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April 2020

This Month's Cover

Our cover this month is *Ultima Cana* (*The Last Supper*) by Peter Paul Rubens, completed around 1631. It is oil on canvas and is displayed in the *Pinacoteca di Brera* in Milan, Italy. Like most of Rubens' works it is large, measuring 10'x8'2". It was originally commissioned as an altarpiece for the Church of St. Rumbold in Mechelen, Belgium. It followed an unsuccessful unfinished painting of the Last Supper in 1611. Rubens' patron backed out of the commission because of the high price (4000 Guilder, whose value in today's money has not been established), and Rubens never finished it. This painting was clearly influenced by Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* (1498).

The painting depicts Jesus looking up toward heaven as he institutes the Blessed Sacrament, surrounded by the twelve Apostles. Judas is prominent in this painting. While all the others are focused on Jesus, he sits in a rather brooding position looking directly at the viewer, as if he were saying, "And you?" There is a dog with a bone lying under the table at Judas' feet looking up at him. Some critics say it merely represents a pet. Jews in Jesus' time rarely kept dogs inside as pets, but they were common in Rubens' time, when a dog in a painting usually symbolized fidelity and loyalty. This one more likely denotes the statement of the Canaanite woman that "the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table" (Matt. 15:27). Judas has cut himself off even from that.

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) was undoubtedly the most influential artist of the Flemish Baroque era. The main art style when he began his career was the stiff and over-dramatic style inspired by the Counter-Reformation, but Rubens and his followers quickly overcame that with an almost sensual style full

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of movement and color. He was eclectic in his choice of subjects, painting landscapes, portraits, altar pieces, and a variety of paintings of religious, mythological and historical subjects. Most of his paintings were quite large.

Rubens' life was varied and complicated, and a thumbnail sketch of it here would not do him justice. An Internet search will provide several good biographies of him. Suffice it to say he was not only one of the most influential painters of the 17th century, but also one of the most popular and prolific (1403 catalogued works). He was not above self-promotion. When he finished a painting he would often make an engraving of it, prints of which were widely distributed. Other artists used them as the basis of their own works. It became common to collect these prints, and this helped increase his popularity, and thus enhance the works' value and his prices for commissions.

Rubens died of heart failure from complications of gout in 1640 in Antwerp, where he is buried.

Richard R. Losch+

A Word from the Editor

To some people their "legacy" is all-important, yet the way the world will remember us (if it remembers us at all) is rarely accurate, and even more rarely fair. We remember Herod the Great as one of the monsters of history, yet if we research his life and rule we find that although he was a typical cruel and despotic Eastern potentate, by the standards of his time he was actually a very effective ruler. On the other hand, we remember Pontius Pilate as a relatively decent man who wanted to do what was right but succumbed to the pressure of the mob. If we research his life and actions, however, we find that he was in reality a depraved monster. Our legacy in this world is uncertain. As Shakespeare had Antony say at Caesar's funeral, "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with

¹ He was called back to Rome by Caligula to answer for his cruelty. When Caligula thinks you are too cruel, you have made quite a career of cruelty!

their bones." When someone dies we often find out things about him that amaze or disappoint us. More often than not what we think we have kept as a deep dark secret is well known in many circles, and comes out after our death. What we need to be concerned about, of course, is not our legacy in this world, but that in the next.

At the beginning of this month we will wind up Lent and celebrate the joy of Easter. What Lent is all about is teaching us to prepare our eternal legacy while we are still in our mortal state, because when we die it is too late to change it. There is nothing we have done that God does not know about, so we need to lead our lives in such a way that our legacy with him is secure. Lent will be over in a few days, but that does not mean that our preparation ceases for another year. Lent is simply to help teach us how to continue to prepare, and to give us a "booster" each year. We must learn to live well in this life not so that we will be well-remembered in this world, but so that we might be well-remembered eternally in the next.

Father Rich Losch+

Thank You, and I'm Sorry!

Many, many thanks to all who worked so hard to prepare for my Ordination Anniversary and reception. I'm sorry it had to be cancelled, but when the Bishop directs no services or gatherings, we are obligated to obey him. It's the first time in 60 years that I have ever cancelled a regularly scheduled service, but God always has a unique way of teaching us humility. Again, thanks to all for your greetings, good wishes and prayers. Please continue to pray for the quick abatement of this health crisis, and for all its victims.

¹ This is also why I have always strongly discouraged eulogies at funerals. If it's true it doesn't need to be said, and if it's not, then it shouldn't be said. I have attended many a funeral of someone I knew quite well, and when it was over I thought, "Wow! I wish I had known that person!"

Anniversary Celebration

Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 (Corona) virus crisis, we were forced to cancel the special service and reception in honor of Fr. Losch's 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. We plan to reschedule the service and reception as soon as conditions allow.

Hiram Patrenos

Regarding the Church Closing

We do not yet know yet what the status of the national health crisis will be by Easter. At the time of this writing we are officially closed only through March 29, but it remains to be seen whether we will have Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and/or Easter services. For this reason we have cancelled our order for Easter lilies, which must be ordered well in advance and are very expensive. If we have services there will be flowers on the altar, but not the usual beautiful display because we will have to get them on shorter notice. If you make a memorial donation for Easter flowers we will honor it, but it might be delayed until after Easter. If that should happen we will have a special memorial service later when all the names will be recognized.

Richard R. Losch+

Easter Flowers (?)

(The following applies if we have Easter services. Please note the announcement above, "Regarding the Church Closing.")

Each year St. James' Church offers the opportunity to remember loved ones through donations to the Altar Guild, which provides the lilies and altar flowers in the church for Easter services. If you wish to make a donation for this –In Memory of, In honor of, or In Thanksgiving for – envelopes with forms are available at the back of the church or you may print this information clearly and mail it along with your contribution to Carolyn Patrenos, President, St. James' Altar Guild, P.O. Box 399, Livingston, AL 35470. Checks should be

made payable to St. James' Altar Guild. Because of the increased costs for these flowers, we ask for a minimum donation of \$25.00 for memorials. Publication deadline for inclusion in the Easter bulletin is Wednesday, April 8th. Your donation is tax deductible.

Hiram Patrenos

Services for Holy Week and Easter (?)

(The following schedule will be observed if the Bishop rescinds the directive not to have public services. Otherwise no services will be held.)

- + The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday On Sunday, April 5th, our observance of Holy Week will begin with the Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Communion at St. James' at. 11:00 a.m.
- → Maundy Thursday St. James' will observe this day with Holy Communion and the Stripping of the Altar at 6:00 p.m.
- + Good Friday St. James' will observe this day with the Good Friday Liturgy Mass of the Presanctified at 5:00 p.m.
- + Easter Day St. James' is the host for the Community Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. at the Livingston Civic Center. We will celebrate The Day of the Resurrection with Holy Communion at 11:00 a.m.

Hiram Patrenos

Thank You, Deep South Landscaping

Thank you to Jason Gordy and Deep South Landscaping for their work in cleaning and re-strawing the flower beds, for pruning the shrubbery in the church yard, and for pruning all of the shrubbery in the rectory yard.

Hiram Patrenos

Our favorite TV zinger: When the Dowager Countess of Grantham (Downton Abbey) was told, "Oh, how you must hate to be wrong!" she replied sedately, "I wouldn't know. I'm not familiar with the sensation."

Be Wordly Wise Semitic

We hear a lot about anti-Semitism these days as this evil is resurging around the world. The word Semitic is mispronounced probably at least as often as nuclear (which is "nu-clear," not "nu-cu-lar"). The word Semitic puts the *e* before the *i*. It is pronounced "seh-mit-ic," not "sih-met-ic."

In the Genesis story of the flood, Noah had three sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth. Ancient legend says that the descendants of Ham were the Africans, those of Shem the people of western Asia and the Middle East, and those of Japheth the Europeans. Later they came to be known as Hamites, Semites and Japhethites. The Semites, of course were the descendants of Shem. In Hebrew, s and sh are represented by the same letter, shin (w), so it is only by tradition that we know which sound it represents in a particular text. For this reason the alleged descendants of Shem are known as Semites rather than Shemites.

There were many ancient Semitic peoples, including Israelites (modern Jews), Canaanites (no significant modern descendants), Phoenicians (modern Lebanese, who were an offshoot of the Canaanites), Arameans (modern Syrians), Edomites (modern Jordanians) and Arabs. In common usage today, however, even though it technically refers to all these peoples, the word Semitic usually refers only to the Jews.

Richard R. Losch+

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¹ In very early times, when these legends originated, people in Africa, the Middle East and Europe were unaware of the Far East. They recognized only three races, European white, African black, and Semitic.

² Early 19th century linguists broke languages in to Hamitic, Semitic and Japhethitic language groups, but that system did not work. We do refer to the Semitic languages, though, primarily Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic.

³ In the modern Hebrew alphabet the difference is denoted by a dot over the letter: $\dot{v}(sin)$ is s, and $\dot{v}(shin)$ is sh, but this dot was not used in the ancient texts. (As a reminder of the dot's position, "sin is never right.") There is also the letter $samekh(\mathfrak{D})$, which is exclusively a hard s.

The Body and Blood of Christ

From the earliest days the Church has taught that the Sacrament of Holy Communion is not just a commemorative ritual, but that it is the real, objective Body and Blood of Christ. At the Holy Eucharist we are not simply participating in a reenactment of the Last Supper, we are involving ourselves in the Sacrifice on the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ, and when we receive the Sacrament we are taking Christ's Glorified Body and Blood into our own bodies. This is the doctrine of the Real Presence-that Christ is truly and objectively present in his Body and Blood in the elements of the Sacrament, under the appearance of bread and wine. Christ's presence is not just a spiritual and symbolic presence that depends on the faith of the believer. Christ is really and objectively present in the Sacrament, whether or not the receiver believes. If a dog eats a particle of the Sacrament he is receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, even though because of his lack of understanding he attains no spiritual benefit from it. The benefit depends on the faith of the believer, but the presence of Christ does not.¹

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53). When we partake of his Body and Blood we take his glorified body into our mortal bodies, and it is through this union of our bodies that we are united with him (Com-Union) and thus attain everlasting life. We pray in the Prayer of Consecration that we may be "made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him."

When Christ died on Calvary his Body and Blood were separated, but they were reunited and glorified when he was Resurrected. His Resurrected Body was a real body of flesh and blood, not just a spiritual apparition, but it was not the corruptible flesh and blood of a mortal body. It is that glorified Body

¹ This is contrary to the teaching of most Protestant churches, wich teach that the presence of Christ in Communion is subjective—that it is purely spiritual and symbolic, and depends solely on the faith of the receiver.

and Blood that is present in the Sacrament, and they are inseparable. As a symbol of that, right after the priest has consecrated the bread and wine he breaks the Host, symbolizing the breaking of Jesus' Body on the Cross, and drops a particle of it into the Chalice, symbolizing the eternal unification of the Glorified Body and Blood of the Resurrected Christ. This also reminds us of a very important point of sacramental theology. That is that both the inseparable Body and Blood of Christ are fully present in the consecrated bread, and both are fully present in the consecrated wine. Even though it has become traditional to receive both when we receive Holy Communion, receiving either alone constitutes a complete Communion. About 500 years ago most of the early Protestant reformers demanded that the Host be placed on the hand instead of the tongue, and that the Chalice be made available to the people. It was not until about 50 years ago that the Roman Catholic Church allowed administration on the hand and made the Chalice available (although many Roman Catholics still prefer to receive only the Host, and to receive it on the tongue, and that is still the regular practice in many parishes around the world). 1

In the past few weeks the world has become concerned with the rapid spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus. While it is true that we should not be concerned with germs when we are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, it is also written that "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7, Deut. 6:16). Sanitary caution is not out of place under these circumstances. For this reason several bishops, including Bishop Sloan, have recommended that for the foreseeable future we change our traditional ways of receiving Communion. Since both the Body and Blood of Christ are equally present in either the consecrated Bread or Wine, we recommend receiving only the Bread, which is still a full Communion. We also recommend

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¹ In the Eastern Orthodox Churches Holy Communion is administered quite differently. A particle of the sacrament is placed on a perforated spoon called a *Labium*, dipped into the Chalice, and then fed to the Communicant from the *Labium*.

receiving it on the tongue instead of on the hand. You have usually shaken hands with at least a few people, and you have touched countless things that have been touched by who-knows-who, including doorknobs, money, pews, and prayer books and hymnals. By the time you come up to receive Communion your hands are filthy. Not even considering the irreverence of this, do you really want something put on those hands that you will then put into your mouth with those same hands? On the other hand, the priest has washed his hands both physically and ritually, and is trained to place the Host on your tongue without touching your tongue or lips. Reception on the tongue is therefore a far more sanitary way to receive the Sacrament. We pray that this world-wide health concern will pass quickly, but in the meantime, wisdom is the better part of valor.

Richard R. Losch+

B.C. and A.D.

We are all familiar with the dating terms B.C. and A.D., which stand for Before Christ and *Anno Domini*, "In the Year of the Lord." One might ask why one is in English and the other in Latin. The answer is simple: "Before the Lord" in Latin would be *Ante Dominum*, which would also be A.D.³ The proper usage, although most do not observe it today, is to place B.C. after the date (327 B.C.—"327 years before Christ"), and

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¹ If you receive on the tongue, you should place your tongue prominently over your lower lip so the priest doesn't have to try to insert the Host into your mouth. It is one of the few times you can stick your tongue out at a priest without being considered rude.

² In Latin the case endings often supply the prepositions so *Anno Domini* is translated "[In the] Year [of the] Lord."

³ If the wine and water cruets used at Mass are crystal, there is no problem seeing which is which. When they are silver, however, as the often are, they need to be marked as to which is which. The traditional marking is V (vinum, wine) and A (aqua, water). An Episcopalian lady gave a set of silver cruets to her church, but she didn't like "all that Popish Latin stuff," so she had one engraved W for wine and the other W for water.

A.D. before the date (A.D. 1253-"in the year of the Lord 1253"). If we are referring to an era rather than a specific year, then A.D. is placed after it (the 14th century A.D.), because there it stands for *Annis Domini*, "In the years of the Lord." 1

Almost all the world, Christian or not, counts years in terms of before or after the birth of Christ.² In the mid-20th century it became increasingly popular for non-Christians (and many "politically correct" Christians) to use BCE and CE in place of B.C. and A.D. These stand for "Before the Common Era" and "[in the] Common Era." Some identify the C as standing for Christian rather than Common, but this is a moot point. Either is acceptable, and only Christian purists are offended by BCE.

Richard R. Losch+

The Name of Jesus

Historically, the man we recognize as the Son of God was not known as Jesus. That name is the English version of the Latin version of the Greek version of his Hebrew name, which was either Yeshua (ישוע) or Yehoshua (יהושוע), and most likely the former³ (pronounced Ye-shoo-ah or Ye-ho-shoo-ah). This is the same name as Joshua, Moses' second-in-command, whose name was actually Yehoshua, which means "God is Salvation." That name was as common in Jesus' day as Robert or William is today, and it appears over thirty times in the Old

¹ If you want to be really pedantic, it should be written a.D., not A.D., unless it begins a sentence or otherwise needs to be capitalized.

² Although scholars argue as to when Jesus was really born (the dates range from 6 B.C. to A.D. 4), for dating purposes his birth year is universally recognized as A.D. 1 eve if that may be incorrect chronologically. There is no year Zero-we go directly from 1 B.C. to A.D. 1.

³ A small but vocal number of writers have argued that his name was Yahshua, but this is rejected by a large number of scholars with far more solid credentials. The argument is that Yahshua would mean "Jah[weh] Saves." Among other things, Yeshua and Yehoshua were very common names in Jesus' time, while Yahshua is found nowhere in the entire body of Biblical and extra-Biblical Hebrew literature

Testament as well. Even though it was a common name, it was the ideal name for the Messiah. When the angel appeared to Mary¹ he said, "You shall call his name Jesus (Yeshua), for he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

Two questions arise: which was it, Yeshua or Yehoshua, and how did either become Jesus? In Jesus' time both versions of the name were used, although Yeshua was by far the more common. It is somewhat analogous to the difference between the names Geoffrey and Jeffrey. The Hebrew name of Moses' aide and successor, Joshua, was clearly Yehoshua. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek in the third century BC (the Septuagint), both names were rendered as Iesous (Ἰησοῦς), pronounced Ee-ay-soos. There are no y or sh sounds in Greek, 2 so the best they could do was ee and s. Also, there is no letter h in Greek, and the only time the sound appears is at the beginning of some words.³ There was therefore no way to indicate the syllables Yeho-, so it came out just Ye-. Finally, Greek requires a gender case ending, and the masculine nominative is -os or -us. Thus the Hebrew names Yehoshua and Yeshua both came into Greek as Iesous, and that is the form that was used for both.

When the Greek Iesous came into Latin the o disappeared, leaving it as Iesus. In the Middle Ages many scribes added a flourish called a swash to the letter I, making it look like J,

¹ Mary's name was actually either Miriam or Mariamne, two versions of a common name at the time. Mary Magdalene's real name was Miriam, and Herod's first wife was the Hasmonean princess Mariamne.

² I had a professor of Greek who said that the Greeks considered the *sh* sound to be as barbaric as wearing trousers.

³ Since there is no letter h in Greek, when that sound appears at the beginning of a word it is indicated by a right-facing apostrophe ('). The goddess Hera, therefore, would be spelled ' $\bar{E}ra$ ('Hp α). To add to the confusion, the Greek letter eta (H, η) is not h, but \bar{e} . If a word begins with a vowel and not an h sound, this is often indicated by a left-facing apostrophe ('). These signs were not used in ancient Greek, so it is by tradition only that we know when a word began with just a vowel or with an h sound.

particularly when it was the first letter of a word (there is no letter j in the Latin alphabet). It was still pronounced as an i or y, however. In time the j sound began to appear in Late Latin, and it came to be associated with the "swashed" letter i (j), but the name was still pronounced **Yay**-soos. By the time the Lord's name came from Latin into English, the name Iesus had become Jesus, and was pronounced as we do today.

Richard R. Losch+

Symbols, Icons and Images

In the February 2020 "Be Wordly Wise" column we wrote about the origin of the word devil being the Greek *diabolos*, and explained that it derives from the roots meaning "to throw apart." The word symbol has a similar origin. It comes from the Greek *symbolos*, whose roots mean "to throw together." 1

In common usage we often use the word symbol as if it meant merely a reminder of something-a device used to bring something to our conscious awareness of it. People tend to say, "It's just a symbol." A better word for that would be token or denotation. To use the word symbol correctly, it is something which actually connects us mentally, spiritually or metaphysically with something else. A symbol "throws us together" with its object. While this is a subtle distinction, it is an important one when it comes to religious symbolism. Improperly used, symbolism can be risky. There is always the danger that a symbol can be allowed to degenerate to the pagan concept of its being its object rather than being a means of connecting us with its object. Essentially this is what a pagan idol is. Ancient pagans would carve a statue of a god, then literally clothe it or put food into its mouth in a ceremonial rite which they believed made that statue attained divine life and actually become one with the god. They could then worship the wood or stone of the

¹ Symbolos (συμβολος) derives from the prefix syn- (συν-), together, and the verb ballein (βαλλειν), to throw. When n precedes b or p in a compound word it generally becomes m.

statue itself, because in their minds it was the god. Injuring or abusing the statue injured or abused the god itself, and could bring its divine wrath upon you.

This danger of allowing symbolism to slip into pagan idolatry was a matter of great concern to the Church in the early days. In A.D. 726 the Byzantine (eastern) branch of the Church¹ declared that because of it, representation of any living thing was to be forbidden. The western branch, based in Rome, disagreed, and this erupted into what is known as the Iconoclastic² Controversy. It raged for over a century, but finally in 842 it was agreed that churches in the Byzantine liturgical tradition could have two-dimensional symbols only (commonly known as Icons), but no statuary or three-dimensional carvings. The Roman tradition had throughout the controversy retained statuary and carvings. To this day you can find much statuary in a Roman Catholic church, but in an Eastern Orthodox church you will find beautiful two-dimensional paintings and mosaics, but no carvings of any living thing. On the other hand, the Eastern tradition places much more emphasis on the importance of symbolism than is common in the west. When an artist is going to make an Icon, he first prepares himself intensely with prayer and meditation. He then does not "paint the Icon," he "prays the Icon." The reason is that the Icon will have a direct spiritual connection with the saint whom it depicts, and serves as a means of connecting the saint with the person venerating him. It is very important to understand that in both the eastern and western traditions, when someone is using a symbol to venerate a saint, he is not venerating the symbol, but simply using it as a means to connect or unify himself with the saint, the object of the symbol.

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¹ At this time the Christian Church was unified, although the liturgical rites were coming to vary greatly between the Roman (Latin, western) and Byzantine (Greek, eastern) regions. It would be three centuries more (A.D. 1054) before the two branches formally separated into the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

² From the Greek *eikōn* (εικων), image, and *klastos* (κλαστος), breaker.

The original Protestant reformers as well as most of their followers today not only rejected most religious symbolism, but also rejected veneration of the saints itself. Most Protestant symbolism points only to God and to his attributes, and not to anything he has created. There are some extreme Protestant groups that reject all symbols, including the cross, although most use the cross and some other basic symbols (very few use a crucifix¹). Statuary is rarely found in Protestant churches, and when it is it is usually purely decorative or architectural, and is not used as a focus for veneration of the saints.

Our lives ae full of what we call symbols, some of which are true symbols that bind up to what they represent, and many are simply tokens or reminders of something else. They range from the sublime to the ridiculous—from the crosses on out altars to Easter bunnies, Christmas wreaths, and Thanksgiving turkeys and Pilgrim hats. Some are mere reminders of other things, and some are true channels to a higher reality.

Richard R. Losch+

The Epistle is Online

The last seven years of *The Epistle* are now online. Go to *http://rlosch.com* and click on the "Epistle" tab at the top. You can read it online or download it as a *.pdf* file. This is an easy way to share articles with others.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ Along with the countless beautiful and ornate cruciform designs that are found in Christianity, there are three basic traditional forms of the cross in liturgical symbolism: the bare cross with no figure on it, which is the most common by far in Protestantism; the crucifix, which has an image of the crucified Christ affixed to the cross, and is used in all Roman Catholic, many Anglican and a few Lutheran churches; and the Christus Rex (Christ the King), which has the figure of the resurrected and glorifies Christ affixed to the cross. On the Christus Rex the figure is usually robed in Eucharistic vestments. This is found most often in Anglican and some Lutheran churches. Eastern Orthodox churches use the cross only in two-dimensional icons and mosaics, with the one exception of the ancient Byzantine two-barred cross that is often placed on their steeples and domes.

A Touch of Trivia

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth name was Michael, after his father, and he was called Mike throughout his school years. His father admired Martin Luther, and in 1934 changed his own name and that of his son. The boy was very intelligent. He could not enter the first grade until he was six due to school regulations, but he skipped several grades. He entered Morehouse College in Atlanta at age 15, and graduated at 19 with a B.A. in sociology.

Richard R. Losch+

JAMIE

by Richard R. Losch



"I have a stomach ache from all the pesticides in the vegetables. From now on I'm going to have to eat just burgers and pizza."



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