



**St Dyfrig's Parish**  
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**Document 08**



**The Artwork of Penanne Crabbe**  
**(A historical note compiled in 2011)**

**Original Content:**

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Artwork by Penanne Crabbe (R.I.P. 2008) was installed in the church in 1999.

Penanne also authored short reflections on the two side-panel images in the same year.

The pictures were taken by Rev Gareth Leyshon in 2008, 2009 and 2011. Additional text by G. Leyshon 2011.

**Copyright:**

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The artwork and reflections © Penanne Crabbe, 1999.

“Recycled Pews” © Eddie Meek 2011.



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**Digitised:**

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The assistance of parishioners Teresa de Ste Croix and Margaret Priest in preparing this electronic document, is gratefully acknowledged.

**For Further Information**

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## **RECYCLED PEWS – by parishioner Eddie Meek**

Father Walsh approached me and asked if I knew Penanne Crabbe, and at the time I only knew her by sight, so Father Walsh introduced us. I asked myself why and soon learned the reason!

He had envisaged a 'Grand Cross' and asked about the feasibility of producing a work of this magnitude. Penanne, without hesitation, said it was and was prepared to do some homework which resulted in her producing an ambitious drawing, (to my mind ambitious), but that was before I knew how talented this lady was!! To produce a drawing was one thing, to actually bring it to fruition would be 9 or 10 months into the future.

A small version was produced, (which is in the side chapel), and was favourably received, so we went ahead with the main project. I bought two 8ft by 4ft sheets of plywood, about 3/4in. thick, then we marked out the required shape which I then cut out.

I would like to explain that with the Narthex being built, some of the pews were redundant and Father Walsh suggested that maybe the wood from these could be used. The wood from the seat of the pews was used by Penanne to carve the figure of Christ, and the sense of depth she obtained on the figure I think is remarkable. The arms were made separately and affixed. The framing around the cross I made with my band saw and router, but that was the end product.

The main part of the task was Penanne's and she had to produce the cross in two sections to be joined together on completion and this was no mean feat, getting the two halves to match up. But she did a wonderful job. At this juncture I would like to say the two halves were worked on in Penanne's front room where, due to the height of the ceiling and the length of the parts of the cross, manoeuvring them daily was a problem which the family had to endure. In the fine weather, Penanne worked outside, but that was very limited due to the 'Welsh summer'

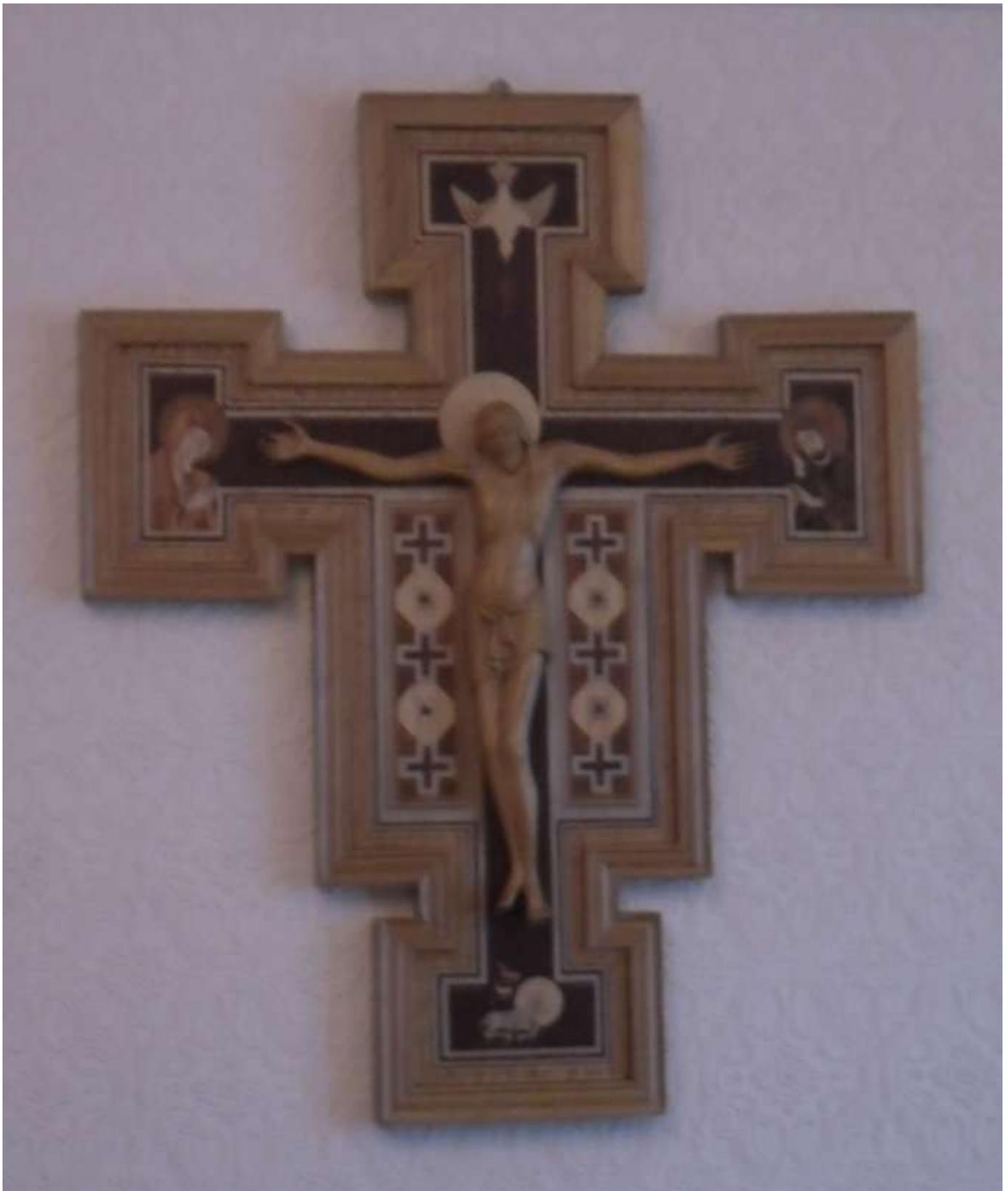
We then took both halves to the gallery in the church hall to continue the work and assemble, where progress was keenly watched by Father Walsh. This doesn't take long to write about but night after night for months we worked very harmoniously 'til the finished item was ready.

It was a very good feeling when, on completion, when we manoeuvred it down the stairs and into the church

While the cross was being made we also produced the 'Stations of the Cross', again utilising the redundant pews, and either side of the altar, 'Our Lady of the Valleys', and 'John the Baptist', as well as the dedication crosses on the pillars.

It seemed more meaningful using the pews as we were not losing them but a form of recycling to enhance the church. The judges of this would be, and are, the parishioners.

Eddie Meek



Penanne's Prototype, currently hanging in the Presbytery.

Photo by G. Leyshon 24/12/2011



## Our Lady of the Valleys

The theme of  
this piece of work is  
Light and Life  
based on chapter eight in  
the Gospel According to John.

*"I am the light of the world  
he who follows me  
will not walk in darkness  
but will have the light of life."*

The miner's lamp  
is a symbol of light  
and  
the canary  
is a symbol of life.

The sorrow of Our Lady  
is intended to express  
the sorrow of all mothers for their children.

In this picture  
(not forgetting that a number of  
St. Dyfrig's parishioners  
are descendants of Irish Famine refugees)  
the tears are for all the children in the Valleys,  
past, present and future.

*Penanne Crabbe, Christmas 1999*

## My Beloved Listen to Him

In this work  
I wanted to capture the drama of  
Our Lord's Baptism in the Spirit.

The interaction of  
the Holy Spirit descending  
on those who seek him  
was and is now  
the most singular, spectacular  
event of our lives.

St John  
I wanted to appear as  
a man of nature,  
merging into the surrounding scene.  
The desert, the mountains and the rocks  
all symbolising that the road to conversion  
is not an easy one.

Whether it is just my nature  
or because I was brought up in Africa,  
I have never lost the sense of  
the preciousness of water  
and the beauty of all things created.

The woods I have used speak for themselves.

*Penanne Crabbe, Christmas 1999*







*Previous page:*

*The great crucifix, which hangs over the altar, was created in Penanne's living room in two halves, and put together on site.*

*Left:*

*Penanne also designed the fourteen stations of the cross which hang on the pillars of the church, completed by this fifteenth "station of the resurrection".*