

The Icon: Prayer Made Visible

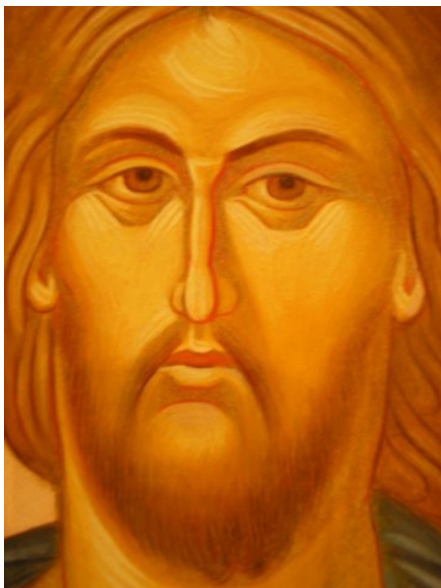
Kathy Sievers, April, 2016

An icon is a work of art, AND it is so much more. Every part of the creation of an icon begins with prayer. One friend stated it this way: "The icon is written in our hearts before we ever put the brush to the panel." The theology of the icon and the prayers associated with its subject determine how the icon is painted. The art and craft are secondary to the prayer, yet at the same time are prayers in themselves.

The icon crucifix project for the St. Thomas Aquinas community is steeped in prayer. From the discernment and decision by the parish to seek a new crucifix to the choice of the iconographer to the development of the design, every step is guided by prayer. When the icon is complete and installed in the sanctuary, the prayer and crafting of the icon will join and aid in the prayer life of the community.

We have just celebrated Easter, for us the high point of our faith and of the Christian year. The experience of the Triduum is a profound journey into the heart of our faith. The crucifix is essential not just during Holy Week, but throughout the year, throughout our lives. As a paradox, the crucifix presents Christ on the cross, by whose death we have been given new life. "We see him crucified; we call him king," says iconographer Charles Rohrbacher. With the stark profundity of the meaning of the crucifix, there is no way that I, as a flawed human, can feel adequate to approach the subject.

Moving through Holy Week, tension arose in me as I prepared for the role of narrator during the Passion on Good Friday. In my heart I remembered the St. Thomas Aquinas community and the deep privilege given me to create the crucifix. As an iconographer, the work on the icon flows from my personal prayer and the prayer of the entire Church, but most importantly from the prayer of the members of STA. Please remember me in your prayers, as I do you.



Detail, Face of Christ, Kathy Sievers