

Parishioners' Corner

On the surface, there is little to suggest there would ever be a connection between Des Plaines based artist extraordinaire Amanda Vandervort and St. Elizabeth of the Trinity - our French Carmelite patron saint. Or, for that matter, a connection between Amanda Vandervort and our parish community. Nevertheless, through a chance intersection of paths, we are grateful and inspired to next weekend bless Amanda's rendition of our patroness in our church.

Amanda was born in Elgin and grew up in Tulsa, OK, which helps account for a southwestern influence in her work. From an early age, she was drawn to the world of artistry. She lauds her good teachers for developing her talents. Over the years she has worked in pen and ink, oils, acrylics, chalk, charcoal as well as sculpture and ceramics. Amanda's faith journey has, to some degree, mirrored her diverse artistic repertoire. She grew up in the Methodist Church, was confirmed as a Lutheran, attended Catholic schools, and was a member of an Episcopal Church.

It was, however, a recent impromptu meeting with a parishioner that led to a visit by Amanda to St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Church. She confides that she was struck by the welcoming and smiling faces she encountered. What's more, as a Cherokee woman, Amanda immediately noticed and admired our stained-glass window of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American saint canonized in the Catholic Church.

While Amanda's art focus has not been religious subjects, she embraced our request for a depiction of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity. She desired that our patroness would join St. Kateri in welcoming worshipers. Soon, Amanda dove into this project, striving to get beneath the surface of the photos available of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity to try to capture her spirit and her deep devotion to the Trinity. Then, Amanda went above the surface of a blank art canvas to produce - using the unique art form of her creation - the three-dimensional piece that will grace our church. As Amanda's completed piece confirms, her attention to detail is extraordinary.

Amanda is quick to give a nod to her husband, Steve, who as fire alarm technician, keeps her grounded with his logical approach to life. And Amanda extends a word of thanks to their 16-year-old daughter who provides her own set of youthful perspectives.

When not immersed in artistry, Amanda enjoys gardening, with the produce she grows going to a food pantry. Amanda confesses a love for many flavors of Ramen noodles.

Amanda is donating half the cost of the St. Elizabeth of the Trinity artwork as an in-kind donation. Parishioners Mike and Mary Shea are covering the balance of the cost, in honor of their Uncle Jim Shea, an artist, who in his circle of friends and family was known as "The Lord of the Dance."



ST. ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY EPOXY STAINED GLASS SYMBOLISM

The French oak was used for construction during St. Elizabeth's lifetime. Staining it black evokes original sin. The surrounding by a rock doorway brings the rock of Christ as the doors to the Church.

Elizabeth's Carmelite habit brings in the earth, and the Carmelite symbol is a Trinity symbol. The red, white and blue are meant to symbolize the flags of both the U.S. and France. The Bible, the Carmelite symbol, and the sun's rays from the symbol are meant to show the Trinity again, as is the gold, silver and bronze leaf.