



in the sacrifice. We are both above it and below it: our view is the view of the artist and the deity, but we are also the occupants of the solitary boat in the harbour below.

## REVERED

In terms of its reception: on the one hand it's been slated as kitsch, on the other hand it's become the most beloved painting of an entire nation. In 2005, the work was voted Scotland's favourite painting; an interesting twist to a story that began with the controversial decision to spend city funds to buy the painting from its artist. The year was 1952, and the work was up for sale for £12,000; but when the director of a leading Glasgow museum, Kelvingrove Art Gallery, negotiated to buy it for £8,200, there was outrage – that money would, many believed, be better spent on providing exhibition space for Scottish artists. The purchase went ahead; and cleverly, the director had paid for the work's copyright as well as the painting itself, which would lead to it paying for itself many times over in the years that followed. The painting itself is now worth upwards of £90 million, although it is unlikely to ever be sold; some years ago the Spanish government decided it would like it back in Spain, and offered USD\$80 million. Unsurprisingly, since it had by then become the country's most revered artwork, Scotland refused.

In 1993 it was moved to the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life in Glasgow; but in 2006, when the Kelvingrove Art Gallery was reopened, it was returned – and today it's the most-viewed work in the gallery, and only rarely do you find it not surrounded by a small crowd of art-lovers.

## Mass text

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world and that which contains all things understands what is said, alleluia.**

### FIRST READING Acts 2:1-11

### PSALM Psalm 103

**RESPONSE Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are.  
How many are your works, O Lord!  
The earth is full of your riches. **R.**
2. You take back your spirit, they die,  
returning to the dust from which they came.  
You send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the earth. **R.**
3. May the glory of the Lord last for ever!  
May the Lord rejoice in his works!  
May my thoughts be pleasing to him.  
I find my joy in the Lord. **R.**

### SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 12:3-7. 12-13

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Alleluia!**

### GOSPEL John 20:19-23

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**They were all filled with the Holy Spirit  
and spoke of the marvels of God, alleluia.**

**Next Sunday's Readings:**  
Exodus 34:4-6. 8-9  
2 Corinthians 13:11-13  
John 3:16-18

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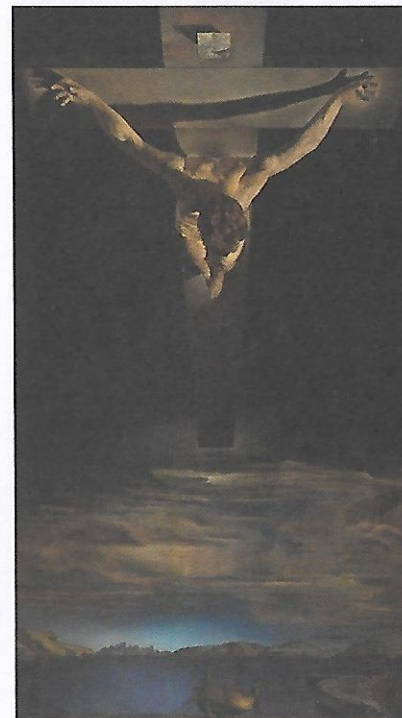
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# SUNDAY BULLETIN

## SALVADOR DALÍ, *CHRIST OF ST JOHN OF THE CROSS*

Like all the best Surrealist art, *Christ of St John of the Cross* was sparked by a dream. Its creator, the Spanish maverick Salvador Dalí, said later that he saw the image in his sleep, and that it represented "the nucleus of the atom". The nucleus was Christ, hanging on the cross, viewed from above – a God's-eye view, fittingly.

Dalí had the dream in 1950, and painted the scene the following year. What he cannot have guessed as he worked on it, however, was the place it would later occupy in the heart of Scotland – a nation he never visited. Because the story of the painting, and what happened to it once it was finished, is as surreal as anything else to do with it.



The painting, which also referenced a drawing by the sixteenth-century Carmelite mystic St John of the Cross, shows Christ suspended above the fishing village of Port Lligat in Spain, which was Dalí's home at the time. To get the figure right, Dalí employed a Hollywood stuntman to recreate the pose of Christ on the cross; the angle of the scene means there is no close-up on the elements of the crucifixion that are usually highlighted, namely the agony, the nails, the blood, the thorns. Some have criticised this element of it as "sanitised"; but the Spanish Dalí would have been more than aware of how many "suffering" paintings of Christ there were in his homeland alone. He seems to have wanted to do something different: to portray the scene devoid of its horrors, but making the sacrifice element centre-stage. And not just the sacrifice alone, but its purpose: Port Lligat was Dalí's everyday, and Christ's life and death are in the midst of everyone's everyday. Tragedy and ordinariness are side by side; and we see the beauty

## Divine images



Joanna Moorhead continues this series looking at religious art.

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PENTECOST SUNDAY

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DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I