

## Symbolism found in Lon Michels' "The Last Supper"

### The rose

Every Apostle and Disciple throughout the painting, and the foreground and background, are covered in the pattern of a rose, the eternal symbol of love. A major premise of this painting is that a rose is a rose by any other name, and so is a religion or deity.

### The tree of life

A solid gold tree of life is found in the actual room where Jesus and the Apostles had the Last Supper, in Jerusalem. The tree of life is located in the far left side of the painting and symbolizes the interconnectedness of all life on our planet.

### Jesus

Covered in the yin yang symbol and light blue roses. On his chest is a red, full heart, and on his forehead is the tilaka, which symbolizes the third eye, or mind's eye, associated with many Hindu deities. He is holding the world and the chalice. A monarch butterfly floats above his head.

### The Apostles (left to right)

All of the symbols of the Apostles were taken from the stained glass windows in the Little Rock Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas

- *St. James the Greater* is covered in the scalloped shell, referring to his pilgrimages, being the first Disciple to go on missions. He is also covered in the Slavic cross, representing the hands of God.
- *St. Philip's* symbol is the silver cross with two loaves of bread, pertaining to his remark to Christ concerning the feeding of the multitudes.
- *St. Andrew* is covered in a red x-shaped cross. According to tradition, St. Andrew was crucified on an x-shaped cross.
- *St. Matthew* was a tax collector before he was an Apostle and is covered in money bags.
- *St. James the Less* was cast down from a pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem, stoned and sawn asunder by the Jews. His symbol is a silver saw, and he's also covered in the Jainist Swastika.
- *St. Simon* is known as a great fisherman, and he's covered in a fish and a gold bible. He is also covered in the triple horn of Odin, which represents the Norse god Odin, and relating to the Asatru faith. He wears a Gothic Christian cross.
- *St. John*, the beloved apostle. Legend refers to his being offered a poison chalice and an attempt made on his life. He is covered in a gold chalice with a silver serpent, and the Muslim symbol of the crescent and the star.
- *St. Bartholemew* is covered in flaying knives with silver blades and gold handles. He is said to have been flayed alive and crucified. He is also covered in the symbol of "om".

- *St. Thomas* is the patron of builders and is covered in a carpenter's square and a spear. The carpenter's square represents his building of the first church in India, with his own hands. The spear refers to his instrument of martyrdom. A spider is located on the spearhead. According to the Navajo creation myth, Spider Grandmother created all things through the shimmering threads that came out of her belly. St. Thomas' skin is covered in the symbol for the Church of the Religious Science of Mind, and he is also shown with a peace sign.
- *St. Peter* felt unworthy to die, as had Christ. He requested to be crucified on an inverted cross so that he might face towards heaven, to see the key to the kingdom of heaven. He is covered in an upside-down gold cross with a silver key.
- *St. Matthias* was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. He served as a missionary in Judea, where he was stoned and beheaded. His symbol is a battle ax.
- *St. Jude* is covered in a sailing vessel, representing the many ports he journeyed to as a missionary. He is also covered in the Trishula, the spearhead held by Sheba, which also represents a trident, the pitchfork held by the Greek god, Poseidon.
- *Judas Iscariot* carries 30 pieces of silver in his hand. The swastika, an ancient Indian symbol used to evoke shakti, the primordial cosmic energy, covers his clothing. The swastika also represents Judas' taking something beautiful and making it into something evil and ugly. On his chest is a black heart.

#### The Women, female Disciples (left to right)

- *First*. Covered in the lotus flower, an ancient Egyptian symbol of the sun and creation. Her hair shows the nine-pointed star, representing the Baha'i faith. The nine points on the star symbolize perfection and unity.
- *Second* (seated woman). Covered in the face of the Buddha.
- *Third* (standing woman). Covered in the Chinese word for God.
- *Fourth* (woman embracing third woman). Covered in the fleur de lis, representing Christ in French culture, and covered in hearts.
- *Fifth* (standing woman) Covered in the Serbian Cross.
- *Sixth, Mary Magdalene* (standing directly left of Jesus). Covered in the Khanda, the coat of arms for Sikhs.
- *Seventh* (sitting below Jesus). Covered in the Jewish Star of David.
- *Eighth, St. Mary, the Mother of God* (directly right of Jesus). Covered in hearts and a Christian cross.
- *Ninth*. Covered in the symbol of Shinto.
- *Tenth*. Covered in the symbol of the Tao.
- *Eleventh* (seated in foreground). Covered in large roses.
- *Twelfth* (standing). Has two doves on her dress, doves representing peace. Has a necklace on with the Chi Rho symbol.

### **The table**

The loaf of white Wonder bread symbolizes the body of Christ. The red glasses of wine symbolize the blood of Christ; Jesus' blood is dripping into the center glass. Various other foods represent the meal or feast served at the Last Supper, which include, in my interpretation: chocolates, fruit, petit fours, cakes, and sushi – which represents the fishes which Jesus fed the to the multitudes.

### **Animals (bottom of painting), left to right**

The three animals depicted in the painting represent all of God's animals and all of his creation. "Sophie," a dog; the cat in the center is "Picasso," Lon and Todd's cat; "Deja," Lon and Todd's dear, departed dog