

PERSONAL PASSIONS AND CARTHUSIAN INFLUENCES EVIDENT IN ROGIER VAN  
DER WEYDEN'S *CRUCIFIED CHRIST BETWEEN THE VIRGIN AND SAINT JOHN*  
*AND DIPTYCH OF THE CRUCIFIXION*

Tamytha Cameron Smith, B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2006

APPROVED:

Mickey S. Abel, Major Professor  
Denise Baxter, Committee Member  
Nada Shabout, Committee Member  
Jacqueline Chanda, Chair of the Division of  
Art Education and Art History  
Robert Milnes, Dean of the School of Visual  
Arts  
Sandra L. Terrell, Dean of the Robert B.  
Toulouse School of Graduate Studies

Smith, Tamytha Cameron, Personal Passions and Carthusian Influences Evident in Rogier Van Der Weyden's *Crucified Christ between the Virgin and Saint John* and *Diptych of the Crucifixion*. Master of Arts (Art History), May 2006, 83 pp., 2 figures, 71 titles.

This thesis examines Rogier Van Der Weyden's two unique fifteenth century Crucifixions, *The Crucified Christ Between the Virgin and Saint John* and *The Diptych of the Crucifixion*, in light of Carthusian beliefs, practices and relevant devotional texts. The specific text used to support this examination is the *Vita Christi* by Ludolph of Saxony, which in part deals specifically with the Hours of the Passion. Ludolph's text is given visual form in Rogier's paintings and supports the assertion that Rogier and Ludolph were connected by a shared belief and worldview. Key aspects of Rogier's life, supported by original documentation— familial ties, associates, patrons, use of finances, and his close involvement with the Carthusians-- support this assertion. Other models of connections of belief, evidenced through artist's work, are corroborated in the work of Grunewald, Sluter and Durer.

Copyright 2006

by

Tamytha Cameron Smith

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN AND HIS OUEVRE .....	3
THE CARTHUSIAN CONNECTION.....	13
LUDOLPH OF SAXONY .....	22
PERSONAL MEDITATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE LAITY .....	31
CARTHUSIANS' OWN MONASTIC MEDITATION .....	34
CARTHUSIANS' EMPHASIS ON MINIMALISM.....	36
CLAUS SLUTER .....	42
ALBRECHT DURER .....	49
PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP .....	54
CONCLUSION .....	59
APPENDIX- DOUAY RHEIMS SCRIPTURE REFERENCES .....	62
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	79

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
1. <i>The Crucified Christ between the Virgin and Saint John</i> or <i>Scheut Crucifixion</i> . c.1460. Oil on oak panel, 326x192 cm, Nuevos Museos, El Escorial. Used with permission from Scala / Art Resource, NY ..... 60	60
2. <i>The Crucifixion Diptych</i> or <i>Philadelphia Crucifixion</i> . c.1460. Oil on oak panel, 180, 3x92, 3 cm. Used with permission from the Philadelphia Museum / Art Resource, NY ..... 61	61

## INTRODUCTION

Rogier Van Der Weyden is one of the most celebrated artists of the fifteenth century movement known as the Northern Renaissance. He was lauded by contemporaries and is venerated by art historians to this day. Van Der Weyden lived in a time, prior to the 1500's, when the idea of the artist as a god-like genius was only beginning to be known because he was first considered a craftsman.<sup>1</sup> It would be the next generation, in the year 1500, before Albrecht Durer would depict himself in the guise of Christ and come into his own as a true Renaissance artist. Perhaps this is why there are no paintings known to have been signed by Rogier and debate has ensued in the art historical world as to which works can confidently be ascribed to him.<sup>2</sup> Two such un-attributed paintings are *The Crucified Christ Between the Virgin and Saint John* or *Scheut Crucifixion* (fig. 1) and *The Diptych of the Crucifixion* also known as *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* (fig. 2) because it is now in the Philadelphia Museum. According to eminent Van Der Weyden scholar Dirk de Vos, both of these paintings are believed to have been created by the master as part of his accepted oeuvre.<sup>3</sup>

The *Scheut* and *Philadelphia Crucifixion* scenes are unique within Rogier's oeuvre. What becomes clear in the formal and iconographical comparison of the ten depictions of the Crucifixion that comprise this oeuvre is that the *Scheut* and

---

<sup>1</sup>James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art* (New York, 1968): 326 and 318, discusses "the growing conflicts between the artist as craftsman and the artist as genius..." that existed during Durer's early career. He also addresses "the emergence of the Renaissance conception of the divinely inspired genius born under the sign of Saturn, the highest and darkest of the planets." Snyder adds, "Marsilio Ficino (De vita triplici, 1482-89) described melancholy as the mark of a great man beset by the furor melancholicus, or frenzy of the genius of the arts, poetry and philosophy." This is reflected in Durer's engraving *Melancholia*.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Davies, *Rogier Van Der Weyden* (London, 1972): 3, finds it incredible that although Rogier was a well-known artist, not one of the paintings ascribed to him are signed. In this book he seeks to more firmly identify the paintings by Van der Weyden.

<sup>3</sup>Dirk de Vos, *Rogier Van Der Weyden: The Complete Works*, Ted Atkins, trans., (New York, 1999): 291-292 and 335-338.

*Philadelphia Crucifixions* are significantly more stark in their compositions, and thus, fundamentally devoid of the narrative character common to the other eight works. It is my belief that the reason for this noticeable difference is a connection that Rogier shared with a devout monastic order- the Carthusians. This connection was more than that of painter and patron. I intend to demonstrate that Rogier Van Der Weyden and the Carthusians shared a common bond of belief, a worldview that informed Rogier's choices in regard to these two works, as well as several of his other paintings. This can best be supported by looking at the writings of one famous Carthusian- Ludolph of Saxony and his *Vita Christi*, as well as important familial ties Rogier had within the order itself. Essentially, the thesis I am putting forth is that Rogier Van Der Weyden's intentions concerning these paintings and their respective themes and uses cannot be separated from his personal beliefs- beliefs that owed much to the Carthusians.

## ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN AND HIS OUEVRE

Concerning Van Der Weyden's life, the facts are sparse. He was born in Tournai in 1399 or 1400, where he is believed to have studied as an apprentice under Robert Campin. He later moved to Brussels where he was living by 1435. He held the title of "Master Painter" in Brussels where he painted for merchants, dignitaries and dukes before he died there in 1464.<sup>4</sup> Dirk de Vos states that those holding the title of master were required to possess certain knowledge, and that figure and history painters were expected to have "an intimate knowledge of history, the Bible, myths, legends, rites and customs- in short the whole of the physical, spiritual and social world."<sup>5</sup> It is probable that texts such as those of the Carthusians and the Bible itself were well known by the educated during the time Van Der Weyden was working.<sup>6</sup> A common misconception concerning these artist/craftsmen is that they may not have been able to read at all. It is also often thought that, of those who were Catholic, only priests had access to scripture.<sup>7</sup>

As was common in his day, Rogier painted mostly religious works, interspersed with a few portraits. It is not simply the subject matter of Rogier's works, but the way they are depicted that gives the impression that the artist was a deeply spiritual man. In comparing him to Jan Van Eyck, his illustrious contemporary, Erwin Panofsky writes,

---

<sup>4</sup> Davies, 3-37. For other biographical information on Rogier, see Lorne Campbell, *Van Der Weyden* (New York, 1980); and Max J. Friedlander, *Early Netherlandish Painting, Volume II* (New York and Washington, 1967); and Otto Pacht, *Early Netherlandish Painting: from Rogier Van Der Weyden to Gerard David*, David Britt, trans., (London, 1994); and Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953); and James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art* (New York, 1968). Contemporary documents are found in *Northern Renaissance Art 1400-1600: Sources and Documents*, Wolfgang Stechow, ed., (Chicago, 1966).

<sup>5</sup> De Vos, 44.

<sup>6</sup> De Vos, 44-45.

<sup>7</sup> De Vos, 44.



“Rogier’s world is at once physically barer and spiritually richer than Jan Van Eyck’s.”<sup>8</sup>

Max J. Friedlander makes the following interpretation of the artist,

Not only was this master devout, he was orthodox in the sense of traditional doctrine. He feared rather than trusted in God; indeed, the cast of his mind was theological. Whatever was the challenge before him, he always kept his eye on the whole of Christian doctrine.<sup>9</sup>

Martin Davies writes concerning Van Der Weyden’s famous *Deposition*, “That Rogier was a pious Christian we have some historical evidence to show; and it could be deduced surely from this picture.”<sup>10</sup>

When Philip II gave *The Scheut Crucifixion* to the Escorial, the records attest to it being a work of Rogier’s. There has been insufficient evidence however to support this attribution until the recent publishing of the under drawings.<sup>11</sup> The painting is also mentioned in the records of the Charterhouse of the Carthusian monastery at Scheut. Philip came to the Netherlands in 1555 and it is believed that he purchased the work from the monastery at Scheut at that time and had his court painter Anthonis Mor paint a copy to replace it after he had shipped the original to the Escorial. Rogier was a charitable donor to both the monastery at Scheut and its parent community at Herinnes, where his son Cornelis was a brother. The Escorial records add that the “Master Rogier” had donated the painting originally to the Scheut monastery. These two sources clear

---

<sup>8</sup> Panofsky, 249, goes on to say “...it is true that Rogier substituted for Jan Van Eyck’s pantheistic acceptance of the universe in its entirety a principle of selection according to which inanimate nature and man-made objects are less important than animals, animals less than man, and the outward appearance of man less than his inner life.” This, of course, is a very biblical world-view.

<sup>9</sup> Max J. Friedlander, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, volume II, *Rogier Van Der Weyden and the Master of Flemalle* (New York, 1967): 29.

<sup>10</sup> Davies, 13.

<sup>11</sup> J.R.J. Van Asperen de Boer, J.Dijkstra and R. van Schoute, “Underdrawings in the Paintings of Rogier Van Der Weyden and the Master of Flemalle Groups,” *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek 1990*, 41 (1992), as quoted in De Vos, 421.

up any doubt as to attribution to Van Der Weyden.<sup>12</sup> De Vos states that “the stylistic unity and fluid genesis from drawing to finished painting are so great as to exclude any doubt as to the autograph character of this work.”<sup>13</sup>

The provenance of *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* is not as clear. The painting first turns up in documentation in the collection of Jose de Madrazo in 1856.<sup>14</sup> It is believed by scholars Dirk de Vos and Penny Howell Jolly that its similarities with *The Scheut Crucifixion* point to its being intended for a monastery as well.<sup>15</sup> It has, therefore, been proposed that this painting was actually intended to commemorate Rogier’s son’s entrance into the Carthusian order at the Herrines’ Charterhouse.<sup>16</sup> It is also possible that because of the Spanish provenance of this work, it was intended for a Spanish patron. It is certainly no coincidence that Van Der Weyden’s work was sought after by the Spanish, who were drawn to Rogier’s style. They were a very austere and devout populace. The Spanish also had connections to the Carthusians through monasteries such as Miraflores. According to Dirk de Vos the convent of Miraflores was linked to the Spanish crown and it seems that Rogier supplied them with two altarpieces; *The Miraflores Altarpiece or Triptych of the Virgin*, 1442-5, and *The Saint John Altarpiece*, 1453-5.<sup>17</sup> *The Descent From the Cross*, 1430-35, was obtained by Philip II

---

<sup>12</sup> De Vos, 172-338, records each painting’s technical details, provenance, exhibitions, and literature about the work, as well as a detailed analysis of work itself. He includes “Problematic Attributions,” 340, “Lost Works and Drawings,” 344, and “Recent Misattributions,” 399. He also includes an appendix with all of the relevant historical documents involving Rogier, 416.

<sup>13</sup> De Vos, 291 and 338, asserts that most authors support the attribution to Rogier. The Scheut work has a Spanish provenance dating back to 1859 so it might have been purchased by a Spanish ruler or possibly commissioned for that country. He references M. Soenen. “Un reseinement inedit sur la destinee d’une oeuvre bruxelloise de Van Der Weyden, le Calvaire de la chapelle de Scheut,” in exh. Cat. Brussels, 1979: 126-33.

<sup>14</sup> De Vos, 335.

<sup>15</sup> De Vos, 338 and P.H. Jolly, “Rogier Van Der Weyden’s Escorial and Philadelphia Crucifixions and their Relation to Fra Angelico at San Marco,” *Oud Holland* 95 (1981):119.

<sup>16</sup> Jolly, 119 and De Vos, 124.

<sup>17</sup> De Vos, 338.

and was donated to the Escorial in 1574. *Saint Margaret and Saint Apollonia*, 1455, also has a Spanish Provenance. *Philip II purchased The Scheut Crucifixion* in 1555 and *The Philadelphia Diptych* ended up in the collection of Jose de Madrazo in Madrid. On the other hand, in a manner similar to that of the *Scheut* work, a Spanish ruler may have bought the Philadelphia painting from a Flemish abbey.

Van Der Weyden's accepted oeuvre contains ten depictions of the Crucifixion or works pertaining to the Crucifixion, such as a Deposition or Lamentation.<sup>18</sup> In order to see where the two unique works- the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* paintings- fit chronologically into this group, the ten in approximate date order are as follows:

1. *The Crucifixion*, c.1425-30, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, cat.no. 5382
2. *The Deposition or Descent from the Cross*, c.1430-35, Museo del Prado, Madrid, cat.no. 2825

---

<sup>18</sup> The original source for this list is in De Vos' *Rogier Van Der Weyden : The Complete Works* in "Part III, Catalogue" which contains recent scholarship on Rogier's accepted oeuvre. He cites the provenance of these two works as follows: For *The Scheut Crucifixion* see (Algemeen Rijksarchief, Kerkelijke archieven van Brabant, no. 11. 935, fol.375v; see Soenen 1979). "Donated by the Artist to the Charterhouse at Scheut where it was probable sold to Philip II in 1555 and replaced with a copy by Anthonis Mor: 'Item summa receptorum de quadum imagine crucifixi vendita ex ecclesia nostra nobis donata a magistro Rogere pictori IcLb' and 'Items summa expositorum quam dedi magistro Anthonis Morre pictori regis pro laboribus suis cum novo tabulario magni crucifixi in ecclesia nostra ac aliis diversis oneribus et expensis scilicet XXXLb'; and see (*Historie van het clooster van de Chartroesen tot Scheut bij Brussel*, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, ms. 71G25, fol. 173V). Jean Tourneur, sacrista of the monastery and the writer of the above accounts, described the painting in 1555 as located in the choir of the church alongside the pulpitum Evangelii '...ast alia imago crucifixi mire magnitudinis habens a dextra beatam Virginem, a sinistra vero illius discipuli quem diligebat Jesus imaginem. Clauditur cortinis de rubro saieto.' The painting was initially installed in the chapel of Philip II's hunting lodge in Segovia. Replaced with a copy by Navarette and transferred to the Escorial (Mulcahy, 1995), where it appears in the 1574 inventory of works donated by Philip II (Zarco Cuevas 1930, 142-3): '*Una tabla grande en que asta pintado Christo Nuestro Senor en la Cruz, con Nuestra Senora y Sant Juan de mano de Masse Rugier, que estua en el Bosque de Segovia, que tiene treze pies de alto y ocho de ancho estaua en la cartuja de Brussellas.*' Siguenza reported in 1602 (Sanchez Canton, 1923, 389-414) that it stood on the sacristy altar, noting that it had been replaced in Segovia by a copy by Navarrette." Dirk de Vos, p.291-292. For *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* see "Collection of Jose de Madrazo (d.1859), Madrid catalogue 1856, nos. 659-60; sale collection of Marquis de Salamanca, Paris, 3 June 1867, nos. 165-6. Sold separately by F. Kleinberger art dealers (Paris) to John G. Johnson (St John and the Virgin) and Widener (Crucifixion). Johnson (Philadelphia) had acquired both panels by 1906." Dirk de Vos, 335.

3. *Triptych of the Crucifixion: Abegg Triptych*, c. 1438-40, Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg, inv. 14.2.63
4. *Triptych of the Seven Sacraments; Chevrot Altarpiece*, c.1440-5, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerp, inv. 393-5
5. *Triptych of the Virgin; Miraflores Altarpiece*, c.1442-45, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, cat.no. 524A
6. *Triptych of the Crucifixion*, c.1443-45, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. 901
7. *The Crucified Christ between the Virgin and Saint John; Scheut Crucifixion*, c.1454-55, real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, El Escorial, inv. 10014602 (fig. 1)<sup>19</sup>
8. *The Lamentation*, c.1450-64, Musees Royaux des Beaux Arts Belgique, Brussels, inv. 3515
9. *The Entombment*, c.1463-64, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, cat.no. 1114
10. *Diptych of the Crucifixion; The Philadelphia Crucifixion*, c.1463-64, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The John G. Johnson Collection, inv.335-35<sup>20</sup> (fig. 2)

What these ten paintings have in common is their depiction of the Crucifixion. As a subject, the Crucifixion abounds in early Netherlandish painting of the fifteenth century.<sup>21</sup> The Passion is the subject addressed most often by the Rogier van der Weyden. While Rogier is probably best known for his powerfully emotive *Deposition* or *Descent from the Cross*, now on loan from the Escorial to the Prado, the *Scheut* and the *Philadelphia* Passion scenes stand out as unique to his oeuvre and in opposition to

---

<sup>19</sup> Works 7-10 are described by De Vos, 120, as “monastically inspired devotional paintings...that “center on the Corpus Christi and were largely determined by the ascetic worship of the Carthusians and Dominicans.”

<sup>20</sup> For plates of all ten of these works see De Vos, “Part III, Catalogue.”

<sup>21</sup> Snyder, 117. It is worth mentioning that Rogier’s illustrious contemporary Jan van Eyck only addressed the Crucifixion once, and in a much different way. Van Eyck’s *Crucifixion and Last Judgment* diptych dated 1438-40 is more of a telescopic view of the teeming scene surrounding the cross. The figure of Christ is not prominent and the viewer has to search for the Virgin and other principal players in the well-documented drama. Obviously the Crucifixion as an event was not as important to the patrons that Van Eyck was working for, or, it could be concluded... to Van Eyck himself.

what Lorne Campbell calls “the multfigured historiated Crucifixion types” common to other artists of his day.<sup>22</sup> *The Scheut Crucifixion* or *The Crucified Christ between the Virgin and Saint John* (1454-55), now in the Escorial; and *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* or *Diptych of the Crucifixion* (1463-64), which is possibly the artist’s last work, now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, are visually unique because of their extreme starkness, simplicity and tendency toward abstraction.

*The Scheut Crucifixion* and *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* are in all particulars pared down to the essentials. In both the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* works, the background has been reduced to what appears to be a walled, enclosed area with a rocky ground. Importantly, the cross has been brought down to the level of the characters adding immediacy to what is occurring. There is no narrative or storyline made clear by a more extensive grouping of biblical characters to bracket the scene. This composition creates iconic images reminiscent of earlier Medieval or Byzantine art. An example of this type of iconic work can be found in the Chapel of the Holy Cross at Karlstejn Castle, where Master Theodoric’s painting dated 1360-65 is similarly sparse and immediate, though the figures are much less refined.<sup>23</sup> Another is a Crucifixion by the Mosan Painter, circa 1400, that features a golden background and several tiny angels and the same three figures of Christ, Mary and John.<sup>24</sup> It is uncertain whether Van Der Weyden was familiar with the Master Theodoric or Mosan images, but it is

---

<sup>22</sup> Campbell, 135, references the “multifigured historiated Crucifixion types.” Examples are the central relief of the *Retable de Champmol* by Jacques de Baerze, 1399; the *Crucifixion* from the *Niederwildungen Altarpiece* by Konrad Von Soest, 1403; Jan Van Eyck’s *Crucifixion and Last Judgment Dyptych*, 1438-40; and *The Altarpiece of the Crucifixion* by Joos Van Ghent, 1467-69, to name just a few.

<sup>23</sup> Snyder, 29, points out that the phenomena known as the Northern Renaissance has been obscured by the attention given to the Italian Renaissance. He states, 125, that “one of the features of Late Gothic piety was namely this preoccupation with the personal identification of the worshipper with the sufferings of Christ and Mary.”

<sup>24</sup> For the Mosan Painter of c.1400, *Crucifixion*, from a quadriptych, c.1400-1410. Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore. See Snyder, 73.

visually evident that his contemporaries were painting scenes of the Crucifixion that were much more detailed in their narrative content and thus less iconic and devotional.<sup>25</sup>

The most obvious point of contrast is a painting of the Crucifixion by Rogier's lauded contemporary, Jan Van Eyck.<sup>26</sup> It is half of a diptych of the *Crucifixion and Last Judgment* (c.1438-40) and is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is a busy, teeming scene where the crucified Christ is on the same scale as the spectators. This painting is more of a snapshot or slice of life than a devotional image. Even Dieric Bouts' *Altarpiece of the Deposition* (c.1450-55), now in Granada (which according to James Snyder, has been shown to have paid homage to Van Der Weyden's famous *Deposition* (1430-35) in its center panel) is a very detailed narrative of the Crucifixion, Deposition and Resurrection of Christ.<sup>27</sup> The left panel that depicts the Crucifixion contains seventeen figures filling the small space. These images are very different from the iconic images of the *Philadelphia* and *Scheut* works or the earlier Mosan and Master Theodoric images.

Most of Rogier's highly emotional scenes are made up of much larger groupings of monumental figures. Based on the biblical narrative of the Crucifixion found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the artistic renderings of the scene during and prior to this Northern Renaissance era, otherwise known as the era of the *Ars Nova*, usually include the Virgin and John the Evangelist. In addition there is generally some

---

<sup>25</sup> Other examples of Crucifixions that represent detailed narratives are those by Andrea Mantegna, 1457-60, in the Louvre ; Fra Angelico, 1441-2, in the Museo di san Marco, Florence; and Jean Fouquet, from an illuminated manuscript, 1452, Musee Conde, Chantilly. See *Crucifixion*, (London, 2000). See also footnote 22.

<sup>26</sup> For Jan Van Eyck, c.1438-40, *Crucifixion and Last Judgment*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. See Snyder, 117.

<sup>27</sup> Snyder, 144.

combination of the following people: Mary Magdalene, the Virgin's two half-sisters Mary Cleopas and Mary Salome, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, the Roman soldiers, onlookers to the Crucifixion, and the two thieves that were crucified on either side of Jesus, Simon of Cyrene who was asked to carry Christ's cross, and sometimes various saints and patrons. In the *Philadelphia* and *Scheut* paintings this more extensive cast of characters has been reduced to Christ, the Virgin and Saint John the Evangelist.<sup>28</sup>

These figures have been described as "Neo-Gothic," reflecting the "community of emotions" so characteristic of High Gothic Art.<sup>29</sup> Dirk de Vos points out that, "content for Rogier is the emotional and simultaneously dogmatic interpretation of biblical information, born by illusionistic and symbolic form."<sup>30</sup> The two Passion scenes cited above are certainly emotional, but in a much less chaotic, more restrained way. One has only to compare them to Rogier's *Deposition*, which was painted for the Crossbowman's Guild of Louvain, in order to see that they represent a much more solitary and personally experienced display of grief.

Both the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* works appear to be about Christ, the Virgin and Saint John depicted individually, as well as collectively. Rogier is showing the viewer of these works the grief of a mother and a dear friend in response to the brutal execution

---

<sup>28</sup> For descriptions of this visual background, see Stephano Zuffi, *Gospel Figures in Art*, Thomas Michael Hartmann, trans., (Los Angeles, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> Campbell, 124. Rogier's work has often been likened to Late Gothic works. Most of the depictions of sacred subjects in Gothic art were rendered as iconic images, usually with a gold background in an attempt to depict the totally unknown and sacred; the realm of heaven. According to James Snyder, 15, "High Gothic" refers to the thirteenth century and was "likened unto a Golden Age of medieval Western art much as the fifth century B.C. has come to represent the apogee of classical culture." He points out that next 150 years were known as the "Late Gothic" and that it was a very difficult time in history because the fourteenth century was darkened by wars and plagues. While it was once thought that this period marked a decline in the arts it has come to be recognized that what has been called "decadent art" was really much more, and that the contributions to art and literature during this time was impressive.

<sup>30</sup> De Vos, 139, believes that Rogier was familiar with scripture and that it was extremely relevant to his pictorial choices and how they were depicted.

of someone whom they loved. Moreover, it was not just the death of Christ himself, but of all the dreams and hopes that were wrapped up in him. Mary and John had not yet experienced the Resurrection or visited the empty tomb, and were therefore engulfed in the darkness that great loss brings. More than being just Crucifixion scenes, these two works represent specific individuals contemplating the Passion. The viewer of these painted images was meant to put himself in the position of either Mary or John, sharing in the collective tide of their emotion. The result is a silence and reverence, a restrained sense of agony that draws the worshipper in, allowing him or her to share in the grief. The overwhelming stillness engulfing the participants in these Crucifixion dramas reverberates from the image, surrounding the worshipper, creating a mental place for empathetic contemplation of the sacrifice of Christ, as well as the loss of Mary and John.

Viewed alongside the countless Crucifixion scenes by predecessors and contemporaries, the relative rarity of Van der Weyden's stark and simple composition is evident. It is my contention that the reason for this marked difference in visual presentation of a common theme was a personal connection that Rogier shared with the Carthusians, their order, and their worldview. To date, there has been no satisfactory explanation for the visual and compositional differences that are so evident in the *Philadelphia* and *Scheut Crucifixions*. There are, however, interesting and telling parallels that can be seen in contemporary devotional writings, particularly that of Ludolph of Saxony, who is also called Ludolph the Carthusian.

Reflective of Carthusian beliefs and devotional practices, Ludolph's *Vita* reflects an approach to the passion, that when compared to the *Philadelphia* and *Scheut* works



by Rogier, is striking. What we know of Rogier van der Weyden's life, and what is so evident in the scarlet thread of austere devotion and passionate spiritual emotion that run through his oeuvre, reflects a man who must have been knowledgeable about scripture.<sup>31</sup> When we read his paintings in conjunction with Ludolph's written work, it suggests he was also familiar with Carthusian texts.<sup>32</sup> As Dirk de Vos succinctly states, "The intensity of emotion, the 'promptings of the soul', has never been conveyed with such purity and lack of superfluity as Van der Weyden achieved."<sup>33</sup> I would suggest that this same emotional approach to devotional meditation can be seen in the meditative practices of the Carthusians.

---

<sup>31</sup> For complete scriptural reference see appendix A. Scriptural passages that describe the Crucifixion are as follows: Matthew 27:27 through Matthew 28; Mark 14:53 through Mark 16; Luke 23:26 through Luke 24; and John 19:17 through John 21. These accounts are not identical in that they do not all include the same details. This is not to say that they contradict one another, but only that the account in John's gospel records the exhortation to John concerning the Virgin "Behold thy Mother" and to the Virgin "Woman behold thy son," John 19:26-27. John is also the only book to mention the spear in his side and the pouring out of the blood and the water, John 19:34. Likewise, the account in Luke is the only one to describe the words of the repentant thief and the unrepentant thief, Luke 23:39-43.

<sup>32</sup> Henry James Coleridge, S.J., *Hours of the Passion Taken from the Life of Christ by Ludolph the Saxon*, Quarterly Series 59 (London, 1887): 1-452 (Hereafter referred to as, Ludolph, *Hours*). This is a translation of part of Ludolph's *Vita Christi*, limited to the chapters on the Passion, which focuses specifically on the Crucifixion itself. In Ludolph's writings concerning the crucifixion he footnotes all of the accounts at some time in his text.

<sup>33</sup> De Vos, 169.

## THE CARTHUSIAN CONNECTION

The Carthusians were and are a very strict order; no other is more austere.<sup>34</sup> St. Bruno officially started the order in 1084 in the French Alps in a humble hermitage. In 1132 an avalanche killed several of the small number of brethren and caused them to move to lower ground in the valley to what was called the Grande Chartreuse. These devout men were unique within Western monasticism in that they chose to emulate the lifestyle of the desert hermits and sought to replicate their solitary desert existence within the walls of individual monastic cells.<sup>35</sup> Each cell was furnished sparsely with rough-hewn furnishings and coarse fabrics and was equipped with a personal garden. Other than weekly communal worship, and some communal meals, the brothers lived completely isolated from one another. According to Carthusian scholar C.H. Lawrence:

Adjacent to the cloister was the monastic church, the kitchen, refectory and other offices. The monks met in community daily in the church for the common celebration of Vespers and the night office; each individual in his own cell recited the remaining services of the day. Similarly, the single meal of the day was taken in winter, and the two meals in the summer were prepared and eaten by each monk in solitude. Community occasions happened only on Sundays and major festivals, when mass was celebrated, a chapter was held, and the brethren sat down together to eat dinner in the refectory. In the afternoon of these days a period of conversation was allowed. This was the only time during the week when the rule of absolute silence was relaxed. The physical austerity of the observance matched the wild desolation of the natural surroundings: the diet was sparser than Saint Benedict had allowed—meat was excluded, and on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays bread and water was the rule, though wine was permitted with food; clothes and bedding were of the coarsest materials. And this spirit of poverty was extended to the monastic church: the customs forbade the use of golden or silver ornaments and vessels, excepting for the chalice.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (New York and London, 1989), 133-137.

<sup>35</sup> Lawrence, 133-137. The movement began in the French Alps in the eleventh-century and spread out from there to other areas on the continent including the Netherlands and Spain and also across the channel to England.

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence, 135. Also important to understanding the Carthusians, their strong belief in the importance of copying manuscripts gave them much needed work that they could do with their hands. This physical

The life of the Carthusian was centered around solitude and meditation on Christ and the Virgin; in fact all of the Carthusian charterhouses were dedicated to Mary. The brothers were devoted to contemplation and were known for their meditation on, and even imitation of, the Passion. According to Penny Howell Jolly, during the investiture ceremony of the Carthusian brother, he essentially reenacts the Crucifixion.<sup>37</sup> During the investiture mass the novitiate “symbolically lies prostrate on the floor... in union with both the sacrifice of Christ and the compassion of the Virgin. He then rises, keeping his hood over his head during the induction and for three days thereafter, during which time he is also silent, thus recalling Christ’s entombment. On the third day he is resurrected, so to speak, as a Carthusian brother.”<sup>38</sup> In describing the Carthusian Mass, Archdale A. King writes “for the greater part of the Mass, the priest remains alone in the sanctuary, with arms lifted up and outstretched in *modum Crucifixi*.”<sup>39</sup> Concerning this posture of empathy, Ludolph of Saxony exhorts in his *Vita*:

Strike the rock twice, that is, exite thyself to devotion not merely by inward contemplation but by bodily exertion, stretching out thy hands, raising thine eyes to the Crucifix, striking thy breast, making genuflections, or even taking the discipline, persevering in these or similar pious exercises till a plenteous stream of tears flows forth, so that thy understanding may drink in the waters of devotion and thy body refreshed by it may become a dwelling-place more fit for grace.<sup>40</sup>

---

labor helped to balance their many hours of prayer and contemplation, and was seen as an act of worship in its own way. For other information concerning the Carthusians, see Christopher Nugent Lawrence Brooke, *Monasteries of the World: The Rise and Development of the Monastic Tradition* (New York, 1974); and Christopher Nugent Lawrence Brooke, *The Monastic World, 1000-1300* (New York, 1974).

<sup>37</sup> Jolly, 116.

<sup>38</sup> Jolly, 116. For more on the Carthusian investiture ceremony see P. Landelin-Hoffmans, *Un Rogier Van Der Weyden iconnu*, (Enghien, 1948).

<sup>39</sup> Archdale A. King, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders* (Milwaukee, 1955): 37.

<sup>40</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 10.

As previously noted and of singular importance, it is known that Rogier indeed had a personal tie to the Carthusians through his son Cornelis who held a masters degree and became a member of the order.<sup>41</sup> He entered the Charterhouse at Herrines as a novitiate around 1449 and was invested in 1450, serving as a brother there until his death in 1473. Van Der Weyden's ties to the Scheut Charterhouse are also well documented. He gave the brothers money in May of 1462 and it is known that he also gave them paintings, although the date is uncertain. Rogier also gave a painting, this time of Saint Catherine, to the Charterhouse at Herrines. The Charterhouse at Herrines was the motherhouse to the house at Scheut, which was founded in 1456 by seven brothers from Herrines to expand an existing chapel that contained a miraculous statue of the Virgin. The first abbot of Scheut was Hendrik van Loen from Herrines and was certainly well known to Cornelis and Rogier.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to note that *The Scheut Crucifixion* was painted without the impetus of a patron and was given to the Carthusian Charterhouse at Scheut as a gift. Gifts of this sort were usually given with particular motivations that are individual to the giver. It is widely believed that Rogier, himself, chose the subject matter of *The Scheut Crucifixion*, as well as the way it was depicted.<sup>43</sup> Because of this, Lorne Campbell has asserted that this simple, yet powerful, work reflects Rogier's personal beliefs and style more than any other.<sup>44</sup> I would go so far as to say that this personal choice tells us something about Rogier Van Der Weyden as a man. The simple and austere image is a

---

<sup>41</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 139.

<sup>42</sup> Jolly, 119; and De Vos, 62.

<sup>43</sup> De Vos, 291.

<sup>44</sup> Campbell, 8, writes in 1977 concerning the *Escorial Crucifixion*, "The picture is all the more interesting as it was probably not commissioned but executed as a gift for the Carthusian monastery of Scheut. It may well show Van Der Weyden's invention uninhibited by the interference of a patron. He appears to have liked working on a grandiose scale...In *The Crucifixion* he designed and painted with more freedom than in any other picture."

visual testament of faith. Knowing that the work would be at home in the Carthusian Monastery, near his son, it would be as if Rogier himself would reside there through his work. The same can be said of *The Philadelphia Diptych* that is painted in much the same style. It also tells us something about what was important to Rogier. It was his last known work, he was very close to death and his own mortality, and as far as we know its subject matter was also not dictated by anyone other than the artist himself.

Van Der Weyden's connectedness with the Carthusians did not end with the giving of paintings. He also gifted monies to them during his lifetime and they were the principal recipients of funds (other than his family) in his will.<sup>45</sup> It is known from a chronicle written by a Carthusian monk that Rogier gave one hundred *petros* to the monastery of Herrines after Cornelis was invested, as well as sixty *libros* to provide for the construction of a new brewery.<sup>46</sup> His will stated that one hundred *coronas* were to be left to the monastery and moreover that upon the death of his wife one-third of his worldly goods were to pass to them as well. This was provided that Cornelis did not die first, which would mean that one fourth of the estate would have been bequeathed.<sup>47</sup> In addition to this, his will included gifts to the poor in two parishes, those of Saint Gudule and Notre Dame de la Chapelle. An annual mass was established in his honor at Scheut, and on October 5th Rogier's wife established a mass at the church of Saint James at Coudenberg. The Confraternity of the Sacred Cross also established a mass in his honor.<sup>48</sup> Van Der Weyden had been a member during his years in Brussels of this

---

<sup>45</sup> Stephan Kemperdick, *Rogier van der Weyden* (Cologne, 1999):121. See also, De Vos, 62-64.

<sup>46</sup> The Chronicle was written by Dom Arnold Beeltsens, who was a Carthusian Brother at Herinnes with Corneille van der Weyden. See A. Beeltsens and J. Ammonius, *Chronique de la Chartreuse de la Chapelle A Herinnes-lez-Enghien*, E Lamelle, ed., (Louvain, 1932), (Append. V), 228, as quoted in Jolly, 125.

<sup>47</sup> Jolly, 119.

<sup>48</sup> De Vos, 64.

confraternity, which had been formed in 1383 to worship a fragment of the True Cross, brought back as a relic from the Holy Land.<sup>49</sup>

Cornelis was not the only member of Van Der Weyden's immediate family to choose a life devoted to Christ. Rogier's daughter also took religious vows and became a nun. The fact that two of the artist's children chose the contemplative life of faith says something about the Van der Weyden household and what was important to them as a family. If faith and devotion had not been stressed and discussed in the home it is unlikely that Rogier's children would have chosen these life paths. Rogier is also believed to have worked alongside Jacques Daret as fellow apprentices under Robert Campin in his early years. Daret was roughly the same age as Rogier and took religious orders in 1423.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, the striking parallels to Carthusian devotional practices and texts, like that of Ludolph of Saxony, that can be found in his vibrant, passionate biblical tableaux give credence to the idea that an image is worth a thousand words... and the way that image is depicted can be worth a thousand more. Everything about Rogier Van Der Weyden's images line up with what we know of his life. His family, patrons, associates, his use of his finances, and his involvement with the Carthusian order in life and in death do not conflict with the idea that he was a very devout and spiritual individual... an individual whose beliefs informed his work.

---

<sup>49</sup> De Vos, 57, says that this confraternity was not linked to the Carthusians, but was what De Vos describes as "the powerful Confraternity of Saint James at Coudenberg..." which "shows how a religious ideal could sometimes link the otherwise mutually exclusive worlds of princely imperiousness and chivalry, the magnificence and protocol, city alderman and bureaucrats and the democracy and ingenuity of the craft guilds." Rogier is listed in the contemporary document as '*Meester Rogier van der Weyden der stad Scilder.*' Rogier's wife is listed separately and she paid a contribution to the confraternities masses and her membership dues at the same time. Their son Pieter, who was a painter and Jan, who was a goldsmith became members at a later date.

<sup>50</sup>De Vos, 48, states in his monograph on Rogier that Daret received the tonsure from the Bishop of Cambrai.

The emotional response to these unique works by Van Der Weyden is haunting. Both of the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* Crucifixion scenes place the apparently warm-blooded emotional human beings in a very cold, lifeless, and unnatural environment. The juxtaposition causes them to appear dreamlike, or like a vision of something otherworldly. In *The Philadelphia Diptych* the figures are placed against a vibrantly blood red cloth of honor, which accentuates the figure's iconic status by making them appear sculptural. As Lorne Campbell points out, it was common for actual sculptural groups to be placed before this type of cloth in churches during the fifteenth century.<sup>51</sup> That sculptural figures were usually placed before these types of cloths is very ironic because Rogier's figures are so realistically rendered. Actually the figures are not truly sculpture at all, but very emotional beings that feel pain...pain to which the Carthusian monk sought to relate. Anne D. Hedeman, in "Roger van der Weyden's *Escorial Crucifixion* and Carthusian Devotional Practices," describes the function of such Crucifixion paintings in the day-to-day life of Carthusian communities.<sup>52</sup> The monks seeing the figures were expected to identify with the figures themselves. The gesture of John could be seen to picture that of the Carthusian Monk at prayer.

The skeletal structure of Christ and the trickles of blood emerging from the wound in his side, the nails in his hands and feet, and the crown of thorns on his head are convincingly depicted, graceful and majestic in their terrible beauty. This made the sought after vision by the worshipper and the Carthusian monks that much more intense

---

<sup>51</sup> Campbell, 8. De Vos, 291, points out that it's unclear whether the *Scheut* painting had an actual function upon an altar as it later did in the Sacristy of the Escorial. He says that the height of the painting, which was at that time unusual, and the fact that it had a curtain covering it suggest that it was placed against a wall as an autonomous piece.

<sup>52</sup> Anne D. Hedeman, "Roger Van Der Weyden's *Escorial Crucifixion* and Carthusian Devotional Practices," *The Sacred Image East and West*, Leslie Brubaker and Robert Ousterhouse, eds. (Urbana, 1995): 294.

and seemingly lifelike. The deep rich red of the delicate lines of blood so lovingly and intentionally placed on the alabaster skin of Christ were certainly meditated on by the artist in much the same way the wounds of Christ were meditated on by the Carthusians in their cells. It is conceivable that the act of creating these paintings was as much an act of contemplation and worship for Rogier Van Der Weyden as was Ludolph of Saxony's writing of *The Vita Christi* or the Carthusian monk's meditation on the Crucifixion in their cells.

*The Scheut Crucifixion* is even more barren and stylized, stripped of all but the critical players. For the contemporary viewer, who would have been without a doubt, intimately acquainted with this biblical event, these figures were all he needed to see and know in order to transport him metaphorically to the foot of the cross. For the first time in Rogier's oeuvre, the figures in this powerful work are life size.<sup>53</sup> This contributes significantly to the somber quality of the visual image. The triangular composition of Christ, with Mary and John on either side of the cross draws the eye up to the crucified Savior, down to John on Christ's left and leads it to where it finally rests on Mary, wiping her tears on the hem of her robe... seemingly lost in grief. John looks up at Christ with a gesture of resignation, hands raised. The scene is almost colorless, painted in what has been called a semi-grisaille.<sup>54</sup> Both figures are wearing what appears to be the white of the Carthusians' habits, and the sheer volume of the drapery around them draws attention to this fact. The shot of color in the composition comes from the red

---

<sup>53</sup> De Vos, 291.

<sup>54</sup> De Vos, 291-292, points out, however, that "severe damage and overpainting limit any meaningful analysis of this work to its composition. It is all but impossible to judge the original execution, coloring and modeling, as there is virtually no area of the painting in which the artist's work has remained intact." Grisaille refers to paintings from this time period that simulated sculpture, depicting the figures as if they were stone. This work does not fit neatly into that category, but is rather muted.



hanging behind the figures, causing the viewer to question what they are actually seeing. There are folds visible in the hanging, as if it had been folded up for some time, unfolded, and hung without being pressed. This small detail brings a sense of the real world to a scene that could otherwise be part of a dream. The skull and crossbones that harkened back to the first man Adam are not included. John does not support Mary but instead the Virgin experiences the Passion of her son completely on her own, while John does the same. The fluttering of the loincloth is stilled and the atmosphere is seemingly silent as the grave. This is in perfect harmony with Carthusian devotional practices and the silence with which they meditated on the Passion very much alone and in the silence of their cells. In both the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* images, Mary takes on a posture that seems much like that of prayer. In the *Scheut* depiction, it is as if both Mary and John might be lost in their own personal meditative visions. It is uncertain whether Christ is meant to be real or whether he is a mental image—a vision, much like one the monks might induce as they prayed and contemplated on the Passion in just such an enclosed space. Placed as he is in such a barren landscape, with the cross so low to the rocky ground and placed before the cloth of honor, which is usually found within a church, this Christ could be either man or mirage.

In order to establish a basis for my assertion that Van Der Weyden shared a connection of belief with the Carthusians that I find evident in his work, it is necessary to take a closer look at Carthusian theology and practice. I will do this by examining closely the writings of Ludolph of Saxony. His *Vita Christi* was one of the most influential devotional writings of the fifteenth century, and I believe that Ludolph's writings provide a textual backdrop for Rogier's more singular images. According to Sister Mary

Bodenstedt in the preface to her translation of Ludolph's work, 100 years after his death, the *Vita* was known through most of the world.<sup>55</sup> She points out that Ludolph's influence can be seen in the works of the later writers of the *Devotio Moderna*, as well as Carmelite, Jesuit, Salesian and French schools of Spirituality.<sup>56</sup> The ideas of this influential Carthusian writer concerning the life of Christ, and more specifically the meditation on and identification with the Passion, create a viable narrative for Rogier's more intimate images. I find that the passages from the *Vita*, which concentrate on the Passion itself, are the most relevant to Van Der Weyden's images of the Crucifixion.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Sister Mary Immaculate Bodenstedt, S.N.D., 1, *Praying the Life of Christ. First English Translation of the Prayers Concluding the 181 Chapters of the Vita Christi of Ludolph the Carthusian: The Quintessence of His Devout Meditations on the Life of Christ*, *Analecta Cartusiana*, vol.15, James Hogg, ed. (Salzburg, 1973).

<sup>56</sup> Bodenstedt, 1, says that there were also translations of the work in other languages: Dutch, German, Italian, Portuguese, Catalan, Spanish and French and there were at least eighty-eight printed editions in Latin.

<sup>57</sup> This section of the *Vita Christi* is 452 pages long.

## LUDOLPH OF SAXONY

Ludolph of Saxony was one of the most influential Carthusians. He was the Carthusian Prior of Strasburg during the reign of Pope John XXII.<sup>58</sup> It is his landmark work on the Life of Christ, entitled the *Vita Christi* that is particularly telling for my reading of Rogier's paintings.<sup>59</sup> Ludolph's *Vita Christi* was written as just such an encyclopedic and contemplative study of the life of Christ, and is thought by some scholars to be the first of its kind.<sup>60</sup> Ludolph was born in 1295, became a Dominican in 1310, and received permission to become a Carthusian in 1340 because he felt called to the stricter life of solitude and silence practiced by that order.<sup>61</sup> According to Ludolph scholar, Charles Abbott Conway, Jr., his *Vita Christi* was well known, widely read and very influential.<sup>62</sup> The history of its transmission is only partially known, but the first printed edition appeared in Cologne in 1472.<sup>63</sup> Although this is after Van Der Weyden's death in 1462, it is important to realize that this publication indicated a strongly increasing demand for the book in the 100 years after Ludolph's death in 1377.<sup>64</sup> Those who had connections to the order would have had ample opportunity to familiarize themselves with this landmark Carthusian devotional text. For Rogier, the connection to

---

<sup>58</sup> Coleridge, Preface, iv, writes of Ludolph's *Vita*, "It may be said in its own way to be almost as unique among books of the same kind as the treatise of the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis. It has been the delight and the food of the soul of countless saints since the fourteenth century. It was particularly dear to Saint Teresa, and it is said to have been the book, the reading of which, in his time of sickness, brought about, under God, the conversion of St. Ignatius."

<sup>59</sup> The section of the *Vita* that Coleridge translated, is limited to the chapters on the Passion and is organized as follows: Chapter I- *Of Meditation on the Passion of our Lord*; Chapter II- *First Compline*; Chapter III- *Matins*; Chapter IV- *Prime*; Chapter V- *Terce*; Chapter VI- *Sext*; Chapter VII- *None*; Chapter VIII- *Second Vespers*; Chapter IX- *Second Compline*; and Chapter X- *Epilogue*. These were the hours of the Passion in the order that they occurred. The monks were to meditate on the events and what happened during these particular hours. See Coleridge 1-452.

<sup>60</sup> Charles Abbot Conway, *The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony and Late Medieval Devotion Centered on the Incarnation: A Descriptive Analysis* (Salzburg, 1976): 3.

<sup>61</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 1.

<sup>62</sup> Conway, 2, cites Bodenstedt as the support for this assertion.

<sup>63</sup> Conway, 2.

<sup>64</sup> Conway, 2.

the book would have come through family, as his son was a Carthusian brother, and through working with the Carthusians on art commissions. Much like today, word-of-mouth advertising that follows popular texts like the *Vita* was certain to have taken place. It is plausible that Rogier's son told his father about the inspirational text that had meant so much to his own spiritual journey. It is also probable that Rogier discussed theological ideas underlying the Crucifixion with the Carthusian brothers.

I find the concepts that Ludolph addresses concerning Christ's suffering during the "Hours of the Passion" relevant to Rogier's work, particularly as the value and importance of this type of text to the communities of brothers was widely known. Reading material was not as plentiful and varied as it is today, but because of the difficulty of daily life during these years of plague and war and the continual emphasis on hell and judgment, texts that encouraged the faithful would have been eagerly sought after.<sup>65</sup> According to Art Historian Craig Harbison; "The laity were also invited to meditate on, or envision, special historical events in Christ's or the saint's lives. Contemporary handbooks were aids to imagining or reliving the Passion in all its mundane detail and human emotion."<sup>66</sup> Texts or contemporary handbooks on the life of Christ would have been spread throughout the lay populace through recommendations from their spiritual advisors, such as a priest.<sup>67</sup> The *Vita*, which came to be "known

---

<sup>65</sup> According to Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages, A Study of Life, Thought and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. F. Hopman, trans., (London, 1954): 156, people were always moved by the gripping account of the terrors of hell and coming judgment. They certainly lived consistently with the reality of death and people's life spans were much shorter. He writes: "No other age has so forcefully and continuously impressed the idea of death on the whole population as did the fifteenth century."

<sup>66</sup> Craig Harbison, *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in Its Historical Context*, (New Jersey, 1995): 97.

<sup>67</sup> Harbison, 94-98.

throughout the world” was certainly one of those texts.<sup>68</sup> If what Dirk de Vos said was true, master painters like Van Der Weyden were required to be familiar with the whole of the spiritual world, especially the world of the written word.<sup>69</sup>

Ludolph’s *Vita Christi* was not only representative of Carthusian doctrine, but played a huge part in the great momentum toward personal devotion sweeping Northern Europe prior to and during Van Der Weyden’s lifetime. This movement was known as the *Devotio Moderna*. It was essentially a movement toward a more personal devotion centered on the life of Christ. C.H. Lawrence points out that “its characteristics were an affective devotion to the person of Jesus, fostered by meditation, indifference to the institutional aspect of the Church, and a mistrust of theological speculation.”<sup>70</sup> The church was no longer the only arbiter between God and man. Everyday men and women wanted to experience God for themselves, and the life of Christ became a subject of intense study. The most important aspect of the movement was the actual imitation of the life of Christ. Central to this was the practical reality of performing intense meditation on the Passion itself. It was important for the worshipper to understand Christ’s sacrifice and through this to gain inspiration for withstanding the difficulties of everyday life in the fifteenth century. According to David Freedburg,

The meditational programs that emerged influenced vast areas of fifteenth-century culture in the North Netherlands...They were substantially practical, since readers and adherents were consistently instructed to transform simple meditation into commitment to the *Imitatio*

---

<sup>68</sup> H.W. van Os, *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500* (Princeton, 1994): 40, writes that Ludolph’s story of the life of Christ was “by far the most widely read life of Christ in the Middle Ages.”

<sup>69</sup> De Vos, 44.

<sup>70</sup> Lawrence, 236, says that the *Devotio Moderna* was moving throughout the Netherlands and lower Germany during the fifteenth century. The movement is associated with the teachings of Gerard Groot of Deventer (1340-84) and the Brothers of the Common Life.

*Christi*. Christ was a doer, not simply a preacher of abstract parables: even the parables themselves brought abstraction to earth.<sup>71</sup>

Freedburg wisely points out “imitation cannot take place without empathy; and empathy...can most effectively be aroused by real images.”<sup>72</sup> Van Der Weyden’s *Philadelphia* and *Scheut* images of the Crucifixion were certainly intended to bring about just such empathy in those meditating on these works. Ludolph of Saxony sought to bring about the same sort of empathy through the written word in his *Vita Christi* that Rogier sought to bring about through his powerful visual images. The monk or layperson could just as easily conjure a mental image of the Crucifixion while reading Ludolph’s *Vita* as could someone looking at the visual images in paint that Rogier created. Both were powerful in their own way. Each sought an empathetic reaction. The reader or viewer was meant to identify with the pain that Mary, John, and especially Christ Himself were experiencing. And while both the *Vita* and Van Der Weyden’s paintings were created as a means of contemplation, they also sought to stimulate pious action. Ludolph exhorts the reader in his *Vita* on the proper way to meditate on the Crucifixion;

Meditation on the Passion of Christ ought not to be made perfunctorily nor with undue haste, especially when time and opportunity are not wanting, but we should bestow on it careful and deliberate consideration, nay indeed, our inmost hearts should be moved to tearful compassion. For unless this sweet wood is chewed with the teeth of loving discernment, its

---

<sup>71</sup> David Freedburg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989): 174.

<sup>72</sup> Freedburg, 174. Also related to this subject is something Barbara Lane points out in her book *The Altar and the Altarpiece: Sacramental Themes in early Netherlandish Painting* (New York, 1984): 9, that “the enhancement of the worshipper’s experience must have been one of the aims of the new realistic settings that appear in the works of the period. As statements of timeless theological truths, these paintings are similar to the traditional ‘Andachtsbilder’ used so frequently for private meditation.” For a further explanation of *Andachtsbild* see Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting*. (Doornspijk, 1965).

savor, great though it be, will not be perceived. Even if thou canst not weep with thy weeping Lord, nor grieve with Him sorrowing, thou oughtest at least to rejoice and to give Him devout thanks for the many benefits freely bestowed upon thee by His Passion. Yet if thou art moved neither by the affection of compassion, nor the desire of thanksgiving, but during thy meditation feelest thyself oppressed with dryness and hardness, nevertheless continue the consideration of this grace giving Passion to the best of thy power, and commit to Christ merciful hands that which of thyself thou canst not obtain.<sup>73</sup>

Ludolph's *Vita Christi* talks in great detail about the principal figures in the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* works: Christ, the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Evangelist.<sup>74</sup> Both Ludolph and Rogier relegate the half sisters of the Virgin, Mary Cleopas and Mary Salome, who are included in the gospel narrative, to mere footnotes in comparison to the amount of text given to the three primary figures.<sup>75</sup> Ludolph goes into great detail to describe the emotions of the Virgin. For example he elaborates on the events surrounding the Crucifixion and how this affected the Virgin; "...In order to console His Mother and the beloved disciple in the midst of their anguish, He commended that Mother, bereft of all comfort, plunged into grief, and almost dying, to the disciple, and the disciple to his mother." In both *The Scheut Crucifixion* and *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* the emotion of the Virgin is very intense, yet restrained and inward looking. It is as if she is remembering times past with her son or perhaps contemplating His

---

<sup>73</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 311-320.

<sup>75</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 297, writes "Now all these things were said and done in the presence of His most sorrowful mother, who 'stood by the Cross' with her sisters and 'Mary Magdalene' and John." This is virtually the only mention of the other Mary's. According to the *Ryrie Study Bible*, (Chicago, 1960): 1559 and 1595, Mary Clopas or Cleopas was the mother of James and Joseph and Mary Salome was the mother of the sons of Zebedee. Ludolph spells their names "Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary of Salome." See, Ludolph, *Hours*, 363.

glorious future which she cannot fully understand. She indeed appears “bereft of all comfort.”<sup>76</sup>

In the *Philadelphia* work the Virgin’s tears are more apparent and her face more drawn and haggard. She is also falling into the arms of John as if she is overcome with grief, which is a clear picture of Ludolph’s words above. Concerning Christ commending his mother to John and the emotion it generated, Ludolph goes on to say: “This exchange caused her inward torture, and was more bitter to the Mother than all the bodily sufferings of the Passion, and it rends other human hearts, even if as hard as stone or iron.”<sup>77</sup> The fact that in each of the Crucifixion scenes the figures of Mary and John are so realistically rendered makes it much easier for the viewer to empathize with them in their grief. Mary is a perfect picture of “inward torture”<sup>78</sup> and John seems to be looking outward toward the actual scene taking place before him. They represent both sides of the contemplative experience, looking within as well as looking toward visual representations of the Crucifixion itself. In *The Scheut Crucifixion* John stands with hands raised as if in praise or worship whereas in the *Philadelphia* work he is employed supporting the Virgin as she is “plunged into grief.”<sup>79</sup> Also in the *Philadelphia* work, the blue gray pallor of the wall, which serves as a backdrop for the scene, seems to echo the grayish pallor of Christ’s face...underscoring the somber reality of death and loss. It is evident that Ludolph, in his writings, considers Mary’s sacrifice as equal to that of Christ himself. Likewise Van Der Weyden, in these two Crucifixion scenes, depicts the

---

<sup>76</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 297.

<sup>77</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 315.

<sup>78</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 315.

<sup>79</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 312.



Virgin on the same physical scale as Christ and gives her suffering equal billing or visual importance. Both Ludolph and Rogier are making the same statement.

Interestingly, Ludolph makes a point in the *Hours of the Passion* to describe John as a virgin as well. Ludolph writes,

By the fact that he commended His Mother to John, is shown the great dignity of John and with how much honour our Lord honoured him. Hence Saint Jerome says the purity of the Blessed Virgin was entrusted to none of the disciples but to John the Virgin, for each would delight in the other's company, and the appearance and demeanour of both were adorned with the brilliancy and beauty conferred by chastity.<sup>80</sup>

John the Apostle is depicted as a Virgin in the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* works through the pale tonality of his robe. Ludolph describes "the great dignity of John," and more importantly the singular devotion through which he gives his life over to serving Christ and Christ's mother.<sup>81</sup> Ludolph writes,

'And from that hour,' as long as Mary lived, 'the disciple took her to his own,' (St John xix. 27) that is, his own mother according to some, but the words are more fitly understood to mean into his own care and solicitude, which he henceforth especially showed to her, for whatever was necessary for her was his care.<sup>82</sup>

Similar to the choice Rogier makes in choosing to depict only Christ, the Virgin and John, Ludolph makes them the two most worthy of the group--Christ's beloved mother, the blessed Virgin, and the disciple whom Jesus loved--to witness this final episode in the crucifixion drama.<sup>83</sup> Both the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* Crucifixion scenes depict perfectly this intimate encounter between these two beloved of Christ; His mother and

---

<sup>80</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 312, cites the scriptural reference for Jesus commending his mother to John is John xix. 27.

<sup>81</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 312.

<sup>82</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 312.

<sup>83</sup> John the Evangelist refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loves" twice in the book of John: John 13:23 and John 19:26, See Appendix.

His beloved disciple, and the Crucified Savior; who was also a son and a friend. Rogier made a conscious choice to limit these depictions to this cast of three, just as Ludolph chose in his *Vita* to concentrate especially on the emotional experiences of Mary and John.

There is a passage in the *Vita* that is especially applicable to *The Philadelphia Crucifixion*. In the left panel that depicts John supporting Mary as she falls backward, they both shed tears. Ludolph writes,

...those two, so beloved by Him did not cease to shed tears. Both those Martyrs were silent and could not speak for excess of sorrow. Those two virgins heard Christ speaking such great things and saw him dying by slow degrees. They wept bitterly because they grieved bitterly, for the sword of Christ's sorrow pierced the souls of both, that of the Mother most sharply because she loved most.<sup>84</sup>

In the same way it is visually evident that Van Der Weyden is acknowledging the importance of Mary's sacrifice at the time of the Crucifixion. He does this by the scale of Mary in the scene and by her inclusion in this exclusive group. This is likewise true of the beloved disciple, John. Mary's role as co-redeemer is underscored in the *Philadelphia* image because Mary's sacrifice is depicted in one panel, Christ's in the other...lending importance to both. Rogier's image is saying virtually the same things about Mary and John as Ludolph is saying in the former passage from his *Vita*. The Carthusians highly esteemed Mary, as well as her sacrifice, and dedicated all their houses to her. When they looked upon these images by Van Der Weyden, they could put themselves in the place of the loyal John, while venerating and honoring the Virgin.

---

<sup>84</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 315.

They could more fully enter in to the imitation of the Crucifixion in their thoughts through Rogier Van Der Weyden's images and Ludolph of Saxony's words.

There are three other points that I would like to illustrate through this comparative reading of Rogier's paintings and Ludolph's Carthusian text:

- A. Personal Meditational Strategies for the Laity
- B. Carthusians Own Monastic Meditation
- C. Carthusians Emphasis on Minimalism

## PERSONAL MEDITATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE LAITY

It is known that the Carthusians placed great emphasis on the meditation upon Christ's passion, but how did this meditation affect the devotional lives of the laity or someone like Rogier Van Der Weyden?<sup>85</sup> If these people had been able to see Rogier's works, what would have been their reading of them? Both the *Philadelphia Diptych* and *Scheut Crucifixion* can be shown to serve as a perfect prelude to intense meditation. The immediacy of the scene in the *Philadelphia* work and the different responses of Mary and John would enable the viewer to identify with them in different ways in their mourning. While the figures are present at the Crucifixion, the viewer of the painting is intended to be present at the Crucifixion as well. The cleft in the rocky ground between the two panels represents the splitting of the rocks that is mentioned in Matthew 27:45 and Matthew 27:51 that occur when all creation mourns the death of Christ.<sup>86</sup> Mary is grieving, swooning into the arms of John, her protector, while clasping her hands as if in prayer. John stoically weeps while supporting the Virgin, thinking of her as well as the suffering of his Lord before thinking of himself. Both of these emotional and physical postures could have brought about empathy in the viewer.

Ludolph quotes Saint Anselm with words that could be a narrative to *The Philadelphia Crucifixion*:

Saint Anselm says: 'But do thou, with his Mother and John, approach the Cross, and standing close to it gaze upon the countenance of Jesus overspread with pallor. What then? Will thou without tears see the tears of thy most loving Lady? Wilt thou remain dry-eyed, and shall the sword of sorrow pierce her soul?'<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Jolly, 116. For more on the Carthusian investiture ceremony, see P. Landelin-Hoffmans, *Un Rogier van der Weyden iconnu*, (Enghien, 1948).

<sup>86</sup> De Vos, 338.

<sup>87</sup> Saint Anselm, *De Excellentia B. Virginis*, as quoted by Ludolph, *Hours*, 314.

In other words, how can you watch Mary grieve for her son and not feel grief yourself? The red hanging that both the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* paintings depict accentuates the object of the worshipper's devotion and the figures with which he could identify within the biblical scene. In emphasizing the importance in meditating on the passion and other biblical happenings as if one were actually present at the scene, Ludolph writes:

And thus, although many of these things are told as in the past, you should meditate on all of them as if they were in the present; because without doubt you will taste a greater pleasantness from this. Therefore read about what was done as if it were being done. Place before your eyes past actions as if they were present, and thus to a great extent you will taste things as more savory and delightful.<sup>88</sup>

*The Philadelphia Diptych* is also a clear picture of the co-compassio of Mary which was discussed earlier because the two panel format places Mary and John in one panel and Christ in the other. Thus Mary's role in the drama could be meditated on alone and for its own merit. According to Dirk de Vos, this is the first time this idea was depicted artistically into two separate devotional paintings.<sup>89</sup> If any women were permitted to see these paintings it is certain that they would more easily relate to the idea of mother love that Mary represented.

The *Scheut* work, with figures that the viewer could identify with because they were actually life size, must have been a powerful stimulus to bring the worshipper to the scene of Christ's Passion. There are no accoutrements other than Christ, the cross, The Virgin and Saint John... alone with their grief and emotion, which Rogier could depict so empathetically. While Ludolph's writings were read and meditated on by those outside cloistered walls, these two paintings were most likely viewed only by the

---

<sup>88</sup> Ludolph of Saxony, as quoted in Conway's translation, 124.

<sup>89</sup> De Vos, 335-338.

Carthusians in the Charterhouse itself. Ludolph inspired many of the laity to pursue private devotion and meditation upon Christ's Passion whether or not they lived the monastic life. Similarly, although it is not known whether the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* works were seen by the laity during Van Der Weyden's day, it can be said that these paintings could have enhanced the laity's personal meditation, in the same way that Ludolph the Carthusian's writings influenced the laity. His was a contemporary worldview that was shared by Van Der Weyden.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Harbison, 94, writes concerning the meditational life of the lay person at this time: "There is much evidence to show that the majority of Roger Van Der Weyden's contemporaries throughout northern Europe relied not on church sacrament and ceremonial for their path of spiritual enlightenment, but on more personal resources. In surviving Netherlandish religious paintings, lay patrons outnumber clerical by a ratio of two to one; and the religious art these lay people bought illustrates quite simply an ideal of private prayer and devotion that can be read, in part, as a conscious reaction against the contemporary turmoil within the church. Various popular reform movements in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, such as the Brethren of Common Life, stressed the power and importance of true personal piety. Increasingly, private prayer books were produced to enable those who were wealthy and literate enough to perform their own devotions in the intimacy of their homes, as well as in the public ecclesiastical locations. Stress on the private devotions did not have to weaken Church authority: there is no evidence that clerics complained about lay people saying their prayers privately, only that the laity did not, routinely fulfill their public, parochial obligations."

## CARTHUSIANS' OWN MONASTIC MEDITATION

It is believed that *The Scheut Crucifixion* was placed in the choir of Scheut Charterhouse behind a red cloth of honor. A painting that could have been this one is mentioned in the records of the monastery. The red curtain is an important detail because it would have matched the cloth of honor depicted in the painting itself, thus giving the impression of the figures standing beneath a red baldachin.<sup>91</sup> This would greatly enhance the liturgical significance of the work for the Carthusians, as it is possible that it was used during the mass. It is also possible that the curtain was pulled back to display the image when the host was elevated. The image would certainly have been fresh in the mind of the monk as he returned to his cell for meditation. De Vos describes Mary and John in this work as being shown in their “emotional essence, dressed in white monastic habits, on either side of the cross, where they make the kind of dramatic gestures that intensified prayer or the culmination of the mass within religious orders of this kind.”<sup>92</sup>

Many of the points of reference for the Carthusian brothers have been discussed previously in terms of both of these paintings, but it is difficult for the modern reader to truly identify with the cloistered world of the monk. It is easy however to imagine that the figures in these paintings were just as real to them as their fellow monks because of the time they spent in solitude meditating on these biblical events, and conjuring mental constructions relating to the Virgin and to the suffering of Christ. In essence, they spent more time alone in meditation than they did in the company of others.

---

<sup>91</sup> Soenen, 127, as referenced by De Vos, 292.

<sup>92</sup> De Vos, 140.

The *Philadelphia* work is even more representative of the devotional world of the order because of its depiction of the co-compassio of Mary, to whom all Carthusian Charterhouses were dedicated. The swooning Virgin clasps her hands above her chest as she falls back into the arms of John in the exact posture the Carthusians were taught to pray.<sup>93</sup> She was a role model for the Carthusian, and as Dirk de Vos points out, she might have reminded the monk of his own mother who was perhaps the only woman in his life.<sup>94</sup> Images very much like this one often decorated the monks' cell, as was the case at the Chartreuse de Champmol, another Carthusian monastery. Two such works have been identified as having been painted by Jean de Beaumetz (late fourteenth century) and represent a Crucifixion with a Carthusian monk kneeling in the foreground along with Mary and John.<sup>95</sup> This knowledge reinforces the reality of the importance of images like that of the *Scheut and Philadelphia Crucifixions* in the devotional lives of the Carthusian monks.

---

<sup>93</sup> De Vos, 144, references *De modo orandi corporaliter sancti Dominici*, a Dominican text that describes Saint Dominic's nine ways of praying that were also used by the Carthusians. See also Hedeman, 198.

<sup>94</sup> De Vos, 141.

<sup>95</sup> Snyder, 69.



## CARTHUSIANS' EMPHASIS ON MINIMALISM

*The Scheut Crucifixion* and *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* clearly exhibit the simplistic and reverent style that is a perfect complement to the simple and reverent lives of the Carthusians. It is this simple reasoning that made the compositions of these two unique late works stand out and bring to mind the cloistered lives of the Carthusians themselves. Knowing the particulars of the provenance of these two paintings underscores how in line they truly are with Carthusian tastes and meditational habits. As has been previously addressed, the walled enclosures in which the drama takes place could be seen to reference the solitary cells in which the brothers lived and meditated on the Crucifixion. These monks hardly ever ventured beyond the walls of their cells except through the mind in contemplation. The lack of ornamentation in the paintings respects the prohibition of any lavish ornamentation in the Charterhouses of the brothers and in the cells themselves. This prohibition is addressed in the *Consuetudines* written in 1127-28 by the prior of the Grande Chartreuse, Guigo I (1110-1136).<sup>96</sup> Guigo asserts that architecture and furnishings remain simple and that there was to be no silver or gold ornamentation in the church except the chalice and fistula. Further reference to the Carthusian's can be seen in the dress of Mary and John in these paintings. Their robes are actually pale versions of the traditionally represented red and blue but appear to echo the white of the Carthusian habits.

For these reasons and many others, the *Philadelphia and Scheut Crucifixions* bear the strongest visible ties to the Carthusians and form the foundation for the connection between the artist and this order, but there are ideas and statements in the

---

<sup>96</sup> *Ornamenta aurea vel argentea praetercalicem et calamum, quo sanguis Domini sumitur, in ecclesia non hebemus. Consuet.*, cap. XL, l. Le Cout., *Annal.*, t. I, 275; *Pat. Lat.*, t. CLIII, col. 717, as cited in King, 11.

*Vita* that are reflected in several of Van Der Weyden's other Crucifixion scenes that would serve as further proof of the artist's Carthusian sympathies. It is interesting that in each of the six actual Crucifixion scenes Christ's head is always nodded in the direction of Mary, facing west, and in all but one, Mary and John are facing east. Ludolph in the *Vita* talks about this posture of the trio in two separate passages.<sup>97</sup> He writes: "Our Lord hanging on the Cross kept his face towards the west, but Mary and John looking towards the east at the face of Christ continually shed tears."<sup>98</sup> He wrote concerning the hour of none, "He began also to droop His head toward his mother, giving her as it were a last salutation."<sup>99</sup> The way the sun and moon are depicted in Rogier's *Abegg Triptych* relates to another passage in the *Vita*.

For because the Son of God and the true Sun of Justice was suffering eclipse, the visible sun, the bright light of the world, pitying its Maker, withdrew and hid its rays, not being able to look upon its Lord hanging on the cross, and the ignominy and bitterness of His death. Hence, St. Chrysostom says: "The sun was darkened, for the creature could not bear the wrong done to its Creator. It withdrew its rays, concealed its fiery splendor, that it might not see the crimes of the impious." Concerning the moon Saint Chrysostom went on to say: "Hence Dionysius being then in Heliopolis saw that this occurred through the interposition of the moon between the earth and the sun, for he saw the moon going up in the east towards the meridian, and putting herself before the sun..."<sup>100</sup>

This is an accurate commentary for the scene Rogier depicts.

Although Dirk de Vos calls the sun and moon included on either side of the cross at the time of the Savior's death "traditional," the way they are depicted in this painting is

---

<sup>97</sup> This posture is not unique however to Rogier and can be seen in most contemporary Crucifixion scenes. The right facing bowed head of Christ is often explained by the common convention in art from this period of the goodness of the right side as opposed to the evil connotations of the left. Also relevant to the right and left discussion is Corine Schleif, "Men on the Right- Women on the Left(A)symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Places." Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury, eds. *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church* (New York, 2005), 207-249.

<sup>98</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 313.

<sup>99</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 346.

<sup>100</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 321-322.

not.<sup>101</sup> In other Crucifixion scenes that include this motif, several of which are Byzantine, the dark clouds that swirl around the sun and moon, almost obscuring them, are absent. Ludolph describes the total darkness that occurred at the time of Christ's death on the cross that lasted for three hours.<sup>102</sup> This refers to the account in scripture found in Matthew 27:45. This is a well-known part of the biblical account, but it is Ludolph's further explanation of this unusual event that might explain the dark clouds in *The Abegg Triptych*.

*The Berlin Crucifixion* (1425-30) and *The Vienna Triptych of the Crucifixion* (1443-5) visualize another concept that Ludolph addresses in the *Vita*. The motif of the '*Planctus Mariae*' or "Mary's Lament" shows the Virgin embracing the bloodstained cross in a posture that was traditionally reserved for Mary Magdalene. Rogier's use of this theme in *The Berlin Crucifixion* was a first.<sup>103</sup> The idea came from the treatise *De laudibus beatae Virginis* by the Cistercian monk Oglerius of Locedio in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, but had been made famous by the more widely read Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*.<sup>104</sup> The words on the banderole coming from Mary's mouth say 'Oh son, let me come forward and clasp the foot of the cross in my hands (Saint Bernard).' The Carthusians had made these words famous in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, but interestingly they wrongly attributed them to Saint Augustine or Saint Bernard.<sup>105</sup> While

---

<sup>101</sup> De Vos, 210-12. It is also relevant that De Vos, 105-106, states "The entire painting seems permeated with the colour of blood. It was undoubtedly the master who conceived this colour symbolism..." He also describes it as a "bloodily sensual scene," which is a perfect complement to Ludolph's lovingly graphic writings.

<sup>102</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 322.

<sup>103</sup> De Vos, 175, points out that angels of mourning are pictured in both scenes, with *The Abegg Triptych* representing the flowering of a more mature style.

<sup>104</sup> De Vos, 175.

<sup>105</sup> De Vos, 178, adds that Panofsky (1953, 267 n.3) was "the first to point out that the inscription in the painting probably came from the *Liber de Passion Christi et doloribus et planctibus Mariae*, wrongly attributed to Saint Bernard."

in *The Berlin Crucifixion* Mary embraces the cross while gazing up at her son, in the *Vienna Triptych of the Crucifixion* Rogier takes the posture a step further by having Mary actually kiss the cross. There is a passage in Ludolph's *Vita* that describes this scene perfectly:

Behold, our Lord hangs dead on the Cross, the whole multitude departs, His sorrowful Mother remains with John and Magdalene... What did His Mother then do? From the desire in her heart she raised her hands, longing to touch her Beloved, as if thus she would be able better to indulge her love and grief. And since she had no other comfort, she pressed her lips with intense eagerness to the warm Blood, which was continually dropping from the Wounds of her Son to the ground...<sup>106</sup>

The right panel of Van Der Weyden's *Miraflores Altarpiece* depicts a scene that is also described in the *Vita Christi*. It shows Christ appearing to the Virgin. The scene occurs shortly after the Resurrection when he first appears to his mother and exhorts her not to touch him because he has not yet ascended to the Father. According to the *Vita* this event took place as the Virgin was praying alone in her room. This scene does not originate in scripture, and only started showing up in visual form in art from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is often confused with the *Noli me tangere*, or the meeting with Mary Magdalene which took place later.<sup>107</sup> These ties between the writings of Ludolph of Saxony and themes found in various works by Van der Weyden further support the likelihood that it was through the *Vita Christi* of Ludolph that Rogier came to understand and identify with Carthusian devotional practices.

The connection seen here between Van Der Weyden and the Carthusians is not unique among artists of the Northern Renaissance era. There is a pattern of this kind of

---

<sup>106</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 366. De Vos, 175.

<sup>106</sup> De Vos, 175.

<sup>106</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 366.

<sup>107</sup> De Vos, 230.

close relationship between an artist and a monastic institution or religious movement. I would like to show that this connection was not just one of painter and patron, but of kindred souls, connected through shared beliefs. A foundational example of this can be found in the relationship of the artist Matthias Grunewald to the mystic Saint Brigitta. In 1945 Otto Benesch wrote of this connection. Brigitta's most important work, her *Revelations*, were published in 1500, and according to Benesch were very influential.<sup>108</sup> He gave the credit to a Catholic scholar named Rector Heinrich Feurstein, who 25 years earlier had first identified the influence that Brigitta's graphic visions of the Crucifixion had on the powerful visual images of Grunewald.<sup>109</sup> Another relevant example of a connection of shared belief is the relationship the artist Hans Memling had with the nuns at the Hospital of St Jan where he did much of his work.<sup>110</sup> This connection was depicted in paint by Henri Dabblers (d. 1885) in 1857 in a work entitled *Hans Memling Painting the Saint Ursula Shrine*. A fatigued Memling leans back in his chair and gazes at the shrine in the company of several nuns. A particularly beautiful nun tries to give him food. Nineteenth century legend has it that Memling was actually in love with one of the nuns.

In much the same way, Claus Sluter had a very close relationship with the Carthusians at the Chartreuse de Champmol in France, and even better documented is the well-known connection Albrecht Durer had with the emerging Reformation movement and the reformer himself, Martin Luther. Like the German sculptor Sluter before him, and emerging Renaissance man Durer after him, Rogier's deeply held

---

<sup>108</sup> Otto Benesch. *The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe, Its Relation to the Contemporary Spiritual and Intellectual Movements* (London, 1965): 28,31,34.

<sup>109</sup> Benesch, 30, writes of Rector Heinrich Feurstein.

<sup>110</sup> Jeffrey Chips Smith, *The Northern Renaissance* (London, 2004): 416.

beliefs can be seen in his body of work but most effectively and intimately in the way these works were rendered. To illustrate this point, it is instructive to look at Claus Sluter's *Well of Moses* (1395-1406) and Albrecht Durer's *Four Evangelists* or *Four Holy Men* (1526).

## CLAUS SLUTER

Claus Sluter was born in Haarlem in 1360.<sup>111</sup> He first appears in a register for the stonecutters, mason's and figurine sculptors' guild in Brussels in 1379-80. It was in 1385 that he was employed as a workman under Jean de Marville, who had been the head of the Duke of Burgundy's workshop since 1372. When Marville died in 1389, Sluter became the head of that workshop and remained there until his death in 1406. He worked extensively for the Duke and is best known for his sculptural works done for the Carthusians: *The Well of Moses*, the portal of the Chartreuse de Champmol, and the tomb of Philip the Bold.<sup>112</sup>

The connection that Sluter had with the Carthusian's at the Chartreuse de Champmol outside Dijon where he worked for Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy until his death in 1406 is widely known.<sup>113</sup> He was the chief court sculptor and in this capacity had the time and opportunity to work on several large-scale projects for the Carthusian monastery of Champmol.<sup>114</sup> It is through an abundance of written documentation kept by Philip the Bold that we know what we do of Claus Sluter.<sup>115</sup> They allow scholars to equate Sluter's twenty year career at the monastery and his association with the monks to the works themselves. This comparison tells us a great deal about Sluter as an artist and as a man.

---

<sup>111</sup> Kathleen Morand, *Claus Sluter: Artist at the Court of Burgundy* (Austin, 1991): 15-90.

<sup>112</sup> Renate Prochno, "Well of Moses," *Art from the Court of Burgundy: 1364-1419; The Patronage of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless*, Musée des Beaux-Arts of Dijon May 28-September 15, 2004 (The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2005): 355; Henri David and Aenne Liebreich, "Le Calvaire de Champmol et l'Art de Sluter," *Bull. Mon.*, (1933): 419-467; Henri David, *Claus Sluter* (Paris, 1951); Aenne Liebreich, *Claus Sluter* (Brussels, 1936).

<sup>113</sup> Morand, 102-118.

<sup>114</sup> Smith, 47, says Philip erected the Chartreuse de Champmol as a family mausoleum. The monastery remained functioning until it was destroyed in 1792.

<sup>115</sup> Morand, 7, notes "The abundance of documentation relevant to the period of Sluter's activity in Dijon is a direct consequence of the elaborate administrative system set up by Philip the Bold to control and account for expenditure in his scattered domains."

Scholars Kathleen Morand and Renate Prochno equate what can be seen in Claus Sluter's work and what we know of his life and connections to the subject at hand; a personal piety and depth of spiritual feeling that can be seen quite clearly and is well documented in the *Well of Moses* or *puits de Moïse*.<sup>116</sup> It was built under the patronage of Philip the Bold of Burgundy between 1395 and 1404 in the center courtyard of the Carthusian monastery in Dijon, France called the Chartreuse de Champmol.<sup>117</sup> The well has at its center a tall pillar around which stand six prophets. Above these prophets, who all foretell the coming of Christ in the Old Testament, six tiny angels weep with varying degrees of emotion and different postures. It was originally topped with a Crucifix that had at its base the figures of the Virgin, Saint John and Mary Magdalene. This fountain served as the cemetery cross and the irrigation for the monastery. Unfortunately, the Calvary group that topped the well was destroyed during the French Revolution, so all that remains is the grouping of angels and prophets: Moses, David, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Daniel, and Isaiah.

As further corroboration, Renate Prochno points out, in a chapter on the *Well of Moses* included in an exhibition catalogue entitled, *Art from The Court of Burgundy*, put together by the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Dijon:

The iconography of the *Well of Moses* most likely refers to the *Meditations Vitae Christi*, written between c. 1348 and 1368. Drawing upon the Passion, Ludolph of Saxony advocated the "*Imitation of Christ*" as the foundation of Christian Life. While the *Well of Moses* is more than a mere illustration of Ludolph's work, it is certainly a very personal interpretation of religious fervor. In their meditative concentration, the prophets themselves are models for the possible interiorization and individual confrontation with the Passion of Christ...<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Morand, 110-111; and Prochno, 213-221. See Morand for plates of Sluter's *Moses Well*, 90-119.

<sup>117</sup> Prochno, 213-219.

<sup>118</sup> Prochno, 219.



Prochno goes on to say that because this is Sluter's only preserved work that did not rely on his predecessor as court sculptor, Jean de Marville, it is the clearest reflection of his personal choices and style.<sup>119</sup> I see this as a close parallel to the choices made by Van Der Weyden concerning his *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* Crucifixions, which were free also from the dictates of a patron. Kathleen Morand in her study of Sluter notes:

Sluter's interpretation of the Mystery of Christ's Passion was created for a contemplative Order, and intended to be viewed in a spirit of humility and devotion. It was doubtless conceived in the same spirit of devotion, and it is this quality that continues to communicate in a manner that defies analysis... No less remarkable is its profound spirituality, expressed in human terms and with a degree of portrait realism that actually enhances the religious quality of the work.<sup>120</sup>

Morand speculates that it is likely that Sluter was familiar with the writings of Gerhard Groote who was the founder of the *Modern Devotion*.<sup>121</sup> She sees a possible connection with his landmark *Well of Moses* and Groote's *Imitation of Christ*. She explained that Sluter would have been a young man when Groote drew large crowds and prompted religious fervor in Haarlem where Sluter grew up. She also draws a definite connection to Ludolph of Saxony. Ludolph equates the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross with the origination of the fountain of life. He extols in his *Vita*:

O Jesus, Who when thirsting for our salvation, didst vouchsafe to have wine mingled with gall and vinegar given to Thee to drink, save me by Thy grace freely bestowed upon me and number me with Thine elect, and grant that I in return may thirst for Thee, the Fountain of Life and of Living Water, loving Thee with all my heart, praising and extolling Thee with my mouth, and showing by my works the love I bear to Thee. Make me worthily offer up to Thee the wine of devotion, with the myrrh of mortification of the flesh, and the gall of penitential compunction, and let me not shrink from the bitterness of Thy chalice, but embrace it with joy

---

<sup>119</sup> Prochno, 219.

<sup>120</sup> Morand, 119-120.

<sup>121</sup> Morand, 20.

and drink it up for my salvation, so that bitter things may seem sweet to my soul athirst for Thy love.<sup>122</sup>

This passage points to the two most important sacraments of the Christian Church. The celebration of the Mass and the ritual of Baptism are a picture of the cleansing of sin and the inauguration of a new life made possible by Christ's shedding of blood on the Cross. These two sacraments, according to Morand, were the original impetus for the great Cross that sat atop the *Well of Moses*.<sup>123</sup> She writes that "...the overall process of meditation invited from the onlooker would have been very much in harmony with the contemplative ideals of the order for which it was created."<sup>124</sup>

Although it is likely that Prior Jehan de Vaulx and possibly a body of advisors contributed to this intricate iconographic program, Morand concludes, "There can also be little doubt that Sluter himself was deeply and passionately involved in the creative process that transformed these theological concepts into one of the great masterpieces of all time."<sup>125</sup>

The movement toward personal devotion that was sweeping the country certainly affected Sluter as his subsequent career attests. Attesting to Sluter's personal religious devotion is the fact that the artist himself entered an Augustinian monastery in 1404.<sup>126</sup> This was a step taken by others who were heavily involved with the *Modern*

---

<sup>122</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 339. James Snyder, 67, also addresses this subject: "The iconography of the *Well of Moses* was thus a complex fusion of the idea of man's salvation through the death of Christ on the cross and the Fountain of Life whereby his sins were washed away in the waters of Baptism. From later paintings of this unusual subject we know that the symbolism of salvation was further enhanced by showing the blood from the wounds of Christ fill the basin, thus bringing together the meaning of the two principal sacraments, the Eucharist and the Baptism."

<sup>123</sup> Morand, 106.

<sup>124</sup> Morand, 106.

<sup>125</sup> Morand, 106.

<sup>126</sup> Morand, 20-21, further supporting the belief that Sluter was a very spiritual man, states: "The unending search for spiritual values, the very personal solution found for each individual problem that has frustrated

*Devotion.* The deed recording his entrance into this spiritual community gives evidence that Sluter was well known to the monks when he joined their company, which probably means they had formed a relationship during his years in Dijon.

The thing that Morand does not mention, but Prochno references in a footnote, is a sculptural connection concerning the six paths to the Passion tying the *Moses Well* to Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*.<sup>127</sup> Seen in the six mourning angels and the six prophets surrounding the base, Ludolph addresses the six proper mental or emotional states that would best assist the reader in contemplating and entering in to the Passion. In the *Vita* Ludolph writes:

As to the method of exercise on the Passion of Jesus Christ, thou must know that a man can set about it in six ways. He may consider it first by way of imitation, secondly of compassion, thirdly of admiration, fourthly of exultation, fifthly of resolution, sixthly of resting in it.<sup>128</sup>

The emotive angels that hover over the prophets could be seen to exhibit these six ways of experiencing the Passion. One of the angels wipes tears from her eyes, exhibiting compassion. One of the angels holds her chin contemplatively in her hand, exhibiting admiration. Another lifts her hands in praise, exhibiting exultation. A fourth holds her head in one hand, exhibiting resolution. A fifth has her hands folded as if in prayer, exhibiting resting in it... and a sixth has her arms crossed in front of her possible drawing to mind the cross, or its imitation.<sup>129</sup>

Prochno, furthermore observed, "Meditation Vitae Christi is the title commonly used. The imitation was accomplished according to six paths. Roggen (1936) supports

---

attempts to find convincing parallels to Sluter's work elsewhere, and the profoundly religious feeling that permeates his art in general all speak for a developed stage in progress toward the contemplative life."

<sup>127</sup> Prochno, 219.

<sup>128</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 23.

<sup>129</sup> Prochno, 218, is the source for the photos of the angels.

the notion that this is perhaps the origin of the hexagonal form of the pillar of the Champmol fountain.”<sup>130</sup> I would argue that these six paths were also depicted in the six multicolored angels that surround the Cross in Van Der Weyden’s *Berlin Crucifixion*, that is one of the earliest works in his accepted oeuvre. Two of the angels are red, two are black, and two are black and gold. One of the black and gold angels has his arms outstretched in imitation of the Crucifixion, one of the red angels exhibits compassion by wiping away tears and the other exultation through raised hands.<sup>131</sup> While the other three are less easy to read it would appear that these six angels follow Ludolph’s paths toward experiencing the Passion.

It can also be observed in Van Der Weyden’s *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* works that several of these paths toward consideration of, or meditation on, the Crucifixion are depicted in the gestures of Mary and John. The first path, imitation, is the very nature of both of these images. As has been established, the viewer was intended to be aided in his imitation of the Passion through these intimate images. The second path, compassion, is depicted by the Virgin in both paintings. In the *Scheut* work, she wipes her tears with the hem of her robe, and in the *Philadelphia* work she weeps with clasped hands. The third path of admiration is best seen in the figure of John in the *Scheut* image. He holds up his hands in a posture of what could also be praise, which also brings to mind the linked fourth path of exultation. The fifth and sixth paths of resolution and resting are seen in the figure of John in the *Philadelphia* work. He sturdily does his job of supporting the Virgin while gazing at his crucified friend and Savior. He seems

---

<sup>130</sup> Prochno, 218, cites Damien Roggen, “De Kalvarieberg van Champmol,” *Gentshe Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis* 3, (1936): 31-85.

<sup>131</sup> Plate found in De Vos, 177. The plates I have seen of this work are very dark and the two black angel’s and one of the black and gold angel’s postures are impossible to make out.

resolved and at the same time at peace with what is occurring before his eyes.

Likewise, Mary seems equally resolved to the sacrifice her son must endure.

In these ways it is evident that Van Der Weyden, like Sluter, brought personal beliefs and a unique worldview to bear on the works for which he is best known. In much the same way, Albrecht Durer provides another model of the contribution that personal conviction can make to creative work and the statement they were making to the world.

## ALBRECHT DURER

Like Sluter, Albrecht Durer has been shown to have held strong personal theological affiliations.<sup>132</sup> Durer was born in Nuremberg in 1471, a century after Sluter, as the son of a goldsmith and the third of eighteen children. Much more is known of Durer because of the journals and correspondence he kept and because he is considered by some to be the founder of the Northern Renaissance.<sup>133</sup> He was a painter, graphic artist and theorist. In the truest sense of the new idea, he was a Renaissance man. He is best known for his engravings such as *Adam and Eve* (1504) and *Melancholia* (1514), and his series of self-portraits. It was, however, with the publication of his well-known *Apocalypse* series, surrounding the actual apocalyptic fears of 1500, that his reputation as the most important artist in Nuremberg was solidified. Snyder writes, "It is at this time that he executed an astonishing self-portrait that blatantly reveals his self-esteem as one especially gifted, the artist as Christ...the hieratic composition with the austere head posed frontally and the right hand held in a position approximating a gesture of benediction is undoubtedly original."<sup>134</sup>

One can see in Albrecht Durer's work what is more certainly known of his life and passionately held reformist beliefs clearly laid out in his journal in his tribute to Martin Luther. A rumor had been spread that Luther was dead and in an entry dated May 17, 1521, Durer wrote:

May every man who reads Martin Luther's books see how clear and transparent is his doctrine, when he sets forth the Holy gospel. Wherefore his books are to be held in great honor and not to be burned; Unless indeed his adversaries, whoever strive against the truth were cast also

---

<sup>132</sup> Snyder, 316. Images of Durer's works addressed in this section can be found in the chapter "Albrecht Durer and the Renaissance in Germany," 316-347.

<sup>133</sup> Snyder, 316.

<sup>134</sup> Snyder, 325.

into the fire, together with all their Opinions which would make gods out of men, provided, however, books of Luther's were printed anew again. Oh God, if Luther be dead, who will henceforth expound to us the Holy Gospel with such clearness? What, Oh God, might he not still have written for us in ten or twenty years? Oh all ye pious Christian men, help me deeply bewail this man, inspired of God, and pray Him yet again to send us an enlightened man.<sup>135</sup>

Durer's admiration for Luther is also evidenced in a letter to his friend Georg Spalatin (1484-1545) who was a private secretary and chaplain to the Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, early in 1520:

So I pray your worthiness to convey most emphatically my humble thanks to his Electoral Grace, and in all humility to beseech his Electoral Grace to take the praiseworthy Dr. Martin Luther under his protection for the sake of Christian truth. For that is of more importance to us than all the riches and power of this world, because all things pass away with time. Truth alone endures forever. God helping me if ever I meet Dr. Martin Luther, I intend to draw a careful portrait of him from the life and engrave it on copper, for a lasting remembrance of a Christian man who helped me out of great distress. And I beg your worthiness to send me for my money anything new that Dr. Martin may write in German.<sup>136</sup>

Durer's well-known painting of *The Four Evangelists* of 1526, given to the city fathers of Nuremberg, is in some ways a visual statement of these sympathies because he places Saint Paul in a place of honor over Saint Peter who was seen as the founder of the Catholic Church.<sup>137</sup> It also serves as the clearest evidence of his own personal religious vision. In a work containing Northern Renaissance sources and translations of original documents, Wolfgang Stechow said of this work:

Durer sent his Four Holy Men as a present to the Council of Nuremberg who accepted it gratefully on October 6, 1526. Whatever its genesis, this work had by now developed into Durer's religious and political testament.

---

<sup>135</sup> Stechow, 104-105.

<sup>136</sup> Stechow, 103-105. Stechow has translated and included extensive excerpts from Durer's personal writings. He includes the tribute to Martin Luther in its entirety.

<sup>137</sup> Jane Campbell Hutchison. *Albrecht Durer: A Biography* (New Jersey, 1990): 183.

Faith in the basic truth of the Reformation is here combined with a warning against political exploitation- a warning made crystal clear by the selection from biblical texts attached to the panels in Luther's translation.<sup>138</sup>

Calling on the authority of Peter, John, Paul and Mark, Durer included text actually printed on the painting that said:

All worldly rulers in these dangerous times should give good heed that they receive not human misguidance from the Word of God, for God will have nothing added to his Word nor taken away from it. Hear therefore these four excellent men, Peter, John, Paul, and Mark, their warning.

Peter says in his second epistle in the second chapter: There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise out of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

John in his first epistle in the fourth chapter writes thus: Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God; Every spirit that confesses that Jesus is come in the flesh, is of God: and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard it should come; and even now is already in the world.

In the second epistle to Timothy in the third chapter S. Paul writes: This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with diverse lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

---

<sup>138</sup> Stechow, 107. Stechow's source for the information concerning these biblical texts is: Sir William Martin Conway, *The Literary Remains of Albrecht Durer* (Cambridge, 1889). The new edition of this text is entitled *The Writings of Albrecht Durer*, with an introduction by Alfred Werner (New York, 1958).



Saint Mark writes in his Gospel in the twelfth chapter: He said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplace, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts; which devour widow's houses, and for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.<sup>139</sup>

It is telling that it is much easier to equate personal convictions and religious fervor with a work by Durer a mere 50 years later than the works by Van Der Weyden. This is because we have written documentation with which to support these assumptions. Art historians have confidently made these assumptions concerning *The Four Evangelists* and its reflection of Durer's religious beliefs partly because it was given as a gift to the city of Nuremberg and Durer had total control over its message.<sup>140</sup> Like Durer, Rogier's *Scheut Crucifixion* was known to have been a gift to the monastery and a creation totally the invention of Rogier. Because it was a gift it illustrates more clearly his personal preferences as to what he wanted to paint and how he wanted to depict the principal figures in this biblical story. In this same line of thought it is interesting to note that *The Four Evangelists* was Durer's last work before he died strengthening the claim that this image reflects his personal beliefs and preserves these beliefs in the form of a legacy. Some scholars believe that *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* was Van Der Weyden's last work prior to his death.<sup>141</sup> Dirk de Vos calls *The Philadelphia Diptych* "one of Van Der Weyden's final achievements." Davies makes a similar assumption concerning *The Scheut Crucifixion*, although he is speaking in terms of legacy more than a final work: "One may believe that the picture was painted for

---

<sup>139</sup> See Stechow, "Albrecht Durer," 107-108.

<sup>140</sup> David Price, *Albrecht Durer's Renaissance: Humanism, Reformation and the Art of Faith* (Ann Arbor, 2003), 258-275.

<sup>141</sup> De Vos, 335.

Scheut, which was founded in 1454. Rogier's known connections with that house might suggest it is his legacy, in the form of a picture expressing his matured feeling for last things, just as Titian's moving *Pieta* at Venice would appear to be for Titian."<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup> Davies, 23.

## PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

Previous scholars such as Lorne Campbell, Anne Hedeman, Penny Howell Jolly, Otto von Simson and Dirk de Vos have suggested a connection between Rogier Van Der Weyden and the Carthusians.<sup>143</sup> Recognizing the contributions these scholars have made to the development of my argument it must also be acknowledged that their conclusions have fallen short of stating my thesis that Rogier was not only familiar with fundamental Carthusian writings, but emphatically shared the belief of the vital importance of the imitation of Christ.

Preeminent Van Der Weyden scholar Dirk de Vos has suggested that all of Rogier's works, which are "doctrinally sound and at the same time filled with empathy with Christ's sufferings," were informed by Rogier's connections to the Carthusians.<sup>144</sup> In his very thorough monograph on Van Der Weyden's complete works De Vos writes:

The individual character of his symbolic program and affect-laden iconography, and the consistency with which they are retained throughout his oeuvre are compelling evidence of a profound and personal assimilation of this biblical and theological content, suggesting that Rogier himself was responsible for their crystallization in these ingenious and symbolic constructions.<sup>145</sup>

Dirk de Vos is alluding to what I believe is the reason for the marked difference in the two late *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* crucifixion scenes, which is his very personal connection to the subject matter. Other than his portrait work, all of Van der Weyden's paintings exhibit the same austere devotion to the story--the story of Christ and his redemptive suffering for mankind.

---

<sup>143</sup> See notes 4, 52, 15, 146, 3 for full citations.

<sup>144</sup> De Vos, 140.

<sup>145</sup> De Vos, 139.

Along this same line, in his article “Compassio and Co-redemptio in Rogier Van Der Weyden’s *Descent from the Cross*,” Otto van Simson proposes a tie between Van Der Weyden and Denis the Carthusian and his writing concerning Mary’s role as co-redemptrix. He focuses on the unique invention in Rogier’s *Deposition* of Mary as the swooning Virgin.<sup>146</sup> Depicted this way for the first time, Mary’s pose echoes that of Christ. The theory of Mary’s total empathy with and compassion for Christ’s suffering had become a dominant idea in late Gothic devotional writings. Writers throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries who were addressing the Crucifixion said that Mary felt Christ’s identical wounds in her heart.<sup>147</sup> Denis the Carthusian, in his work entitled the “Dignity of Mary,” emphasized the important role Mary played in the salvation of mankind.<sup>148</sup> This work provides another possible literary tie between Rogier and the Carthusians. For my purposes Ludolph also addresses the co-compassio of Mary during the hour of Sext saying:

Thy Cross, O Lord Jesus, tortures Thee, but Thy Mother does so no less, Thine own suffering rends Thee, but not less hers. It is not wonderful that Thou, O good Son, shouldst grieve for and condole with, suffer and compassionate the desolation of Thy Mother, the separation from Thy Mother, the commendation of Thy Mother. For never did she forsake Thee, not in Thine Infancy, nor Boyhood, nor Youth, nor Passion. Never did her consolation, never did her service, fail Thee. She suckles Thee as a Babe, she listens to Thee and follows Thee when preaching, she beholds Thee and accompanies Thee suffering; she contemplates Thy ignominy, she gazes on Thy Wounds, she hears Thy words, and Thou, O good Jesus, although Thy pain was unendurable, and Thy wounds were incurable, when in Thy agony and on the point of drawing Thy last breath, didst not forget Thy Mother... Let me, I pray thee, O good Mother, and Nurse, and desolate Daughter, consider what are thy grief and anguish.

---

<sup>146</sup> Otto Von Simson, “Compassio and Co-redemption in Rogier Van Der Weyden’s *Descent From the Cross*,” *Art Bulletin*, XXXV (1953): 9.

<sup>147</sup> De Vos, 40, as seen in footnote 19.

<sup>148</sup> For Mary’s role at the Crucifixion, see Dionysii Cartusiani, “De Passione Domini Salvatoris,” and “De Praeconio et Dignitate Mariae, Liber III, art. xxiv,” in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 35, 303 and 563, as cited by Hedeman, 202.

For thou seest crucified thy only Child, thou exchangest thy Son, the Master, for His disciple, the King for His soldier, the Lord for His servant, the Almighty for a weak man. Truly the sword penetrates thy inmost being, the lance and nails pierce thy soul, the points of the thorns tear thy mind, the bitter sight of thy Son rends thy heart; tears fail thee for grief, words are lacking, thy strength gives way, thy beauty withers. The Wounds of thy Son are thy wounds, the Cross of thy Son is also thy cross, His death, thy death.<sup>149</sup>

The idea can be seen best in Rogier's *Philadelphia Diptych*. Separated into two parts, the painting succinctly tells the salvation story that occurred on Calvary. The left side of the Diptych addresses Mary's sacrifice and role as co-redeemer and the right side addresses the sacrifice of Christ. In this way it is an excellent visual representation of idea of Mary as co-redeemer.<sup>150</sup>

Penny Howell Jolly was one of the first to explore a Carthusian tie to Rogier Van Der Weyden.<sup>151</sup> She believes that *The Philadelphia Crucifixion* was intended for an unnamed monastery. She came to this conclusion based on comparisons with works by Fra Angelico for the Dominican monk's cells in San Marco, in Florence, which share striking similarities with the *Philadelphia* work. Rogier is assumed to have seen Fra Angelico's painting on a trip he took to Italy in the Jubilee year of 1450. Jolly's thesis is sound, but she is primarily interested in tying Rogier to Fra Angelico, rather than the Carthusians. Her assertion is that Rogier was inspired by the frescoes he saw in the cells of San Marco, which had been painted by Fra Angelico, and that it was through

---

<sup>149</sup> Ludolph, *Hours*, 315-316. The amount of text given to Mary is understandable considering the fact that all Carthusian Charterhouses were devoted to the Virgin Mary, and her role as co-redeemer was a widely accepted one.

<sup>150</sup> De Vos, 335; and Von Simson, 9, discuss these ideas concerning Mary as co-redeemer.

<sup>151</sup> Jolly, 113-26.

Fra Angelico that Rogier came to the idea of the more monastic look of the works.<sup>152</sup>

Although it is never mentioned in Jolly's article, I would suggest that Van Der Weyden's trip to Italy during the Jubilee Year of 1450 was more than just a pleasure trip. It is in line with what we know of the man that this trip was in fact a personal religious pilgrimage, which was not uncommon during his day.<sup>153</sup> Pope Nicholas V declared the year 1450 a Holy Year, and it was not unusual for the faithful from the Low Countries to make journeys of pilgrimage to the holy city- particularly in a Jubilee year. According to De Vos, the devotional significance of making the trip during a year of celebration, with the availability of indulgences for sale, made it an ideal time for pilgrimage.<sup>154</sup> Although Rogier's son Cornelis had just entered the monastery at Herinnes in 1449, which was a happy occasion, Rogier's daughter Margareta actually died in 1450, just prior to his trip to Italy.<sup>155</sup> It is possible that Van Der Weyden went to offer prayers for the soul and eternal rest of his daughter. After such a tragic event, a religious pilgrimage would have been a more probable reason for the pilgrimage south than the pleasure trip suggested by Jolly.

---

<sup>152</sup> Similar ideas have been proposed by Snyder, 131, concerning the Italian influence that the 1450 trip had on such works as Rogier's *Virgin and Child with Four Saints* and *Farewell at the Tomb* both dated 1450.

<sup>153</sup> Harbison, 98-100, discusses the history of the pilgrimage in the fifteenth century.

<sup>154</sup> De Vos, 60, adds, "The journey was customarily undertaken in a group, and it could easily take the travelers two months to reach their destination. The first stage was overland to Cologne, followed by a river journey down the Rhine to Basil and the crossing of the Alps – just the kind of pilgrimage that Hans Memling presented in his *St Ursula Shrine*. It was also possible to make the journey by ship from Bruges to Pisa, but then it could hardly be considered a pilgrimage. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Fazio's report written shortly afterwards (c.1456) that Van Der Weyden visited San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome. According to this account, when Van Der Weyden saw the frescos of Gentile de Fabriano – which have since disappeared – he inquired admiringly after the author, whom he praised as the best painter in Italy. The recording of the incident suggests that Van der Weyden's visit was an important event within Italian humanist and artistic circles. He appears to have been received as an honoured guest and to have been shown around by knowledgeable guides, just as Albrecht Durer was during his visit to the Low Countries."

<sup>155</sup> De Vos, 60.

Anne Hedeman responded to Jolly in the article “Rogier Van Der Weyden’s *Escorial Crucifixion* and Carthusian Devotional Practices.”<sup>156</sup> She proposed that the *Escorial Crucifixion* has not been sufficiently studied in light of its meaning and function within the Carthusian monastery at Scheut. She discusses the devotional practices of the Carthusian order, but the work of Ludolph was not thoroughly mined. She qualifies her speculations by saying that the *Escorial Crucifixion* may have “acquired meaning from the monastic liturgy and ritual...meaning that may have transcended the artist’s intent.”<sup>157</sup> In other words, she sees the devotional reading as having grown out of the monastic context. I would assert, however, that it is actually Rogier’s intent that we should see in the paintings. The most significant difference between what Hedeman is saying and what I am proposing is this idea of intent- intent on the part of the artist. Hedeman makes no attempt to discern Van Der Weyden’s intent or personal worldview.<sup>158</sup>

It is important to distinguish Jolly’s proposed connection between Rogier and the Carthusians that paralleled Fra Angelico’s connection to the Dominicans through their works, and Hedeman’s proposed link between Rogier and the Carthusians which is based largely on the more generalized reception theory proposed by James Marrow, from my thesis. A key point of differentiation is that neither of these scholars go so far as to speculate on Rogier Van Der Weyden’s intentions or how his personal religious worldview informed his work.

---

<sup>156</sup> Hedeman, 191-203.

<sup>157</sup> Hedeman, 195.

<sup>158</sup> Hedeman, 195.

## CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, the primary emphasis of my thesis is one of personal belief. It is impossible to separate the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* Crucifixions by Rogier van der Weyden from the Carthusians and their distinct worldview. As I have discussed in preceding pages, this worldview was shared by Rogier and finds visual form in not only these two unique works, but several other of his paintings. Key aspects of Rogier's life, which are supported by original documentation— his familial ties, associates, patrons, use of finances, and his close involvement with the Carthusians, support this assertion.<sup>159</sup> When Rogier's images are studied alongside the writings of the Carthusian Ludolph of Saxony, the parallels are striking. Moreover, there is certainly something to be learned about Rogier Van Der Weyden as a man by looking at the *Philadelphia* and *Scheut* compositions. Other models of connections of belief evidenced through artist's works are corroborated in Grunewald, Memling, Sluter and Durer. Their works tell us something about their patrons and the artistic, religious and political climate of their cultural context. Importantly, they also tell us something about the deeply held convictions of these men. In essence, the *Scheut* and *Philadelphia* Crucifixion images created by Rogier Van Der Weyden were born of personal belief that was nurtured by a particular connection to the Carthusian order. In turn, these paintings fed the belief of others.

---

<sup>159</sup> De Vos, 416-420, includes an appendix which contains all known original documentation referencing Rogier Van Der Weyden.



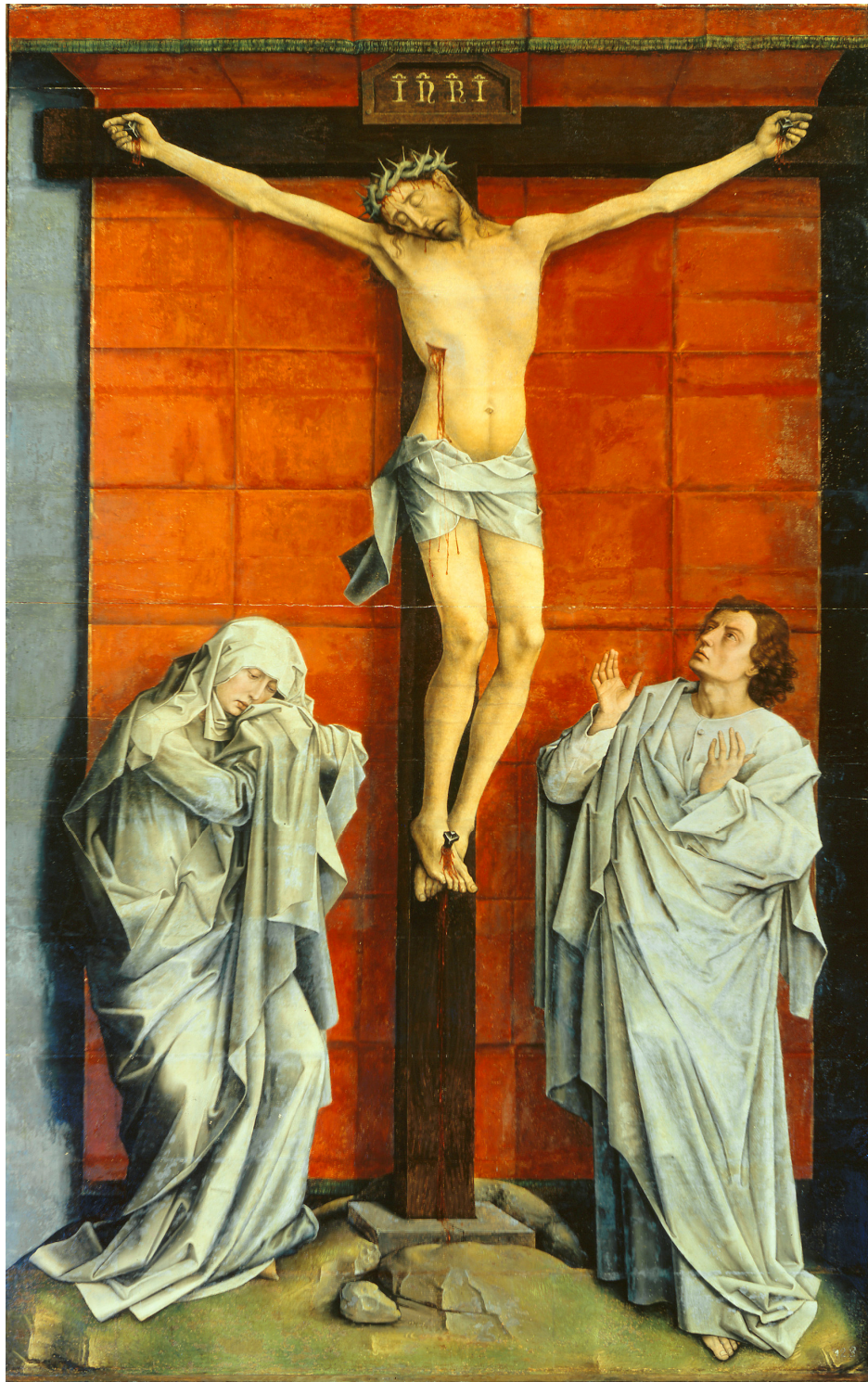


Figure 1

*The Crucified Christ between the Virgin and Saint John or Scheut Crucifixion. c.1460.*  
Oil on oak panel, 326x192 cm, Nuevos Museos, El Escorial. Used with permission from  
Scala / Art Resource, NY.

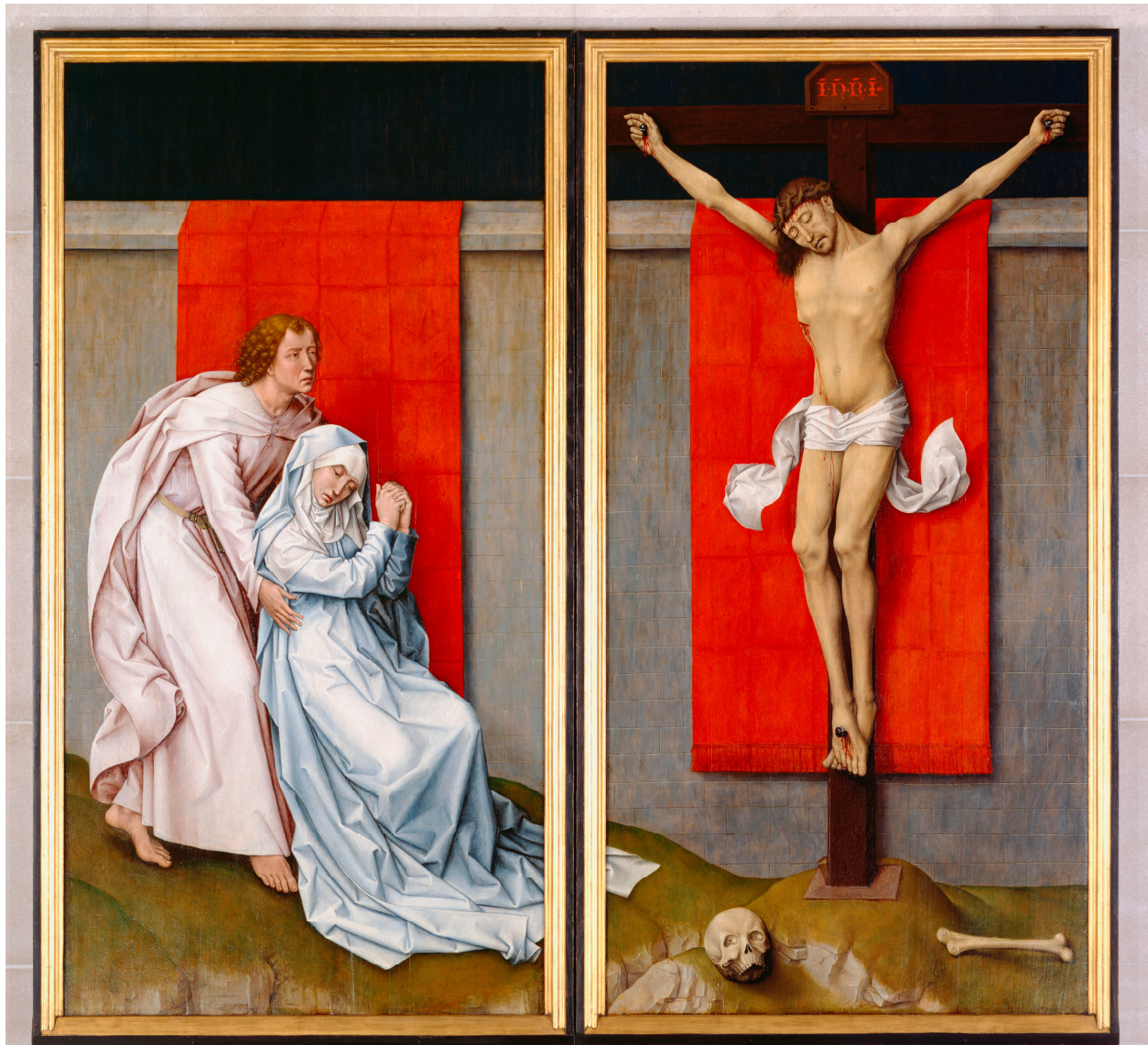


Fig. 2

*The Crucifixion Diptych or Philadelphia Crucifixion.* c.1460. Oil on oak panel, 180, 3x92, 3 cm. Used with permission from the Philadelphia Museum / Art Resource, NY.

APPENDIX

DOUAY-RHEIMS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLICAL PASSAGES CONCERNING THE  
CRUCIFIXION

Douay-Rheims Translation of the Biblical Passages Describing the Passion from  
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John<sup>160</sup>

The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Saint Matthew  
CHAPTER 27.

*The continuation of the history of the passion of Christ. His death and burial.*

AND when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put him to death.

2 And they brought him bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients,

4 Saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it.

5 And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed: and went and hanged himself with an halter.

6 But the chief priests having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood.

7 And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying place for strangers.

8 For this cause the field was called Haceldama, that is, The field of blood, even to this day.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: *And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was prized, whom they prized of the children of Israel.*

10 *And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me.*

11 And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus saith to him: Thou sayest *it*.

12 And when he was accused by the chief priests and ancients, he answered nothing.

---

<sup>160</sup> I have chosen to use the Douay Rheims translation because it is one of the closest English translations to Rogier Van Der Weyden that was translated from the Latin Vulgate (80 books). It was compiled in 1609 when the Douay Old Testament was added to the Rheims New Testament (of 1582), making the first complete English Catholic Bible. See <http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/>

13 Then Pilate saith to him: Dost not thou hear how great testimonies they allege against thee?

14 And he answered him to never a word; so that the governor wondered exceedingly.

15 Now upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would.

16 And he had then a notorious prisoner, that was called Barabbas.

17 They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ?

18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

19 And as he was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

20 But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away.

21 And the governor answering, said to them: Whether will you of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas.

22 Pilate saith to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They say all: Let him be crucified.

23 The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified.

24 And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made; taking water washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it.

25 And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and our children.

26 Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him unto them to be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band;

28 And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him.

29 And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews.

30 And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head.

31 And after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him.

32 And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced to take up his cross.

33 And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary.

34 And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when he had tasted, he would not drink.

35 And after they had crucified him, they divided his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: *They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots.*

36 And they sat and watched him.

37 And they put over his head his cause written: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then were crucified with him two thieves: one on the right hand, and one on the left.

39 And they that passed by, blasphemed him, wagging their heads,

40 And saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it: save thy own self: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 In like manner also the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said:

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 He trusted in God; let him now deliver *him* if he will have him; for he said: I am the Son of God.

44 And the selfsame thing the thieves also, that were crucified with him, reproached him with.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth, until the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 And some that stood there and heard, said: This man calleth Elias.

48 And immediately one of them running took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar; and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 And the others said: Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver him.

50 And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent.

52 And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose,

53 And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many.

54 Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God.

55 And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

56 Among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

57 And when it was evening, there came a certain rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was a disciple of Jesus.

58 He went to Pilate, and asked the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded that the body should be delivered.

59 And Joseph taking the body, wrapped it up in a clean linen cloth.

60 And laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way.

61 And there was there Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre.

62 And the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate,

63 Saying: Sir, we have remembered, that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day: lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate saith to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know.

66 And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards.



The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Saint Mark  
CHAPTER 15.

*The continuation of the history of the passion.*

AND straightway in the morning, the chief priests holding a consultation with the ancients and the scribes and the whole council, binding Jesus, led him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

2 And Pilate asked him: Art thou the king of the Jews? But he answering, saith to him: Thou sayest *it*.

3 And the chief priests accused him in many things.

4 And Pilate again asked him, saying: Answerest thou nothing? behold in how many things they accuse thee.

5 But Jesus still answered nothing; so that Pilate wondered.

6 Now on the festival day he was wont to release unto them one of the prisoners, whomsoever they demanded.

7 And there was one called Barabbas, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder.

8 And when the multitude was come up, they began to desire *that he would do*, as he had ever done unto them.

9 And Pilate answered them, and said: Will you that I release to you the king of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him up out of envy.

11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

12 And Pilate again answering, saith to them: What will you then that I do to the king of the Jews?

13 But they again cried out: Crucify him.

14 And Pilate saith to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more: Crucify him.

15 And so Pilate being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

16 And the soldiers led him away into the court of the palace, and they called together the whole band:

17 And they clothe him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon him.

18 And they began to salute him: Hail, king of the Jews.

19 And they struck his head with a reed: and they did spit on him. And bowing their knees, they adored him.

20 And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him, and they led him out to crucify him.

21 And they forced one Simon a Cyrenian who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and of Rufus, to take up his cross.

22 And they bring him into the place *called* Golgotha, which being interpreted is, The place of Calvary.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but he took it not.

24 And crucifying him, they divided his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

26 And the inscription of his cause was written over: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith: *And with the wicked he was reputed.*

29 And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again;

30 Save thyself, coming down from the cross.

31 In like manner also the chief priests mocking, said with the scribes one to another: He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let Christ the king of Israel come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of the standers by hearing, said: Behold he calleth Elias.

36 And one running and filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it upon a reed, gave him to drink, saying: Stay, let us see if Elias come to take him down.

37 And Jesus having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost.

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top to the bottom.

39 And the centurion who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this man was the son of God.

40 And there were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph, and Salome:

41 Who also when he was in Galilee followed him, and ministered to him, and many other women that came up with him to Jerusalem.

42 And when evening was now come, (because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the sabbath,)

43 Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

44 But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead. And sending for the centurion, he asked him if he were already dead.

45 And when he had understood it by the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking him down, wrapped him up in the fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewed out of a rock. And he rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre.

47 And Mary Magdalen, and Mary *the mother* of Joseph, beheld where he was laid.

The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Saint Luke  
CHAPTER 23.

*The continuation of the history of the passion.*

AND the whole multitude of them rising up, led him to Pilate.

2 And they began to accuse him, saying: We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he is Christ the king.

3 And Pilate asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? But he answering, said: Thou sayest it.

4 And Pilate said to the chief priests and to the multitudes: I find no cause in this man.

5 But they were more earnest, saying: He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.

6 But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if the man were of Galilee?

7 And when he understood that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem, in those days.

8 And Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad; for he was desirous of a long time to see him, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to see some sign wrought by him.

9 And he questioned him in many words. But he answered him nothing.

10 And the chief priests and the scribes stood by, earnestly accusing him.

11 And Herod with his army set him at nought, and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate.

12 And Herod and Pilate were made friends, that same day; for before they were enemies one to another.

13 And Pilate, calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people,

14 Said to them: You have presented unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people; and behold I, having examined him before you, find no cause in this man, in those things wherein you accuse him.

15 No, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death is done to him.

16 I will chastise him therefore, and release him.

17 Now of necessity he was to release unto them one upon the feast day.

18 But the whole multitude together cried out, saying: Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

19 Who, for a certain sedition made in the city, and for a murder, was cast into prison.

20 And Pilate again spoke to them, desiring to release Jesus.

21 But they cried again, saying: Crucify him, crucify him.

22 And he said to them the third time: Why, what evil hath this man done? I find no cause of death in him. I will chastise him therefore, and let him go.

23 But they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified; and their voices prevailed.

24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him who for murder and sedition, had been cast into prison, whom they had desired; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country; and they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus.

27 And there followed him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 For behold, the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us.

31 For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?

32 And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified him there; and the robbers, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. But they, dividing his garments, cast lots.

35 And the people stood beholding, and the rulers with them derided him, saying: He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the elect of God.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37 And saying: If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

38 And there was also a superscription written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And one of those robbers who were hanged, blasphemed him, saying: If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art condemned under the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil.

42 And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise.

44 And it was almost the sixth hour; and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 And Jesus crying out with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And saying this, he gave up the ghost.

47 Now the centurion, seeing what was done, glorified God, saying: Indeed this was a just man.

48 And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts.

49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that had followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

50 And behold there was a man named Joseph, who was a counsellor, a good and just man,

51 (The same had not consented to their counsel and doings;) of Arimathea, a city of Judea; who also himself looked for the kingdom of God.

52 This man went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

53 And taking him down, he wrapped him in fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre that was hewed in stone, wherein never yet any man had been laid.

54 And it was the day of the Parasceve, and the sabbath drew on.

55 And the women that were come with him from Galilee, following after, saw the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

56 And returning, they prepared spices and ointments; and on the sabbath day they rested, according to the commandment.

The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Saint John

CHAPTER 19.

*The continuation of the history of the passion of Christ.*

THEN therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him.

2 And the soldiers plating a crown of thorns, put it upon his head; and they put on him a purple garment.

3 And they came to him, and said: Hail, king of the Jews; and they gave him blows.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith to them: Behold, I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him.

5 (Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment.) And he saith to them: Behold the Man.

6 When the chief priests, therefore, and the servants, had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Take him you, and crucify him: for I find no cause in him.

7 The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more.

9 And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus: Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Pilate therefore saith to him: Speakest thou not to me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above. Therefore, he that hath delivered me to thee, hath the greater sin.

12 And from henceforth Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Caesar.

13 Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha.



14 And it was the parasceve of the pasch, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews: Behold your king.

15 But they cried out: Away with him; away with him; crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Caesar.

16 Then therefore he delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him forth.

17 And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha.

18 Where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst.

19 And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title therefore many of the Jews did read: because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin.

21 Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am the King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written.

23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified him, took his garments, (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part,) and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said then one to another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the scripture might be fulfilled, saying: *They have parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they have cast lot.* And the soldiers indeed did these things.

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen.

26 When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son.

27 After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own.

28 Afterwards, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst.

29 Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar and hyssop, put it to his mouth.

30 Jesus therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated. And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost.

31 Then the Jews, (because it was the parasceve,) that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath day, (for that was a great sabbath day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 The soldiers therefore came; and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him.

33 But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water.

35 And he that saw it, hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true; that you also may believe.

36 For these things were done, that the scripture might be fulfilled: *You shall not break a bone of him.*

37 And again another scripture saith: *They shall look on him whom they pierced.*

38 And after these things, Joseph of Arimathea (because he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

39 And Nicodemus also came, (he who at the first came to Jesus by night,) bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.

40 They took therefore the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now there was in the place where he was crucified, a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man yet had been laid. 42 There, therefore,

because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand. <sup>161</sup>

---

<sup>161</sup> The above passages were taken from the online Douay-Rheims translation of the Bible. [cited 31 March 2006] Available from <http://www.ourladywarriors.org/bible/> or <http://www.drbo.org/>; INTERNET.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baxandall, Michael. *The Limewood Sculptures of Renaissance Germany*. New Haven, 1980.

Baxandall, Michael. *Patterns of Intention, On the Historical Explanation of Pictures*. New Haven, 1985.

Benesch, Otto. *The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe, Its Relation to the Contemporary Spiritual and Intellectual Movements*. London, 1965.

Bodenstedt, Sister Mary Immaculate, S.N.D., *Praying the Life of Christ. First English Translation of the Prayers Concluding the 181 Chapters of the Vita Christi of Ludolph the Carthusian: The Quintessence of His Devout Meditations on the Life of Christ, Analecta Cartusiana*, vol.15, James Hogg, ed., Salzburg: Analecta Cartusiana, 1973.

Brooke, Christopher Nugent Lawrence. *Monasteries of the World: The Rise and Development of the Monastic Tradition*. New York, 1974.

Brooke, Christopher Nugent Lawrence. *The Monastic World, 1000-1300*. New York, 1974.

Campbell, Lorne. "The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century." *Burlington Magazine* 98 (1976), 188-198.

Campbell, Lorne. *The Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings*. London, 1998.

Campbell, Lorne. *Van Der Weyden*. New York, 1980.

Clifton, James. *The Body of Christ: in the Art of Europe and New Spain, 1150-1800*. Houston, 1998.

Coleridge, Henry James, S.J. *Hours of the Passion Taken from the Life of Christ by Ludolph the Saxon. Quarterly Series 59*. London, 1887.

Conway, Charles Abbott. *The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony and Late Medieval Devotion Centered on the Incarnation: A Descriptive Analysis*. Salzburg, 1976.

*Crucifixion*. London, 2000.

David, Henri. *Claus Sluter*, Paris, 1951.

David, Henri and Liebreich, A. "Le Calvaire de Champmol et l'Art de Sluter," *Bull. Mon.*, (1933), 419-467.

Davies, Martin. *Rogier Van Der Weyden*. London, 1972.

De Vos, Dirk. *Rogier Van Der Weyden: The Complete Works*. Ted Atkins, trans., New York, 1999.

Dixon, Laurinda S. "Portraits and Politics in Two Triptychs by Rogier Van Der Weyden." *Gazette Des Beaux Arts*, Ser 6, v 109, (1987), 181-90.

*Douay-Rheims Version of the Bible*. Latin Vulgate. 1578.

Eichburger, Dagmar and Zika, Charles. Eds. *Durer and His Culture*. Cambridge, 1998.

Finaldi, Gabriele. *The Image of Christ*. National Gallery, London, 2000.

Friedlander, Max J. *Early Netherlandish Painting, Volume II*. New York and Washington, 1967.

Hall, Edwin. *The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Jan Van Eyck's Double Portrait*. California, 1994.

Harbison, Craig. "Realism and Symbolism in Early Flemish Painting." *The Art Bulletin*, v66, (1984), 588-602.

Harbison, Craig. *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in Its Historical Context*. New Jersey, 1995.

Harbison, Craig. *The Play of Realism*. Seattle, 1991.

Harbison, Craig. "Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting." *Simiolus*, 15, (1985), 87-118.

Hedeman, Anne D. "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial Crucifixion and Carthusian Devotional Practices." (191-203). (Brubaker, Leslie and Ousterhouse, Robert, Eds.,) *The Sacred Image East and West*. Champagne-Urbana, 1995.

Huizinga, Johan. *The Waning of the Middle Ages, A Study of Life, Thought and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. F. Hopman, trans., London, 1954.

Hutchison, Jane Campbell. *Albrecht Durer: A Biography*. New Jersey, 1990.

- Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*. New York, 1896.
- Jolly, P.H. "Rogier Van Der Weyden's Escorial and Philadelphia Crucifixions and their Relation to Fra Angelico at San Marco." *Oud Holland*, 95 (1981), 113-26.
- Jordon, Mark D., and Emory, Kent. *Ad Litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers*. Notre Dame, 1992.
- Kemperdick, Stephan. *Rogier van der Weyden*. Cologne, 1999.
- Kempis, Thomas a'. *The Imitation of Christ*. (Originally written between 1420-27) Joseph N. Tylenda, trans. and ed. New York, 1998.
- King, Archdale A. *Liturgies of the Religious Orders*. Milwaukee, 1955.
- Lane, Barbara G. *Flemish Painting Outside Bruges, 1400-1500, An Annotated Bibliography*. Boston, 1986.
- Lane, Barbara G. "Sacred versus Profane in Early Netherlandish Painting." *Simiolus*, 18, (1988), 107-115.
- Lane, Barbara G. *The Altar and the Altarpiece: Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting*. New York, 1984.
- Lawrence, C.H. *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*. New York and London, 1989.
- Liebreich, Aenne. *Claus Sluter*, Brussels, 1936.
- Mander, Carel van. *Dutch and Flemish Painters*. Constant Van De Wall, trans. New York, 1936.
- Marrow, James. *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative*. Kortrijk, 1979.
- Marrow, James H. "Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance." *Simiolus*, v 16/213, (1986), 150-69.
- Morand, Kathleen. *Claus Sluter. Artist at the Court of Burgundy*. Austin, 1991.
- Mund Helen and Stroo, Cyriel. *Early Netherlandish Painting (1400-1500) a Bibliography (1984-1998)*. Brussels, 1998.
- Neff, Amy. "The Pain of Compassio: Mary's Labor at the Foot of the Cross." *Art Bulletin*, (vol. 80/2), (1998), 254-74.

Nigg, Walter. *Warriors of God; The Great Religious Orders and their Founders*. New York, 1959.

Os, H.W. van. *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500*. Princeton, 1994.

Pacht, Otto. *Early Netherlandish Painting: from Rogier Van Der Weyden to Gerard David*. David Britt, trans. London, 1994.

Price, David. *Albrecht Durer's Renaissance: Humanism, Reformation and the Art of Faith*. Anne Arbor, 2003.

Prochno, Renate. "The Well of Moses." *Art from the Court of Burgundy: 1364-1419. The Patronage of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless*. Musee des Beaux-Arts of Dijon May 28-September 15, 2004. (The Cleveland Museum of Art, October 24, 2004-January 9, 2005).

Panofsky, Erwin. *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*. Cambridge, 1953.

Ringbom, Sixten. "Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions: Notes on the Place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety," *Gazette Des Beaux Arts* ser. 6/73 (1969), 159-70.

Rowlands, John. *The Age of Durer and Holbein: German Drawings 1400-1550*. Cambridge, 1988.

Ryrie, Charles Caldwell, Th.D., Ph.D. *The Ryrie Study Bible*. New American Standard Version. Chicago, 1960.

Schleif, Corine. "Men on the Right- Women on the Left(A)symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Places." Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury, editors. *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church*. Albany, 2005.

Snyder, James. *Northern Renaissance Art*. New York, 1968.

Smith, Jeffrey Chips. *The Northern Renaissance*. London, 2004.

Smith, Spencer Dale. *Union of the Soul, Union with God: The Use of Vernacular Theology by Jean Gerson, Nicholas of Cusa, and Denys the Carthusian*. Master's Thesis, Northwestern University, 1997.

Stechow, Wolfgang, ed. *Northern Renaissance Art 1400-1600: Sources and Documents*. Chicago, 1966.

Stroo, Cyriel and Syfer-d'Olne, Pascal, eds. *The Flemish Primitives; The Master of Flemalle, Rogier Van Der Weyden, Volume I*. Brussels, 1996.

Tucker, Mark. "Rogier Van Der Weyden's Philadelphia Crucifixion." *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 139, (1997), 676-83.

Verdon, Timothy and Dally, John. *Monasticism and the Arts*. Syracuse, 1984.

Von Simson, Otto. "Compassio and Co-redemption in Rogier Van Der Weyden's Descent From the Cross." *Art Bulletin*, XXXV, (1953), 9-16.

Walsh, S.J. *Spirituality Through the Centuries: Ascetics and Mystics of the Western Church*. New York, 1964.

Whinney, Margaret Dickens. *Early Flemish Painting*. New York, 1968.

Wilson, Jean C. *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages: Studies in Society and Visual Culture*. Philadelphia, 1998.

Zuffi, Stephano. *Gospel Figures in Art*. Thomas Michael Hartmann, trans. Los Angeles, 2000.

<http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/>; INTERNET. [cited 31 March 2006].

<http://www.ourladywarriors.org/bible/> or <http://www.drbo.org/>; INTERNET. [cited 31 March 2006].