

Local artist creates iconic image of St Saviour

Artists and iconographer Karen Blampied has set herself the task of creating a traditional icon to represent each of the parishes and its church and in November it will be the turn of St Saviour

ICONS are more usually associated with Eastern Orthodox Christianity, but Karen Blampied, who initially trained as an art teacher, became inspired by icons while studying pastoral theology at Heythrop College in London.

'My studies at Leuven University for a master's degree in religious studies encouraged me to look at religious art from a wider perspective, but for me, the orthodox icon offers a profound way in which to express my Christian faith,' she said.

She also uses iconography in the classroom as a way to study the Christian religion. 'The whole process of writing an icon is a theological journey, from the bare wood of the crucifixion to the luminous colours of the resurrection,' she said.

Karen, who is a member of the British Association of Iconographers, explains that the 12 Parish Saints are so much part of Jersey's heritage that their names are an integral part of our Island's past and present, its community boundaries and identity.

The patron saints provide a combination of story, legend and historical facts that weave an intriguing community story and identity for the island of Jersey.

Within the icon tradition, the Saviour can be represented in many ways, each giving an insight into Christian belief about the Saviour.

'My challenge was to interpret all these statements of belief into a single icon that expressed St Saviour de Jersey with the parish crest depicting the crown of thorns and nails,' she said. 'I chose to represent the Saviour as Pantocrator, the seat of wisdom.

Here the Saviour is seated on a throne holding in his left hand the scriptures and his right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing. 'The finished icon will be 52cm X 42cm made out of recycled wood, a pew from Holy Trinity church. All natural materials have been used to write the icon, each having a theological meaning.

To find out more, please visit St Saviour's Church during the week of the 15 -20 November where Karen will be artist in residence and happy to share her work on the icon of Saint Saviour.

Her work can also be followed on her website, www.iconspirit.com or on Facebook.

Photos: Karen Blampied
Inset: St Saviour drawing
Main: Karen Blampied

