

Designed and made for the wall behind the altar in the minor seminary chapel.

1961-1963 Ceramic Crucifixion with two angels;

Life size figure of Christ	5' 6"x 5' 8"
Angel on the left	3' x 3' 9"
Angel on the right	2' 6"x 3' 7"
Tree of the Cross	7' x 7' 1 ½ " -- ¾ " x 3 1/8"

Saskatchewan potter's throwing clay was used to build and model the figure of Christ and the two angels. Although in high relief, they were not completed in the round so it was possibly to build them with slab clay without the use of molds. The work was done on a moderately sloping platform with the cartoon taped to the top and covered with a stretched plastic sheet. No armature to worry about, simply building on top of the drawing! Fine until you wanted to see how it would look hanging on the wall. Fortunately, the half empty haymow where I was working had rafters above, so I was able to climb the bales to get on to them and look down. The light was also good because the open barn doors on the left were in the same relative position as the windows would be in the chapel. Without a rolling machine our slab was produced by rubbing and scraping the clay into special frames ¾" deep with removable guides around the edges. The bottom was covered with stretched linen making it easy to lift the slab once the guides were cut free and removed. Made of potter's clay this slab could be bent or handled without cracking or breaking.

To avoid stresses in the firing, the figures were made in sections; 13 for Christ, 8 for the left Angel and 7 for the right. Each section was encircled with walls of slabs clay, including the side adjacent to the previous section. A plastic sheet was inserted between these double walls at every joint. Then the sections were filled with a sand sawdust mix in plastic bags. These were capped with slab clay rubbing in fresh clay at all the joints. Where two sections meet, the plastic insert was cut back 3/8" into the clay and modeled over. As the clay shrank with gradual drying the hair line appearing bent itself to the formation of a perfect joint. When the modeling was completed and the clay leather hard, the surface was tapped with blunt modeling tools for texture. Clay burn red was used to make the tree of the cross and the wounds for hands and feet. The inspiration for this crucifix derives from patristic meditation on the Scriptures; Sts Augustine and John Chrysostom in which they see a direct correlation between the Old Adam in Eden, and the New Adam on Calvary.

Of the Old Adam we hear in Genesis God saying, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Gen 2:18). The man is not to remain solitary but is to become a bridegroom and bride, a family, a community, a people. "So the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and while he slept took one of his ribs" (Gen 2:21) and the rib which he had taken "he made into a woman and brought her to the man." (Gen 2:22). then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." (Gen 2:23)

with St. Paul we see in this passage a deeper typology of mystery. "The first man (Old Adam) was from the earth, a man of dust;" (I Cor 15:47) as was Eve the first woman, bone of his

bones, and flesh of his flesh – dust of his dust, sharing with him original sin which made them and their children after them, graceless as “are those who are of the dust,” (I Cor 15:48), and destined to death. But earlier the import of his thinking is clear: “As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” I Cor. 15.22. The parallelism is striking. “The second man” (The new Adam is not of the dust but “is from heaven.” I Cor. 15.48. He became “a life giving spirit.” I Cor. 15. Just as the deep sleep fell upon the old Adam, so now upon the new Adam falls the deep sleep of death. Instead of a rib becoming a woman of flesh, now from the side of Christ comes his bridal church, the new Eve, born to new life in baptismal water and Eucharistic blood. Architype of the Church, Mary had given him our humanity, so that he in dying could give us his divinity-praise God!