

An Icon of Saint Mary of the Burnt Monastery

During 2010 I am writing an icon of each of the 12 parish saints of Jersey. The title for this iconographic project is:

*All my delight is in your Saints,
The faithful who dwell in your land.
The lines have fallen for me in
pleasant places.
I have been given a welcome heritage.*
Psalm 16.

The twelve Parish Saints are so much part of Jersey's heritage that these Saints' names have been an integral part of our Island's past and present, its community boundaries and identity. But who are these Saints and why have their names been used in the naming of Jersey's twelve Parish Churches and consequently the communities that surround them?

One thing we do know is that Jersey was at the crossroads of Celtic and Roman saints. These saints brought a great wealth of spirituality to the island; their witness is a tribute to the history of Christianity as it spread throughout these islands.

The name of each parish church gives us an insight into its Patron Saint.

Saint Mary of the Burnt Monastery
Mary the Mother of Jesus is seen by many Christians as a saint for her part in the Christian story. The church that is dedicated to her name St Mary of the Burnt Monastery tells its own story of Christian witness. As the name suggests there was a link to a monastery in that area of the island or perhaps the then neighbouring monastic centre in Sark.

Writing an icon of St Mary of the Burnt Monastery:

Within the canon of iconography Mary is represented through several prototypes. I have taken some of these such as 'Our Lady who Points the Way', 'Our Lady of the Burning Bush' and 'Our Lady Enthroned'. I have interpreted them into an icon that depicts the Church's name Saint Mary of the Burnt Monastery.

Despite the complexity of the subject I have tried to keep the icon simple. I depict Mary enthroned with the monastery on her lap engulfed by flames. In the middle of the burning monastery, is Christ as a young adult. Mary's right hand points to Christ reminding the onlooker that Christ is the Way the Truth and the Light.

Here is my initial drawing:



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. 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.

During the week of the 30th August to 4th September I will be artist in residence in St Mary's Church and will be happy to share with you the richness found in writing an icon, especially the icon of Saint Mary of the Burnt Monastery.

Please visit my website www.iconspirit.com or my page on Facebook to keep up-to-date with the icon of Saint Mary of the Burnt Monastery.

By Karen Blampied Iconographer

