

DARINA ALSTER – IMAGO DEI
artist's statement



In the everyday hustle and bustle, people easily lose faith in the value of their own lives. They suffer because they do not perceive the meaning and context of their own existence; the measure of everything for them is merely the surrounding empty world. Where can they find their own values? Is their happiness only based on success, possessions, or the productivity required by society?

While faith has been an ordinary part of life throughout history, today faithlessness is more common. It's no wonder, the Church (with rare exception) is so removed from real life that it can seem ridiculous to many.

The Catholic Church in our country is seemingly not concerned with restoring Christianity; worse, it is often concerned neither with God nor with people. It seems that the only thing it is truly interested in is its gigantic property, which it has successfully regained. In extreme forms the opinions of the church can even approach Fascism, as it does with some of the Catholic actors in the D.O.S.T. initiative. General interest in religion was spurred just last year by several events: The punk prayer of the activist group Pussy Riot sparked a worldwide response in the summer.

Pussy Riot connected religion with politics and punk. With the election of Pope Francis, hope has arisen that the church will come closer to actual human life in the 21st century, the war on poverty, and more understanding concerning anti-conception and homosexuality. At the same time, however, Pope Francis bears a shadow from the past in the form of the uncertainties concerning his activities in 1976-83, when his native Argentina was governed by the Junta and the Guerra Sucia.

Another topic that was heavily connected to the need for faith was the global expectation of the end of the world on 21 December 2012. Many theories of apocalypse existed, from sci-fi wars with alien civilizations to scientific versions of meteors colliding with earth, esoteric transitions of civilization from a three-dimensional to a five-dimensional existence, to the destruction of the majority of overpopulated humanity by a group of ruling powers, perhaps through the use of chemtrails. One can find many documentaries on the internet where the mysterious end of the Mayan calendar is explained in connection with the Egyptian pyramids and in direct connection to the economic crisis. Nothing out of the ordinary happened to the majority of people on that fateful day. Nevertheless, one interesting societal phenomenon arose: a desire for societal change and a hunger for something supernatural that transcends humans and gives their lives sense.

When I write about God I do not at all care about which form God appears in - whether Jesus, Krishna, the Buddhist essence of everything, or Life itself. Mystics have always claimed

that Christ is walking among us to this day, that God can be born in each of us, that God or Goddess is hiding in every human heart. This kind of idea gives life a deeper, humbler, more ethical and, at the same time, a more courageous dimension.