

**Art Adventure | Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski**

**Icon art for Christmas**

includes Russian, Western European, Byzantine and 13th Century Italian icons.

Icon means image in Greek. In the true tradition of icons, the works are not considered paintings. They are considered "Writings or the Word of God," states the artist. When you think in these terms, the art takes on a deeper meaning. The subjects range from Jesus to the Holy Mother to many of the saints, including St. Francis of Assisi.

Joseph Malham is passionate about writing icons. He feels he was "called" to the writings. He felt drawn to the sacred in art from early childhood. Born in Gary in 1961, he and his six siblings were raised in Merrillville. While attending Catholic schools he absorbed images of sacred art as well as Medieval and Renaissance masterpieces. His fascination with scared art was nurtured by the variety of churches, nationalities and cultures

nearby. After graduating from Loyola University with a bachelor's of art in history, he spent a year in Rome. He immersed himself in the rich heritage of sacred art found on every corner and in every church.

After meeting and studying with famed iconographer Meltem Atlas, Malham began being "pushed further into the dusky realms of the spirit where, like the desert, God is experienced obscurely, in that proverbial dark mirror where despite the struggle and the elusiveness, one presses on in a spirit of hope and love."

Malham began writing icons in 1995. Since 1999 Malham has lived as a full-time artist having shows and exhibitions on a regular basis and receiving icon and icon banner commissions from churches, institutions, religious communities and private individuals. His clients include an archbishop and a number of churches in Illinois. He is currently an artist in residence

Children welcomed Santa to Crown Point the day after Thanksgiving. Lowell's downtown is decorated and Christmas lights are reflecting in Cedar Lake. I get the feeling that Christmas is on its way. HO HO HO!

... **Charlie and Marilyn Kaper** had a crowd at their Cedar Lake flower shop open house the day after Thanksgiving.

... **Mike Goletz** is a fantastic chef but he made too much really good food for Thanksgiving. We all were as stuffed as the turkey.

... Hopefully Cedar Lake

*Kitty Conley's*

**Scratching Post**

building owner **Ronald Kwansy** will sign the statement that the arson fire in his building on 133rd Place was not set with his permission. Then the prosecutor can file charges against the alleged arsonist.

... Thank you to the wonderful people who made 93rd Avenue between Main Street and Merrillville Road so beautiful. The classy lampposts and street lights are a joy to see.

... Congratulations to **Matt**

**Goletz** as he receives his bachelor's degree this December in Indianapolis.

... Somehow we missed most of fall. Going from summer to winter just is not right. I like fall.

... Mayor **Dan Klein** honored the Crown Point High School football team on Nov. 25 with a proclamation on the east steps of the Old Courthouse. He presented the proclamation to coach **Chip Pettit** and team members. The Bulldogs finished the regular season undefeated and won the Duneland Athletic Conference title.

Should art be part of Christmas? Yes!

Our ancestors who lived 40,000 years ago painted their cave walls, not for art's sake, but for mythical and religious reasons. They wanted the gods to help them have a better life.

In more recent times, the Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans created statues, paintings and buildings to please their gods rather than for decorating purposes.

During the Renaissance, art took on a new role. It was no longer the exclusive property of religion.

Today, there are still some artists who follow the traditions of religious art.

Iconographer Joseph Malham uses a combination of many ancient styles. This

at a church on Chicago's north side.

Malham has "always felt drawn to the sacred in art ... because it expresses the deepest longings of my inner self, the better part that struggles to remain on a path toward the divine and the true that always lies above the muddle and mess of my everyday life."

He concludes: "For a society that craves and trumpets free speech and the freedom of worship, we have become more and more reluctant to

speak the name of God in public or to honor God with the work of our hands and heart. Too often these days artists are hesitant to name God as God in their work and instead use oblique, sanitized euphemisms that are neutral and non-threatening.

"In writing icons I am free to say 'this is what I believe and believe to have been revealed in time and space.' Ultimately, icons proclaim truths greater than the individual creating them and then

draw people into those inner truths."

Join us for a moment of reflection and demonstration of iconic art at the The Steeple Gallery, 11107 Thiel St., St. John, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 4.

The writings of Malham will add to the spirituality of the season. Please call (219) 365-1014 for more information.

Contact Sam at The Steeple Gallery at (219) 365-1014 or at samowner@sbcglobal.net.

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