

## The Story Behind Peter Adams' Passionate Art

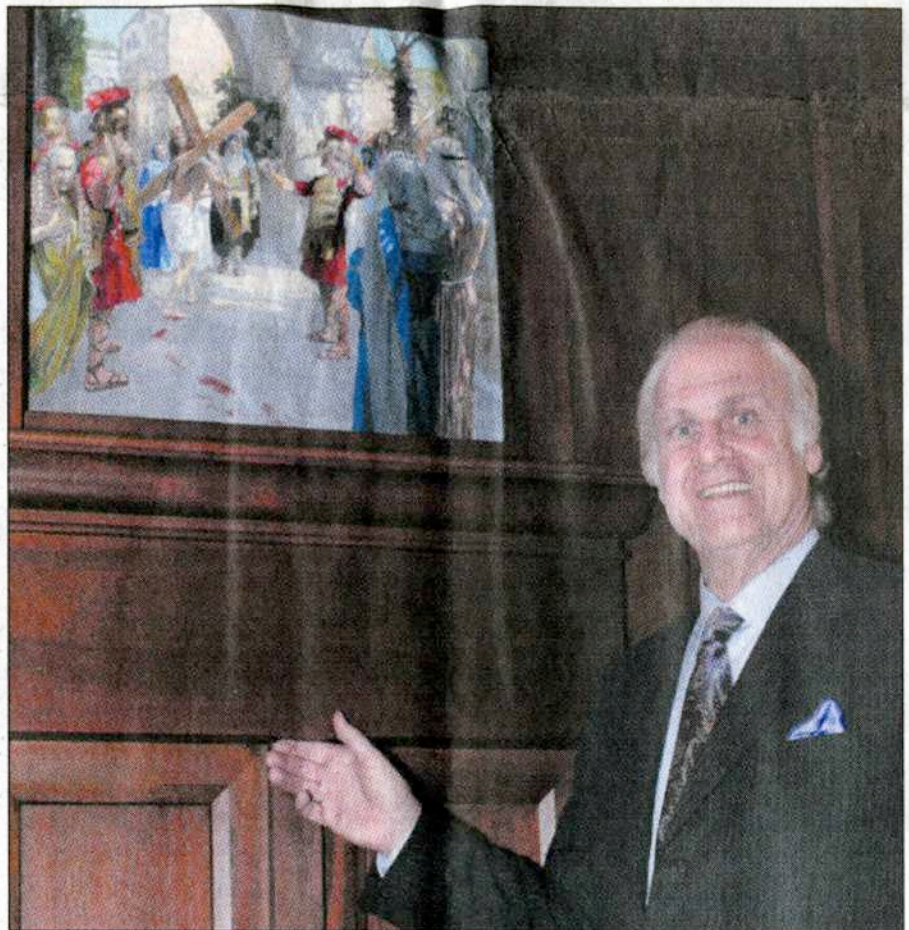
By **Winston Chua**  
EDITOR, SGV EDITION

Look closely, and you just might recognize one of the subjects of Peter Adams' fourteen paintings of the Stations of the Cross located inside Our Savior Church at the new USC Caruso Catholic Center, the beautiful and moving work of nationally the renowned landscape painter and Pasadena resident.

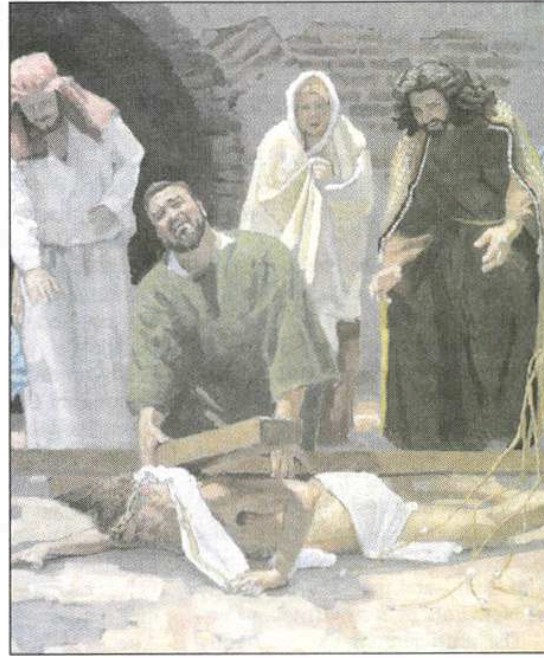
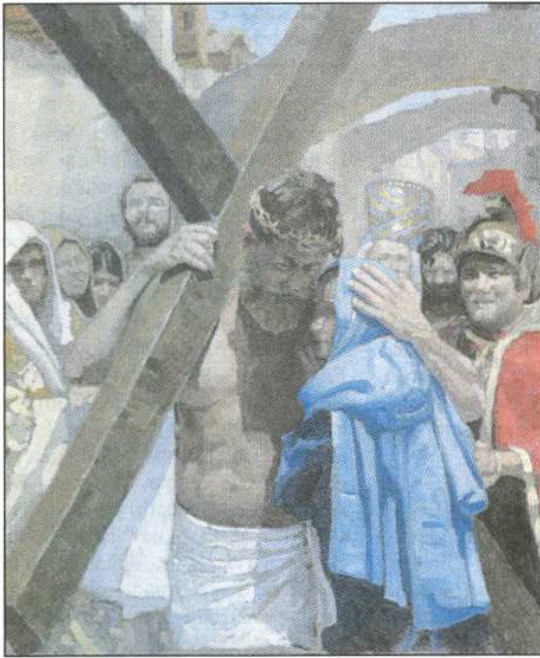
The church, whose Liturgical Design Committee commissioned Adams in 2010 to create the art, dedicated the Church on December 9 of 2012.

"In designing the paintings for the stations, I wanted guests to look at the story of Jesus in a new light and fresh way," said Adams, who spent a month in Jerusalem's Via Dolorosa to get as accurate a depiction of Jesus's life as possible. "A lot of times in churches the scenes

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**POIGNANT PAINTINGS:** California Art Club President Peter Adams stands beside his painting of Station 2, one of 14 Stations of the Cross paintings Adams created for Our Saviour Church at the USC Caruso Catholic Center. In this work, Jesus is given the Cross.



LOCAL SUBJECTS and landmarks appear in Peter Adams' 'Stations of the Cross,' including the Old Mill, right.

## ADAMS

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tend to mimic one another."

The 14 Stations of the Cross are seen in many Catholic churches and include Jesus's condemnation, his struggles carrying the cross on the Via Dolorosa (the Way of Pain) to the Crucifixion, and finally to the Entombment. Typically the message of the Stations centers around a suffering Jesus.

Adams certainly captures Jesus's final moments vividly, but he also profiles the stories of those around him in gripping detail, including the Virgin Mary, John the Beloved, Mary Magdalene, Veronica, Simon of Cyrene, Nicodemus, Caiaphas the High Priest of Sanhedrin, to name a few.

"Peter wanted (USC) students to feel that Christ was not alone in his sufferings and we are never far away from Christ," said USC Catholic Center Executive Director Clare Faulkner, who told the Tribune that there are as many as 10,000 Catholics who make up the USC student body. Our Savior Church is just across the street from the main USC campus on West 32nd Street.

And like the USC student population, the renowned plein-air artist's work includes people of all different ethnicities, including Filipinos, African and Chinese, because Adams believes the life and mes-

sage of Jesus is a timeless one for all people, not strictly for the people at the time.

Adams went to great lengths to get a feel for what went on during Jesus's time. Using San Marino's Old Mill, his house in Pasadena and a location in Malibu, he went so far as to gather 40 friends and artists to re-enact Biblical scenes in time-specific costumes to capture as best as he could what may have happened nearly two thousand years or so ago. He directed one person to play Pilate, and one to play Pilate's wife, for example. He studied in great detail the process of death upon a cross.

Photos and videos from the staged scenes would become the foundation for his painted work.

He even rented donkeys, horses and camels, all in all a thorough process that made him appreciate Jesus's story on a whole new level. The process of producing each of his full color paintings helped deepen his own personal understanding of Jesus and Adams's own personal faith.

"When you paint something, you become what you're painting. You become an expert on what you're painting. You learn everything about it, inside and out," Adams said. "It was an uplifting experience for me and I discovered things I didn't know."

Although he had done paintings of the interiors of All Saint's Church and St. Andrew's Church, religion is

not typically what he is known for. The sample of his body of work that can be found online at the American Legacy Fine Arts website includes landscapes, seascapes, ethereals and figures. ALFA is located at Linda Vista Avenue in Pasadena.

Adams has a wealth of experience in painting. He was the first American artist to paint in China. He has also painted with the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan and worked in Pakistan and India. He studied under California portrait and landscape painter Theodore Lukits (1897-1992) for seven years. Lukits won the Prix de Rome scholarship in 1919. Adams said, "That was a time just before the advent of Modernism when many traditional painting techniques were still taught."

The USC Catholic Center is itself a work of art, with a tympanum featuring Jesus with two angels and 27 stained-glass windows. It was created in Romanesque style with beautiful artwork, marble floors, a bronze crucifix and gold leaf dome. The exterior stone is from a 2500-year-old quarry near Rome, the same quarry that was used to build parts of St. Peter's Basilica. The Gold Leed Church was designed to last for the ages.

Faulkner hopes Adams can speak each year at the Church on Good Friday, as he did this past spring, telling guests and students about the motivation and inspiration behind the art at each of the 14 Stations.