

GRAND DESIGNS



1 **Andrea Sacchi**
1599–1661 Italy
The Vision of Saint Romuald c1631
oil on canvas
purchased 1961
Frame sponsored by D G Kilford

Saint Romuald (c952–1027) entered a Benedictine monastery as an act of atonement, following the murder of a relative by his father. He initiated a number of reforms, including the introduction of a white habit to his Camaldolese order. This painting depicts Romuald's vision and inspiration for the reform, in which he saw the monks of his order ascending a ladder to heaven dressed in white.

2 **Unknown artist**
Spain
Christ in Majesty late 12th century
polychromed wood
purchased with the assistance of Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand and the Watson Bequest 1966

A late Romanesque/Gothic sculpture from Barcelona, this figure is believed to have come from a convent situated on the pilgrim way between Pamplona and Santiago. Although missing lower arms and some of the polychrome surface, *Christ in Majesty* retains a formal dignity which gives a clear indication of the figure's original power.

3 **Antonio da Venezia, known as Veneziano**
1599–1661 Italy
The Vision of Saint Romuald c1631
oil on canvas
purchased 1961
Frame sponsored by D G Kilford

The oldest painting in Auckland's collection, Saint Bartholomew is one of four panels of saints that once flanked a painting of the Madonna and Child, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. One of the 12 Apostles, Bartholomew was martyred by being flayed or skinned alive. Here he holds his attribute and cause of death in the form of a hefty butcher's knife.

4 **Marco d'Oggiono**
1467–1524 Italy
Madonna and Child c1490
tempera on panel
Mackelvie Trust Collection
purchased by the Mackelvie Trust with assistance from the National Art Collections Fund, 1966

Here, the waterways and distant hills represent the world of the artist, but the Madonna herself stands in divine space, beyond time. The parapet on which the Christ Child sits separates the Virgin from our contemporary world, yet we are drawn into the painting by the golden lining of her cloak, which is draped over it.

5 **Juan de Juanes**
c1523–1579 Spain
Saint Sebastian 16th century
oil on panel
gift of Sir George Grey, 1887

Juan de Juanes and his father Vicente Maçip were significant artists in Valencia in the 16th century, at a time when the city was becoming a conduit for the entry of Renaissance ideals into Spain. Juan preferred *sfumato* (misty effects) to his father's more precise modelling, as well as the clear luminous tones loved by the Mannerists.

6 **The Girard Master**
2nd half of the 15th century Spain
Saint Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary c1470
tempera and gesso on panel
gift of the Friends of the Auckland Art Gallery, 1966

Saint Anne is depicted on a large scale, cradling her daughter Mary in her arm, who supports the infant Christ in turn. However, here size is not everything. Anne's wimple is the kind worn by everyday women, whereas the Virgin is crowned as Queen of Heaven. While tiny by comparison, her son carries the orb of sovereignty, his right hand raised in the traditional gesture of blessing.

7 **Juan de Juanes**
c 1523–1579 Spain
Saint Catherine of Alexandria 16th century
oil on panel
gift of Sir George Grey, 1887

Saint Catherine was condemned to death for refusing the advances of the emperor, Maxentius. She spurned the arguments of 50 philosophers, and when the emperor attempted to torture her on the wheel, a thunderbolt shattered it. The artist shows her without the wheel, trampling Maxentius underfoot.

8 **Unknown Craftsman**
Spain
Chest with Leaf and Flower Motifs 15th century
walnut with traces of polychrome
gift of Norman B Spencer, 1968

When this ancient chest was first constructed, it was richly painted, but now only traces of red ochre and blue remain in the carved decorative features its side panels. Although woodworm long ago ate away much of the base, it is still a grand piece of furniture. We can only imagine what must have been stored in its capacious interior in previous centuries.

9 **Paris Bordone**
1500–1571 Italy
Madonna and Child with Saint Sebastian 16th century
oil on panel
purchased 1960

This painting is a type of *sacra conversazione*, the term given for the depiction of saints in conversation with the Virgin and Child. Saint Sebastian was believed to protect against disease, particularly the plague, while the Madonna and Child represent the overall protection given by the Church to its believers.

10 **Unknown artist**
17th–18th century Italy
In the Manner of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo 1692–1770 Italy
Two Saints in Adoration
oil on canvas
gift of Norman B Spencer, 1967

Scenes such as this were popular during the Baroque period, often having direct relevance to the region or church for which the work was painted. These two saints may be Saint Ignatius Loyola, in white, who founded the Jesuit movement in 1540, and Saint Luigi (Aloysius) Gonzaga, one of his young followers, who died of the plague in 1591 when he was only 23 years old.

11 **Unknown artist**
15th century France
Madonna and Child c1460
wood and gesso
purchased with funds from the Watson Bequest, 1965

The Madonna and Child was a favourite theme of Gothic sculptors, with wood the preferred material in the 15th century. The bold S-shaped curve of her figure reflects contemporary developments in style, as does the swag-like rhythmic folds of her drapery. The Virgin's warm expression and the child's mischievous smile indicate a leaning towards the popular realism and humanist focus of the Renaissance.

12 **Vincenzo Spisanelli**
1595–1662 Italy
The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine after 1620
oil on canvas
gift of J Yock Esq, 1960

In Christian art, placing a gold ring on a saint's finger symbolises their mystic marriage to God. Catherine of Alexandria is shown having her hand drawn towards Christ by the Virgin, watched by his cousin John the Baptist, who is holding his lamb.