

F R Leach mural East wall St Clement's church Cambridge 1872-1875
(Shelley Lockwood @ David Parr House, 2021)



Image © Hannah Boatfield, DPH

Christ is the central figure, surrounded by 8 angels, 4 on each side. The lower 2 angels are offering incense, the spiralling smoke trails of which are depicted around the swinging censers (thuribles).

Christ is depicted as the High Priest (after the order of Melchizedek, King of Salem). He is wearing vestments – a long white robe (alb), a stole (long scarf worn around neck and hanging loose), a shorter tunic (dalmatic) and a chasuble (ornate, sleeveless, outer-most garment) - his right hand is raised in blessing and in his left hand he holds the Blessed Sacrament (chalice containing consecrated bread and wine). He is Christ as mediator, celebrating Holy Eucharist. The sacred wounds are shown in his hands and feet so he is the crucified Christ, offering his sacrifice in heaven.

Written on a scroll below Christ's feet, above the dossal, are the words 'Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum' ('The Peace of the Lord be always with you'). The two figures painted kneeling and each holding a chalice at either end of this scroll are St Clement (on the left) and St Augustine of Canterbury (on the right).

1. **St Clement of Rome** (Pope Clement I) is the Patron Saint of the church. He was the second Bishop of Rome (Pope) and the first Apostolic Father of the church, having been consecrated by St Peter (Peter the Apostle). He is wearing the vestments of an Archbishop, including a mitre. The emblem of his martyrdom - the anchor (he was executed by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the sea) - can just be seen at his side between his robes and the dossal.

A description of one of the frescoes in the Basilica of San Clemente in Rome reveals that the words 'Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum' are written on the page of the missal open on the altar in the fresco: "On the altar, which is covered with a white cloth, are the missal, chalice, and paten. The missal is open, and on one page are written the words : Dominus vobiscum which the saint is in the act of pronouncing while his hands are extended as is done today by the celebrant at the same words of the Mass. On the other page are the words : 'Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum' which the saint himself is believed to have introduced into the liturgy." Louis Nolan, *The Basilica of St. Clemente in Rome* (1914).

2. **St Augustine of Canterbury** was the first Archbishop of Canterbury, known as the 'Apostle to the English' and a founder of the English Church. He was sent by Pope Gregory I to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity in 595. He is wearing his vestment as an Archbishop and offering up a chalice.

Flanking St Clement and St Augustine of Canterbury are the 'Schoolmen', St Bernard of Clairvaux and St Thomas Aquinas.

3. **St Bernard of Clairvaux** was a monk and theologian, author of many treatises. He is wearing the white robes of the Cistercian Order which he founded. Canonized in 1174, in 1830 Pope Pius VIII bestowed upon him the title 'Doctor of the Church'. He is holding a book with the words "Jesu dulcis memoria" (Jesus, the very thought is sweet) which is the first line of hymn attributed to him.
4. **St Thomas Aquinas** was a philosopher and theologian, the great synthesiser of the ideas of Aristotle with those of the church in the 13th Century. He is wearing the black and white habit of the Dominican Order to which he belonged and the book he is holding has the words "Adoro te devote" (I devoutly adore you) which are the first words of the Eucharistic hymn written by him. He also has the shining sunburst on his chest which is thought to symbolise the purity of his heart, the ardour of his charity and the light and truth of his teachings, inspired by God which, in turn, shine out as a great light for the whole Church.

Next there is a group of three saints on each side. On the left:

5. **St Francis of Assisi** is wearing the brown habit and girdle of the Franciscan Orders which he founded and he is showing the stigmata in his hands which he received during a vigil at Mount La Verna in 1224, making him the first recorded stigmatic in Christian history. He is known for his love of the Eucharist.
6. **St Cecilia** is portrayed playing an organ. She was a Roman martyr and became patron saint of music and musicians and she symbolises the role of music in the liturgy.
7. **St Etheldreda** (Æthelthryth) was a queen and foundress and abbess of Ely so she is portrayed wearing a crown and carrying a pastoral staff.

On the right:

8. **St Teresa of Avila** is wearing the habit of the Carmelites and is holding a crucifix. She represents the contemplative religious life. Canonised in 1622.
9. **Fra Angelico**, the Dominican artist and painter of frescoes, is wearing the black Dominican hood and carries his painter's palette and brushes. He represents the art of painting and art as a religious act. Although known for his humility, piety and devotion, his nimbus is painted as individual rays of light not a full halo as he was not a saint. He was known as 'Blessed Angelico' but he was not beatified until 1982.
10. **St Edward the Confessor** was King of England 1032-1066, canonised in 1161, he was the patron saint of England until he was replaced in that role by St George in the mid-fourteenth century. He is portrayed wearing ermine and a crown and is holding his sceptre.

Next up on the extreme left is:

11. **St Leo the Great** (Pope Leo I) is portrayed wearing a papal tiara or triple crown and a long green robe. He is holding a scroll representing 'Leo's Tome' which was a letter he wrote to Flavian, the patriarch of Constantinople. The words written are "Ad Flavianum" (To Flavian). The letter explains that human and divine natures coexist in Jesus Christ.

And on the extreme right:

12. **St Athanasius** was Bishop of Alexandria. He is holding a book with the words “Quicumque vult” (Whosoever wishes), the opening words of the Athanasian Creed, the first creed in which the equality of the three persons of the Trinity is explicitly stated.

The next 2 figures on each side are of the 4 Fathers or Great Doctors of the Latin (Western) Church: St Ambrose, St Augustine, St Jerome and St Gregory the Great.

On the left:

13. **St Ambrose**, Bishop of Milan, is wearing a mitre and holds a scourge (a small whip), sometimes said to represent his penance for the massacres at Thessalonica, sometimes (if containing three knotted thongs) to represent the three-fold doctrine of the Trinity.
14. **St Augustine**, Bishop of Hippo, theologian and philosopher, is wearing a mitre and holding a copy of his most famous work “De civitate Dei” (On the city of God) in which he imagined the Church as a spiritual City of God, distinct from the material Earthly City.

On the right:

15. **St Jerome**, priest and theologian, best known for translating the Bible into Latin. He is portrayed as a Cardinal wearing red robes and a wide-brimmed red capello with cords. Although the role of cardinal did not exist until after his death, portraying him in this way refers to his service as an advisor to Pope Damasus I. He is holding a model or maquette of a church. This usually denotes that the bearer was responsible for the building of a specific church or monastery. In Jerome's case, this may be the monasteries he founded at Bethlehem.
16. **St Gregory the Great** (Pope Gregory I) is portrayed wearing a papal tiara or triple crown and a long green robe. He is holding a book with the words “Beatus vir” (Blessed is the man). These are the first words in the Latin Vulgate Bible of Psalm 1 (art) and Psalm 112 (music).
17. **St Paul the Apostle** carries a book of his famous epistles and holds the sword which is his emblem due to being beheaded. He is frequently seen, as here, with St Peter.
18. **St Mary Magdalene** is portrayed with an uncovered head and flowing hair and is holding her box of ointment with which she anointed Christ's feet. She was the first witness to the Resurrection of Christ.
19. **St Peter**, one of the 12 Apostles of Christ, and one of the first leaders of the early Church - the first Pope or Bishop of Rome. Because Peter was the first to whom Jesus appeared, the leadership of Peter forms the basis of the Apostolic succession and he is described as ‘the rock’ on which the church will be built. He is portrayed holding the key of heaven and a book representing the gospel.
20. **St James the Great**, one of the 12 Apostles of Christ, patron saint of Spain. Portrayed holding his pilgrim's staff.
21. The **Virgin Mary** wearing a blue mantle, with her eyes cast down and her hands crossed on her chest in a gesture of humility.

22. **St John the Evangelist**, one of the 12 Apostles of Christ, is portrayed here as a young man with no beard. He is holding an open book in his left hand with the words “Verbum care factum est” (The Word became flesh), from his gospel (John I:14) and a pen in his right hand.