

Accompanying the Bell are four Icons which correspond to the four stages of the Pastoral Preparation Programme. We hope the Icons will stimulate catechesis as they accompany the Eucharistic Congress Bell from diocese to diocese.

### OUR LADY OF REFUGE<sup>1</sup>



The Icon of Our Lady of Refuge and St. John the Evangelist is based on a 14th Century icon from the Poganovo Monastery. It shows John the Evangelist and Mary as they might have been beneath the cross, evoking the text of John 19:26-27.

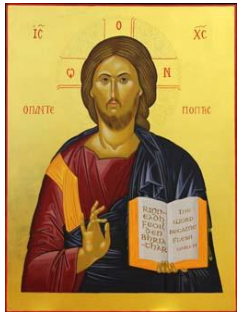
This icon is used to represent **stage 1 of the Congress pastoral preparation programme**: “Christ gathers us as a Eucharistic community.”

The choice of this icon is motivated by the idea that it represents the formation of the Church at the foot of the Cross. As St. John

Chrysostom reminds us the water and blood flowing from the side of Christ were symbols respectively of baptism and Eucharist.

Mary is confirmed as mother of the Church. In the person of St. John, the whole Church is gathered at the foot of the cross. The beloved disciple looks out from the icon, inviting us into this new communion with Christ through Mary. The Icon thus highlights both the Marian and Johannine aspects of the ecclesial community – we are called to be fruitful bearers of the Word and Beloved disciples. "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." (Luke 8:21).

### PANTOCRATOR<sup>2</sup>



The oldest surviving icon of Christ Pantocrator dates from around the 6th or 7th century (from St Catherine's monastery, Mt Sinai). The IEC Pantocrator icon is based on an icon found in the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos in the 16th Century. It depicts Christ holding the open Gospel in His left hand and blessing us with His right hand.

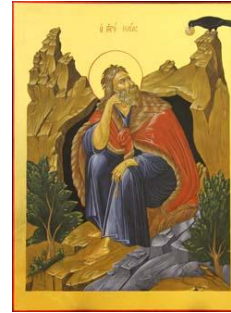
This icon is being used to represent **stage 2 of the Congress pastoral preparation programme**: “Christ gathers us to listen to hear, to be nourished and to be formed into a community by God’s Word.”

The text inscribed in the Book is “The Word was made flesh and lived among us” reminding us that Jesus is the eternal Word, spoken by God in the beginning.

<sup>1</sup> Iconographer: Philip Brennan.

<sup>2</sup> Iconographer: Richard Sinclair

### ELIJAH AND THE RAVEN<sup>3</sup>

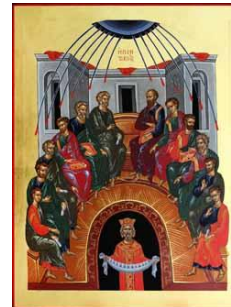


The Icon of Elijah and the Raven is in the Byzantine Museum in Athens and dates from the 17th Century. This is the image chosen to represent **Stage 3 of the pastoral preparation**: “Christ gathers us to be nourished by the Bread of Life.” In some respects it is not the most obvious choice and requires some explanation.

Elijah is a strong prophet, but we meet him here at his most vulnerable. He has begun to realise that his own spiritual energy is not enough to sustain Him. To that extent, he may capture quite well the 21st century experience of a Church in need of new energy; energy which only God can provide.

The bread and water brought by the raven nourish Elijah for his long journey to the Holy Mountain. In that sense they pre-figure the Eucharist, which is food for our journey to the Holy Mountain where God has prepared a banquet for all the nations (Is. 25)

### PENTECOST<sup>4</sup>



The Pentecost Icon from Staronikita Monastery, Mount Athos is the inspiration for the fourth image. It dates from the 16th Century and presents the classic group of the early Christian community. The community has “moved on” however. Mathias has already taken the place of Judas. Paul (as an apostle to the Gentiles) also appears, together with Luke and Mark. Christ holds out to the Apostles the scrolls with the Good News, symbolic of the mission which flows from the Paschal Mystery.

This icon is being used to represent **Stage 4 of the pastoral preparation for the Congress**: “Christ gathers and strengthens us for Mission by the Word and the Bread of Life.”

The coming of the Holy Spirit is what transforms the Church into a missionary Church. Those who come to the Congress “from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2) will be invited to return home and to share the promise with their children and “all who are far off” – whether physically or spiritually. The Pentecost icon serves as a reminder that the “ekklesia” that gathers for the Eucharist is also sent out to the ends of the earth.

The choice of the Pentecost image highlights the importance of the 'epiclesis' (let your Spirit come upon these gifts) in our prayer and its importance as our source of energy for mission.

<sup>3</sup> Iconographer: Colette Clarke

<sup>4</sup> Iconographer: Colette Clarke