

Icon of the Resurrection



The word "icon" means "**image**" in Greek in the sense that God meant it when He said : "*Let Us make man in Our own **image**.*" (Book of Genesis)

An Icon is an image of God's likeness, or of a spiritual reality that shares in God's spirit eg. a saint. To **be** an icon yourself, is to be connected to a deep and holy reality. Photos and pictures eventually rot, but holy people and the events of the bible exist forever in God. When we stand in front of an icon, we are in some sense gazing at heaven, because we are standing in the presence of an eternal and holy reality.

We humans have darkened this image of God in ourselves, because of our sins. Only Christ remains the true icon, or image of God's likeness. He died on the cross, to forgive our sins and to restore in us this image of God in ourselves.

This is why icons always seem to be painted in the same style, even though small details may differ, because the eternal truths themselves never change. Icon painters don't paint people in a natural way because holy and spiritual realities are not the same as earthly ones, and they don't paint in 3-D; everything looks like it's on one flat plane, or one great reality. This is why heads often look big, because the sides of the head and the ears have been brought forward to be in line with the front of the face.

Questions

1. What is an icon?
2. Why aren't we human beings icons of God?

3. Why don't icon painters paint in a realistic, natural way?

In Pairs: Look at the Icon of the Resurrection. Guess the meaning of the different things in the icon. Explain how they relate to the resurrection. (see example).

MANDORLA (the white oval): *A Mandorla is a symbol of heaven, and the joining of heaven and earth. Christ is inside the mandorla because He is resurrected into heaven. The mandorla symbolises his new life with God the Father. However, His feet are slightly outside the mandorla, because he personally comes down to hell in his new power, to rescue humanity from eternal death. The golden background is the colour of heaven.*

CHRIST (describe his posture, what is your impression of him?)

THE PROPHETS (on the right) **AND KINGS OF ISRAEL** (on the left)

BROKEN LOCKS, SHATTERED GATES, USELESS KEYS

THE DEVIL

ADAM AND EVE (describe Adam and Eve: what is your impression of them?)

What has this painting helped you to understand about the Resurrection?