

The Apostles Series

The Parkville Frame Gallery is honored to offer: **The Apostles Series**. These images can be purchased either already framed, or we can order the image, in a variety of sizes, and frame it to your specifications.

Background: Around 1611 the famous Flemish Baroque artist Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) painted a series of portraits of the twelve apostles. The series included Saint Paul, but did not include Jude. Originally a painting with the 'Savior of the World' was part of the series, but it has been lost.



Peter Paul Rubens (June 28, 1577 - May 30, 1640) was a prolific seventeenth-century Flemish Baroque painter, and a proponent of an exuberant Baroque style that emphasized movement, color, and sensuality. He is well-known for his Counter-Reformation altarpieces, portraits, landscapes, and history paintings of mythological and allegorical subjects.

In addition to running a large studio in Antwerp which produced paintings popular with nobility and art collectors throughout Europe, Rubens was a classically-educated humanist scholar, art collector, and diplomat who was knighted by both Philip IV, king of Spain, and Charles I, king of England.

Peter Paul Rubens self-portrait

- **The Apostles** paintings were commissioned by Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas (1552/1553 – 1625), the first Duke of Lerma, Spain. The Duke of Lerma was a powerful minister and favorite of the Spanish king, King Philip III. Rubens had portrayed the king in 1603.
- Rubens painted the half-portraits life-size.
- Each apostle has an attribute, a symbol by which he can be identified. They were depicted as strong men, with impressive old faces.
- At first Jesus had eleven followers: Andrew, Bartholomew, James the elder, James the minor, John, Judas, Matthew, Peter, Philip, Simon and Thomas. After Judas' treason and death, Matthias replaced him. Paul would later become the 12th apostle.
- The twelve paintings of the apostles, all oil-on-panel, can be found in the Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.



Saint Andrew (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Acts 1:13

Andrew is carrying his attribute: the cross that he may have died on. Andrew was martyred by crucifixion in Patras. He was bound, rather than nailed, to a cross, as is described in the Acts of Andrew. He was crucified on a cross form known as "crux decussata," which is an X-shaped cross or a "saltire." Today this is commonly referred to as "St. Andrew's Cross." It is believed Andrew requested to be crucified this way, because he deemed himself "unworthy to be crucified on the same type of cross as Jesus."



Saint Bartholomew (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Acts 1:13

Little is written in the Bible about the apostle Bartholomew. He is named a few times in lists of Jesus' followers. Rubens shows him holding a knife. That refers to one account of Bartholomew's death. It is said that he was flayed alive.



Saint James the Elder (ca. 1612-1613)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Acts 12:2

James is identified by his pilgrim's attributes: the hat and the staff.



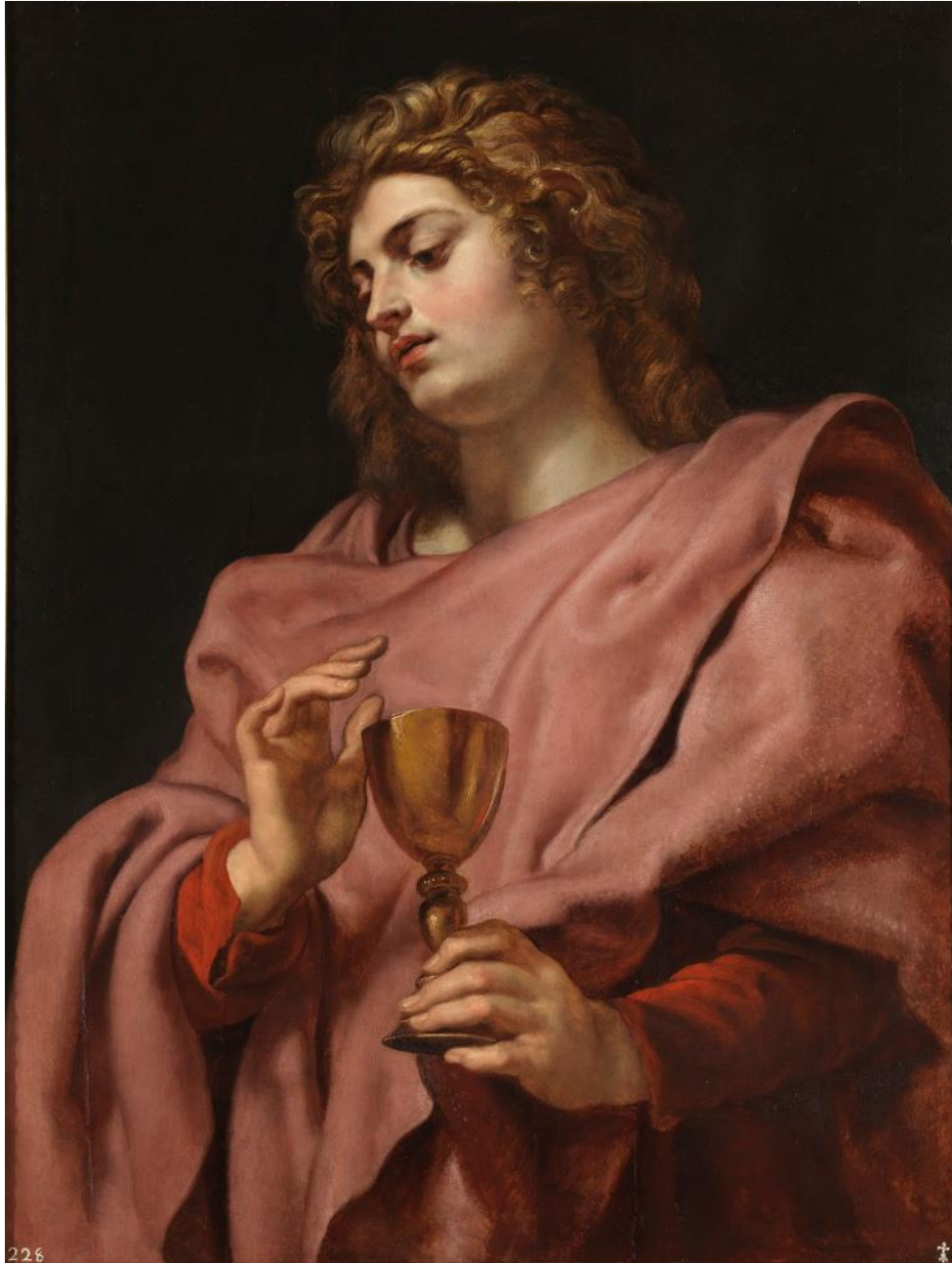
Saint James the Minor (ca.1612-1613)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to James 1:1

James the Minor is identified by his attribute: a fuller's hammer. Legend has it that James was killed with his own tool. In the roman-catholic tradition the apostle James the Minor is considered the author of the Epistle of James.



Saint John (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Revelation 22:8

Saint John can be identified by the goblet: legend has it that someone tried to kill him by serving him poisoned wine. The murder attempt failed. John is said to have died a natural death. John, a fisherman, was a brother of Saint James. He, Peter and James were the disciples that stood closest to Jesus. John is often mentioned as the disciple whom Jesus loved.



Saint Matthew (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Matthew 1:1

Matthew is shown holding a weapon. The weapon refers to the martyrdom which the Catholic Church says he suffered.



Saint Matthias (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Acts 1:23

After Judas' departure the apostles felt they should be twelve again. There were two candidates: Joseph and Matthias. Lots were cast and Matthias it was. The axe in his hand refers to his death. According to an unconfirmed story Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded, in Jerusalem.



Saint Paul (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Ephesians 1:1

Rubens shows Paul with a sword and a book. The book refers to the teachings of Jesus which he helped to spread. The sword can have multiple meanings. In his letter to the Christians of Ephesus Paul speaks of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). The sword may also refer to his early life as a persecutor of Christians. Or it may refer to his alleged beheading. As a Roman citizen he had the right to be decapitated instead of being tortured to death.



Saint Peter (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to 1 Peter 1:1

Peter is depicted holding a pair of keys, his common symbol: the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.



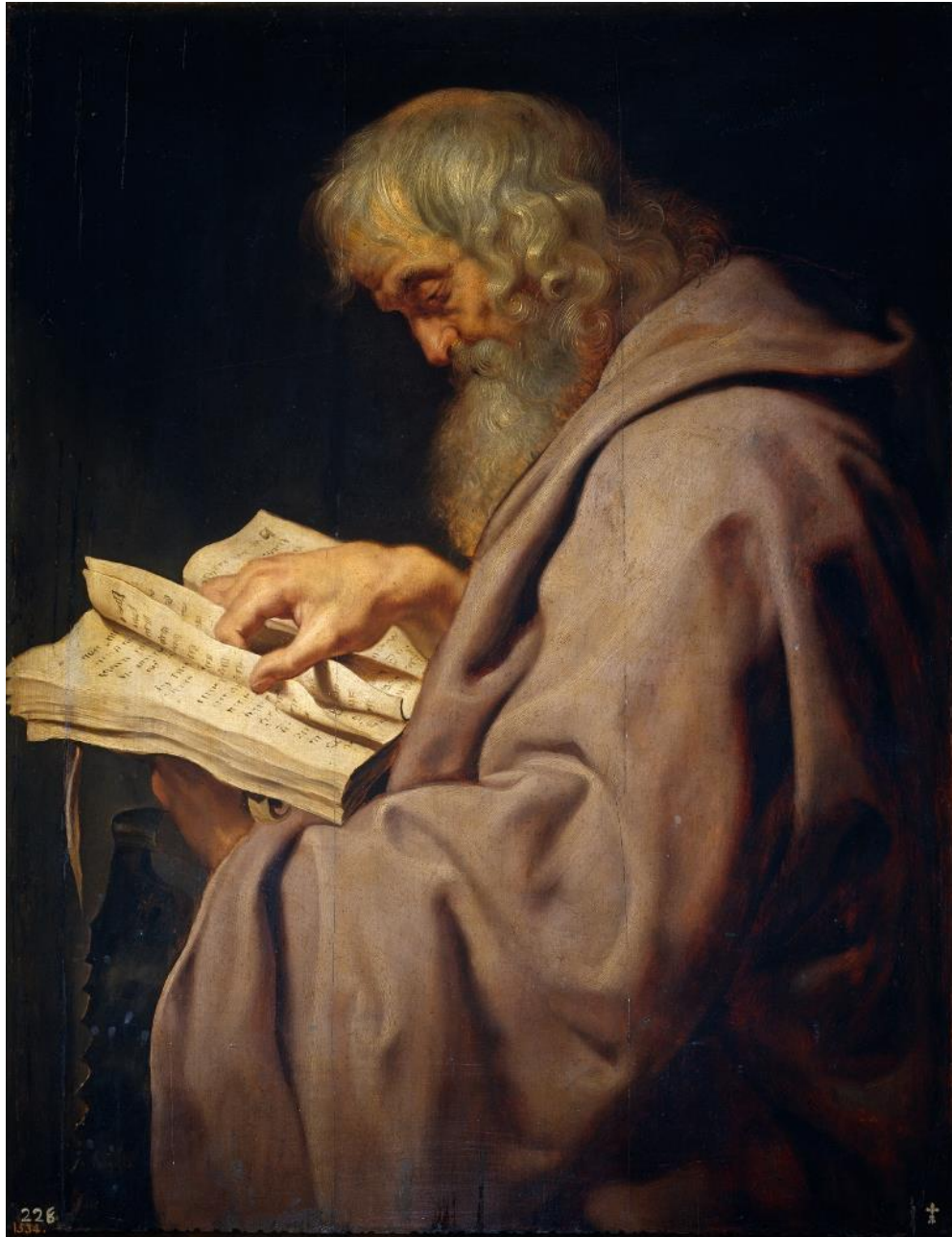
Saint Philip (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Mark 3:18

Philip is shown carrying a cross. Tradition has it he was crucified after spreading the Gospel together with Bartholomew in Phrygia, a kingdom in Antatolia.



Saint Simon (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to Mark 3:18

Simon holds a saw in his left hand. According to a tradition he was put to death with a saw. The Bible doesn't say much about this Simon. He is only mentioned in lists of all apostles. To distinguish him from Peter, who was also called Simon, this Simon was called Simon the Zealot or Simon Kananaios.



Saint Thomas (ca.1611)

Peter Paul Rubens

Oil on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid

This work is linked to John 11:16

Thomas holds a spear, the weapon that supposedly killed him and made him a martyr. Thomas is commonly known as "Doubting Thomas" because he doubted Jesus' resurrection when first told of it (as related in the Gospel of John alone); later, he confessed his faith, "My Lord and my God," on seeing Jesus' crucifixion wounds.