

# THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church  
Livingston, Alabama



Volume XXIV, Number 3

March 2017



March 2017

## *This Month's Cover*

In honor of the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, our cover this month is the center panel of Robert Campin's *Mérode Altarpiece*, completed sometime around 1428. The altarpiece is a hinged triptych (three-paneled work). It is oil on oak panels and is relatively small, indicating that it was probably privately commissioned. The center panel is only 25.6"x24.8", and the side panels 25.6"x10.7". It is on display in The Cloisters in New York City, which is an adjunct of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Met attributes it to "Robert Campin and Assistant," because it is not clear whether this is the original or a superb copy of the original Campin work (which may now be lost) by one of his students.

The center panel depicts not the actual Annunciation, but the moment before, when the Blessed Virgin is not yet aware



of the presence of the Angel Gabriel. The right panel depicts Saint Joseph working in his carpentry shop. He is making a mousetrap, symbolic of the trapping of Satan. The left depicts the donor who commissioned the triptych. The woman is by a different artist. The couple is not centered,



and the way she is crammed into the picture is an indication that she was a later addition. This is possibly because the donor married her after the triptych was originally completed.

Typical of Dutch painting of the time, there is an enormous amount of symbolism, the explanation of which is beyond the scope of this article. An important symbol that could be easily missed, however, is a tiny infant Christ with his cross descending just above the angel's wings. Another is the table, which at first appears round, but on closer look is actually sixteen-sided. This represents the sixteen Hebrew prophets.



Robert Campin (1375-1444), usually identified with the Master of Flémalle, is the first great master of Flemish and

early Dutch painting. He did not sign his paintings, but because of his unique style experts are confident that most of those attributed to him are authentic. While the Master of Flémalle is unidentified, most critics believe that he was Campin. He was married, but had no children. For many years it was believed that Jan van Eyck, a contemporary of Campin, introduced the Northern Renaissance, which brought the realism of the Italian Renaissance into northern Europe. Today, however, critics are convinced that it was Campin who introduced it, and that he was followed by van Eyck.

Campin died in Tournai in what is now Belgium in 1444.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***A Word From the Editor***

Lent begins on the first day of this month. This is a season in which we seek to improve our spiritual lives through self-denial and self-discipline. As we do so, it is easy to start focusing so much on ourselves that we tend to forget our obligation as Christians to take responsibility for the improvement of the spiritual lives of others as well. This does not give us the right to force our beliefs and practices on others, but it is our duty to be concerned for the spiritual welfare of others and to do what we can to help improve it. One of the most important ways we can do that, of course, is to pray for them. That should be a significant part not only of our Lenten discipline, but also of our regular prayer life.

A very divisive thing has injected itself deeply into our society today, and that is what is known as “identity politics.” We have paid so much attention to identifying ourselves by specific minority groups—race, gender, religion, sexual ori-

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entation, political affiliation, and so on and on—that we have become a fragmented, confused and often even hateful society. In his final prayer in Gethsemane Jesus prayed “that they may be one even as we are one.” I do not believe that he was asking that we all to agree on everything (what a boring world that would be), but that we learn to accept and love one another despite our differences. There is no need for the anger and sometimes visceral hatred that we see these days, and it is truly satanic in that it destroys the unity and love that we should be experiencing as Christians. We can work against what we believe is wrong and support what we believe is right without descending into hatred and intolerance. I recently posted on Facebook a couple of stick figures with the legend, “This is Bob. Bob voted for Trump. This is Bob’s friend Sally. Sally voted for Clinton. Bob and Sally are still friends, because Bob and Sally are adults. Be like Bob and Sally.”

As you develop your Lenten discipline, I strongly recommend that you include in it daily prayer not only for the reunification of our country, but for the abatement of the anger and intolerance that is tearing us apart. Never underestimate the power of prayer. Not only can it effect a rebuilding of the unity that is so important to our national success, but it will also strengthen it in you as well.

*Father Rick Losch*

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## ***Cookie Tins***

Over the years we have accumulated numerous cookie tins which are just too good to throw away. We will keep a few of them for our use. However, the time has come when we must dispose of most of them. On Sunday, March 5th, the tins will be stacked on a table in the parish house. Please take as many as you like. After that day the tins will be taken to be recycled.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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*Advice from an old farmer: “Forgive your enemies.  
It messes up their heads.”*

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## ***Special Services for Lent***

On March 1st, our observance of Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, will be held at 12:05 p.m. with a service of Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes. Please make your plans to begin your observance of the Lenten Season at this special service.

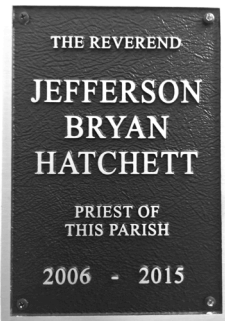
*Hiram Patrenos*

## ***Vestry Notes***

The Vestry met following the February 19th service with Fr. Losch, Rector Emeritus and acting Priest-in-Charge opening the meeting with prayer. Hiram Patrenos, Senior Warden and acting Treasurer/Bookkeeper, presented a year-to-date financial statement and the year-end financial statement for 2016. With the death of our longtime Treasurer, Raiford Noland, the Vestry elected Roy Underwood as Treasurer for 2017. Also, the Vestry voted that Mr. Patrenos continue acting as Bookkeeper for the church financial records, that two signatures be required on all checks, that in addition to Mr. Underwood and Mr. Patrenos that Mr. Joe Moore be added to the church accounts, and that upon request to Mr. Patrenos, financial statements be made available to any parishioner.

*Hiram Patrenos*

## ***Father Jefferson Bryan Hatchett***



A bronze plaque has been placed in the narthex of the church in memory of the Rev. Bryan Hatchett. Fr. Hatchett served Saint James' as a regular Supply Priest and then as Priest-in-Charge from 2006 until his death in 2015, which ranks him as the second longest serving priest in Saint James' history. He was well-loved, and is still missed.

*Richard R. Losch+*

## ***Be Wordly Wise***

### ***Effect and Affect***

We are dealing here with another of those wonderful Latin words that is just begging for prefixes, and that thus produces a huge number of English words. The word is *facere*, to put or to do. The Romans added most of the prefixes, and when they did the root usually changed to *-ficere* whose past participle is *-fectus*. If we add *in-* we get infect, put in; effect (*ex-*), put out; affect (*ad-*, to or toward), do to; refect, do again (to refect is to eat, a repeating process); defect, put away from; and prefect (a magistrate), one who puts authority before you.

A very common error is to confuse effect and affect. When used as a verb, to effect is to cause something (“His actions will effect a lot of hostility”). To affect something is to do something to it (“The humidity will affect my sinuses”). To add to the confusion, if you affect something you have an effect on it. An easy way to tell the difference is to remember the meaning of the prefix: *ex* means out of, and *ad* means to or toward. When you are not sure whether to use effect or affect, substitute “bring *out*” for effect and “do something *to*” for affect. If that works, you have chosen the right word. Try it with the two examples above (about hostility and sinuses).

These words can also be used as nouns. An effect is a result of something (it is something that comes out of something—remember *ex*, “out of”: “The effect of his pep talk was better performance”), and an affect—usually used as a psychological term—is an emotion or desire that influences (does something *to*) behavior (“Her affect made her unpleasant”).

*Richard R. Losch+*

In Memoriam

**Thomas Raiford Noland, Jr.**

1942-2017

*May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed  
by the mercy of God rest in peace.*

## *Adam's Apple*

For 1500 years people have told the story that Eve ate a forbidden apple and then gave it to Adam, who also ate of it. Unfortunately, this is based on a mistranslation by St. Jerome when he translated the Bible into Latin in the 4th century.<sup>1</sup> The Bible gives no indication whatever of what the fruit really was—it simply calls it the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—but of all the possibilities an apple is the least likely candidate, because apples do not grow well in the Palestinian climate.<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word for apple is *tappuach* (תפוח), which can also mean fragrance, and its first use in the Bible is in the Psalms and in the Book of the Prophet Joel. The ancient rabbinic traditions vary greatly as to what the fruit really was. Several sources say that it was a pomegranate (*rimonim*, רימונים), while others identify it as a nut (*egoz*, אגוז), a citron (*etrog*, אתרוג), a vine (*gefen*, גפן), wheat (*chitah*, טהחי) or a fig (*tenah*, תאנה). Many consider the most likely candidate to be a fig, because the first mention of a specific tree is immediately after they eat the fruit, when Adam and Eve recognize that they are naked, and sew fig leaves together to make aprons (Gen, 3:7). Also, the fig tree grows profusely in Palestine and throughout the Mediterranean regions, and is mentioned many times throughout the Bible. The prophet Amos made his living as a shepherd and dresser of sycamore fruit (figs) (Amos 7:14).

Regardless of what the fruit really was, 1500 years of tradition form an incredibly strong root, and there is no doubt that for centuries to come Adam's fruit will still be considered by most people to have been an apple.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome was a brilliant scholar, but he did not know Hebrew. He went to Jerusalem to learn it so he could translate the Bible. Palestine was a Christian province of Rome at that time, but the rabbis there generously shared their time with him to teach him their sacred language.

<sup>2</sup> They do grow there, but the fruit is generally small and not very sweet. A good, sweet apple is highly prized there.

## ***The Jews Did Not Renounce Jesus***

An ancient calumny against the Jews is that they renounced Jesus, and thus cut themselves off from God. This led to centuries of vicious anti-Semitism and ultimately to the Holocaust.<sup>1</sup> Most Jews accept Jesus as a great teacher, and some as a great prophet, but they do not accept him as the Messiah or as divine.<sup>2</sup> This is not, however, the same as renouncing him, and it unfair and incorrect to accuse them of that. You cannot renounce that which you have never accepted in the first place. From the Christian point of view it is tragic that they failed to see the gift that was given to all mankind through Christ, who came in fulfillment of all that had been promised Judaism through the prophets. This is not the same as saying to God, “Thanks, but no thanks,” however, because they did not recognize it as a gift of God to start with.

Much of the resultant Christian anti-Semitism rose from a tragic misunderstanding of a simple phrase in the gospels, which says that the Jews denounced Jesus and called for his crucifixion. It was only a tiny handful of Jews to whom that refers, and not the Jewish people as a whole. That tiny group was the Jerusalem ruling class, whose authority, political status and power were threatened by Jesus’ teachings. Most of them were sycophants to the Romans and were hated by the people they oppressed. They included the High Priest Caiaphas and most of the members of the Sanhedrin, which was the legal authoritative body that controlled the city and the Temple under the authority of Rome.

The Jews are not to be condemned, but rather should be always in our prayers.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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<sup>1</sup> As Dr. Luke Timothy Johnson points out, while it is true that Christianity did not invent anti-Semitism, it is also true that Christians honed it to a vicious art.

<sup>2</sup> There is a growing sect of what are called Messianic Jews who accept Jesus as the Messiah in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. They do not accept him as the Son of God, however.



## ***Saint Paul's Rule for All***

In 1 Corinthians 7:17 Paul says, “Each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.” At the time he wrote this people of all nations, faiths and social positions were becoming followers of Christ. In those days most religions were tribal—i.e. they were associated with specific cultures. When someone converted from one religion to another it was expected that he would embrace not only the religion, but the entire culture. When the Moabite Ruth chose to stay with her mother-in-law Naomi and accept her God, she also accepted the Israelite culture (“Where you go I will go, and where you say I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God my God” Ruth 1:16). There were exceptions, but they were rare. Naaman accepted the Jewish God, but went back to Aram (Syria) and remained in his own culture (2 Kg. 5:15ff).

Many Gentile converts, because Jesus was a Jew, wanted to be circumcised (only the males, of course) and adopt not only the Jewish faith, but also the Jewish culture (the earliest Christians saw themselves as a Jewish sect). Similarly, as Judaism and Christianity began to pull apart and go their separate ways, many Christian Jews wanted to abandon Judaism altogether and have themselves surgically uncircumcised.<sup>1</sup> Paul forbade this kind of conversion. He argued that while the Gentiles had to put aside any of their cultural practices that were at conflict with Christian values (such as the wanton sexual promiscuity of many of the Gentile cultures), they should otherwise remain true to their own culture and herit-

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek culture had pervaded most of the known world by that time. It was very attractive to many Jews, especially the youth (much to the distress of the majority of Jews, who were strongly opposed to Hellenization). Athletic games were very important to the Greeks, but they were considered a religious event, and so only men with perfect bodies were allowed to participate. Circumcision was considered an imperfection, so Greek physicians developed a skin grafting procedure to undo it. Apparently it was quite successful, and could hardly be detected.

age. In this way they would display to the world that God was for all mankind, and not just for the Jews. To convert to Judaism and embrace the Jewish culture, abandoning their own culture, would be to limit God to being only the God of the Jews. Paul believed that each individual nation, including the Jews should retain its own distinct identity, but offer joint communal worship of God. This is well presented in the old hymn, “In Christ there is no east or west, In him no South or North, But one great fellowship of love Throughout the whole wide earth.” Paul’s reasoning was that if all the Nations worshiped God alongside the Jews, then the glory of God would become evident to all mankind. “There is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through the same faith” (Rom. 3:30).

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***A Touch of Trivia***

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (Mk. 12:10). In about 1460 a large marble slab was cut from the quarry outside Florence, Italy. It had been ordered by a now unknown sculptor who was not satisfied with it, and rejected it. Several other sculptors also started work on it and then rejected it because the grain, in their opinion, made it too hard to carve. It lay unwanted for many years until in 1500 a young sculptor by the name of Michelangelo Buonarrotti, who could not afford a better piece, bought it. The result was one of the most famous statues of all time, that of David.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***“The Epistle” Is Online***

The last four years’ issues of *The Epistle* are online. Go to <http://rlosch.com> and click on the “Epistle” tab at the top, then click on the issue you want to see. You can read it online or download it as a *.pdf* file.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***The Blood of the New Covenant***

In Judeo-Christian theology a covenant is a special spiritual bond between God and a particular people or, in the case of the Christian covenant, all mankind. From the most ancient times (Biblically, from the time of Noah) all such covenants have been sealed with the shedding of the blood of an animal in sacrifice, which was then shared with the people by sprinkling it on them. The Book of Exodus, Chapter 24, describes this in detail in the account of the sealing of the Mosaic Covenant, when the Law was given to the Israelites.<sup>1</sup>

From ancient times it was a rabbinic tradition that in his good time God would establish a new Covenant that would be extended through the Jews to include all mankind. The Prophet Jeremiah speaks of this extensively (31:31ff). The end of Exodus and the beginning of Leviticus go into exacting detail about how various sacrifices are to be offered as sin and guilt offerings. The Jews were painfully aware of their constant failure to live up to their end of the Covenant, and they saw in the promised New Covenant a hope that they would be brought to a more righteous life. They sought the help of God in overcoming a weakness that they had failed to overcome in themselves. Some scholars believed that this Covenant would be closely associated with the coming of the Messiah, and others thought that these would be independent events. Either way, most faithful Jews looked forward to it and prayed for it to come to pass soon. There were many different interpretations of it. Some looked for the new Covenant to be a restoration of the United Kingdom of David and Solomon, when Israel ranked among the most powerful nations in the world. Many who believed that also believed that God would send as its leader the Messiah, whom they saw as a mighty warrior

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<sup>1</sup> Although the expressions of the Jewish faith have changed and developed over the millennia, it is from that time on that the Hebrew people, particularly the Israelites (the descendants of Jacob), should be called Jews. The Covenant through Moses, not the promise to Abraham, was the actual beginning of the Jewish Faith.

who would defeat Israel's enemies and bring about this restoration, much as Judas Maccabeus drove out the Syrian Seleucids and briefly restored Israel's independence.<sup>1</sup>

In Jesus' time, with Judea being ground under the heel of Rome, many were looking and praying for this new Covenant to come soon. Some believed that it had already come. Recent archaeological finds, for example, have revealed pre-Christian documents that refer to Jewish followers of the New Covenant in Damascus. There is no reference, however, to its being sealed in sacrifice, and to the Jews that was an essential element of a Covenant.

Jesus, at the Last Supper, gave his disciples bread and said, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." After supper he gave them the cup of wine and said, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Lk.22:19-20). They no doubt had little understanding of the full significance of this until after Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on them revealed the Faith. There is also no doubt, however, that as faithful Jews they were fully familiar with three things: (1) the meaning and importance of a covenant sealed in blood, (2) the concept of a memorial sacrifice which we will discuss below, and (3) Jeremiah's prophecy of a New Covenant. There were certainly many questions that came into their minds, but it is just as certain that they realized that something extremely significant had just happened. In six weeks the Holy Spirit would come upon them and it would all become crystal clear.

Volumes have been written on Eucharistic theology and it would be presumptuous to try to explain it here, but a few words of explanation are undoubtedly in order. A sacrifice was the killing of an animal or the destruction of food (usually grain) by burning it. A priest is one who offers a sacrifice,

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<sup>1</sup> This was the belief of the Zealots, a rebel sect in Jesus' time, of whom Judas Iscariot was almost certainly a member. Judas may have betrayed Jesus because it became apparent that he had no intention of raising a rebellion, and thus might actually hinder the uprising.

an altar is a place on which it is offered, and the sacrifice itself is called the victim. One of the major sacrifices offered in accord with Levitical Law was what was called a sin offering (Lev. 4:1ff). It was an animal sacrifice in expiation of sins, but as Saint Paul pointed out a number of times, it was of little use if it had to be offered over and over again. The majority of sacrifices offered in the Temple in Jerusalem were sin offerings. One of the requirements was that the victim had to be perfect, with no blemish. When Jesus died on the cross, he served as both priest and victim, offering himself on the altar of the cross.<sup>1</sup> As the Christ he is both the perfect priest without sin, and the perfect victim without blemish. Jesus the Christ was the only one worthy to be either priest or victim for the ultimate sin offering that would be offered once and for all time. Since he was sinless he could voluntarily take upon himself the total sin of the world and offer it to the Father as both priest and victim. He offered himself as the sacrifice to seal the New Covenant between God and all mankind.

The Crucifixion was not just a specific event at a specific point in history. If all mankind is to be saved, past, present and future, the Crucifixion must be an ongoing event unbound by the limits of time and space. Just as God is outside the constraints of time and space, so is Christ's offering, even though it crossed paths with history 2000 years ago.<sup>2</sup> When Christ instituted the New Covenant he gave us the means to participate in that sacrifice through the Holy Eucharist. Every time we participate in the Mass we are participating in that sacrifice, and reaping its benefits. This is why the presiding minister is called a priest, and not just a minister. He is acting as Christ's representative in offering the eternal sacrifice of Christ. When we present ourselves at the foot of the altar we are presenting ourselves at the foot of the Cross.

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<sup>1</sup> This is why the cross is the primary Christian symbol—it was the Altar of Sacrifice for the ultimate sin offering.

<sup>2</sup> This is why Abraham and Moses, the Patriarchs and Prophets, and all the righteous people of ancient times are also saved by Christ's sacrifice.

The concept of a memorial sacrifice was important in Jewish worship. When the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt, their first act in the actual release was to sacrifice a lamb and sprinkle its blood on their doorposts as a sign that they were not under the condemnation of the death of the firstborn (Ex. 12:1ff). They were commanded to celebrate this every year with a memorial sacrifice (12:14ff). This, of course, was the Passover celebration. When the Passover was celebrated the Jews did not see it as a simple a re-enactment, but as a participation in the original event. This is what is meant by the term memorial sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> The Last Supper was either the Passover celebration or a precatory meal for it, so when Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance (*anamnesis*) of me,” the disciples knew exactly what he was talking about. He meant that thereafter the sacrifice to be commemorated and participated in would no longer be the escape from slavery in Egypt, but his sacrifice on the cross, which was the escape from slavery to sin. This is completely in accord with Jeremiah’s prophecy of the New Covenant, with which the disciples would have been thoroughly familiar.

In the sealing of a covenant with a sacrifice, the blood of the victim was always shared with the people by sprinkling it on them. Inasmuch as Christ’s New Covenant sacrifice is eternal and was only momentarily in history a physical event, this is not possible. Instead, it is shared through the mystical transmutation of the bread and wine of the Eucharist into his Body and Blood in the context of a sacred commemorative meal. Thus when we receive the Blessed Sacrament we take Christ’s Body and Blood into our own bodies in preparation for our own resurrection in the last days. He said, “This *is* my Body ... this *is* my Blood,” not that they *represent* his Body and Blood. The Holy Eucharist, therefore, is not simply a re-

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<sup>1</sup> In the Greek Old Testament and in the New Testament, the word used is *anamnesis* (ἀναμνησις), memorial. It occurs only eight times, and in every use of it but one (Wis. 16:6, which refers to a remembrance of the Law) it has a clear sacrificial overtone.

enactment of the Last Supper, and the elements of bread and wine are not merely symbols of his Body and Blood. We are truly at the foot of the Cross in the Mass, and Christ is truly and objectively present in the consecrated bread and wine.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***Virginia Derby Grimes Named Captain of 2018 Curtis Cup Team***

The United States Golf Association has named our own Virginia Derby Grimes Captain of the 2018 Curtis Cup team. This team plays in a biennial golf competition between amateur women golfers of the United States, Great Britain and Ireland. Virginia was the 1998 U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur Curtis Cup champion, and was a member of the 1998, 2000 and 2006 teams. She is tied for the second-best record in Match history. She holds several records, and has received many awards and honors. The 2018 Match will be held in Scarsdale, NY on June 8-10, 2018. Congratulations, Virginia.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***Diocesan Convention***

The 186th annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama was held in Birmingham on February 17-18. Happily, it was a fairly routine convention with no serious controversy. Six resolutions were adopted, which included the budgets of the Diocese and its subordinate institutions, and the continuation of the diocesan anti-racism program. Resolution 5 encourages the development of refugee resettlement communities, and Resolution 6 encourages parishes to remove from job applications any questions about the applicant's previous conviction or arrest history. More detailed information about the Convention can be found on the Internet at <http://stjohnshc.dioala.org/Diocese/convention.html>.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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# More Trivia

When he was still young Michelangelo produced a statue for his patron Lorenzo de' Medici that looked so much like an ancient Greek statue that de' Medici had it painted and scuffed, and sold it as such. The purchaser was Cardinal Raffeo Riario. When he realized he had been cheated, instead of arresting Michelangelo, Riario hired him to carve a statue for the cathedral. The statue was Michelangelo's masterpiece, the Pietà.

*Richard R. Losch+*

**JAMIE** by Richard R. Losch



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