

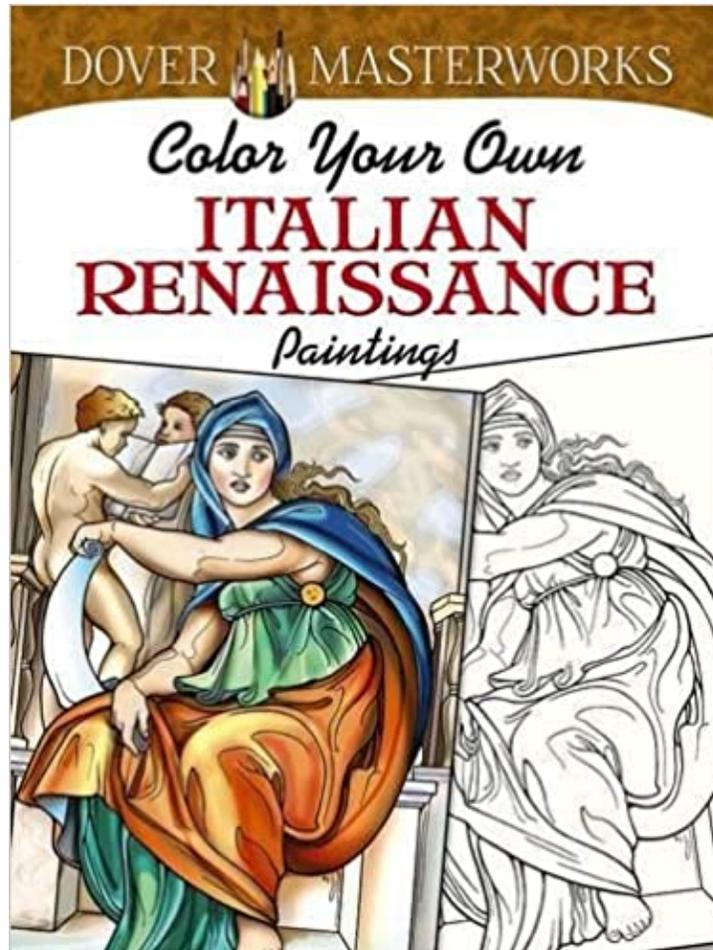


# Renaissance Art Masterpieces

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This compilation of Renaissance Art Masterpieces is meant to complement *Dover Masterworks: Color Your Own Renaissance Art Masterpieces*, by Marty Noble.



This coloring book contains 30 pictures to color. From these, I have chosen 18 which I think will be most appealing to children. I encourage you to study and discuss these paintings with your children.

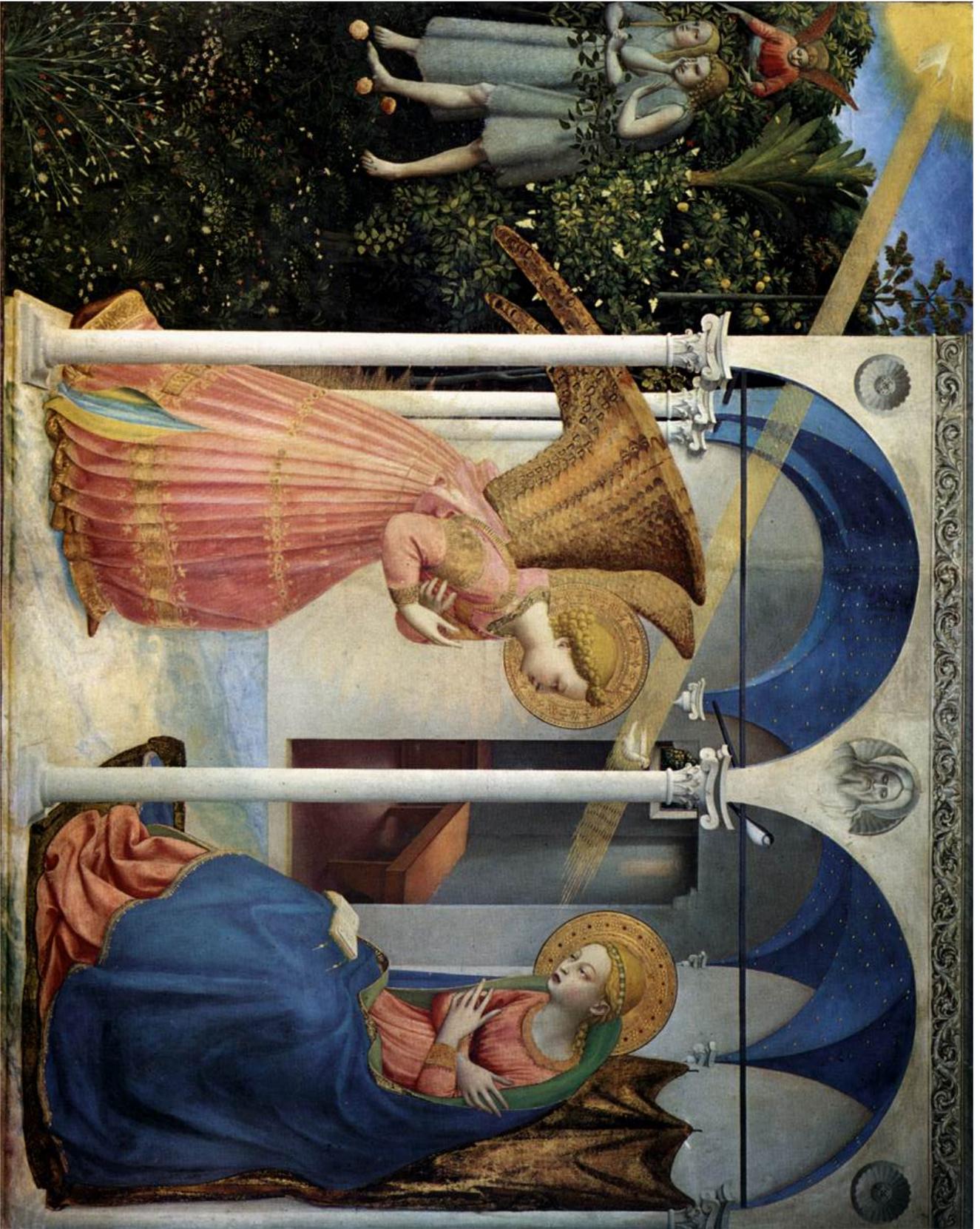
If your children are old enough to be detail-oriented, give them a set of pencil crayons that has several shades of each color. For example, Crayola has a set of 120 pencil crayons with no repeat colors. Encourage them to match the colors as closely as possible as they color and even to blend their colors.

Another great resource to go along with this is the card game, *Go Fish for Renaissance Artists*.

## Five Characteristics of Renaissance Art

1. An interest in Greek and Roman art and mythology. Many Renaissance artists painted Greek and Roman gods and goddesses.
2. A love for the nobility and beauty of human kind.
3. The use of painting techniques that make a painting look three dimensional.
4. Realistic-looking art and attention to detail. The figures in Renaissance art look more natural than in Medieval art.
5. The use of symmetry and balance. Many paintings feature a triangular form because the triangle is symmetrical and stable.

As you study the following paintings, see if you can identify any of these characteristics.



## ***The Annunciation, Fra Angelico***

c. 1432 - 34

- Painted for the cloth merchant Giovanni di Cola di Cecco for the church of San Domenico in Cortona.
- Depicts the moment when the Archangel Gabriel asks Mary if she would be the Mother of the Son of God.
- Can you find:
  - The Holy Spirit,
  - God the Father,
  - Adam and Eve
- What do you notice about the way Angel Gabriel and Mary are holding their hands?
- Notice the following:
  - the ruffles on Gabriel's robe
  - the texture of Gabriel's wings
  - the detail of the flowers in the garden
- Compare Mary's halo with Gabriel's halo. How are they different? How are they similar?
- Why do you think Fra Angelico included the scene of Adam and Eve being sent from the Garden of Eden in this painting?
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



**San Zaccaria, Giovanni Bellini**  
1505

- This is a part of a larger painting: *The Sacred Conversation*.



- It depicts the Infant Jesus with his Blessed Mother. To their left is St. Peter and St. Catherine. To the right is St. Lucy and St. Jerome.
- Notice the following:
  - the embroidery on St. Lucy's dress
  - the fluffiness of St. Jerome's beard
- How would you describe St. Lucy's expression? How would you describe St. Jerome's expression?
- Why do you think St. Lucy is holding?
- Compare the postures of St. Lucy and St. Catherine. How are they similar?
- Compare the postures of St. Peter and St. Jerome. How are they similar?
- This painting is very symmetrical. Where would you draw the line of symmetry?
- This painting is full of triangles. For example, the heads of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Catherine, and St. Lucy make a triangle. How many other triangles can you find?

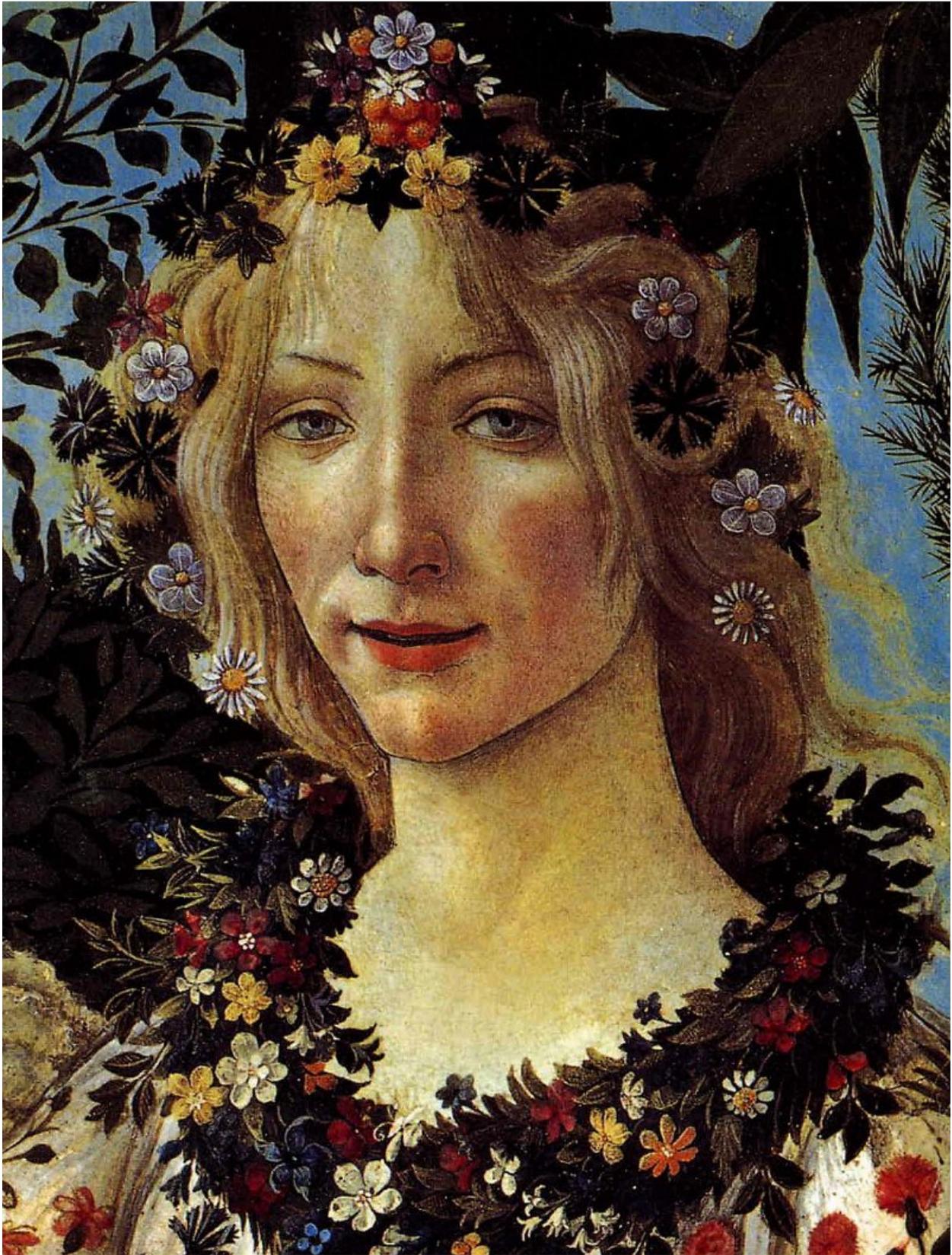


## ***St. Jerome Reading in the Country, Giovanni Bellini***

c. 1480-90

- This painting depicts St. Jerome, a Doctor of the Church who translated the bible into Latin. In this painting St. Jerome is surrounded by nature, far away from the walled city.
- This is a good example of a painting that looks three-dimensional. Look how large and close-up the rocks are in the foreground and how small the mountains and the towers look in the background. This gives the painting depth.
- Can you find the lion? There is a story that St. Jerome tamed a lion.
- Can you find the white dove? It might be a symbol of the Holy Spirit.
- Notice how puffy the clouds look and how puffy St. Jerome's beard looks.
- Notice the many different shades of blue Bellini uses to paint the sky. which shade of blue best matches St. Jerome's robe?
- Compare this painting to an earlier rendition, painted in 1480. How are they similar? How are they different? Which do you like better? Why?





## ***Primavera*, Sandro Botticelli**

c.1482

- This is a close up of Flora, Goddess of Flowers, in the painting *Primavera*, which means “Spring”.



- Renaissance artists were very interested in Greek and Roman mythology. This painting depicts gods and goddesses from classic mythology. The characters, from left to right are: the messenger god Mercury, the Three Graces (dancing in white), Venus the goddess of love, Flora the goddess of flowers, and Flora being chased by a figure representing the West Wind. The god Cupid flies above Venus.
- What kind of fruit is in the trees? Who is picking the fruit?
- What is Cupid about to do?
- Notice the contrast between light and dark. What figures are very bright? What is very dark?
- Draw some of the flowers on Flora below:



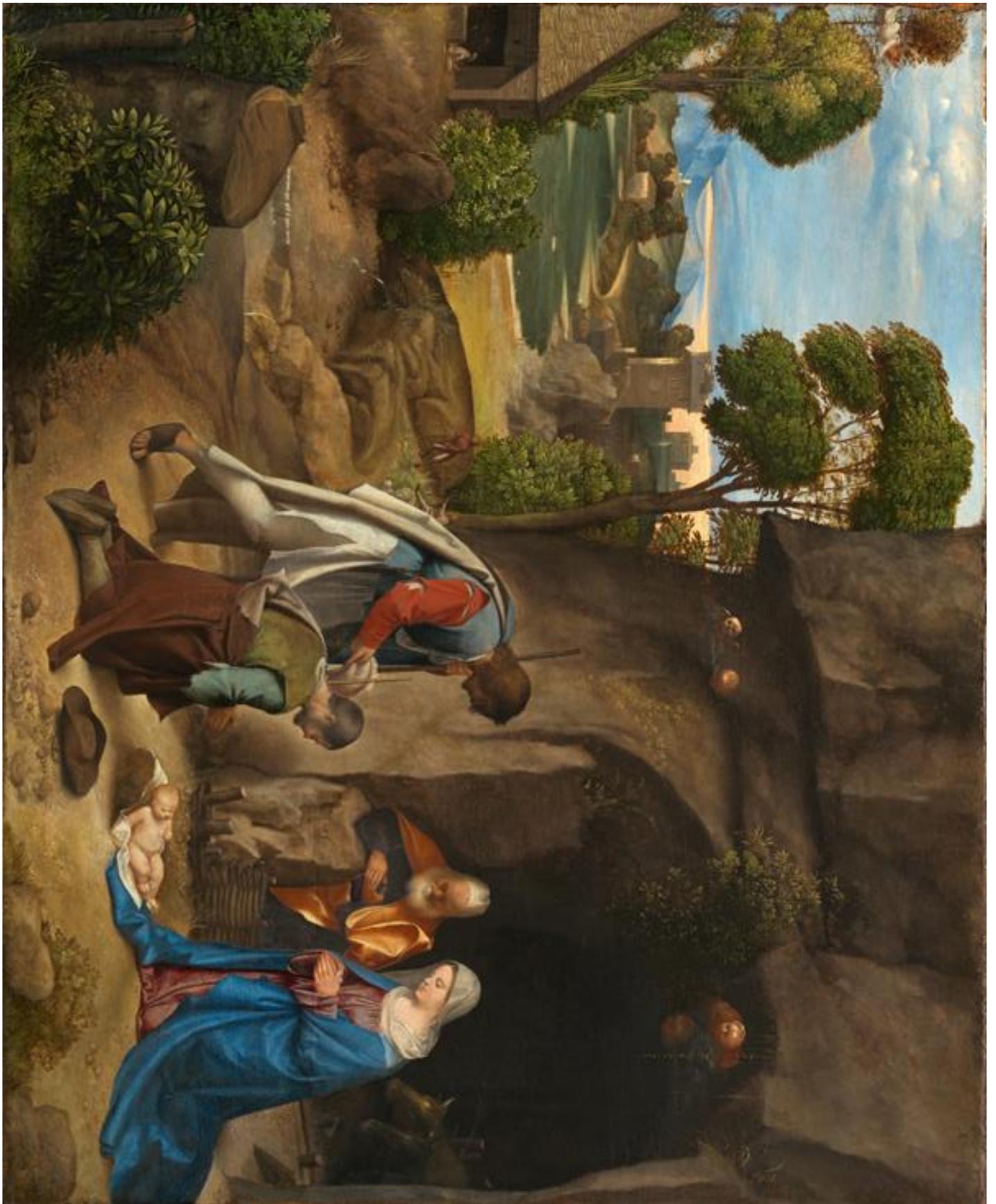
***The Inspiration of St. Matthew*, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio  
1602**

- This painting depicts St. Matthew writing the gospel while being inspired by an angel.
- What do you notice about the background? Why do you think Caravaggio made the background so dark?
- What shape does the angel's robe make?
- Look carefully at St. Matthew's posture. Look at the position of his legs and look at the stool. Is the stool in a stable position or does it look like it could fall over? Has Matthew been sitting and writing for a long time, or did he run to the table start writing and capture the inspiration? Explain your answer.
- Look at the angel's fingers. It appears that the angel is telling St. Matthew what to write while counting the ideas on his fingers.
- Think of three words to describe the expression on St. Matthew's face.
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



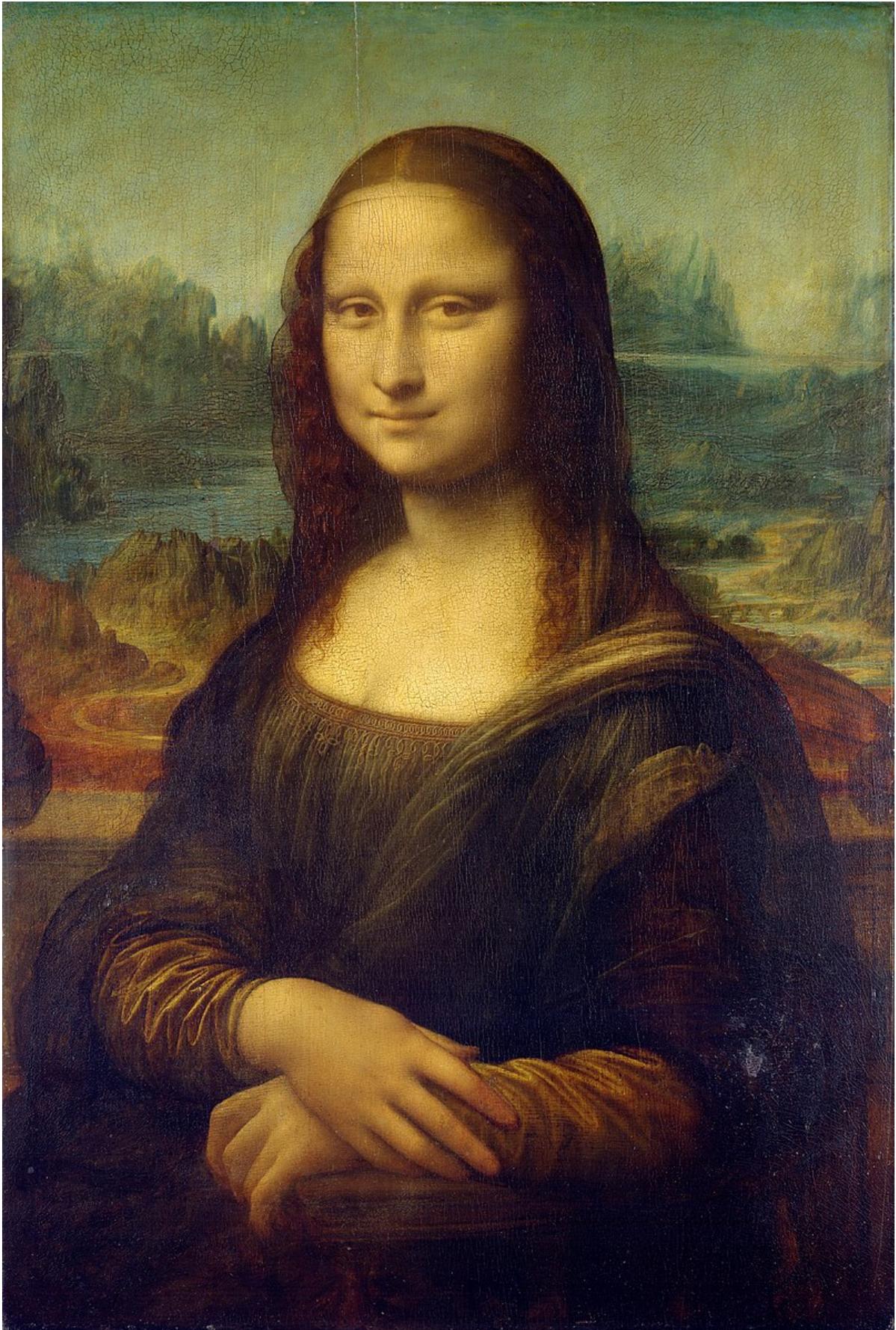
***The Three Philosophers, Giorgione***  
**c. 1509**

- Scholars cannot agree on what this painting depicts. Some think the three men depict the three ages of man: young, middle-aged, and old. Some think they depict three different ages of civilization (the man in gold from Ancient Greece, the man in red from the Middle Ages, and the man with a green robe from the Renaissance). Still others believe they represent three temperaments (or personalities).
- What details in the painting would support the idea that it depicts the three ages of man?
- What details in the painting would support the idea that it depicts three ages of civilizations?
- What details in the painting would support the idea that it depicts three different temperaments?
- What do you think this painting depicts? Why?
- Notice: the old man is holding a document with astronomical symbols; the young man is holding mathematical tools.
- Look at the expression on each of the faces. What is each person looking at? What do you think each person is thinking?
- Giorgione loved nature; notice how he makes the figures almost secondary by placing them at the side of the picture instead of in the center.
- Can you find:
  - the setting sun
  - a city
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



***The Adoration of the Shepherds, Giorgione***  
**1505-1510**

- This painting depicts the shepherds adoring the Infant Jesus.
- In the Gospel of Luke, it says that the shepherds found the infant lying in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes.
- How does this painting differ from St. Luke's gospel? In this painting, what is the Infant Jesus wearing? What is he lying on?
- Rather than being an accurate depiction of St. Luke's gospel, Giorgione is using symbolism: the naked Infant Jesus symbolizes the Eucharist. The rock represents the altar stone on which the Eucharist lies at every Mass. Jesus is lying on a white cloth which is a part of Mary's blue robe. This represents the white altar cloth.
- What color is St. Joseph's robe? His gold robe shows us that he is from the royal lineage of King David.
- Look at the shepherds' clothing. What do you notice about the sleeve of the shepherd who is standing? Why do you suppose it is ripped?
- Can you find:
  - an angel
  - an ox and ass
  - two men in the distance
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



***Mona Lisa, Leonardo da Vinci***  
**c. 1503-1519**

- This painting is a portrait of Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco Gherardini. It is one of the world's most famous paintings.
- What makes this painting so famous is Mona Lisa's mysterious expression. Think of three words to describe her expression.
- What do you think she is thinking about?
- Look carefully at Mona Lisa's face. What is unusual about her face?
- She has no eyebrows! It was fashionable for women at that time to shave off their eyebrows! How would you like to shave off your eyebrows?
- Look carefully at Mona Lisa's hair. What is she wearing over her hair?
- She is wearing a very thin, translucent veil.
- How old do you think Mona Lisa is in this portrait?
- Can you find:
  - a winding road
  - a bridge
- What else do you see in the background?
- Notice that Mona Lisa is life-like and close-up, whereas the background is rather vague. When taking photographs, many photographers like to make a similar effect, focusing on the main subject while making the background a little hazy.
- If you have an iPhone, you can take a picture of someone with a similar effect using portrait mode. Give it a try!
- *Sfumato*, which means "vanished", is a technique where a painter gradually shades one color into another to create soft outlines or hazy forms. Da Vinci perfected this technique. Look at the picture and find examples where one color blends into another.



***Virgin of the Rocks, Leonardo da Vinci***  
**1491-1508**

- This painting features the Blessed Virgin Mary with St. John the Baptist and the infant child Jesus with an angel.
- Observe the hand gestures of each of the figures. What are each of them doing with their hands? They seem to be communicating. What do you think each of the figures are saying?
- Who is each of the figures looking at?
- Notice: the ripples in Mary's hair, the pendant holding her cloak, the folds in her dress, the detail on the leaves
- How does Da Vinci use light and dark to draw our eyes to each of the figures?
- Describe the background.
- Do you remember what *Sfumato* means? *Sfumato* is a technique where a painter gradually shades one color into another to create soft outlines or hazy forms. Da Vinci perfected this technique. Look at the picture and find examples where one color blends into another.
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



**The *Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, Leonardo da Vinci  
c. 1508**

- This picture depicts St. Anne, The Virgin Mary, and the infant Jesus. St. Anne was the Virgin Mary's mother.
- What is very odd about this picture? Who or what is Mary sitting on? Some scholars think this symbolizes family lineage; that St. Anne is the mother of Mary.
- Look at St. Anne's face and look at Mary's face. What do you notice? Does St. Anne look like Mary's mother? Why do you think da Vinci painted St. Anne with such a youthful face?
- What is the infant Jesus grasping? This symbolizes Jesus' passion and that Jesus is the Lamb of God.
- Who is St. Anne looking at? Who is the Virgin Mary looking at? Who is Jesus looking at?
- What shape is made by the three figures? Clue: St. Anne's head is the top of the shape.
- Notice: the detail on the rocks, the folds in Mary's clothing, the curls in Jesus' hair, St. Anne's veil that is nearly transparent.
- Describe the background.
- Do you think da Vinci used *sfumato* in this painting? Why or why not?
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



***Delphic Sybil, Michelangelo***  
**1509**

- The Delphic Sybil is one of the twelve prophetic figures painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. People in the ancient world believed that she chanted her prophecies from the "Sibyl Rock", a natural platform made of rock located near the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. The Greeks believed that she even prophesied that Helen of Sparta would be the cause of the Trojan War. She is included in the Sistine Chapel because she predicted the coming of Christ. She is also included along with four other pagan sibyls to show that the coming of the Messiah was for all people and nations.
- What is the Delphic Sybil sitting on?
- What is she holding?
- Look at her hair and cloak. It looks as if the wind were blowing them. It is the wind of the Spirit blowing.
- The boy behind her is reading from a scroll. What is unusual about the boy behind her? What is unusual about the figure looking at the boy?
- Look at the expression on the Sybil's face as she listens to what the boy is reading. Look how wide open her eyes are. Think of three words to describe her expression.
- For a virtual tour of the Sistine Chapel, see this link: [https://www.vatican.va/various/cappelle/sistina\\_vr/index.html](https://www.vatican.va/various/cappelle/sistina_vr/index.html). Can you find the Delphic Sybil?
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



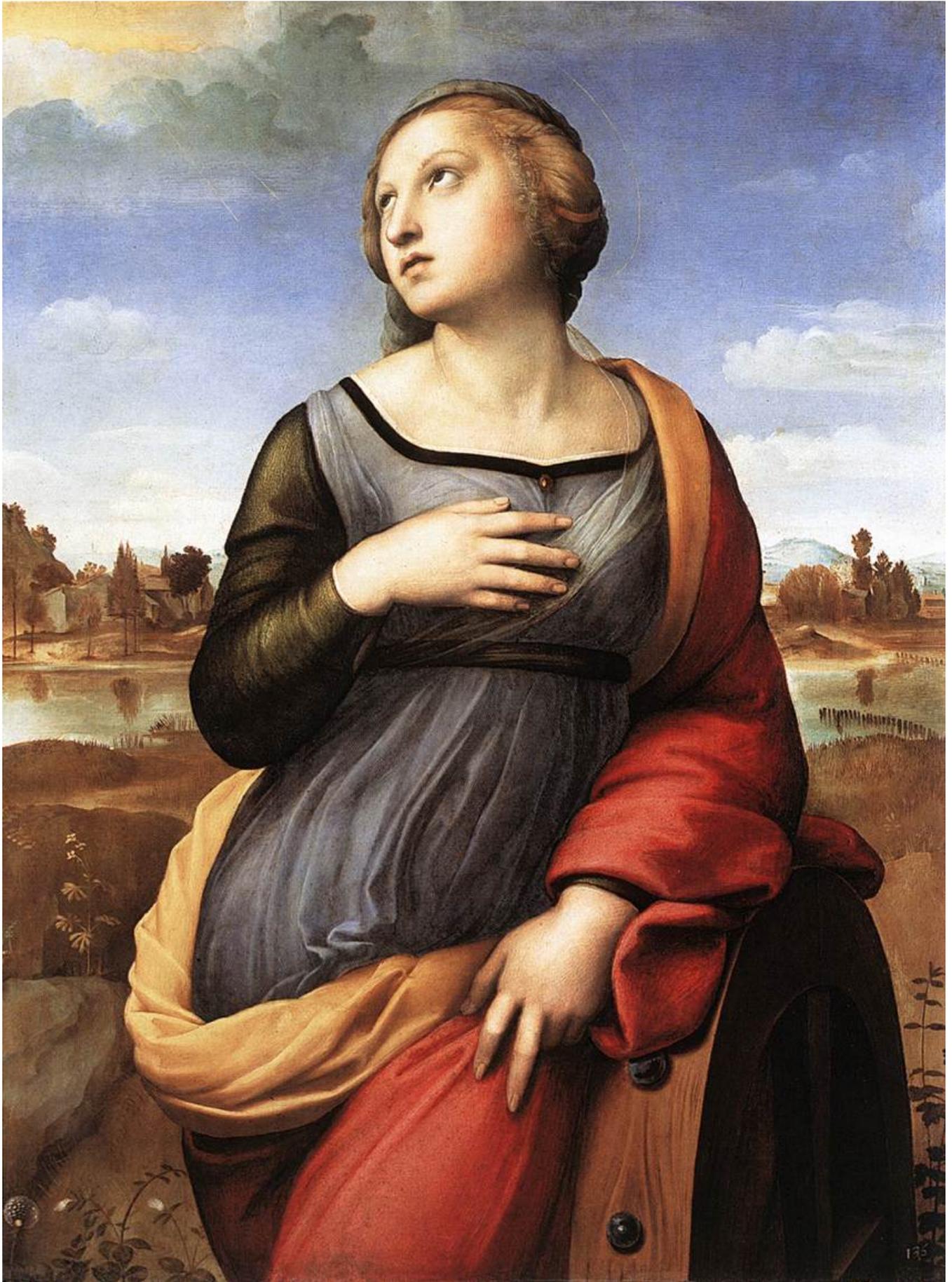
***The Virgin and Child with Saints George and Anthony, Pisanello***  
**c. 1445**

- This painting is divided into two halves. At the top the Infant Jesus embraces His Blessed Mother. In the bottom half, Abbot St. Anthony looks upon the knight St. George.
- Notice that the Blessed Mother and Jesus are in the middle of a golden sun, perhaps referring to the bible passage in Revelation 12 of a woman clothed with the sun.
- How would you describe the expression on the Blessed Mother's face?
- Look at St. Anthony. What is he holding in his right hand? What about his left hand?
- Describe St. Anthony's expression. Why do you think he is looking like that?
- Look at St. George. He is dressed in the armor of a fifteenth century knight and wears a fashionable hat. How does his clothing differ from St. Anthony's?
- What is the animal next to St. George? Describe what it is wearing.
- What is the animal at St. George's feet? It is a dragon, and what is it snarling at?
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



***The Sistine Madonna, Raphael Sanzio***  
**1512**

- This painting depicts a vision of the Blessed Mother holding the Infant Jesus. She comes from Heaven and brings Christ to the world. At her left kneels St. Sixtus; at her right is St. Barbara. Both were third century martyrs.
- Pope Julius commissioned Raffaello to paint this for the monastery church of San Sisto in Piacenza.
- Who is the Blessed Mother and the Infant Jesus looking at?
- Who is St. Sixtus looking at? What is he doing with his hands? This posture suggests that he is interceding for us and showing the Blessed Mother the way to us.
- Who is St. Barbara looking at?
- Look at the cherubs at the bottom of the painting. What do you think they are thinking? The story goes that the woman Raphael used as a model for this painting would bring her two young children along. Noticing their facial expressions, he decided to include them in the painting as two cherubs.
- What is in the background? Look very carefully at the clouds at the top of the painting. Do you see faces? These are the faces of angels.
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



***St. Catherine of Alexandria, Raphael Sanzio***  
**1508**

- This is a painting of St. Catherine of Alexandria, who lived during the third century. The scholarly daughter of the governor of Alexandria, St. Catherine converted to Christianity after seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus. She was so brilliant that she converted almost everyone who came to speak to her, including several pagan philosophers and scholars whom the Emperor sent to debate with her. St. Catherine suffered many tortures and scourges for refusing to renounce her faith and was eventually beheaded.
- Notice that Raphael uses rich colors for St. Catherine's clothing. Name the colors.
- What do you think St. Catherine looking at? What does this suggest?
- What is St. Catherine leaning on? It is a wheel, a breaking wheel, an instrument used for torture. Emperor Maximilian wanted to use it on her but when she touched the wheel, it shattered.
- What do you see in the background?
- Can you find:
  - the reflection of the trees in the water?
  - little white flowers
  - St. Catherine's halo
  - rays of the sun coming through the clouds
  - a distant mountain
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



***Madonna della seggiola, Raphael Sanzio***  
**1513 -1514**

- This painting depicts Mary sitting in a chair and holding the Child Jesus in an embrace while young St. John the Baptist looks at the two. This is Raphael's most humanistic rendering of Mary, meaning that in this painting she looks more like an earthly mother than a heavenly one.
- Notice that Raphael again uses vibrant colors, as he did in his painting of St. Catherine.
- Why do you think Raphael painted this with a black background?
- Who is Mary looking at? Who is Jesus looking at?
- How is St. John the Baptist holding his hands?
- What is St. John the Baptist holding in his arm?
- Notice: Jesus' halo is not a circle, but a cross. However, you can only see part of the cross.
- Notice the detail on Mary's scarf: the beautiful embroidery and the gold fringe.
- How does this painting differ from all the other paintings in this set? Clue: Think of the shape.
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



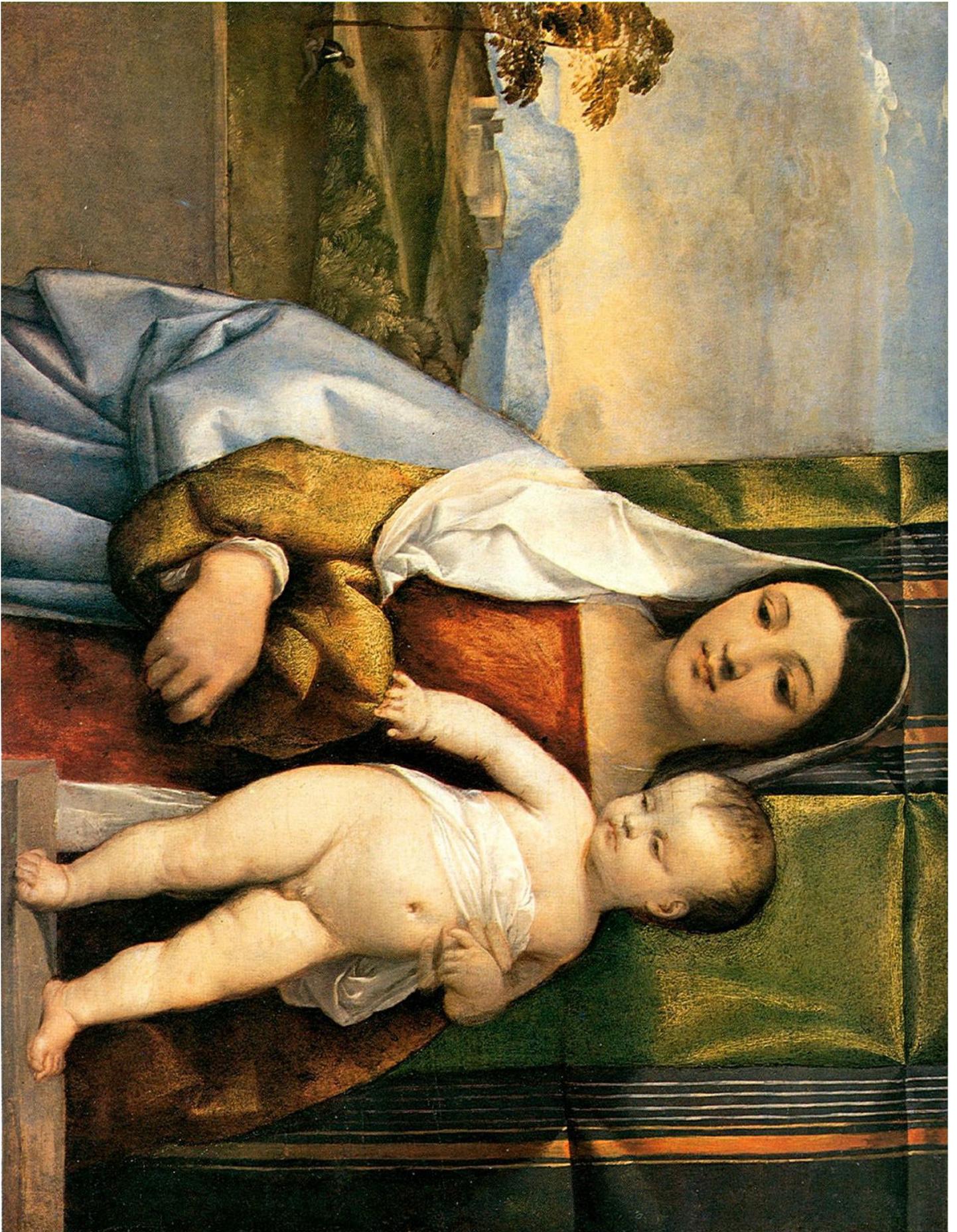
***Creation of the Animals, Jacopo Tintoretto***  
**1550**

- This painting depicts God the Father creating the animals. In front of Him are birds of the air and the fish of the sea. Behind and below Him are the animals of the land. God is shown in a blaze of light.
- This painting is full of motion. What do you see in the painting that shows forward motion?
- Why do you think Tintoretto painted God with a red cloak?
- How do you imagine God the Father?
- Notice the details on the feathers on the birds and the scales on the fish. Can you almost feel the textures?
- Can you find:
  - a rabbit
  - a unicorn
  - a deer
  - a swan
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



***The Visitation, Jacopo Tintoretto***  
**c. 1588**

- This painting depicts Mary coming to visit her cousin Elizabeth after hearing from the angel Gabriel that Elizabeth was with child.
- St. Joseph is sitting beneath a tree behind Mary, while Zacharias stands behind Elizabeth.
- What shape do the form of Mary and Elizabeth make? Clue: Elizabeth's head is the top of the shape.
- It almost looks as if Mary is stumbling and Elizabeth has caught hold of her. Do you think this is what is really happening in the picture? If so, why? If not, what do you think is happening at this moment in the painting?
- Compare this painting with Tintoretto's *Creation of the Animals*. How are they similar? Can you tell they are by the same painter? Why or why not?
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?



***Gypsy Madonna*, Titian  
c. 1510**

- This painting depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Infant Jesus. It was originally titled *The Virgin and Child* but later became known as *The Gypsy Madonna* because Mary and Jesus are portrayed with dark hair.
- What shape does Mary's form make?
- Does Mary or Jesus have a halo in this painting?
- Describe Mary's expression. Describe Jesus' expression.
- Find:
  - the knight sitting in the distance
  - the distant castle
- Look at Jesus' hands. What is he holding?
- Which of the five characteristics of Renaissance Art do you see in this painting?