

1988/3 The Son of Man Standing Christ at Canterbury Cathedral

Bronze

7 feet 7" including base

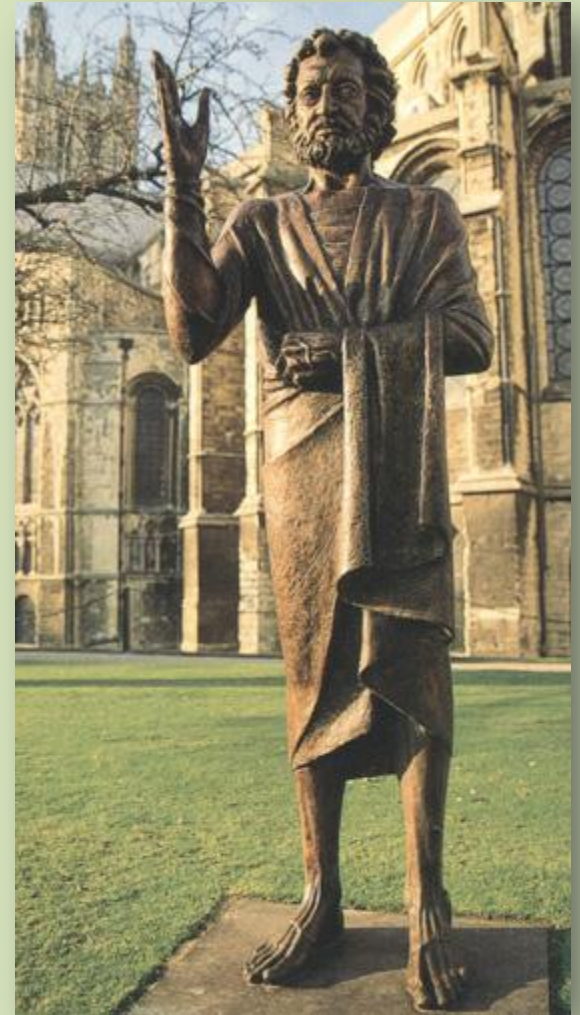
Unveiled after David McFall's death by James Butler RA and dedicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Robert Runcie on 8th October 1988.

References:

1) Extract from a letter dated 5th August 1987 from David McFall to John Simpson, The Dean of Canterbury:

"Dear John, The chalk and watercolour sketch accompanying this letter is to show the position we all agreed upon on 3rd July for the siting of my proposed figure of CHRIST. I love the position with the walls of Trinity Chapel behind and the two trees standing guard like sentinels. ... You will see that I indicate a bronze base of eight or ten inches in depth. I have since been wondering if we need even that much. Suppose I reduced it to a mere 1½ or 2 inches so that from the pathway the feet of CHRIST would appear to be virtually on grass level? I would like to know what you all felt about this. In a word, "plinth" = equals statue; no plinth = equals man. After all, I have depicted the Nazarene who was Christ on earth in our midst. Whereas the sculpture proposed for the Christ Church Gate will, I suggest, show him enthroned in paradise...

With best wishes, as ever, David."



2) Extract from a letter dated 27th July 1988 from John Simpson, The Dean of Canterbury, to David McFall:

"Dear David,

The statue is magnificent. I am absolutely thrilled and can see even more how right we were. The power and the sense of divinity humble the viewer: at least, that is what I feel. It will be the most significant of additions to Canterbury Cathedral and I am proud that it has happened in my time as Dean.

Our plan is that it will be unveiled and dedicated after Evensong (3.15pm) on Saturday 8th October...

With my best wishes, Yours sincerely, John Simpson."

[On reading this letter from the Dean, David McFall burst into tears]

3) Extract from a letter dated 8th September 1989 from The Dean & Chapter of Canterbury, to Mrs Alexandra McFall:

"... They have given careful thought to what to put on the plaque and believe "The Son of Man" expresses theologically the mind of David in referring to it as "The Nazarene". The title, too, repeats the words used by Jesus to describe himself as reported in the New Testament and the Chapter believe it captures the humanity which was so beautifully conveyed in the work ... The bronze maquette of the statue is now positioned in the Chapter Room where it looks very well and is much admired ..."

4) Canterbury Cathedral publication with the 1990 accounts: "...In October of that same year, a most compelling, powerful statue of Jesus Christ, Son of Man, executed by the late David McFall RA, was unveiled in the Precincts, towards the east end of the Cathedral. Already, this is recognised as one of the major religious sculptures of the second half of the twentieth century."

5) Letter from John Ward: "...I went along to Canterbury to see David's Nazarene. And how fine it looks. Before writing this, I wrote to the Dean congratulating them the Chapter on commissioning so fine a work and on their courage and discernment in realising how powerful and moving so simple a work would be. People have come to expect ghastly oddities, piles of complexities (which, when examined, add up to nothing) that when confronted by so straightforward a statement which makes them think they are aghast. How David must rejoice to know that this last magnificent work stands in front of England's greatest work of art, this Cathedral."

6) Letter from the Dean 4/11/88 refers to Ward's letter: "...He (Ward) has since been to see the statue and has referred to it as a masterpiece, and says it is so wonderful that the moment has been reached when something perfectly straightforward shocks."





Some may be interested to read David McFall's diary entries of the poignant and harrowing struggle he faced to complete this work in the face of advancing cancer. The entries can be read by clicking the following link

[1988_3 The Son of Man diary.pdf](#)