

Exploring a contemporary painting of The Last Supper

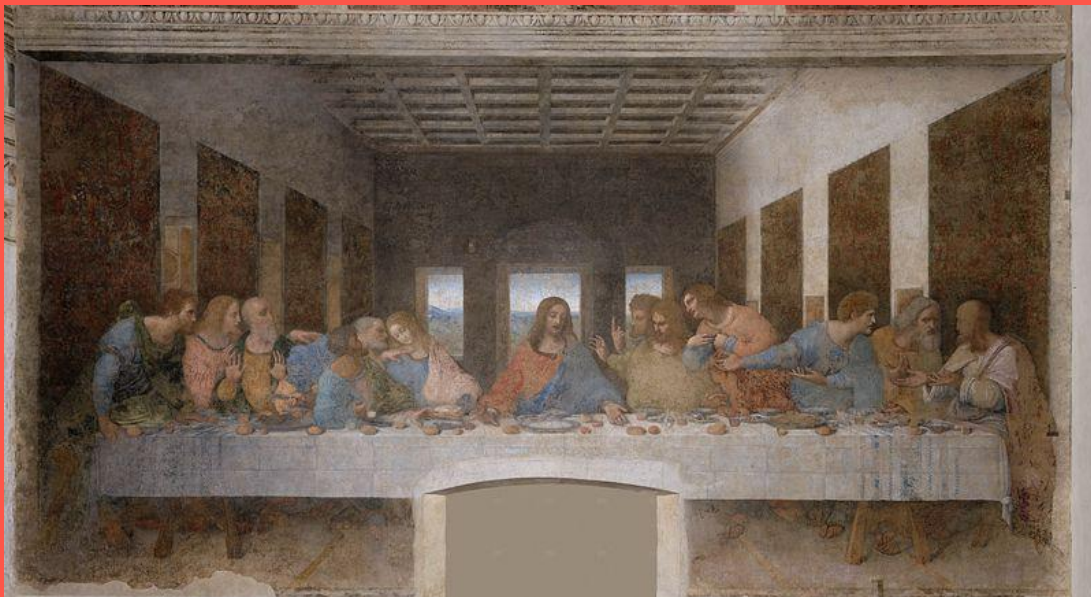
January 2008

The artist Nicholas St John Rosse was commissioned to produce a picture of The Last Supper, - Jesus' last meal with his disciples, for St Paul's Roman Catholic Church, Tintagel in Cornwall. The Last Supper is the event which began the Christian tradition of Holy Communion (also called the Mass or the Lord's Supper).

Using his skills as a portrait painter, and drawing from Leonardo da Vinci's own version of the scene as a long table with Jesus in the centre, Nicholas St John Rosse has produced a contemporary version in which Jesus and his disciples wear ordinary clothes and whose faces are modelled on those of real people. He has included his son Alex, who has long hair, in the place of Jesus, while his other son, two parish priests, a fisherman, a local farmer and a gardener are all included in the scene.

The painting has been done to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the building of the church.

This is Leonardo's version.



L-R

Bartholomew, James, Andrew, Judas, Peter, John, Jesus, Thomas, James, Philip, Matthew, Jude, Simon.

In the new version, olives, grapes and wine lie on the table. As Jesus breaks the bread, light pours out illuminating the different faces. As in da Vinci,

Peter holds a knife pointing away from Jesus. Judas, whose face cannot be seen and whose back is to the onlooker, dips his hand into the dish, as confirmation that he is the betrayer. Above Jesus' head, a knife/cross awaits. Old and young are here, friendship and fellowship.

You can see a reproduction of the new painting at [http://www.nstjohnrosse.com/last%20supper07%20\(3\).jpg](http://www.nstjohnrosse.com/last%20supper07%20(3).jpg)

Some questions:

What do you think about seeing the Last Supper as if it was happening today?

What do you think the people in the painting are thinking about?

How might the Last Supper as a contemporary event make it more meaningful to people?