

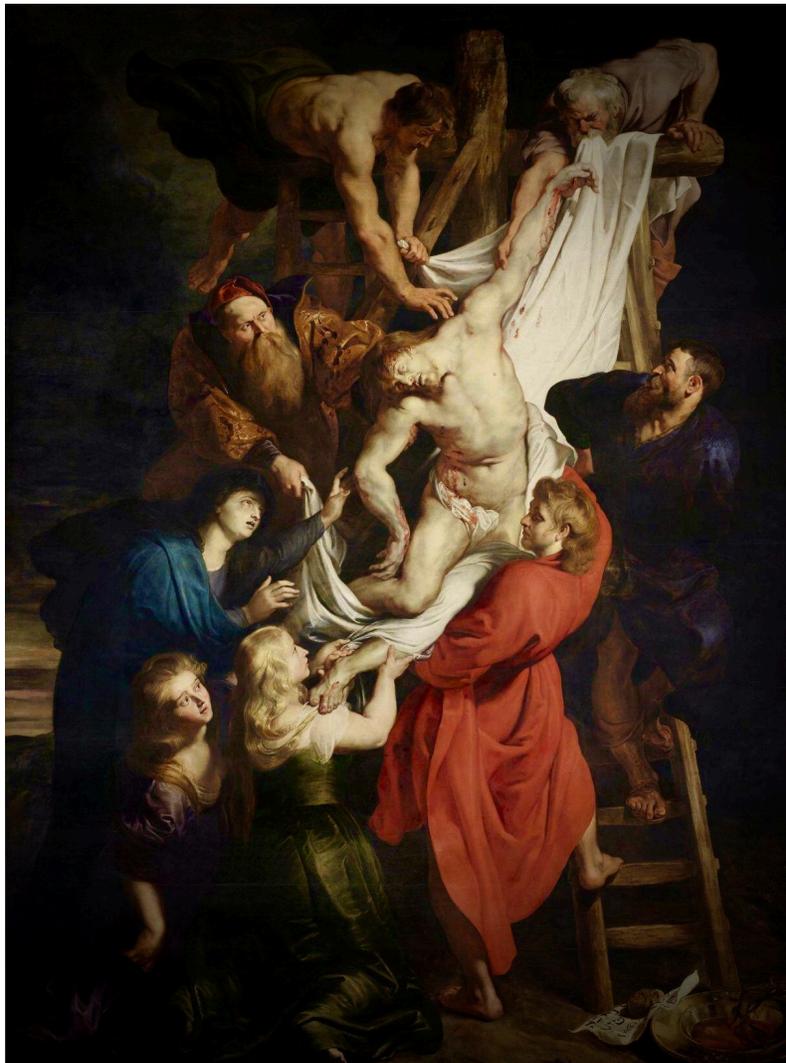


Christian Art

Daily Gospel Reading and Art Reflection

John 19: 38

The Stations of the Cross - Station 13: The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross



The Descent from the Cross,
Painting by **Pieter Paul Rubens (1577-1640),**
Painted between 1612-1614,
oil on panel
© Cathedral of our Lady, Antwerp

Daily Gospel Reading

John 19: 38

After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave.

So he came and took away his body.

Reflection on the painting

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

My Jesus, what a dramatic, sad scene. I see workers lowering your body with the aid of a shroud which one of them holds in his teeth. They are bracing themselves firmly against the arms of the cross. How strong that cross must be! I can see John, with one foot on the ladder and his back arched, supporting your lower back. One of your feet rests gently on the shoulder of Mary Magdalene. Your mother is standing at the foot of the sacrificial tree, extending her arms towards you. She can't wait to hold you again.

Today, I focus on your mother. Our mother. I cannot imagine what it must be like for her to see her son tortured, battered and then nailed to a cross in the public forum for everyone to see... Open my eyes, Lord Jesus, that I may be there for someone sorrowful, helpless or grief stricken too.

When someone dies, I suddenly become very kind about that person. But what about when they lived? My Jesus, help me to see the good things in everyone I meet, and make me love them.

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Hail Mary, full of grace...

Glory be to the Father and to the Son...