

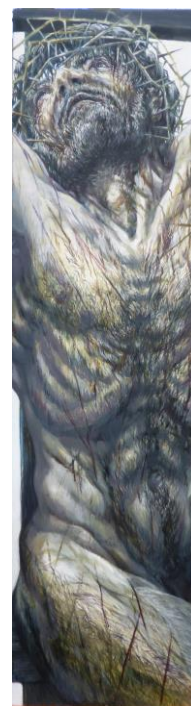
This series of paintings by Iain McKillop is a form of visual prayer, contemplating the themes of hope and salvation. We feel for those in pain or struggling in life, particularly the plight of so many innocents who suffer as a result of war and terrorism. Influenced by a visit to Wurzburg, rebuilt after devastating bombing in 1945, the paintings draw inspiration from the art of the city.

The images encourage us to seek forgiveness, inner peace and the world integrity which Jesus gave his life to achieve. We are invited to stop a while, to use each picture to focus on the needs of others and ourselves, to contemplate and to pray for peace, justice and the healing of our world.

**The Seven Last Words from the Cross** show Jesus identifying with the pain of so many on the earth, forgiving those who persecute, giving us to each other for mutual support, dying to cleanse broken people & restore human peace with God. They are not so much meditations on pain, as on God's willingness to pour out all for our healing.

**The Seven Songs of Resurrection** contemplate Christ's returning to life with promises of hope and restoration. He calls us to new ways of living, and assures us that he remains with us. God gives his Spirit to strengthen and support us in sending us out to spread his message. With his peace and his love we are to build a better world.

These paintings are also conceived as a memorial to innocent lives taken as a result of war in all nations. They were created as part of a process of contemplative prayer. Destructivity, terrorism or warfare are not Christ's way to solve political or social problems. The images ask us to learn new ways, following Christ's loving, self-sacrificial, forgiving, non-recriminatory, peace-bringing example. We are asked to pray & work for peace.



Iain initially conceived the **'Words of Forgiveness and Hope'** during his tour to Wurzburg with a German artist friend and their partners. They were horrified by the extensive bombing of the historic, mediaeval and baroque city on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1945. Many British cities suffered similarly during the Blitzkrieg. Wurzburg had little strategic military or industrial importance. It was targeted primarily because its historic buildings would burn easily – propaganda to demoralise the German people. 225 Lancaster bombers following 11 Pathfinders targeted the city centre, releasing 1,127 tons of bombs, including around 370,000 incendiaries in just 17 minutes. With little warning, the inhabitants found few escape routes. Nearly 5,000 innocent citizens died in the bombing and ensuing fire-storm or drowned in the swollen river while attempting escape. 82% of the city was destroyed: 21,062 homes, the Cathedral, 35 churches, palaces, parts of the historic Prince-Bishop's Wurzburg Residenz, including the beautiful Hall of Mirrors. Its famous fresco by Tiepolo survived only because the ceiling construction was exceptionally strong. Too many world cities today suffer similarly.

For Iain, the most poignant artworks in Wurzburg to survive are religious sculptures by Tilman Riemenschneider & life-size Stations of the Cross by the sculptor Johann Peter Alexander Wagner, leading up 352 steps to Kaeppele, Balthasar Neumann's Pilgrim Church

Iain's own panels are an expressive-realist response to those artworks, as tributes to all who suffer. They take the form of 4ft high beams [reminiscent of the beam of the Cross or rafters of houses] on which are painted fragments of life-size Crucifixion or Resurrection scenes. Painful images become themes of hope.

## SEVEN LAST WORDS

- 1 "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing." [Lk. 23:34]
- 2 "Mother, behold your son; Son, behold your Mother." [Jn. 20:26-27]
- 3 "Today you will be with me in Paradise." [Lk. 23:43]
- 4 "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" [Mk. 13:33-34]
- 5 "I thirst" [Jn. 20:28]
- 6 "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." [Lk. 23:46]
- 7 "It is finished!" [Jn. 20:30]

## SEVEN RESURRECTION SONGS

- 1 "He is not here for he is risen!" [Lk. 24:1-6]
- 2 "Do not cling on to me, for I must return to my Father" [Jn. 20:14-18]
- 3 They recognised him in the breaking of bread. [Lk. 24:30-31]
- 4 "Touch me & know proof! Blessed are those who believe without having seen." [Jn. 20:24-29]
- 5 "Do you truly love me?... Feed my sheep." [Jn. 21:15-19]
- 6 "Wait for my Spirit to empower you" [Jn. 20:19-22; Lk. 24:49]
- 7 "Go in my Spirit's power to be my witnesses to the ends of the earth." [Matt. 28:18-20]

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE PICTURES

- Please take time, not just to look at the paintings but to sit, think of others and pray.
- Perhaps consider how the theme of each image speaks into a situation that you know.
- You may find it helpful to just concentrate on one picture & let your thought & prayers flow.

## PRAYER

Loving God, who poured out your life to heal our world, please strengthen our resolve to work for good, bring peace and reconciliation to all your people, and heal all needs in us, so we can be at peace and learn to love as you love us. AMEN.



# WORDS OF FORGIVENESS AND HOPE

Paintings to Pray for the Healing of our World



St John's Church, West Byfleet  
18<sup>th</sup> Feb. – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2015

