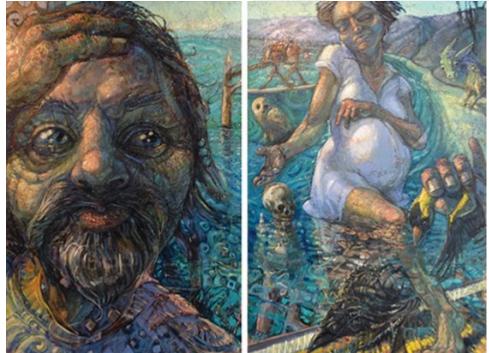
Joseph and Mary: Wedding Portrait, by Jim Larson

Art selection and comment by Lil Copan in the January 21, 2015 issue



During Advent and Christmas, Christians hear stories of prophets, shepherds, night skies, angel announcements, a star, traveling Magi, and wanderers. An exploration of past and future, of expected and curious symbols, and of mystery—these also are central in the work of Jim Larson. A traditional woodworker and liturgical artist at House of Mercy, a church in St. Paul, Minnesota, Larson merges Western art, biblical and historical narratives, and traditional and nontraditional symbolism. This oil-on-canvas diptych, *Joseph and Mary: Wedding Portrait* (working title), is part of a series based on Jean-François Millet's and Vincent van Gogh's *The Sower*, where the sower is transformed into Mary with the Christ-child, and the Passion is attested to by raven, goldfinch, and skull. "The narratives might remain elusive," Larson writes. "But that's OK; the stories they grow out of are pretty strange to begin with."