



Three paintings commissioned by Father Paul McDonald for the church of St. Vincent de Paul, Picton St. Niagara-on-the-Lake, were completed and installed in July 2005. They are the work of Christopher James Tinkler, a freelance artist who works in the Niagara Region. Prior to his present work for St. Vincent de Paul, Christopher together with a colleague, Miroslav Pieprzyk, completed murals and decorative work commissioned in 2002 by Father Keith Whittingham for St. Barnabas Anglican Church, St. Catharines.

The Artist

Christopher's background in Religious Artwork derives initially from his training at the overseas campus of The Ontario College of Art and Design in Florence, Italy where in addition to Painting and Drawing, he studied Art History. His experiences were formative to his enduring interest in the Masters of the Late Gothic, Renaissance and Mannerist periods.

In an entirely different manner from his religious painting but by no means irrelevant to it, Christopher was also taught and deeply influenced by Carmen Ceraceda, a renowned South American muralist from Chile. As well, and integral to his experience as a freelance artist and to his work for various publications, Christopher has developed substantial versatility relative to portraiture, landscape painting, book illustration and graphic design.

The St. Vincent Paintings

The St. Vincent paintings include an altarpiece and panels for the font and for the pulpit.

The Altarpiece, painted in acrylics, is an intensely dramatic and richly coloured work which is complex in its structure and use of symbolism. In its style, the work bears strong reference to the Gothic International, but it does refer as well to the Neo Primitive style of Stanley Spencer and Paul Gauguin. Its subject matter, discussed many times with Father McDonald, is a contemplation of the life of Christ and that of his mother, the Virgin Mary.

Atmospherically, the painting attempts to probe the mysteries of the rosary in the identification of events that are known as joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious. In this way, for example, the Annunciation of Mary portrays joy; the light of the Transfiguration which bathes the Lamb of God is luminous; the finches which feed on desert thorns foretell sorrow, and the Ascension of Our Lady into Heaven is glorious. (Her lilies are strewn in the desert at the base of the painting).

The landscape within which these events are portrayed, together with the signs of ordinary human and natural existence that surround them, provide a powerful emotional catalyst, as to their understanding, for anyone sitting or kneeling before the altar. Christopher regards this painting as a crucible from which he will develop other works.

THE ALTAR PIECE AT St VINCENT de PAUL



The Panels

These oil paintings are portray-als of the Bap-tism of Jesus at the font, and of J e s u s t h e Teacher, at the pulpit. They are very different in style to the altar-piece in that they are simpler and more direct in content. Their style is relative to the Renaissance Periods, but with the artists' flexi-

bility of interpretation. Within the landscape of the Holy Land (the constant of Bethlehem is actually included in all three paintings), the panels regard situations that are entirely familiar in the life of Jesus - his baptism, and his teaching. At the same time however, they are evocative of condition and circumstance in a way that encloses the viewer.

Christopher's intention has been to work a compromise in developing certain elements of character that apprehend stages of the life of Jesus on earth. But, he stops short of what he describes as imposing entirely his own interpretation.

(Something more of this exists in another of his paintings of the face of Jesus). What he attempts can be noted in his painting of Jesus at his baptism which has a rawness and also a suffusion that does not exist in the pulpit panel depicting the affirmative face of Jesus teaching and proclaiming truth. Both these paintings are intended to prompt the viewer to reflect and to add whatever is according to his or her individual knowledge and experience.

