



Farm Chapel "Christ The King"

Farm "BOLO" Condobolin NSW 2877 (Kiacatoo)

The Farm Chapel "Christ the King" is part of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn and has the blessing of Archbishop Christopher Prowse DD STD.
His Grace appointed Father Emil Milaf as the Chaplain.

Blessed by his Grace Archbishop Karl Hesse 12th July 2008

Concept: - Rev. Ibrahim Gharbi
- Walter Bachmann

Hermit in Residence: Bro. Dominic Levak OFM
Mobile: 0457 692 735

Artist: Professor Todor Velin (Bulgaria)

Architect: Hans Dorbecker

Builders: Rudi Ehrat & Nick Stofmeel

Farm Manager: Tom Turner

Mobile: 0401 845 133



FARM CHAPEL “CHRIST THE KING”

The first seeds of the idea for this farm chapel were planted during my childhood on our family property “Vorderrain” situated by Lake Lucerne and my memories of the farm chapel there. However, the farm chapel “Christ the King” is very different as its concept is the product of a dream and the inspiration of the visionary Swiss National Saint, Bruder Klaus, whose image is depicted in one of the frescos adorning the outside of the chapel.



Farm chapel “Christ the King” facing east with mosaic (B) St Joseph and (C) St Nicholas von Flue

The farm chapel “Christ the King” is located in central NSW, some 50 km west of the town of Condobolin, on a property bordering the meandering Lachlan River on the northern boundary for about 6 km. Traversing the property from north to south are the Goobothery (Booloon, “Bolo”) Hills. The highest peak of this range is Mt Bolo at 333 m high, at the base of which now stands the farm chapel surrounded by the homesteads and outbuildings of the farm. In total, the farms cover some 5000 hectares and produces organically grown wheat, oats and spelt next to grazing pastures for sheep and cattle. Interestingly, during the bountiful harvests of the 1990s, organic wheat and oats were exported to Switzerland for delivery to millers including Stadtmühle Zurich, Mühlebach, Meierhans and others. The milled product was then distributed throughout Switzerland through Migros and Coop as Biosuisse Certified Organic products. The complex logistics of delivering the product to Basel were handled from Australia by fellow Swiss friend Armin Oswald. Ultimately, like many farms throughout NSW, the low rainfall of more recent years stalled the growth of new crops and productivity was low for a number of years, affecting the ongoing exports. During this dry time of reflection, the seeds of the idea for the farm chapel grew and plans for its construction were born.



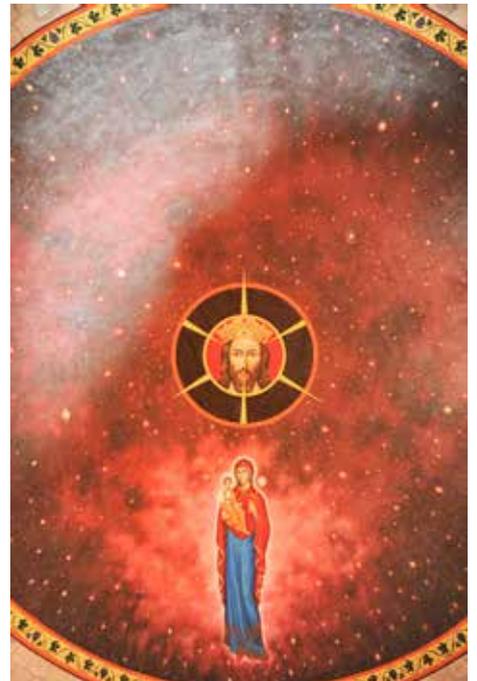
Merino sheep grazing in the ‘Bolo’ hill country



Emerging oat crop during the Winter season



The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few



(D) Dome fresco from the inspiration of St Nicholas von Flue, hermit and patron of Switzerland, with the (E) Virgin Mary and child and Monstrance (Logos)

The farm chapel “Christ the King” is of a circular design, representing the form of eternity, with a bronze cross on the roof symbolising redemption through Jesus Christ. The domed roof is highlighted in the interior with a vast fresco adorning the ceiling. The outer roof is covered with tiles of 100mm x 100mm and displays four Jerusalem crosses, one in each direction. The building incorporates the chapel on the upper floor and a hermits’ residence on the ground floor. The Chapel is segmented into 12 x 30 degrees, representing the twelve tribes of Israel or the twelve Apostles. Every thirty degrees a window, door or mosaic is installed to complete the full circle. A gallery walk around the outside of the chapel displays three mosaics created over a period of months from thousands of finely cut and polished stones depicting:

- A. Christ the Teacher
- B. Saint Joseph with baby Jesus
- C. Saint Nicholas von Flue

The interior of the chapel is engulfed by the fresco covering the domed ceiling (D), representing the universe and Christ the King. The painting takes the structure of a wheel, with the undivided Godhead in which all the saints rejoice at its very centre. Like the three rays, the three persons go forth from the one Godhead and embrace the heavens and the whole world. The icon (E) depicts the Virgin Mary, Queen of the Universe. In the right arm she carries the child Jesus and in the left hand she holds a monstrance with the Host as Logos, the divine Word and rational Principle that governs and develops the Universe, the spirit of all life.

A number of people were integral in bringing this farm chapel to life. Construction was led by Rudi Ehrat, a Swiss master builder known well in the Swiss community of NSW. The beautiful artwork was carried out by master artist Prof. Todor Velin from Bulgaria. Most of this work was carried out on the farm itself, with some in his studio in Sydney, with just one of the three mosaics taking nine months to complete. Prof. Velin then spent over a year painting the fresco on the domed interior while completing the remaining two mosaics.

By July 2008, construction of the farm chapel was complete and at its opening was blessed by his Grace Karl Hesse, Archbishop of Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, in the presence of hundreds of people. Many people and historical societies from near and far have visited the farm chapel since, with one visitor describing it a “present for the bush” in the guest book. Perhaps the chapel and its surrounding reminds us of the presence and beauty of God in today’s world, with the resounding echo from Saint Bruder Klaus - “pray to God, to Him surrender...”

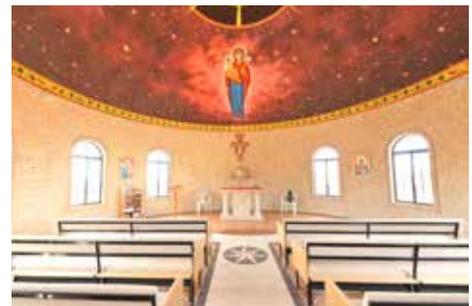
Walter Bachmann

Prayer of St. Nicholas von Flue:

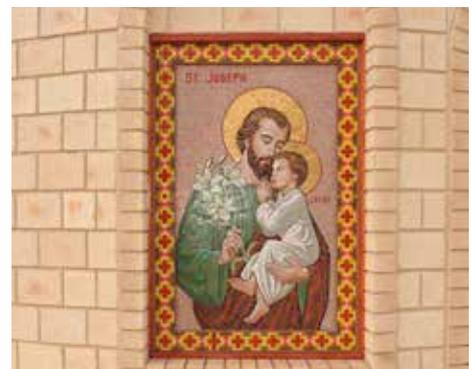
**My Lord and my God,
take everything from me that keeps me from Thee.
My Lord and my God,
give everything to me that brings me near to Thee.
My Lord and my God,
take me away from myself and give me completely to Thee.
Amen**



Farm chapel “Christ the King” towards West with mosaic (A) “Christ the Teacher”



Farm chapel interior with altar and part of dome fresco



Mosaic of (B) St Joseph, patron of workers and farmers



Saint Nicholas von Flue, Hermit and Patron of Switzerland

A support for understanding the Icons of “Christ The King” Chapel

Christ Pantocrator (the Almighty)

The first images of Christ are from the late third century and were found in the catacombs in Rome. From the sixth century onwards he is always shown bearded and with the same features, as the majestic and solemn Pantocrator (the Almighty). He wears Greek clothing and holds a jewelled book, either open or closed; against his chest, whilst blessing with his right hand. The fingers of Christ’s hand; whilst blessing, seem also to form the shapes of the letters of his anagram. The shape of folds in drapery enhances the gestures and meaning of the subject. Although they are represented in an abstracted geometric style the folds are never arbitrary - or fantasy shapes; they make logical sense, and where the garment touches the body it radiates energy and light. Hands and fingers are carefully studied. Their shapes are far from naturalistic, having a special representation in the Byzantine tradition. The position of the hands and fingers has deep symbolic meaning. They are blessing, praying or pointing to God. The face is not an ordinary portrait, but depicts the divine presence in man. The head is facing you and is never painted in profile since the Word of God has to be received face to face. The top of the head approximates the form of a circle and in turn is surrounded by the halo, the circle being the symbol of perfection, unity and totality of God. The eyebrows form a bridge across the top of the nose, and the carefully shaped eyes are contained within the contours of the eye- sockets. The line of the nose ridge ends in an oval tip and is continuous with nostrils. The special configuration of the lips is sensitively drawn. The ears listen to the Divine Word, the nose senses its perfume, the mouth speaks, praising it, the hands point out its beauty, goodness and truth, and the eyes contemplate its mystery. Colours in icons have a symbolic or spiritual dimension, in general:



The meanings of the Greek letters on the Icon of Christ are:

IC XC: Jesus Christ— abbreviated from I(HCOY) C X(PICTO) C

OWN: “The Being”. (Inside the halo)

- Gold colour means - divinity
- Red - divinity, royalty, love, martyrdom
- Blue - humanity

CREATING A MOSAIC: Mosaics are art forms in which small pieces of coloured glass or stone are set in mortar. The pieces are cut and formed to fit together to form a picture.

