



SYMBOLISM E-NEWSLETTER

San Michele, Cemetery Island, Venice (1810)

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The baby boy angel is holding thorns which conveys Christ because during Christ's journey to the cross, the Roman soldiers mocked him and placed a crown of thorns on his head calling him the King of the Jews. Of course, the thorns tore into his scalp while he wore the crown. Thorns relate to difficulties, grief and sin. Later on, the crown of thorns is replaced with rays of light coming out of the band around Jesus' head emulating the light of the world or eternal light. In Christian iconography, the crown of thorns is taken one step further with Christ's crown of thorns celebrating the marriage of heaven and the Virgin Mary with the ring (crown of thorns). The baby boy angel or putto in Italian, is a symbol of innocence.



Saint George Slaying the Dragon, Venice

Conveys good triumphing over evil. George died in approximately 303 AD and was a soldier-saint who was venerated in the East shortly after he was beheaded in Palestine. The only true fact about him is his death and other parts of his life are fiction. The story of Saint George slaying the dragon goes back to the citizens of Silene in Libya being terrorized by a dragon. The Silenians' solution to taking care of the dragon was to sacrifice the King's daughter, Princess Cleolinda. On her way to be sacrificed, she met Saint George who promised to save her and kill the dragon if she would be saved through the power of Jesus Christ. She consented and he led the dragon back to the city with her girdle as a leash and then killed the dragon.



Broken Column, Harp and Wreath, Oakland Cemetery, ATL (1850)

Even though the broken column with harp is associated with David in the Old Testament, it is the symbol of Saint Cecilia, patron saint of musicians and conveys worship in heaven and hope. The wreath, on the monument, containing roses and lilies (her flowers), conveys eternity, roses convey love and fidelity, and lilies convey purity. Not a great deal is known about Saint Cecilia other than she probably lived in Rome around the 3rd Century and founded a church in the Trastevere area. One legend about her says that she was Christian and was unwilling to marry a pagan. However, by singing to the lord in her heart, during her wedding, she convinced her bridegroom to convert to Christianity thus the reference to musicians.



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