

Meditation

Seen in part



1 What do you see?

Before you read any further, spend some time looking only at the image, rather than being led by any words. Then, when you're ready, ask yourself the following questions to lead your sight deeper:

- What does the image bring to mind?
- What can you see fully?
- What can you see in part?

2 Looking behind the surface...

This painting has many layers – even uncovered and seen in full...

The artists, Barbara Macnish and Sarah Baxter, painted it in several stages as part of a live art piece for worship at Mosaic Church, Leeds. Originally it was the other way up and there was no face. The current crown of thorns was an

advent wreath and each week a different candle was painted with a name of Christ on it – Immanuel, One True King, Messiah, Saviour.

Advent is a time of waiting for Christ's coming – remembering his incarnation as if it were still to come – and looking forward to his return.

The advent ring here was used to foreshadow the crown of thorns... and the writing on the candle becomes transformed in the finished, upside down image, into a suggestion of blood running down the face of Christ.

Our lives following Jesus are like constant overlapping cycles of waiting, incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection as he leads us to seek him, meets with us, beckons us to lay down our lives and then to take up his... first in one area of our life, and then another... he works to reveal himself – and the true us in his image he created us to be – step by step by his grace.

Think about your life:

- Where can you see Christ more clearly than you used to be able to?
- Where can you see Christ more clearly in the world around you than you used to be able to?
- Where are you longing to see Christ more clearly revealed – to you, in you and through you – than he is now?

Offer your reflections to God in prayer.

3 Seeing the Word face to face

1 Corinthians 13:12-13 says:

“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (NIV)

“We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be cancelled.” (The Message)

“For now we are looking in a mirror that gives only a dim (blurred) reflection [of reality as in a riddle or enigma], but then [when perfection comes] we shall see in reality *and* face to face! Now I know in part (imperfectly), but then I shall know *and* understand fully *and* clearly, even in the same manner as I have been fully *and* clearly known *and* understood [by God].” (Amplified)

- Meditate on these words, your own experience ‘seeing Christ’ and the different ways that come to mind in which artists like Barbara – or song-writers or poets – have shown you glimpses of Christ.
- Look at the image with no covering...



- In the quiet of your own mind – or using a piece of paper and a pen – list all the images, descriptions, feelings and thoughts that come to mind as forming your current ‘picture’ of Jesus.
- Imagine how different your list will be when you see him face to face, and know in full.

4 Reflecting Christ

Just as we see in part now, others see in part too – though some may currently see even more dimly than us because they have been looking for less time or with less focus. Or simply have their eyes wide shut.

It’s overwhelming to think that Christians are part of the mirror that reflects Jesus to the world:

- Where are Christians playing their part in reflecting Christ well?
- Where are we getting in the way, and distorting the image of Jesus that people see?

Offer your reflections as prayers.

About the artists

Barbara Macnish and Sarah Baxter run the Creative Arts Network at Mosaic Church, Leeds. They are passionate about releasing creativity in the church and reclaiming the arts for worship.

