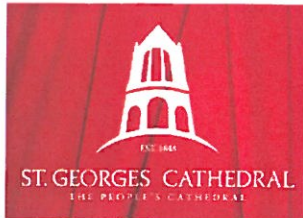


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VICTIM, NO RESURRECTION?

A series of post-apartheid re-imaginings led by St George's Cathedral, in partnership with the Michaelis School of Fine Art, UCT and the District Six Museum.

This collaborative project is taking place over the period of Lent (5 March - 19 April 2014). It brings together a series of conversations and creative events in an endeavor to think about key questions in the 20th year of South Africa's democracy.

Pivoting around a particular piece of art by British artist Terry Duffy, the programme for 'Victim, no resurrection?' brings together interfaith clergy, men, women and children from across the city and from all sectors: the faith community, artists, activists, students, scholars and academics.

The series will be launched at St George's Cathedral on the evening of Tuesday, March 4th 2014 at 17h45 with the inaugural Vice Chancellors Conversation, chaired by Anglican Archbishop Makgoba who is also a Vice Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape. The event is envisaged as an informal conversation between ten South African university heads around the theme of the program, Victim: no resurrection? They will share their thoughts on the role of universities in social transformation.

Coupled with the installation of the art work, this conversation will kick-start the 6 week programme which will take place every Tuesday evening, details of which will be shared at the launch.

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Project Partners:

- St George's Cathedral, Dean Michael Weeder, dean@sgcathedral.co.za
- District Six Museum, Ms. Bonita Bennett, bonita@districtsix.co.za
- Michaelis School of Fine Art, UCT, Dr Siona O'Connell, sionaoc@gmail.com

Note: Terry Duffy is an international artist with a reputation for unique and challenging work. His 4.5 meters high painting 'Victim, no resurrection' has been on an international journey to sites of conflict, focusing upon the plight of victims across cultures in search of greater peace and reconciliation. It was recently shown in Dresden, Germany to commemorate the bombing of the city and its citizens by the Allies in 1945 and in opposition to the present day Neo Nazi rallies held there. Other locations in planning will include Belfast, Krakow, New York, Palestine and Jerusalem. It brings a new and challenging contemporary context to Christ's passion focusing upon issues of global importance, transcending religious and cultural boundaries. The focus of this global journey; are the victims of genocide, holocaust, slavery, torture, terrorism, tyranny, bigotry and hatred. This crucifix was painted some 27 years ago in the aftermath of the 1981 UK riots. It now inspires and provokes a new politically and culturally aware generation extremely cognisant of global conflict and its victims.

St. George's Cathedral has an Icon**About St. George:**

Saint George (c. 275/281 – 23 April 303 AD), born in Lydda, Palestine, was a soldier in the Roman army and was later venerated as a Christian martyr. He is immortalized in the tale of Saint George and the Dragon. The earliest known depictions of the motif are from tenth- or eleventh-century Cappadocia and eleventh-century Georgia. Previously, in the iconography of Eastern Orthodoxy, George had been depicted as a soldier since at least the seventh century. The earliest known surviving narrative of the dragon episode is an eleventh-century Georgian text. His memorial is celebrated on 23 April, and he is regarded as one of the most prominent military saints.

About the Iconographer:

Charlotte Weppenaar is a Danish Iconographer who studied under the tutelage of Monk Gregorios of St. Paul's Monastery, New Skete on the Holy Mount Athos. She was trained in the byzantine style of icon painting. Byzantine icons are sacred paintings characterized by vivid colours and often gold coloured backgrounds. Unlike regular paintings, these icons are saturated in prayer and require an interior spirit of humility and patience. Charlotte had been praying and painting the icon of St. George and also praying daily for the Cathedral for the past year. The size of the icon is 36 x 47 cm, and has three layers of 24carat gold.

THE SONG THAT MARY SANG

A reflection on Christmas by Fr Michael Weeder. Published in the Cape Times, Tuesday December 24, 2013

When Mary sang her song of high revolt of how her spirit "rejoices in God my Saviour" she did so from a heart assured of her place in God's dream for her and the world into which she had been born. She sang of "the Mighty One has done great things for me", despite the scandal of pre-marital pregnancy and the protracted terror of life in an occupied territory of the Roman Empire. The magnitude of divine intention and the grand narrative of empire coalesced in the person of Jesus Christ. But it is the mention of a domestic detail which signifies the nature of the culture into which he had been born and the values that would inform and guide him as he grew older.

A few seconds after his birth the navel cord of Jesus would have been cut, the afterbirth washed off his skin and he would have been rubbed with salt and wrapped in strips of cloth. The Prophet Ezekiel, when remonstrating with a rebellious Israel, cites the absence of these post-natal rites as a sign of their collective abandonment by God: "As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in cloths"(Ezekiel 16:4)

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The culture in which I was raised observed a similar practice. The baby would be washed and dried and then the whole body, limbs and fingers and toes rubbed with a concoction of Vaseline and herbs or Dutch medicines and lovingly wrapped in a "Charlie", the Creole variant of the isiXhosa word, ityali. It was always with a sense of well-being, of an undefined spirit of belonging to ancient immensity that I would observe the mothers of our community blessing their children in this manner with their gentle yet firm touch, songs and sometimes a quiet prayer. It was a centering rite and a sign of spiritual richness.

Our society is reflecting a growing de-centering, an alienation from each other. This fragmentation into racial and ethnic identities seemed to be temporarily held in abeyance when we South Africans gathered in a communal sigh of longing and sadness over the ten-day period of public mourning at the death of Madiba. Further, the poverty and growing inequality indicts the faith community tacitly associated as we are with the prosperity cult of franchised religion. A sanitised idolatry which serves to quell the cautioning of excess in all its licentious forms.

The late Tony Judt, historian, raises compelling questions for us to consider about how to traverse the clichéd, cul-de-sacs of economic measurables in relation to human need and desire: "What of well-being? What of fairness or equity? What of exclusion, opportunity – or its absence – or lost hope? Such considerations mean much more to most people than aggregate or even individual profit or growth. Take humiliation: what if we treated it as an economic cost, a charge to society? What if we decided to 'quantify' the harm done when people are shamed by their fellow citizens as a condition of receiving the mere necessities of life?"

Mary, the bearer of the promise of God's fulfillment, sang of a God who "brought down the powerful from their thrones", who lifted up the lowly, of how the hungry were filled with good things. At the end of October I felt the awakening of God's Marian promise as I stood on the Cathedral steps and witnessed the march of the thousands who filled the streets of Cape Town with their chaos. Their cry for proper sanitation, houses and work declaring their own Magnificat. When the New Year begins with the Klopse marching across the city, the poor and working people of the Cape Flats will register their critique, in carnival fashion, of a society which generally ignores them for most of the year. Mary our Mariam, blessed among women, will be in their number with the God whom has "has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts".

Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, wrote the following for a celebration of departed priests.
He reminded the gathering that "We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders; ministers not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own".

THE PASSING OF A REVOLUTIONARY SOUL

Press Statement re ex-President Nelson Mandela by the Dean of Cape Town, The Very Reverend Michael Weeder (Friday, December 6, 2013)

Rolihlahla Nelson Dalibhunga Madiba Mandela, in the late hours of Thursday, 5 December passed on from this place.

In life Madiba, flawed and marked by the traits of human frailty, through his practice of humble servant hood, his consistent acts of forgiveness and kindness was a celebration of the call of the Prophet of Galilee, Jesus Christ, of living life wonderfully and in full and glorious abundance.

We offer our condolences and the assurance of our love and prayers to: - Mrs Graca Machel and her family; to the children of the late Madiba, to his grandchildren to whom he was their much-loved uBawomkhulu; - the elders and leaders and all of the baThembu people; - to the African National Congress, his life-long political home, and - to our fellow South Africans - we give thanks with you that we have lived in the time of this man, Nelson Mandela.

We call upon you, my sisters and brothers, to be mindful of the best that Madiba represented of us as a commonwealth of communities and the qualities he espoused. We are reminded of this in a letter to Mrs Winnie Madikizela-Mandela in 1973 during one of her periods in detention: "You may find that the cell is an ideal place to know yourself...In judging our progress as individuals we tend to focus on external factors...but internal factors may be even more crucial in assessing one's development as a human being: honesty, sincerity, simplicity, humility, purity, generosity, absence of vanity, readiness to serve your fellow men – qualities within reach of every soul...the foundations of one's spiritual life...Never forget that a saint is a sinner that keeps on trying."

Mr Mandela, exemplary as he was in the public domain, also constantly reflected on the importance of doing right by your immediate family and loved ones. So while he often expressed regret that he was not present at key moments such as at the death of closest of loved ones or the significant rites of passage of his children, he did not wallow in self-pity or guilt. The rigorous demands of high office, the ever-demanding needs of a nation being born out of the hopelessness of the past led him to embrace all the children of our land, black and white, as his own.

Celebrated as the perfect example of how an individual can make a difference he nonetheless demonstrated the servant aspect of leadership and would accede to the wisdom of the collective. His life was a gift to humanity. May his reflection on the place of death comfort and encourage us: "When a man has done what he considers to be his duty to his people and his country, he can rest in peace. I believe I have made that effort..."

Nelson Mandela brought, we believe, much joy to the heart of God who has this day welcomed him to the immensity and transformative heaven of freedom.

S. Africa's Desmond Tutu wins Templeton Prize

Anti-apartheid icon Desmond Tutu, the former archbishop of Cape Town, was awarded the \$1.7-million Templeton Prize for his lifelong work to promote "love and forgiveness".

Click below to watch the video

