

# Sacred Art and the Theology of the Body:

## Cornelius Sullivan's Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings

### CORNELIUS SULLIVAN >>>

Cornelius Edmund Sullivan MFA has taught Drawing at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, at The University of Miami, The University of Miami School of Architecture, the Danforth Museum, and Art History at Florida International University. He studied Physics at Boston College and completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Rhode Island School of Design in 1991. He also completed a Master of Fine Arts from The University of Miami.



### "THE CALLING OF SAINT MATTHEW" >>>

"Caravaggio's *The Calling of Saint Matthew*," art historian Sir Kenneth Clark believed, "changed the history of painting." In Renaissance Art with its exalted glory, saints were portrayed in Heaven in the form of Greek Gods. Caravaggio brought mysteries, martyrdoms, and miracles down to our world. It is as if Caravaggio paints with flesh. Caravaggio addressed the core of Christianity, that God became Man, forever connecting the two. When Pope Francis contemplated *The Calling of Saint Matthew* in the San Luigi dei Francesi church, he said "That's me, Matthew the sinner."



Cartesian dualism set the intellectual ground to be comfortable subduing and mastering nature and bodies. Art took a path to follow the mind newly free to follow its own whims, which led to Abstract Art and finally to Conceptual Art, art that is just an idea to ponder. Sacred Art cannot be merely abstract. A "Theology of the Body" has always informed Christian Sacred Art precisely because "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."- John 1:14. Sacred Art is tangible and real. The Theology of the Body ultimately is about the worth, dignity and sanctity of the individual human person. Because of this, Sacred Art can be expressed not only in religious subject matter but also as portraits.

In *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Professor Michael Waldstein translated the teachings of Pope John Paul from his Wednesday General Audiences from 1979 to 1984. Professor Waldstein in his introduction explains how John Paul makes the connection between Theology of the Body and Beauty. "Deeply struck by the beauty of love between man and woman, he committed himself to the service of 'fair love', because love is fair, it is beautiful."

Ralph Waldo Emerson described attributes of Beauty: "Beauty is the form under which the intellect prefers to study the world. All privilege is that of beauty; for there are many beauties; as, of general nature, of the human face and form, of manners, of brain, or method, moral beauty, or beauty of the soul."

As Sacred Art is very much about this beauty, so too is the Theology of the Body because in "Man and Woman He created Them", Saint John Paul has rendered with care and depth the beauty of how we are made, and of how we may know who we are.



Learn more about  
Cornelius Sullivan's work