



## Picture Study

### Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin* (1518)

When her life on earth was finished, Mary was taken up into Heaven body and soul. This mystery of our Faith is called the Assumption of Mary. Titian's painting of the Assumption shows Mary gazing upward with awe as she beholds the face of God. God the Father hovers over her in the painting with loving, outstretched arms. The lower part of the painting shows the awestruck apostles gazing upward and gesturing toward Mary.

Titian wanted viewers to experience what a glorious event the Assumption was, so he designed the painting on a huge scale. The *Assumption of the Virgin* is 23 feet tall and the figures are painted larger than life! As it hangs above the altar in a basilica in Venice, the painting's enormous size and height invite viewers to marvel at the glory of Heaven. Another way that Titian sought to communicate the grandeur of the Assumption was by using oil paints to produce hues that are full of life and energy.

Notice the rich, bright green in the robes of the apostles and angels, the light blue of the sky, the deeper blue of Mary's garment, and the rich and vibrant reds. Do you see the bright yellow light that surrounds Mary? This light represents the light of Heaven, so Titian painted it brighter than natural sunlight.



Notice how the gestures, glances, and upright postures of the apostles, angels, and Mary lead our eyes upward to God the Father. Our eyes are also led upward by Titian's use of the color red, which is the strongest color in the painting. Mary's red gown and the red garments of two apostles form a narrow triangle pointing to God the Father. The painting as a whole is a vertical composition, which again leads our eyes from the bottom of the painting to the top. Titian used the strong vertical composition to lead our thoughts and desires to the glory of Heaven. Like the apostles, we strain upward, wishing to follow Mary to our heavenly home.





“The Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death.”  
–Pius IX



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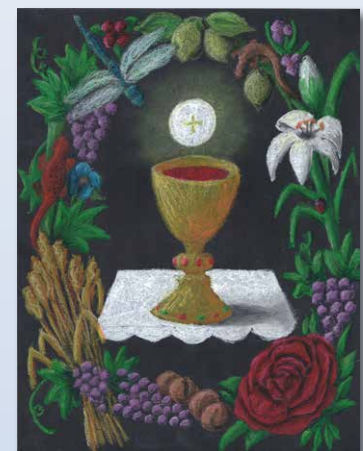
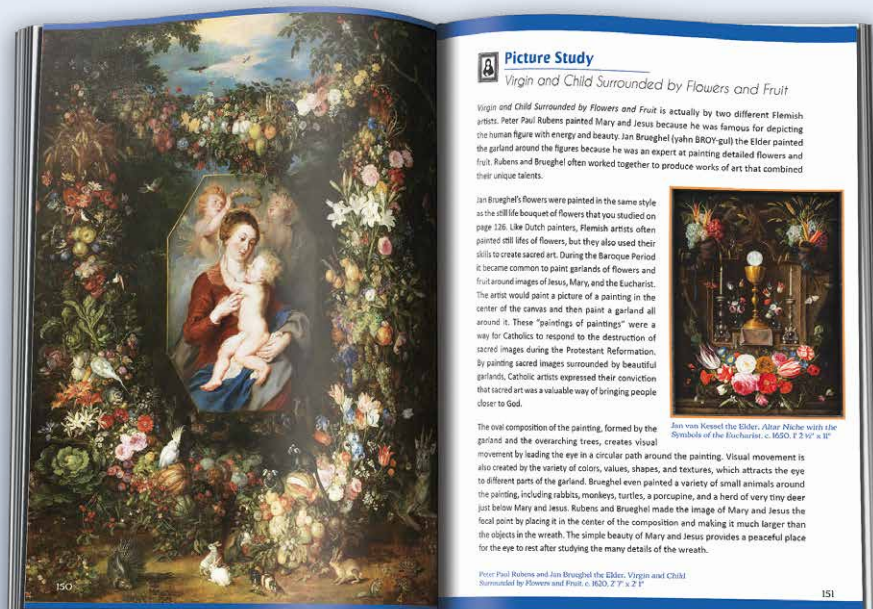
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