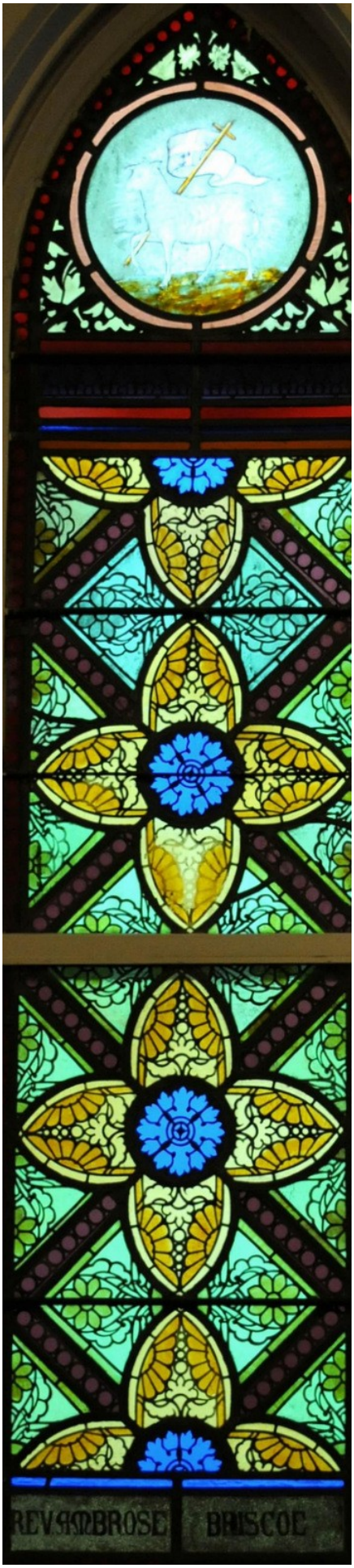


The Windows of St. Michael's

A brief history about those who donated the stained glass windows of St. Michael's, or in whose memory they were given.

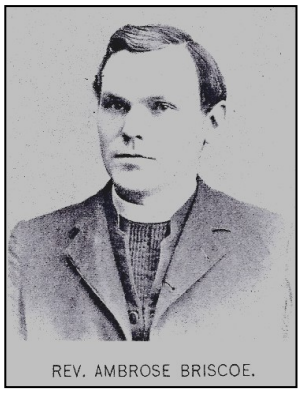
Window Symbol: Agnus Dei

The lamb and banner are referred to as the Agnus Dei, which is Latin for the Lamb of God. The Agnus Dei represents the Risen Christ who triumphs over death. John the Baptist proclaimed of Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29

Given by: Rev. Ambrose Briscoe

There are two windows dedicated to Rev. Ambrose Briscoe: this one in the transcept of the church and a large one in the front of the church. The story below introduces Father Briscoe and his family, and the other story discusses Father Briscoe's pastorate.

On May 1, 1851, Ambrose Briscoe, son of James Briscoe, was born in the village of Castletown, Gortymadden, parish of Abbeygormacan, County Galway, Ireland. He was ordained to the priesthood in Ireland and then emigrated to America. He arrived December 6, 1877 in the Port of New York aboard the *China* out of Cobh and went directly to the Hartford diocese for assignment. When he emigrated he did not travel in steerage, as most immigrants did. He traveled in cabin class, so he must have been a man of some means.


REV. AMBROSE BRISCOE.

Ambrose Briscoe's brother, Thomas, was also a priest and had emigrated a few years earlier. Rev. Thomas Briscoe was a highly successful priest, even being considered at one time as a potential successor to Bishop Hendricken of Rhode Island. In his later years, however, Thomas Briscoe suffered a significant decline in mental and physical health, was removed from the priesthood, and died in an institution in New Jersey.

Sadly, Rev. Ambrose Briscoe suffered a similar decline as his brother. By 1900 an administrator, Father Charles Brennan, was assigned to oversee St. Michael parish while Father Briscoe remained as "pastor-in-residence." On New Year's Day in 1902, Father Briscoe left St. Michael's to begin a journey throughout Europe to restore his health, traveling to Algiers, Rome, France and England. He finally settled in his native Ireland, where he died May 10, 1919 in St. Michael Hospital, Dublin, Ireland. His devotion to St. Michael parish was clearly evident upon his death. On his gravestone in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, Ireland, he had inscribed:

Sacred to the Memory of Rev. Ambrose Briscoe

late pastor of St. Michael's Church, Pawcatuck, Conn, USA