

OUR LADY OF AFRICA PARISH MURAL

The Our Lady of Africa Parish Mural was painted by Reverend Englebert Mveng, a priest from Cameroon, Africa, especially for the former Holy Angels Church. The mural was painted in the early 1990s at the request of Father George Clements, who was then the Pastor.

The February 1989 issue of Time magazine published a two page article on the resurgence of his work in the Catholic Church in Africa. However, on the night of April 22-23, 1995 an unknown assailant(s) brutally murdered the Reverend Englebert Mveng, a Jesuit priest, author, artist, and prominent Cameroonian historian, in his residence outside of Yaounde. The murder, in 1995, was only the most recent of several unsolved murders of clergy over the past several years.

The police announced an investigation into the case, but at the end of 1995, no progress had been reported. Father Mveng's murder remains unsolved. The Government was widely criticized for not seriously pursuing an investigation into this and other church murders, leading to widespread speculation about government complicity. The mural depicts the roles and interventions that Angels have played throughout the history of mankind.

The scriptures account of the Angels story begins in the upper left corner, moves counter clockwise and the last scripture is in the center.

1. From Revelations: (Warriors and fighters)

St. Michael the Archangel is shown as he thrusts his sword into the mouth of the Serpent-Dragon, Satan (in Hebrew this means accuser) casting him down from heaven. The serpent was protesting God sending him onto earth in the form of man. This is in contrast to the multitude of Angels who sang and celebrated his birth to Mary and Joseph

2. Book of Daniel: (Deliverers)

Three Jewish men, Hanaiah, Azarich, and Mishael, renamed Meshak Shadrak and Abednego, by the Chaldeans, as they were thrown into the fire by King Nebuchadnezzar. They prayed for deliverance and the Lord sent to them an angel who appears as the yellow figure with outstretched hands to protect them from the fire.

3. Acts of the Apostles: (Ch.6) (Liberators)

Peter was banished to prison by King Herod and the Lord sent an angel in the middle of the night to who told him to get up and as he did his shackles broke and he walked past the sleeping guards. The artist thought that in light of Nelson Mandela's recent release from Prison, he would make the face on Peter closely resemble Mandela's (which it does).

4. The Annunciation: (Preparers of the Way)

The Virgin Mary appears as a common Nigerian woman in her village hut preparing her FU FU (evening meal), when the archangel Gabriel appears to her and says, "Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with thee", letting her know that she is about to conceive Christ. The Holy Spirit descends, indicating the presence of the Lord.

5. Resurrection and Ascension: (Announcers of the Good News)

On Easter morning the angels appeared to announce the good news of his resurrection and Ascension into heaven. The tomb is Christ's feet indicating his victory over death, and the shroud within which he was wrapped is under his right hand. The left hand is held out to show the wound for 'doubting Thomas'.

6. Agony in the Garden: (Comforters and Consolers)

The apostles slept as Christ prayed and agonized over the burdens of mankind. The Chalice represents that portion of the Biblical verse that says, "take this cup from me but if it be thine will I will drink it." Of course, the angels appeared to comfort and console him.

7. Book of Revelation: (Protectors)

On Judgment Day four angels appeared and they went to the four corners of the earth and as they grabbed the winds to let them blow and destroy the entire earth a fifth angel appeared, held out his hand and said certain of those have been sealed with the sign of Christ and they shall be saved.

8. Genesis: (Messengers)

We are told that Abraham was asleep outside of his tent in the village of Mamre when awakened to find three travelers approaching. Abraham and Sarah were both in their nineties and always wanted to bear children. These travelers were in fact messengers to bring the good news that Abraham and Sarah were to bear a child whom they would name Isaac. Abraham brought them bread and put them up for the night.

9. Book of Tobit: (Healers)

One of the apocryphal books. Tobit was blind and the archangel Raphael appeared to his son and his wife and instructed them to take the gall from a fish and place over Tobias' eyes. When he did so scales dropped from his eyes, and he was able to see again.

10. Star of Bethlehem at the Birth of Jesus:

Brightly shining its light upon the faces of 49 angels. You can see the brightness of the light reflected on the faces as it descends. "And there appeared a multitude of angels singing and celebrating the birth of Christ. There are 49 faces indicative of the biblical verse that says" you shall forgive and love 7 x 7. The infant Jesus appears wrapped in common loin cloth in common surroundings of the average family of the day.

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