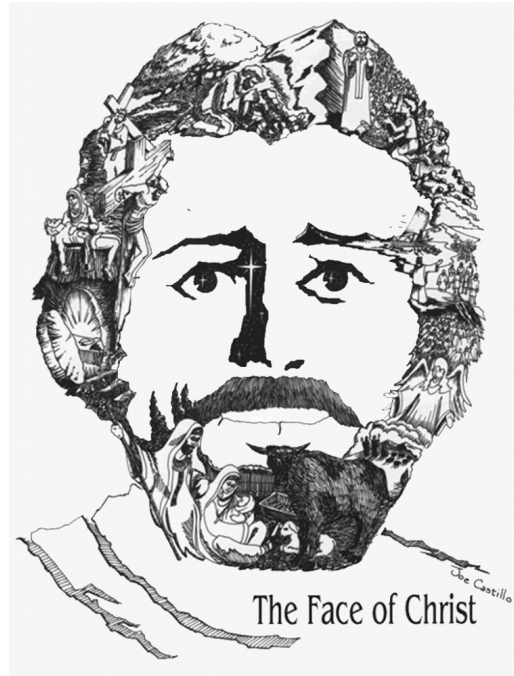


ONE TYPE OF LEGACY WE LEAVE



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One of the legacies that is passed from one generation to another includes family stories and memories. When a woman wearing perfume leaves a room, the scent of her perfume lingers. In a similar way, there is a lingering fragrance left from a person's life in the memories of others.

I think Joe Castillo's artwork (shown here) is a powerful illustration of this type of legacy. There is more to the Face of Christ than appears at first glance. A close examination of the drawing reveals many picture/snapshots from Christ Jesus's earthly life. I believe people remember one another in a similar way—as a series of mental snapshots. These pictures flow together in our memory, forming a personal legacy that person left us.

For example, start at the bottom of the Face of Christ picture and move in a counterclockwise direction. Within the beard of Joe's artwork is a snapshot of the humble birth of Jesus. Moving up the right side of the face, you see the angels proclaiming His birth. At the top is depicted a time of

prayer. Down the left side is pictured Jesus' voluntary death on the cross as his payment for our sin—sin that separates us from our holy God. Low on the left is the empty tomb, signifying Christ Jesus's resurrection and victory over death. These snapshots from the physical life of Jesus Christ illustrate His love for us, i.e., our legacy from Him. This picture demonstrates how snapshots accumulate to show what a life and its beliefs are all about, for what we believe determines how we behave.

JOE CASTILLO'S STORY

When I read the story behind the "Face of Christ" picture, I discovered a struggling artist with a wife, two children and no insurance. Joe sketched the Face of Christ as part of his church's Christmas program in 1980. A friend, Lonnie, with a plaque business, offered to produce Joe's picture and promised that after he had sold enough to recover his costs, he would pay Joe royalties.

A tidal wave of medical debt swept over Joe when his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. With plaques selling briskly around the world, royalties appeared to be the answer to the mounting medical expenses. However, Lonnie refused to pay, and Joe struggled to forgive the man who had reneged on his promise and yet continued to profit substantially from Joe's artwork.

From Joe's perspective, the situation was a total loss. His wife died of cancer and he, overloaded with debt, felt his life crumble around him. Eventually, however, he found the courage to release his anger and he surrendered everything to God's control. God then gave Joe the strength to forgive and move forward. He now tells of the many blessings the Lord brought out of those dark days.

Joe's story of loss, forgiveness, and restoration reminds us that there are many difficult events in our lives that God uses for good purposes. We can leave a legacy behind—a real masterpiece—if we allow God to paint on the canvas of our everyday lives.