

Jesus's Crucifixion and Deposition

Christian Art in Lent: Trinity United Methodist Church

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The Crucifixion

Matthew 27: 33-38 Mark 15:22-28 Luke 23:27-34 John 19:18-19

Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. (Mark 15:22-28 NRSV)

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Elevation of the Cross*, 1610

Oil on wood. 15 ft. 2 in. x 21 ft.

Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp, Belgium

Although a triptych, the work is unusual because it portrays a single scene of several men straining to raise the cross holding the crucified Jesus, witnesses mourning the spectacle, and Roman soldiers handling the two bandits crucified with Jesus. Rubens blends the influences of Renaissance and Baroque artists in this work.

Marc Chagall, *White Crucifixion*, 1938

Oil on canvas. 5 ft. 3/8 in. x 4 ft. 7 in.

Art Institute of Chicago

Painted as a response to Kristallnacht, the work emphasizes the crucified Jesus as a Jewish martyr mirrored in events of Nazi Germany.

Salvatore Dali, *Crucifixion Corpus Hypercubus*, 1954

Oil on canvas. 6 ft. 4 in. X 4 ft. (approx.)

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

Fascinated by atomic science and mathematics after Hiroshima, Dali blends his interest in Catholicism with his interest in atomic theory to paint Christ crucified on a four-dimensional geometric figure known as the tesseract or hypercube.

Deposition

Matthew 27:57-60 Mark 15:42-46 Luke 23:50-56 John 19:38-42

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight. They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close by, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:38-42 RSV)

Rogier van der Weyden, *The Descent from the Cross (Escorial Deposition of Christ)*, c. 1435

Oil on oak panel. 7 ft. 2-5/8 in. x 8 ft. 7-1/8 in.

Northern Renaissance, Flemish

Commissioned by the Great Guild of Crossbowmen

Altarpiece, center panel of triptych. Originally in Notre-Dame hors-les-Murs, Louvain, Belgium; now in Museo del Prado, Madrid

Van der Weyden depicts the crucified Christ being lowered from the cross.

Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Pietà (The Pity)*, c. 1498-1500

Marble. 5 ft. 9 in. x 6 ft. 5 in.

High Renaissance, Florentine

Commissioned by French Cardinal Jean de Bilherès for his burial chapel; now in Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome

Mary cradles the dead body of Christ on her lap.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Entombment of Christ*, c. 1603

Oil on canvas. 9 ft. 10-1/8 in. x 6 ft. 7-15/16 in.

Milanese, Baroque.

Altarpiece created for the Chapel of Pietro Vittrice, Santa Maria in Vallicella, Rome; now in Pinacoteca, Musei Vaticani, Rome

Commissioned during the Counter Reformation

Caravaggio gives visual form to the doctrine of transubstantiation.