



A TALE OF TWO GARDENS

UNDERSTANDING *THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST*

OVERVIEW

- Introduction to Passion art
- Why do we meditate on the Passion of Christ?
- The Garden of Eden and the Garden of Gethsemane
- Mary the New Eve



EARLY PASSION ART

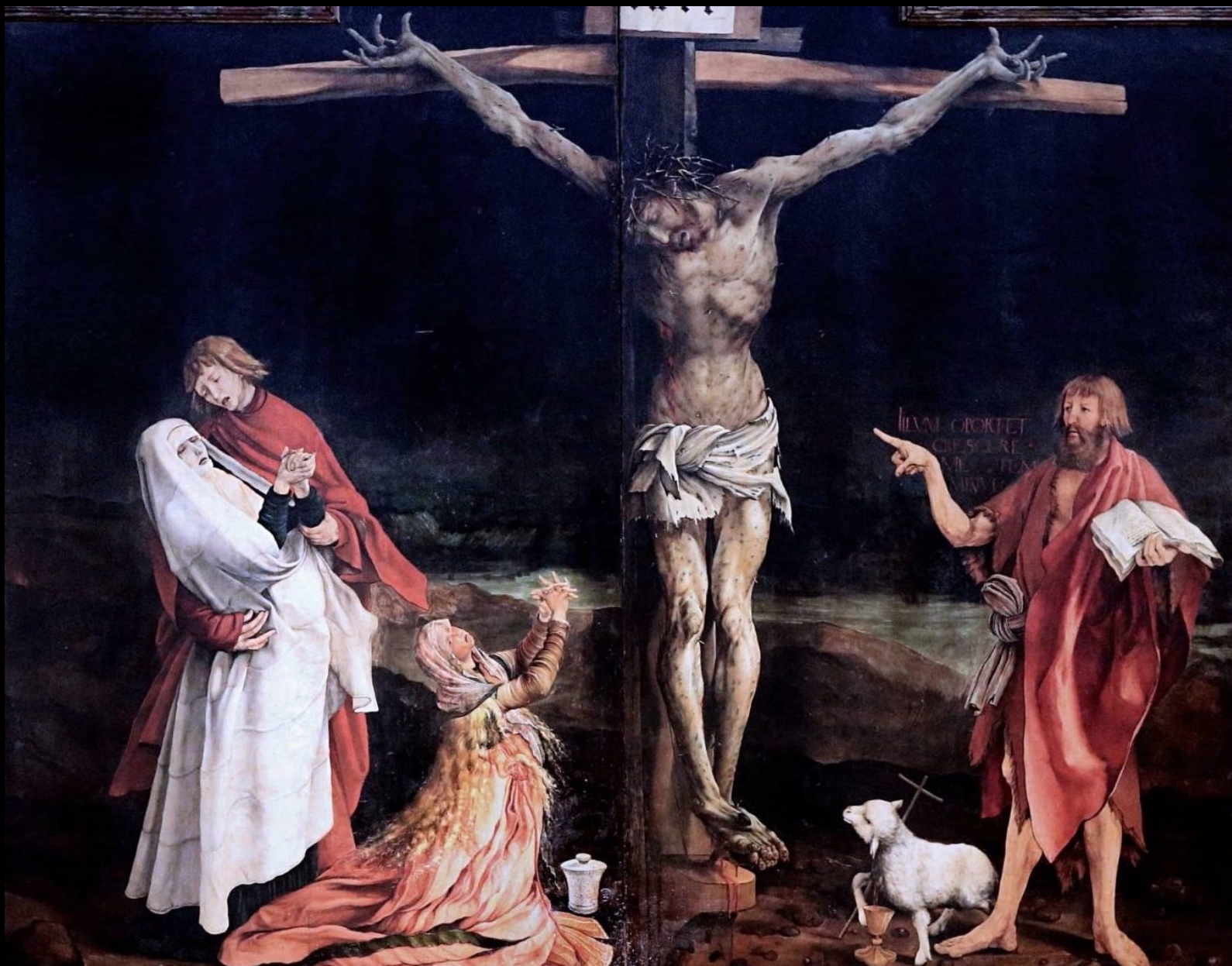
Ivory Casket Crucifixion of Christ 420 AD



THE ISENHEIM ALTARPIECE 1516 AD

- The Hospital of St Anthony
– Isenheim France





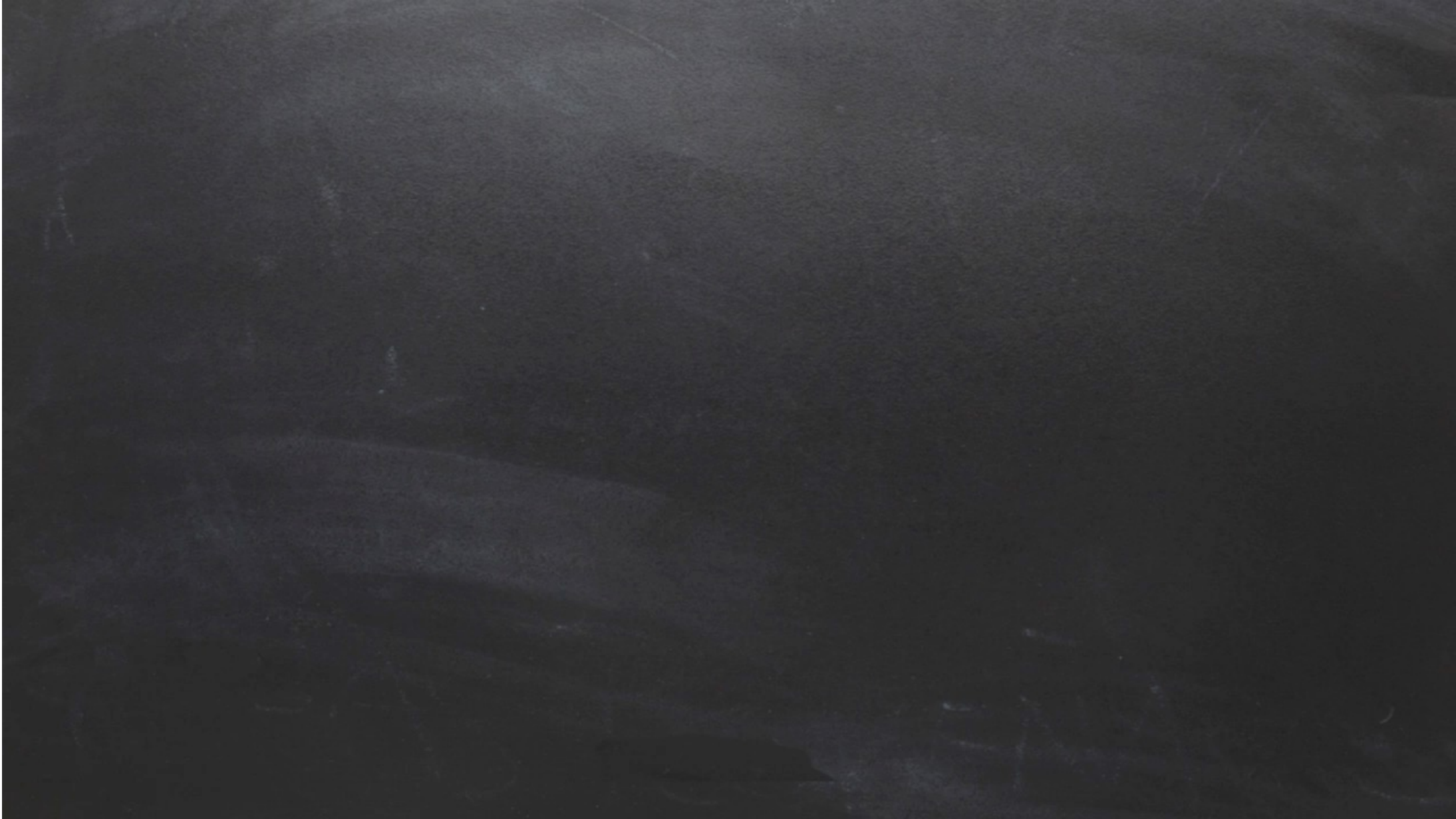
The Antonine monks commissioned the altarpiece as a gift for their sick and suffering patients.

Why?

WHY DO WE MEDITATE ON CHRIST'S PASSION?

- These works of art are meant to reveal the extent that God desires communion with us. Looking at the cross allows us to face the terrifying dominion that suffering and sin has over our lives. We are meant to recognize the struggle, betrayal, violence, tyranny, and pain that Christ experienced and that is present in our own lives.
- Jesus defined love as self-sacrifice for the sake of the beloved. Undergoing His Passion was a way to teach His disciples what this meant:

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15:13





TWO REACTIONS TO SUFFERING/LIMITATIONS

REBELLION

- Sees no purpose in pain; no final destiny; no mission.
- Suffering is opaque as a heavy curtain. Natural for the soul to rebel.
- Temptations to despair or bitterness.

*Two looked out through prison bars
One saw mud; the other stars*

RECEIVE

- Seen as a means to an end; opening on to something new. Transparent.
- Active cooperation with the will of God. Making the sacrifices called for by love.
- Becoming emptied – so as to make room in our hearts to bring God's own life and glory into this world.



IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- Can sufferings and limitations be rendered not only acceptable but desirable?
- How do we pass over from a life of bitterness and enslavement to a life consecrated to God?

“Come, follow me” –Matthew 4:19



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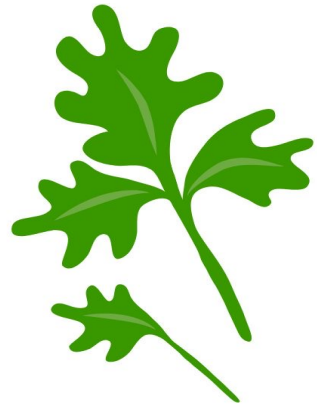
The Garden of Eden



The Garden of Gethsemane



BEFORE ENTERING THE GARDEN...

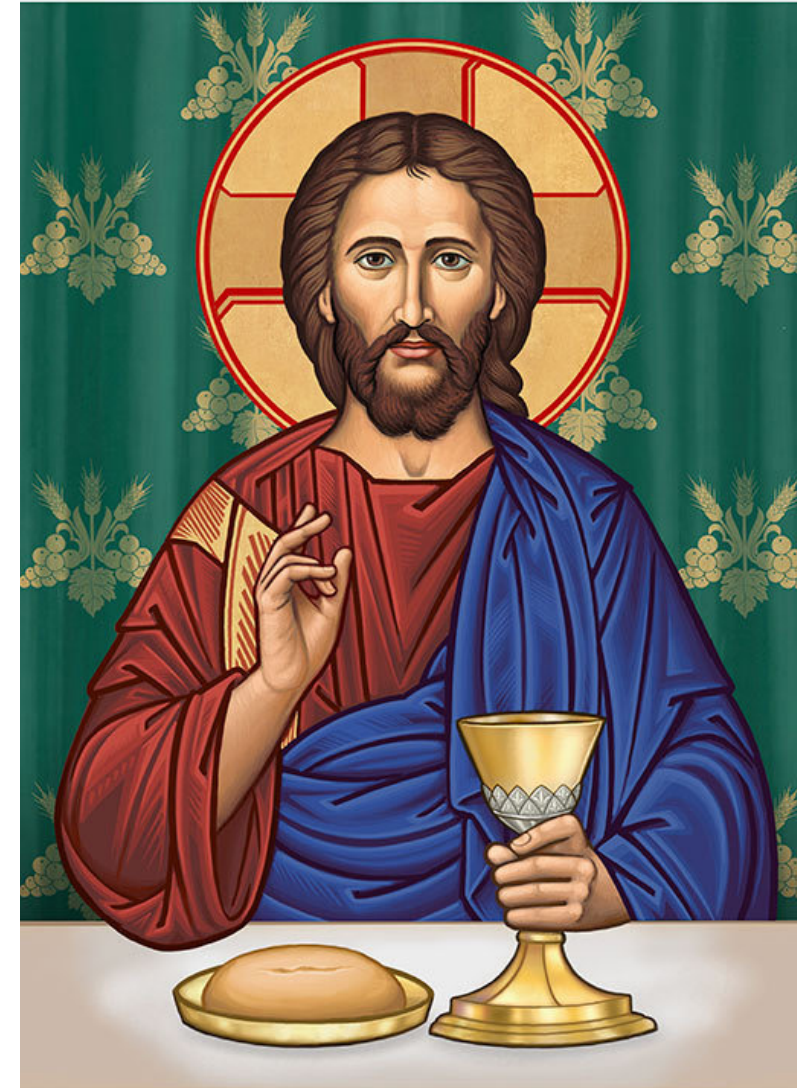


The Lord celebrated the Last Supper with His closest friends.

“I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you” Luke 22:15



- Ceremonial Washing: Baptism; Renewed in Confession; Holy Water
- Bitter Herbs: Remembrance of the bitter slavery of sin; the Confiteor to prepare for Mass
- Matzah: 'The Bread of Affliction'. The Offertory; fruit of the earth.
- Wine: 'The Cup of Blessing'. The Offertory; fruit of the vine.
- The 4th Cup: The Crucifixion of our Lord.
- Sacrificial Lamb: The offerings of Bread and Wine are Consecrated; now the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus the Christ; the Lamb of God is present on the Altar and given to each one in communion.



GETHSEMANE = GAT SHEMANIM (THE OIL PRESS)



- The 'oil press' evokes a place of painful crushing and fruitful transformation.
- Olive oil was used to nourish the body, heal wounds, anoint priests, prophets, and kings, and light lamps.
- In the garden, Christ too was crushed "being sorrowful unto death...being in agony" Everything we use at Mass is crushed - grapes and wheat.
- Jesus freely receives suffering. He is Jesus the Christ – Anointed One – Messiah.

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The Garden of Eden

- It was a crisis of faith, hope, and love that led to the human family's rebellion against God and allowed sin and evil to enter human history.



The Garden of Gethsemane

- The new Garden of Eden. A spiritual battle is taking place.
- God promised to send a Redeemer who would save us from the clutches of evil.
- To do so the Redeemer would have to reverse Adam's disobedience. In the face of the alluring voice of evil he would have to keep his trust in God.

THE NATURE OF THE BATTLE

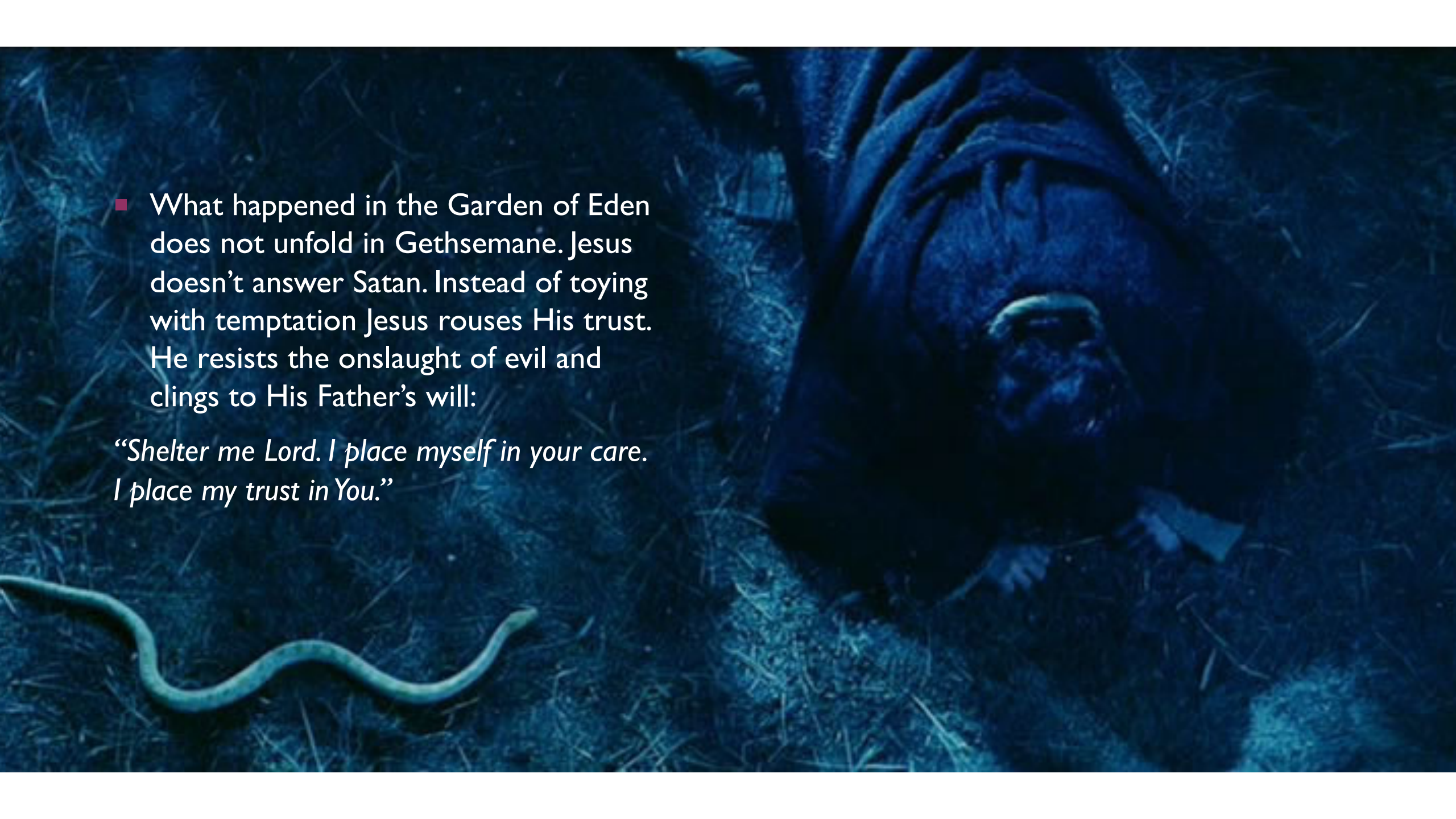
- The powers of darkness launch an assault on Christ's inner life – here in the garden – and then on His physical and relational life.
- These sufferings were to test Christ's trust to make Him turn his back on his Father as Adam had done in Eden.
- He would usher in a new Creation, a new era of reconciliation with God.





CONVERSATION WITH THE DEVIL

- In the Garden of Eden the devil instigated Adam and Eve's rebellion by engaging them in a little conversation. His words made them doubt God's goodness, stirred up envy, and made their healthy, humble obedience to their Creator seem like tyrannical slavery.
- In the film, the devil attempts to derail Jesus' mission. Jesus does not engage in conversation.

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- What happened in the Garden of Eden does not unfold in Gethsemane. Jesus doesn't answer Satan. Instead of toying with temptation Jesus rouses His trust. He resists the onslaught of evil and clings to His Father's will:

*“Shelter me Lord. I place myself in your care.
I place my trust in You.”*



MARY, THE NEW EVE

- When humanity fell, Adam and Eve fell together, male and female.
- It was appropriate that when it was redeemed by a new 'Adam', another 'Eve' should have a role to play as well.
- Mary is there to support and strengthen her son and actively engages with Him in the mission of salvation.
- She is filled with grief but also great courage.



- Genesis states that God will place 'enmity between the serpent and the woman.' Mary is the only character, besides Christ, who actually sees Satan.
- Mary strengthens her Son in the very moment of His offering.



TO CONCLUDE



‘When Jesus had received the wine, He said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed His head and gave up his spirit.’

John 19:30



■ 1 O sacred Head surrounded
By crown of piercing thorn!
O bleeding Head, so wounded,
Reviled and put to scorn!
The pow'r of death comes o'er you,
The glow of life decays,
Yet angel hosts adore you
And tremble as they gaze.

■ 2 I see your strength and vigor
All fading in the strife,
And death with cruel rigor,
Bereaving you of life;
O agony and dying!
O love to sinners free!
Jesus, all grace supplying,
O turn your face on me.

■ 3 In this, your bitter passion,
Good Shepherd, think of me
With your most sweet compassion,
Unworthy though I be:
Beneath your cross abiding
For ever would I rest,
In your dear love confiding,
And with your presence blest.




- Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

- Psalm 31:2-25

R. Father into your hands I commend my spirit.

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- 1 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 - 2 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 - 3 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
 - 4 Were you there when the stone was rolled away?
Were you there when the stone was rolled away?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the stone was rolled away?

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- Psalm 22
 - Closing Hymn; Were You There?