St. Ann’s Episcopal Church in Nashville, Tennessee recently commissioned an icon of Christ’s Resurrection that was installed above their columbarium. The icon was written by Sr. Eliseea Papacioc, a Romanian Orthodox nun, who is a world-renowned iconographer and whose work has been exhibited in New York, Washington, DC, Moscow and Rome. Maureen Mullarkey, a New York art critic, commented on her work:

Sister Eliseea eclipses pious sentiment and rises to compelling sacred art. She is not a copyist, not merely replicating older work. Rather, she inhabits the icon tradition infusing historic patterns with a quality of concentrating precision, and refinement distinctly her own. It is said that to write an icon is like standing in prayer. Looking at her work you trust the truth of these words.

In 2017, Sr. Eliseea visited Nashville and made a presentation of her work at Christ Church Cathedral. Barbara Donley, a member of St. Ann’s, attended the presentation and was inspired by the beauty of Sr. Eliseea’s icons. She approached the Vestry of St. Ann’s to consider commissioning Sr. Eliseea to create an icon for the parish’s columbarium. The Vestry supported the idea as a memorial to deceased parishioners.

The Resurrection icon depicts the risen Christ and the three women who approached the tomb to anoint His dead body, as described in the Gospel of Luke. The icon contains much symbolism that helps convey the mystical experience of this significant event in the life of the Christian church, through the use of specific colors, body language and architectural setting. Around the perimeter of the icon is a band of text recounting the Resurrection story written in Greek. Sr. Eliseea’s attention to detail and technique make for an exquisite expression of spiritual art.

Following the installation, Ms. Donley said, “The design and skill are a gift to us all, and speak profoundly of the Resurrection. Everyone who spoke to me is very happy to have this icon for our columbarium. Exceeds expectations. It is just so right.”

The commission was facilitated and installed by the Rev. John Runkle and Harriet Runkle of the Frame Gallery located in Sewanee, TN.