

***The
Meaning
of a 500+
Year-Old
Statue of
Mary &
Jesus.***

**THE PIETA:
THE ORIGINAL STATUE,
A METHODIST CHURCH'S REPLICa,
A LUTHERAN PASTOR'S SERMON,
A MUSEUM'S PLASTER CAST,
ON-LINE ACADEMY RESOURCE VIDEO**



Wikipedia public domain image of the Pieta by Michelangelo in St. Peter's, Vatican City.

On April 10 and 11, 2020, our Facebook group page featured a series of presentations related to the Pieta. Knowledgeable commentary and beautiful close-up views of Michelangelo's spiritually moving Pieta came from Khan Academy. The link is repeated below. The Academy, which lists as a free on-line educational resource, provided interesting observations and background information in plain language during its 3.5-minute video filmed at St. Peter's, Vatican City. The link: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/high-ren-florence-rome/michelangelo/v/michelangelo-piet-1498-1500>



From the Christ United Methodist Church website text describing both the original and the replica:

“At the age of 23, Michelangelo himself went to the quarries at Carrara, Italy to find pure veins of the best marble for the Pieta. He completed the

work in one year.

“Although the Pieta seems to be in realistic proportions, notice that Mary is larger than Christ. She would be seven feet tall if standing.

“The height and mass of Mary's garments transform what would be an awkward pose into a graceful pyramid composition. . . .

“This replica [right] was created in Pietrasanta, Italy, by Palla, one of the foremost sculptors in that country. It is one of two known replicas of Michelangelo's masterpiece in the United States. . . . The 6400 pound marble sculpture was shipped directly from Italy to Christ United Methodist Church in Salt Lake City, Utah.

“The replica is made from Carrara marble, the same material used in the original. The process of creating the replica began with many photographs and measurements of the original; the form of the replica was fashioned by drilling into the marble to desired depths and removing the excess stone.

“The more exact form was chiseled and the finished work polished to a high shine to match the original.”



In welcoming visitors to view the church art collection, the website noted, “At Christ UMC, we recognize art as one of the many ways we celebrate our faith and all of creation!”

“During the Middle Ages, the symbols and art created by prominent artists served as the Bible for the illiterate”

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Good Friday (3/29/2013), Rev. Daniel Mackey, pastor of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Muncie, Ind. , preached a sermon, beginning with the famed sculpture. From the web, we excerpt:

“The Pieta, Michelangelo’s famous statue of the grieving Virgin holding the corpse of the dead Jesus in her arms, is behind glass. After its trip to the World’s Fair in New York forty years ago, a deranged . . . man’s rampage [with a hammer] put the statue behind glass, and there is little chance that it will ever leave St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome again.

*We
were
given
a Word.
A Word of Life and Not
Death;
a Good
Word,
for this
the day
is named.*



“While it was at the World’s Fair, however, this piece of marble carved 400 years ago attracted the most attention among the modern wizardry and electronic gadgets. This statue of the Mother of God, holding the dead body of Jesus, was the center of attention. Michelangelo’s mastery has remained unmatched. Perhaps more important, the sorrowing Virgin Mother holding the corpse of her Son represents the universal tragedy from which no one is immune. Mothers are the source of life.

“The Book of Genesis says that Adam called his wife “Eve” because she was the mother of all the living (Gn 3:21). A mother holding the corpse of her son is a contradiction. Mothers bring life and not death. In the death of Jesus, the roles are reversed. The mother lives. The Son dies.

“For Christians, the statue of the Pieta symbolizes the

No images accompanied Pastor Mackey’s sermon on the Internet. This webmaster placed the image and caption here for its graphic interest and relevance to the subject discussed. The Queens, NYC, Museum FB page on March 6, 2014, featured a *Happy Birthday Michelangelo!* post with this image of its full-scale Michelangelo’s Pieta plaster cast then on display in its World’s Fair Visible Storage area. The real Pieta, shipped from the Vatican, was the high-art highlight of the 1964 fair. The museum is on the ex-fair grounds.

complete and utter corruption of humanity. It tells us the kind of people we really are and makes us focus on our own depravity.

Sins are not simply mistakes Sins are the nails that have put Jesus on the Cross what we are and what we have done has caused the death of the Son of God. Sin turns heaven and earth upside down and inside out.

“The One who brings life is dead and we, in whom the seed of death is planted, live. Sin takes the One who fills heaven and earth and confines Him to the tomb. The One who said about

Himself “as the Father has life in Himself, so that Father has given life to Him” is now dead (Jn 5:26).

“The body of Jesus stands in sharp contradiction to the words “I Am the Life” (Jn 14:6) Thanks be to God! The Pieta also symbolizes God’s total and overwhelming compassion for humanity. We should rest in the arms of our mothers as they wail and weep over our broken bodies—much as Eve wept for Abel . . . But it is Mary who weeps over Jesus. His side is pierced. A sword has pierced her soul also. . . .

“Her eyes are closed and her hands are raised in prayer. Her son is dead, yet she still turns to her God, His heavenly Father. No hope remains in this world. Her only hope—our only hope—is found in the Father who willingly offers His Son in sacrifice for the sins of the world (Jn 3:16). We likewise call upon the name of God in every trouble. He hears our soul’s complaint and grants us sublime succor in our desperate need.

“Taken from His mother’s arms, Jesus was laid in the tomb, thereby sanctifying our own graves. He rested for three days and was raised by the Father in glory. This is the Word Jesus promised to His disciples, and to His own mother, on many occasions before His crucifixion. It is this Word she was given to trust—this Word which Mary pondered and kept in her heart.

“Likewise, we are given a Word. A Word of Life and not Death. It is a Good Word, a Word of which this Friday is named. The author of life was murdered on a cross. Yet He lives. Death holds no sway over Him.

“So, too, you. Your victory is in Jesus’ death. He has taken your place in the cold and icy silence of the tomb. He emptied His veins so that red life might stream again in yours. Death is not the end. You shall live in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, serving under Him in His kingdom, just as He lives and reigns to all eternity. Behold your dead God—“*Gott selbst ist tot*”—and rejoice because He is the God of the living. And nothing can separate you from your God: “Neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rm 8)



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The vandal smashed the hammer into the stature’s Marian face, breaking off a large piece of nose and gouging a piece out of the left eye. He also broke off the fingers on her outstretched hand before Vatican guards finally subdued him. In all, some 50 pieces lay scattered about the Basilica floor.

Over the next year, Vatican art restorers worked with precision equipment to repair the damage done. The end of the Madonna’s nose and the eyelid near the corner of her eye were glued back into place. Synthetic marble was used to repair the remaining damage done to the eye.

Image of face damage and after some repair sourced NYWF.com webhost Bill Young to Life Magazine The Beat of Life, Volume 73 #22, Dec. 1, 1972