

Part Seven THE FACE OF JESUS IN EVERY PERSON

In His Image William Zdanak

Commercial artist William Zdanak (1925-1993) woke up in the middle of one night and painted for the next fourteen hours. The result was this, *In His Image*, his most famous work. He said, "It really doesn't matter which persons are depicted. We are all one in Christ."

Jesus made a remarkable statement about how we see and treat others. He said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40).

When Paul was persecuting the friends of Jesus, Jesus appeared to him in a vision and asked him, "Why are you persecuting me? Paul asked, "Who are you, Lord?" Jesus replied, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:4-5).

Jesus tells us that how we treat others is how we treat Him. It may be easier to see the face of Jesus in the lives of those we call saints. Here are a few icons and images of the more recognizable saints down through the ages.

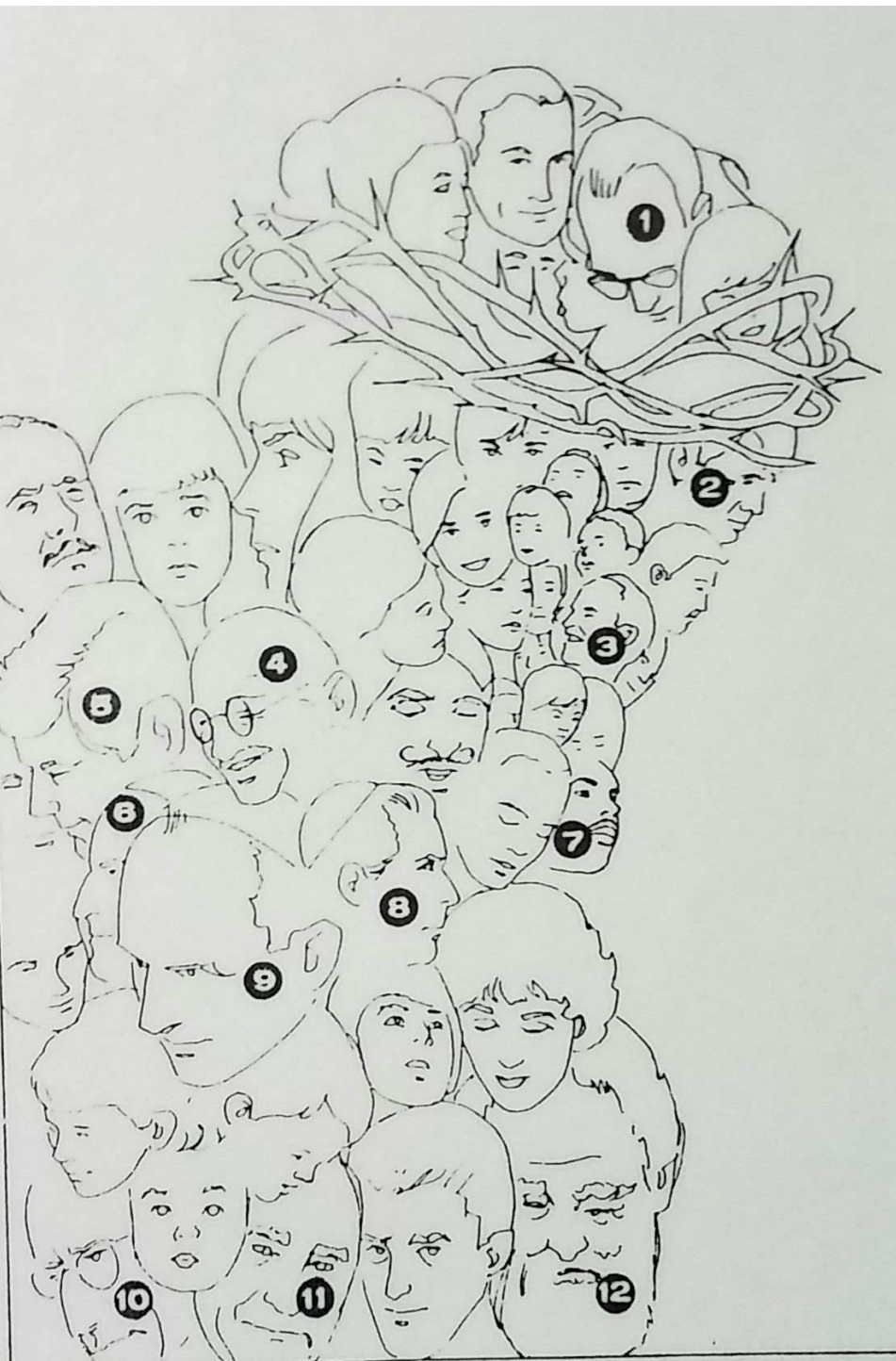
Can you see the face of Jesus in their faces?



Diagram for In His Image

1. **Dr Jonas Salk**, American medical researcher who discovered one of the first successful polio vaccines.
2. **Senator Robert Kennedy**, assassinated in 1968, was a strong advocate for the Civil Rights Movement.
3. **Averell Harriman**, New York Governor, Ambassador, and widely respected elder statesman in the 1960's and 70's.
4. **Mahama Gandhi**, Hindu leader in 1915-1947 of the Indian independence movement against British rule, employing nonviolent civil disobedience. He was assassinated in 1948.
5. **President John F Kennedy**, 35th President of the United States from until his assassination in November 1963.
6. **Pope John XXIII** convened the historic Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), which changed the Catholic Church to a more progressive stance. He said, "We were all made in God's image, and thus, we are all Godly alike.
7. **Dr. Martin Luther King**, American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement. He was assassinated in 1968.
8. **Fulton J. Sheen**, Catholic Bishop and Emmy award winning radio and TV personality who brought messages of hope to millions from 1930 – 1968.
9. **Pope Paul VI**, Pope from 1963 to his death in 1978, continued the Second Vatican Council, implementing its numerous reforms, and fostered improved ecumenical relations with Eastern Orthodox and Protestants.
10. **Pope Pius XII** used diplomacy during WW II to aid the victims of the war and lobby for peace, and spoke out against race-based murders and other atrocities.
11. **Henry Luce** (1898 – 1967) American magazine entrepreneur, called "the most influential private citizen in the America of his day."

12. **Alexander Graham Bell** (1847 – 1922), scientist, inventor, engineer, and innovator who is credited with patenting the first practical telephone.



Jonathan and David Robert Lentz OFM

The story of the love between Jonathan and the heroic King David is recorded in 1 and 2 Samuel in the Bible as these two young men became the closest of friends. When Jonathan was killed, David mourned for him with these words:

“O Jonathan,
Very dear to me you were,
Your love to me more
wonderful than the love
of a woman.”
2 Samuel 1:26

For gay men who struggle to remain within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the love between Jonathan and David is an inspiration and strength.

Genesis states that we are all made in the image and likeness of God who both includes and transcends gender and sexuality.

Gay folks especially need to know they are made in the image of God, just like every other human being. We are all God-Being-Us deep within, and the goal is to become aware of our True Identity, embrace it, and manifest it in the world in healing love as Jesus did.

Can you see the face of Jesus in Jonathan and David?





**Saints Sergius and Bacchus
7th Century icon from
St. Catherine's Monastery on
Mt. Sinai in Israel.
Now in Kiev, Ukraine.**

St. Sergius and St. Bacchus martyred in 303, were tortured to death in Syria because they refused to attend sacrifices in honor of Jupiter. The close friendship between the two is strongly emphasized in their hagiographies and traditions, making them one of the most famous examples of paired saints.

This closeness led Yale historian John Boswell to suggest that their relationship was a romantic one, representing a type of early Christian same-sex union.

After their arrest, the two saints were paraded through city streets in women's clothing, treatment that was meant to humiliate them as officers in the Roman army. They were then separated, and each was tortured. Bacchus died first and appeared that night to Sergius who was beginning to lose heart. According to early manuscripts, Bacchus told Sergius to persevere, that the delights of heaven were greater than any suffering, and that part of their reward would be to be reunited in heaven as lovers.

For nearly a thousand years they were the official patrons of the Byzantine armies and Arab nomads continue to revere them as their special patron saints. Their feast day is October 7.

German Catholic theologian and mystic Meister Eckhart (1260– 1328) wrote, "God has given birth to the Son as you, as me, as each one of us. As many beings, as many gods in God."

Can you see the divine face of Jesus in St. Sergius and St. Bacchus?

Julian of Norwich

Julian of Norwich lived in a special room attached to the parish church of St. Julian, which may account for her name. She was the first woman to write a book in English.

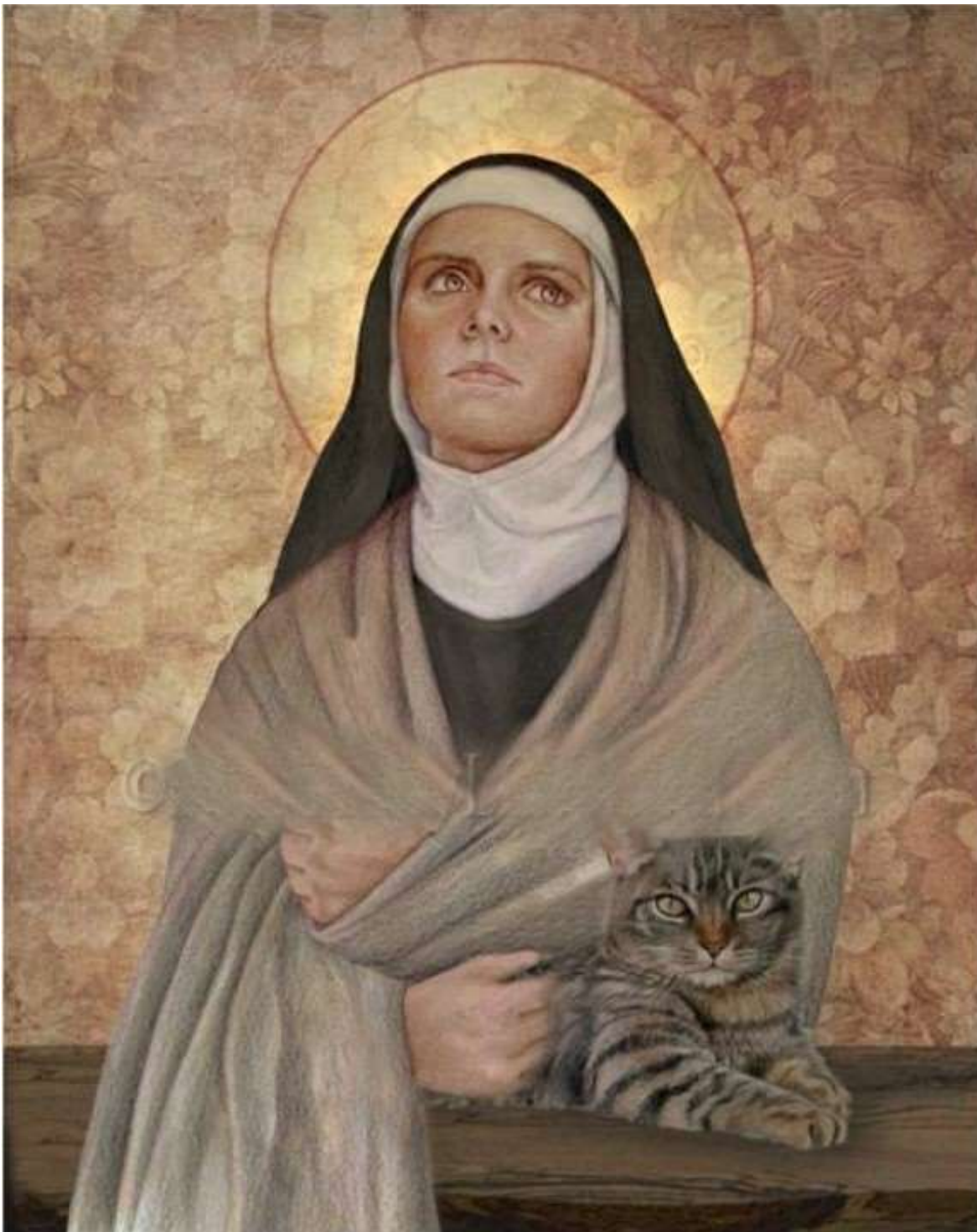
When she was thirty years old she was intensely sick and came close to death. At this time she had a number of visions of Jesus on the cross. She recovered and lived many more years, writing down what she had seen and learned from her visions. The themes which run most strongly through her writings are the motherhood of God and God's mercy towards weak humankind. "So Jesus is our true Mother in nature by our first creation, and he is our true Mother in grace by his taking our created nature."

In this icon she is shown at the window opening to the outside, with her cat, listening to those who come to her with their problems, fears, and woes.

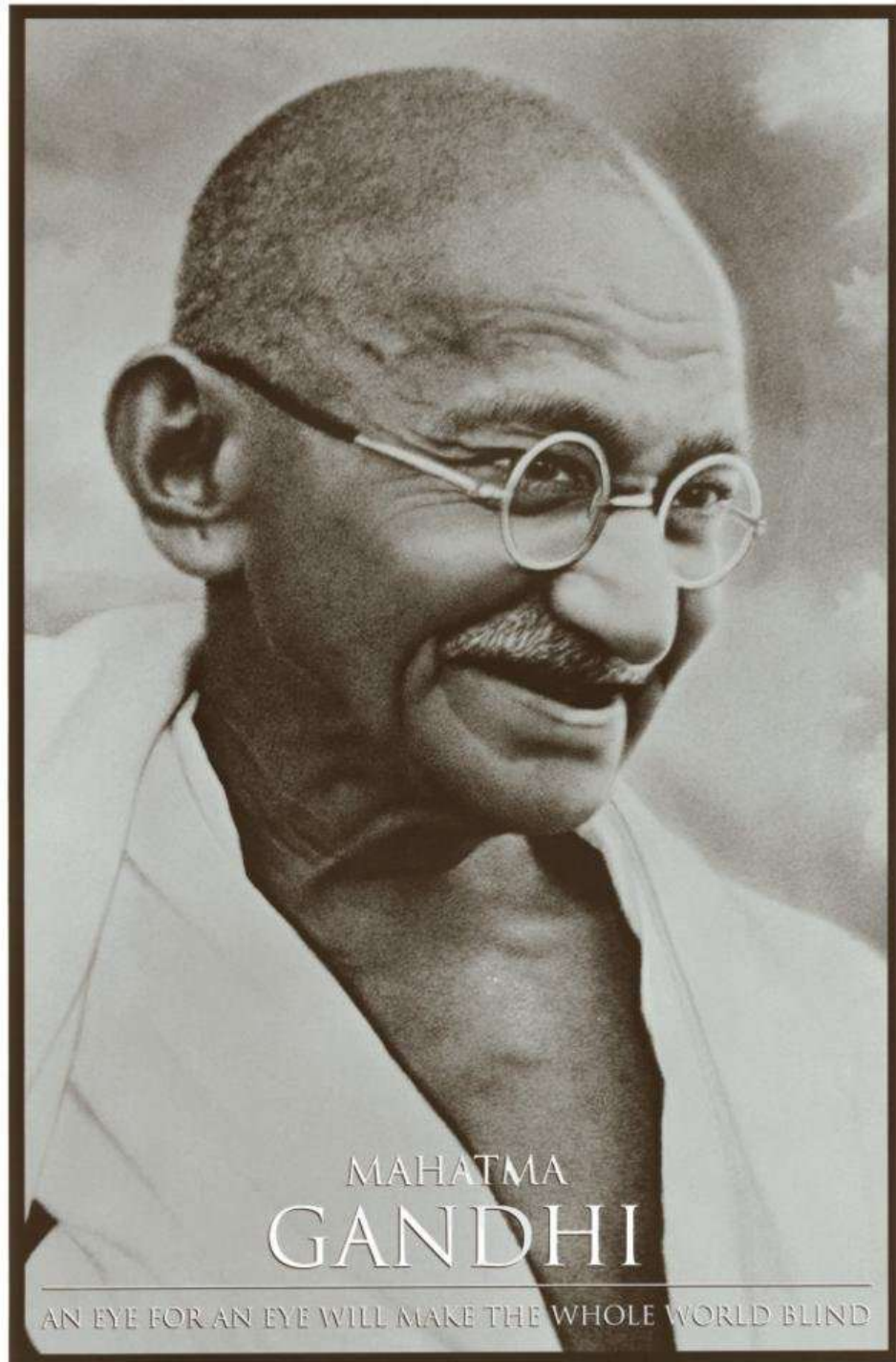
The writer of 1 John declares, "We are God's children now but what we are to be in the future has not yet been made manifest; what we do know is that when it is made manifest we shall be like God because we shall see God as God really is." (1 John 3: 2).

Can you see the face of Jesus in Julian?

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Mohandas Gandhi



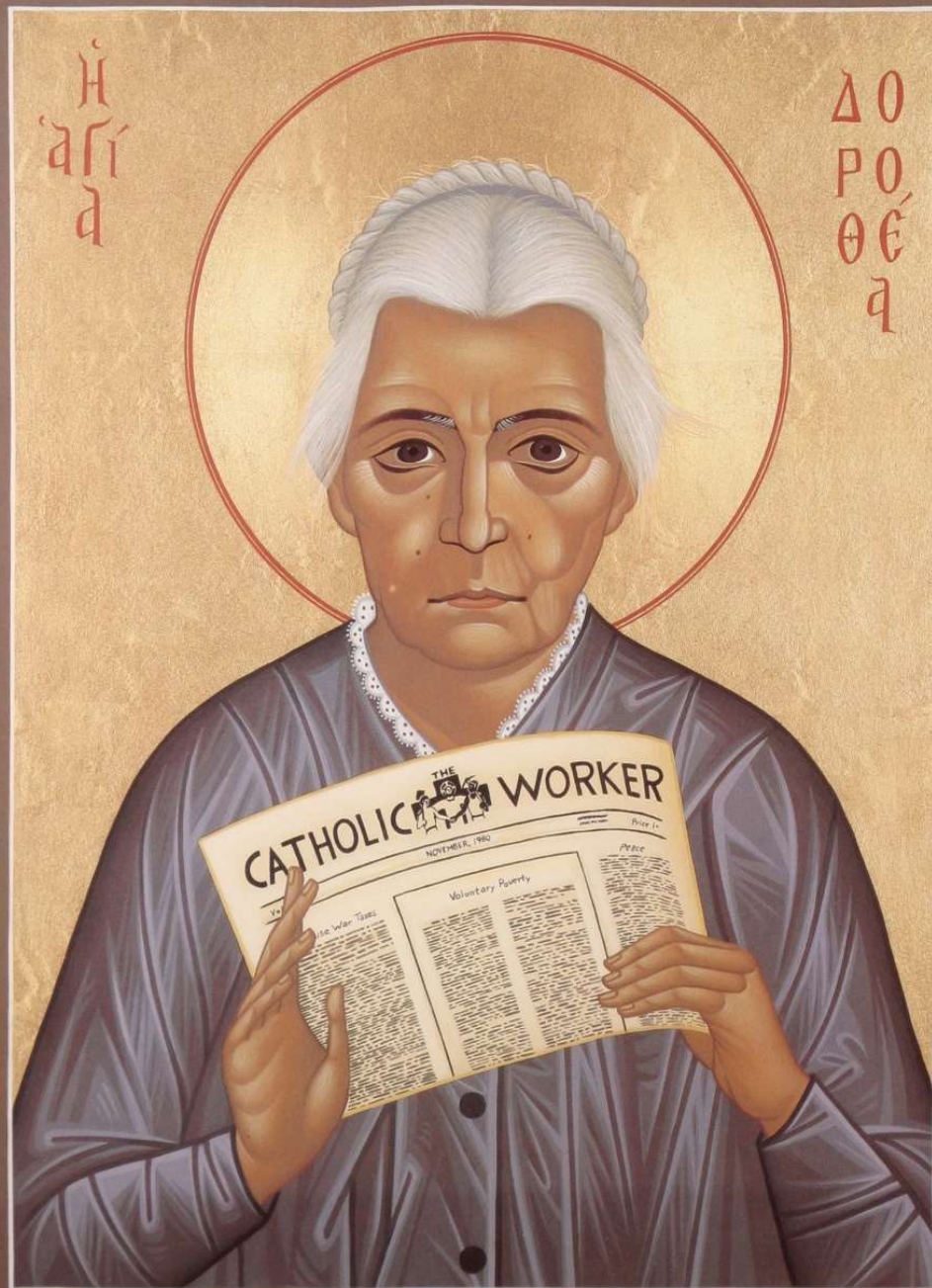
Gandhi, a devout Hindu, spent his life fighting evil throughout non-violent resistance. For him the liberation of India was a religious duty. He saw it as a step toward the liberation of all humankind from the tyranny of violence in others, but especially in themselves. When violence could be abolished universally, Gandhi said, “God will reign on earth as he does in Heaven.” Gandhi was murdered on January 30, 1948.

Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God. Gandhi, like every individual who is directed toward Jesus’ ideals is a bearer of that Kingdom.

Gandhi said, “I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ. . . . I came to the conclusion long ago that all religions were true and also that all had some error in them, and whilst I hold by my own, I should hold others as dear as Hinduism. So we can only pray, if we are Hindus, not that a Christian should become a Hindu. But our innermost prayer should be a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, a Christian a better Christian.”

Anglican and famous writer of fantasy and Christian thought, C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* wrote, “God said that we were “gods” and He is going to make good His words. If we let Him— for we can prevent Him if we choose— He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine . . . The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for.

Can you see the face of Jesus in Gandhi?



DOROTHY DAY OF NEW YORK

Dorothy Day Robert Lentz OFM

Dorothy Day (1897 – 1980) was an American journalist, social activist, and Catholic convert. She has been called the most significant, interesting and influential person in the history of America Catholicism. She is a candidate for sainthood, and was praised by Pope Francis in the U.S. Congress.

She became a key figure in the Catholic Worker Movement, a movement to implement the teachings of the Gospels and Catholic social teaching. It earned a national reputation as a political radical and social activity, working for the oppressed. She was perhaps the most famous radical in American Catholic Church history.

Day often quoted Catherine of Siena's words: "All the way to Heaven is heaven, because Jesus said, 'I am the Way.'"

Augustine (354– 430), an early Christian theologian and philosopher whose writings influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy, exclaimed, "Let us applaud and give thanks that we have become not only Christians but Christ himself."

Can you see the face of Jesus in Dorothy Day?

Darkness cannot drive
out darkness;
only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate;
only love can do that.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King (1929 –1968) was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement.

He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using the tactics of nonviolence and civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs and inspired by the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi.

Although his life was threatened many times, he continued to expose himself to danger. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

Can you see the face of Jesus in Martin Luther King?

Mother Teresa Unknown Artist

This original oil painting, donated to the collection by Karen Smith, depicts Mother Teresa (1950–1997) who founded the Missionaries of Charity Sister in 1946 which has grown to over 3000 individuals working in 313 houses in 75 countries around the world. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

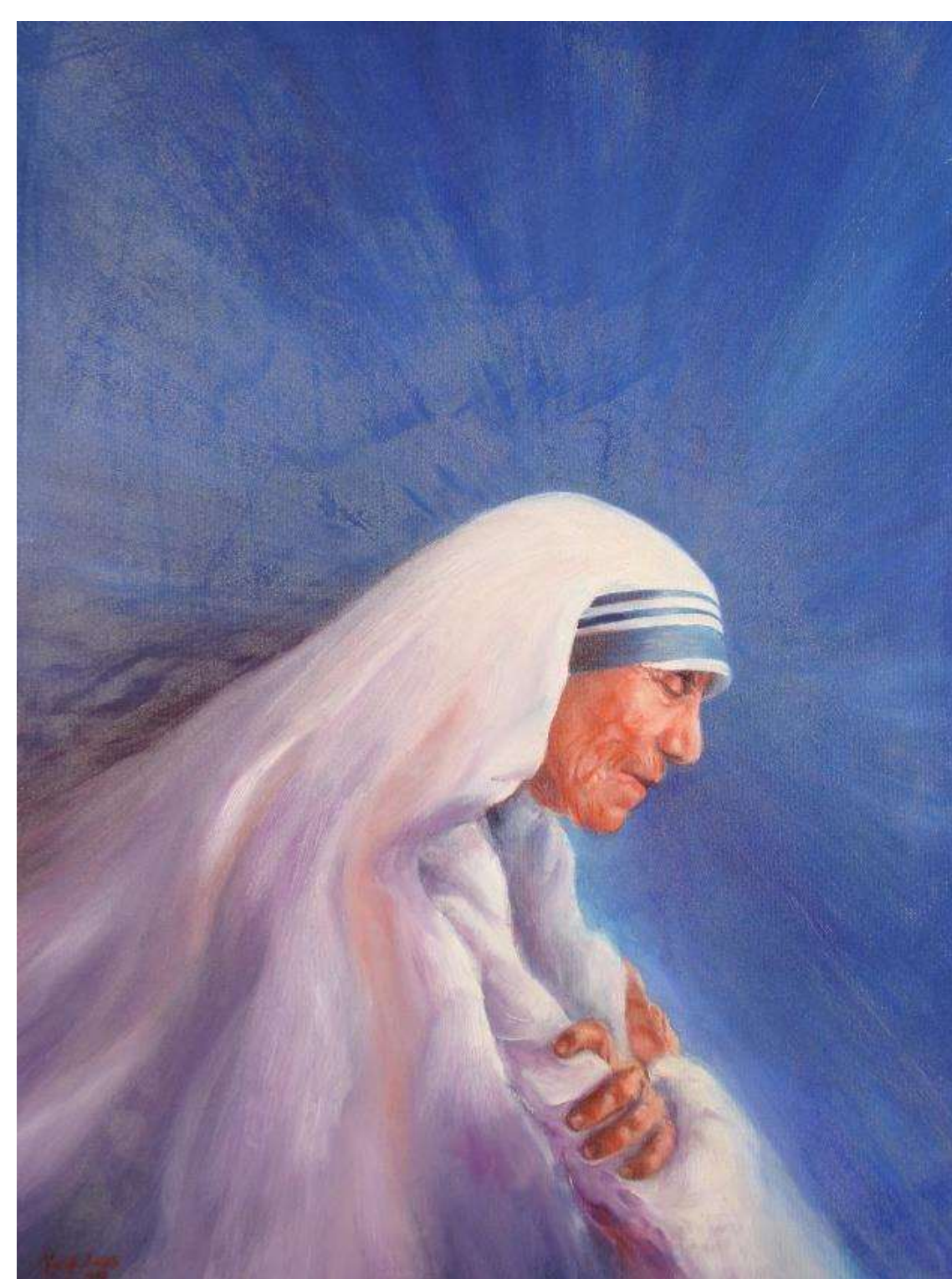
Mother Teresa had a secret life of mystical experiences with Jesus. It would be difficult to understand her work without these visions and mystical conversations with Jesus. They went from Sept. 10, 1946, to Dec. 3, 1947, as Jesus sent her to go out into the streets to care for the poorest of the poor.

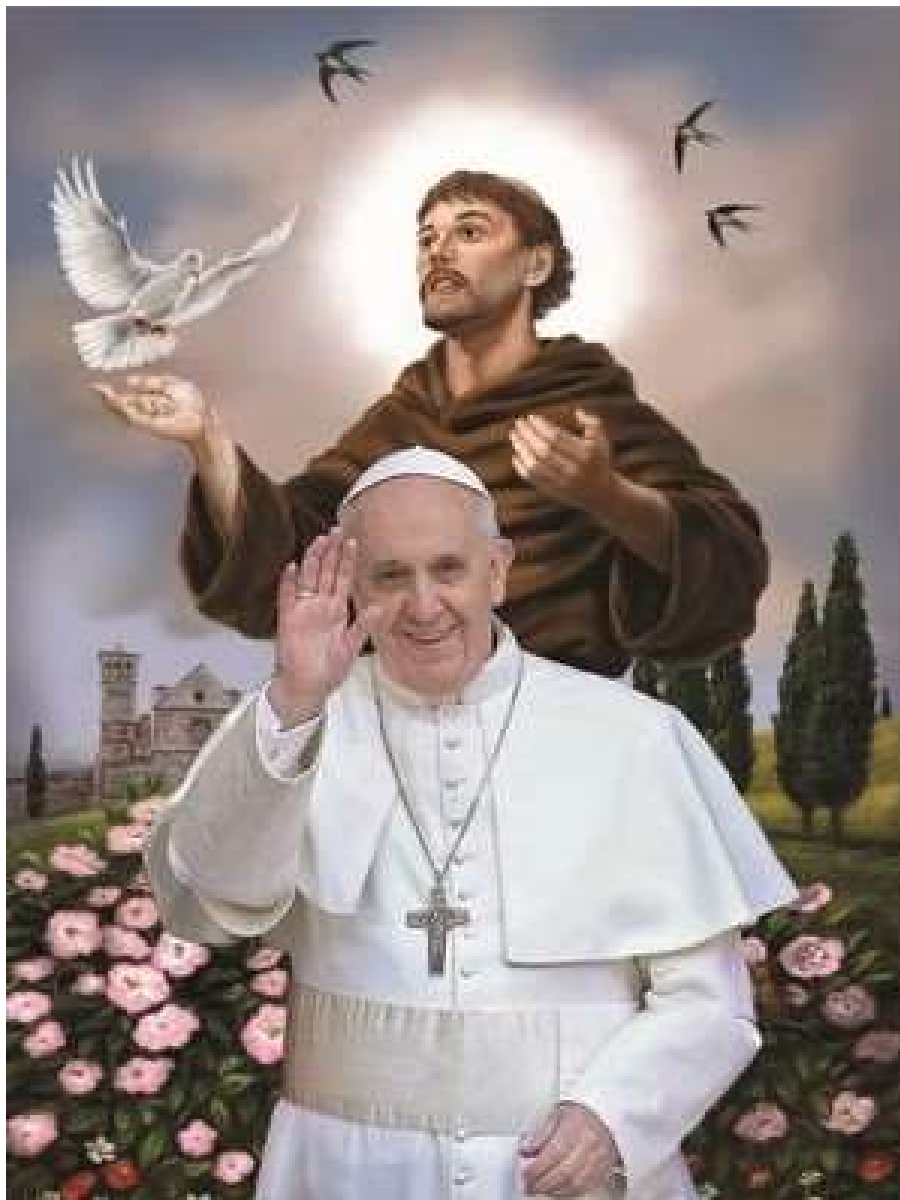
But not even her friends were aware of these awakened, mystical events. It wasn't until after her death that this part of Mother Teresa's spiritual life was uncovered in documents found in the archives of the Jesuits in Calcutta.

Another mystic, Catherine of Genoa (1447– 1510) was an Italian saint and mystic of the Catholic Church. She boldly penned, “My me is God, nor do I recognize any other me except my God Himself. . . . My being is God, not by some simple participation but by a true transformation of my being.”

Can you see the face of Jesus, the human face of God, in Mother Teresa?

Saint Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis





Francis of Assisi was a universal person whose love extended across boundaries of class, religion and race. His reverence for everything led him to call animals, plants, and all of creation "brother" and "sister." Animals responded to his respect and love with an amazing docility.

St. Francis helped reform the Roman Catholic Church in the thirteenth century through his example of personal poverty. Living among the poor, his example was so compelling that soon he had thousands of followers.

Pope Francis, throughout his public life, has been noted for his humility, emphasis on God's mercy, concern for the poor and commitment to interfaith dialogue. He is credited with having a less formal approach to the papacy than his predecessors, for instance choosing to reside in a guesthouse rather than in the papal apartments of the Apostolic Palace used by his predecessors.

In addition, due to both his Jesuit and Ignatian aesthetic, he is known for favoring simpler vestments void of ornamentation, including refusing the traditional papal cape upon his election, choosing silver instead of gold for his papal ring, and keeping the same pectoral cross he had as cardinal. He maintains that the Church should be more open and welcoming.

Although not changing his traditional Catholic position on homosexuality, he said, "A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: 'Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the

existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?' We must always consider the person."

These remarks and others have been seen as an encouraging change of tone from the papacy, so much so that the American LGBT magazine The Advocate named Pope Francis their Person of the Year for 2013.

Remember, none of these people in this section are perfect or see everything the way we do. They all have flaws and differences. However, given that, can you see the face of Jesus in them?



Jesus in the Soup Line
Fritz Eichenberg

This is graphic reminder to see the face of Jesus especially in the poor, suffering, and oppressed. “In as much as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it to me” (Matthew 25:40).

The truth of this image is that all the faces in this line of the poor and hungry are faces of Jesus. According to Jesus, they are all God-Being-Us deep within.



Theologue Alex Grey in 1986

Grey writes, “During deep meditation, I entered a state where all energy systems in my body were completely aligned and flowing. It was in this state that I envisioned Theologue. I stared into an infinite regress of electric perspective grids that radiated from my brain/mind and led to the horizon.

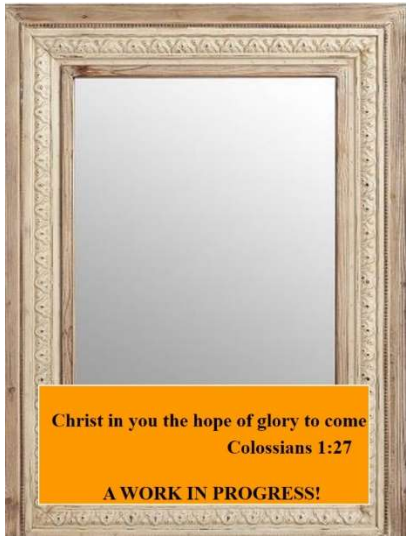
A mystic fire engulfed

me. Across the horizon all I could see were perspective lines going into deep space. I was seeing both the perceptual grid of my mind on which space and time are woven, and the universal mind which was both the source and the weaving loom. At this moment, faintly, Himalayan mountains appeared. Transparent, but present, they formed a vast and beautiful panorama and then disappeared back into the grid.”

This is a picture of the divine/human seen in awakened spirit consciousness with energy fields radiating outward, connected to all that is. According to Jesus, every person is also a “theologue,” the human face of God in energetic form. Can you begin to see others as their deep True Self, hidden behind temporary human flesh and superficial attachments?

This is also *your* face as it is in awakened consciousness with energy fields radiating outward. This is the way you have always been and will always be. The goal is to become aware of it and live from that inner knowing.

There is both a transcendent God and also the divine image and likeness of God that is the deepest you at the same time. To discover one is to discover the other. Jesus said of the awesome, transcendent I AM God of Moses, “I and God are one” (John 10: 30). He recognized the voice and presence of God in his own presence and invites us to do that, too. This is to unveil the hidden God-center within each of us.



God Being You Artists: God and You

The last depiction of the Face of Jesus collection comes from a mirror. The gallery visitor comes to it and reads the inscription. “Christ in you the hope of glory to come.” They smile because they get it right away. The image of the face of Jesus they see in the mirror is of them. What is much more difficult to get is that it’s true!

Some think it is heresy to think that we share in God’s divinity. However, God-Being-Us is founded in Genesis in being created in the image and likeness of God. It is further defined in 2 Peter 1: 4 as our “participation in the divine nature.” It was demonstrated in the life of Jesus, the light of the world. When Jesus said that we were also the light of the world — but don’t hid it under a bowl (Matthew 5:14-16), he

meant that the divine light that we are in our deepest self can be hidden by our ego and mistaken identities. However, even though it can be hidden under a pile of ego, that divine image cannot be erased or taken away. Our job is to own it, embrace it, and manifest it.

This means that the real heresy is not claiming to be a god, but saying, “Who am I to be a god!” In the often-quoted words of spiritual teacher and author Marianne Williamson:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, who am I to be so brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn’t serve the world.
There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you.
We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson

The final point in the Faces of Jesus journey is, “Can you see the face of Jesus in yourself?”