

Part One

The Human Face of God

Madonna and Child

Tim Ashkar

Ashkar is a first generation, American born, multicultural fine-artist of French and Lebanese descent.

The collection begins with this warm image which has a relatively accurate message—Jesus looked more like a black American than he did a white American.

Artist Tim Ashkar says, “Through my art, I try to portray the beauty and humanity that all people share.”

Since we don't know what Jesus looked like, artists try to portray him using the qualities he modeled in his life and teaching of unconditional love and inclusivity.





are beyond the artist's power to portray.

Madonna of the Chair
Raphael in 1513-1514
Pitti Palace, Florence, Italy

Raphael, an Italian painter and architect of the Italian High Renaissance, is best known for his Madonnas.

In early days, an Italian in addressing a lady used the word Madonna, which, like the French word Madame, means "My Lady."

Mary holds the baby Jesus while the young boy who is to grow up as John the Baptist looks on. He holds a reed cross, reminding us of this baby's future.

Around each of the three heads is a very faint nimbus, a circle about the head that artists used to signify religious figures. This circular form took the name "nimbus" from the Latin word for a cloud, as if the heads of sacred persons were in an unearthly surrounding. It is also called a halo.

Such a representation is a symbol or sign to indicate those higher and more mysterious qualities which



Simeon with Christ Child in the Temple
Rembrandt in 1666-69
National Museum, Stockholm, Sweden

Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus forty days after his birth to the Temple to be “consecrated to the Lord.” (Luke 2:22-39).

The elderly prophet Simeon took the infant Jesus in his arms and offered a blessing. He saw Jesus as Israel’s Messiah and Savior.

There were various ideas about what “Messiah” meant at that time. As an adult, Jesus’ teaching subverted these meanings with his own. After the resurrection, the Apostle Paul moved the meaning of “Messiah” (or Christ) to a more universal and cosmic understanding that some call the Cosmic Christ (the Christian symbol for everything) which is the subject of Part Six of this collection.

Raphael 1-6.99 Andy Warhol in 1985



Andy Warhol (1928 – 1987) was an American artist and a leading figure in the visual art movement known as pop art. There are six prints of his work in the Faces of Jesus Collection.

Warhol took Raphael's masterpiece, the Sistine Madonna, and playfully zapped it into this day and time with a price tag that grabs your attention away from everything else. What does that mean?

Is it the commercial market that has taken da Vinci's and other's paintings and reproduced them in cheap distorted copies so much they become boring? Is he showing how the world of buying and selling drains the spiritual of its meaning?

Is he acknowledging the conflict between money and religion? Is the cheap price pointing to the undervaluing of a spiritual path? Or it is just being playful, a dominant Warhol characteristic? Or perhaps all of those?

Many people are surprised to find that flamboyant pop artist Andy Warhol was a very religious man, attending Mass at his Byzantine Catholic church almost every day.

Warhol created the largest series of religious art by any American artist.



Black Madonna and Child

Anskar Holmberg CSJ

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph (CSJ) is a religious community of over 1000 vowed Catholic women and lay associates who live and minister in the U.S. and around the world.

Holmberg's color-saturated works are more reminiscent of folk art than more conventional religious images. Her art results from her own spiritual journey and life changes.



Cheyenne Virgin and Child
Father John Giuliani in 1992

Giuliani, understanding the richness of contemplation, studied icon painting under a master in the Russian Orthodox style in New York. Adapting the technique to a Native American style, he wanted to find ways to expand the notion of Orthodox sacredness.

His work expresses the idea of Native American Indians as the original, indigenous presence of the holy in this continent.

Nativity He Qi in 2013

He Qi (pronounced “huh chee”), born in China in 1950, now lives in the United States. Coming of age during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, he was sent as a teenager to a communal farm to erase the effects of his parent’s intellectualism.

He Qi’s Christian faith was forced underground during this time. To hone his artistic skills, he openly painted portraits of Chairman Mao, while secretly painting images of the Madonna at night.

In this work depicting the Christian nativity, He Qi uses vibrant color blocks and geometric shapes to create a compelling composition. Mary and Jesus are shown in glowing pink surrounded by electric blue. The shepherds and their flock surround mother and child, enveloping them in a protective sphere. An angel flies over, observing the birth.

There are seven of He Qi’s images in the Faces of Jesus Collection.



**The Unseen
Magi
Lucy Sync in
1993**

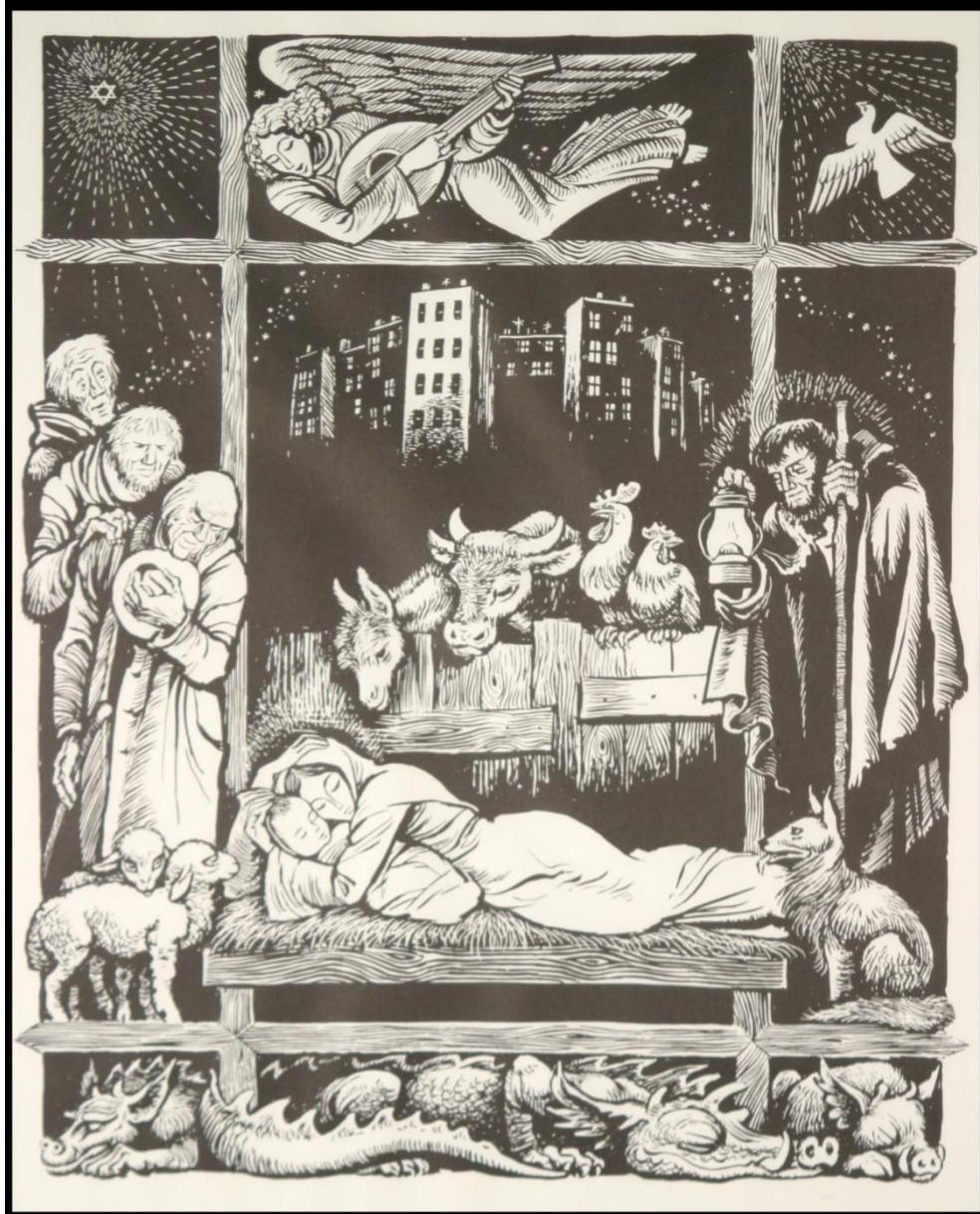
This delightful and imaginative painting of the Nativity evokes fantasies of a magical world.

Real or unreal, all worlds speak of the glory and beauty of God.

There are three reproductions of Sync's work in this collection.

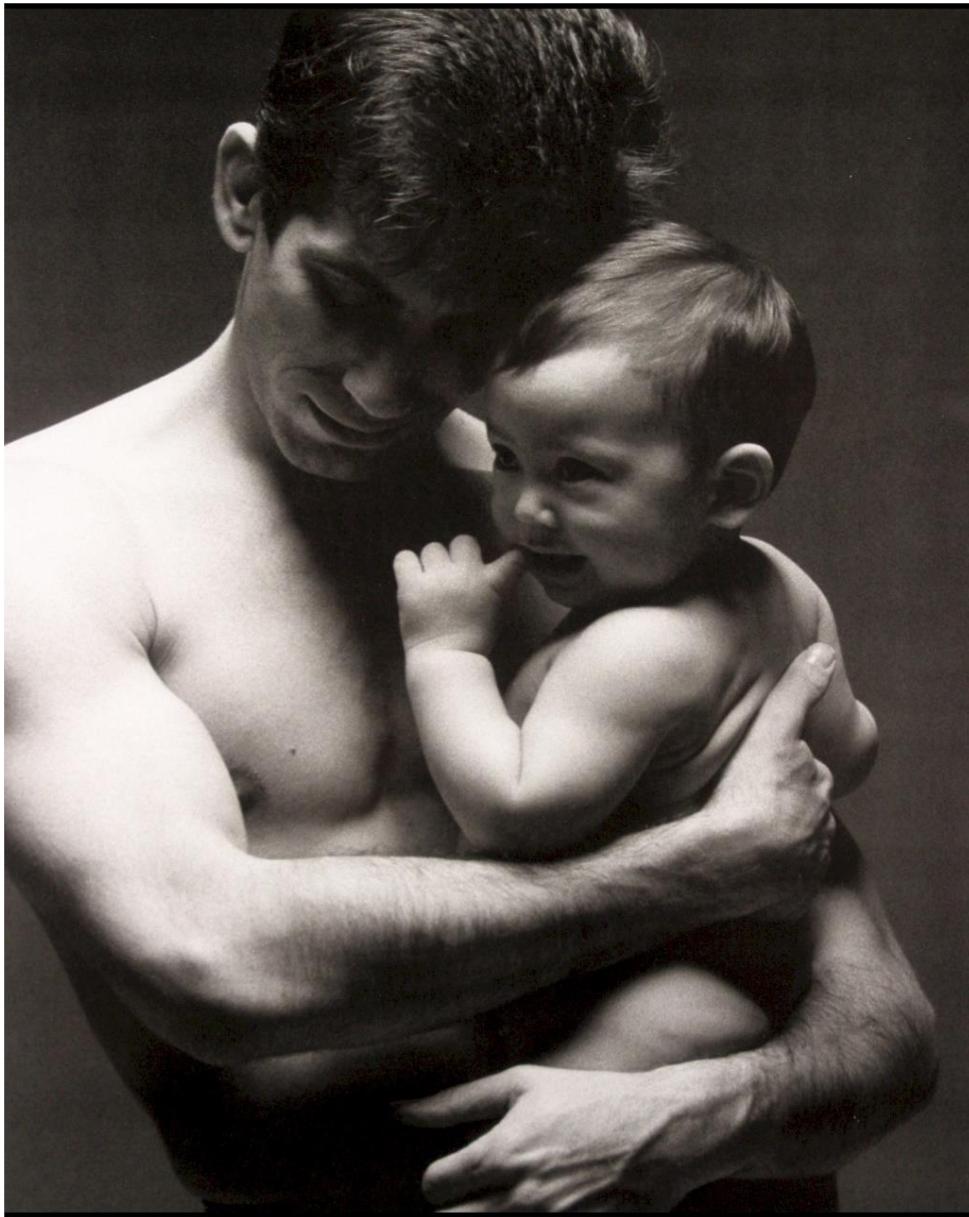


Christmas Fritz Eichenberg in 1954



Eichenberg (1901-1990), one of the world's master wood engravers, emigrated from Germany in 1933 with his wife and children to the United States, settling in New York City and becoming a Quaker.

His best-known works focus on religion, social justice, and nonviolence. He wraps those themes up together in this woodprint of the homeless and the baby Jesus.



Bonding Peter Furst

Bonding is my title for this lovely image of father and child by commercial photographer Peter Furst.

Jesus' *Abba*, Joseph, would have held him in this way. Jesus would later call God by the same name he called Joseph — *Abba*, a term of endearment used by both children and adults for their father, meaning Papa, or Daddy.

Can you let *Abba* God hold you close?

Biblia Nativity Salvador Dali in 1960

Salvador Dali (1904 – 1989), was a skilled Spanish surrealist painter best known for the striking, bizarre, and beautiful images such as melting drooping watches. Dali employed extensive symbolism in his work.

He experienced a spiritual renewal in the late 1940's when he abandoned atheism and embraced Christianity in the form of Catholicism.

Here is a rare glimpse into Dali's spiritual and emotional interpretation of the Bible.

This work gets away from traditional sentimental



portrayals of the Nativity and pulls us into the spiritual energies and movement of that event. The cross held by the baby Jesus, looking like a scepter of power, reminds us of his earthly destiny.

There are seven reproductions of Dali's paintings in the Faces of Jesus gallery.



The Madonna of Port Lligat (detail)

Salvador Dali in 1950

This is Dali's first sacred painting and one of his finest works. Officially approved by the Vatican, it began a period of intense fascination in Christian spirituality as Dali combined theories of harmony and geometry.

The painting depicts a seated Madonna with the infant Jesus on her lap. Both figures have rectangular holes cut into their torsos, suggestive of their transcendent status.

The whole composition is arranged around the Eucharistic bread in a tabernacle where, in the Catholic tradition, the bread for the Mass is kept. The tabernacle and the Christ Child are now of living flesh, and the bread, which represents the giving of the adult Jesus of himself for all, is suspended from his heart.

Mother and Yawning Christ Child

Tommy Canning

The face of Jesus was first the face of an infant – cuddly, gurgling, smiling, crying, screaming, and throwing up.

Here is a delightful image of what happened often, as babies are wont to do – the baby Jesus yawns. Divinity and humanity blend in seamless unity in Jesus Christ.

That same blend is within each of us as divine spiritual beings on a human journey. It yearns to express itself more fully as we evolve in our own true humanity and divinity.



**Christ in the
House of His
Parents**
**Sir John Everett
Millais in 1850**

This work by English painter Millais (pronounced Mih-lay) was inspired by a biblical quotation from Zachariah 13:6:

What are these wounds in your hands?
Then he shall answer
Those with which I was wounded
in the house of my

friends.

This painting was highly controversial in its day because of its realistic portrayal of a working-class family laboring in a messy carpentry workshop. When the painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy, critics brutally condemned Millais's unflattering representation of the Holy Family. It was difficult for them to see Jesus coming from the common people of his day.



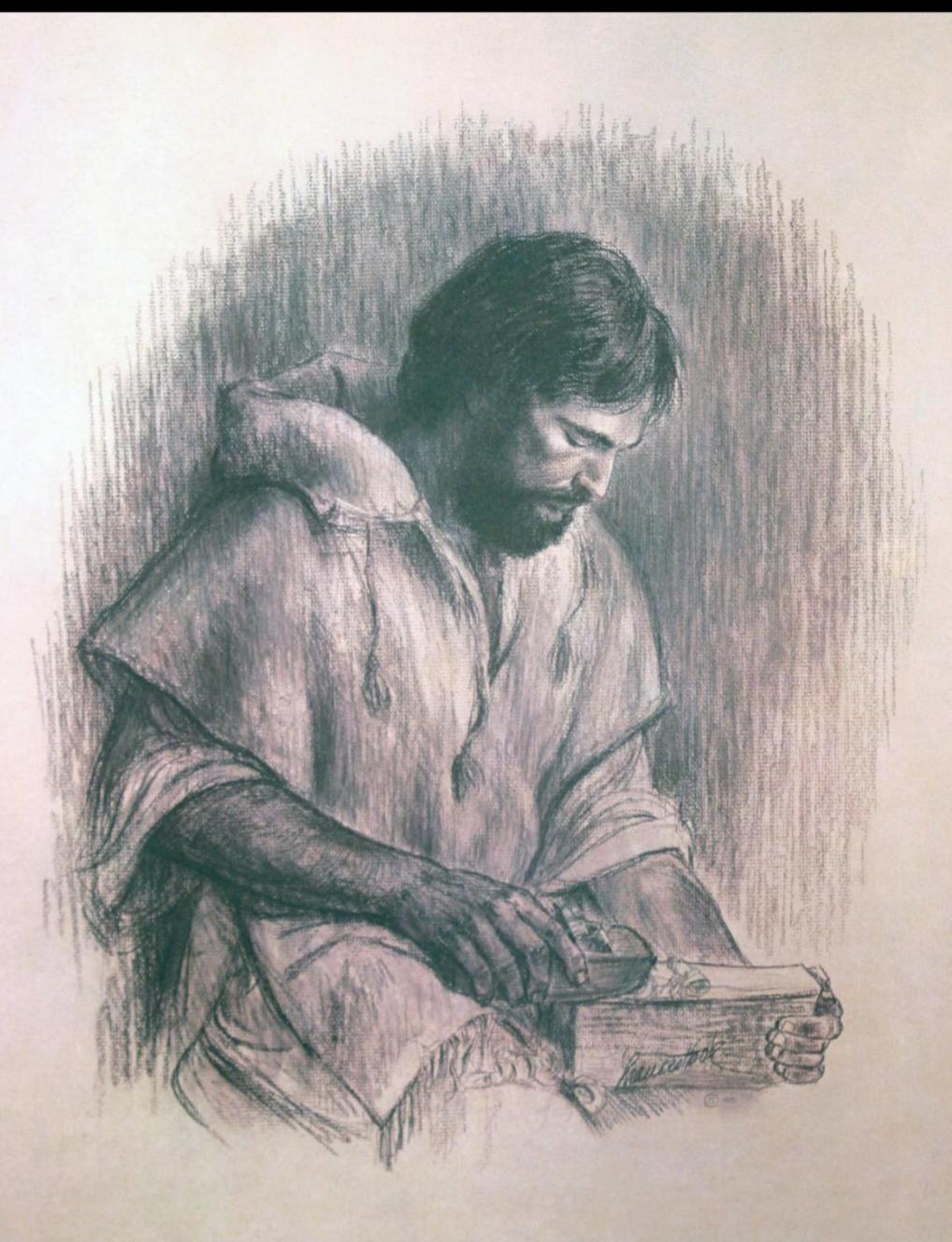
The Carpenter

Georges de La Tour, French artist in 1642
The Louvre, Paris, France

The style of Georges de la Tour (1593 – 1652) is incredibly unique in its depiction of common subject matter as well as in the design and composition of the works themselves. They have an almost meditative or pensive quality about them.

His paintings are lit with a candle, a nightlight, or a torch, which are sometimes visible or are, at other times, hidden behind a figure's hand or another object. Neglected for three centuries, he has been increasingly recognized since the early 20th century as one of the most interesting painters of his age.

The boy Jesus holding the candle prefigures his later words, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). Astoundingly, he also said to the crowds, "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14)! To embrace the first is to open us to embrace the second.



The Carpenter

Francis Hook

Frances and Richard Hook were a talented and inspired couple whose sketches of Jesus, created mostly in the 1960's and 70's, are known worldwide

Here, as a young man, Jesus learned the trade of his father, working with him until he was thirty.

Do you think of Jesus with a full-time job? Does he sweat and struggle with getting a doorway made just right? What would the quality of something that Jesus be? And what did he yell when he hit his thumb with a hammer?

Jesus was saving the world in Nazareth growing up and working just as much as he was in Jerusalem preaching. We can learn to sense God's love and presence at work as well as when we pray.

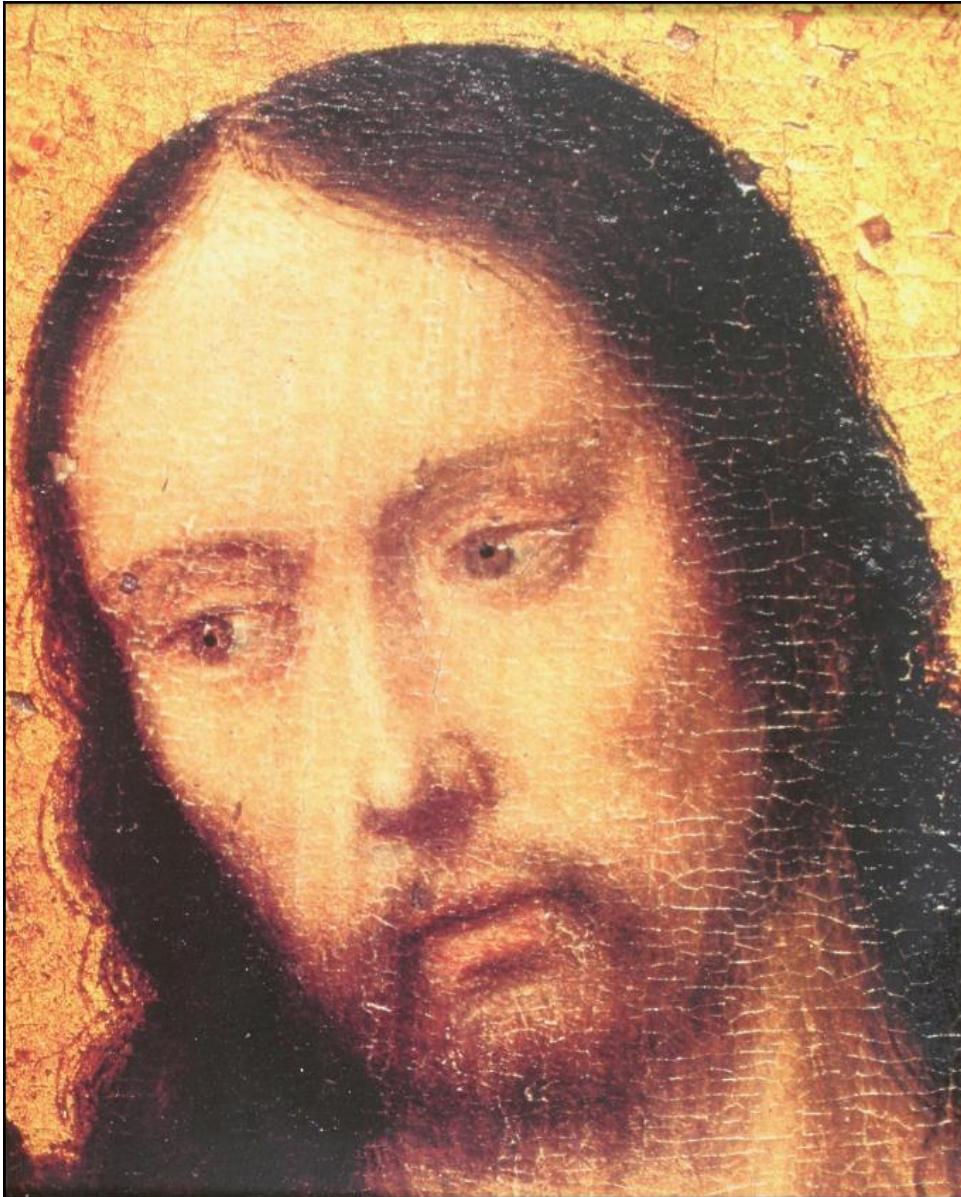


**The Head of Christ
Rembrandt in 1648
Berlin State Museum, Germany**

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606- 1669) was a Dutch draughtsman, painter, and printmaker. An innovative and prolific master in three media, he is generally considered one of the greatest visual artists in the history of art and the most important in Dutch art history.

He based this painting on a Jewish model. There are multiple versions of Rembrandt's Head of Christ which compose an international collection of paintings in the possession of a number of different cultural institutions and individuals. These similar heads in varying poses were possibly created as devotional objects.

After the resurrection, the early Christians rapidly moved to giving the same devotion to Jesus as they gave to God in their worship gatherings. Fully embracing both devotion to God and Jesus is a central element in the Christian tradition.



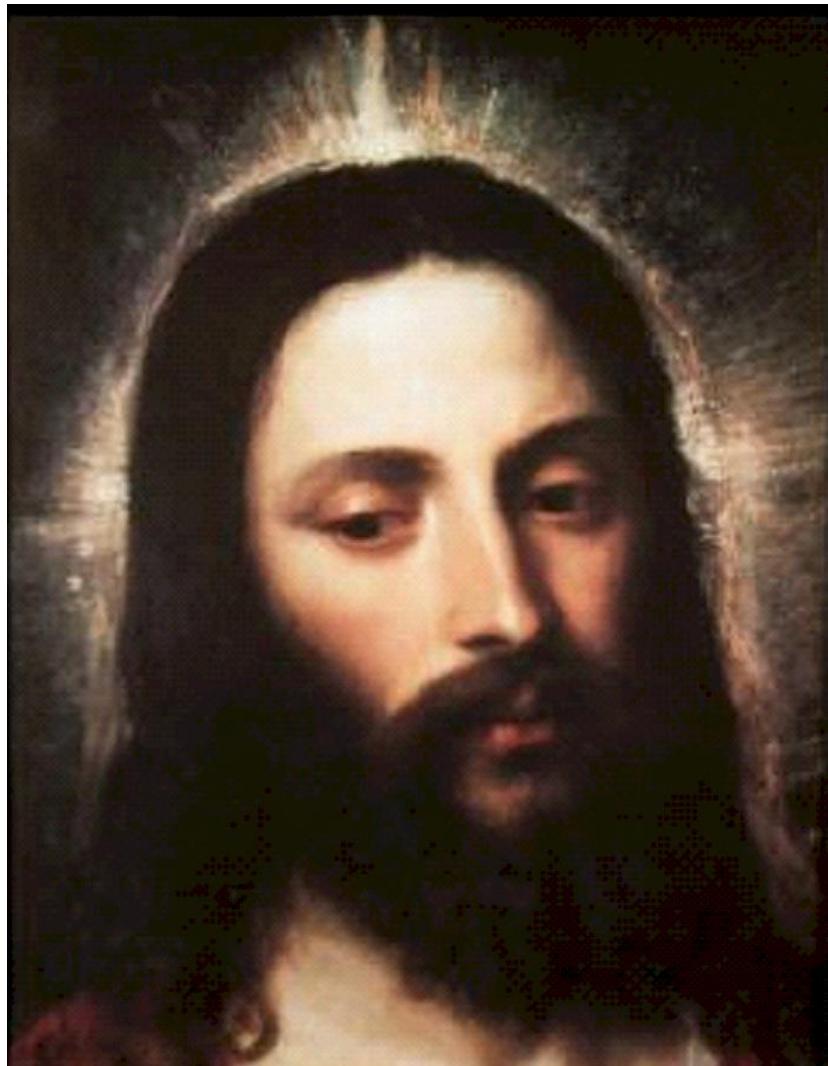
Christ taking leave of his mother (detail)

Gerard David around 1500

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

David (1460 – 1523) was an Early Netherlandish painter and manuscript illuminator known for his brilliant use of color. Christ taking leave of his Mother is a subject in Christian art, most commonly found in Northern art of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Christ says farewell to his mother Mary, often blessing her, before leaving for his final journey to Jerusalem. The subject does not illustrate any biblical passage, but derives from one of the Pseudo-Bonaventura's "Meditations on the life of Christ" (1308).



The Temptation of Christ (detail)

Titian in 1560

The Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia

This is less well-known than other images of Christ by Titian (1488 – 1576) but maintains the same self-reference. Titian painted Jesus looking like himself.

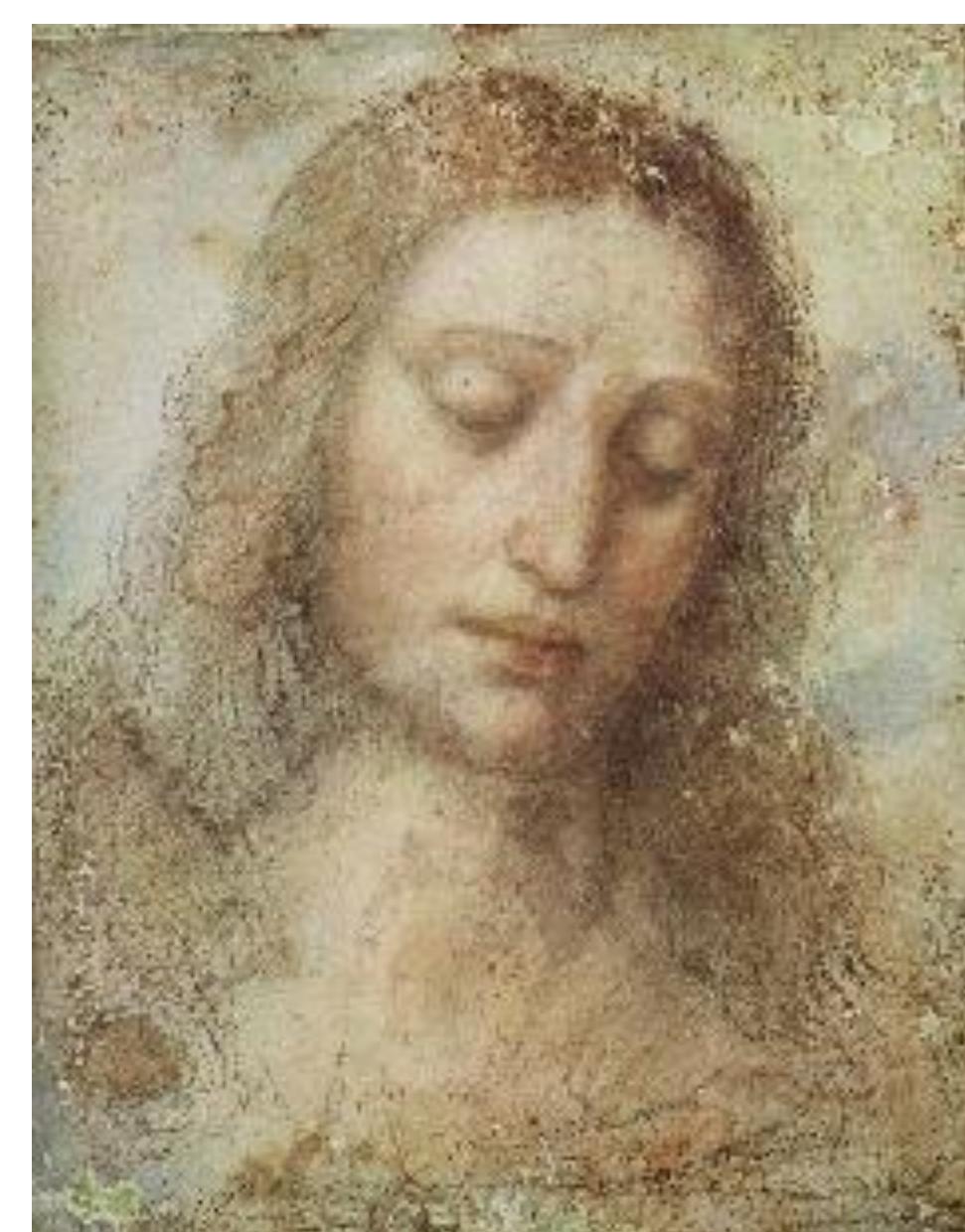
That may be a questionable representation, but it is good theology. The Old Testament proclaims we are made in the image and likeness of God, and the New Testament proclaims that “We are participants in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). The idea that God is inside us and that we ourselves are gods (John 10:34) is pervasive in Renaissance art. Of course this does not mean we are physically like God but artists use the physical to depict the spiritual.

The Eastern Orthodox Church, third largest Christian church in the world, has made becoming God a central tenant. Titian depicts himself as Christ and God.

Can you see your deepest True Self as divine like Jesus was divine? Of course, Jesus embraced and manifested the light of his divinity more than we do — but it’s still there deep within us.



Self Portrait
Titian 1546-7

A close-up, monochromatic study of a man's head, likely Jesus, rendered in charcoal or pencil. The drawing emphasizes the facial features, particularly the eyes, nose, and mouth, with fine hatching and shading.

Study for the Head of Christ

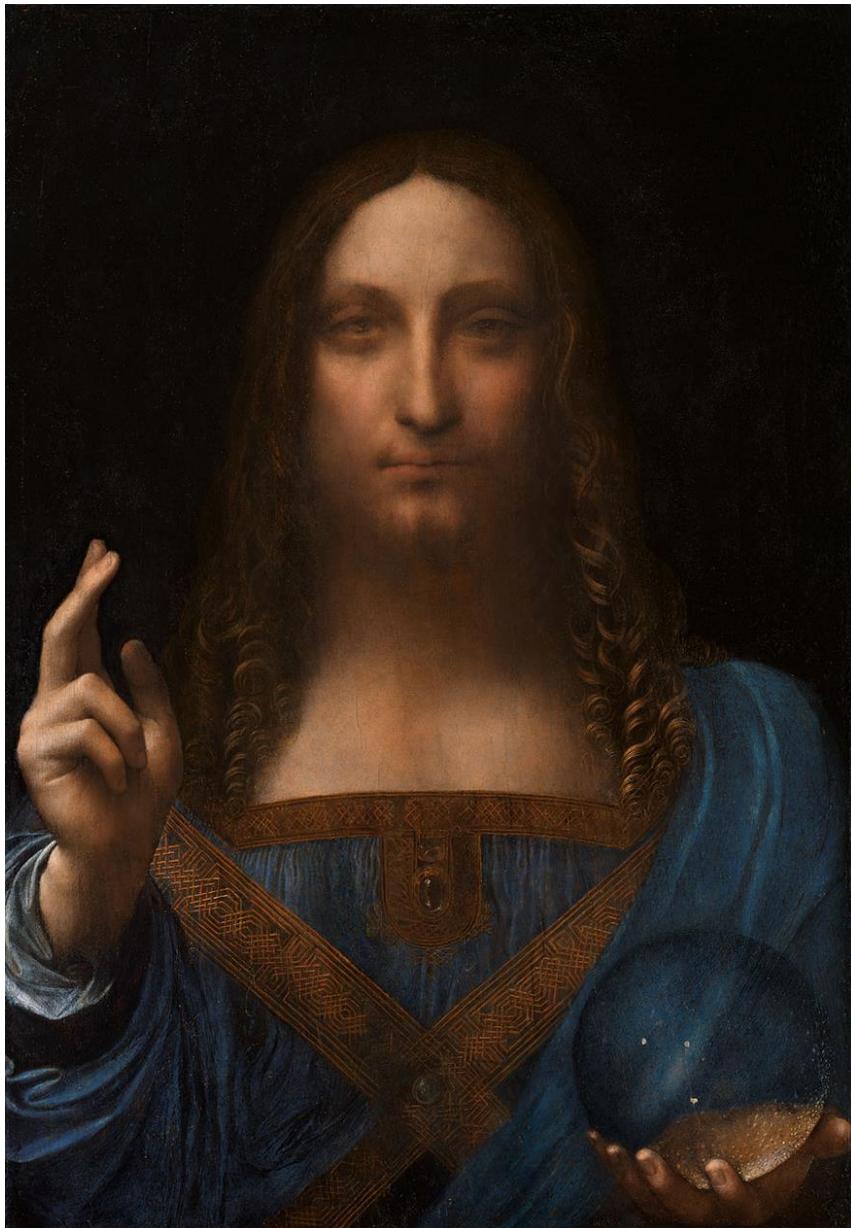
Leonardo da Vinci 1495

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France

Versatile genius of the Renaissance, Leonardo (1442 – 1519) created this drawing for his wall painting in Milan, The Last Supper. The artist defined the role of artist as philosopher when he portrayed the moment Jesus said to the disciples, “I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

This drawing, now more than 500 years old, was considered so important it was continually updated and reworked.

Artists naturally draw Jesus looking like someone in their culture. This may not be good history, but it is good mystical theology. In union with Jesus we are now the hands and feet, voice and heart of Jesus to the world today.



Salvador Mundi

Leonardo da Vinci

around 1500

The Louvre Museum, Abu Dhabi

Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1514) was an Italian Renaissance polymath whose areas of interest included invention, painting, sculpting, architecture, science, music, mathematics, engineering, literature, anatomy, geology, astronomy, botany, writing, history, and cartography. He is widely considered one of the greatest painters of all time.

This painting, thought to be lost or destroyed, was rediscovered in 2005. It was authenticated and sold in 2017 for \$450 million, the world record for any work of art sold at auction at that time.

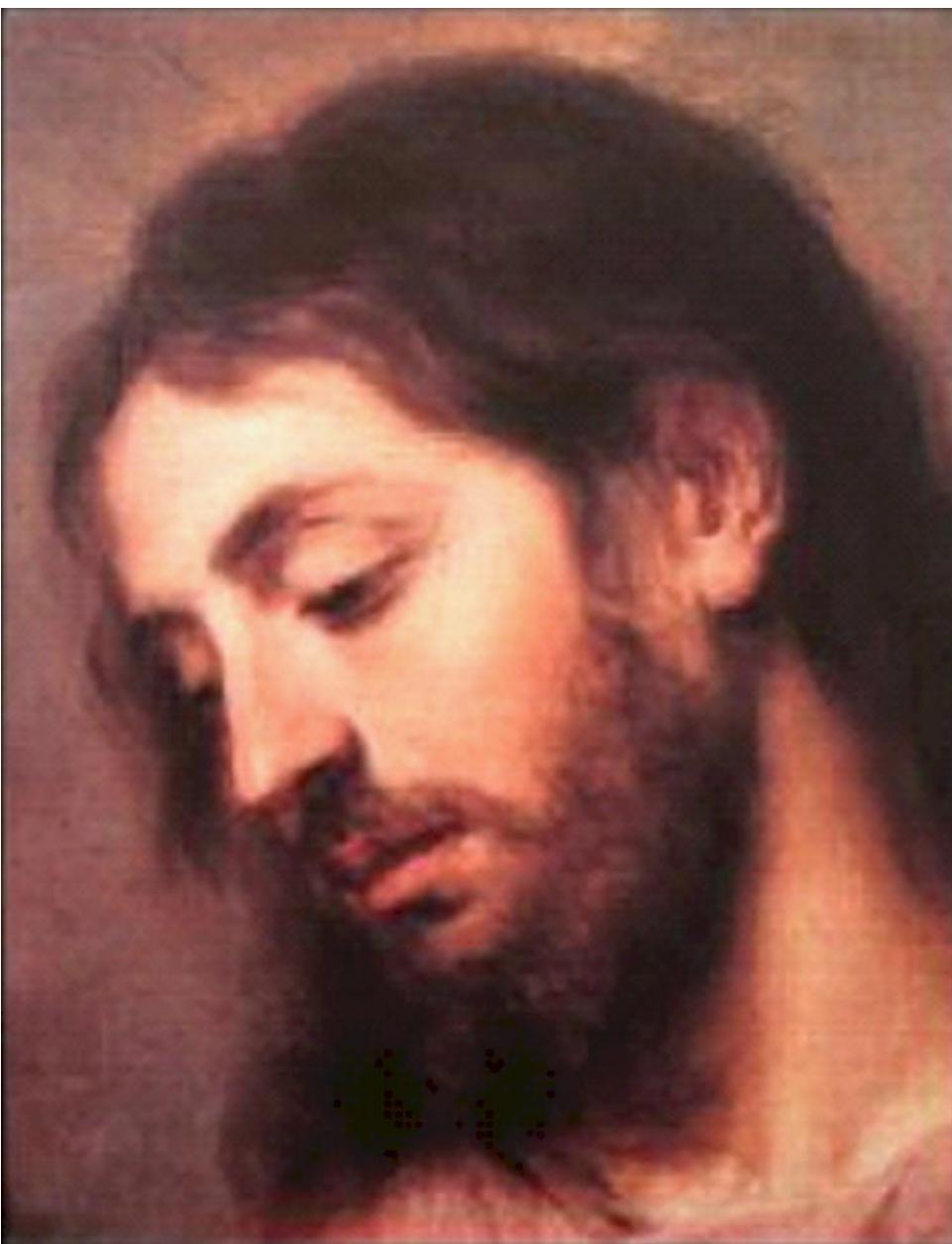
The oil on panel depicts a figure of Christ as “Savior of the World” in flowing robes, holding a crystal orb in his left hand and raising his right hand in benediction.

The “sfumato” technique in painting of fine shading produces soft, imperceptible transitions between colors and tone.

Sometimes called “the male Mona Lisa,” this is an evocative and ethereal portrait of Jesus, eloquently conveying vulnerable softness and divine transcendence.

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Christ Healing the Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda (detail)
Bartolomé Esteban Murillo in 1667-70
The National Gallery, London

Murillo (1617 – 1682) was the most popular Baroque religious painter of 17th-century Spain. This painting was made for the church belonging to the hospital of the Caridad (Charity) in Seville. The Caridad was a charitable brotherhood dedicated to helping the poor and sick of the city. Murillo was himself a member of the brotherhood.

The often mystical significance of his paintings is accompanied by the reality of his figures based on familiar human archetypes, with natural gestures and tender, devout expressions, creating an effect of intimate rather than exalted religious sentiment.

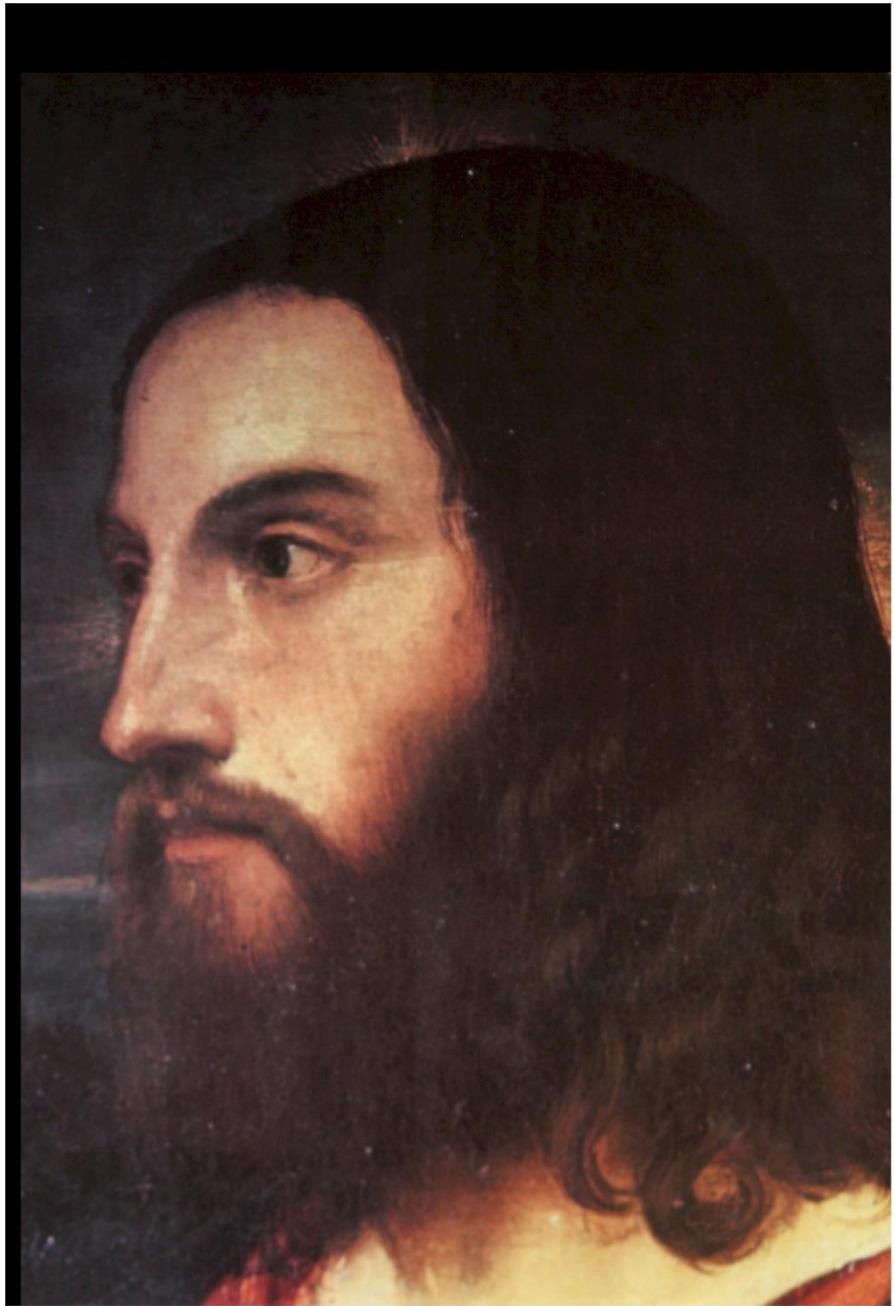
The Tribute Money (detail)

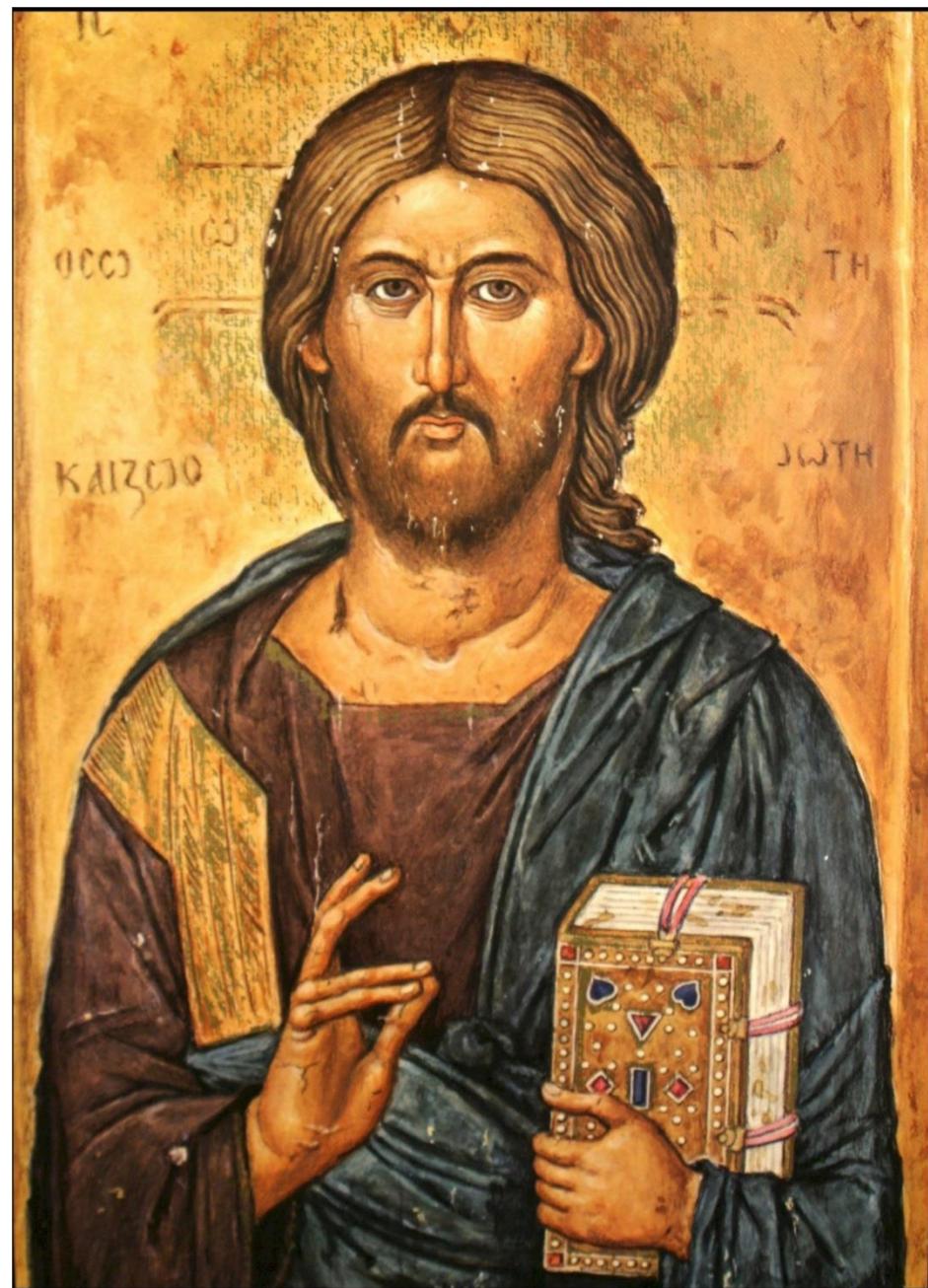
Titian in 1516

Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden, Germany

Tiziano Vecelli (1488 – 1576), known in English as Titian, was an Italian painter, the most important member of the 16th-century Venetian school.

Contemporary Giorgio Vasari thought the head of Christ here was the “most stupendous and miraculous” thing painted by Titian and that all artists at the time believed it to be an insuperable achievement.





Jesus Christ Pantocrator

Metropolitan Jovan Zografs (The Icon-Painter) in 1384
Museum of Macedonia, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

Christ Pantocrator means "Christ, Ruler of All" and was one of the first images of Christ developed in the early Christian Church. Even though "ruler of all," Christ is not pictured with a crown or scepter as other kings of this world.

The large open eyes look directly into the soul of the viewer. The high curved forehead shows wisdom. The long slender nose is a look of nobility, the small closed mouth, the silence of contemplation. Jesus holds the New Testament in his left hand and makes the gesture of teaching or of blessing with his right.

It is the tradition of the Orthodox Church to depict "God is with us" by having a large Pantocrator icon inside of the central dome, or ceiling of the church.

When Paul, in Colossians, says that Jesus is the *image* of the invisible God, the Greek word is "image" εἰκὼν (eikon), from which we get our word "icon."

In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, only flat images are painted. The Byzantine style of iconography was developed in which figures were stylized in a manner that emphasized their holiness rather than their humanity. The interiors of Orthodox Churches are often completely covered in icons.

Today icons are used particularly among Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Coptic and Eastern Catholic Churches. Icons served as tools of edification for the illiterate faithful during most of the history of Christendom. They are aids to devotion today.



Ecce Homo (Behold the Man!)

Georges Renault in 1952

**Vatican Collection of Modern Religious Art Vatican City,
Italy**

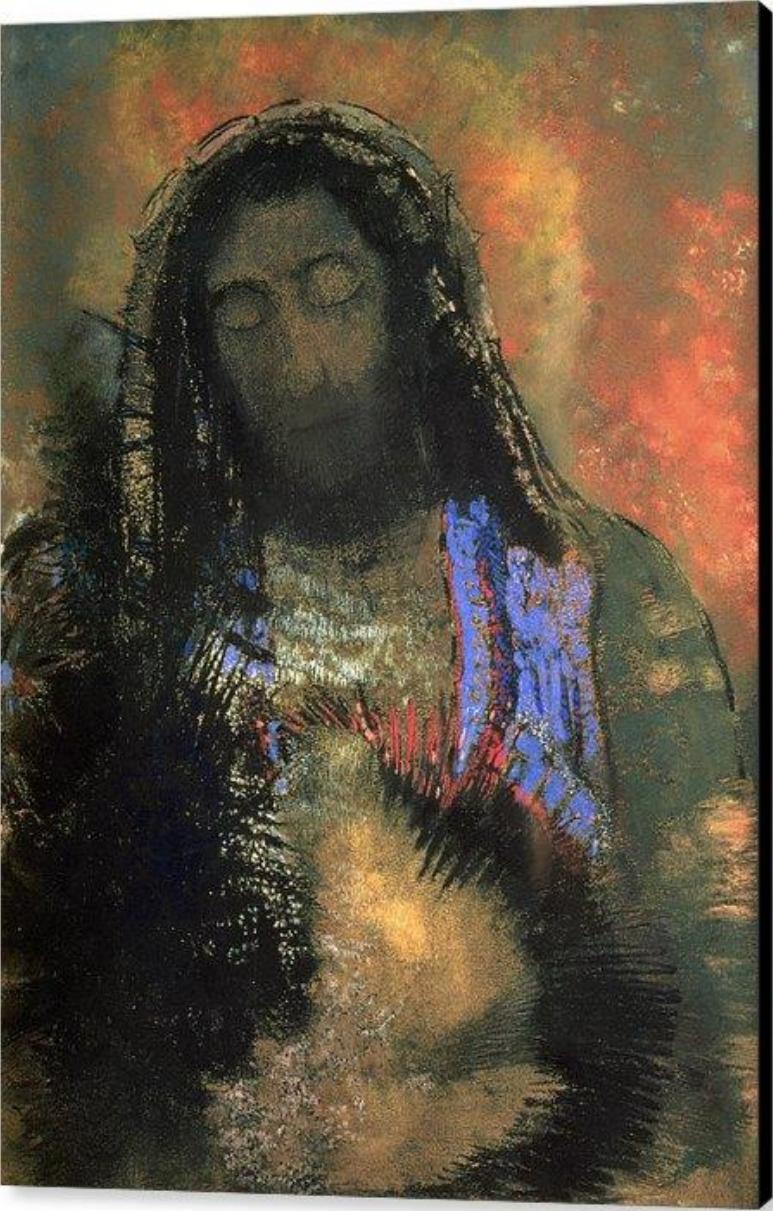
"Ecce Homo" (Latin) are Pilate's words, "Behold the man," on presenting Christ to his accusers (John 19:5).

Rouault 1871 – 1958), a French [expressionist](#), is considered by some the most important 20th century Christian artist.

The Christian faith informed his work in his search for inspiration and marks him out as perhaps the most passionate Christian artist of the 20th century.

He said: "My ambition is to be able to someday paint a Christ so moving that those who see him will be converted." He also painted works dedicated to the vulnerable of society such as the homeless and prostitutes.

The bright color he uses along with representing Jesus with his eyes lowered, give the artist's interpretation of Jesus' suffering.



on you today."

The heart center or fourth chakra is considered by many to be the energy center that connects the upper and lower energy centers.

Sacred Heart

Odilon Redon

in 1910

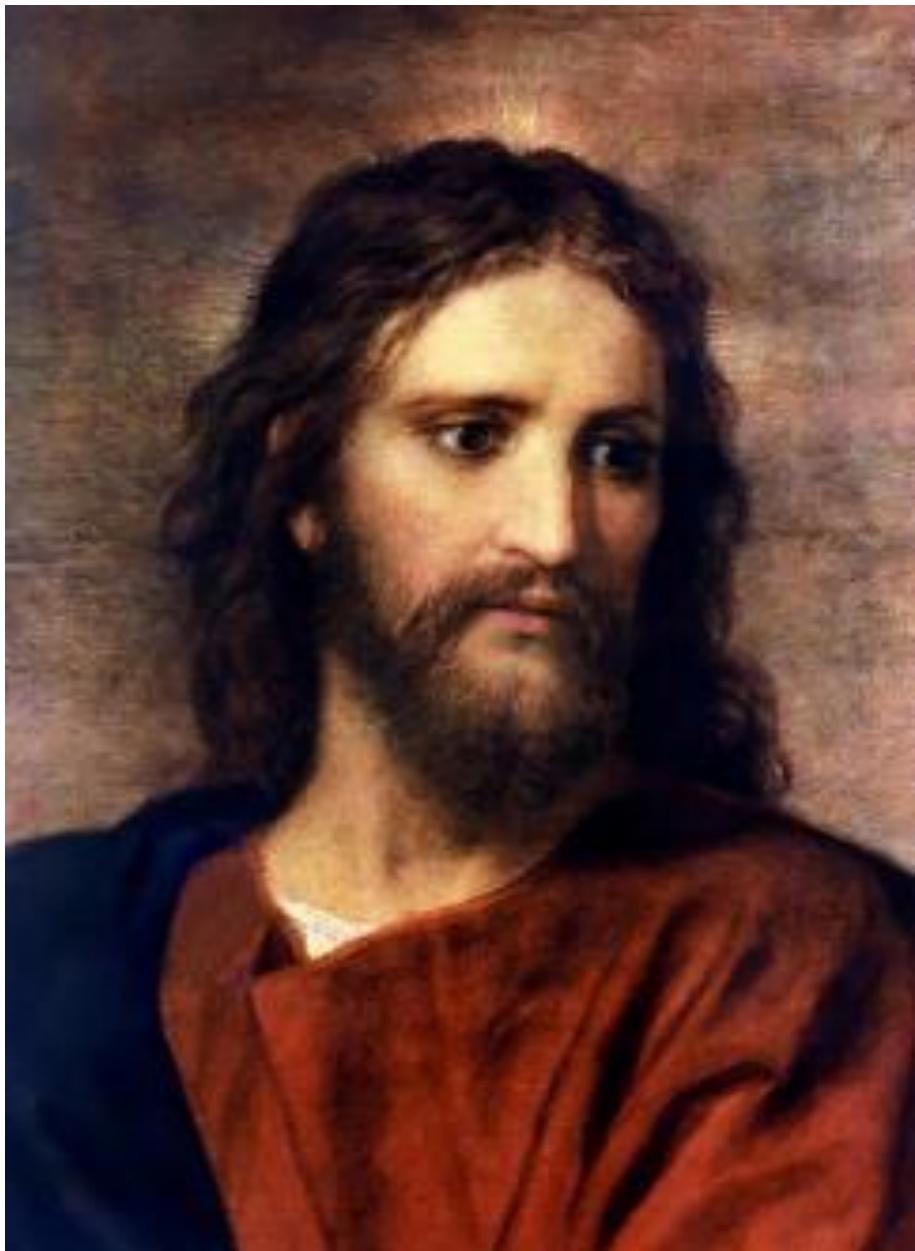
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France

Redon (1840 –1916) was a French symbolist painter. He wanted to portray “the triumph of light over darkness.”

The devotion to the Sacred Heart is one of the most widely practiced and well-known Roman Catholic spiritual practices, taking Jesus’ physical heart as the representation of his divine love for humanity.

The devotion is especially concerned with the longsuffering love and compassion of the heart of Jesus towards humanity. The popularization of this devotion in its modern form is derived from a Roman Catholic nun from France, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque. She learned the devotion from Jesus during a series of apparitions to her between 1673 and 1675, and later, in the 19th century, from the mystical revelations of another Roman Catholic nun in Portugal, Blessed Mary of the Divine Heart.

To appreciate the rich symbolism of the heart, we can remember in that Judaism the word heart represented the core of the person. While recognized as the principle life organ, the heart was also considered the center of all spiritual activity. Here was the seat of all emotion, especially love. As the Psalms express, God speaks to us in our heart and there probes us deeply. This notion of the heart is clear when we read the words of Deuteronomy 6:5-6: "Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin



Christ at Thirty-three (detail)
Heinrich Hoffman in 1888

This much loved portrait of Jesus from the German painter Heinrich Hofmann (1824 – 1911) is taken from his Christ and the Rich Young Ruler which hangs in Riverside Church, New York City.

We can ask, “Is this how Jesus really looked?” Probably not. However, that is not the most significant matter in painting images of Jesus for us to contemplate today. The Risen Jesus is with us today in his spiritual body which is no longer limited to the physical realm. Therefore, what is most significant today is that he now takes any loving form that we need for him to be real to us.

This painting represents one form which makes it appealing for some to think about the reality of Jesus’ presence which is available to each of us today in whatever way we need.

Head of Christ

Warner Sallman in 1940

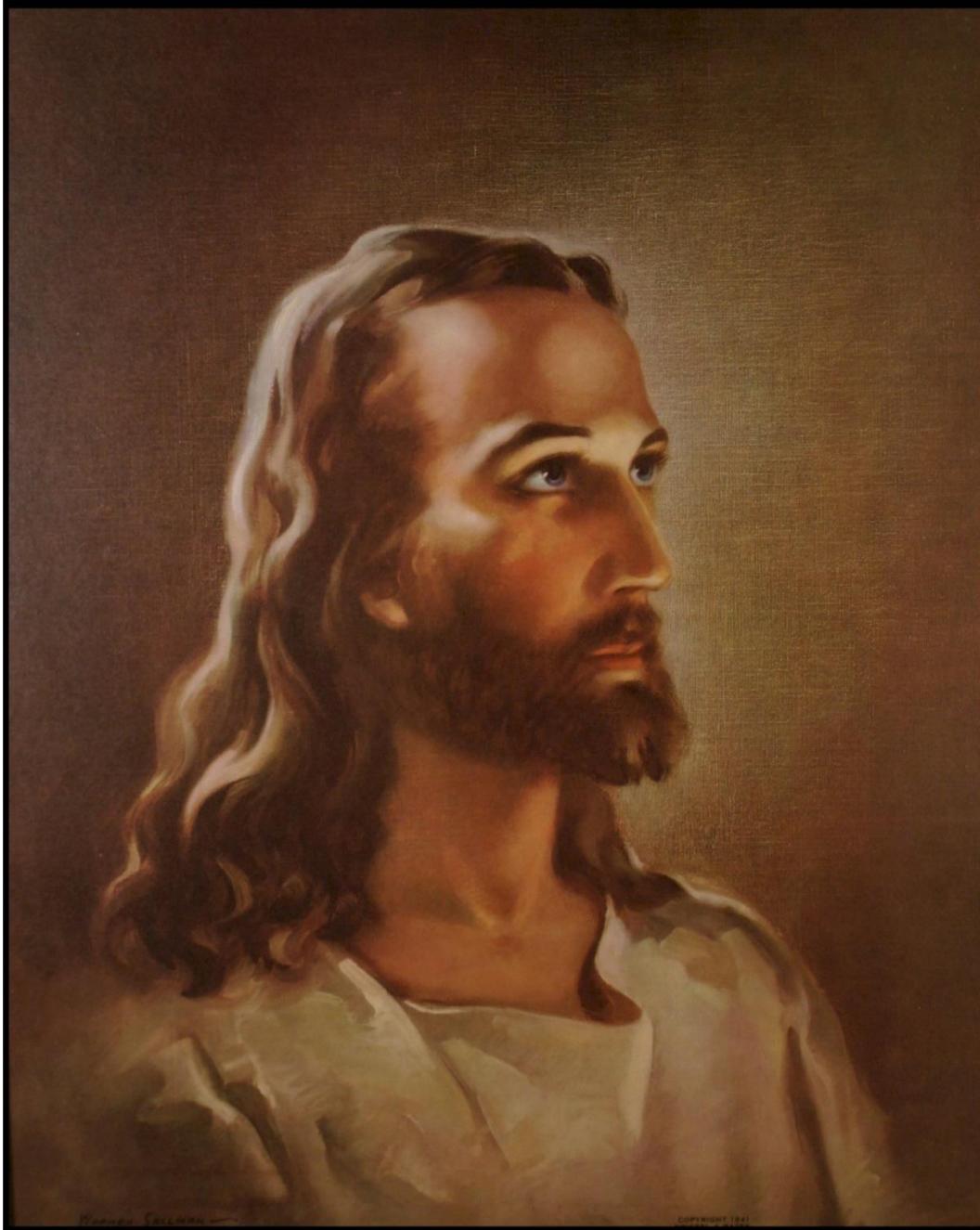
This painting has been reproduced more than 500 million times. Sallman (1892 – 1968) believed that his initial sketch of The Head of Christ was the result of a miraculous vision that he received late one night.

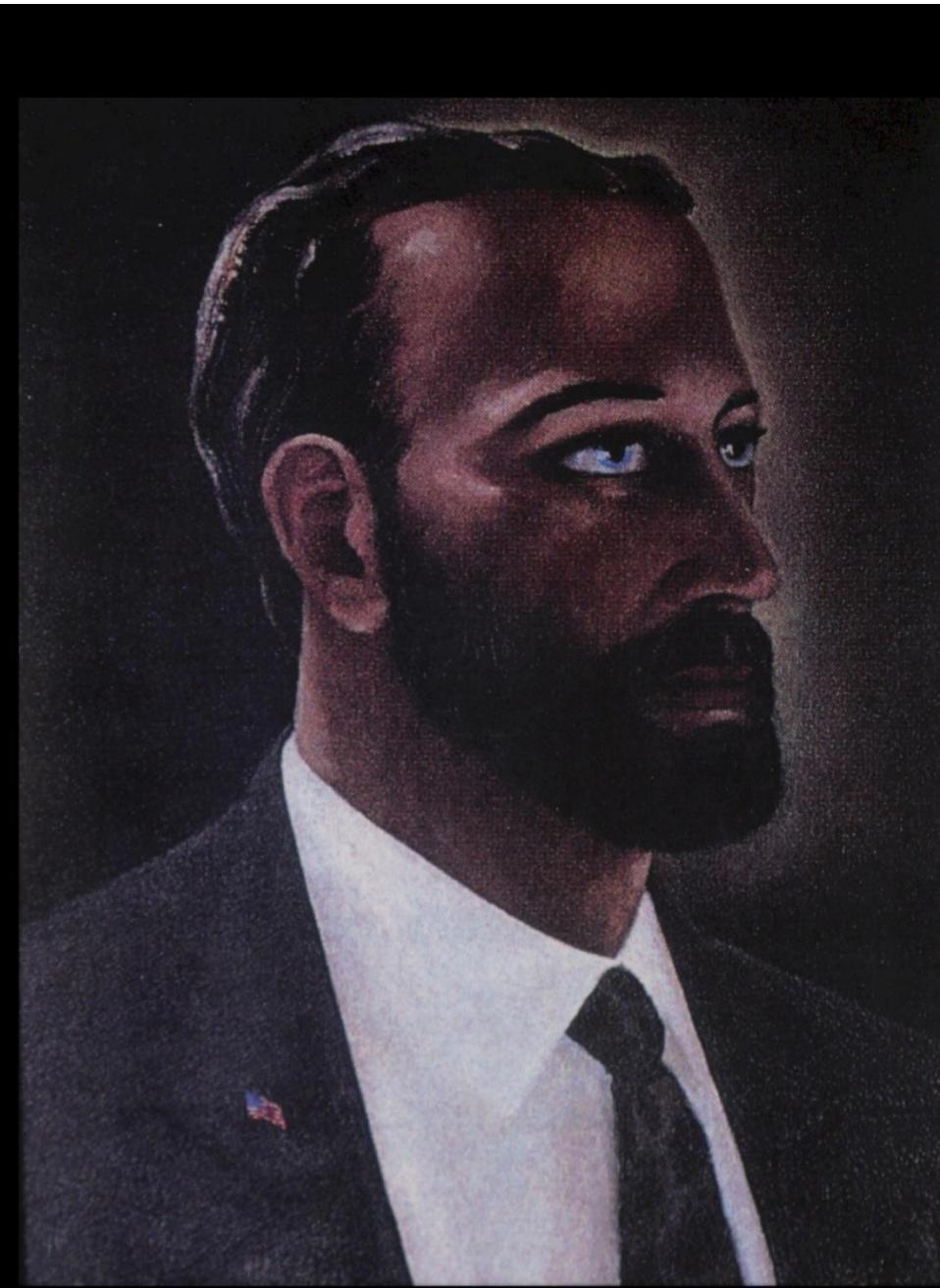
David Morgan, professor of religion at Duke University, states that "for many Christians during the Cold War, Sallman's portrait did symbolize a virile, manly Christ, while for others it embodied a more intimate and nurturing Jesus, a personal savior for modern times.

Many Lutheran and Roman Catholic Christians have praised the painting for the hidden host, the communion bread, which is used in the Christian ritual of the Eucharist, on the forehead of Jesus, and a chalice on his temple, both pointing to the Holy Eucharist.

Some find this traditional portrait of Jesus as a blue-eyed, golden-haired white man offensive. The appropriation of Jesus by the white, wealthy, and powerful of the world seems to them to negate Jesus' clear and special identification with the oppressed. Compare this image to the Black and Native American images in this collection.

Jesus, was and is a destabilizing presence in history. If our idea of him legitimizes the current culture, then we abandon not only the historical Jesus, but the risen Jesus as well.



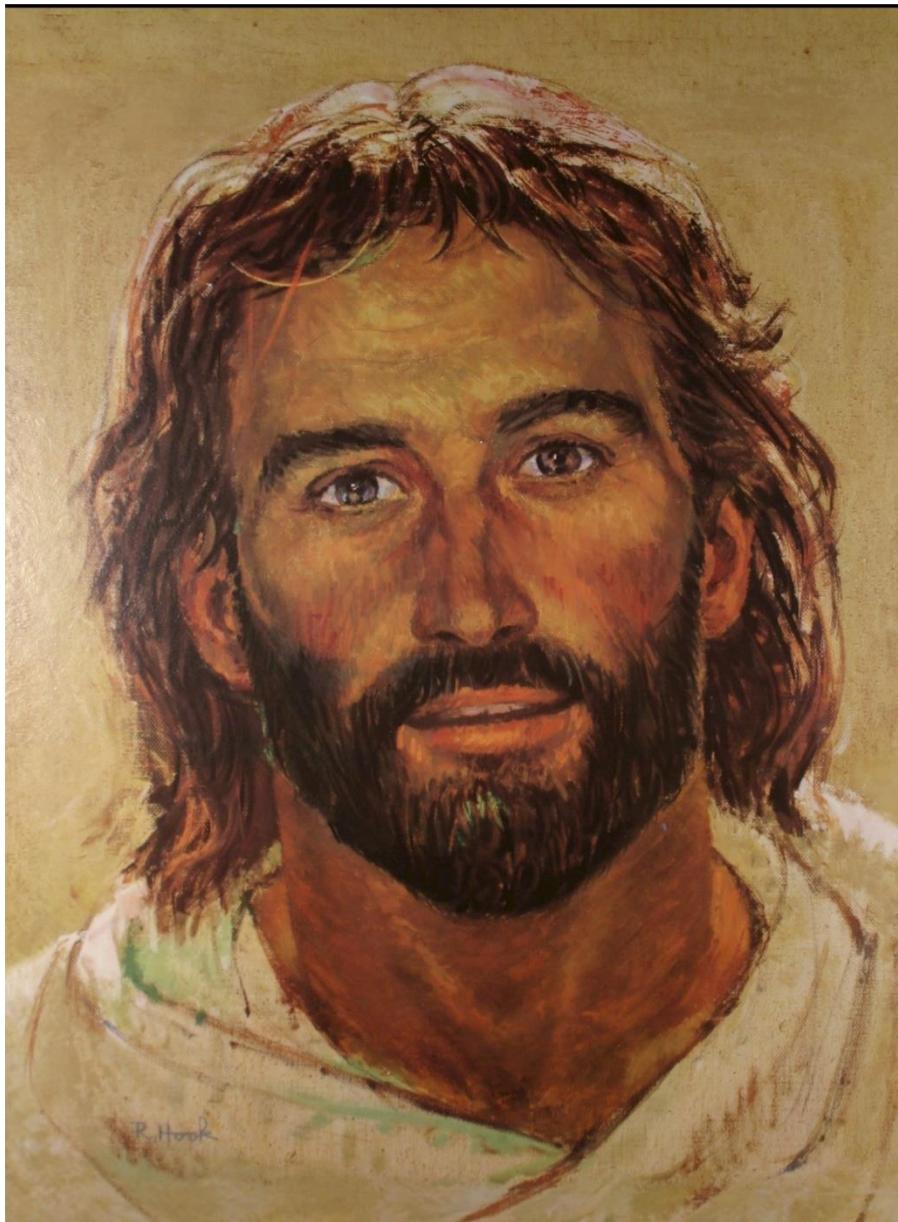


The Conformist Cliff Davis in 1993

Davis was motivated to paint this picture based on Sallman's Head of Christ when he realized Sallman's Christ would not be admitted to the Christian college where he taught, unless Jesus first had his hair cut.

So a Jesus with short hair, white shirt and tie, small American flag pinned in his lapel might well be the treasurer of the Rotary Club and fishing on weekends.

We need a great many diverse images to widen our perspective, lest we think our image of Jesus is the only one that communicates who Jesus was and is to everyone.



Head of Christ **Richard Hook in 1960's**

Hook (1914-1975) was a talented and inspired artist who was best known for painting sketches of Jesus in the 1960's and 1970's.

This rugged Jesus was his most popular painting. It was deliberately more rugged than Sallman's painting and has a Semitic look which is certainly appropriate since Jesus was a Palestinian Jew.



The Black Jesus

John Campbell

This is a classic African American version of Jesus. Scholars agree that whatever Jesus' skin color, he was not a pale-skinned, blue-eyed, light-haired Caucasian.

Jesus' geographical origins mean he was dark-skinned. The early Israelite tribes to which he was ancestrally linked were a mixed group with African connections.

Jesus has suffered with the Black community for many centuries – slavery, exploitation, prejudice, racial violence. It is important to depict his solidarity with the Black peoples of the world with these kinds of images.



The Good Shepherd

Vincent Barzoni

Barzoni is one of the most reproduced artists in the world.

Based on John 10:1, “I am the good shepherd,” this features a handsome African American Jesus standing in a garden with one arm extended and hand open as he welcomes you into his way of life. He holds a shepherd's staff in his other arm.

Art, from the Renaissance to today within the Christian tradition, sometimes carries a sacred erotic element.

Sometimes this is to emphasize, as the apostle John writes, “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.” Jesus was really a male human being with associated body shape and parts. The Bible declares that our physical bodies were God/She’s idea and called “very good.”

Sometimes, as in the standard accepted history of the nineteenth century, the idea of erotic elements in art challenged rigid Victorian behavioral norms. Baroque religious art is rich and sensual as with Bernini and Caravaggio.

Sometimes it is a desire to communicate spiritual passion which has a close association with eroticism in the writings of some of the Christian

saints such as Saint Teresa and Bernini’s statue, The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa.

Sometimes Christian art verges on the erotic to appreciate the beauty of the human form. Barzoni’s image suggests spiritual passion and eroticism.



Dark Jesus
Bonnie Tolson

In this original painting, Tolson, Broadway Church member, has created a portrait of Jesus with a stern and serious countenance to encompass the abuse and suffering of minorities in our country's history and contemporary life.



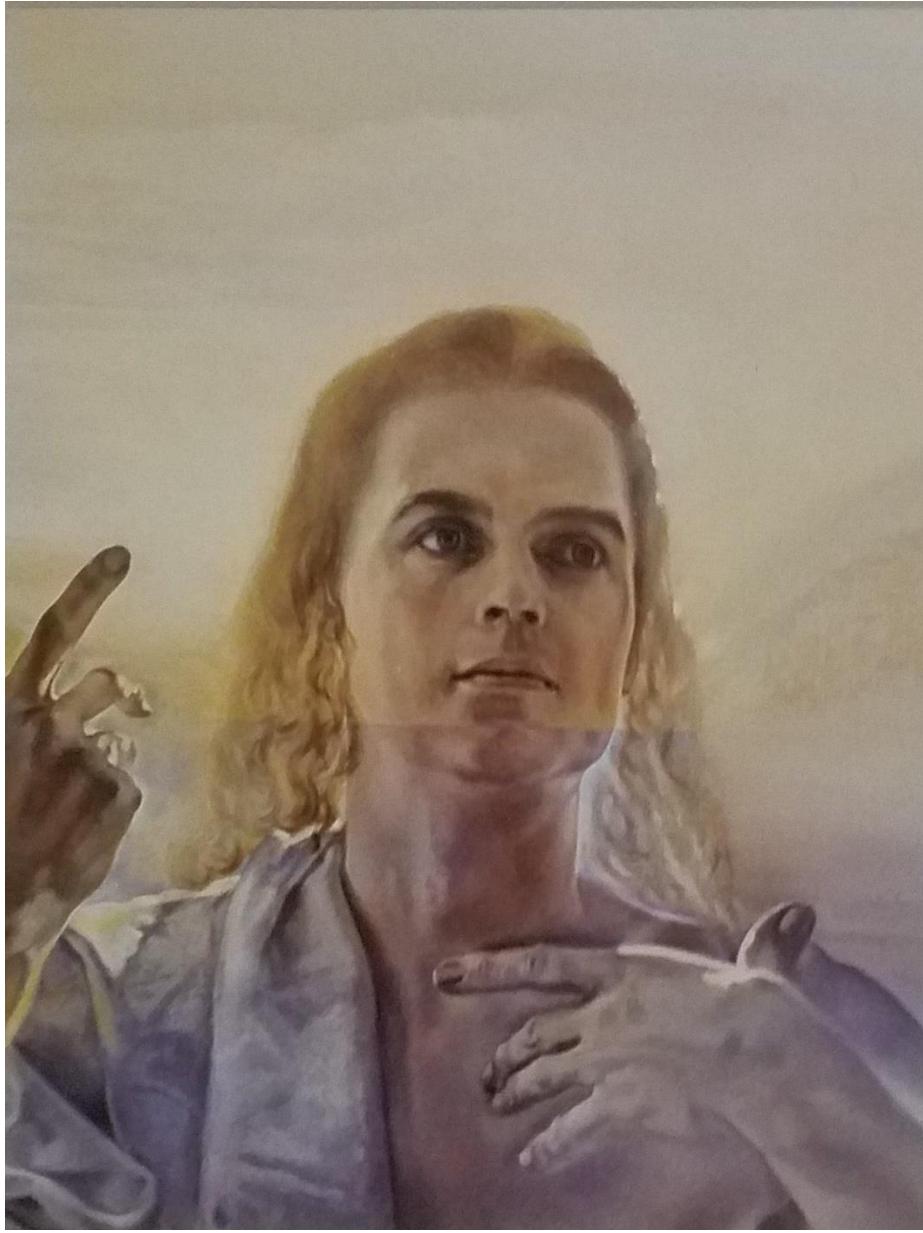
Compassionate Christ

Fr. John Giuliani

Giuliani, (b. 1932) is a Roman Catholic priest. This unadorned Navajo Christ moves forward beyond the frame, and with his hands initiates a welcoming embrace. His compassionate countenance bears the marks of human suffering summoning us to transform our own.

He says, “In my work I try to celebrate a union of a common spiritual understanding, to show how a single mystery can be approached through diverse cultures.”

Traditional iconography gives witness to the human face of the Sacred. This icon, imaged in the features of America’s indigenous peoples, reveals anew that sacred power. It celebrates the soul of the Native American as the original spiritual presence on this continent, and as a prophetic sign, it celebrates the reconciliation of the spiritual vision of Native and Christian peoples of this land.

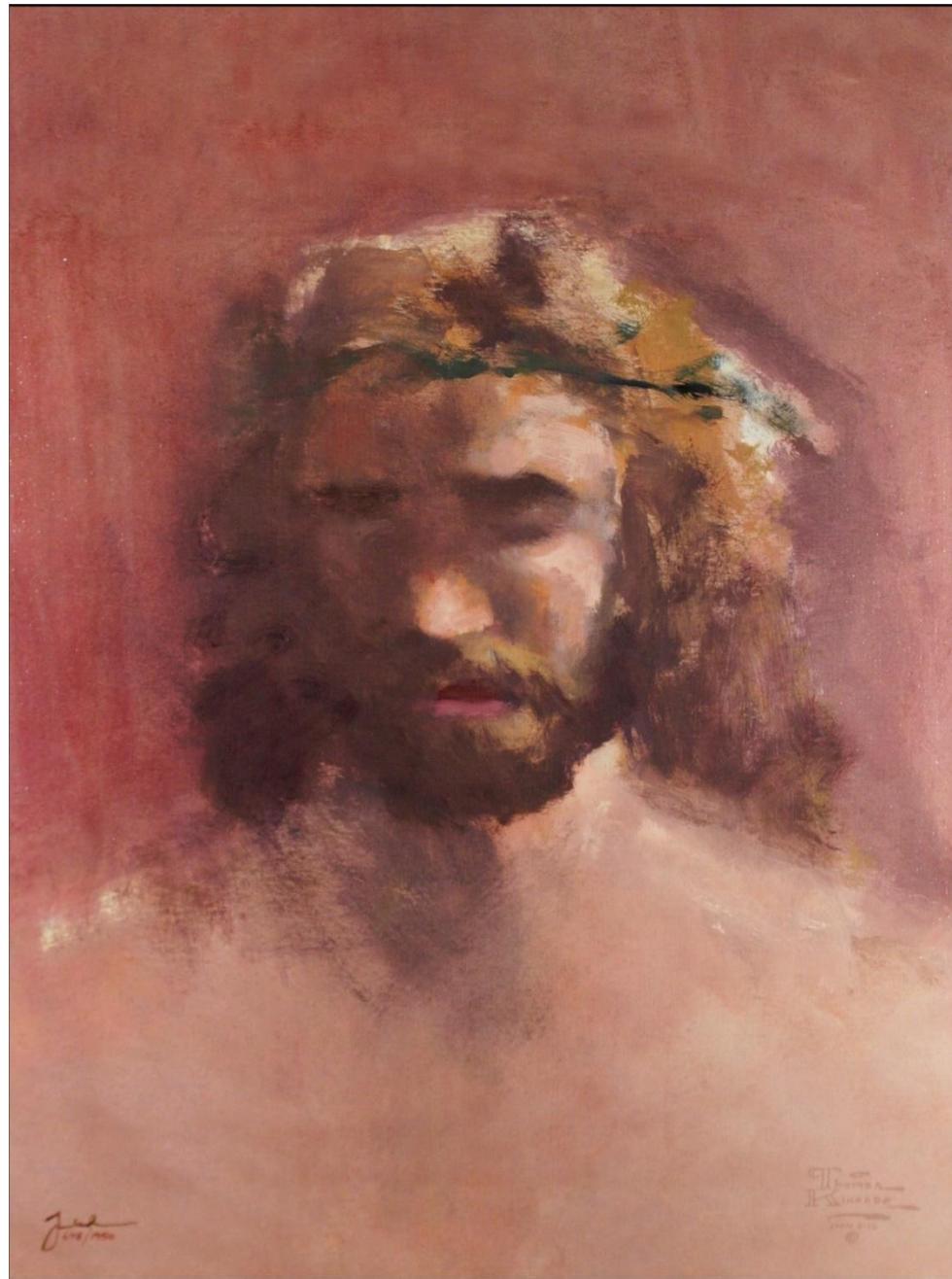


The Sacrament of the Last Supper (detail)
Salvador Dali in 1955
National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

The complete image of the Last Supper and its description appears in Part Two of the Faces of Jesus Collection.

The face of Jesus here is located in the very center of Dali's painting. This Last Supper has been misunderstood as representing the historical Last Supper which it is not. It is a mystical image of the real, but spiritual, presence of Jesus when the Eucharist is celebrated.

This reflects Dali's Roman Catholic background. Other Christian traditions focus on finding the real, spiritual presence of Jesus in various forms of prayer, worship, and ministry.

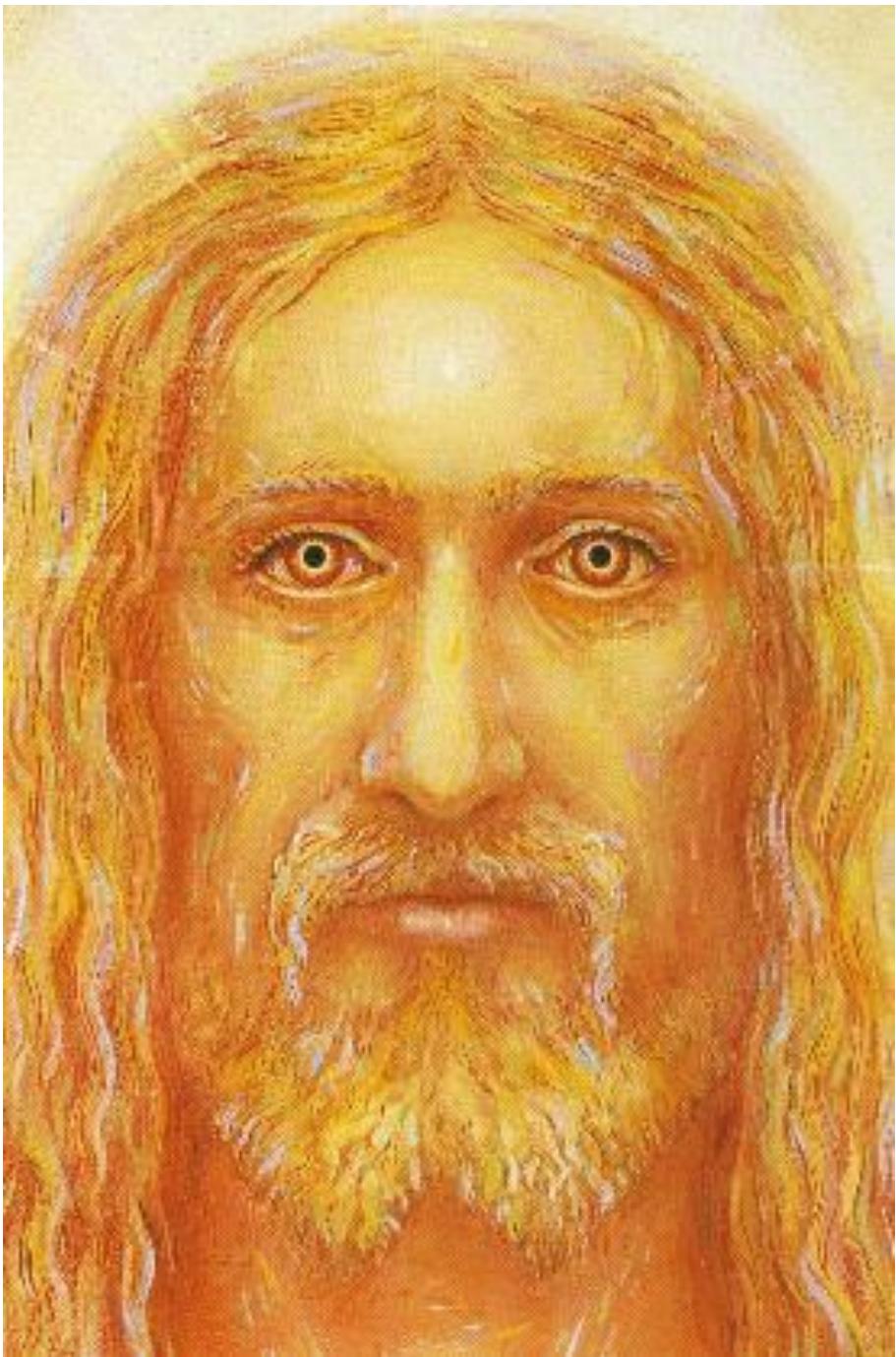


The Prince of Peace - Portrait of the Christ

Thomas Kincaid in 1980

Kinkade (1958 – 2012) is one of America's most collected artists, a painter-communicator whose tranquil, light-infused paintings bring hope and joy to many, affirming the basic values of family, faith in God, and the luminous beauty of nature.

Kincaid, writes, “In 1980 I found myself sitting in an art class, my mind wandering. I was suddenly struck with a powerful vision. The vision that was laid on my heart that day is the painting you see before you, The Prince of Peace. It flowed from Him through my heart and hand onto the canvas very quickly. It was the first clear coming together of my art and my faith, a coming together that is visible, perhaps more subtly but just as profoundly, in each of my paintings even today.”



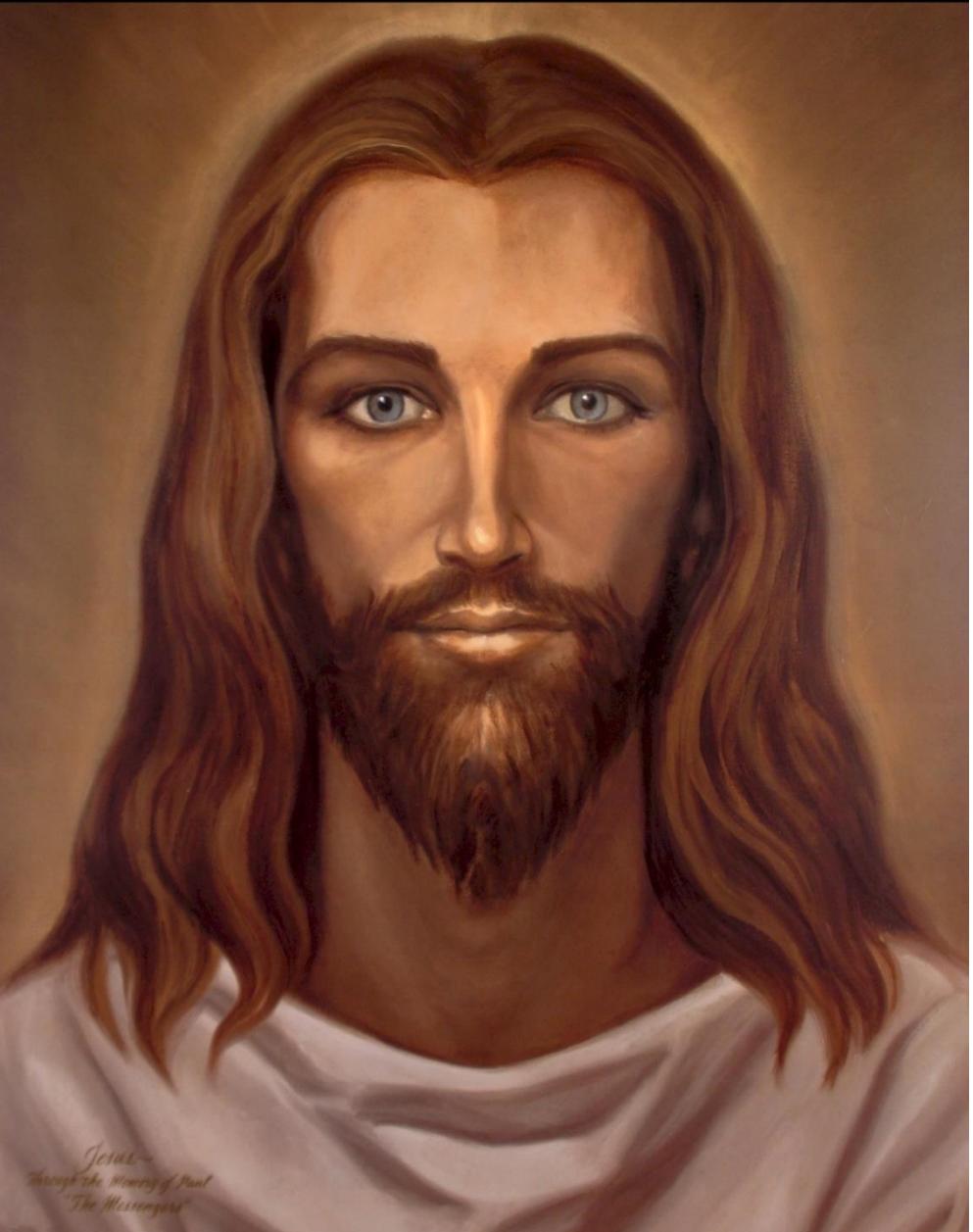
Christ Alex Grey

Alex Grey, born in 1953, is an American artist specializing in spiritual and visionary art. His art is shown all over the world. Grey is also known for his album covers for the American rock band Tool.

He attempts to intentionally convey that which is seen in the higher states of consciousness by mystics down through the ages and interpreted by their own cultural worldview.

Ken Wilber, renowned philosopher of consciousness, says, “Alex Grey might be the most significant artist alive. Alex’s art calls us beyond ourselves to a transpersonal land where Sprit is real, where God is alive, where Buddha smiles and the Tao sings, where our own original face shines with a glory that time forgot and space cannot recall.”

There are twelve of Alex Grey’s images in The Faces of Jesus.



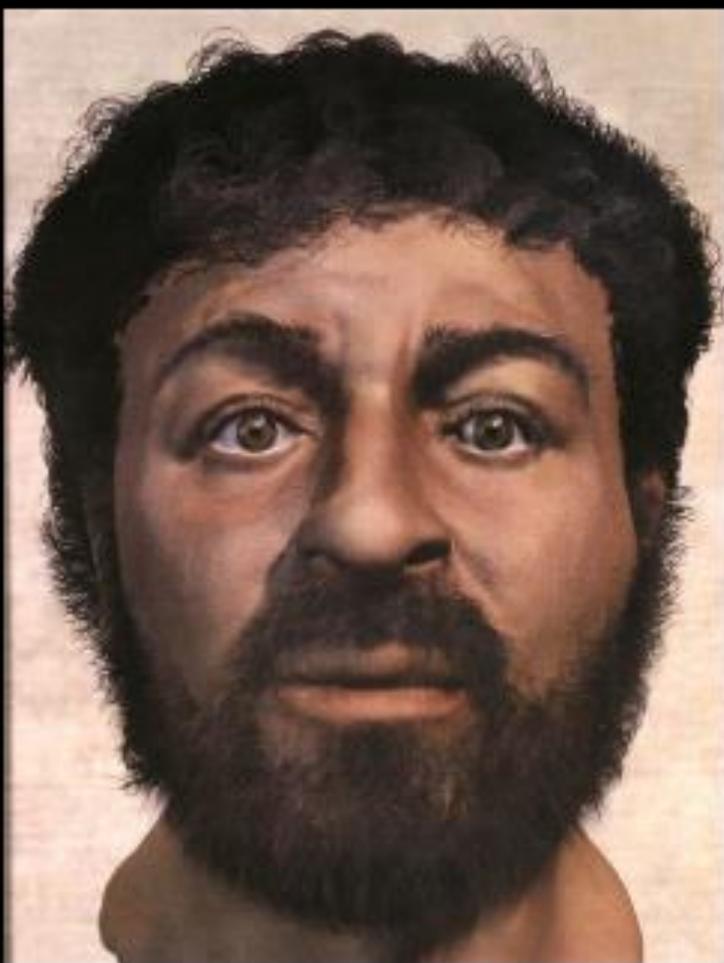
Ascended Master Jesus Christ from Nick Bunick in 1997

Bunick believes that, in a vision, the Apostle Paul described to him how Jesus looked. He asked an artist friend to paint this image.

It is not uncommon for mystics and others to connect with those who have passed on to the other side as Jesus did with Moses and Elijah. The things we experience in altered states can have an authentic spiritual element even as they are also always shaped by our culture and degree of evolution in our worldview.

Forensic Reconstruction

Richard Neave in 2002



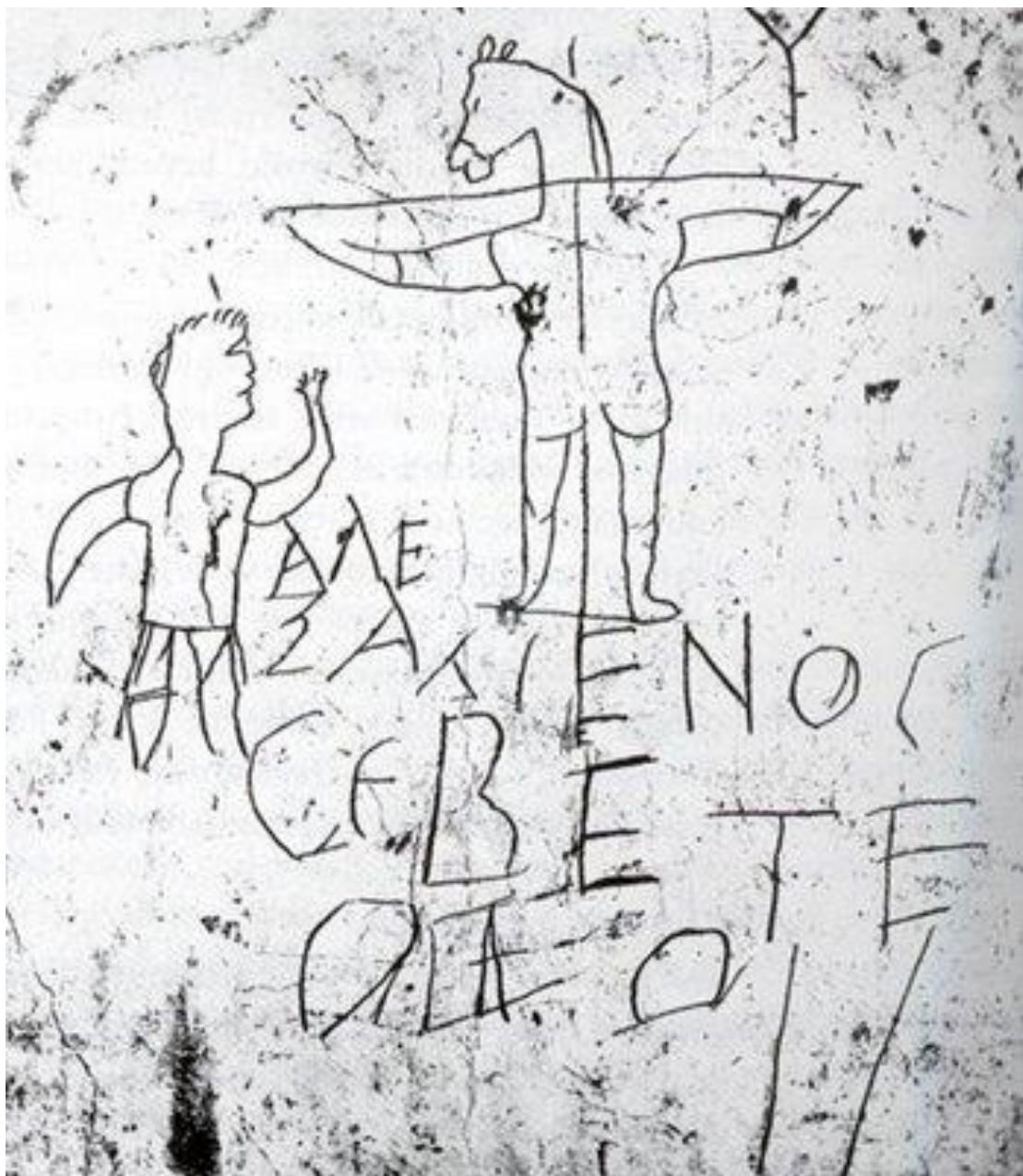
Neave, a retired medical artist from the University of Manchester in England, used forensic anthropology to reconstruct a typical Galilean Semite of Jesus' era.

Starting with the assumption that Jesus resembled a typical peasant from 1st century CE Palestine, Neave and a team of researchers started with an Israeli skull dating back to the 1st century. They then used computer programs, clay, simulated skin and their knowledge about the Jewish people of the time to determine the shape of the face, and color of eyes and skin.

The result is shown in this portrait: a person with a broad peasant's face, dark olive skin, short curly hair and a prominent nose. His height would have been on the order of 5' 1"; he would have weighed about 110 pounds.

Alison Galloway, professor of anthropology at the University of California in Santa Cruz, said that: "This [portrait] is probably a lot closer to the historical truth than the work of many great masters."

The Earliest Known Picture of Jesus The Alexamenos Graffito around 200, Rome



The Alexamenos Graffito, discovered in 1857, is believed by scholars to be the earliest known depiction of Jesus. This is a piece of 3rd-century wall graffiti near the Palatine hill in Rome. It was apparently drawn by a Roman soldier to mock another soldier who was a Christian. The caption reads, in Greek, "Alexamenos worships God," while the image shows a man raising his hand towards crucified figure with a donkey's head.

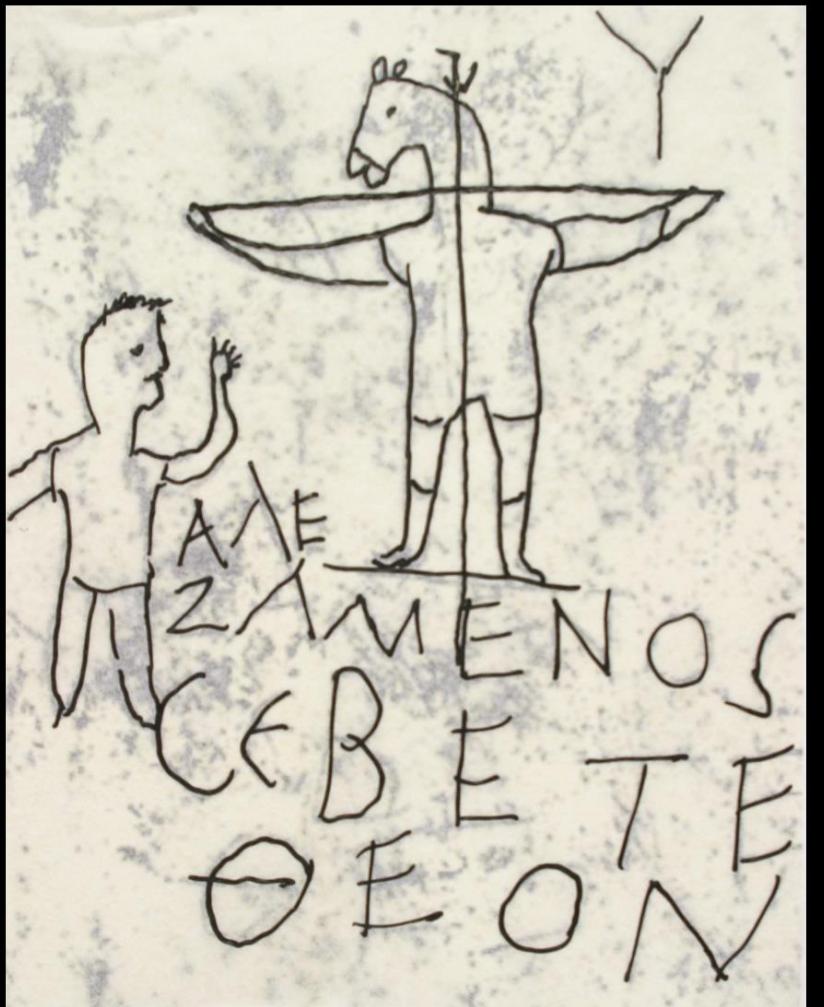
The inscription is a mocking depiction of a Christian. Both the portrayal of Jesus as having an ass's head and the depiction of him being crucified would have been considered insulting by contemporary Roman society.

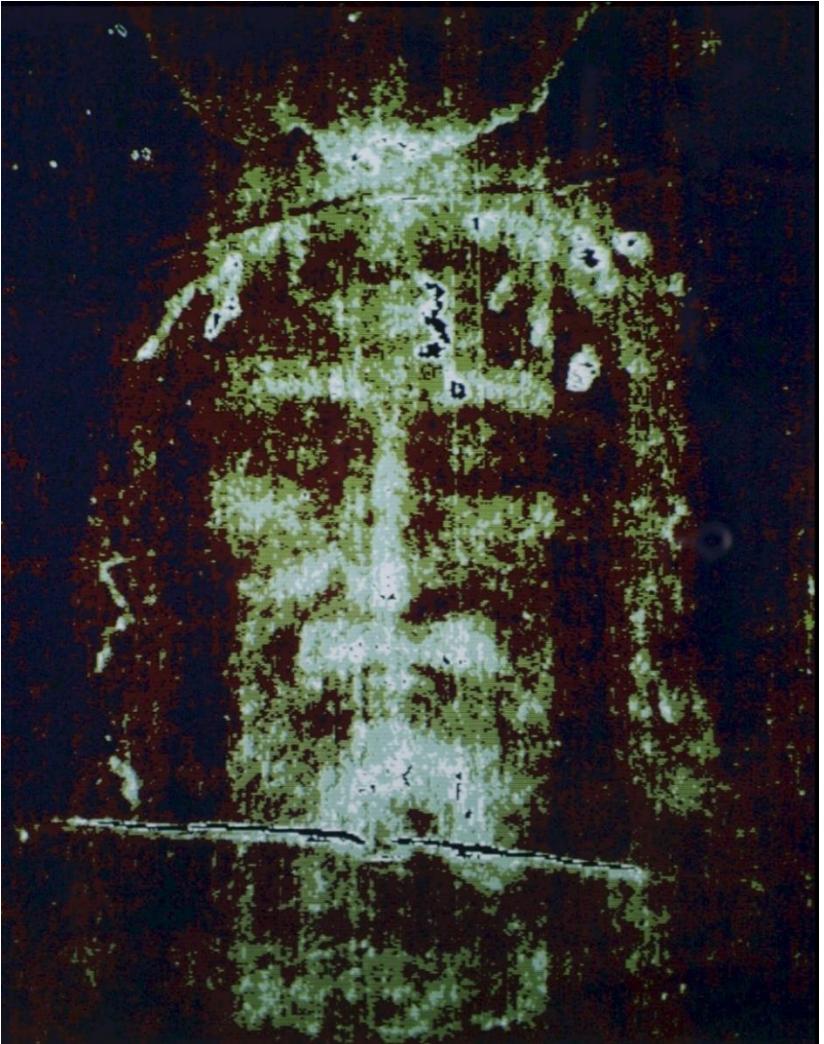
The accusation that Christians practiced worship of donkeys seems to have been common at the time. Tertullian, writing in the late second or early third century, reports that Christians along with Jews were accused of worshipping a deity with the head of an ass.

So this image would be both anti-Semitic and anti-Christian. We should not be surprised that this first known depiction of Jesus is a derogatory parody. We have often misunderstood Jesus and Christianity down through the centuries, including today.

The Alexamenos Graffito

(cleared background to make the drawing easier to see)





The Shroud of Turin (detail) Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, Turin, Italy Photographic negative image of face area

The Shroud of Turin is a centuries old 14 ft 5 in × 3 ft 7 in linen cloth that bears the image of a crucified man — a man that millions believe to be Jesus of Nazareth. Is it really the cloth that wrapped his crucified body, or is it simply a medieval forgery, a hoax perpetrated by some clever artist? Modern science has completed hundreds of thousands of hours of detailed study and intense research on the Shroud. It is the single most studied artifact in human history.

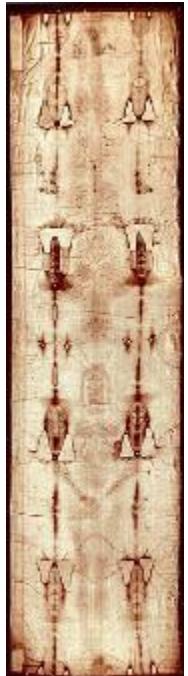
However, the cloth has refused to yield its secret to space-age techniques. Scientists have largely concluded that the shroud is not a forgery, cannot be reproduced by any known means, bears traces of real blood, has dirt and pollen found only in Palestine, and cast a startling three-dimensional human likeness when it is subjected to photographic image analysis.

The imprint resembles that which would have been created by a burst of radiation or energy, burning the body's image into the cloth.

Carbon-14 dating done in 1988 concluded that the three tiny samples from the cloth were most likely from the 14th century. However that conclusion has been challenged by other scientists on the basis of the scorching by the intense fire in 1532, disputed dating techniques, and most recently, that reweaving of sections of the cloth in later centuries created an error in Carbon-14 dating, the only theory supported by peer-reviewed scientific data.

It appears to many researchers that this is burial cloth with an unexplained image of a man crucified in a way similar to Jesus. It cannot be known at this time if this was the burial cloth of Jesus.

A website devoted entirely to scientific papers on the Shroud may be found at: <http://www.shroud.com>.



Shroud
of Turin

Computer generated face from The Shroud of Turin Ray Downing



During the production of the program "The Real Face of Jesus?" for the History Channel, 3D computer graphics artist Ray Downing worked with high definition photographs of the Shroud of Turin.

On that ancient linen there are two distinct and different images: the body image and the blood image. Downing noticed a slight difference in color between the body and the blood images.

Using sensitive digital color mapping, Downing enhanced the blood image to produce the blood map you see in this image. This blood was then "lifted" from the body image and applied to the 3D computer model of the man in the Shroud, as featured in "The Real Face of Jesus?".

The man in the Shroud appears to have suffered well over a hundred and thirty different injuries. There are wounds from scourging, wounds to the wrists and feet, numerous head wounds, and a side wound.

While it cannot be stated the Shroud is the burial cloth of Jesus, it can be affirmed that the wounds it depicts are consistent with those described in the gospel accounts.