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GET THE PICTURE

PICTURE an artist and what do you see? A familiar image is of a bohemian type struggling to keep body and soul together while committing their masterpiece to canvas in a backstreet garret. Colour-mixed palettes, daubed works in progress and brushes soaking in turps are all hidden from view. The first chance an outsider gets to see a creation is if and when it goes on public show.

That's not the way Dilek O'Keeffe works. Not only does she publish on the web (dilekokeeffe.com), she is also painting landscapes in the window of the New City Gallery, just a stone's throw from London Bridge. As she adds a tad more 'cad yellow' to the canvas, passers-by pause to watch, or pop in for a chat.

Why go public?

'I like the idea of showing people how art is made from start to finish,' Dilek tells *The War Cry*.

'Mind you, that also means that people can see my mistakes!'

'Rather than people just seeing an end result on display, the whole thing – painting, process and painter – becomes the exhibit.'

'It's a brilliant idea,' one onlooker tells *The War Cry*. 'It shows that what she's doing is for real, not a print.'

The reaction of other pause-and-ponderers suggests that being able to see a painting in progress adds to the appreciation of the artist. It breaks down arty pretensions without losing the wonder of the skill involved.

Some people like to

Artist has a brush with the public

says NIGEL BOVEY



EASEL DOES IT: Dilek O'Keeffe attracts spectators to the New City Gallery

paint God as someone who is only accessible to a select few. Others see him as someone who shuts himself away – out of touch, out of sight, out of mind. Of course, by definition, God is invisible. But he is not cut off from his masterpiece – humanity.

When God decided to show his creation what he is like he did not paint a picture, he expressed himself

in flesh and blood. He sent his Son, Jesus, to live among us. The Bible describes Jesus as 'the image of the invisible God' (Colossians 1:15 *New International Version*).

If we want to know what God is like, we need only look at what Jesus was like. Jesus loved the unlovable, reached out to the untouchable, valued the outcast and forgave the undeserving.

He made himself available to

people, whatever their background. He said that God's forgiveness was for anyone, whatever they'd done.

Jesus cut through religion that restricts access to God to a chosen few or those who consider themselves good enough. Instead of rules, a relationship. His message was simple. It was: 'Follow me.' It still is.

Is it time to put ourselves in the picture?

People can see my mistakes!