

## Cross-Stitch Birds

These beautiful pictures were made by Ruth Smith.



A **kingfisher**, said to be the first bird to fly from Noah's ark after the deluge, supposedly received the orange of the setting sun on its breast and the blue of the sky on its back. It was considered a **symbol of** peace, promising prosperity and love.

The kingfisher is an icon, the embodiment of something that shows us how to live our faith. Icons give us powerful images that inspire pure prayer. The image may not look like reality but it points to what is essential. For example, an icon of Mother Teresa might have disproportionately large hands. The small woman did not actually have large hands, but they represent the great love with which she served many poor, dying, and orphaned people. Icons are not a work of art that people worship. They are a sort of visual shorthand for what matters most - because we understand through picture and symbol and beauty. Each feature of an icon communicates something. Hence, the bright wings of a kingfisher spread in flight catch the sun and this flash of brightness brings encouragement. I'm convinced that there are icons all around us, and they can lead us into the most natural and essential prayers. Despite the deluge & storms of recent times, God shines bright & encourages us to stay strong. So, let's pay attention. We may catch a Kingfisher.

**Owls**, on the other hand, are generally a symbol of wisdom, good judgement, and knowledge. Of all an owl's features, perhaps the most striking is its eyes & owls are well known for their sharp vision & keen observation. An owl's eyes are so well developed that they can 'see through the darkness' in their nocturnal kingdom. As far as eyesight in the animal kingdom goes, humans see quite well. We can see stars glowing from millions of light-years away, we can see a wide range of colours, and we can see clearly for miles if our sight isn't obstructed or impaired. But although our sight is pretty incredible and probably the sense we rely on the most, our vision pales in comparison to that of the owl. This ability to see in the darkness, reminds me of the heart of our Father which looks & reaches beyond what is seen by our natural eye. He looks beyond a person's exterior & the interior condition of their soul. He looks beyond a person's history & He sees a much-loved child of God. Because of His love for us, He sees treasures in the Darkness. And that's something we can do - we must look into the darkness & see the treasure in hidden places - they are there!