



Roman Martyrology: At Rome, Blessed John of Fiesole, of the Order of Preachers, of a gentle disposition, virtuous in religion, devout in his holiness and a great Master in the art of painting: doing the work of Christ, he always cleaved to Christ. Known as Fra Angelico the painter, he is a patron before God of all artists, especially painters.

Patron of: Known as Fra Angelico the painter, patron of all artists, especially painters.

PROFILE

The patron of Christian artists was born around 1400 in a village overlooking Florence. He took up painting as a young boy and studied under the watchful eye of a local painting master. He joined the Dominicans at about age 20, taking the name Fra Giovanni. He eventually came to be known as Fra Angelico, perhaps a tribute to his own angelic qualities or maybe the devotional tone of his works.

He continued to study painting and perfect his own techniques, which included broad-brush strokes, vivid colors and generous, lifelike figures. Michelangelo once said of Fra Angelico: "One has to believe that this good monk has visited paradise and been allowed to choose his models there." Whatever his subject matter, Fra Angelico sought to generate feelings of religious devotion in response to his paintings. Among his most famous works are the Annunciation and Descent from the Cross as well as frescoes in the monastery of San Marco in Florence.

He also served in leadership positions within the Dominican Order. At one point Pope Eugenius approached him about serving as archbishop of Florence. Fra Angelico declined, preferring a simpler life. He died in 1455.