

BROTHER COSMAS WAMBACH SDS

For much of his religious life, until his death in 1993, Brother ‘Coz’ was quite well-known in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa. On the weekends, he would travel to state fairs, county fairs, parish bazaars and picnics. Armed with chalk, pencils, drawing pads and easels, he’d set up his art booth where he would sit for hours sketching people’s portraits. For just a few dollars and a few minutes of their time, people could get a professional portrait of themselves, their children or grandchildren. Most of his proceeds went to the Salvatorian community, the rest went to foster parent organizations – a cause that was dear to his heart.



Brother’s day job was in the art department of the community’s publishing facilities – first in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin, from 1941 when he entered the Society – until the move to Salvatorian Center in nearby New Holstein in 1958. He was quiet and reserved, and most people had no idea who was creating the artwork they’d see in the various Salvatorian publications and greeting cards. Much of the time, it was the work of Br. Cosmas.

Samples of his artwork also graced the halls of our seminaries, schools, and community houses across the country. Some of his paintings were religious, and some were simple landscapes meant to provoke a peaceful mood. Br. Cosmas also provided the administration of the Province with artwork of the Society’s “Teaching Savior” logo which was used on official documents. The logo was revised numerous times over the years by Br. Cosmas.



Images of the Savior and the Blessed Mother were favorite themes of Brother’s work. He found it easier to express his faith and prayer in the way he knew best – in his artwork. He “kept up with the times” in his artistic skills and styles. His earlier paintings and drawings from the 1940’s show the very traditional portrayals of Christ and Mary that were prevalent through the centuries. In later years, his drawings would take on a more modern slant – appealing to a new generation of the faithful.

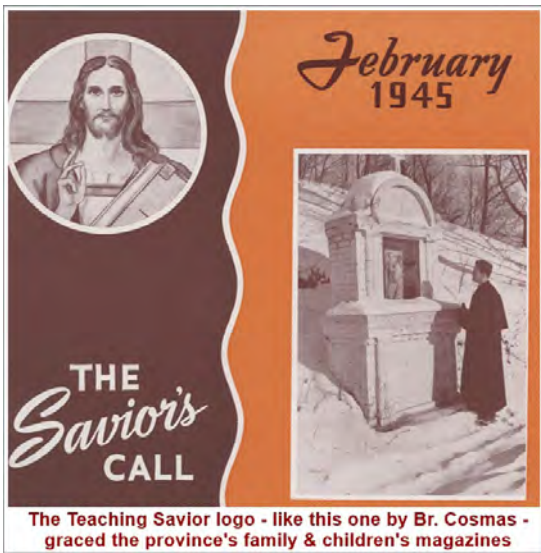
As a Salvatorian, Br. Cosmas was occasionally called upon to offer a drawing of our Founder – Father Francis Jordan. Using familiar photographs of the Founder, he created numerous renderings that are still in use today, years after his death.





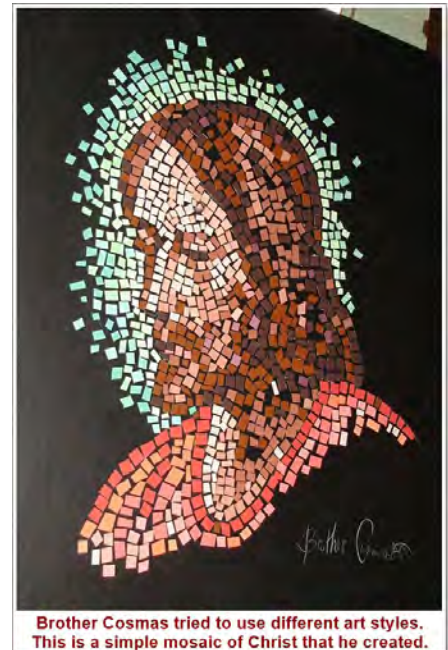
But the way most people remember Br. Cosmas is like in the photo at the left – sitting at his easel, intently drawing a quick portrait while people watched over his shoulder. And when he had finished, you’d see a smile come across the sitter’s face when they were shown their picture – and Brother was almost always rewarded with a hug. Not every artist gets that kind of love!

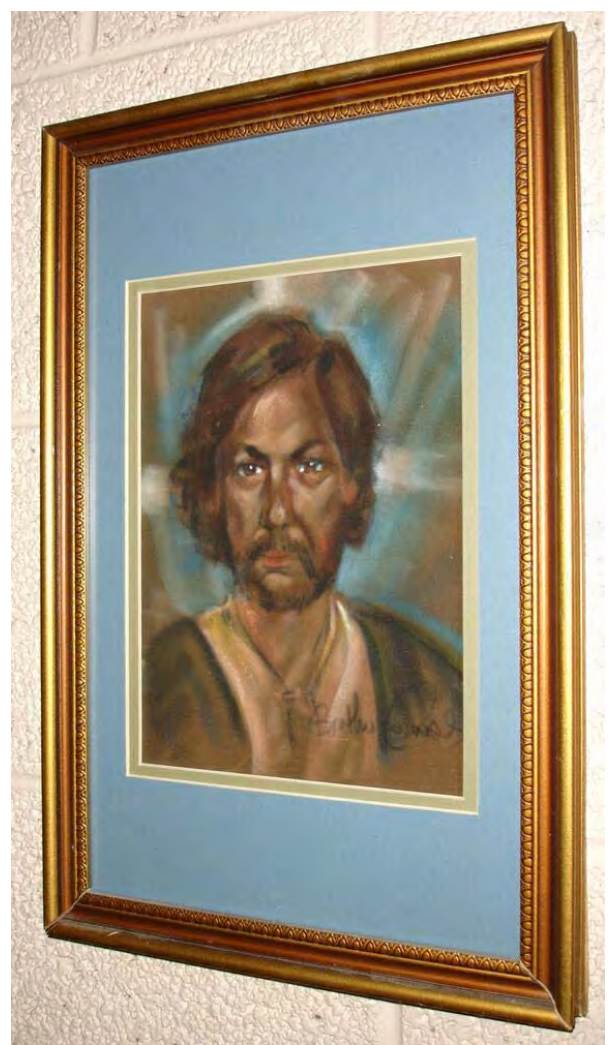
For people who couldn’t travel to meet him at one of the fairs, he also offered to sketch portraits from photos they would send to him at Salvatorian Center. Even during his breaks at work, Brother was usually seen drawing something! One advantage to drawing from the photos was that he could also sketch portraits of pets too! He would say with a smile, “Animals don’t sit well for portraits! It’s much easier using a photo.”



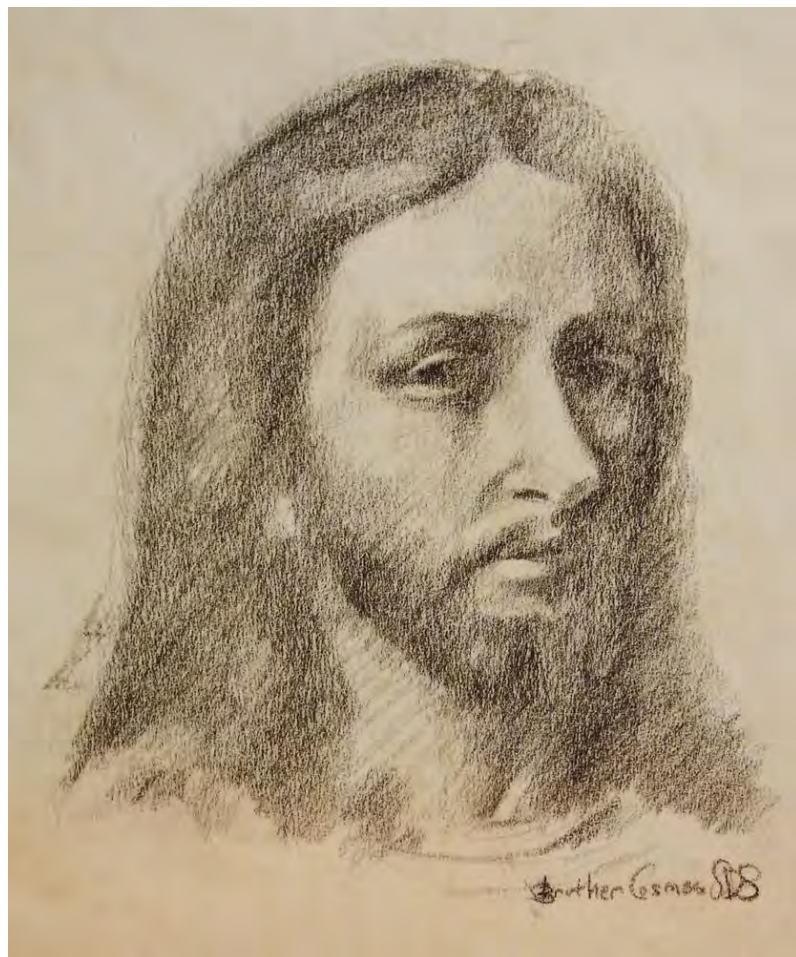
The following pages show samples of the many works done by Brother Cosmas.

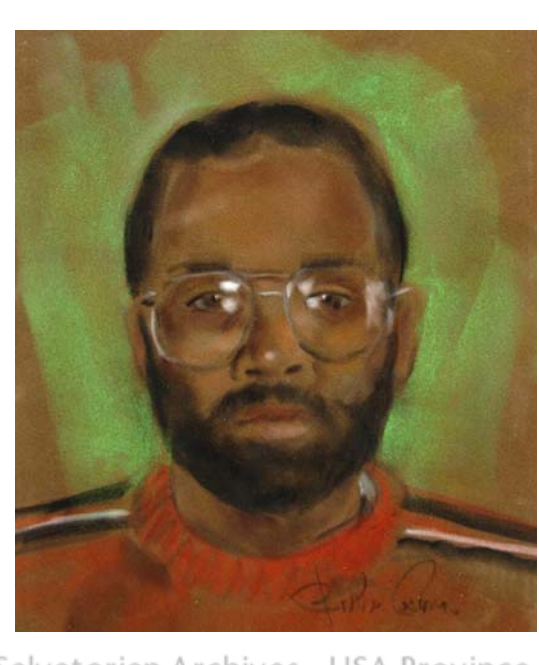
His simple chalk drawings make up most of his art pieces that are housed in the Salvatorian Archives.



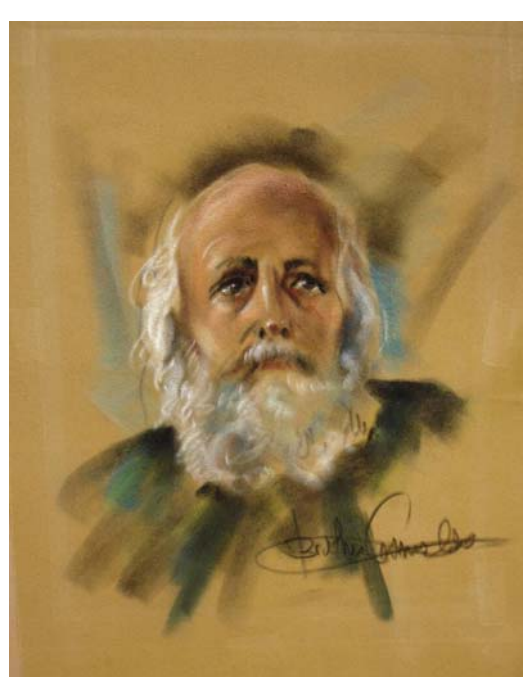


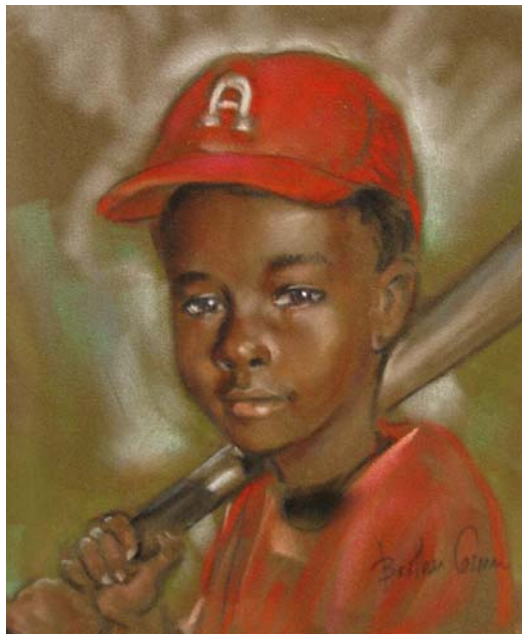
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