

HOLY WOMEN - HOLY MEN

Christian Saints in European Prints

Saints, or holy women and men, recognized for leading especially pious and devout lives, have served as intermediaries between Christians and God for nearly two millennia. Many Christians pray to saints to intercede with God on their behalf for aid and protection. Some saints are historically documented persons while others appear to have emerged from legends. Many are martyrs who gave their lives for their faith, whereas some are venerated for their rejection of society to pursue quiet lives devoted to God. Others are noted for their charitable acts. Common to the legends of all saints is their performance of miracles to aid those who have appealed to them. Many saints are said to have performed such miracles during their lifetimes, while others are thought to have done so from heaven. Through their deeds many saints have come to be revered as patrons of specific causes, professions, or locales.

Over the centuries saints have served as a rich source of subject matter in the visual arts. Their depictions have formed the basis of countless paintings, sculptures, prints, and other art forms. Saints are usually shown with halos and are typically associated with specific attributes or symbols by which they can be visually identified, such as a lion for St. Jerome or the keys to heaven for St. Peter. Martyr saints often hold a palm branch and an object related to the means by which they were tortured, such as a wheel for St. Catherine of Alexandria.

Prints, which are more easily mass produced than other art forms, and thus are more affordable and widely disseminated, have served as an ideal medium for artistic expression. With the selection of printed imagery in this exhibition, in woodcuts, engravings, and etchings, viewers can sample some of the different approaches artists have chosen for depictions of sainted women and men over a two hundred year period, from the late fifteenth to the late seventeenth centuries.



Lucas van Leyden (Dutch, 1494–1533)

St. Gerard Sagredius, 1517

Engraving

Museum purchase (64.98)

This image was likely meant for private devotion and depicts St. Gerard Sagredius (or Sagredo), who was born in Venice and went to Hungary to serve as a missionary and bishop. He was martyred there in the mid-eleventh century. Gerard's relics were transferred to Venice in 1333 and he was venerated as that city's first martyr. St. Gerard stands in front of a ruined wall wearing a bishop's mitre, or cap. He holds a crozier, or staff, in his right hand and a heart pierced by an arrow in his left. The heart and the arrow, symbols of charity and mortality, remind the viewer of Gerard's saintly life and martyrdom.

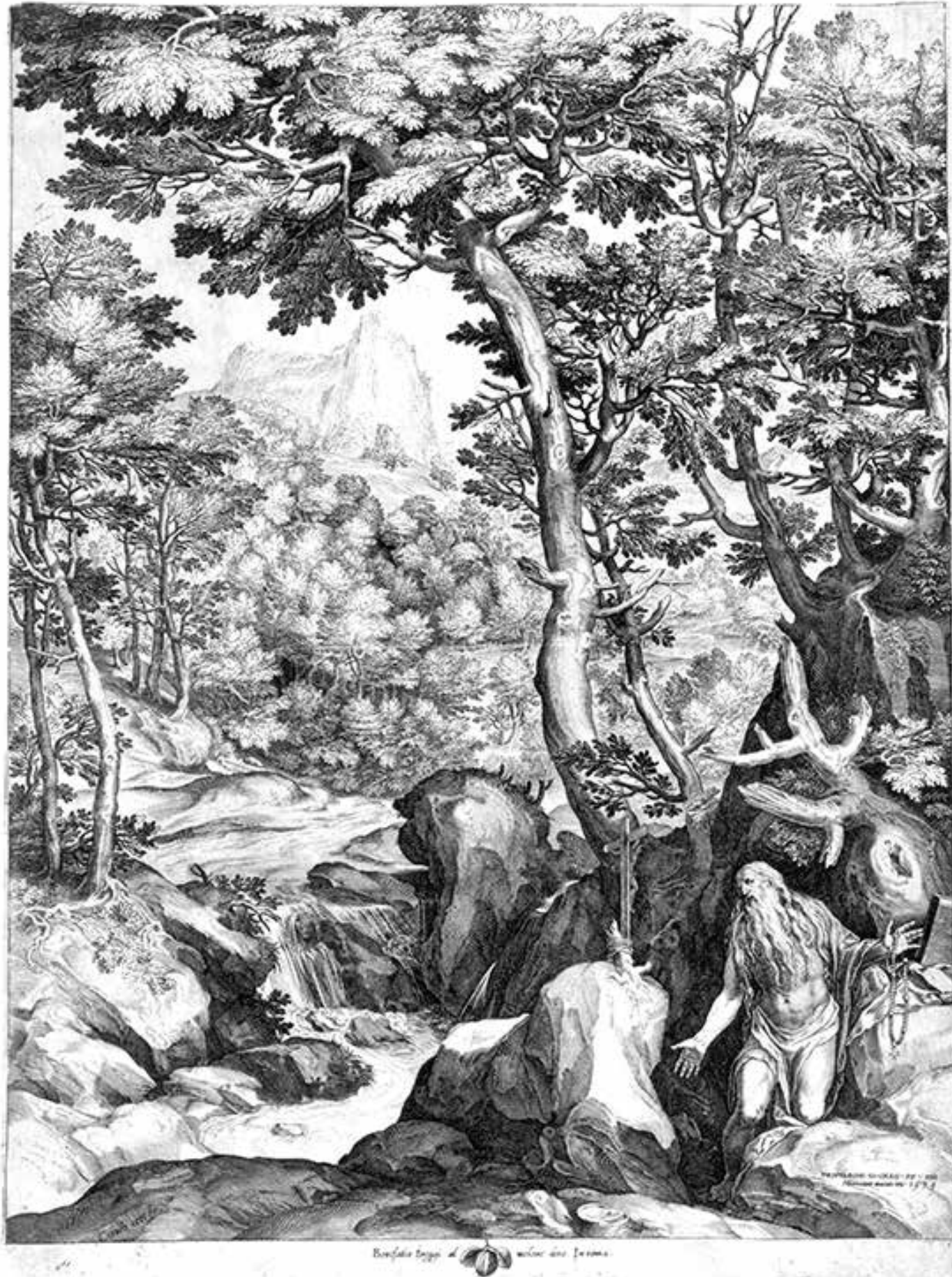
Lucas van Leyden was one of the pioneers of the Dutch school of printmaking and was known for his innovative compositions and great technical skill. He was profoundly influenced by Albrecht Dürer, whose strong use of light and shadow Leyden infused into his own works.



Cornelis Cort (Dutch, 1533–1578)
St. Jerome in the Wilderness, 1577
Engraving
Museum purchase (64.106)

Jerome spent his formative years as a student of rhetoric and philosophy in Rome and traveled afterwards to Antioch, on the border between modern day Turkey and Syria. At Antioch Jerome had a vision that led him to abandon his studies of the classics and devote himself to God. Like St. Onuphrius, Jerome moved to the desert to become a hermit and concentrate on his biblical studies.

Cort depicted this ascetic aspect of Jerome's life in his engraving. The half-clad saint is shown in a wild setting meditating on a cross. The book before Jerome refers to his translation of the Bible from its original Hebrew into Latin. The cardinal's hat in the foreground alludes to his future position as secretary to Pope Damasus I, who appointed him after he returned to society. The skull, a reminder of the vanity of worldly possessions, and a lion, from whose paw Jerome is said to have courageously removed a thorn, are depicted in the shadows at right. The artist's mastery of the contrasts between light and shadow helps imbue the scene with a sense of drama.



Cornelis Cort (Dutch, 1533–1578),
After Girolamo Muziano (Italian, 1528–1592)
St. Onuphrius Penitent in a Landscape, 1574
Engraving
Museum purchase (64.108)

St. Onuphrius is said to have lived as a hermit for seventy years in a desert near Thebes, Upper Egypt, where he survived by eating only the fruits from a date tree. Onuphrius is depicted praying in a wild landscape. He wears a loincloth, a symbol of his vow of poverty, and holds prayer beads, which indicate his faith and devotion. He became a popular saint during the Middle Ages and is usually depicted as an aged man with flowing white hair.

Cornelius Cort reproduced *St. Onuphrius* and *St. Jerome* from a series of six drawings of hermit saints by Girolamo Muziano, an Italian artist noted for his tumultuous landscapes. Indeed, this print seems to focus more on landscape than on St. Onuphrius, who occupies only a small space at the lower right corner of the scene. Many of Cort's designs reproduced famous original works, and collectors desired them for their high market value.



Theodoor Galle (Flemish, 1571-1633),
After Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577-1640)
St. Hiltrudis Virgo, 1617
Engraving
Museum purchase (64.111)

The major events from St. Hiltrude's life are economically condensed around a portrait image of the saint. The roundels are numbered to help the viewer navigate the story, and a condensed version of the tale is presented in Latin below the saint's portrait. Counterclockwise from top left: Hiltrude refuses to marry a powerful suitor, clutching a crucifix instead in an allusion to her choice to retain her virginity and become a Bride of Christ. She flees into the woods for seventeen years to avoid her arranged marriage and devote her life to prayer and contemplation. Finally emerging from hiding, Hiltrude becomes a nun at the Abbey of Liessies, where her brother Guntrad was an abbot. Finally, Hiltrude is counseled by Guntrad. In the portrait image, she is distinguished by her attributes of a nun's veil, lamp, book, and crown of roses.

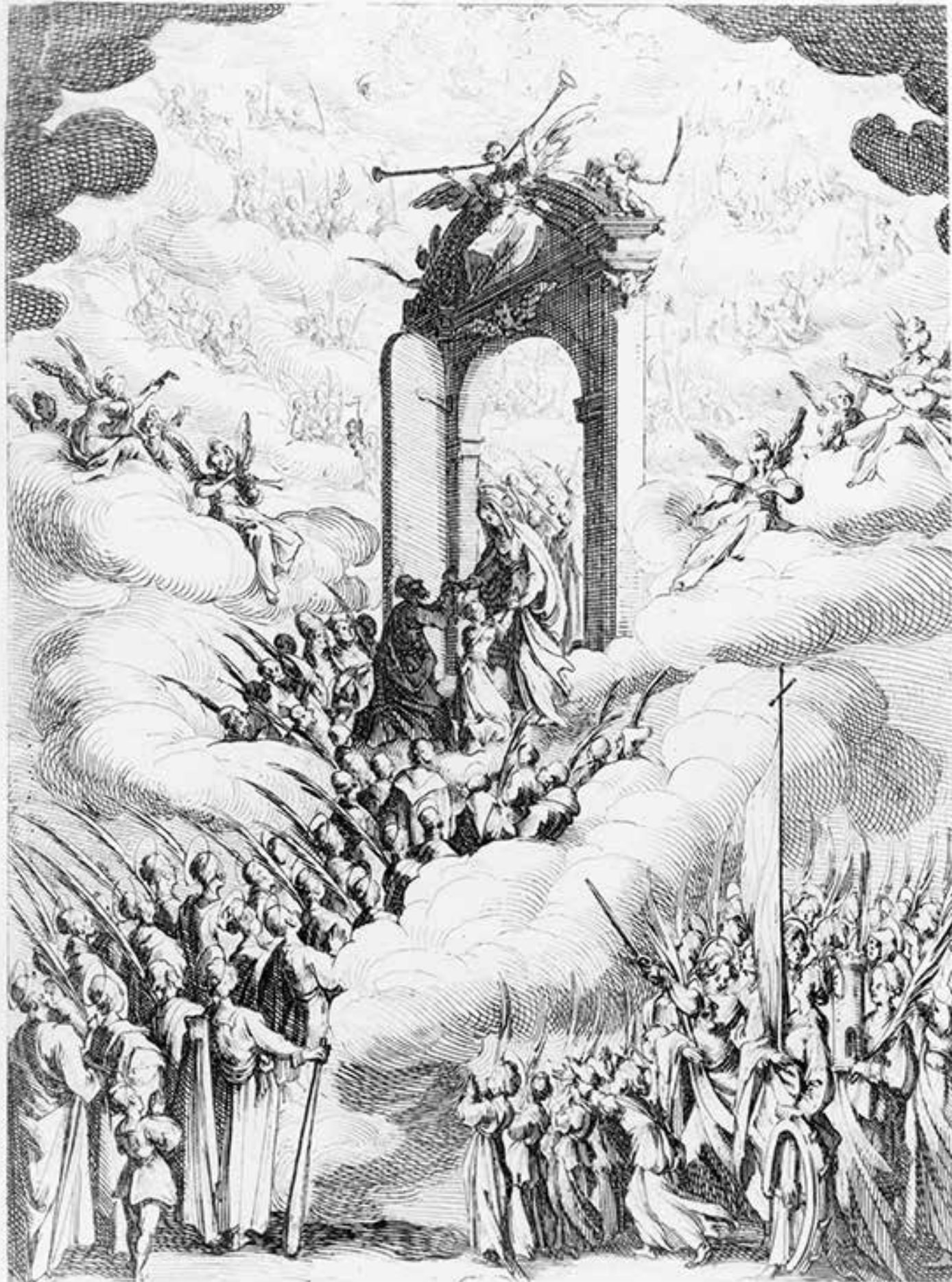
Theodoor Galle's engraving was based on a design by Peter Paul Rubens, who began working with printmakers in the early seventeenth century to more widely disseminate his work. The inscription at the bottom of the engraving states that it was undertaken through the patronage of Anthony of Winghe, abbot of Liessies, perhaps to advertise the abbey's status.



Gérard Edelinck (Flemish, 1640–1707),
After Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)
The Repentant Magdalene, 1657
Engraving
Museum purchase (65.184)

Mary Magdalene, traditionally identified as a prostitute who washed Christ's feet during a supper in the House of Simon (Luke 7:37), is depicted here in a dramatic scene of repentance. The future saint pulls back her costly veil and gazes heavenward in a metaphorical rejection of her sinful life, which is symbolized by the mirror, jewelry box, cosmetics, and other luxurious objects that fill the room. Works such as this engraving warned viewers against the dangers of self-absorbed, impious lifestyles. Though no longer recognized as a former prostitute by the Catholic Church, images of Mary Magdalene were long used as a definitive symbol of sin and redemption.

Gerard Edelinck was well-known during his lifetime for the fine quality of his prints and especially for portraits of his contemporaries. Edelinck was a friend of Charles Le Brun, whose painting *The Repentant Magdalene* he reproduced in this engraving. From the Renaissance onward, reproductive prints were highly prized and not seen as unoriginal copies of other artworks but rather as artistic translations.



Jacques Callot (French, 1592-1635)
The Virgin Receiving Martyrs into Heaven, 1636
Etching
Museum purchase (66.3)

This etching was the frontispiece to Jacques Callot's posthumously published *Images des Saints* (*Images of the Saints*), which contained 476 etchings of saints. In this image, the Virgin Mary, who was the most important Christian saint and who served as an exemplar of merciful and pious behavior, welcomes martyrs into heaven. St. Barbara, holding the tower in which she was imprisoned, and St. Catherine of Alexandria, clutching a fragment of her wheel, are clearly visible among the ranks in the lower right corner.

Callot was a prolific graphic artist, draftsman, and printmaker from the Duchy of Lorraine, near the northeastern border of France. He produced over 600 religious subjects in the 1630s alone, likely in response to a strong market for spiritual imagery toward the end of the Counter-Reformation (1545-1648).



Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471-1528)
Virgin and Child on a Crescent with a Diadem, 1514
Engraving
Museum purchase (71.109)

The Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, was one of the most important saints to Christians. Devotees were attracted by her close relationship with Christ, hoping that she could ensure their prayers would be granted. In this image Mary tenderly holds her infant son while standing atop a crescent moon, a symbol of her status as Queen of Heaven.

Albrecht Dürer selected the subject matter of many of his prints to appeal to a broad audience. Images of Mary were extremely popular in the sixteenth century, and this engraving is one of nine small prints of the Virgin and Child that the artist produced between 1508 and 1521. Such images could be used for private devotion by middle class Europeans who could afford prints but not more expensive paintings.



Hans Springinklee (German, ca. 1495–after 1522)

St. Margaret, 1519

Woodcut

Museum purchase (71.117)

This image of St. Margaret of Antioch was originally an illustration in the early sixteenth-century prayer book *Hortulus Animae* (*Little Garden of the Soul*). This popular book was published both in Latin and German in at least eighteen editions between 1516 and 1521. Each copy contained over 100 woodcuts designed by Springinklee and his associate Erhard Schön.

Like the Virgin Mary, St. Margaret was especially venerated for her ability to intercede with God on behalf of her supplicants. As in many images of the saint, Margaret is shown in regal attire standing atop a dragon. She was purported to be a young noblewoman from Antioch, in modern day Turkey, who was imprisoned by a local Roman governor for her Christian beliefs. While in prison a dragon appeared in her cell and swallowed her whole. Margaret pressed the sign of the cross into its innards, splitting the monster open. Because of her escape from the dragon's belly, she became the patron saint of pregnancy and childbirth, providing comfort to women at a time when the maternal death rate was shockingly high.



Hans Brosamer (German, ca. 1500–1554)

St. Peter, ca. 1515–1552

Woodcut

Museum purchase (71.120)

St. Peter, gazing heavenward, sits in a landscape outside of a city. He holds a book, which may refer to the book in which the names of the saved are written. The large key the saint grasps in his left hand symbolizes his metaphorical receipt of the keys of heaven from Christ. Peter held an important role in the establishment of early Christianity, with Christ himself referring to Peter as the “rock” upon which the Church would be built. Indeed, Peter was one of Christ’s closest disciples and is traditionally described as the first bishop of Rome.

This image was originally included in a copy of the New Testament for which Hans Brosamer provided the woodcuts. It departs somewhat from the artist’s usual style. Brosamer generally preferred to place his figures against architectural backgrounds, but here he chose to depict Peter in quiet contemplation outdoors. Although little is known of his life, Brosamer was a prolific artist and an important Protestant German book illustrator, producing over 1200 woodcuts, a number of paintings, and several dozen engravings.

sprach der Ritter. Heyliger herz sant linhart
hilff mir auß dyser gefencknis so wil ich dir
furbaß mer dienen dan vor. und rufft auch al
so lang bis das der lieb herz sant Linhart zu
im kam das es die mensche sah zu mittē tag
vñ zerbrach die schloß vñ dy rigel. und gab im
die ketten dz er sy trug. vñ sprach zu im. Gee
mit mir. vñ sy giengē beyde mit einand durch
die menschen dy in dem hauf waren darin er
was gefangen gelegē. dy erschacken gar ser.
und dorsten doch darwider mit thun. Da ver

schwand sant linhart. Da ward der ritter gar
fro und dancket got vñd sant linhart der ge
naden. O heyliger herz sant Linhart erwirb
uns vñb got das wir von allen vnsern sünden
vñ gebrechē leybs vñ der sele erlöst werde. vñ
vnser lebens ein gutz ende. und nach dysem
leben das ewig leben Amen.

Von der vier gekron ten leben.



Die vier gekronten
marterer heysen Seuerus. Seueri
anus. Corposorus und Victorinus
die waren cristen. und hettē got lieb vñ dientē
im mit vleyß tag vñ nacht. mit betē. mit vastē.
mit reachen. vñ mit vilander guter vbung. Zu
dē zeyten da woz dyocletianus keyser d durch
ächter die cristen gar ser und schloß sie in ge
fengknus. und tötet sy dani wo er sy ankam.
Da hört er von den viern auch das sy cristen
waren. und hieß sie vassen. und sprach sy soltē
den abgöttern opffern. das wolten sie nit tun
und sprachen sy wolte dem abgot nit opffern
sy wolten dem almechtigen gott opffern. Da
hieß er sy vor zorn zutod schlafen. Da furen ir
selen zu den ewigen freudē. Da höret d bapst
wol dz man dy vier vñb cristē glauben vñb
brachte und getödt het. Da het er sye gern ge
eret da weist er irer namen nicht. das was im
gar leyd. und wurden ir namen darnach vber
vil iar geoffenbart.
Über zwey iar darnach da die vier gema
tert wurden. da waren funff cristē dy hießen

Claudius. Castorius. Nicostratus. Simplicius
und Simphorianus dy funff künde wol
schneyzen. malen und pild machen. Da wolt d
keyser das sie den abgöttern hettē geopffert
und in ein bild hettē gemacht nach seine ab
got. des wolten sie nicht tun. das thet im zorn
und hieß funff pleyen truhē machen. und le
get sie also lebendig darein. und versencket sie
in das meer. da furen ir sel zu den ewigē freu
den. Das was nach Christi geburt zweyhun
dert vñ sibemendachtzig iar. da satzt d bapst
auff das man die funff mit den viere solt cre
und begeen. dy vier gekrontē heysen darin
dy gekronten das man dennoch irer namē nit
weist. sy wurde aber himmach von got geoffen
waret. und also behyelten sie den namen fur
bas von der gewonheyt. das man sie noch die
vier gekronten heysset. Nun bitten wir dy sie
ben heyligen all das sy uns vñb got erwerbe
das wir auch kummen zu den ewigē freuden
Amen.

Von sant levinus

Anonymous

Published by Anton Koberger (German, ca. 1445–1513)

Leaf from *Leben der Heiligen* (*Lives of the Saints*) with
illustration showing the *Four Crowned Martyrs*, 1488

Hand-colored woodcut with printed text

Gift of Joseph Fischer in honor of Professor Saul Weinberg (77.93)

This page was originally from a fifteenth-century German
edition of Italian monk Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*
or *Lives of the Saints* of about 1260. According to Voragine
the Four Crowned Martyrs were four early Christians who,
like St. Sebastian, were persecuted by Roman emperor
Diocletian (r. 284-305). They refused to carve a pagan idol,
seen on the pedestal in the center of the image, and were
ordered to be beaten to death. Diocletian, wearing a crown
to symbolize his status, stands to the left and watches as his
henchmen bludgeon the four haloed martyrs.

Translated into most major European languages, the
Golden Legend became the most popular printed book in
Europe by the early sixteenth century. The version from
which this page originally came was printed in 1488 in
Nuremburg by publisher Anton Koberger. It contained
254 narrative images of saints' lives which were executed
with little three-dimensional modeling. This simplified
rendering facilitated easy hand-coloring by the artists
who painted the images.



Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471-1528)
St. Arnolff, from *The Triumphal Arch of Maximilian*
Ca. 1512-1526 (late edition, printed 1559)
Woodcut
Museum purchase (77.181)

This image of St. Arnolff was originally created as part of a large-scale print depicting the *Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I*, Holy Roman Emperor (r. 1486-1519). The arch was made of hundreds of separate woodcut images. At nearly 11 by 9 ½ feet when fully assembled, the incredibly detailed arch was intended to glorify and promote Maximilian's illustrious ancestry as well as important events from his life. The project was overseen by Albrecht Dürer and the woodcuts were done by several artists, including Hans Springinklee, whose work is featured elsewhere in this exhibition.

St. Arnolff (ca. 582-640) probably was included in the *Arch* to link Maximilian's genealogy with that of the earliest ruling families of Western Europe. Arnolff was the third great grandfather of Charlemagne (742-814) and was allegedly the great-grandson of Chlothar I, King of the Franks (ca. 497-561). He was an early bishop of Metz, in present day northeastern France. Like St. Gerard Sagredius in the neighboring engraving, Arnolff is dressed in the attire of a bishop and holds a crozier, a symbol of his role as the protector of God's flock.



Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471-1528)
The Martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria
Ca. 1497-1499 (late edition, after 1700)
Woodcut

Gift of Barbara Stratton Bolling and Deborah S. Booker
in memory of Arthur Mills Stratton (78.45)

St. Catherine of Alexandria was wildly popular among both men and women throughout medieval and Early Modern Europe. She epitomized the virtues of the female saint, with attributes of purity, knowledge, and unyielding faith. Catherine allegedly confronted Roman emperor Maxentius (r. 306-312) about his persecution of Christians. He assembled fifty of his most erudite pagan scholars to debate her, but she converted them all to Christianity. An enraged Maxentius then condemned her to be tortured on a spiked wheel, which was destroyed when Catherine prayed to God for salvation.

In this image Albrecht Dürer captured the intense drama of Catherine's martyrdom. Fire and brimstone rain down from clouds in the sky, shattering the wheel and killing a number of onlookers. Catherine kneels calmly in prayer in acceptance of her fate while a guard unsheathes his sword to behead her.



Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471-1528)
St. Sebastian at the Column, ca. 1498-1499
Engraving
Museum purchase (79.93)

This image depicts the miraculous survival of St. Sebastian after he was tied to a column and shot with arrows in an attempted execution. Sebastian's torture was in response to his proclamation of the Christian faith before Roman emperor Diocletian (r. 284-305). After Sebastian's recovery he showed himself to the emperor as living proof of the power of Christ.

A number of Albrecht Dürer's prints were dedicated to popular saints whose protection was claimed by the public and whose intercession was called upon in cases of illness or other emergencies. Sebastian, for example, was invoked as a patron against the plague and other contagious diseases. This may stem from a notable aspect of his legend wherein a man suffering from a painful illness was immediately cured after the saint baptized him.

Von sant

Funen und wolt den münich erlöden und als
 le die cristen die er auß dem. Da fursah got die
 seinen und sein liebe muter Maria. wan es ge
 bot unser liebe frau einem ritter d hieß Mer
 curius das er sy end ir liebes kind und die cri
 sten an dem bösen Juliano rech. wan er hett
 den selben heyligen Mercuri vor auch umb
 cristen gelauben erlödt. Da im das unser liebe
 frau gebot. Da stund er von dem grab auff.
 und nam sein schilt und sein sper. Das inn der
 kirchen ob seinem grab hieng mit im. und reyt
 zu dem keyser der woz auff dem feld an einem
 streyt. und slach in mit einem sper zutodt. Die
 sing sah sant Basilius in eine gesicht von de
 willen gottes. Da wurden die christen gar fro

Das sie got von im erlödet het. und danckte
 im seiner genaden. vñ die leut von persien land
 schunden den ketzter als ein vrech. und lieffen
 das af vor den hunden ligen. vñ wolten in mit
 begraben. und namen sein haut. und legte sie
 dem kunig von persien endet sein füs. wan er
 wolt die von persia ser gemartert haben. Also
 erlöset unser hertz iesus cristus sein freud von
 dem bösen Juliano. Nun bitten wir unsern
 herzen Jesum Cristum dz er uns auch erlöse
 von allen unsern veynden sichtig und unsichtig
 und von allen engsten der hell und des leydes.
 und uns geb das ewig leben Amen.

Von sant Brigida



Brigida die lieb hey-
 lig iuncfrawe ist vñ Schotten land
 geboen gar vñ edlem geschlecht. vñ
 ir vater der hieß Diataus. der het sy bey sey
 ner meyd die hieß profeth. wan sein frau woz
 lang zeyt bey im gewesen das sy nye kein kind
 gewan. Und da die frau das innen ward dz
 sy meyd ein kind bey ire herzen trug. Da ward
 sie gar zornig. Da gab der hertz d meyd vil laub
 und sprach. wan sy das kind gewun so wolt er
 es haben. Da gieng sy meyd mit leyd auß dem
 hauf. vñ kam in ein doiff in eins bauernhauf
 da was ein Eynsidel eingangen der sah das
 die meyd ein liechte scheyn umb ir haubt trug
 und zuhant bekant er von dem einsprechen
 des heyligen geystes das ein heylige frucht
 von ir solt kummen. und luyet gegen ir nyder
 und sprach. Got hat grosse genad mit dir ge

than. wan dem frucht ist heylig. vñ gebürt
 ein kind on allen schmerzen als unser liebe
 frau ir kind on allen schmerzē gebat. also ge
 bat sie das kind on alle schmerzen als ir der
 Eynsidel gesagt het. und dem kind ward der
 namen gegeben Brigida. vñ das kind was
 zumal schön. und het got lieb vñ dienet im
 mit oleyf tag und nacht. mit beten. mit fastē.
 und mit wachen. und mit vil ander guter vñüg
 dauon versagt ir got keyn ding wes sie in bat
 des geweret er sie. Und da sie zu iren tagen
 kam. Da wolten ir ir freund einen man geben.
 und da sie das innen ward da was ir gar leyd
 und bat got mit ernst das er ir etlich krank
 heyt und gebrechē geb dz sie des mans vñüg
 würd. Da erhört sie got vñ vordarb ir ein aug.
 Da ward sie ein Closterfrau. vñ kamen vil
 iuncfrawen zu ir in das closter. vñ lebten se

Anonymous

Published by Anton Koberger (German, ca. 1445–1513)

Leaf from *Leben der Heiligen (Lives of the Saints)*

With illustration showing *St. Brigid*, 1488

Hand-colored woodcut

Gift of Esther Randolph in memory of John Randolph (86.83)

A man with a severed hand approaches the nun St. Brigid (ca. 452–542) while Christ watches from above. As leprosy causes damage to the limbs, this action suggests that the man represents one of several lepers the saint purportedly cured. The text relates that the saint restored the man to health. Bridget is said to have performed numerous conversions, charitable acts, and miracles. She founded a well-known monastery for both men and women at Kildare, near Dublin, Ireland. The building at the top right corner and the nuns digging in the foreground may reference this religious community. The placement of the scene on the banks of a stream may refer to Brigid's miraculous movement of a river to remedy a drought.

Like the woodcut of the *Four Crowned Martyrs*, also on display in this exhibition, this illustration was originally included in a fifteenth-century German edition of Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* or *Lives of the Saints* of about 1260. It was printed in Nuremburg in 1488 by the prolific publisher Anton Koberger. Koberger, who was the godfather of master artist Albrecht Dürer, employed over 100 workers and ran 24 printing presses.