

St. John the Evangelist
Catholic Church



"They will know that you are my disciples
by your love for one another." John 13:35
Waynesville, NC



Immaculate Conception
Catholic Mission



"Do whatever He Tells You." John 2:5
Canton, NC

March 2 – 3, 2019

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

Unveiling and Blessing of a True Work of Gospel Charity!

THEY WILL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE

John 13:35

Artist Loree Lam His Many Faces Acrylic Art

On the Feast Day of Saint Teresa of Calcutta 2018, I was asked to start a painting in honor of Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II, two great Saints that lived and died in my lifetime. My journey as an Artist began in 2002 as I answered a call in my heart to pick up a pencil and draw God's children I had no idea that my life was about to change forever. I began to draw one face after another, and I watched as God used it in a healing way. Over the years, I began finding ways to share my passion and teach others to draw. I often prayed that God would show me His face and I believe he does this everyday through His people. So, it is my hope that in viewing my work you will see the face of God through the faces I have selected to paint and that my work will glorify God. It is an honor for me to be able to paint for His Holy Church.

Christian love flows from Christ Himself. It is merciful and lifegiving. The rays that gush forth from the heart of our crucified Savior flood all the earth with heavenly grace and generate God's two-fold action in our souls. By His loving mercy we are cleansed and rescued from the sin and death that separate us from Him. We are then made new by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit Who infuses us with God's own divine and eternal life so that we may live united in love with Him and each other forever. The two doves accompanying Pope St. John Paul II and St. Teresa of Calcutta represent the Holy Spirit's Heavenly Presence that comes to dwell with each of us as we are recreated in Christ. Reminiscent of the two doves offered to God as the humble sacrifice of the poor at the temple, God became humble and poor and offered Himself as a most perfect Sacrifice for us. In doing so, He emptied Himself out upon us, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, making us new creatures able to commune with Him.

God's merciful love streams from the sacrificial heart of Christ into our hearts and spills out to all of mankind through us if we allow Him to transform our souls. St. Teresa and St. John Paul II are witnesses of what God's action can do in us and in the world when we open our hearts fully to Him. We are transfigured and become the face of God for all to see. It is God Himself, in His peace, joy and love, that shines from the countenances of the two Saints and the five grace filled children. They represent a return to innocence, our holy potential and the effect of God's grace in our souls when we receive Him with childlike faith, purity, humility, joy and hope.

God's Love is for everyone...every man, woman and child of all ethnicities, ages and walks of life. We are each called to share God's love in a way that only we can. St. John Paul II and St. Teresa were both devoted to Christ in His Divine Mercy and had special hearts for the youth, but, individually, they had unique parts to play. In their own ways they were inspirational messengers of God's loving mercy for the whole world. St. John Paul II was a great leader of the Church and promoter of devotion to God's Divine Mercy. St. Teresa was an example of God's love and mercy by serving the needs of the poorest of the poor and shedding light on their dignity.

When St. Teresa looked into the eyes of the suffering people of India, she saw Christ in them. The boy painted in fine traditional Indian clothing has the face of Christ that St. Teresa saw in everyone. She saw them as beloved and royal children of God despite their poverty. The luminous garments represent the "Holy Attire" which is the glory of God's love and mercy that clothe His adopted children. The boy's eyes summon us into the soul of humanity to see God residing there amidst our vulnerability and weakness. The poorest of India were closest to Mother Teresa's heart and received her love first hand. They were recipients of heavenly treasure making them the richest of all.

The other children, old and young alike radiate pure hearts and a generous flow of love and joy that captivates us. The little girl's arm reaches out to invite us to come closer, to look upon the face of Christ and receive Him. One boy looks in wonder up at Mother Teresa's face emanating the love of God. We are encouraged to look up to the Saints and like the thriving golden sunflowers, seek the sun (Son). Another boy bursts with exuberant and contagious joy. He reminds us that we are made to flourish in the Presence of God and in the affection of one another that draws us into God's loving embrace.

St. Teresa and St. John Paul II shared a special friendship rooted in their love for God and His children. It highlights the reality that God made us for relationship with Himself and each other. The Saints recognized the vital role of relationships, especially the bonds of the family, in God's plan. St. Teresa once said, "If you want to help the poverty in the world, go home and love your family." The love of every family brims over into society and into our greater human family. Our relationships extend to our heavenly family also. The two Saints are painted among the children reminding us of the presence and many faces of all the saints God sends to us.

St. John Paul II, St. Teresa and the vibrant children are fruits of Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross and are tangible examples of His love and mercy. They are placed within the rays coming from Christ's heart to signify our participation in God's work of mercy in the world. As we receive God abundantly through the Church, in the Sacraments, and through each other, we reflect His Holy Face of love and mercy more and more. We are impelled to serve one another joyfully in solidarity with Christ our Brother. That is how the world will know we are God's beloved children. We are commissioned to be little Christs. **We are Christians! (John 13:35)**