

The Meaning of Holy Week

Holy Week

- Most important week in liturgical year
- Palm/Passion Sunday to Easter Sunday
- Enter into Christ's life, death and resurrection
- Commemorate the important historical events of salvation
- Celebrate them in a sacramental way – makes us “present” to sacred mysteries

Thinking about Holy Week

- Historically: What were Jesus and his followers doing during this week?
- Today: How does the Church help us to participate in the events of this week?



Israel
 at the
 Time of Christ
 30 AD

SCALE OF MILES
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● **Petra, Sela (Kadesh Barnea)**

Thinking about Holy Week Historically

- **Place:** Jerusalem. It is a Jewish city, but occupied by the Romans who tolerate the Jewish religion, as long as it doesn't make any trouble for them.
- **Time:** March or April, the week before Passover, around the year 30 AD. Jews from all over the world travel to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. The City is crowded with tourists and pilgrims. Roman soldiers are everywhere, to keep the peace.

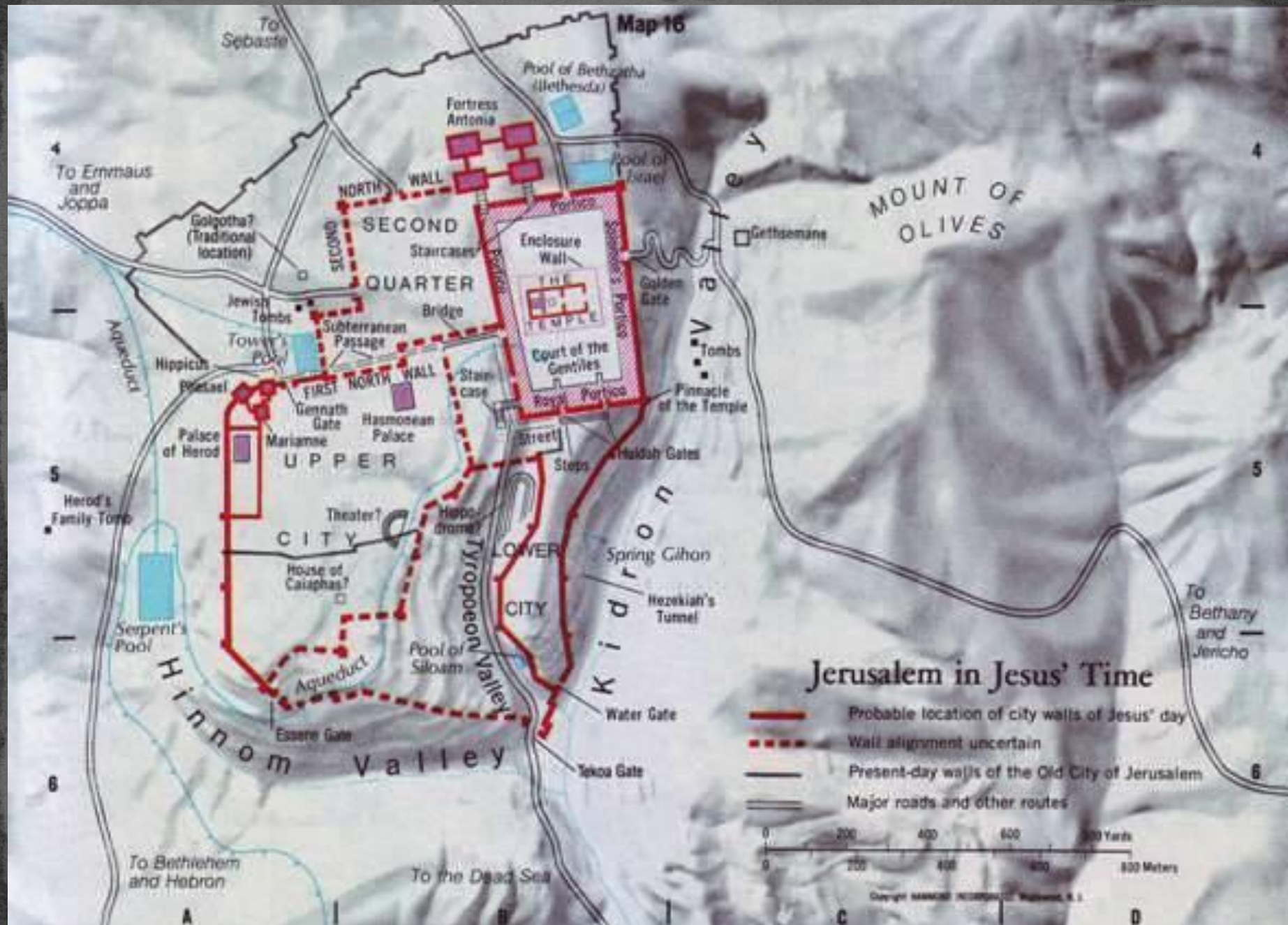
Recap: What is Passover? (Exodus 12)

- God sent Moses to rescue the Israelites from slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt.
- God sent 10 plagues. The final one: every first-born will be killed.
- In order to save Israelite first-born from death, each family was to kill a lamb, smear its blood on their doorposts, and eat the lamb at a meal with unleavened bread (travel food -- there's no time for bread to rise).
- The angel of death would “pass over” the houses marked with the blood of the lamb.
- After the death of the Egyptian first-born, Pharaoh allowed Moses and the “children of Israel” to go free. But he changed his mind and went after them with his army and chariots.
- God caused the water of the Red Sea (or Sea of Reeds) to part – the Israelites crossed dry-shod, but the waters fell in on the Egyptian army pursuing them, and washed the Egyptians away.
- The Israelites followed Moses into the desert, where God gave them the 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai. The new relationship is sealed in blood – Moses and the elders sacrifice some animals and collect the blood –sprinkle people with ½, pour other ½ on altar.
- The Passover is to be a perpetual memorial for the Jews: they are commanded to retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt every year and teach it to their children. Those who participate in the Passover celebration are deemed to have been saved by God during the Exodus and bound by the covenant at Mount Sinai.
- Centuries later, once the Temple was established in Jerusalem, Passover had to be celebrated there so that the lamb could be sacrificed at the Temple by a priest.

- **Passover week, around 30 A.D.**

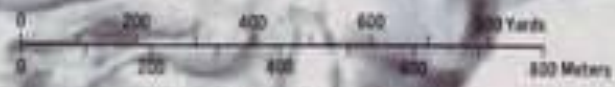
- Jesus, a wandering preacher from Galilee, has been preaching the Reign of God for about 3 years, working miracles, & finally claiming to be the Messiah. He is in the area to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. He is becoming so popular, that the High Priest and the Jewish authorities see him as a serious threat to their authority over the people.
- The Jewish leaders think about killing Jesus, but they don't have the legal authority – only the Roman Governor can condemn someone to death.

- Now it's Passover week, the city is jammed with pilgrims. It's a crowded festive atmosphere – there are tourists, animals, and probably pick-pockets and beggars and con-artists and bandits... the kind of people who always show up to take advantage of a crowd... There are Roman soldiers too, in case there's trouble...
- Thus begins Holy Week...



Jerusalem in Jesus' Time

- Probable location of city walls of Jesus' day
- - - - - Wall alignment uncertain
- Present-day walls of the Old City of Jerusalem
- Major roads and other routes

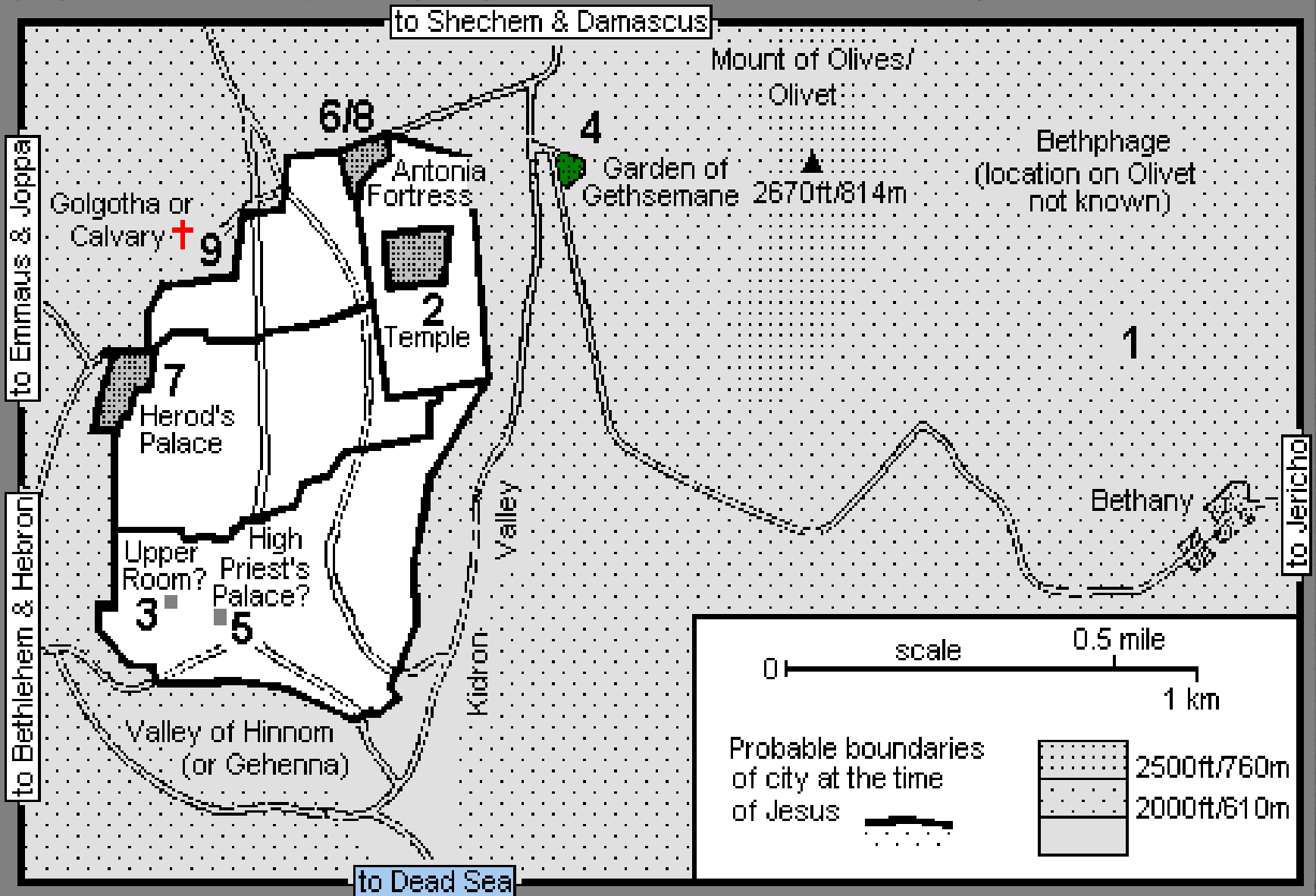


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A I B I C D

Jerusalem & environs

(<http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/CP051GOSPELMAPS.htm>)

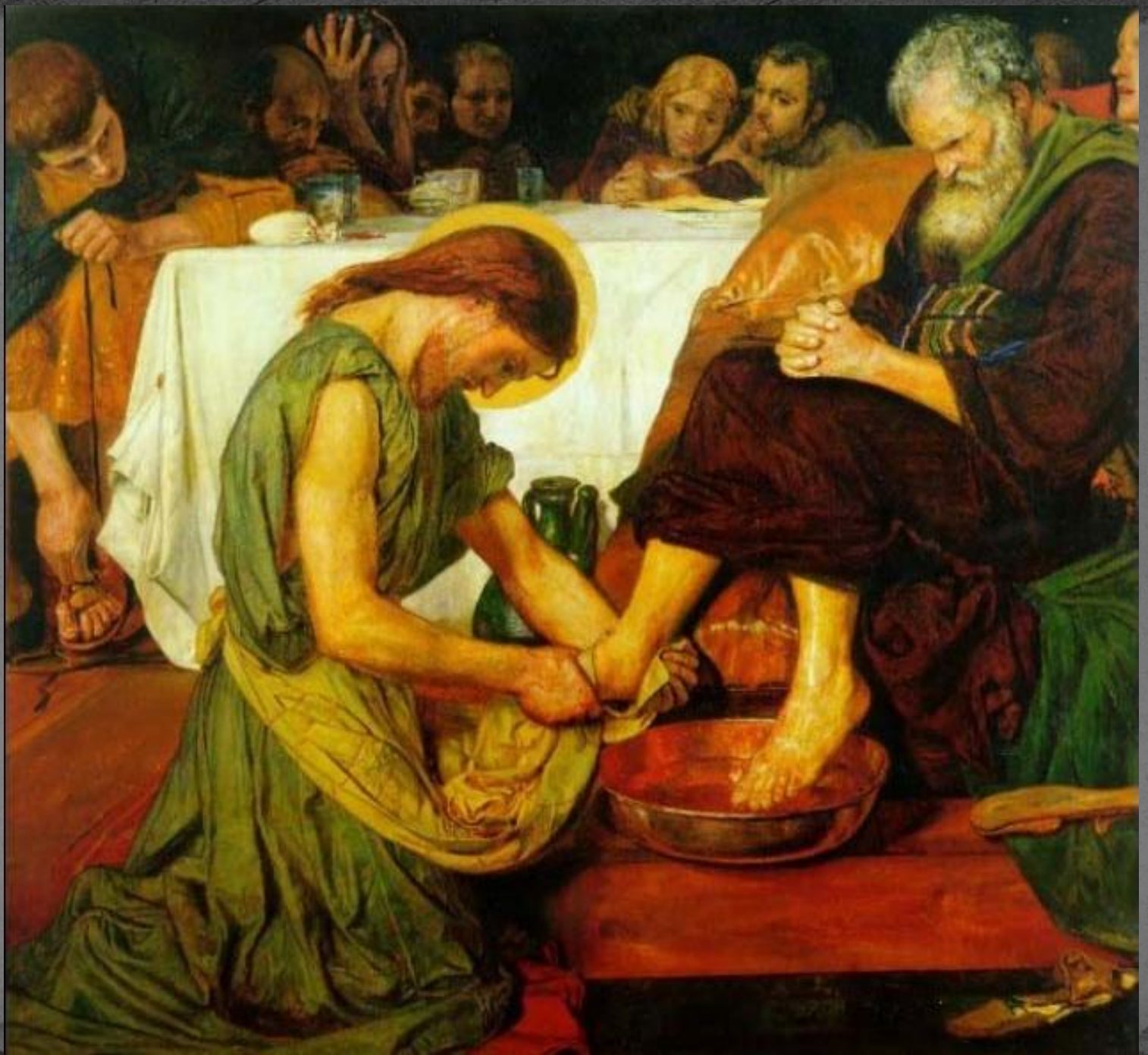




Palm/Passion Sunday

- Red vestments
- First Gospel – Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem
- Palm branches – kingly tree – sign and symbol of royalty and victory
- People cried “Hosanna” which means “Save us!”
- Second Gospel – Passion – usually several lectors join Father to relate the trial and crucifixion and death of Jesus
- The same people who welcomed Jesus with palms on Sunday condemned him on Good Friday
- Reflect on our own weak human nature
- Keep blessed palms as symbol of Jesus’ victory over death and sin





Holy Thursday

- Feast day of the Priesthood and the Eucharist
- Chrism Mass – bishops bless all the oils to be used for the coming year and give them to representatives of each parish
 - Oil of Chrism for baptism, confirmation, holy orders
 - Oil of Catechumens for baptism
 - Oil of the Sick for anointing the sick
- Priests renew their commitment to priestly service
- Chrism Mass usually held on Monday in this diocese

Holy Thursday (cont'd)

- Beginning of **Triduum**: Three Holiest Days – one continuous liturgy
- Mass of the Lord's Supper
- Celebrate institution of the Eucharist
- Gospel where Jesus commands his apostles to serve others
- Celebrant washes the feet of 12 people
- Consecration of extra hosts (bread)
- Blessed Sacrament taken to an Altar of Repose in the Chapter room
- Tabernacle left open and empty

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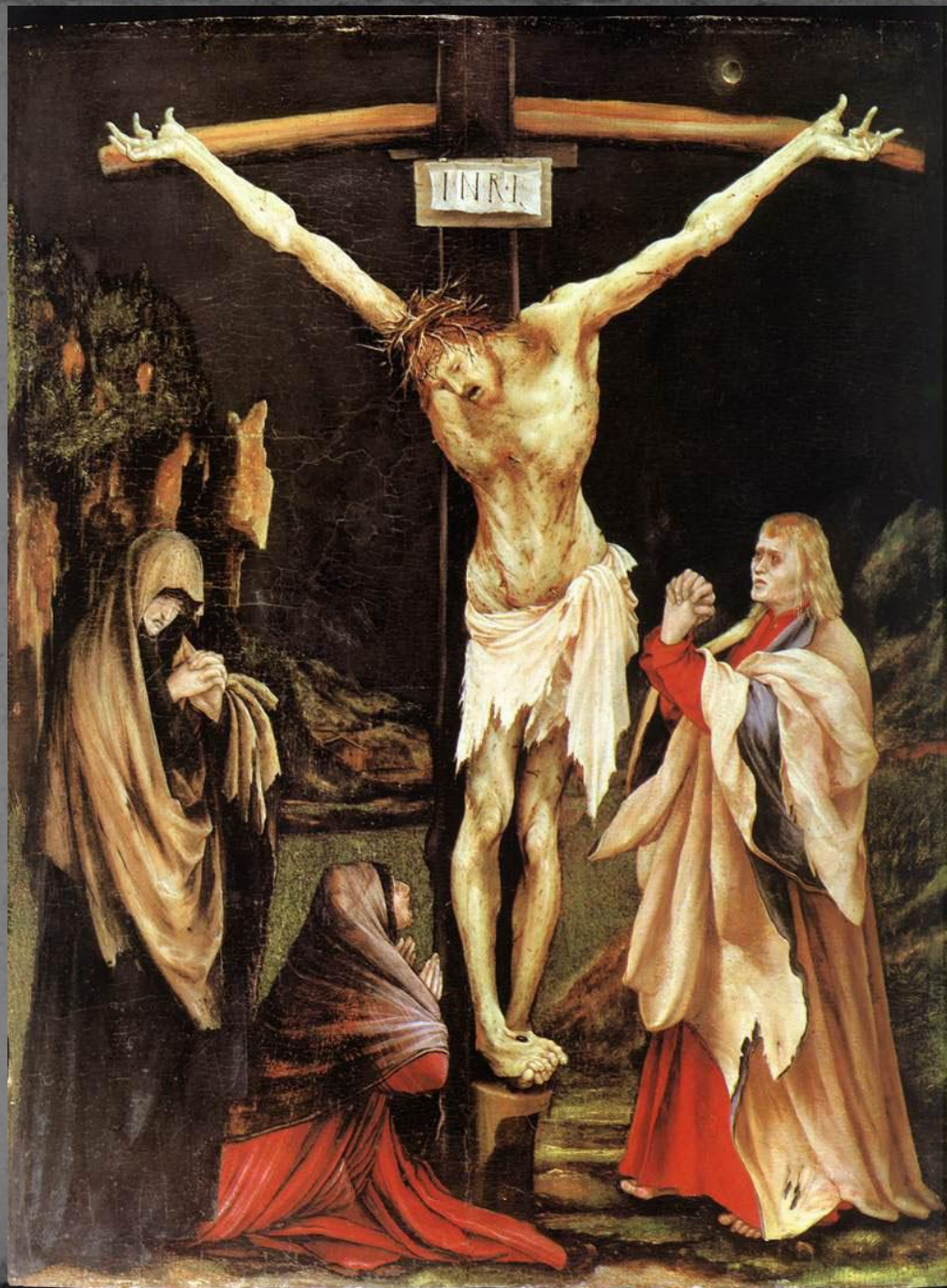
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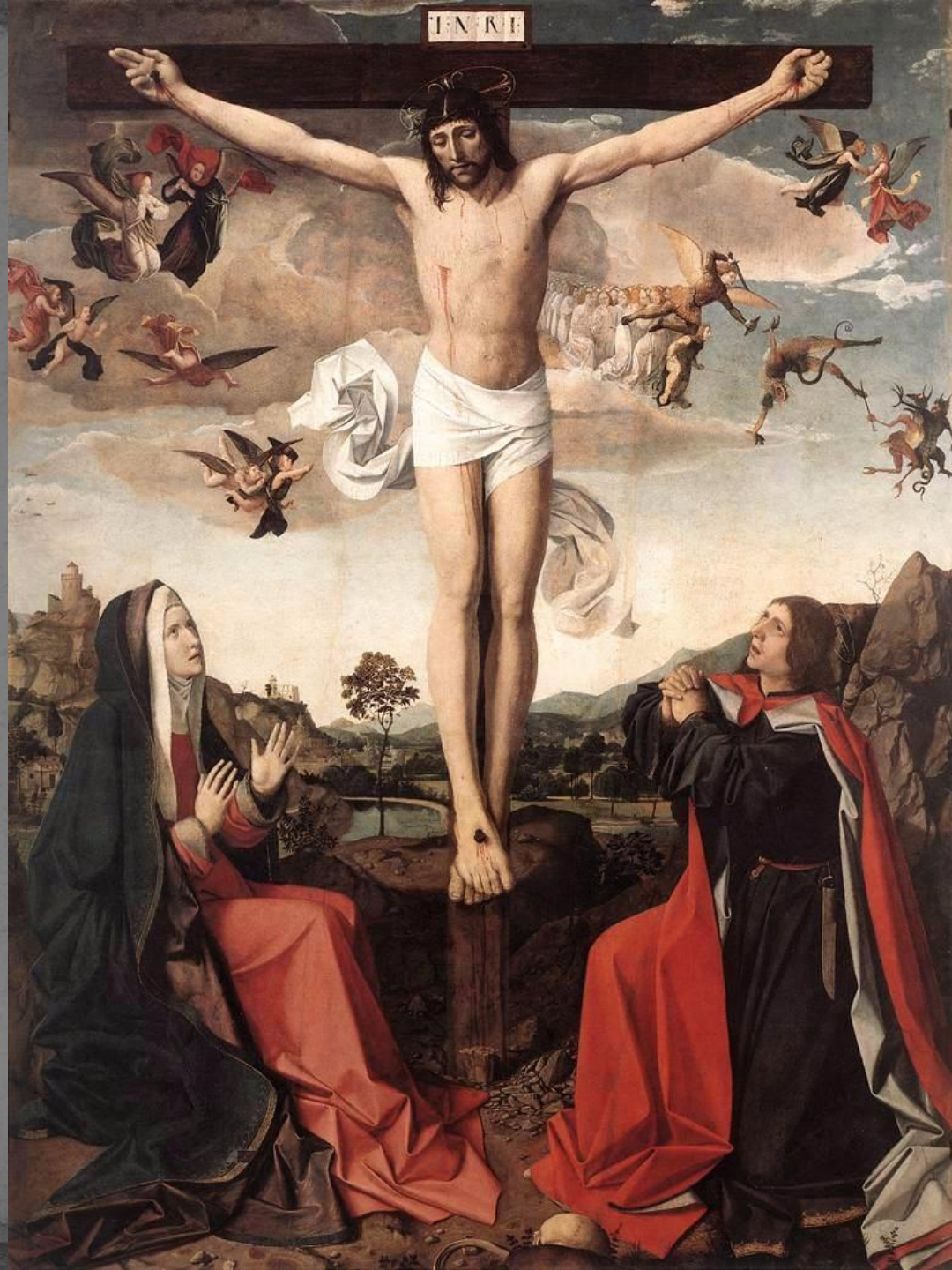


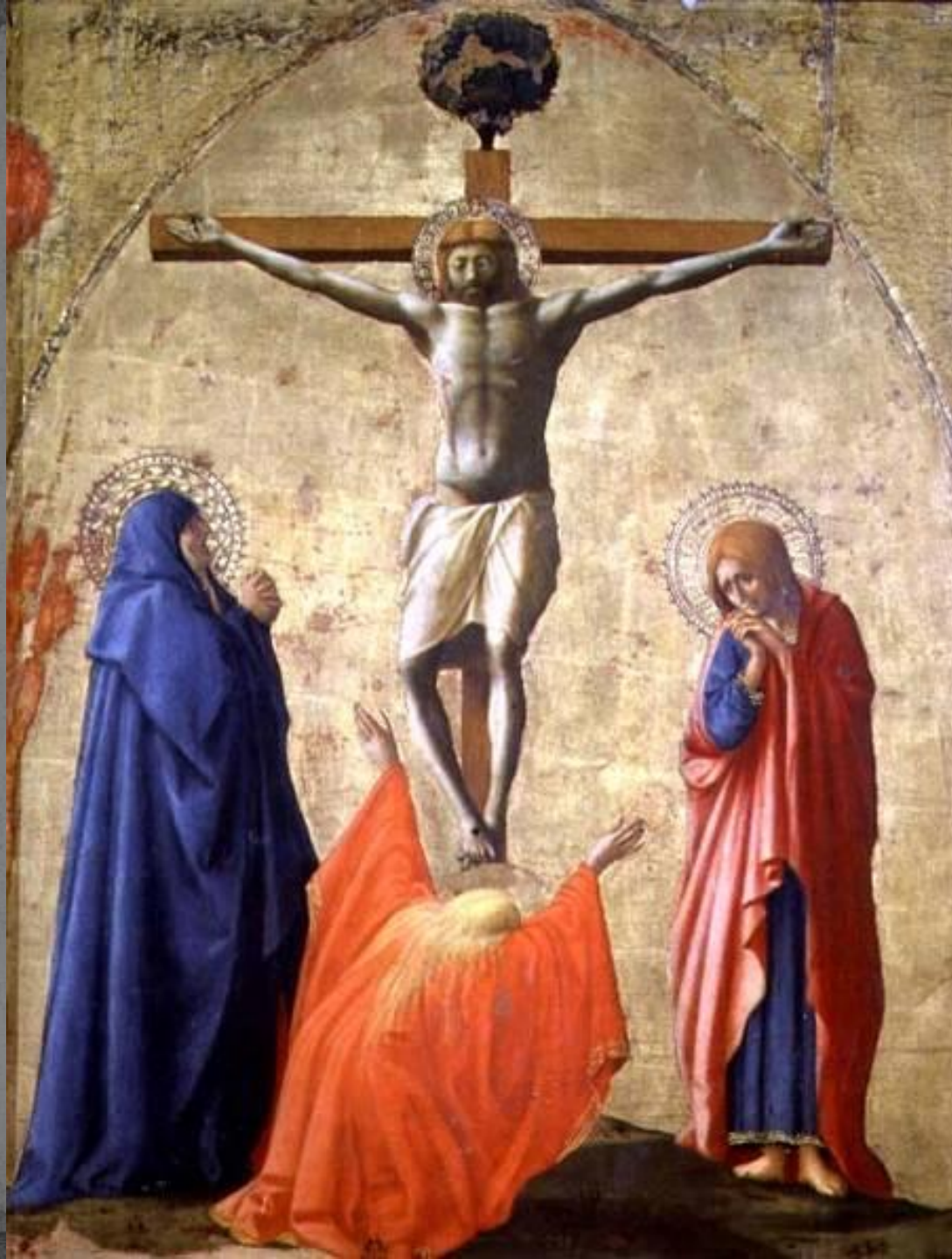


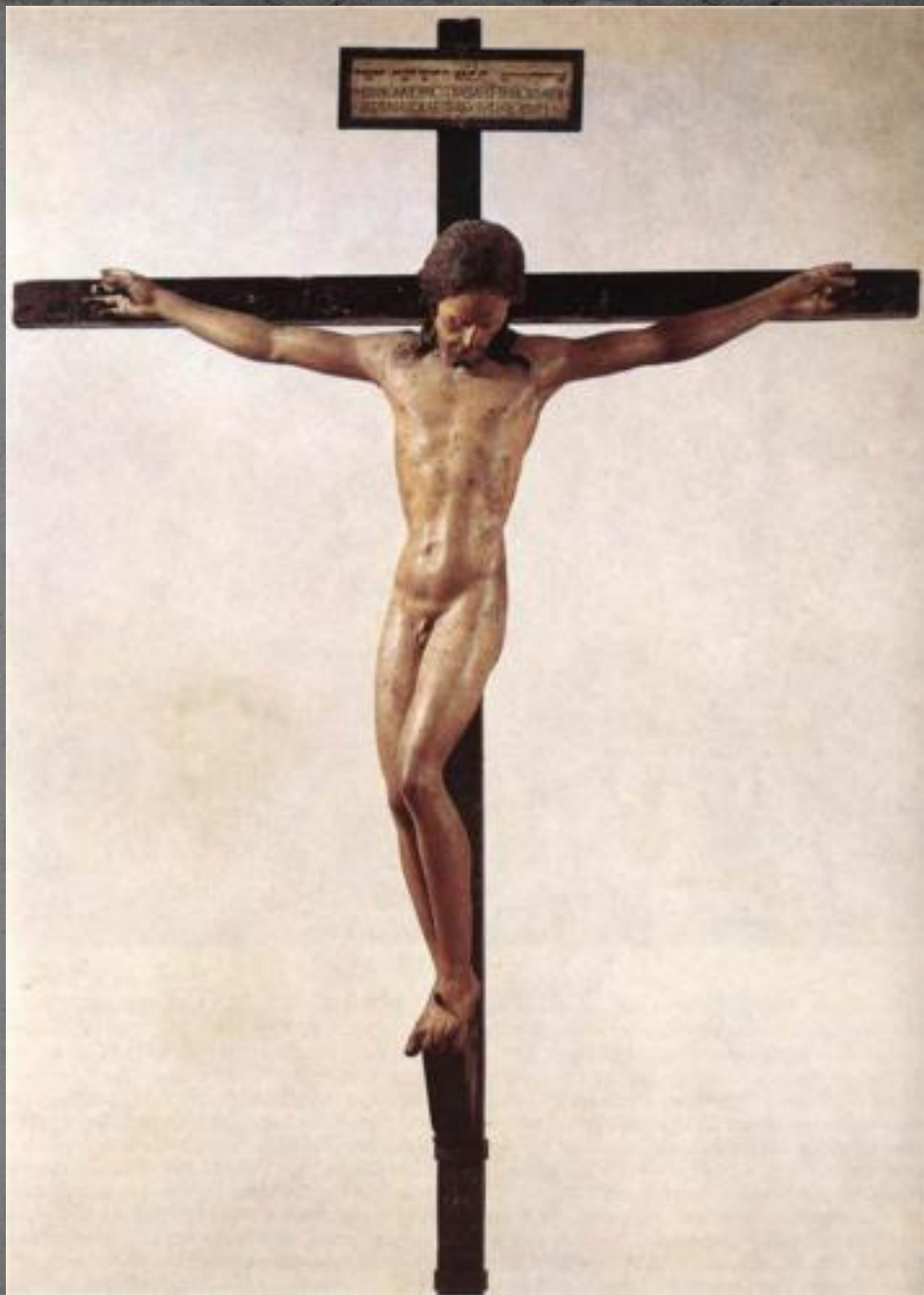


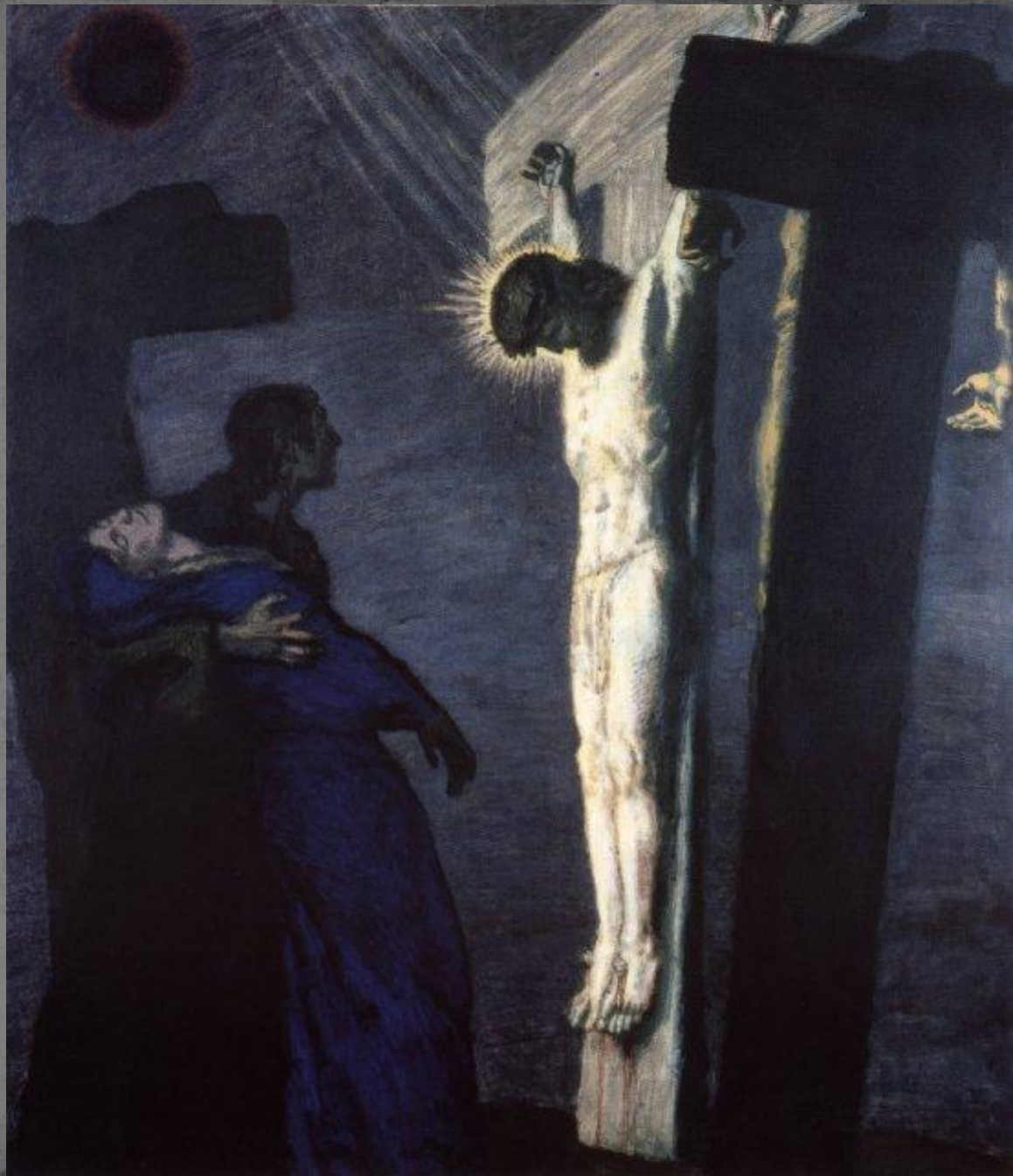


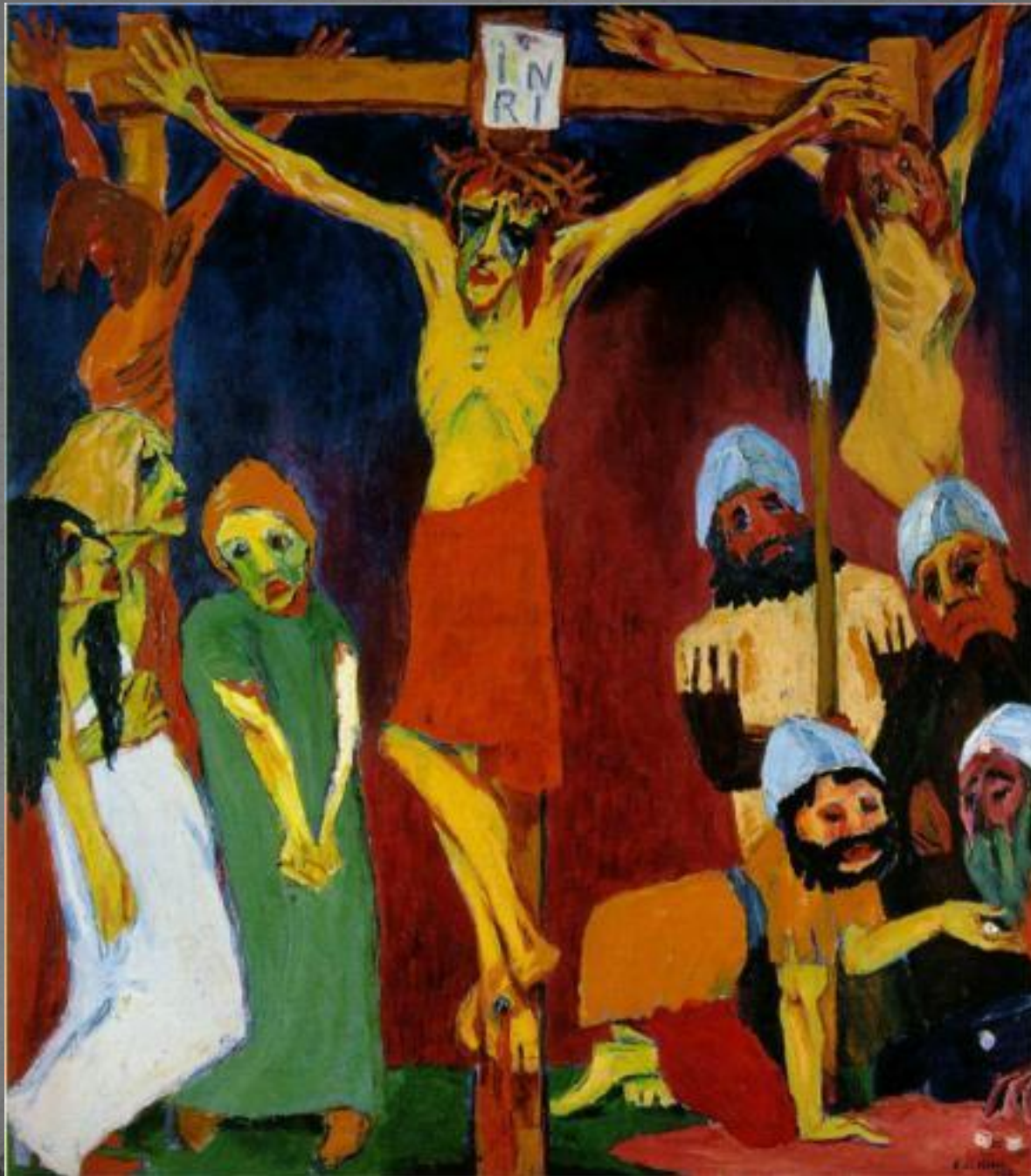


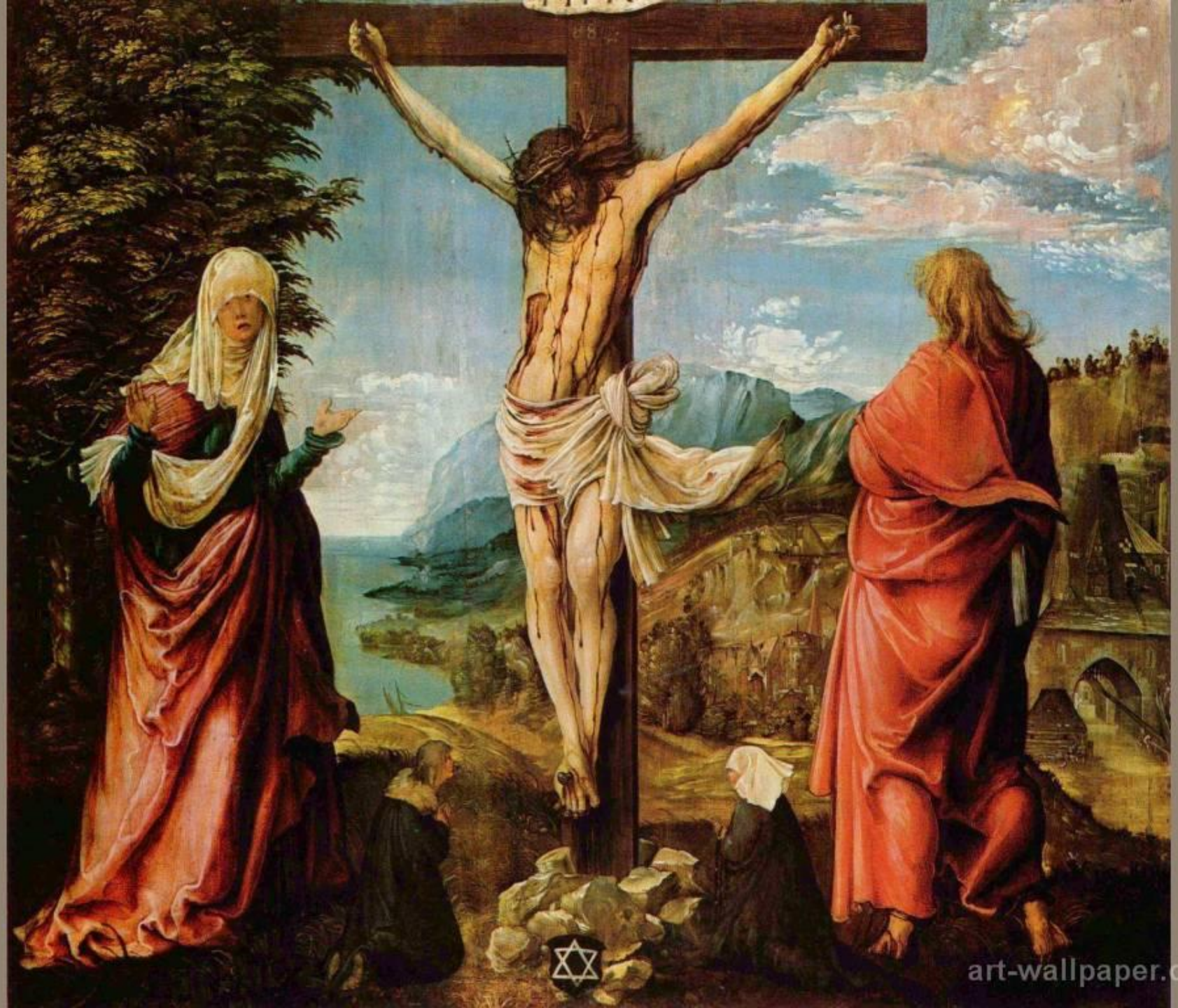


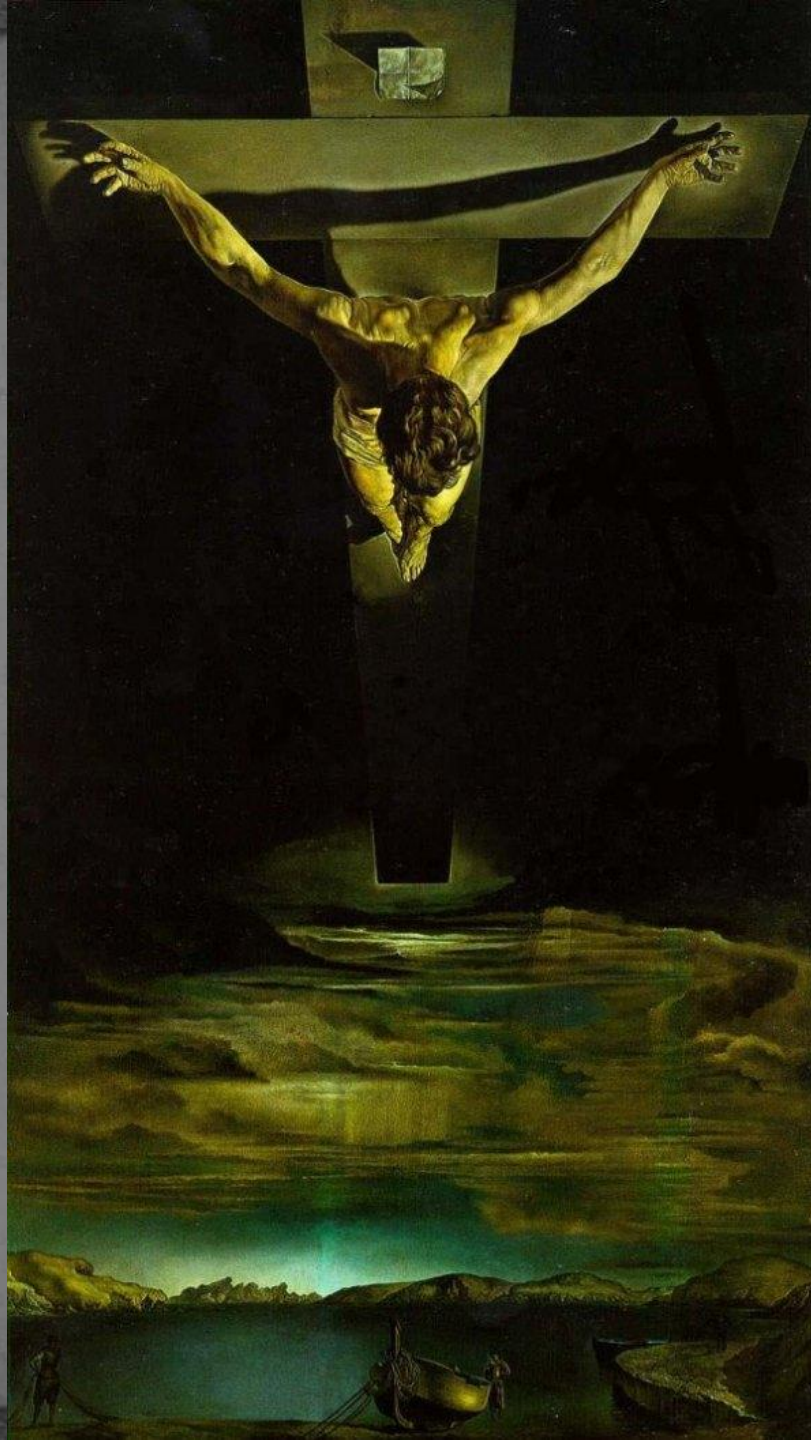








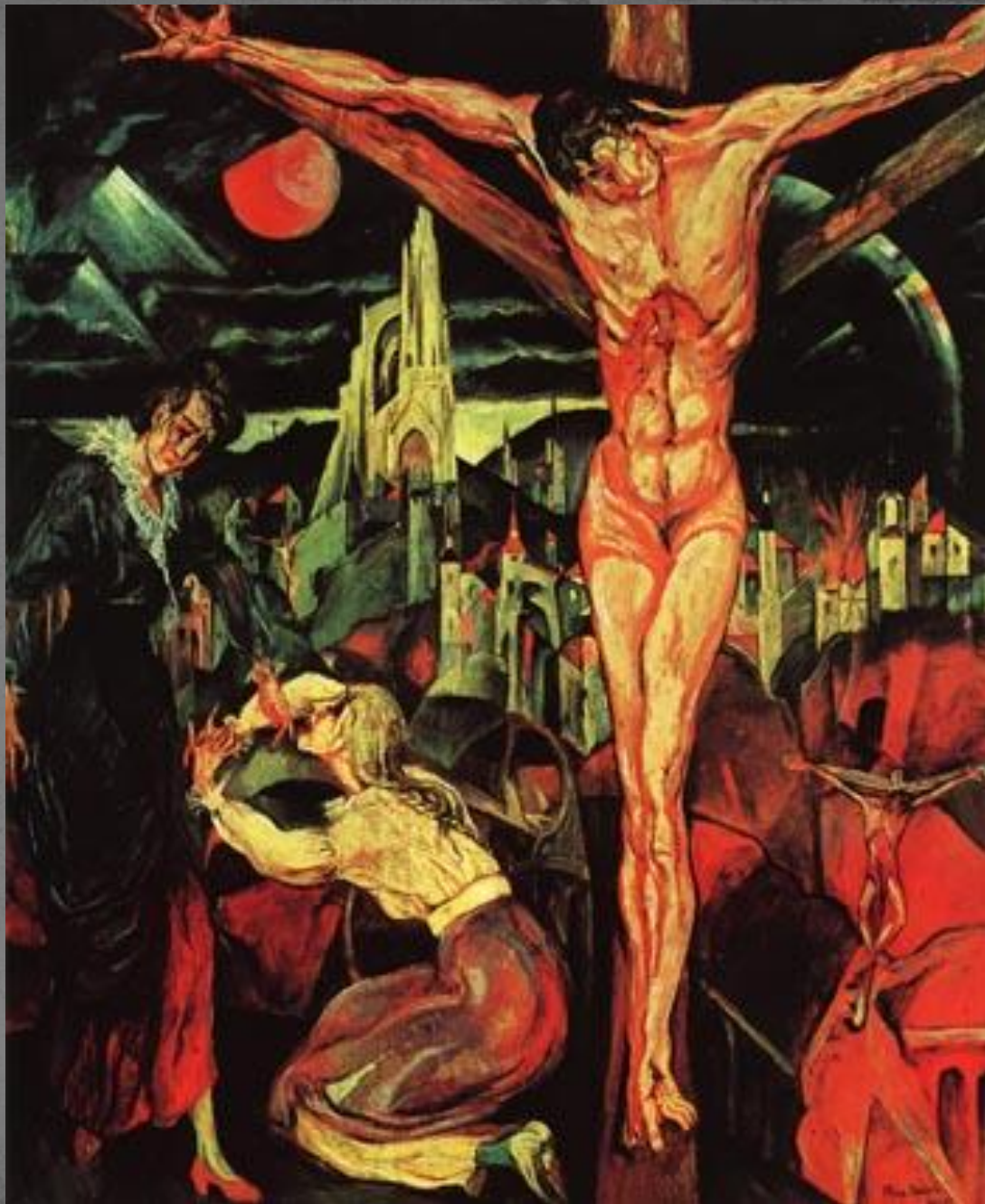


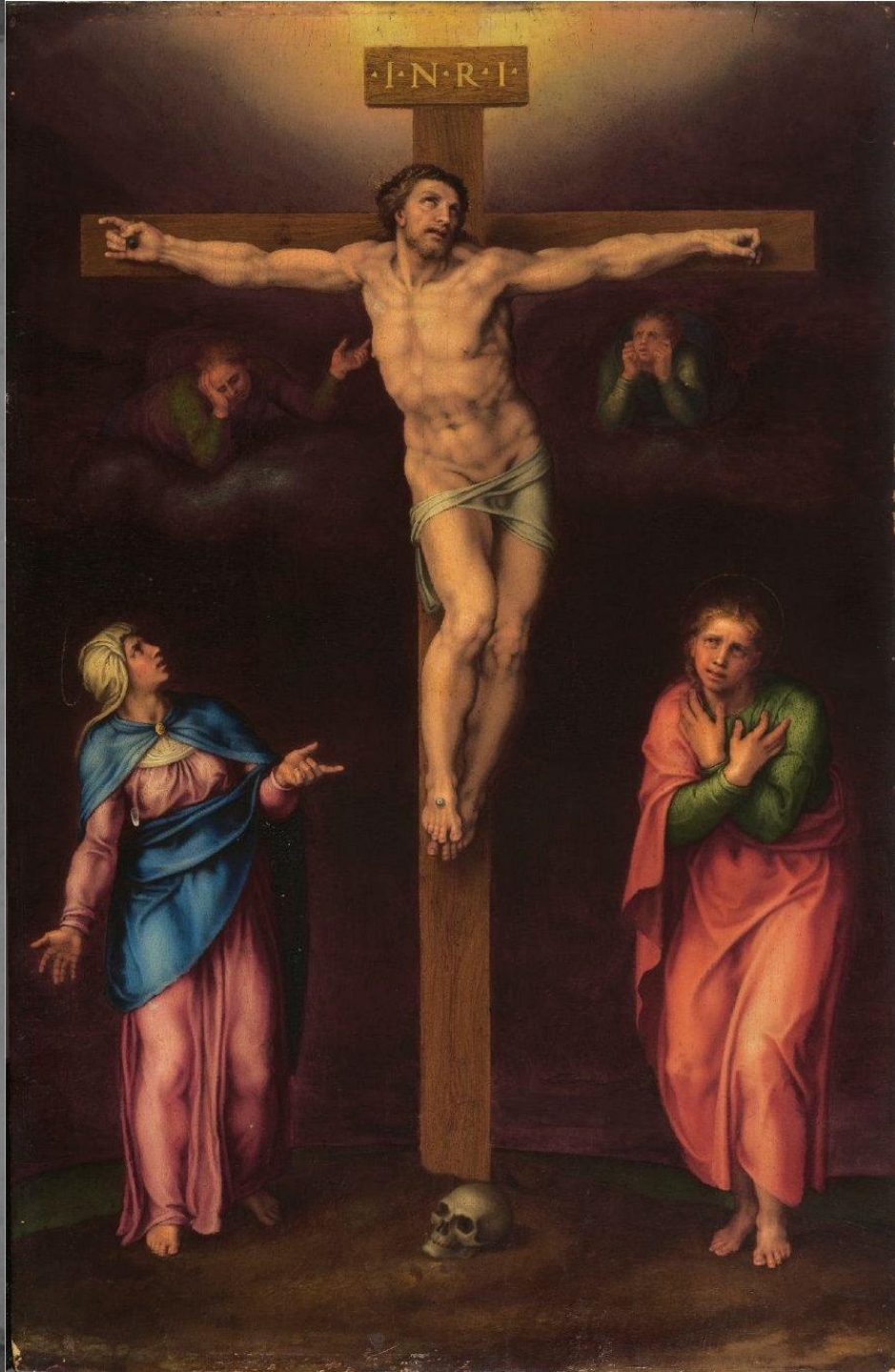




















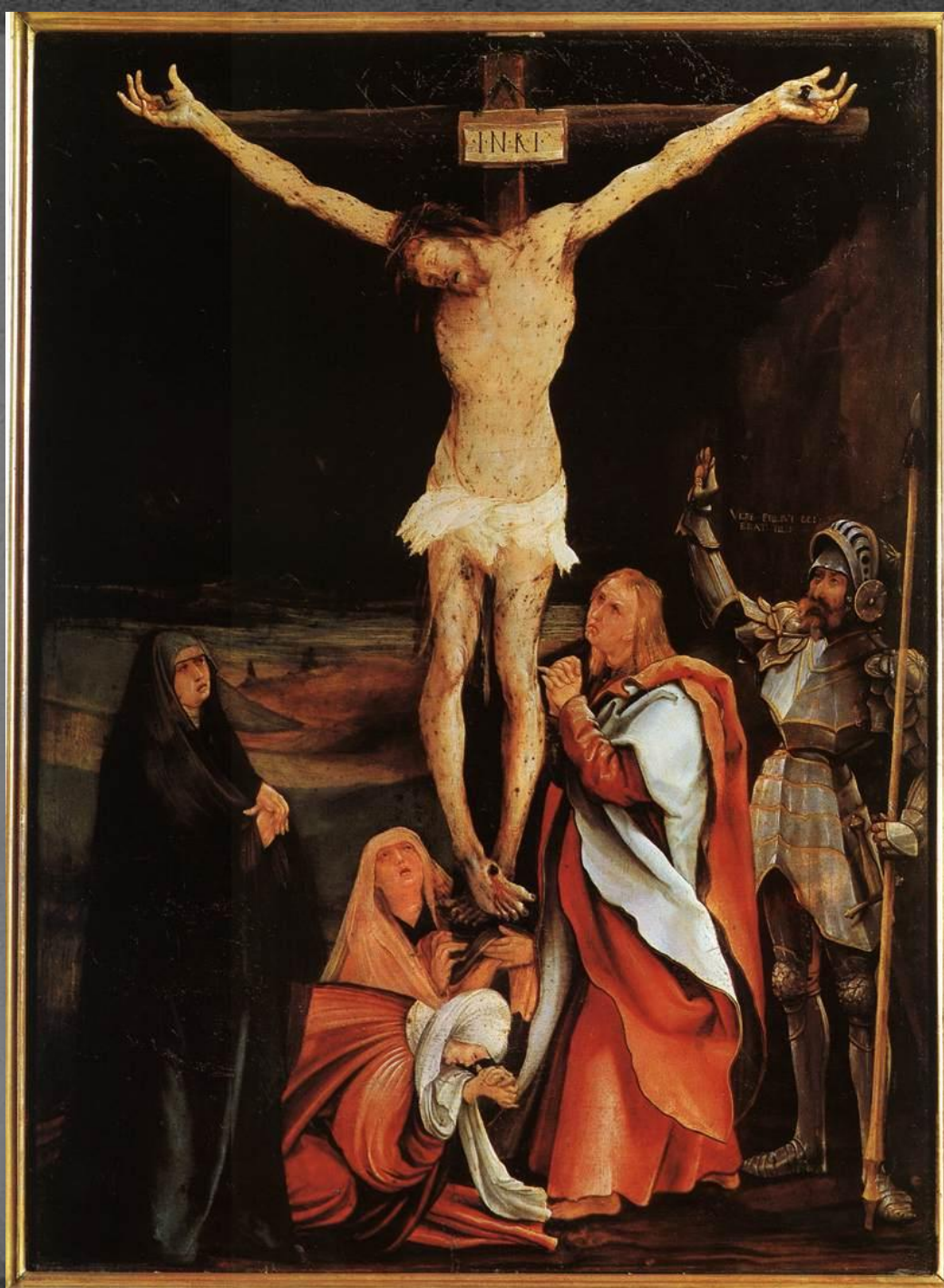


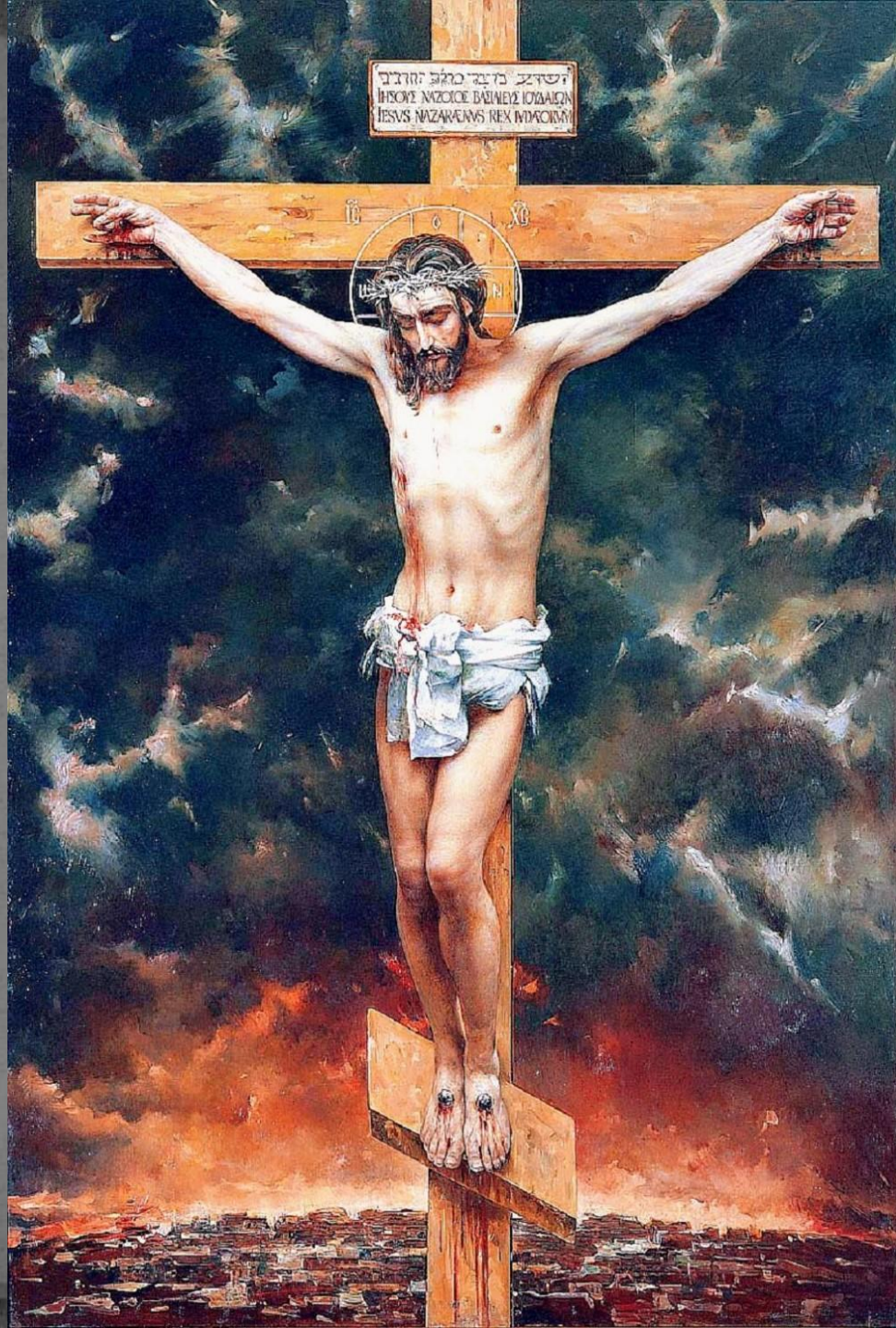












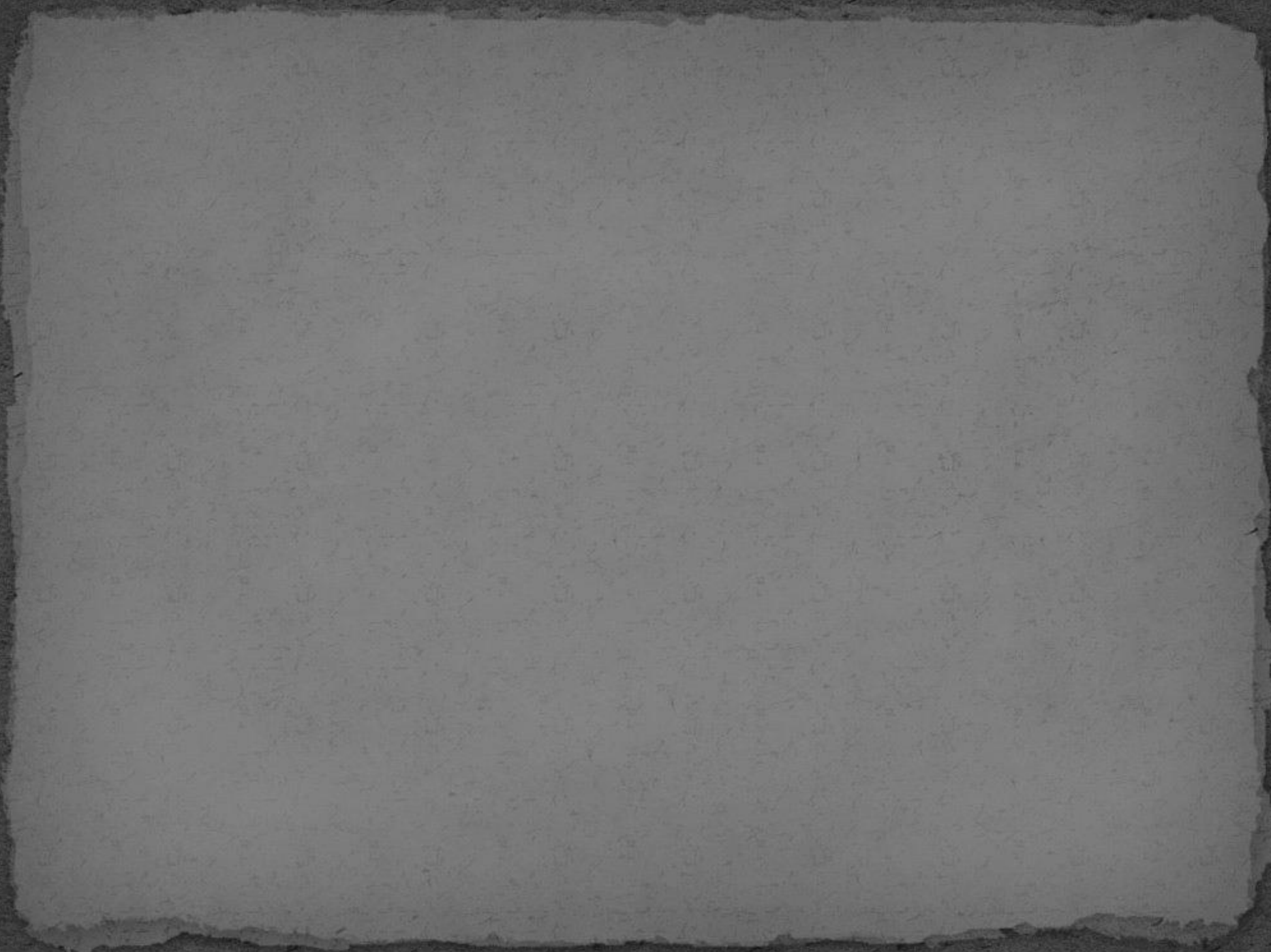
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Hans Memling, *The Descent from the Cross*, 1465

Good Friday

- Focus on Passion and Death of Jesus
- Service, not Mass
- Gospel Passion according to John
- Special prayers of the faithful for the world
- Veneration of the Cross
 - Kiss, touch, bow, genuflect – signs of reverence for the Cross as symbol of salvation
- No mass said this day; previously consecrated hosts distributed for communion
- Meditate on Jesus' death on the cross
- Day of Fast and Abstinence



Holy Saturday during the day

- During the day, Church is silent, altar bare, tabernacle empty: a day of silence and waiting.
- No masses are said.
- Prepare for Easter sacraments by prayer, reflection and continuing our Paschal fast.

(Preparatory rites and morning rehearsal for the Vigil)

Holy Saturday – Easter Vigil

- All great feasts in the Church begin the night before
- Celebration of Jesus' Resurrection
- Church is silent, altar & tabernacle bare
- **Service of Light** – new fire kindled – **Paschal (Easter)** candle lit – symbol of Christ – processes to altar
- Exsultet – Easter proclamation of joy
- **Liturgy of the Word** – history of our salvation from the beginning
- Gloria (with bells!)

Easter Vigil, cont'd

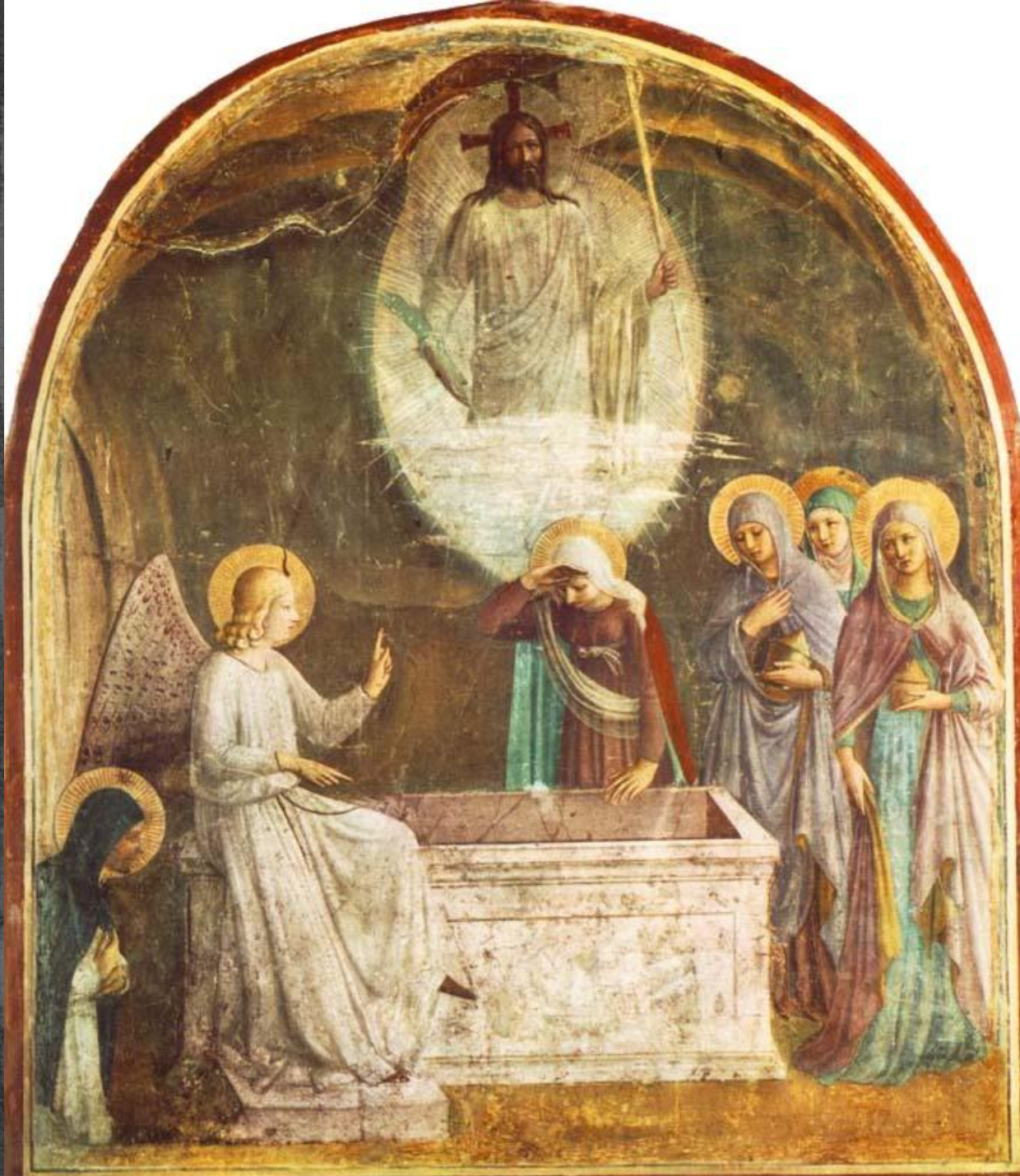
- **Sacraments of Initiation and Rite of Reception**
 - Litany of the Saints
 - Blessing of Water
 - Baptism
 - Reception
 - Confirmation
- **Liturgy of the Eucharist**
 - Holy Communion
- Lent is over, **ALLELUIA!**



**Alleluia,
He is
Risen!!**

Easter Sunday

- Celebration of Christ's resurrection continues
- Sunday Masses
- Rite of Sprinkling
- Easter Sequence
- Renewal of Baptismal Promises
 - Rejection of Sin
 - Profession of Faith
- Blessing of Easter breads, baskets of food
- Octave of Easter – celebrate for entire week.



**Indeed,
He is
Risen,
Alleluia!!**

*Blessed Fra Angelico's The
Resurrection of Christ and the
Women at the Tomb*

