



Introduction to Orthodox Iconography

More than 38 people from various traditions of the local church family gathered on Tuesday 19 May 2015 with the community from St Mary and Anba Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church, Cowandilla, to learn more about Orthodox Iconography.

Fr Seraphim Sidaros, Dr Heshmat Keroloss and Dr Stephen Ghabriel led us in prayer and story, describing the theological and spiritual aspects of Icons. We heard how the presence of Icons are often an enduring way into prayerful reflection on the challenges and the joys of daily life, when our desires can pull us in various directions. This has been so for young people, as well as for older folk.

We then meandered around the church, gazing on the Icons and spending time in conversation with a local Iconographer, and with one another.

For many of us, it was a first encounter with Iconography. Reflections from the gathering included:

- *It was most illuminating (I think that's the right word!);*
- *A wonderful way to be reminded of the breadth of Christian tradition and expression;*
- *It took me back to my days with the Anglican Board of Mission and my visits to Egypt and Ethiopia;*
- *Wonderful to see such creativity welcomed in church;*
- *My warm thanks to you and the fathers at St Mary and Anba Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church, for an excellent evening tonight;*
- *I am grateful for the opportunity to attend, and for all that I learnt and experienced during our time in that beautiful church. It was a most helpful intro into the world of iconography for me;*
- *Thank you so much, it was a blessing to spend the evening together.*
- *It was a beautiful meeting of brothers and sisters in Christ; may the risen Christ continue to guide us on the way of love and unity, in Christ.*

Refreshments had also been prepared and these were served in the hall, ensuring we were physically as well as spiritually nourished.

Thank you all at St Mary and St Bishoy, for leading us into a profound experience of faith, hope and charity: your sharing invited us into a deeper encounter with God who holds us all across all times, illuminated the hope of healing of relationships across our traditions, and demonstrated familial love through gracious and generous hospitality in so many ways.

May we continue to learn from one another and grow together in our unity in Christ.

Geraldine Hawkes

Executive Officer

on behalf of all who came along, together with the Committee for Ecumenical Learning

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.

Ps. 32: 8 [www.sacopts.org.au]