

SAINT JOSEPH AND THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

An update about Michael Galovic's activities

Dear All

Greetings to you with a hope that this newsletter finds you well! So much uncertainty and sadness in these unsettling times of ours that are a constant reminder of our frailty.

However, as much as our times are uncertain, challenging, despairing, they were equally so from the beginning of mankind and effectively nothing had radically changed in the makeup of us humans with an uncanny propensity for destruction and self-destruction.

Mine are exclusively artistic and iconographic activities but the reasons for my previous words will be revealed shortly.

Months ago when I was approached to make another icon of Saint Joseph for a new Sydney school which is soon to be completed, I knew I wanted to deliver something different. It would have been far too easy to replicate my own previous work. It was time to present St Joseph in a different light, in a different way.

I opted for The Flight Into Egypt depiction, seldom seen on panel icons but more on medieval frescoes. In this version Saint Joseph is carrying Christ child on his shoulders. The Child wants to be united with the mother, His arms are outstretched towards her who is riding a donkey and has her own arms pointing to the Child. This is a scene of empathy, family love, togetherness, all in the midst of an uncertain road framed with an ultramarine desert sky which envelopes the protagonists.

In traditional icons everything is detailed and highlighted as it is the Divine Light which permeates and infuses all things. In my rendition, I chose to make St Joseph stand out by painting the rest of the scene in a washy, almost monochromatic way giving him the primacy in this rendition.

As the school principal and I were watching the artwork, I could not but think of an uncanny parallel of this scene with the exodus and refugee crisis of our times. As he said, it is in these uncertain, unsettling times that the unity and togetherness of the family comes to the fore and shows its value and importance.

The artwork, a cross between an icon and a religious painting, is 150x80cm.



I have been honoured recently by being interviewed for the ABC Radio National program, Soul Search. The podcast was about icons and iconofiles and tied in with the current icon exhibition in Mona, Hobart. My gratitude to the producer Salmond Rohan and Dr Meredith Lake who conducted the interview. It is yet another podcast with me talking about my involvement with icons, after the July one with Parousia Media. Both of these can be listened on the respective websites.

The news about my forthcoming book was so enthusiastically received and I thank to all of you who commented so positively about it! As I said, the work on this ample material dealing with the past 17 years and beyond of my iconography and art is progressing nicely. The scope of the material is surprising even for me and the hard cover publication will finish by having around 200 to 250 pages, full of colour plates and relevant texts . Its launch is expected next year around April or May but more about it closer to the date. For now, below is the front and back cover design.



One interesting little project I am working on is the icon of Saint Benedict for a Benedictine monastery in France. Again, rather than replicating my own iconic rendition which was given to the then Pope Benedict XVI as a gift from the Eastern Catholic Churches in 2008, I am creating an altogether new version.

As announced earlier, there should be an exhibition dedicated to St George and the Dragon either in April or in May 2024. My end of this year and the beginning of the next will be accompanied by this cosmic battle of good and evil which has so many guises in the medieval art and so many angles, spiritual and theological ones.

Greetings to all!

Michael Galovic, Oct 2023