

How I came to know his star

Artist A. Vonn Hartung tries to bring the reality of Jesus' birth into his paintings.

As an infant and until I was around seven years of age, I had to wear plaster casts on both feet and legs due to a congenital deformity.

Therefore I was greatly restrained in getting about, and spent most of the time on my back in a baby carriage or being carried from place to place, to where others thought I should be.

I compensated for this situation with observation and imagination. I travelled (if you can imagine) among the fantastic clouds that drifted above and along with the birds and butterflies that flew past; or with the determined comings and goings of the ants and their neighbours in the grass next to the blanket where I spent my days, close to my mother as she worked.

When finally the casts came off and I could walk and run, I was off to explore the world! We were blessed to live on a tidal inlet off the Atlantic coast, surrounded by woods which offered me endless chances to explore and discover.

If I wasn't fishing or harvesting scallops, I was hunting or trapping in the woods nearby.

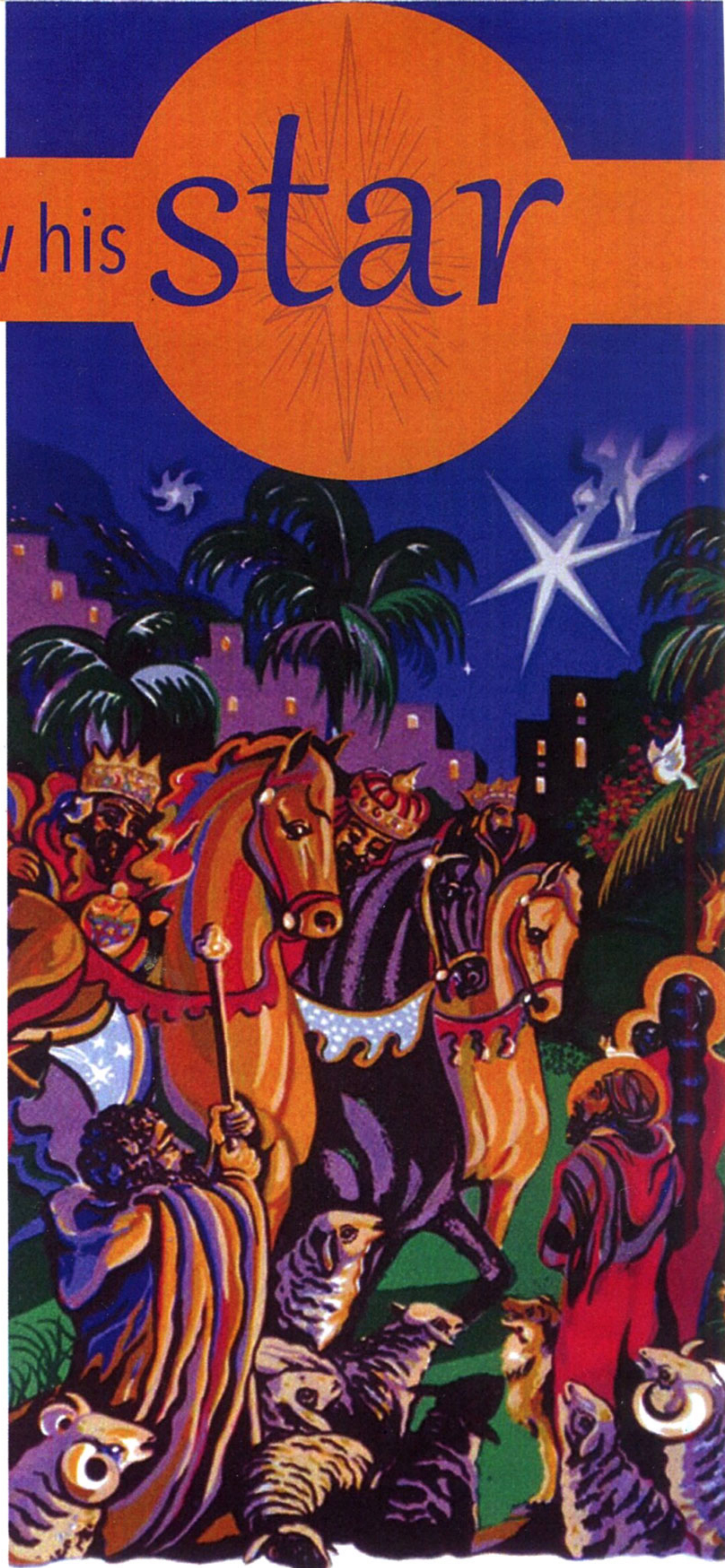
My father was a fisherman and taught me about the sea, explaining why the herring and bluefish were so abundant in the summer and disappeared in the winter; how the Gulf Stream made its way north from the Caribbean, fed the Grand Banks fishing grounds, then skirted the coasts of Great Britain, Europe and Africa before returning to the southern ocean to merge with the currents that circle the earth.

This understanding was then complemented and completed with the revealed truth so evident in our local Catholic Church, a most amazing and beautiful place!

Convinced that it was a glimpse of heaven with its magnificent stained-glass windows, carved statuary and painted murals of Jesus, his mother and all the saints, my imagination was illuminated and enriched with this language of Divine Beauty.

I wakened to a life beyond the one I lived, to one even more glorious. I was hooked!!! I began drawing more and more and was fascinated to see that the figures I drew seemed to come to life for me.

When I left home I wandered far and wide and worked at many things. To toil and learn the skills that others master is to appreciate and respect their treasure and be grateful for what they give.



Paz (Peace) By A. vonn Hartung

Because of the mastery I saw in others, I arrived at the place where I had begun and became an artist of Sacred Art, realizing that the source and essence of all beauty is God. Whether we come to this truth tethered to one place or along the protracted journey of life, we, like the Wise Men who followed that Star, must offer our treasure from where we are.

A. Vonn Hartung is "an artist of Catholic Sacred Art, primarily a painter and wood sculptor, although he has done major works in mosaic, ceramic sculpture, portraits and serigraphs".