

MY *Fine Art* STORY BOOK

VOLUME SIX

COMPILED BY MARLENE PETERSON

My *Fine Art* Story Book

Volume Six



Stories of Artists and Fine Art
Pieces for the Young Reader

Compiled by Marlene Peterson

Libraries of Hope

My Fine Art Story Book
Volume Six

Copyright © 2023 by Libraries of Hope, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher. International rights and foreign translations available only through permission of the publisher.

Book Design and Layout: Krystal D'Abarno

Cover Image: *The Journey of the Magi,* by James Tissot (1894). In public domain, source Wikimedia Commons.

Lester, Katherine Morris. (1927). *Great Pictures and Their Stories, Volumes 1-8*. New York: Mentzer Bush & Co.

Carpenter, Flora L. (1918). *Stories Pictures Tell, Volumes 1-8*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Hurll, Estelle M. (1897). *The Madonna in Art*. Boston: L.C. Page & Co.

Waters, Clara Erskine Clement. (1886). *Handbook of Christian Symbols*. Boston: Ticknor & Co.

Libraries of Hope, Inc.
Appomattox, Virginia 24522

Website: www.librariesofhope.com
Email: librariesofhope@gmail.com

Printed in the United States of America

Table of Contents

The Life of Christ.....1

Christ in the Temple.....3

The Last Supper.....9

James Tissot.....17

The Madonna in Art.....53

The Madonna in Art.....55

Religious Symbols in Art.....77

The Use of Symbols in Christian Art.....79

The Life of Christ




Christ in the Temple
Hofmann

Christ in the Temple

Heinrich Johann Hofmann

The great day had come! The young lad, Jesus, with his parents was soon to visit the holy city, Jerusalem. Ever since he had been a little child at his mother's knee, he had heard of the great day when he should see the wonderful city and temple. Now his dream was soon to be realized!

Jesus lived with his parents in the quiet village of Nazareth. They were pious Jewish people.

During Passover Week, it was the ambition of all Jewish people living in the country round about to make the annual visit to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the holy city. Here upon the mount stood the beautiful temple. Within its sacred courts the learned doctors, rabbis, and scribes studied the Scriptures, and taught the people.

The Passover was the great yearly festival of the Jews; the temple was thronged with pilgrims, gathered in the holy city for this great occasion.

It was a beautiful day when the boy Jesus and his parents began their journey to Jerusalem. From all directions the pilgrims were gathering. The roads became more and more crowded, and as they drew near the city the throng grew greater. Soon, with songs of praise, they entered the city gates.

Day after day the pilgrims worshipped in the temple. Day after day they sat at the feet of the rabbis.

He looked upon their wonderful robes. He observed their fine faces and thoughtful brows. He gave them reverence as teachers of the Sacred Law.

Soon they were touching upon deeper and more vital questions. He pushed forward and stood nearer. Suddenly he spoke. The doctors looked. They listened. They were surprised to hear this little country lad speak with so much wisdom.

Soon they, in turn, began to question him. They asked about the Scriptures and their meaning. The answers were clear and sure. The doctors were astounded.

In the meantime the parents of the boy and others of the numerous bands of pilgrims were preparing to return to their homes. So many little companies were starting on their return journey that the narrow streets of the city were thronged. Pilgrims and donkeys everywhere!

The parents of Jesus, believing he was in their company, moved on with the others. Not until they had gone a day's journey did they miss the boy. Great was their grief and fear!

They hastened back to the city. They went to the temple. To their surprise and joy they found their son standing in the midst of the learned doctors, explaining to them the Scriptures. They were amazed.

Clad in a simple white tunic, the boy Jesus stands in their midst expounding to them the Law.

How quickly he catches our attention! Not only is he the center of the group, but all eyes, all thought is fixed upon him.

See the faces of those who listen! Each is interested. Each is different.

He is indeed a stern Pharisee who sits before the lad. The heavy book, which to him is the Law, rests upon his knees. He turns the pages. But the boy's wisdom astonishes him. He pauses to listen.

Next stands a younger man. Perhaps he is a scribe. He seems to have



12-Year-Old Jesus in the Temple by Adriaen van der Werff

asked a puzzling question, and is listening to the lad's reply. His kindly face seems captivated by the boy's words.

The aged rabbi with the heavy white beard leans heavily with both hands upon his staff. He, too, listens. A whimsical smile plays over his features. He perhaps wonders how a little country boy from Nazareth could know so much. He is patient, however, and listens as the boy continues.

Leaning on the desk at the right is another stern Pharisee. See his eyes! See his face as he observes the boy! He holds the scroll of the Law firmly grasped in his hand. This to him is his faith.

Beyond, in the far corner, is still another listener. The wisdom of questions and answers has also caught his attention. He pauses to hear yet another word from the young lad in their midst.

See how the artist has suggested the temple, the learning of the East, and the richness of oriental color.

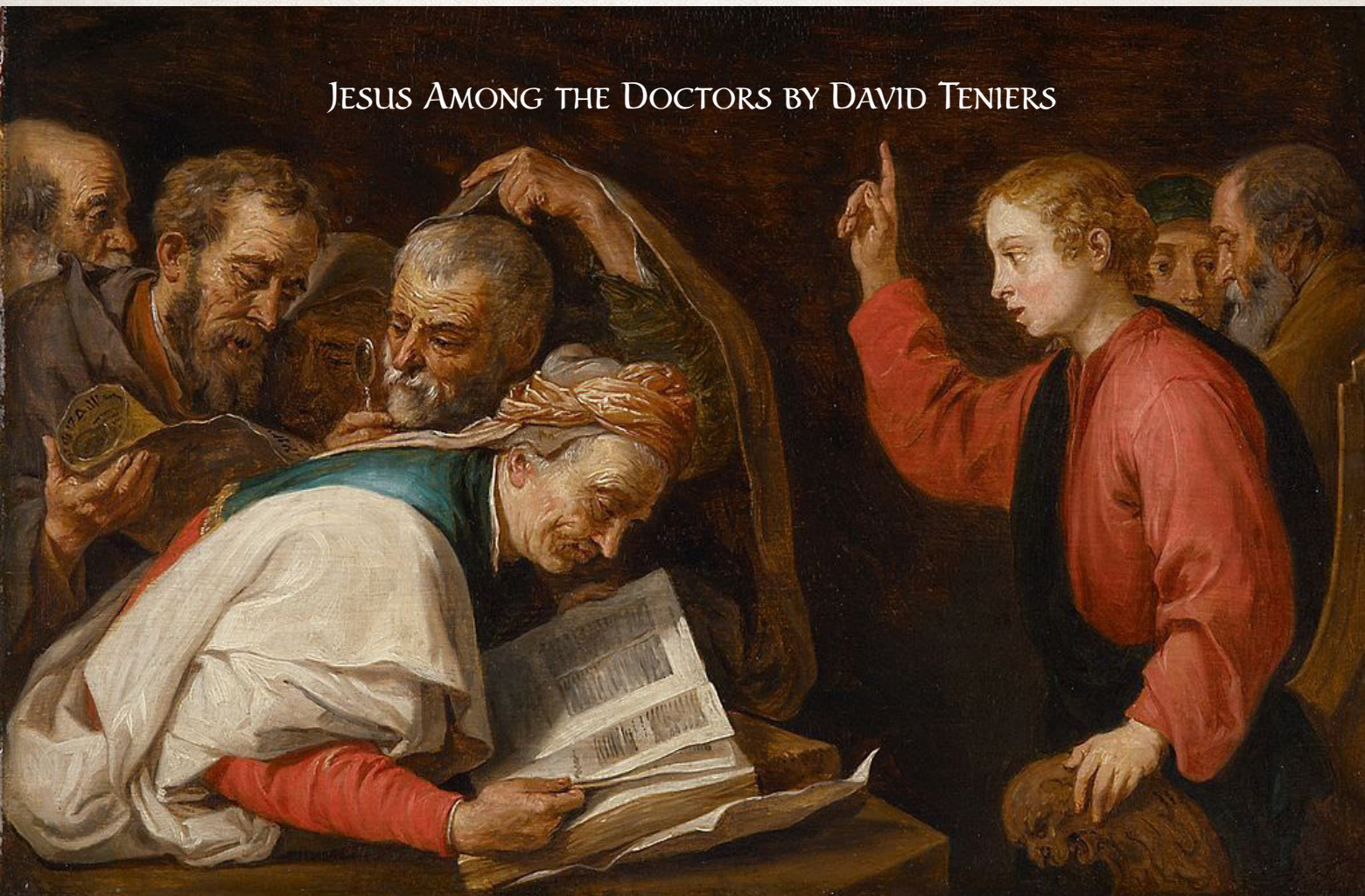
The two columns in the background and the reading-desk suggest that the group is within the temple. The open books and the parchment scroll give an air of learning and scholarship to the scene. The rich materials and inlaid chair lend magnificence to the picture.

See the rich robes of the doctors! Notice how the red of the Pharisee's robe is repeated, toned off, in the robes of the other figures. Notice how the gray-blue of the desk-cover and the robe of the leaning figure is repeated opposite in the headress of the seated Pharisee. Thus the artist repeats his color over the picture, giving a color-pattern to the composition. Perhaps you observe the marked contrast between the richness of the Pharisee's robes and the simple white tunic of the boy.

Above all, however, is the illumined face of the child, and the interest in the faces of those who listen. The artist made these interesting faces shine out of the dark background by lighting the picture as he did. Notice how the full light falls upon the young lad, then upon the open book, then moves up to the face of the learned rabbi. It passes next to the young scribe; then to the older rabbi; across the picture to the face

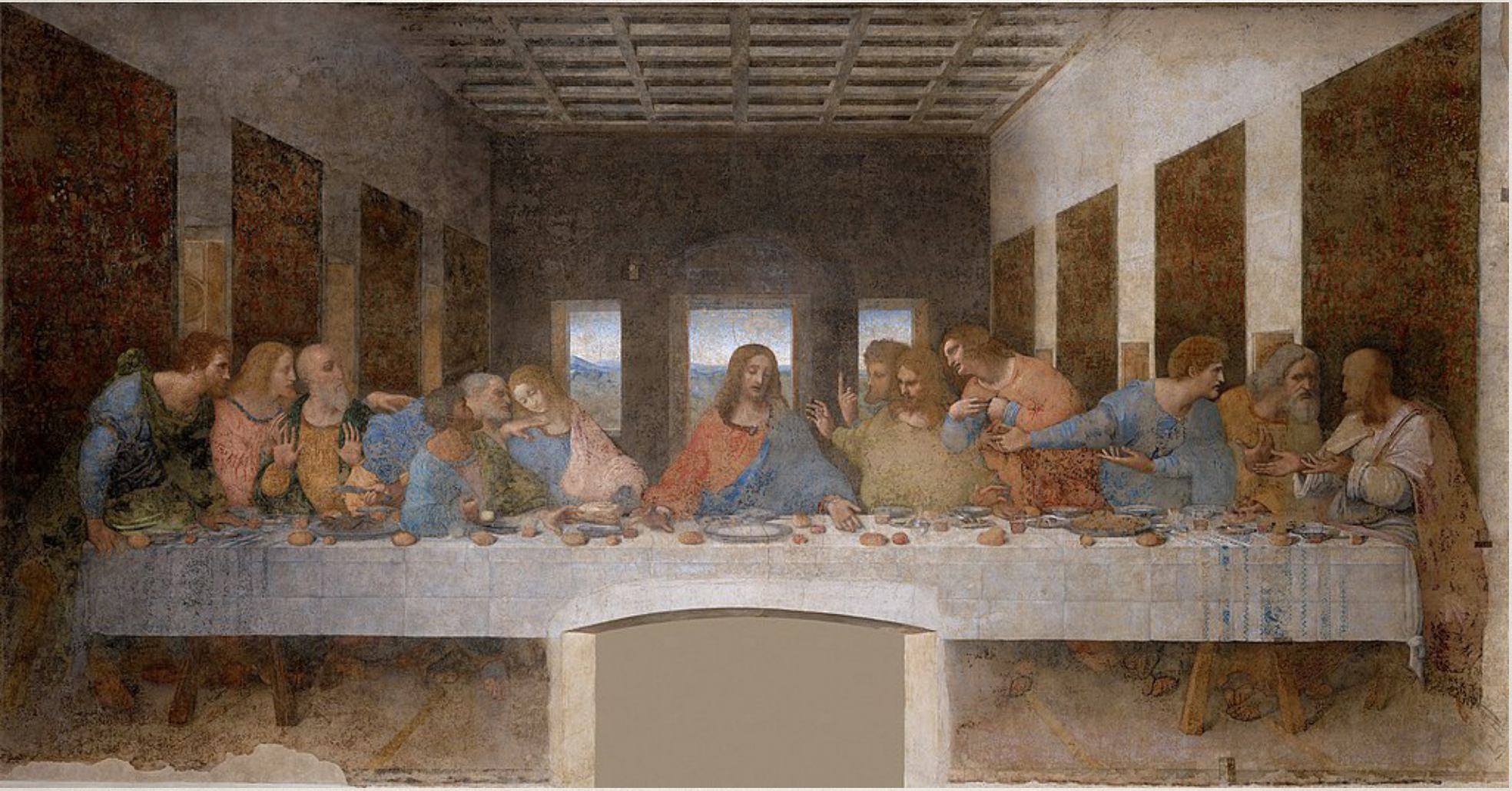
in the far left; then to the stern Pharisee in the foreground; and back again to the central figure. Thus, you see, the artist has arranged his light to make the eye travel all around the picture, and then lead back to the "center of interest." He has combined these many figures into one picture, largely by his arragement of light. In this way the artist gives unity to his composition, and at the same time emphasizes the "center of interest."

The beautiful face of the lad is illumined with wisdom and aglow with gracious sympathy. It captivated these learned teachers of old. It has won the modern world as well. The radiance and charm of the face and figure of the Christ-child make this one of the most inspiring creations in modern art. No picture of modern times has met with greater public favor than has Hofmann's "Christ in the Temple."



Jesus Among the Doctors by David Teniers

The Last Supper DA VINCI



The Last Supper

Leonardo da Vinci

Among the great fresco paintings of the world, "The Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci, has held a conspicuous place for the past four hundred years. Though mutilated, restored, and mutilated again, it still remains among the greatest of Italian wall-paintings.

This famous fresco was painted directly upon the wall of the old monastery of Santa Marie delle Grazie in Milan. The date according to the monastery records is 1497. This, you see, makes the fresco over four hundred years old. We are not surprised that it has "flaked off" during the passage of the years. We are told that the artist, instead of following the established rule for fresco, mixed his color with oil instead of water, to secure more brilliant hues. He little thought at the time that the world, four hundred years later, would regret his choice.

Though today this room in the old monastery is a shrine constantly visited by artists and travelers alike, it has not always been so highly esteemed. History tells us that Napoleon, in one of his Italian campaigns, quartered his horses in this room. His men were so little impressed by the painting that they used it as a target for missiles. Later a door was cut through the wall, defacing the lower center. Today the general design of the great picture is about all that remains of the original. Even in this state, however, it is recognized as one of the master-

pieces of the world.

About four hundred years ago Italy awakened to a new artistic life. The patrons of art in that distant day were largely churchmen. For the the great mass of the people, pictures were the most effective means of religious instruction. The artist told the story of the saints and martyrs in the language of picture, the language of design and color. All the people went to the churhces. They studied the pictures. Through pictures they learned more of the saints, more of the holy men of the past, more of the religion.

Not only the walls of the churches of this day, but the walls of monasteries as well, and other buildings associated with the life of the church, were decorated with subjects chosen from the Scriptures. The Last Supper was a favorite theme. It was considered especially appropriate for the dining-hall of a monastery. It was here that the monks gathered regularly. It was here, each day as they sat at meat, that the impressive lesson of the picture was imprinted upon their minds and hearts.

Though the most brilliant painters of Italy were inspired by the same subject, not one designed his picture as did Leonardo da Vinci. It is the beauty of design that makes this fresco, though sadly mutilated, a masterpiece.

The idea of seating the disciples at a long table grew, no doubt, out of a custom of the monks. It was their habit to file into the dining-hall three times each day, and seat themselves at the long tables. They doubtless made a picture similar to that of the decoration.

> "And when even was come, he
> sat down with the twelve."

Jesus and his disciples had journeyed to the Holy City, Jerusalem. It was a day of celebration, commemorating the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. They sat in an upper room having their evening meal together.



The Institution of the Eucharist by Gerard de Lairesse


Last Supper by Philippe de Champaigne

The artist pictures the large upper room in perfect perspective. see how the long lines of the ceiling and the vanishing lines of the side walls carry back, back, through the open window to the far Judean hills. This gives plenty of room for the long table and thirteen figures, each larger than life.

Jesus sits in the midst of his disciples. Six are arranged at the right, six at the left. They are conversing. Gradually the scene grows quiet. They hear strange words. The Master is speaking: "Verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

The little company is shocked, horrified! They become excited and anxious. One by one they eagerly question: "Is it I? Is it I?"

We see the anxious group. We see the stricken faces. We see all questioning but Judas. He draws back. He holds in his hand the money bag. He sits third to the master's right.

See the arrangement of the group! The artist gave much thought to this. As the words, "One of you shall betray me," were spoken, the little company, in the excitement of the moment, breaks up into groups of three. To the master's right, John, the beloved disciple, is overcome by the words he hears; Peter, the impetuous one, leans over questioning; Judas draws back. These three form a close compact group. Next, James, the younger, Bartholomew, the scholar, and Andrew stand together, eagerly hanging upon the words of the teacher.

To the left, James the elder throws out his hands, recoiling from the thought of betrayal. Thomas raises his finger, as he asks excitedly, "Lord, is it I?"

Philip is deeply moved; he raises both hands to his breast as he questions, "Is it I?" In the last group, Matthew, with outstretched arms, turns and vehemently addresses the excited Thaddeus and Simon.

Thirteen men sit within the room. They are all forceful men. All, but one, are agitated and bewildered. We see the consternation and perplexity written in their features. Then we pass to the central figure, so calm and composed. The contrast is marked.

A true picture gives but one impression. So here the artist planned his picture in the form of one design. Though there are many figures, they are so arranged that they unite in one pattern, with the principal lines leading to the "center of interest."

Continue the perspective lines of the walls and ceiling! They meet about the head of Christ.

See the faces! They are turned toward the central figure.

See the hands! They point to the Christ.

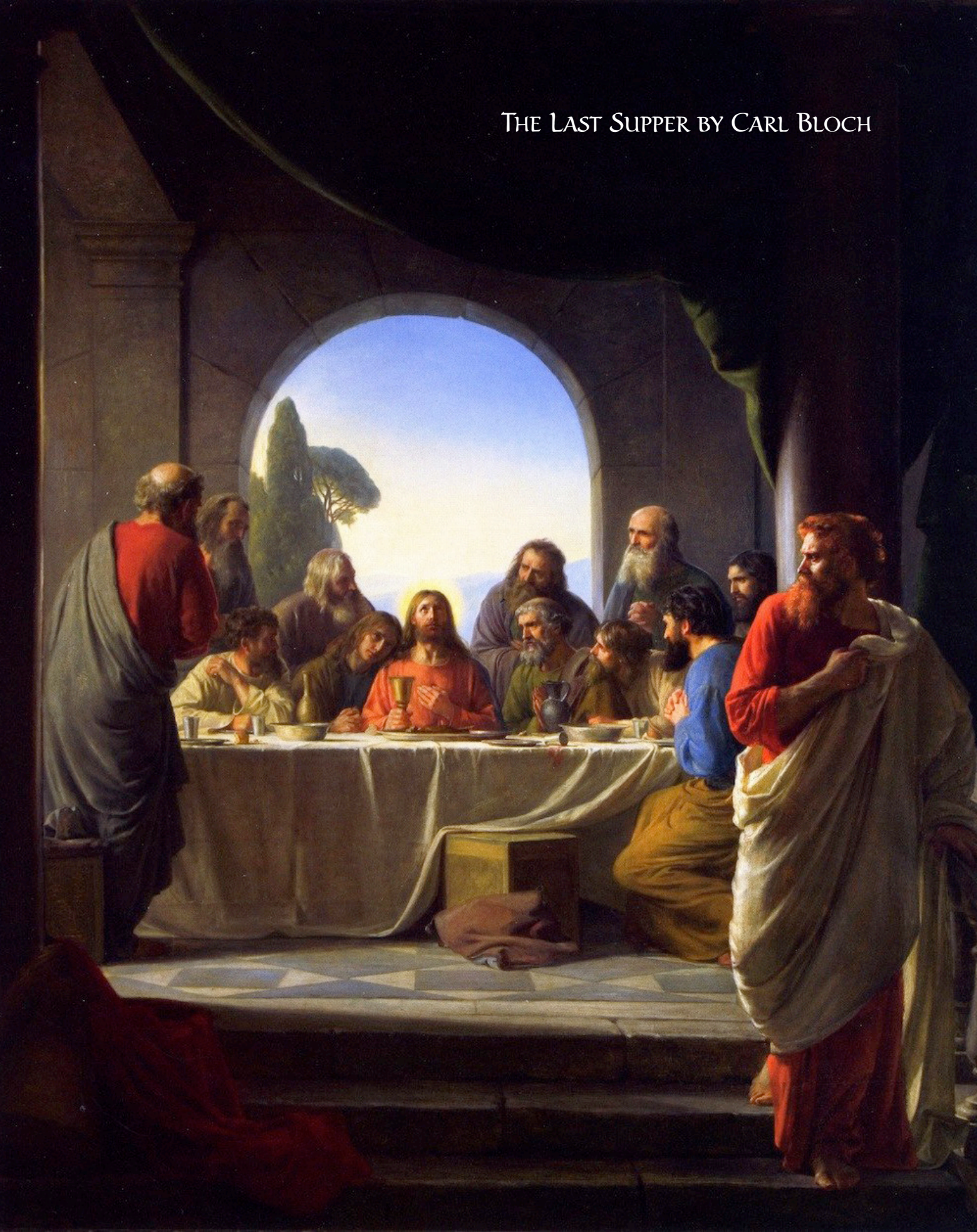
The disciples look, they stare, they gesture. The gestures made by hands and arms form a line which threads its way through the groups uniting them, and carrying straight to the central figure.

Though excited and greatly agitated, we understand that the thought of all is quickly centering about the calm figure in their midst. Here is where all the feeling of the great fresco centers!

It is said that the head of Christ is one of the most remarkable ever painted. It was never finished. The artist worked for days trying to realize his ideal. At times he would rush out upon the streets to relieve his mind of the strain.

One day he met a friend. He told him his dilemma. "Leave the Christ imperfect," advised his friend, "for you will never be able to accomplish a Saviour after such apostles."

It is true that the downcast eyes of the Christ and the unfinished head suggest all the artist could possibly have imagined the head of Christ to be. It alone is a masterpiece.



The Last Supper by Carl Bloch


Marguerite in Church
Tissot

James Tissot

1836-1902, France (Painter of Holy Land Scenes)

James Joseph Tissot was born in France in 1836. It was his mother, Marie, who taught him stories from the Bible at a very young age.

His parents worked in the fashion industry, which likely influenced his painting style. You will notice the fine detail he used in the clothing he painted.

By the time he was 17, he knew he wanted to be a painter. His father wanted him to go into business, but young Tissot was encouraged by his mother to pursue a career as an artist.

So off to Paris he went. While he studied with successful painters, Tissot spent much time on his own at the Louvre, copying masterpieces of art, as did most other young artists at the time.

He became friends with other famous artists like James Whistler, Edgar Degas and Manet.

His first exhibition in Paris showed scenes from the Middle Ages, many from Goethe's Faust.

In time, he became known for his paintings of elegantly dressed women shown in various scenes of everyday life.

In 1885, while visiting the Church at St. Sulpice, he had a religious vision which caused him to turn all of his attention to painting scenes from the Life of Christ. He traveled to the Holy Land where he

he could study the landscape, architecture and the people.

His creation of 365 watercolor paintings showing the life of Christ were met with much enthusiasm. Eventually, patrons of the Brooklyn Museum donated funds to purchase the collection. These paintings brought him wealth and fame.

In 1894, he was awarded the Legion d'Honneur, France's most prestigious medal.

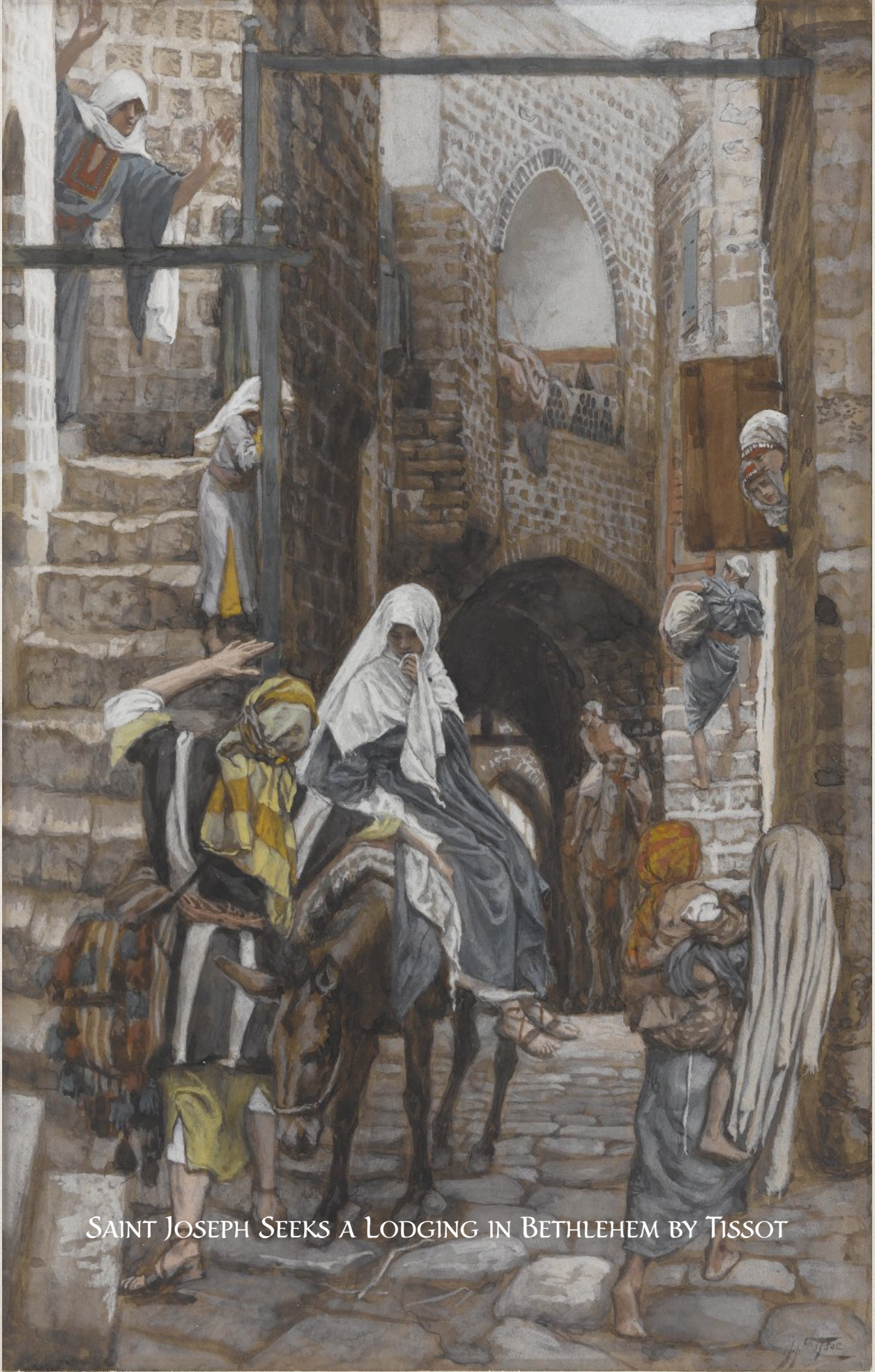
He spent his last years working on paintings based on stories from the Old Testament. A fun fact is that the creators of the movie Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark used Tissot's depiction of the Ark in the movie.



The Ark Passes Over the Jordan by Tissot



The Pope in Jerusalem by Tissot



Saint Joseph Seeks a Lodging in Bethlehem by Tissot

Luke 2

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem to be taxed with Mary, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Matthew 2

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.



The Magi Journeying by Tissot



The Woman of Samaria at the Well by Tissot

John 4

Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Matthew 5, 7

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.



The Sermon of the Beatitudes by Tissot



The Miraculous Draught of Fishes by Tissot

Luke 5

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genneserat, and saw two ships standing by the lake. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land.

And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

And Simon said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both ships, so that they began to sink.

Mark 4

And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there gathered unto him a great multitude, and he taught them many things by parables.



Jesus Teaches the People by the Sea by Tissot



The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes by Tissot

Mark 6

And the people came together unto him. And he began to teach them many things. And when the day was not far spent, the disciples came unto him, and said, Send them away for they have nothing to eat.

He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. How many loaves have ye? And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And when he had taken the five loaves and two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and brake the loaves and the two fishes divided he among them all.

And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

Mark 4

And the same day when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And they took him in the ship, and there were also with him other little ships.

And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on the pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.



Jesus Sleeping During the Tempest by Tissot



The Good Shepherd by Tissot

Luke 15, John 10

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

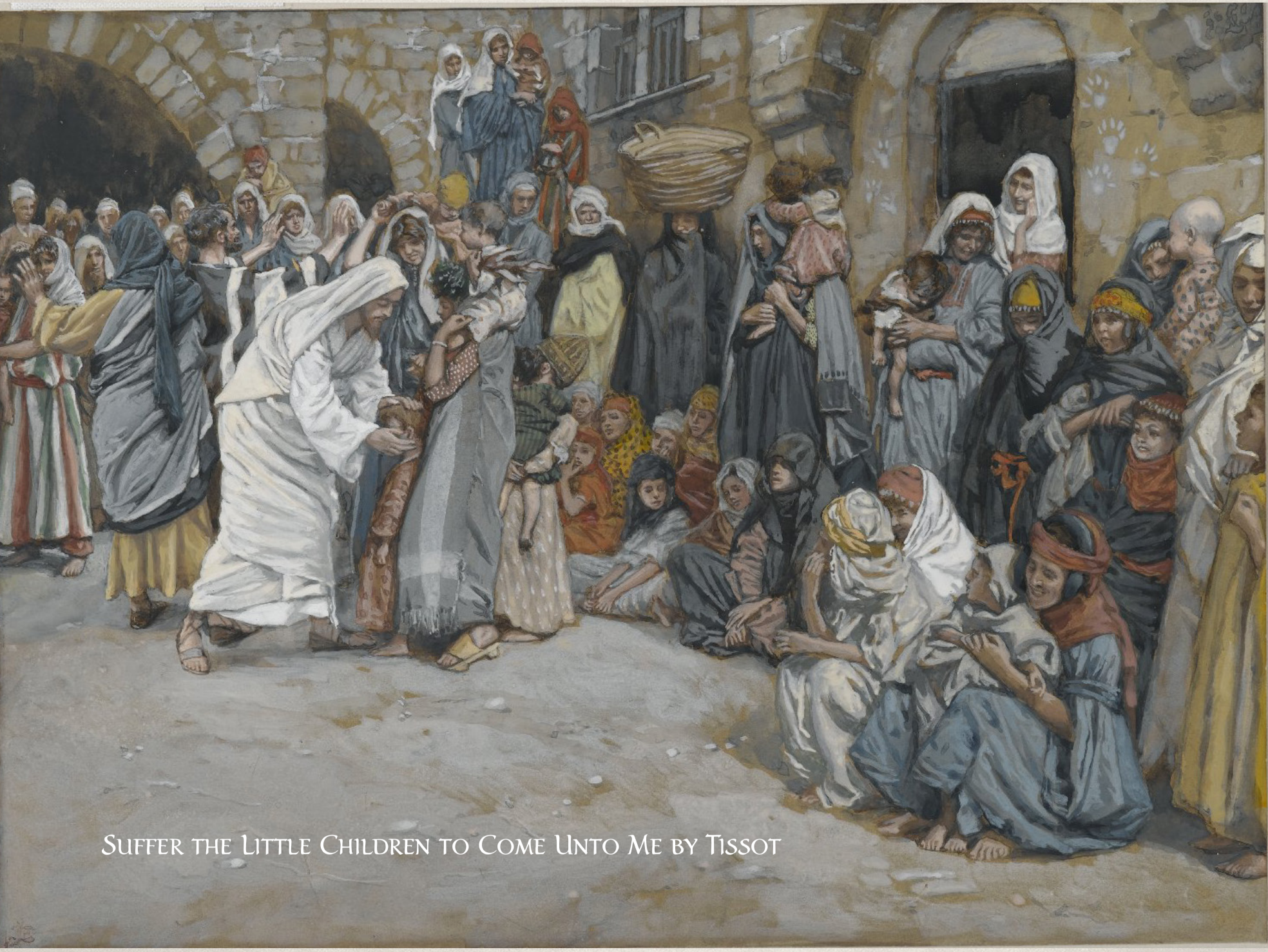
I am the Good Shepherd.

Mark 10

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.



Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me by Tissot



In the Villages the Sick Were Presented to Him by Tissot

Matthew 15

And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, and dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them.

Insomuch that the multitudes wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

Mark 5

And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name: and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed.

And Jesus went with him and cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. He saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he entered in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, arise.

And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years.

And they were astonished with great astonishment.



The Daughter of Jairus by Tissot



The Pool of Bethesda by Tissot

John 5

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity of thirty and eight years.

When Jesus saw him lie, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The man answered him, Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk.

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.

Luke 5

And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

He said unto the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.



The Palsied Man Let Down Through the Roof by Tissot



The Healing of Ten Lepers by Tissot

Luke 17

As he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jeus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God. And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

Mark 12

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites.

And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.



The Widow's Mite by Tissot

The Madonna in Art





Madonna and Child Enthroned

GIORGIONE

The Madonna in Art

Marlene Peterson

This portion of the book will share sections from a book called *The Madonna in Art* by Estelle Hurll written in 1897. But before we dive in, I think it bears repeating a couple of quotes from the audio I did in connection with Art. Our learning objective in studying art is captured in this little experience, shared by one of our heart-educator friends:

> The first time I saw Raphael's *Disputa*, which decorates one of the walls in one of the rooms of the Vatican in Rome, I had set out with my guidebook, intending to study all the paintings by Raphael that decorate these rooms. I entered the first room, and I suppose looked around the other walls, seeing the other paintings, but all I recall during this visit was the *Disputa*. I sat down before it and remained seated! I do not know how long, but the morning slipped away. What I thought about as I looked at the picture I cannot tell you. My impression is that I did not think at all; I only felt. My spirit was lifted up and purified and strengthened with happiness. Returning to my hotel, I read about the picture

in my guidebook. It appeared that one of the figures represented Dante. I had not noticed it; and as I read on, I noticed other things that I had missed; that indeed, the whole subject as far as it could be put into words escaped me. I had no knowledge what the painting was about; only I had felt its beauty.

Since then I have studied more about the picture and discovered some of the means Raphael employed to arouse this depth of feeling, and the knowledge has helped me to find beauty in other things.

John Van Dyke wrote: "You must look at pictures studiously, earnestly, honestly. It will take years before you come to a full appreciation of art; but when at last you have it, you will be possessed of one of the purest, loftiest and most ennobling pleasures that the civilized world can offer you."

And now let's turn to Estelle Hurll's introduction:

This little book *The Madonna in Art*—is intended as…a study of Madonna art as a revelation of motherhood. With the historical and legendary incidents in the life of the Virgin it has nothing to do.... Out of the great mass of Madonna subjects are selected, here, only the idealized and devotional pictures of the Mother and Babe.

It is now about fifteen centuries since the Madonna with her Babe was first introduced into art, and it is safe to say that, throughout all this time, the subject has been unrivalled in popularity. It requires no profound philosophy to discover the reason for this. The Madonna is the universal type of motherhood, a subject which, in its very nature, appeals to all classes and conditions of people. No one is too ignorant to understand it, and none too wise to be superior



Madonna and Child Blessing by Jacopo Bellini



Sacred Conversation by Giovanni Bellini

> to its charm. The little child appreciates it as readily as the old man, and both, alike, are drawn to it by an irresistible attraction. Thus, century after century, the artist has poured out his soul in this all-prevailing theme of mother love until we have an accumulation of Madonna pictures so great that no one would dare to estimate their number. It would seem that every conceivable type was long since exhausted; but the end is not yet. So long as we have mothers, art will continue to produce Madonnas.

Then she goes on to talk about how overwhelming it is to approach the subject without some kind of system for studying the art. While an historical student may group the paintings according to the era in which they were painted, and an art critic may group them by the technical schools they represent or there may be other scholarly groupings, Estelle first groups them according to the setting of the composition and then with their inner significance, which will hopefully make more sense as we go along.

We have collected some of the paintings she talks about in her book and will share them here to gain a quick overview of these paintings as she has grouped them. I hope the brief descriptions I'll share will help you appreciate what you're looking at.

So let's take a look at the first five groups: the settings of the paintings. I'll let Estelle teach you herself:

> First, there is the Portrait Madonna [e.g. *Madonna and Child Blessing* by Bellini] in which the figures are half-length against an indefinite background. We turn with relief to a simple portrait mother like this. It is another case where the simplest is best.
>
> Next, the Madonna Enthroned [e.g., *Sacred Conversation* by Bellini] where the setting is some sort of throne or

dais. In every true home the mother is queen, enthroned in the hearts of her loving children. There is, therefore, a beautiful double significance, which we should always have in mind, in looking at the Madonna enthroned. The picture stands for the Virgin Mother as Queen of Heaven. Understood typically, it represents the exaltation of motherhood.

The story of Cimabue's Madonna—an example of the Madonna Enthroned—is one of the oft-told tales we like to hear repeated. How on a certain day, about 1270, Charles of Anjou was passing through Florence; how he honored the studio of Cimabue by a visit; how the Madonna was then first uncovered; how the people shouted so joyously that the street was thereafter named the Borgo dei Allegri; and how the great picture was finally borne in triumphal procession to the church of Santa Maria Novella. Sir Frederick Leighton has preserved for future centuries this story, already six hundred years old, in a charming pageant picture: Cimabue's Madonna carried through the streets of Florence.

Third, the Madonna in the Sky or the Madonna in Gloria [e.g. *Our Lady of the Angels* by Bouguereau] where the figures are set in the heavens, as represented by a glory of light, by clouds, by a company of cherubs, or by simple elevation above the earth's surface. It is of pictures like this that our poet Longfellow is speaking, when he wrote:

> "Thou peerless queen of air,
> As sandals to thy feet the silver moon dost wear."

The fourth grouping is the Pastoral Madonna [e.g. *The Virgin of the Rocks* by da Vinci], with a landscape background. It was many centuries before art, at first devoted exclusively to figure painting, turned to the study of natural scenery. Thus it was that Madonna pictures, of various



The Madonna in Majesty by Cimabue



Our Lady of the Angels by William-Adolphe Bouguereau



The Virgin of the Rocks by Leonardo da Vinci

kinds, had long been established before the idea of landscape setting was introduced. In the ideal pastoral, the landscape entirely fills the picture, and the figures are an integral part of it. Such paintings are so rare that we write in golden letters the names of the few who have given us these treasures. The pastoral Madonna is the sort of picture which can never be outgrown. The charm of nature is as perennial as is the beauty of motherhood, and the two are always in harmony.

Finally, we have The Madonna in a Home Environment [e.g. *The Holy Family* by Schongauer], where the setting is an interior. A subject so sacred as the Madonna was long held in too great reverence to permit of any common or realistic treatment. The pastoral setting brought the mother and her babe into somewhat closer and more human relations than had before been deemed possible; The Madonna as a domestic subject, represented in the interior of her home, was hesitatingly adopted, and has been rarely treated. The Northern painters—the Dutch and the Flemish—led the way. Peculiarly home-loving in their tastes, their ideal woman is the *hausfrau*, and it was with them no lowering of the Madonna's dignity to represent her in this capacity.

...

The second grouping addresses the question, Which aspects of motherhood are displayed in the Madonna pictures or in other words, in what relation to her child has the Madonna been represented? The answer includes the following three subjects:

1. The Madonna of Love [e.g. *Madonna with Child* by Correggio] in which the relation is purely maternal. The emphasis is upon a mother's natural affection as displayed towards the child. Undoubtedly the most popular of all Madonna subjects certainly the most easily under-



The Holy Family by Martin Schongauer



Madonna with Child by Antonio da Correggio

stood is the Madonna of Love. The mother's mood may be read at a glance; she is showing in one of a thousand tender ways her motherly affection for her child. She clasps him in her arms, holding him to her breast, pressing her face to his, kissing him, caressing him, or playing with him. Love is written in every line of her face; love is the key-note of the picture. Pictures like these constantly reiterate the story of a mother's love—an old, old story, which begins again with every new birth.

2. The Madonna in Adoration [e.g. *Madonna with Child and Two Angels* by Lippi] in which the mother's attitude is one of humility; contemplating her child in awe. The first tender joys of a mother's love are strangely mingled with awe. Her babe is a precious gift of God, which she receives into trembling hands. A new sense of responsibility presses upon her with almost overwhelming force. Hers is the highest honor given unto woman; she accepts it with solemn joy, deeming herself all too unworthy. This spirit of humility has been idealized in art in the form of Madonna in Adoration. It represents the Virgin Mary adoring her son. Sometimes she kneels before him, sometimes she sits with clasped hands, holding him in her lap. Whatever the variation in attitude, the thought is the same: it is an expression of that higher, finer aspect of motherhood which regards infancy as an object not only of love, but of reverent humility. It is a recognition of the great mystery of life which invests even the helpless babe with a dignity commanding respect.

A picture with so serious an intention can never be widely understood. The meaning is too subtle for the casual observer. But though the sacred mystery of Mary's experience sets her forever apart as blessed among women, she is the type of true motherhood in all generations.



Madonna with Child and Two Angels by Filippo Lippi

Before such pictures as these, gleaming in the dim light of quiet chapels, many a heart, before unbelieving, may learn a new reverence for the mysterious sanctity of motherhood.

Finally, The Madonna as Witness [e.g. *Madonna and Child* by Murillo], in which the Mother is preeminently the Christ-bearer, wearing the honors of her proud position as witness to her son's great destiny. In proportion to a mother's ideals and ambitions for her child does her love take on a higher and purer aspect. The noblest mother is the most unselfish; she regards her child as a sacred charge, only temporarily committed to her keeping. Her care is to nurture and train him for his part in life; this is the object of her constant endeavor. Thus she comes to look upon him as hers and yet not hers. What is true of all motherhood finds a supreme illustration in the character of the Virgin Mary. She understood from the first that her son had a great mission to fulfil, that his work had something to do with a mighty kingdom. Never for a moment did she lose sight of these things as she pondered them in her heart. Her highest joy was to present him to the world for the fulfillment of his calling.

As a subject of art, this phase of the Madonna's character requires a mode of treatment quite unlike that of the Mother as Love or the Mother as Adoration. The attitude and expression of the Virgin are appropriate to her office as the Christ-bearer. Both mother and child, no longer absorbed in each other, direct their glance towards the people to whom he is given for a witness. The mother's lap is the throne for the child, from which, standing or sitting, he gives his royal blessing.

It will be readily understood that so lofty a theme can-

not be common in art. The progress of painting, and the growing love of beauty, at length wrought a change. The time came when art saw the possibility of uniting, with the religious conception of previous centuries, a more natural deal of motherhood. Thus, while the Madonna continues to be preeminently a witness of her son's greatness, it is not at the sacrifice of motherly tenderness.

Raphael's Sistine Madonna [see page 103] is the greatest ever produced, from every point of view. Its theme is the transfiguration of loving and consecrated motherhood. Mother and child, united in love, move towards the glorious consummation of the heavenly kingdom.

It has been said that Raphael made no preparatory studies for this Madonna, but, in a larger sense, he spent his life in preparation for it. The Sistine Madonna is above all words of praise; all extravagance of expression is silenced before her simplicity. Hers is the beauty of symmetrically developed womanhood; the perfect poise of her figure is not more marked than the perfect poise of her character. Not one false note, not one exaggerated emphasis, jars upon the harmony of body, soul and spirit. Confident, but entirely unassuming, serious, but without sadness; joyous, but not to mirthfulness; eager, but without haste; she moves steadily forward with steps timed to the rhythmic music of the spheres. The child is no burden, but a part of her very being. The two are one in love, thought and purpose. Sharing the secret of his sacred calling, the mother bears her son forth to meet his glorious destiny.

Art can pay no higher tribute to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, than to show her in this phase of her motherhood. We sympathize with her maternal tenderness, lavishing fond caresses upon her child. We go still deeper into her experience

Madonna and Child by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo





Madonna of the Harpies by Andrea del Sarto

when we see her bowed in sweet humility before the cares and duties she is called upon to assume. But we are admitted to the most cherished aspirations of her soul, when we see her oblivious of self, carrying her child forth to the service of humanity. It is thus that she becomes of his "witnesses unto the people"; it is thus that all generations shall call her blessed.

I'll divert a bit from Estelle Hurll's writings to add a little more about this final painting. The Sistine Madonna was Raphael's final Madonna painting and said to be his crowning achievement. I thought it was interesting that Lew Wallace mentioned, as he researched the characters to write Ben-Hur and they came alive to him in his imagination, there were only two Madonna's that did justice to the Mary created on his heart. One of them was Raphael's Sistine Madonna.

The curtains are suggestive to me of a stage as though there was a role to be played; an act to be performed in this stage of life. In the clouds, you see the faces of unborn babies. So many lives are dependent upon the successful completion of this act. It is said that when the painting was first placed, it was set opposite a crucifix that would have been the object of sight and that the expressions on the faces of mother and child reflect the dread and yet the resolution of that supreme offering that lie ahead.

The two other figures in the painting are Saints. The figure on the left is Pope Sixtus II, a 3rd century martyr who some say is pointing to the scene of the Crucifixion or others say he is calling attention to the myriads of souls who are watching in anticipation of the events to unfold. The figure on the right is Saint Barbara who is always connected with her tower, which you see faded in the background, largely

> hidden behind the curtain. Saint Barbara's pagan father locked her in a tower to keep her away from the world's influences, yet despite his efforts, she became converted to Christianity and endured torture and her eventual beheading at the hands of her father rather than deny her faith. I noted the perfect peace on her face, that gift of the Prince of Peace that stands independent from outward circumstances. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

I hope I have given you enough of a background to enjoy the Madonna paintings we've shared with you. Estelle Hurl said to notice that as we go from Madonna as Love to Madonna as Adoration and from Madonna as Adoration to Madonna as Witness, we advance farther and farther into the experience of motherhood. At the same time there is an increase in the dignity of the Madonna and to her importance as an individual. In the Mother as Love paintings, she is subordinate to her child, absorbed in him, so to speak; his infantine charms often overmatch her own beauty.

When she rises to the responsibility of her high calling, she is, for the time being, of equal interest and importance.

In conclusion, Estelle said through studying both the settings and the internal meanings of the paintings, we are admitted to some new secret of a mother's love.





Madonna and Child by Unknown 19th Century Artist

Religious Symbols in Art





The Immaculate Conception by Juan de Juanes

The Use of Symbols in Christian Art

Estelle Hurll

From the beginning of history, religion and art have gone hand in hand. The worshipper has always embodied his aspirations in some form of beauty. With the ancient Hebrews this instinct for beauty found its highest expression in poetry. Forbidden by the Mosaic law to practice the graphic arts, they wrought their spiritual ideals into a magnificent national literature. This was the literature in which Jesus was reared, and from which he drew continually to illustrate his meaning. The disciples followed the teaching of their master. Thus it was that, when Christianity entered the Western world through the gates of Rome, the sacred books came with it, and from time to time added to themselves the writings now forming the New Testament.

The new religion was now to work out a new art. Since the written word could not be put into the hands of the people, it had to be translated into the universal language of pictures. Unworthy as were these first crude symbols of the noble literature which they illustrated, they were the foundation on which was builded in after years the highest form of graphic art which the world has ever seen.

Persecutions had forced the Roman Christians to hold their

religious services in the catacombs. In these underground passages, originally constructed as burial-places for the dead, were a few square chambers where, hidden from their enemies, the faithful might worship unmolested. The walls of these subterranean chapels were decorated with rude frescoes, illustrating the subjects deemed most important for Christian edification. Dimly discerned on the damp walls by the flickering light of lamp and taper, they carried a message of comfort and inspiration. Some of the decorations were mere symbols: the dove, signifying the soul; the fish and the bread, the tokens of the Saviour; the ship and the vine, the types of the Church. Christ as the Good Shepherd was represented as a youth with a lamb, or kid, on his shoulders. Other subjects were more ambitious, illustrating the stories of the Bible.

From its infancy to the present time, there have been certain characteristic figures, attributes, or symbols, which have made a part of the language of what may be called Christian Art. They are meaningless to the eye of one who understands them not; but they add much to the power of a representation, to the depth of sentiment and expression when rightly apprehended.

There is no doubt that the first object of Christian art was to teach.

--Estelle Hurll

Here are a few symbols to get you started in
understanding Christian Art at a deeper level.





St. Peter Preaching the Gospel in the Catacombs
by Jan Styka



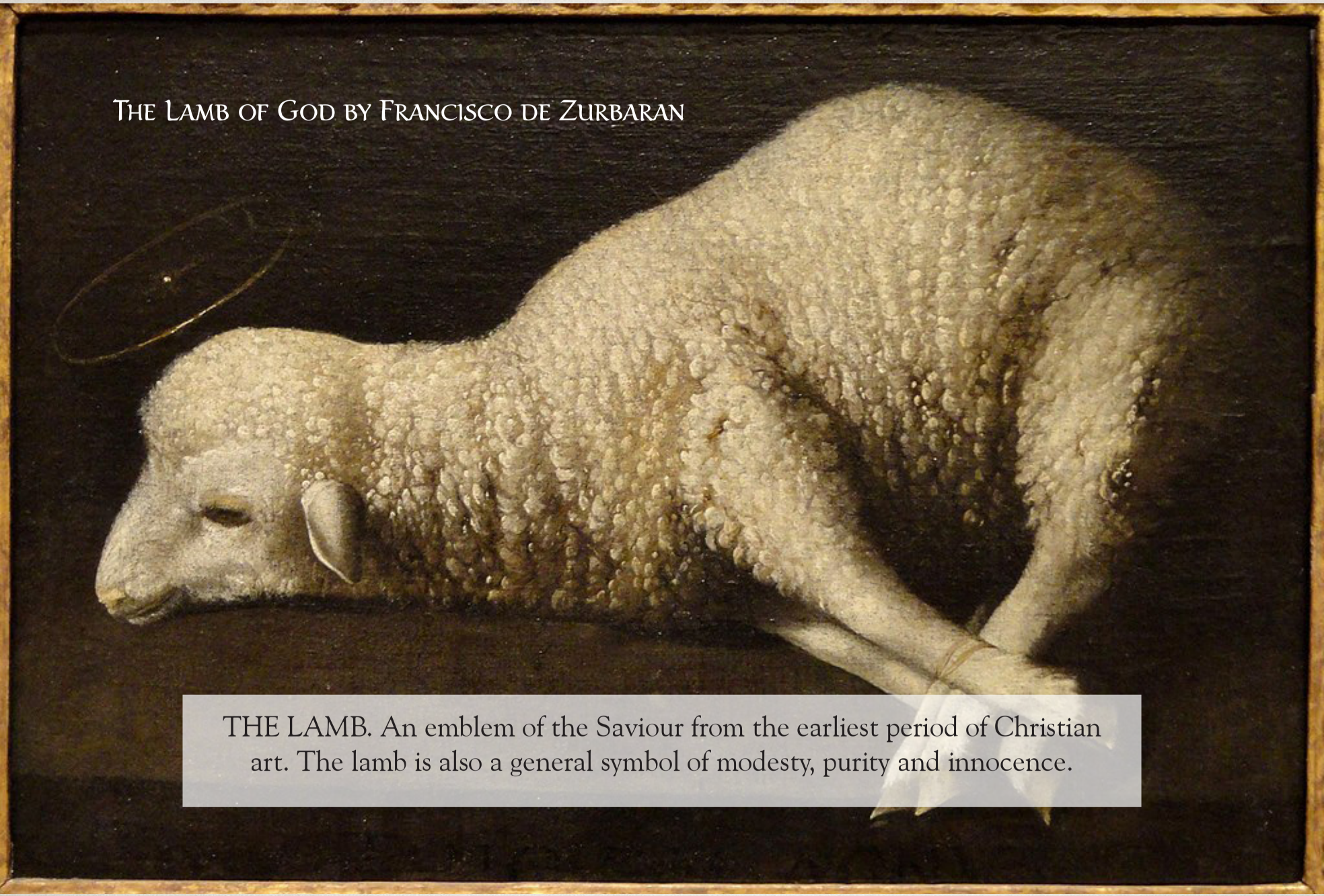
Coronation of the Virgin by Fra Angelico

THE GLORY. The Glory, Aureole, and Nimbus all represent light or brightness, and are the symbols of sanctity. The nimbus surrounds the head; the aureole encircles the whole body, and the glory is the union of the nimbus and aureole. The nimbus belongs to all holy persons and saints as well as to the representations of divinity.

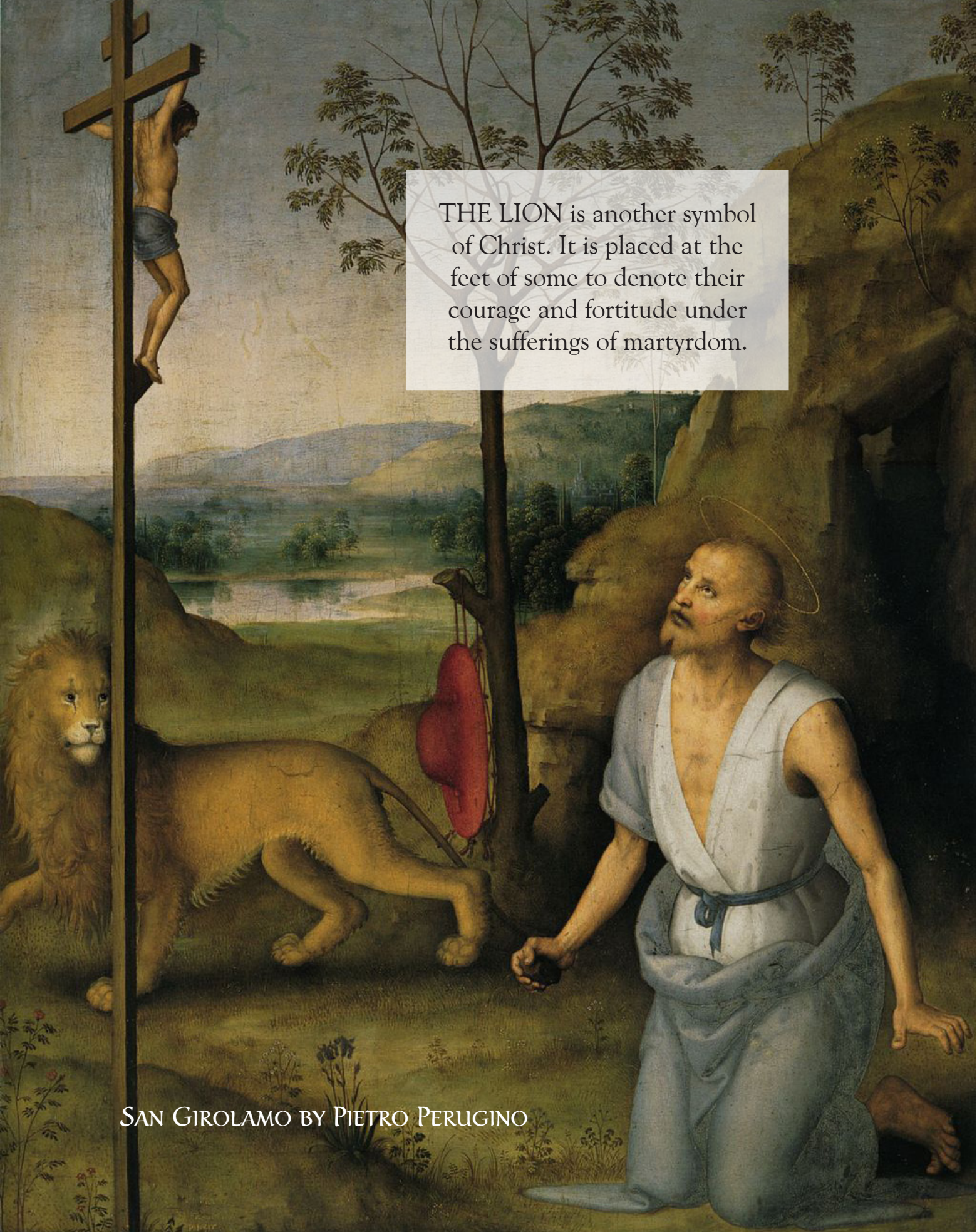


Mosaic in the Church at Tabgha Near the Sea of Galilee

THE FISH. A fish, most frequently a dolphin, was the earliest and most universal of the Christan symbols. The fish is an emblem of water and the sacrament of baptism; of the Christian apostle, or “fisher of men.”

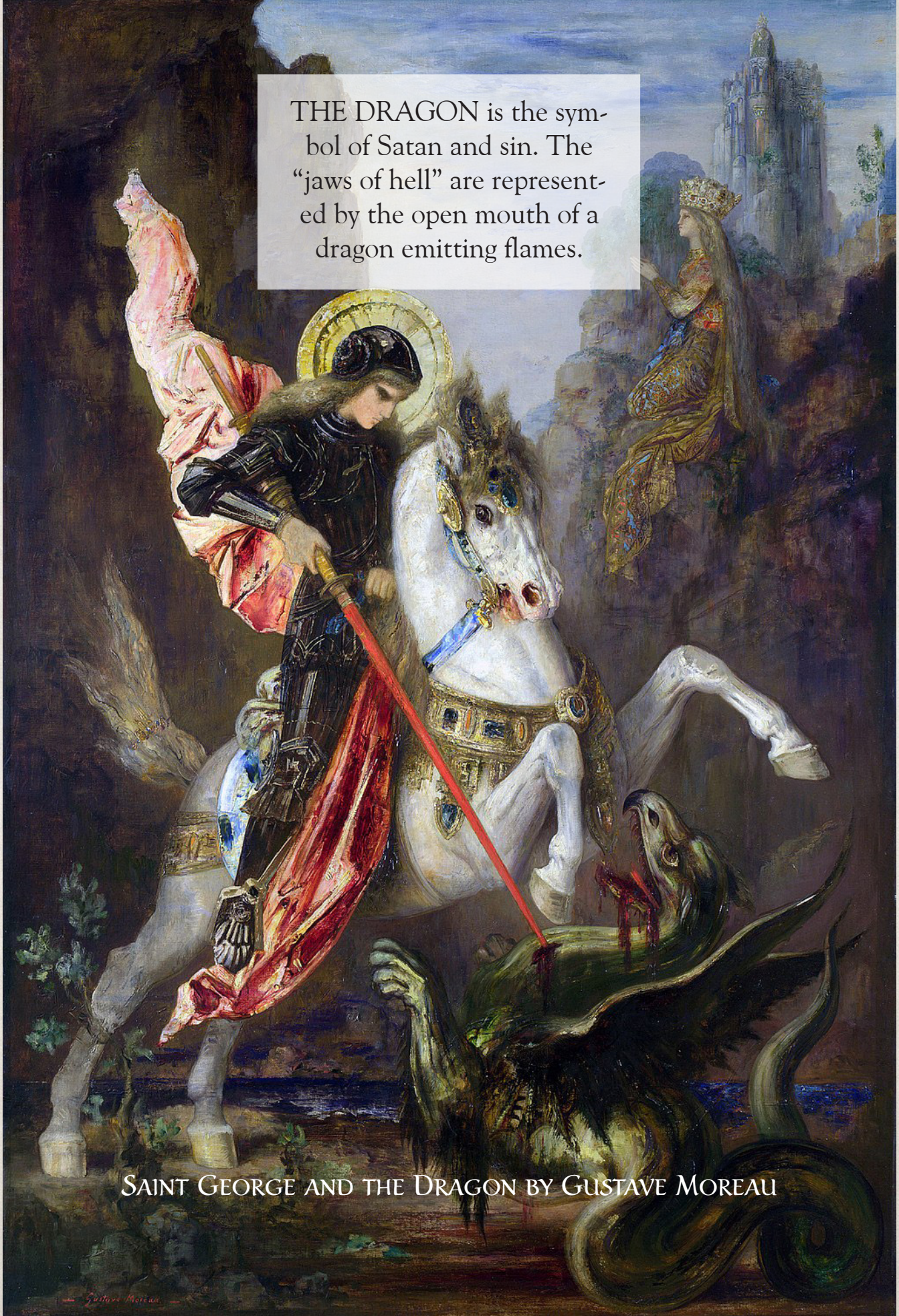


THE LAMB. An emblem of the Saviour from the earliest period of Christian art. The lamb is also a general symbol of modesty, purity and innocence.



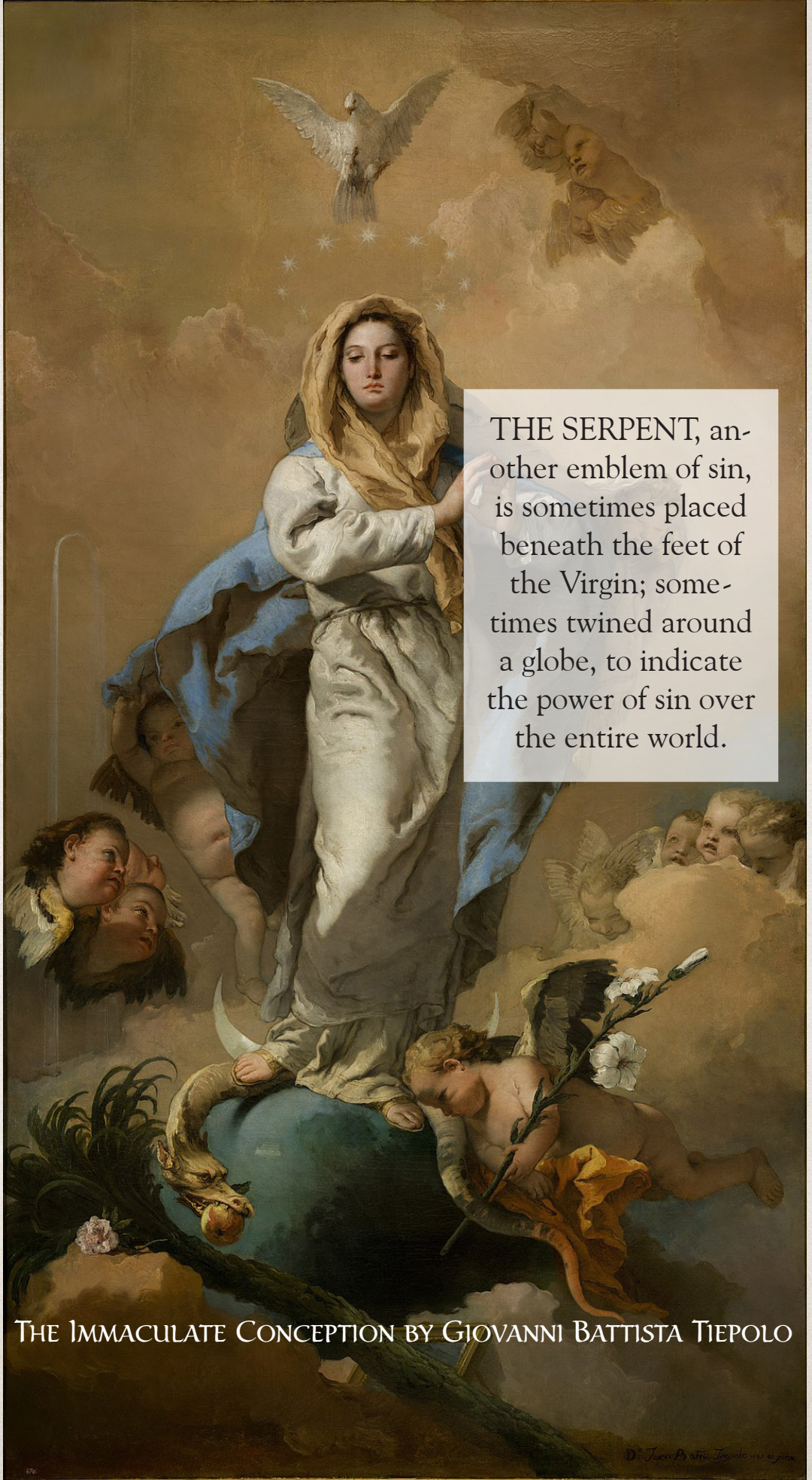
THE LION is another symbol of Christ. It is placed at the feet of some to denote their courage and fortitude under the sufferings of martyrdom.

San Girolamo by Pietro Perugino



THE DRAGON is the symbol of Satan and sin. The "jaws of hell" are represented by the open mouth of a dragon emitting flames.

Saint George and the Dragon by Gustave Moreau

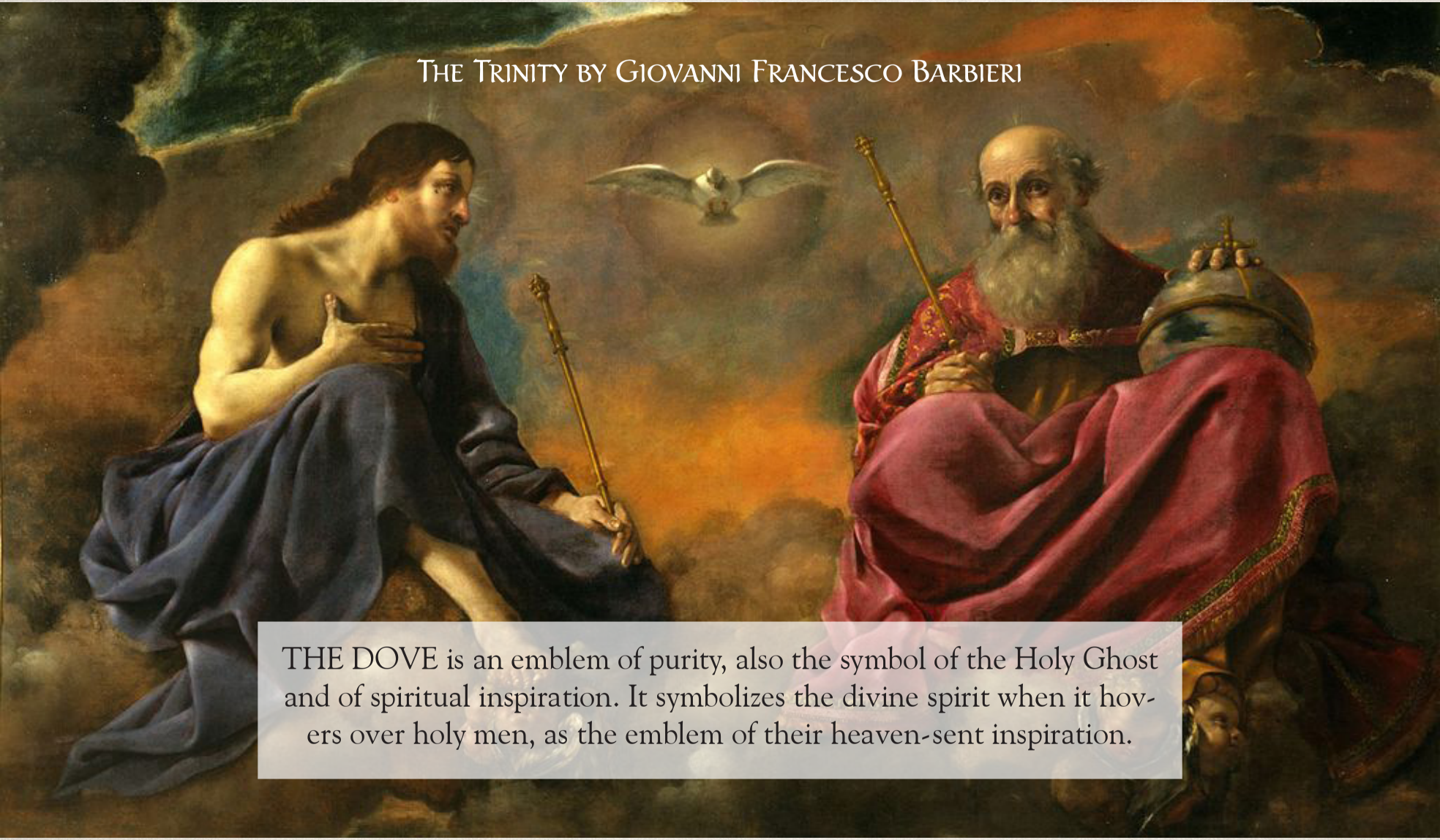


THE SERPENT, another emblem of sin, is sometimes placed beneath the feet of the Virgin; sometimes twined around a globe, to indicate the power of sin over the entire world.

The Immaculate Conception by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo



Peacocks Mosaic, Byzantine Church in Nahariya



THE DOVE is an emblem of purity, also the symbol of the Holy Ghost and of spiritual inspiration. It symbolizes the divine spirit when it hovers over holy men, as the emblem of their heaven-sent inspiration.


Angel With an Olive Branch by Hans Memling
THE OLIVE is the emblem of peace.

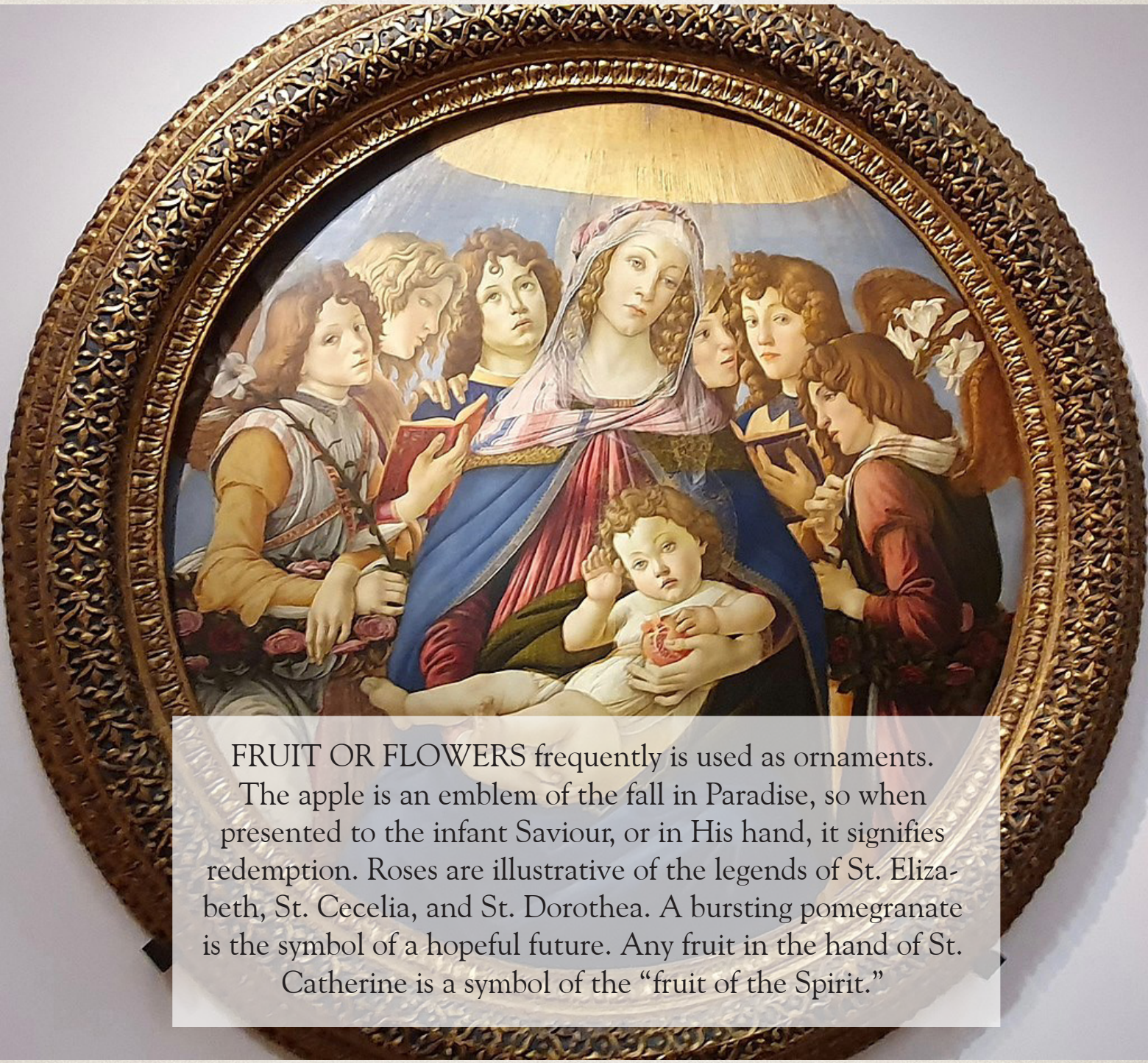


THE PALM is the symbol of martyrdom. It is placed in their hands and carved on their tombs.

The Madonna and Child Adored by St. Lawrence and St. Martha by Maarten Pepyn

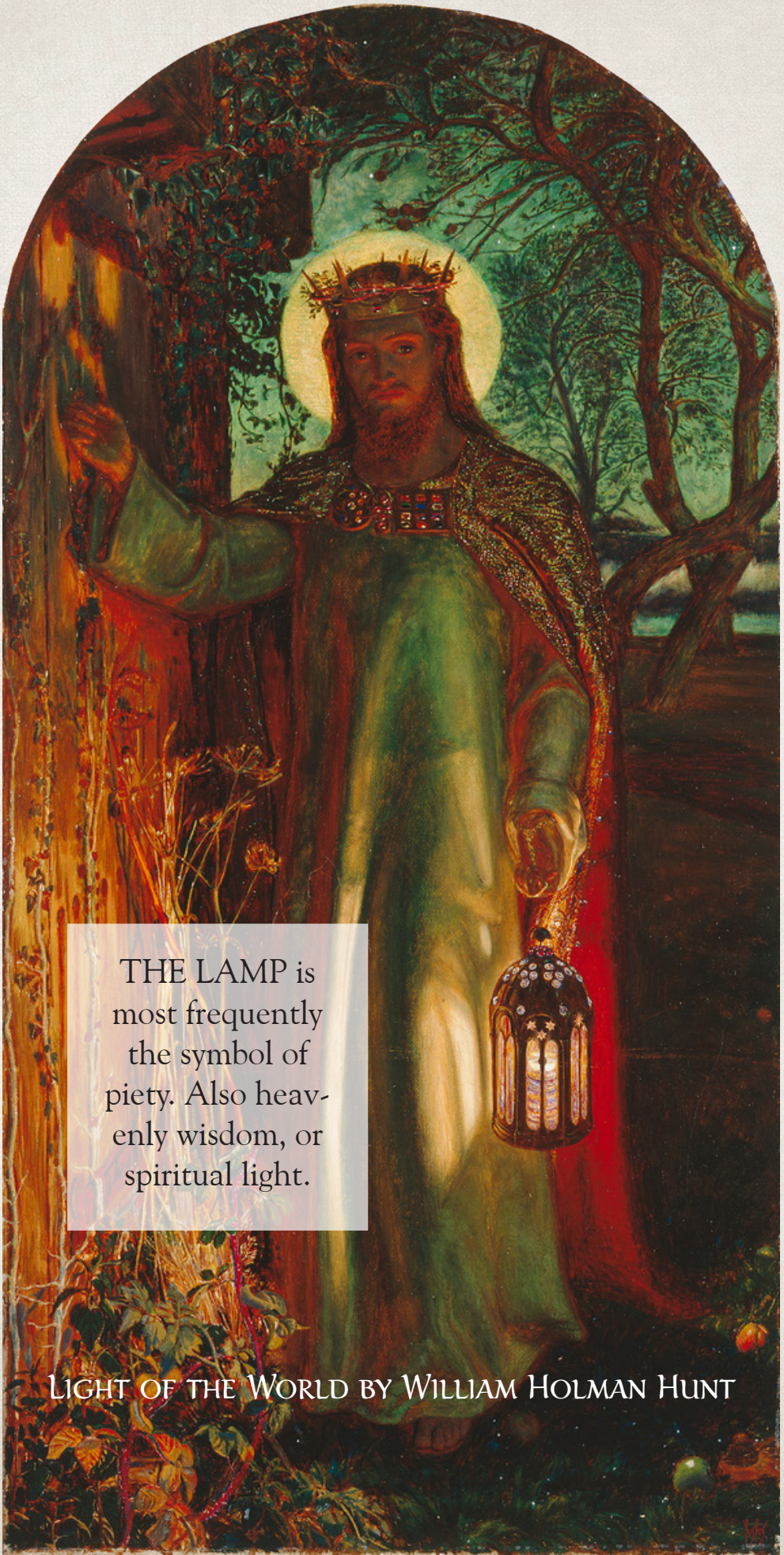


Saint Joseph by Michaelina Wautier

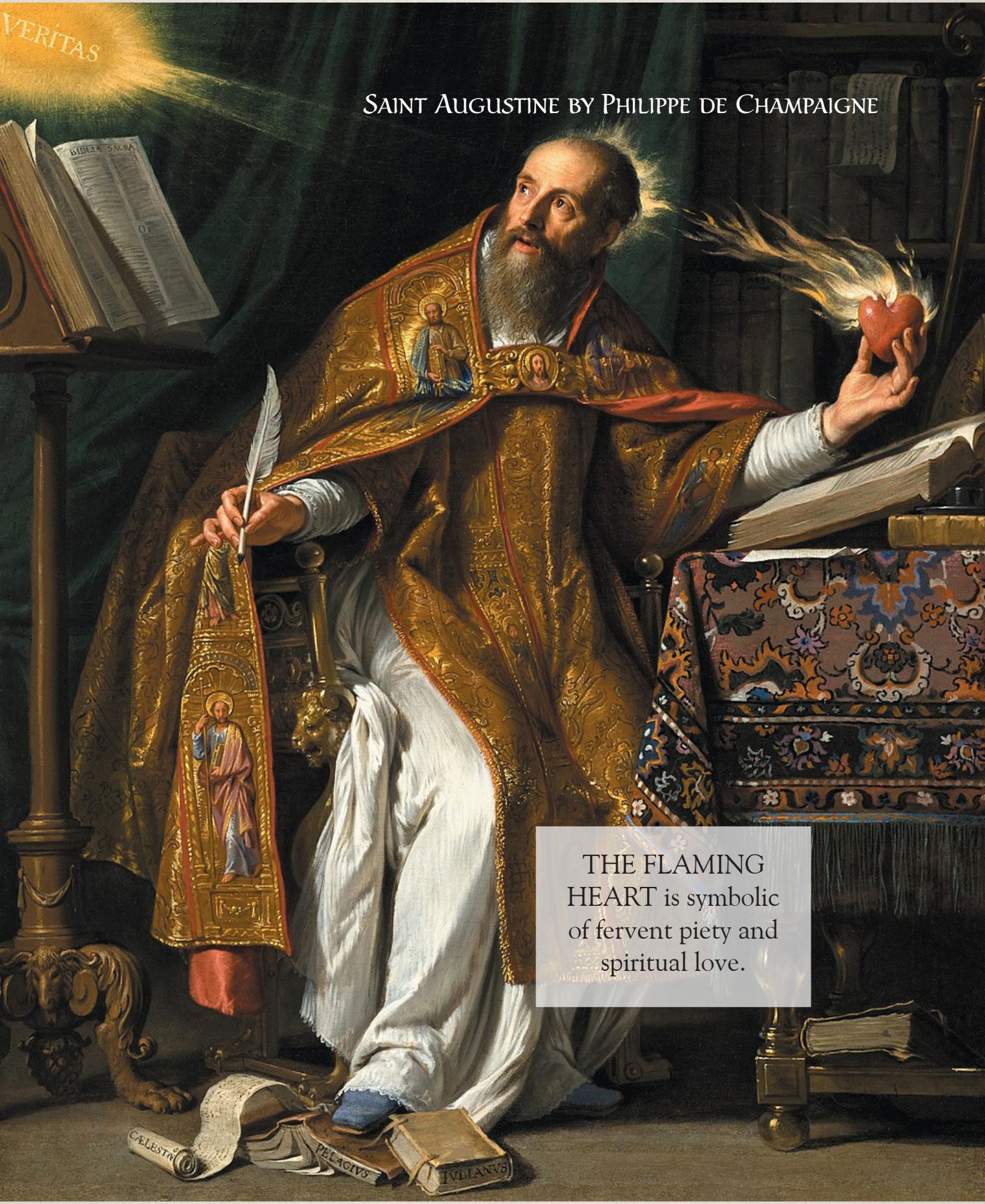


FRUIT OR FLOWERS frequently is used as ornaments. The apple is an emblem of the fall in Paradise, so when presented to the infant Saviour, or in His hand, it signifies redemption. Roses are illustrative of the legends of St. Elizabeth, St. Cecelia, and St. Dorothea. A bursting pomegranate is the symbol of a hopeful future. Any fruit in the hand of St. Catherine is a symbol of the "fruit of the Spirit."

Madonna of the Pomegranate by Botticelli



Light of the World by William Holman Hunt



Saint Augustine by Philippe de Champaigne

THE FLAMING HEART is symbolic of fervent piety and spiritual love.



THE CROWN,
when on the head
of the Madonna,
makes her the
Queen of Heaven.

Madonna with Child Clothed
in Sunlight by Anonymous



THE BOOK is the symbol of learning and writings of the saint who bears it.

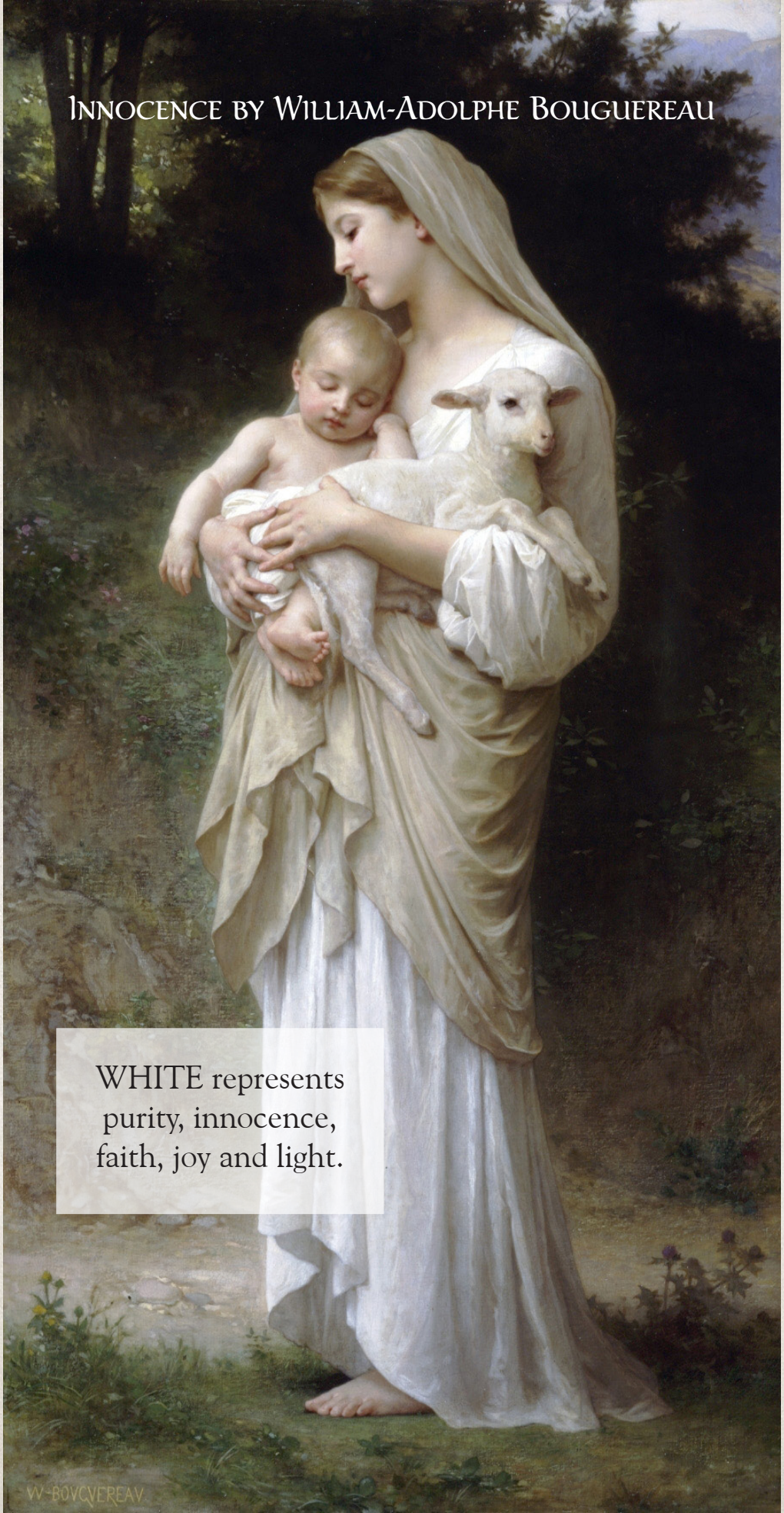
The Madonna of the Book by Sandro Botticelli


Navicella by Giotto de Bondone
THE SHIP is symbolic of Christ's watchful care of his church.



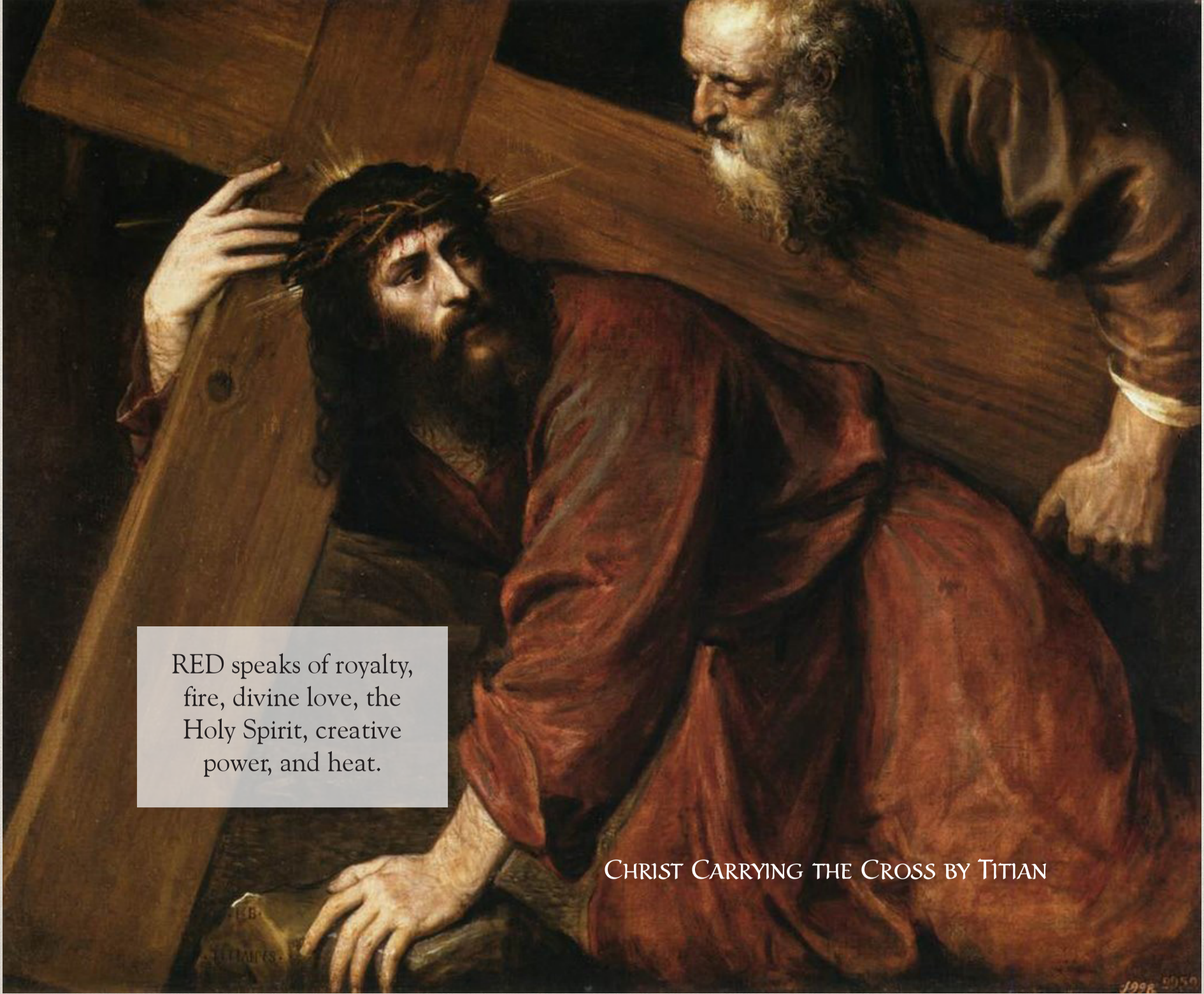
Ship of Faith Icon (17th Century Russia)

THE ANCHOR is one of the earliest Christian symbols. It is the emblem of immovable hope and untiring patience.



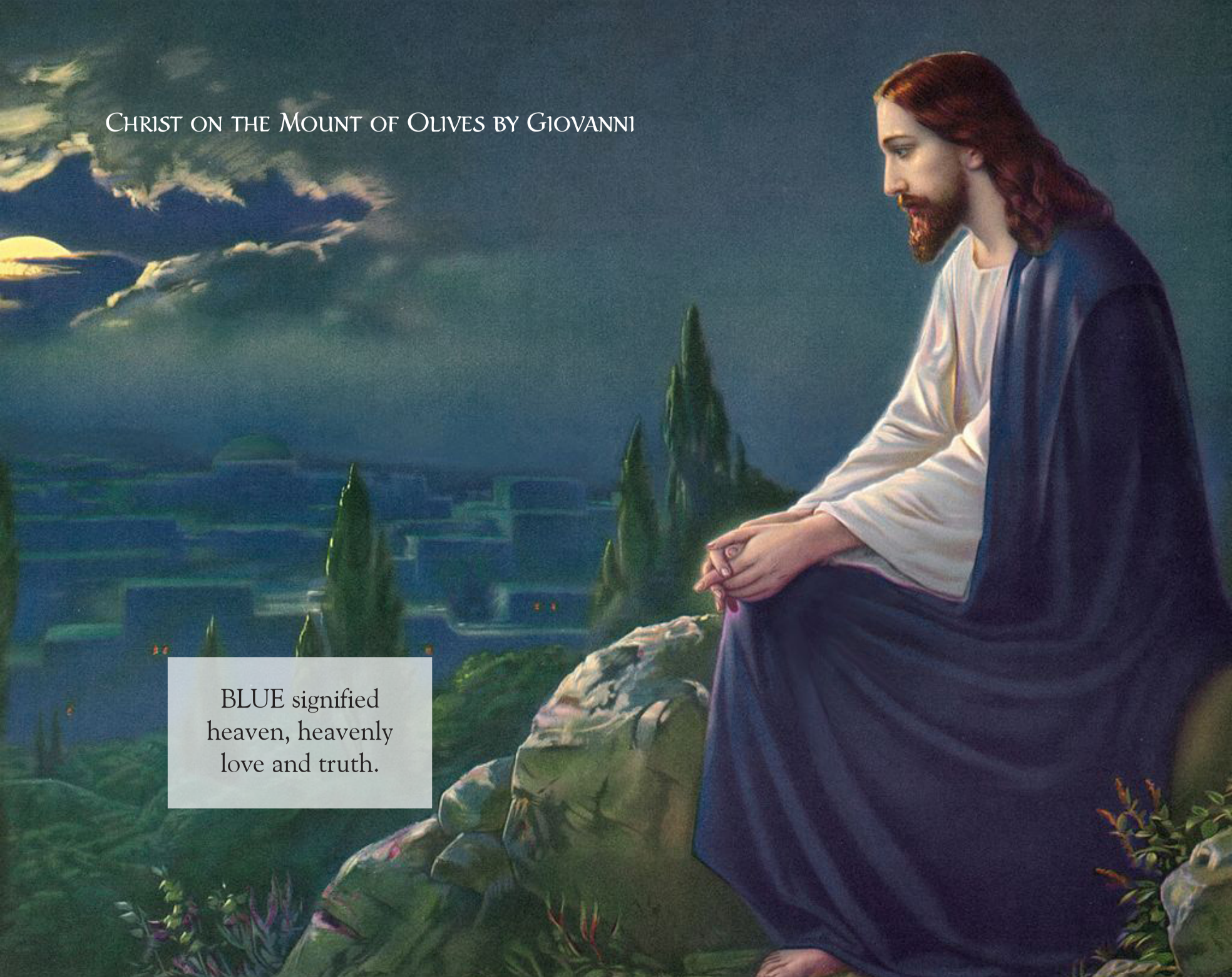
Innocence by William-Adolphe Bouguereau

WHITE represents purity, innocence, faith, joy and light.



RED speaks of royalty, fire, divine love, the Holy Spirit, creative power, and heat.

Christ Carrying the Cross by Titian

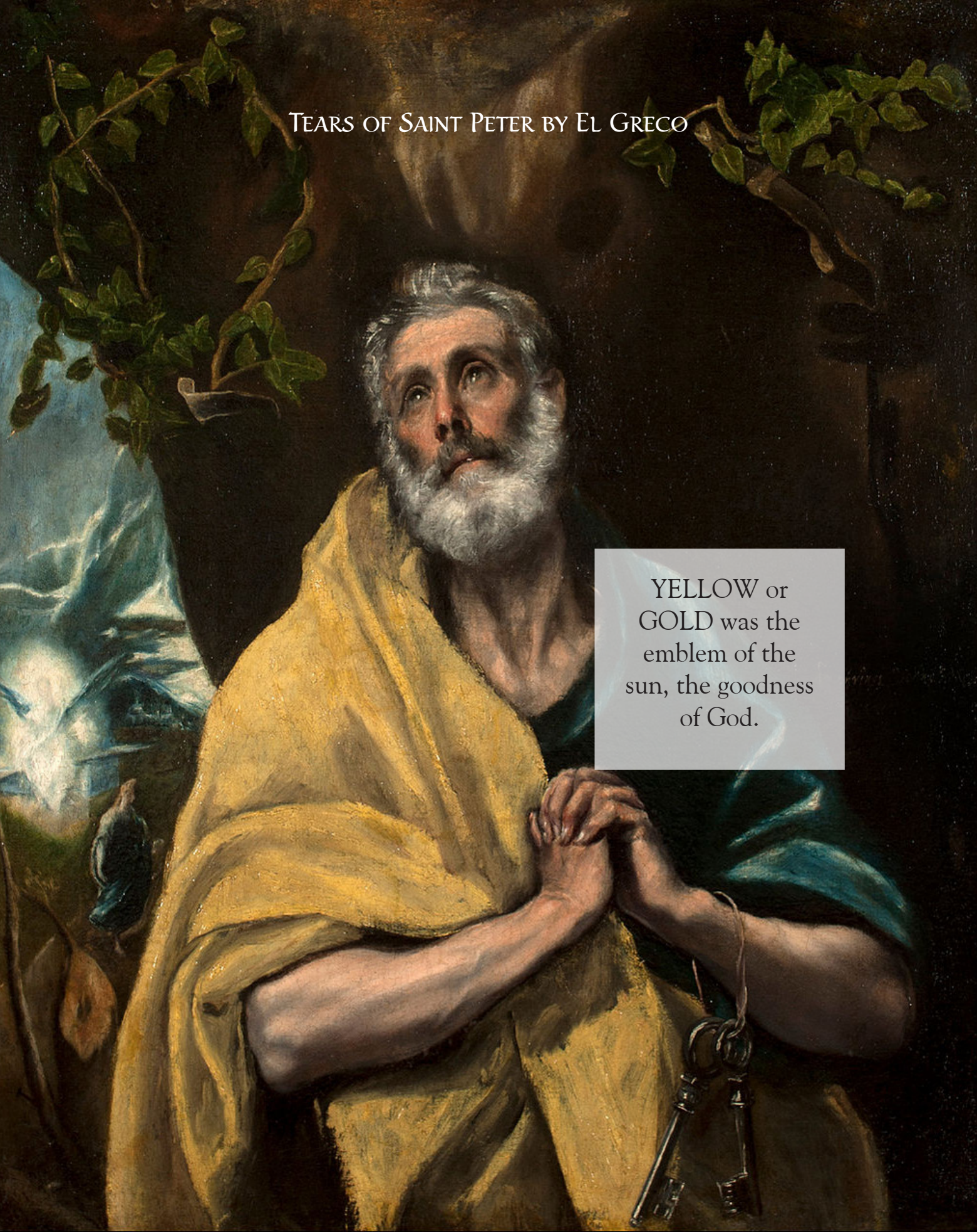


BLUE signified heaven, heavenly love and truth.



GREEN, the color of spring, expressed hope and victory.

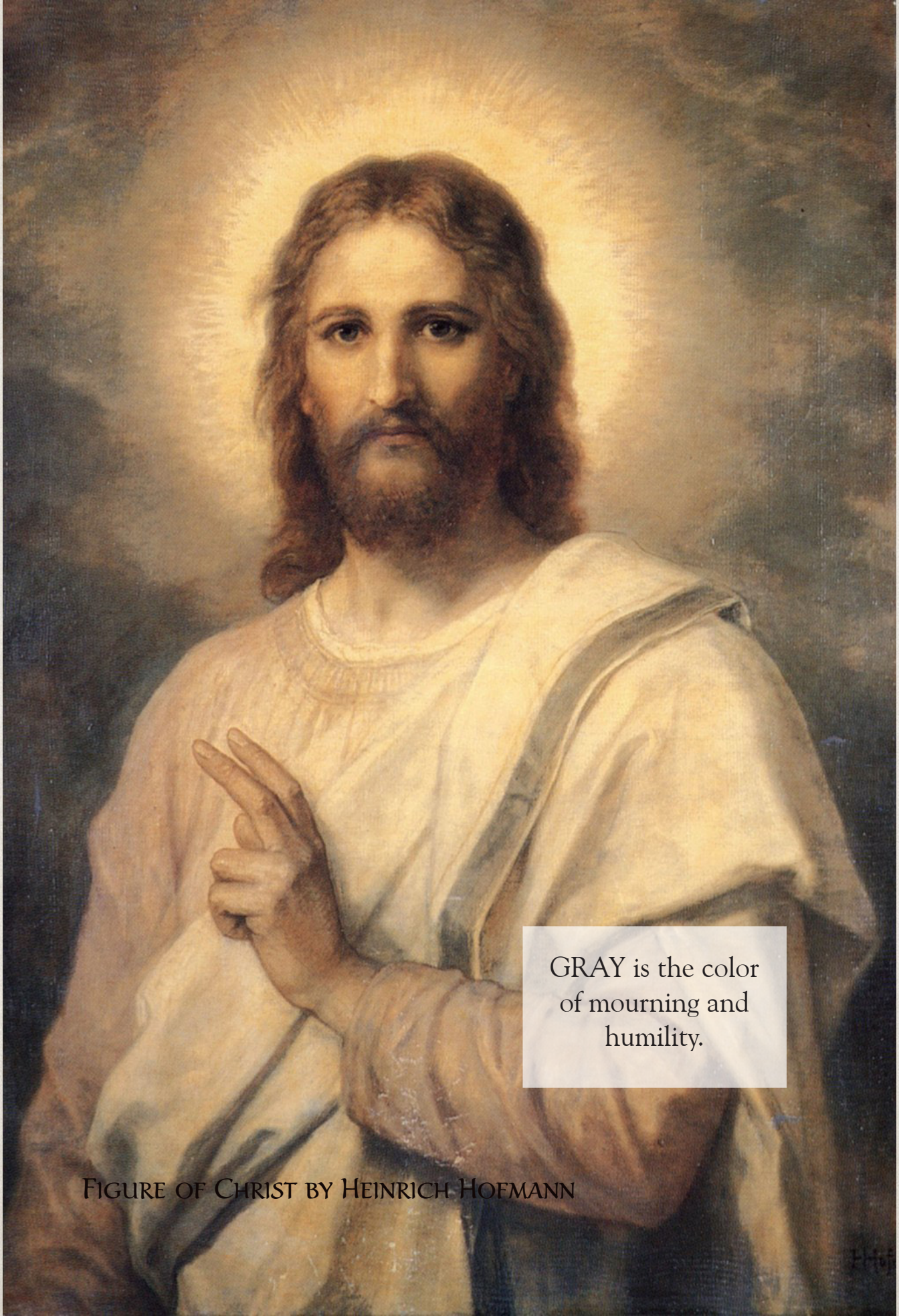
THE SISTINE MADONNA BY RAPHAEL


Tears of Saint Peter by El Greco
YELLOW or GOLD was the emblem of the sun, the goodness of God.



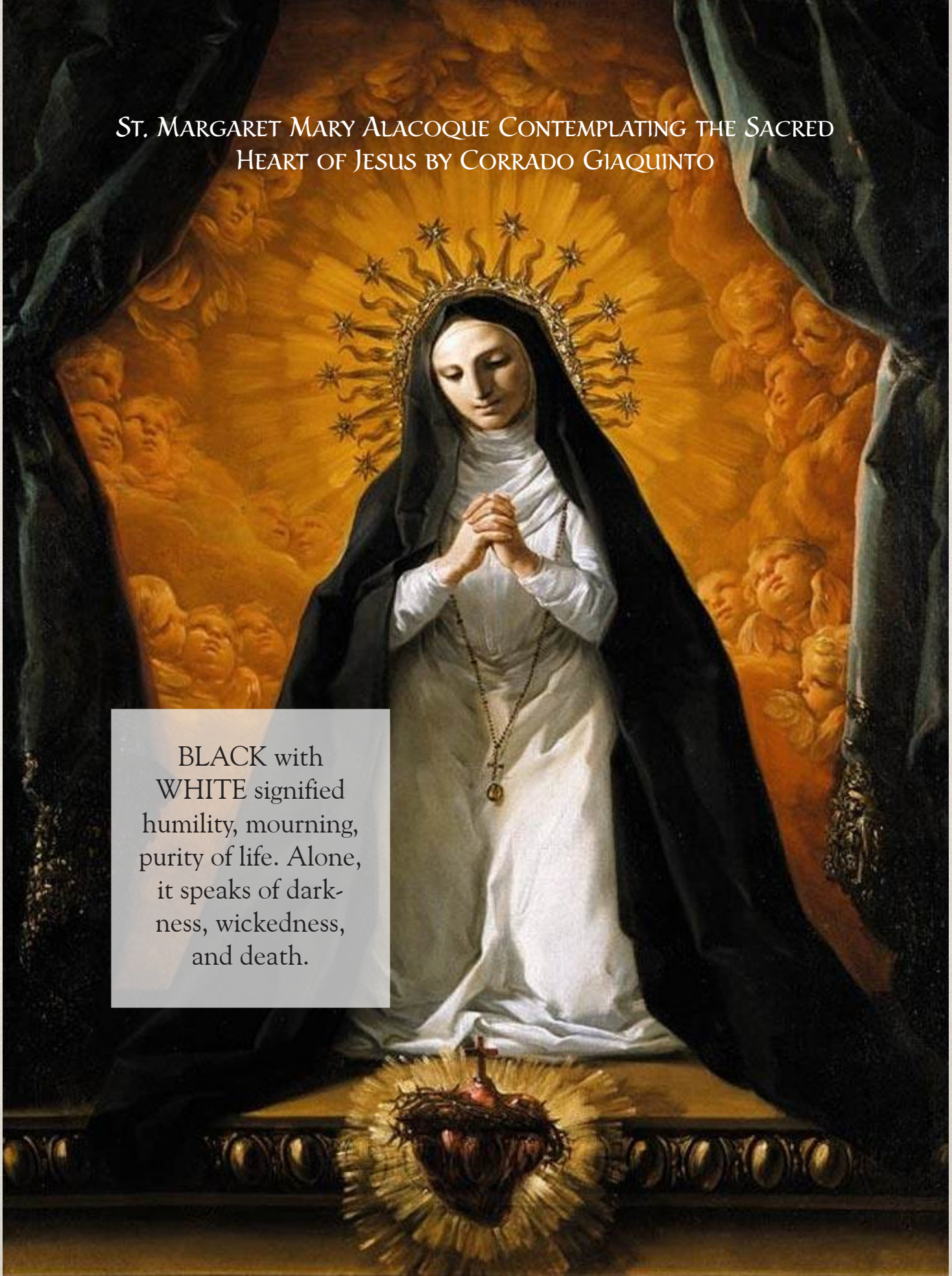
VIOLET signified passion and suffering, or love and truth.

Coronation of the Virgin by Diego Velázquez



GRAY is the color of mourning and humility.

Figure of Christ by Heinrich Hofmann



St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Contemplating the Sacred Heart of Jesus by Corrado Giaquinto

BLACK with WHITE signified humility, mourning, purity of life. Alone, it speaks of darkness, wickedness, and death.