

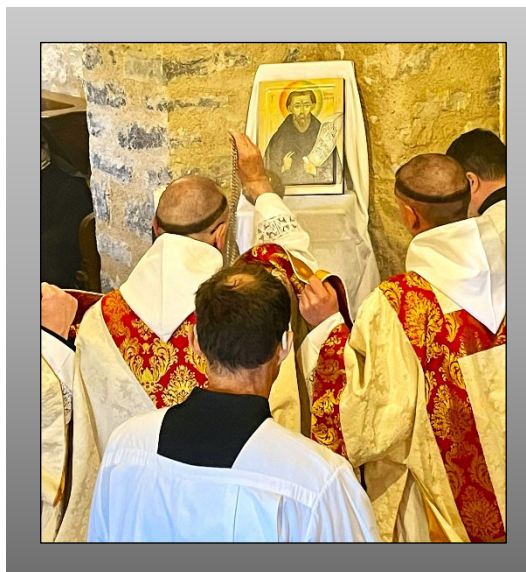
APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

By Michael Galovic

Dear All

Warm regards and Easter greetings to you!

In my previous newsletter I mentioned my icon of St Benedict for a Benedictine monastery in France. On 21st March the saint's day was celebrated there with the icon blessing as per the photo:



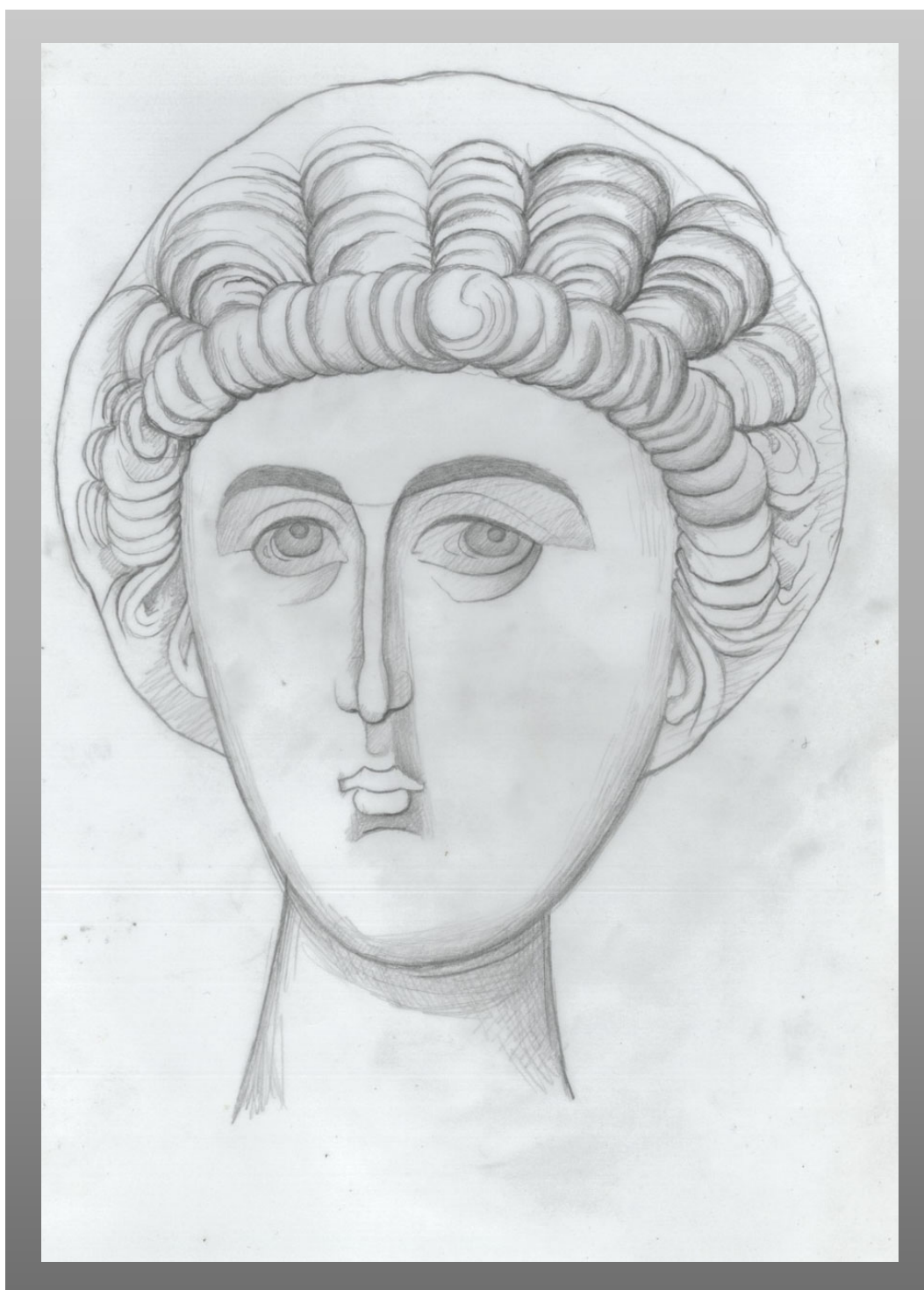
One of my Resurrection pieces, *Angelic Exuberance*, found its home in the Marist Brothers Centre in Sydney, next to the chapel with two of my previous icons. It was timely and gratifying to receive the image of the Resurrection work in situ during the Holy Week and to hear that the walls were specially painted as a background for the icon to stand out.



I am both honoured and delighted to continue being part of the tapestry of the Australian cultural and religious life and institutions.

The body of work on icons about Saint George which began over a year ago is now completed; a few last icons are drying and wait to be varnished. The flyer is attached.

My first icons of St George were painted over 50 years ago. When I look at them now, a smile can not be resisted as I am reminded of the "vastness of my ignorance" in those days. Going through my books and other visual material recently, I have come across a black and white reproduction of a wonderful Greek icon from 15th century. It shows just a head of St George as warrior, always traditionally depicted with the Assyrian-like hair and an androgynous face. I hope the viewer will enjoy as much as I have the stupendous play of locks and curls which look similar but are never exactly the same, in position, or quantity or highlights. It reminds me of seawaves and I am now aware that I could not have the same appreciation of this beauty in my youth as a beginner in iconography.



The asymmetry I talked about on numerous occasions in the past is powerfully present here, in particular with the eyes. We can admire the saint's gaze "through" us or bypassing us into ether, or into a time beyond the linear, Chronos time. With icons it is always about the Kairos, the dimension of the "beyondness."

The visitors to this display will have the opportunity to see this drawing transformed into a painted icon which gave me immense pleasure in its making.

One of the other points of this exhibition is to show both the Convention and the Tradition in icons as much as it is possible with only twelve pieces. It also points out to the aspect of "modernity" in icons which the old masters were unaware of, as well as to the inventiveness and creativity in tackling the same, conventionally accepted elements, such as the knight, the horse, the dragon, the landscape. They are endlessly impressive and fascinating for me and I tried to faithfully replicate some old icons in order to bring that everlasting beauty and achievement closer to the present viewer.

In a recent article in the SMH, titled: SHOW OF ENLIGHTENMENT, our renowned art critic John McDonald writes about the old icons' show in Hobart's MONA. With a subtitle: MONA swims against the tide with a heavenly show that deserves a wide audience, John McDonald says several things we do not hear much in our era of the contemporary art which so dominates the art scene. I will quote just some of them and although they are taken outside of the article context, they illustrate and formulate what I have been trying to say about any traditional icon exhibition in our midst:

"It might be thought an unfashionable fixation but I defy anyone to spend an hour in this show and not be moved by the inventiveness of the work and the air of spiritual conviction that positively radiates from the walls".

The motifs may have remained inviolate for centuries but this exhibition shows how naive it is to believe the art of the Orthodox Church, often referred to as byzantine, was hieratic, inflexible and unchanging".

"In these culturally complacent days, every museum visitor deserves to see at last one exhibition in which the paintings look at you with greater intensity than you can look at them".

I hope to see you at my exhibition St George v Dragon in Hunters Hill.

Michael Gaboric

April 2024