

Fr. Kapaun Painting

1. **THANK YOU'S:** First, thank you for coming tonight for the blessing of this painting in honor of Fr. Emil Kapaun. Thank you, also to my family, N.U., and those that made this painting possible. Lastly, thank you to the models, for being patient in working with me in capturing the desired expressions that I was looking for...and most of them might agree with me in saying that it was not always comfortable and fun, but I truly appreciate every effort they instilled!
2. **GOD WANTED THIS PAINTING DONE:**
 - * First, I want to proclaim, that it is evident "God wanted this painting done!" All glory and honor is His! Though with His help my hand painted this painting...I step aside in awe for two reasons, first, that I was to be entrusted by God to visually express to you Fr. Kapaun's life and mission. Second, I am in awe at how God works in our lives. What I mean is His timing! For whatever His perfect plan was for this assignment...I can attest that He has been in complete control of this painting...For its completion and the admiration of Fr. Emil Kapaun. During this time I will try to briefly share with you how I believe He unfolded this project, the message I am trying to communicate, and its symbolisms.
3. **MODELS:**
 - * I was given this assignment back in 2005, after the completion of the Maria De Mattias.
 - * This painting had taken me approximately 7 months to complete in 3 different segments of time, over a period of 4 years.
 - * The first 3 month segment: I was studying, seeking models, sketching the idea, constructing the substrate wall, and starting the painting, all of which I did part time.
 - * From the beginning, I spent some time digesting every piece of literature I could get my hands on about his life and his daily mission. After studying Father Kapaun's life it had a profound affect of me which, left me with compelling feelings that inspired me! I asked myself, "How do I capture and portray a treasure chest of compassion amongst desolate despair?" My answer...it would have to be in the eyes and faces. What I wanted to be portrayed had to be timeless, and it had to demonstrate his character and the relationship he had with Jesus and his troops. From this conception the process began and I started seeking models to portray these desired emotions that needed to be illustrated.
 - * In my study I had noticed a man in one of the books whose family was from Marion County and grew up around the Kapuan family. He had a somewhat, striking resemblance of Fr. Kapaun but according to the book he lived out of state. I contacted Rose Mary from the Kapaun Guild to follow up on this mysterious man which, we both learned he had just moved back to Wichita! Bang...thank you God! Within a day I was in contact with this man who was humbled at the idea to represent the image of Fr. Kapaun, Mike Navrat.
 - * Another model I had in mind was a young man whose heart to me has limbs....his legs and feet extend out from his heart and he always seemed to walk in accordance with Christ. This young man is a friend and mentor to my son, was a leader of spiritual works at Bishop Carroll, and now a seminarian for our diocese. I might add...when asking if he would model for me, he was reluctant and asked to pray about it. An eternal week had passed and he finally agreed. David Darland.
 - * Yet another model who exemplified characteristics of a compassionate spirit is a young man who is ceaseless in yielding his time, sharing kind words, and always trying to inject his enthusiasm and humor for a simple smile. My son whom I'm very proud of is, Skyler.
 - * During this time, I had also met with Eugene and Helen Kapaun, to further seek the kindred spirit of Fr. Kapaun, and to try to incorporate their family if at all possible. During this first memorable visit, I was then directed to their nephew, Michael Kapaun, who had just come back from the war for a couple of days. The next day I had the pleasure of meeting him, and the

following day he left for duty. Bang....another thank you God!

* Next, I needed a model to represent Jesus. That choice was easy! Not only does the features of this model resemble the tradition American 'face of Jesus, but God had brought this friend into my life over a decade ago in an attempt to introduce to me, his closest friend, Jesus. He is a good friend to my family, and his daily walk demonstrates a disciple of Christ. Aaron Wisdom.

* The two young models that were chosen to be the Cherubims, are two little angels whose families shared the pews with my own at St. Peter's Church in Schulte. These two little 'angels' are from awesome Catholic families that I think highly and have had the pleasure sharing in their friendship. Mark Linnebur and Annette Sponsel.

* Lastly, the two models that were chosen to be the Seraphim angels are two people in my life that are very special to me. The young seraphim at Fr. Kapaun's side is my beautiful daughter, Jadyn. I wanted a look of purity and peace in the face, and a smile that communicates approval of Fr.'s Kapaun's works. The older Seraphim draped in red is my sage and the other foot that joins my soul in my daily walk. She is my best friend, my cousin, and the daughter of the cantor at St. Anthony's Church, Bernard and Kay Dette. Angie Cook.

4. FURTHER EXPLAIN HOW GOD HAS BEEN IN CONTROL, 2nd and 3rd segments- HARDSHIPS:

* After about 3 months of beginning this project my family and I began to experience some hardships and circumstances that left me with no choice but to put the painting on hold. The painting sat at idle for 3 years! As these changes were taking place in my family, the painting was moved to a studio downtown for storage and a space in hopes to resume painting when possible. Bang!...God was taking care of it! Last year I started working full time and had a chance to resume the painting part time...another God-thing! But, due to climate conditions in the warehouse, I was invited to move the painting here to the Chapel. And that's where the magic began...the painting was home and so was I! Then in March this year I was laid off...scary as it is, I believed He was in control. I tried to look at these circumstances with Faith and a mindset that this was an open door to finally finish this painting and perhaps begin whatever else He has in mind for me and my family. And, there it is...this is how He has maneuvered my life with many blessings and got this painting done!

5. SCOPE OF THE PAINTING AND SYMBOLISMS:

* The lay out of the painting is dissected into three different groups. Starting from the bottom I illustrate Fr. Kapaun's flock of sheep in drab, all of which are taking refuge from their sufferings under Fr. Kapaun's wings of compassion and hope. Next, all bodies are united under the umbrella of Jesus. Joining them, is the third group of angels that are accompanying Jesus with their heavenly praise and adoration of one of God's servants.

* I believe God has given me the patience and the gift to paint in a realistic style so I can better illustrate His Supreme beauty in all His creations. My aim in this painting is to direct your eyes Heavenward to the key understanding of having a relationship with commune exchanges with our Savior, and Fr. Kapaun understood in his life and I try to demonstrate this at the very center of the painting.

* Next, in order to personalize and define the life of Fr. Kapaun I incorporated symbolisms to communicate his attributes and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Symbolisms will start from top and descend down....

- Banner which is being held by the Cherubim's announces to us one of many attributes that Fr. Kapaun preached harmoniously in his life and in the POW camp.

- Fr. Kapaun's soul which denotes to the fullness of the embodiment of one's identity. Inside his soul is the symbol of a pelican. The pelican is a common symbol used in the Church and denotes to selflessness, sacrifice, and charity. We use this symbol because the bird is known for feeding its young with its own blood.

- Dove above Fr. Kapaun's head illustrates the inspirations and works of the Holy Spirit in Father's life.
- Byzantine Cross being held by the little Séraphim is the same cross hanging on the sanctuary wall here at St. Johns Chapel and is the same cross which Fr. Kapaun was ordained in front of here in 1940.
- Jesus' cloak , was my attempt in trying to descend Jesus as an omnipresent entity amongst the soldiers unawareness.
- Purple stole symbolizing is priesthood and Fr. had found a purple material that he draped around his neck in the pow camp.
- Barbed-wire rosary that Fr. Had made in the prison camp is being held by soldier laying on the ground.
- Seraphim Angels are the highest of the orders of angels. In Isaiah 6 they are described to have six wings. Two covering the face, hence the headdress among the two angels. Two pairs for flight and two covering its ethereal body. The Hebrew translation for 'seruf' means, 'to burn or incinerate.' Throughout the Bible the Seraphim are also described to be a 'fiery serpent.' Hence the serpent texture of the tops of their wings and the red that drapes the Seraphim gives the back drop to the prelude of Fr. Kapaun's death.