



Museum Restores 18th Century Icon



Thanks to a generous donation St. Mark's Coptic Museum hired a professional icon Conserver to "clean" and restored the icon "St. Mary of the Seven Sorrows." The painting was in a very fragile condition due to age and inadequate attention to conservation. At some point during the icon's life, it was unfortunately "cleaned" with linseed oil which stained it permanently and gave the painting a darker appearance. The good news is that the Conserver was able to bring out the narrative of the artist's rendition and its mystical expression.

History

The Seven Sorrows of Mary is a popular Roman Catholic devotion originated by a provincial synod of Cologne (Germany) in 1413. In Catholic imagery, the Virgin Mary is portrayed as sorrowful, with tearful eyes, and with seven daggers piercing her heart, often bleeding, symbolizing her seven sorrows. Devotional prayers elaborate on her Seven Sorrows which are based on the prophecy of the Simeon: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also..." (Luke 2:35).

The Seven Sorrows of Mary are:

1. The prophesy of Simeon
2. The Flight into Egypt. (Matthew 2:13–15)
3. The loss of the child Jesus in the Temple. (Luke 2:41–50)
4. Mary meets Jesus on the way to Calvary.(Luke 23:27–31; John 19:17)
5. The Crucifixion of Jesus. (John 19:25–30)
6. The piercing of the side of Jesus, and Mary receiving the body of Jesus in her arms. (Matthew 27:57–59)
7. The burial of Jesus. (Isaiah 53:8; Mark 15:4–47; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:40–42)

At the same time, Orthodox Christians and Eastern Catholics commemorate a wonder-working icon of the Theotokos known as "the Softening of Evil Hearts" or "Simeon's Prophecy." It also depicts the Virgin Mary at the moment of Simeon's prophesy, in prayer position and with seven daggers piercing her heart. This is one of the few Orthodox icons of the Theotokos which does not depict her with the infant Jesus.

The icon in St. Mark's Coptic Museum also has the Virgin Mary raising her hands up in prayer and with seven swords piercing her heart. In this rendition however her eyes are looking down at a crown of thorns and three nails. The icon is signed by "Beshar Ibn Saqr" and dated 1735.

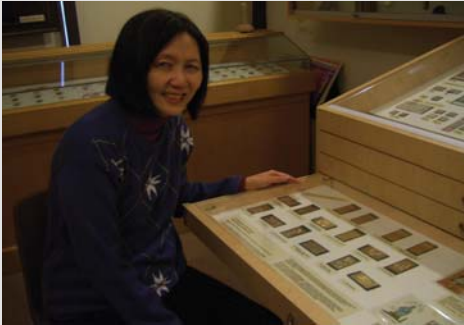
The icon "St. Mary of the Seven Sorrows" is a permanent feature at St. Mark's Coptic Museum. To learn more about this icon, please visit the Museum and invite family and friends.

Intergenerational and Family Clay Workshop (December 2, 2013)



Taking their inspiration from the Museum's Nativity terracotta workshop sixteen participant created their own nativity scene.

Museum Management Internship (January – April 2014)



Ming Regina Yi Li, candidate in the Centennial College Post Graduate Certificate Program, Culture and Heritage Site Management fulfilled the 15 weeks (three days a

week) internship requirement at St. Mark's Coptic Museum. Ming's main task was to design interactive workshops relating the Museum's ancient Egyptian jewellery, stamps collections and the Hellenic to Byzantine coin collections to the Ontario Curriculum. Ming's contribution will greatly enhance the Museum as a learning site for Public and Separate school social science and history classes. The Museum also offers learning opportunities for World Religions classes.

Reflecting on her experience, Ming said "To create and design activities for educational purposes with the focus of St. Mark's Museum's jewellery, stamp and coin collections has been a valuable learning experience for me. I will use this experience in my future career goal of cultural integration and educational programs. I also want to share what I learned about ancient Egyptian culture and art with friends and other people."

Ecumenical World Day of Prayer 2014 for Egypt (March 7 and 8) (see newsletter Fall, 2013 page 3 for back- ground information)



On Saturday January 11, 2014 St. Mark's Choir and the Museum were asked to participate at the GTA World Day of Prayer orientation day. Over one hundred and fifty WDP members were in attendance.



Over two thousand churches from ten Christian denominations across Canada prayed for Egypt on March 7 and 8. On March 8, St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church and St. Mark's Coptic Museum hosted a World Day of Prayer ecumenical service together with the St. Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church Choir (Stouffville).