HARRY W. VINSON

1876 - 1939 1876 - 1949



KATHY SCHEUBLE

BRAMBLES

"The bramble was believed to be the burning bush in which the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses, '... the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed' (Exodus 3:2). The bramble has become a symbol of the purity of the Virgin Mary, who bore the flames of divine love without being consumed by lust."

(F 33)

This kneeler is illustrated in color, the better to show its padding and surface stitchery.

Worked by Rachel H. McCandlish, 1974.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Randolph W. McCandlish, Jr.,
in loving memory of his father,

RANDOLPH WALKE McCANDLISH, 1893 - 1970

CARNATIONS

"The red carnation is a symbol of pure love.
... A variety of carnation, the pink, ... has
become a symbol of marriage."

(F 34)



KATHY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Alice A. Beattie, 1974.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Beattie,

in loving memory of her father,

EVAN ERNEST ALLEN ANGLE, 1893 - 1970

CEDAR OF LEBANON

The use of the Cedar of Lebanon as a symbol of Christ derives from the Song of Songs, 5:15: "His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars". Through popular usage in the Renaissance period, the beauty and majesty of the cedar came to be associated with Mary, the Mother of Christ.

(F 34, 163)

This kneeler is illustrated in color, the better to show its padding and surface stitchery.

Worked by Gwendolyn V. Weidemann, 1975.

Given by Mrs. E. Wade Cadman,

in loving memory of her parents and husband,

ISABELLA B. and JOHN E. BRYERS

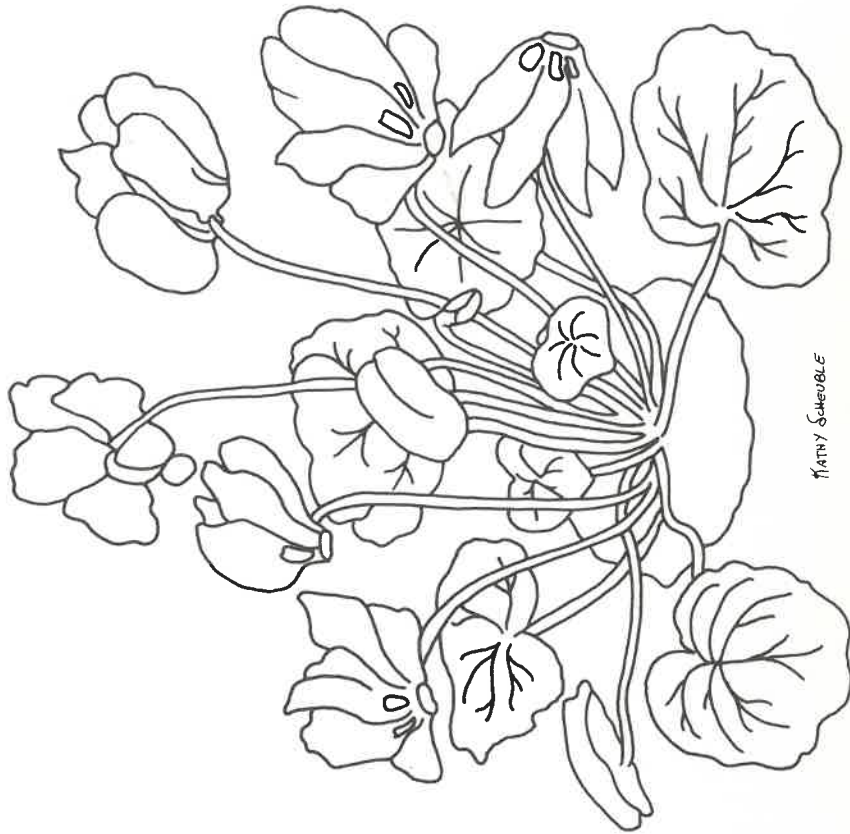
E. WADE CADMAN



CYCLAMEN

The cyclamen "was early dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The red spot at the heart of the flower signifies the bleeding sorrow in Mary's heart."

(F 35)



Worked by Gwendolyn V. Weidemann, 1975.

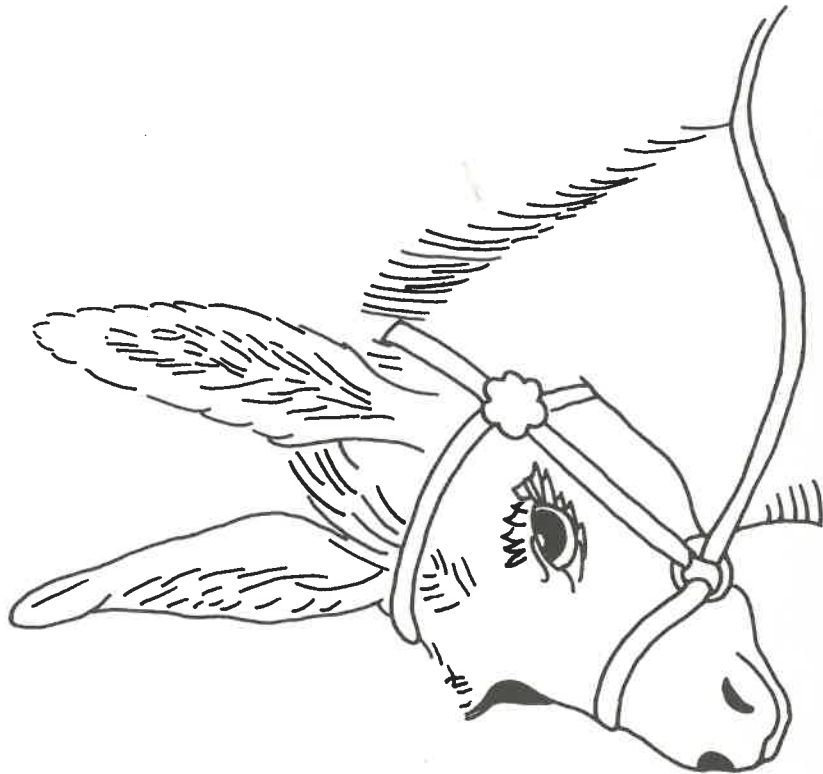
Given by friends, in loving memory of

MABEL FREY BASSETT, 1900 - 1974

DONKEY

A donkey carried the Virgin Mary into Bethlehem, and traditionally it is said that both a donkey and an ox were present at the Nativity of Our Lord. On that occasion, these humble animals recognised that Jesus was the Son of God, as foretold in Isaiah 1:3: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib". A donkey also carried Mother and Child on the Flight into Egypt.

(F 3)



This kneeler is illustrated in color, the better to show its padding and surface stitchery.

Worked by Patricia R. Pemble, 1976.

Given by friends, in loving memory of

HORACE Y. BASSETT, 1900 - 1974



KATHY SCHEUBLE

DOVE

In addition to its use as a symbol of peace, the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and as such is present in pictures of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin. Also, since two doves were the traditional offering for purification after childbirth, the dove is associated with the Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

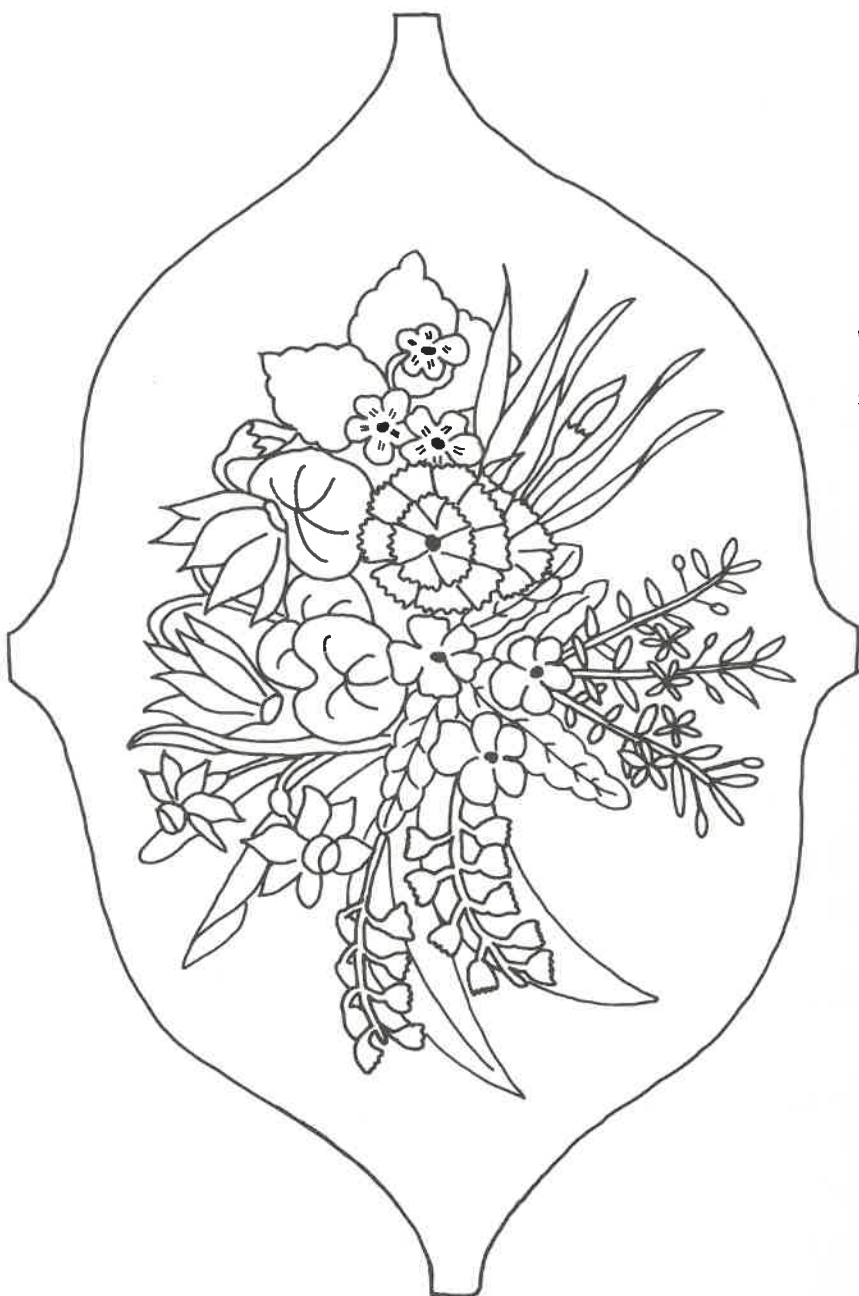
(F 10, 11)

Worked by Melissa D. Johnson, 1977.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Randolph W. McCandlish Jr.,

in loving memory of his mother,

FRANCES ARCHER McCANDLISH, 1893 - 1974



KATNY SCHEUBLE

ENCLOSED GARDEN

"A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse."
These words from the Song of Songs (4:12) are traditionally taken as a reference to the purity of the Virgin. The enclosure is a mandorla (see "BEES"). The meaning of each flower is listed elsewhere in this pamphlet except for narcissus, which means triumph of divine love over sin, sacrifice over selfishness, and eternal life over death.

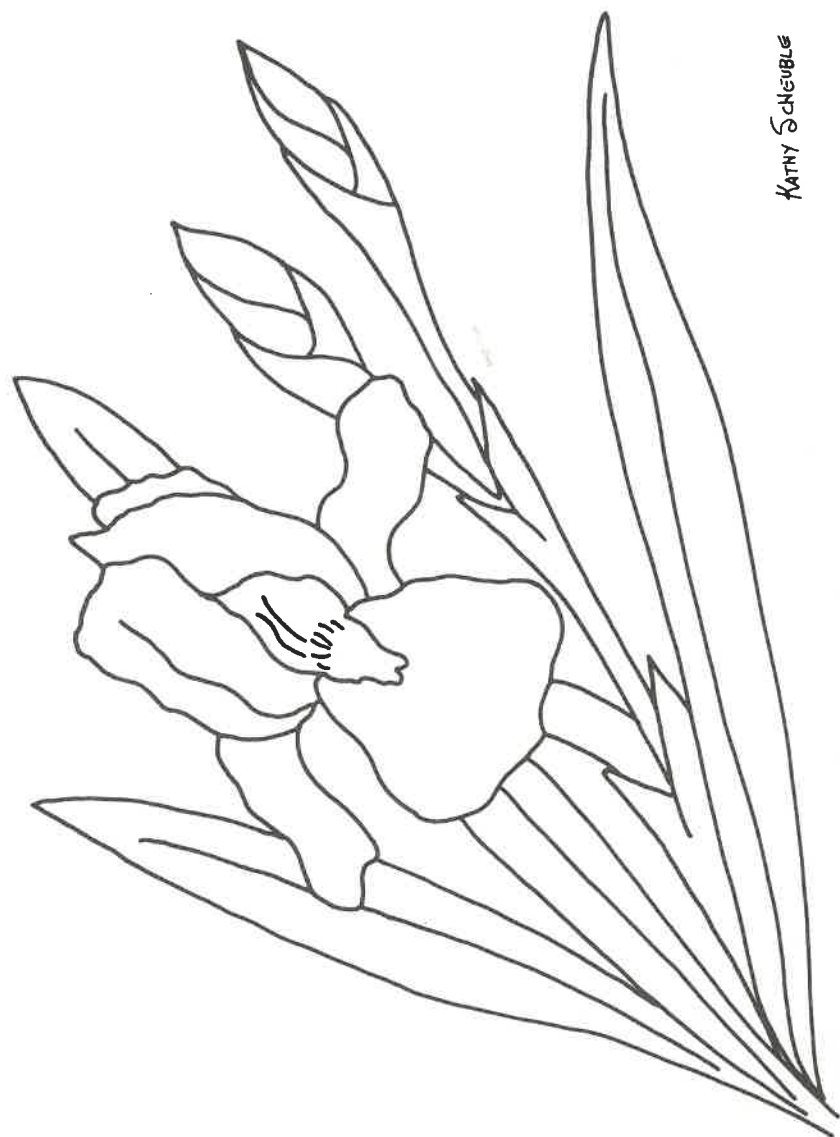
(F 43, 55)

Worked by Florence S. Joseph, 1975.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Godshalk,

in loving memory of her mother,

GERTRUDE WRIGHT PERKINS, 1891 - 1962



KATHY SCHEUBLE

IRIS

The iris is second only to the lily as the flower of the Virgin. Its name means "sword lily" and alludes to Mary's sorrow at the Passion of Christ. Spanish painters used the iris as an attribute of Mary as Queen of Heaven.

(F 39, 40)

Worked by Barbara A. Fee, 1974.

Given by the Dahlberg Memorial Fund,

in loving memory of

GILBERT EDWARD DAHLBERG, 1902 - 1971

JASMINE

The white color of the jasmine denotes the purity of the Blessed Virgin; its sweet scent, her amiability and sweet disposition.

(F 40; K.A.S.)



This kneeler is illustrated in color, the better to show its padding and surface stitchery.

Worked by Katherine A. Scheuble, 1977.

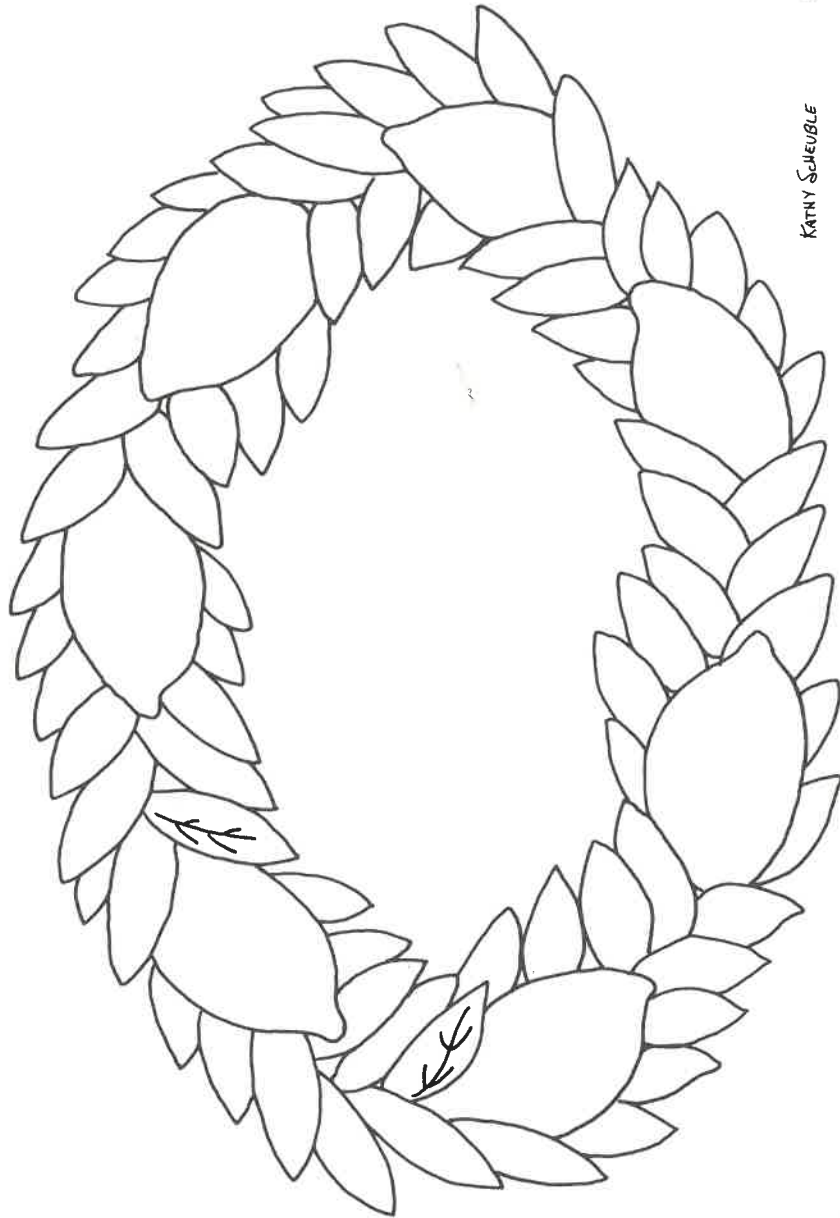
Given by friends, in loving memory of

MARGARET CUDDY SNIFFEN, 1907 - 1976

LEMONS

The lemon signifies fidelity in love, probably because of the persistence of its flavor. The number seven recalls the seven-fold gift of the Holy Spirit.

(F 41, 277)



KATHY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Elizabeth H. Stewart, 1973.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Stewart,

in loving memory of her parents,

SEVERA and WALTER HEMPELMANN

1885 - 1960, 1882 - 1958

LILIES OF THE VALLEY

Because of the sweetness of its scent, the lily of the valley has come to symbolize the Virgin Mary, especially her purity of life. In Biblical times, lilies of the valley were pink, and the pink strain is still found in Mediterranean areas.

(F 42; M.A.B.)



Worked by Patricia N. Baumann, 1975

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Baumann,

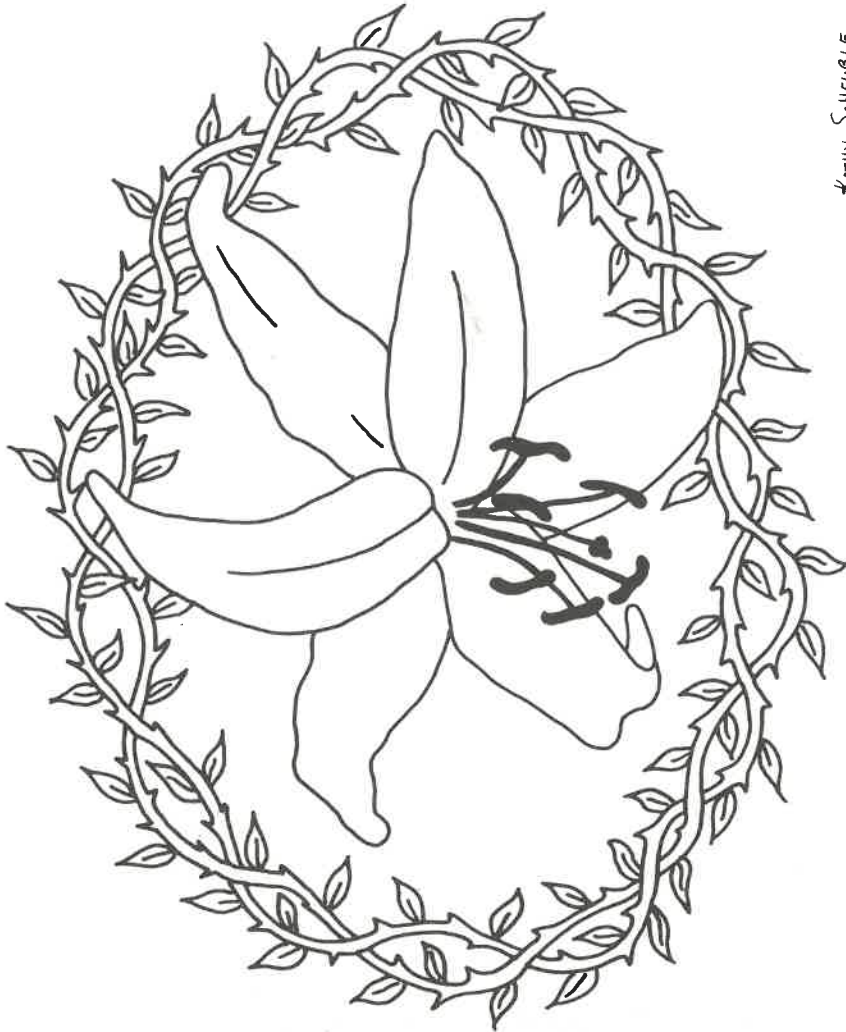
in loving memory of her paternal grandmother,

TOMMINA HAUGENSEN NELSON, 1858 - 1943

LILY AMONG THORNS

The lily among thorns is a symbol of the
Virgin Mary "in token of the purity she preserved
amid the sins of the world".

(F 41)



KATHY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Patricia R. Pemble, 1974.

Given by St. Hilda's Guild, in loving memory of

PHOEBE HARRIS MAXWELL, 1897 - 1974

MADONNA LILY

The lily is a symbol of purity, especially in scenes of the Annunciation. The Archangel Gabriel is often shown holding a lily as he announces the coming birth of Christ to His Mother.

(F 41)



Worked by Alice P. Schumacher, 1975.

Given by Mrs. Irwin C. Schumacher,

in loving memory of her husband,

IRWIN C. SCHUMACHER, 1897 - 1972

OAK LEAF AND ACORNS

"Because of its solidity and endurance, the oak is ... a symbol of the strength of faith and virtue, and of the endurance of the Christian against adversity."

(F 43)



Worked by Virginia B. Syren, 1975.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Karl F. Syren,

in loving memory of his parents,

ANNA W. and KARL O. SYREN

1869 - 1927, 1871 - 1945

OLIVES

A wreath of olive leaves and fruit is a symbol of martyrdom, deliverance from anxiety, and the peace of death. The fruit in different stages of ripeness signifies immortality.

(M.A.B.)



KATY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Margaret A. Babcock, 1973.

Given by the Needlepoint Guild,

in loving memory of

CARL JEFFREY DeFOREST, 1956 - 1973

ORANGES WITH BLOSSOMS

Oranges, and especially orange blossoms, symbolize generosity, chastity, and purity, which is why orange blossoms are traditional flowers for virgin brides.

(F 44)



Worked by Gwendolyn V. Weidemann, 1974.

Given by Mrs. William R. Lawler,

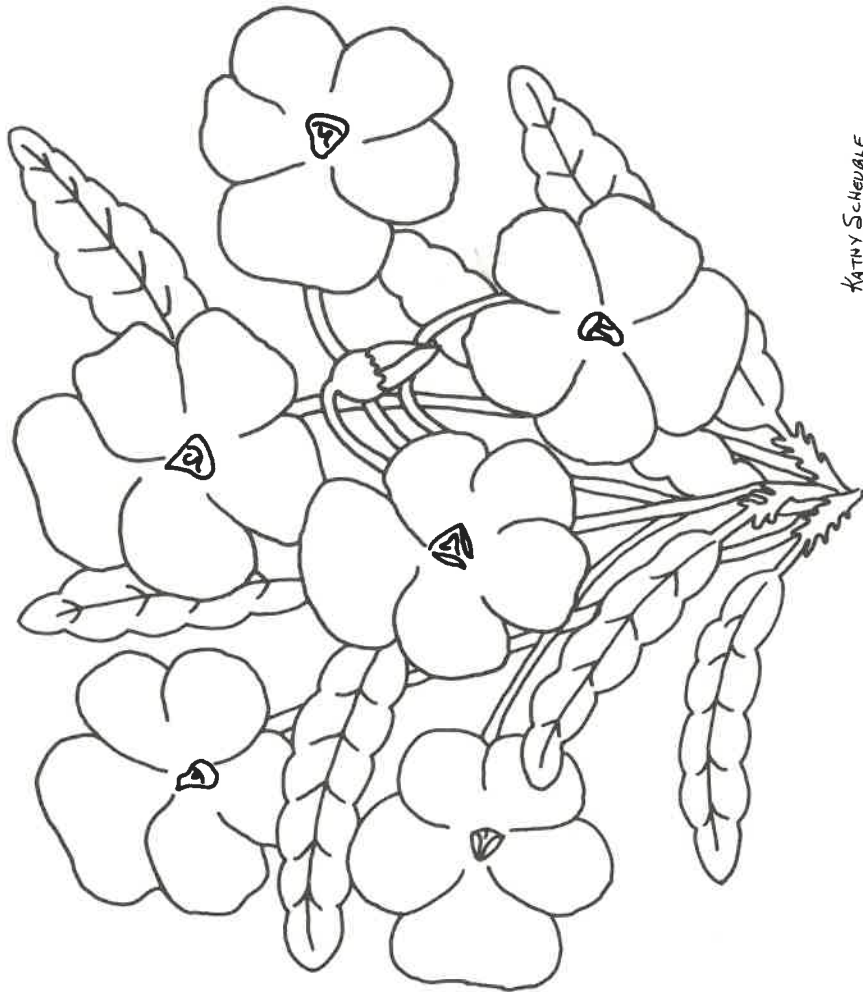
in loving memory of her husband,

WILLIAM RIPLEY LAWLER, 1897 - 1972

PANSIES

Pansies symbolize remembrance and meditation.

(F 45)



KATNY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Jacqueline P. Holland, 1975.

Given by Dr. and Mrs. James M. Holland,

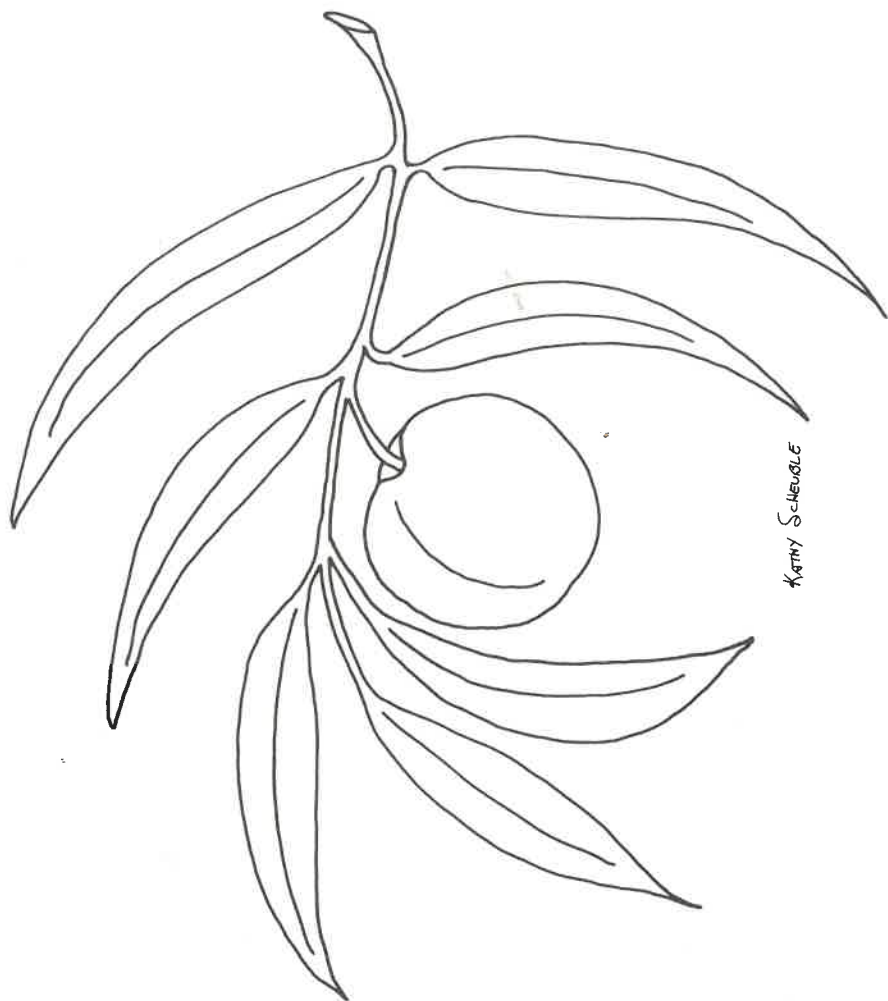
in loving memory of her maternal grandmother,

MARJORIE RICHMOND BRUSON, 1889 - 1975

PEACH

The peach symbolizes a virtuous heart and tongue, and in paintings of the Virgin and Child, the fruit of salvation.

(F 46)



Worked by Ellen F. Jones, 1973.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Rees Jr.,
in loving memory of his father,

CHARLES CHRISTIAN REES, 1890 - 1960

ROSE GARLAND

The wreath of roses represents the rosary, a series of prayers and meditations upon events in the lives of Christ and the Virgin. There are three series of meditations, called Mysteries: the Joyful Mysteries (white rose), the Sorrowful Mysteries (red rose), and the Glorious Mysteries (yellow or gold rose).

(F 48, 301)



Worked by Virginia B. Syren, 1975.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Karl F. Syren,

in loving memory of her mother,

ETHEL KIRKMAN BAKER, 1890 - 1961

ROSE OF SHARON

The Rose of Sharon was originally associated with Christ, as in the Song of Songs 2:1; "I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley". Over the years, by tradition, it has come to be associated with the Blessed Virgin as well. Modern scholars believe that the Rose of Sharon was in fact a kind of tulip, probably Tulipa sharonensis. Mrs. Scheuble notes that these tulips may also be the flower called "lilies of the field".

(F 42; K.A.S.)



KATHY SCHEUBLE

Worked by Lilies Circle, 1977.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Circle,

in loving memory of his mother,

JENNIE JONES CIRCLE, 1881 - 1973



KATY SCHEDULE

ROSE WITHOUT THORNS

The rose is said to have had no thorns until the Fall of Man brought sin into the world. Since the Virgin Mary lived a sinless life, she was called a "rose without thorns". Pink is the color of the original, wild rose, from which all others are derived.

(F 48)

Worked by Elizabeth Y. Carpenter and

Elizabeth H. Stewart, 1974.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. James A. Hughes,

in loving memory of

VIRGINIA MARCON, 1906 - 1964

EDITH WELTER, 1905 - 1973

STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries symbolize perfect righteousness,
or a righteous person whose fruits are good works.
The Virgin is sometimes shown wearing a dress
decorated with clusters of strawberries.

(F 48)



Worked by Meredith Montross, 1974.

Given by Mrs. Ralph D. Boughton,

in loving memory of her husband,

RALPH D. BOUGHTON, 1904 - 1970

STRAWBERRIES AND VIOLETS

The strawberry symbolizes perfect righteousness, and the violet symbolizes humility. Together, they mean that "the truly spiritual are always humble".

(F 49)

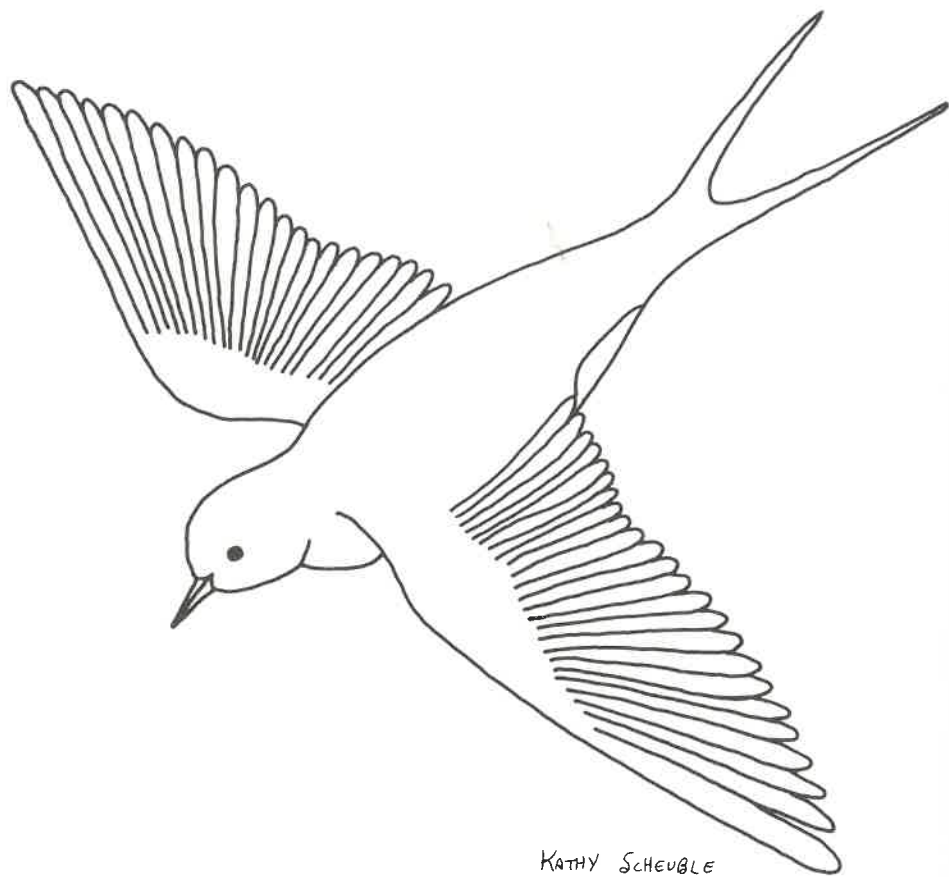


Worked by Mary K. Seidholz, 1974.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Donn Seidholz,

in loving memory of her father,

WILLIAM LAVERN HENRY, 1900 - 1972



KATHY SCHEUBLE

SWALLOW

Birds in general are symbols of the "wingéd soul", suggesting "the spiritual, as opposed to the material". Swallows in particular are symbols of the Incarnation of Christ, and are therefore often shown in scenes of the Annunciation or Nativity.

(F 6, 27)

Worked by Ruth C. Johnston, 1977.

Given by Dr. and Mrs. Angus Johnston II,

in loving memory of her parents,

MARY and PERCY COAD

1883 - 1972, 1875 - 1974



SWAN

"The swan is a symbol of Mary and of beautiful virgins; it suggests beauty, grace, and royalty. An Order of the Swan was formed in 1440 in honor of the Blessed Virgin in the Electorate of Brandenburg. A medal of the Virgin with an effigy of a swan was the badge of membership."

(K.A.S.)

Worked by Betty A. Jenkins, 1977.

Given by Dr. and Mrs. William Jenkins,

in loving memory of his father,

CARL HUBER JENKINS, 1876 - 1939

UNICORN

Legend states that the unicorn could be captured only by a virgin. It therefore became a symbol "of purity in general and of feminine chastity in particular. The legend was interpreted by Christian writers as an allegory of the Annunciation and Incarnation of Christ, born of a Virgin."

(F, 28)



Worked by Betty A. Jenkins, 1974.

Given by Dr. and Mrs. William Jenkins,

in loving memory of his sister,

VIRGINIA JENKINS WHEELOCK, 1903 - 1974

VIOLETS

Violets are the symbol of humility. "St. Bernard describes the Virgin Mary as the 'violet of humility'."

(F, 52)



Worked by Florence S. Joseph, 1973.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Russell B. Joseph,

in loving memory of her grandmother,

MARY KAY SCHWERTFEGER, 1864 - 1934

NEEDLEWORK SPECIFICATIONS

CANVAS:

#14 mono, 18" north to south by 22" east to west.

Hem before beginning work.

WOOL:

Paternayan crewel (Persian is too fuzzy, tapestry is too heavy).

Working thread: 2 strands.

Quantity: 9 oz. background color per kneeler.

SIZE AND SHAPE:

TOP:

A rectangle, measuring 10" (140 threads) north to south by 14" (200 threads) east to west.

DROPS:

On each edge of top rectangle, a smaller rectangle, 2" (28 threads) deep. East and west drops measure 28 threads E-W by 140 threads N-S; north and south drops measure 28 threads N-S by 200 threads E-W.

SEE DIAGRAM OF CANVAS ON LAST PAGE.

METHOD:

Hold canvas with selvedge edge vertical, on left (west). Mark canvas north, south, east, west. Always work with north at top, so you are working on the warp; work on the woof will stretch. For Tent Stitch, work up the diagonal, from SE to NW, when horizontal threads of canvas cross on top of vertical threads. Work down, from NW to SE, when vertical threads are on top.

STITCHES:

TOP:

Diagonal Tent Stitch, with one row of Modified Algerian Eye, covering 4 threads, all around outer edge. Some central motifs have added surface stitchery.

EAST and WEST DROPS:

Modified Algerian Eye over 4 threads; 7 rows E-W by 35 rows N-S. Innermost row abuts the single row of Modified Algerian Eye which frames top rectangle.

NORTH DROP:

Modified Algerian Eye, 1 row at N edge, 1 row at S edge (abutting single row Modified Algerian Eye framing top rectangle). At each side, Modified Algerian Eye, 5 rows N-S; from 1-10 rows E-W, depending on desired size of center box. Center box, Diagonal Tent Stitch.

SOUTH DROP:

Modified Algerian Eye, 1 row at S edge, 1 row at N edge (abutting single row Modified Algerian Eye framing the top rectangle), 2 rows at E and W edges. Inside this frame, at E and W sides of drop, a box, 20 x 20 threads, worked in Diagonal Tent Stitch. Boxes separated by center panel of Modified Algerian Eye, 5 rows N-S by 36 rows E-W.

SEE DIAGRAM OF MODIFIED ALGERIAN EYE ON LAST PAGE.

FINISHING:

BACK:

Blue wide-wale corduroy.

FILLING:

Solid piece of extra-density foam rubber, 10" x 14" x 2".

DESIGN:

TOP:

Blue, with gold fleur-de-lis in each corner; a special multi-color design, each one unique, in center.

DROPS:

Blue, with gold letters and numbers in Tent Stitch boxes.

N BOX: IN LOVING MEMORY OF
NAME - DATE

SW BOX: Designer's initials: K.A.S.

SE BOX: Worker's initials; year of completion of piece.

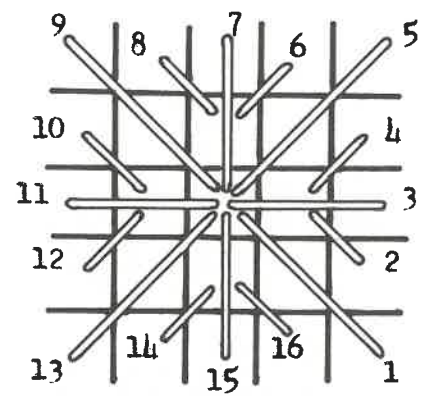
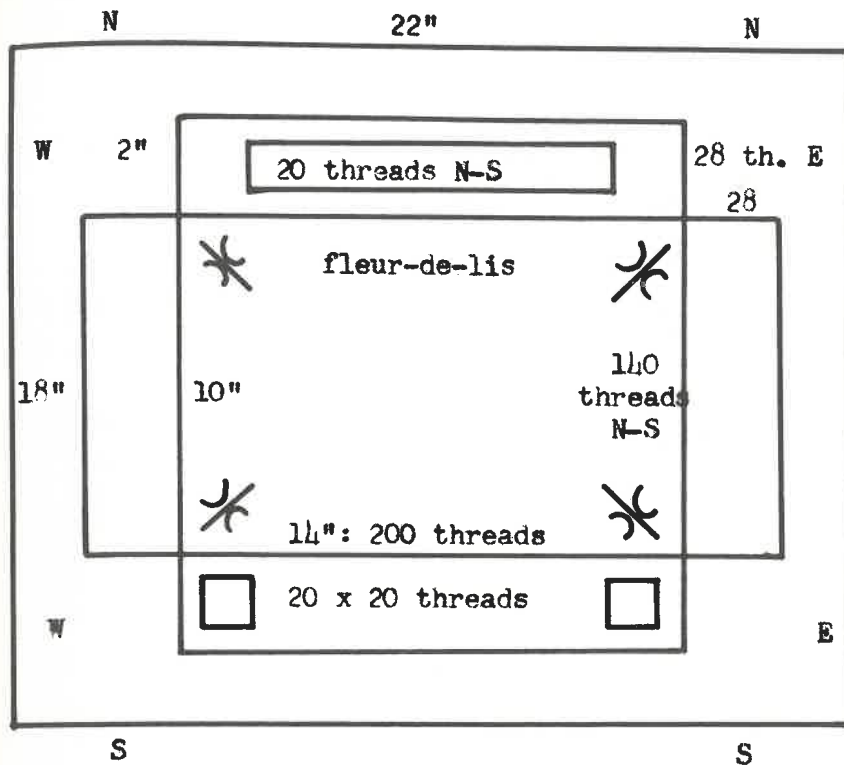
Full-size copies of Mrs. Scheuble's original black-and-white drawings are available for purchase in the church office. The price is \$10 for each design.

Color photographs in this pamphlet by

Philip A. Scheuble.

Text by Elizabeth-Louise Girardi.

SET-UP of CANVAS



MODIFIED ALGERIAN EYE

