

## SAGGIO

## Josefa de Óbidos's *Holy Family* and *Sacrificial Lamb*: Emblematic Devotions

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Josefa Figueira de Ayala Cabrera de Óbidos (1630–1684) was an outstanding Portuguese Baroque painter. She was renowned for her talent and creativity, making her one of the most notable female artists of her time. Her artwork covered both secular and sacred subjects, and she employed various mediums with versatility. Despite having different surnames, she signed her paintings under *Josepha em Óbidos*. This study delves into her religious art, focusing on her life and career, and analyses two religious paintings, the *Lisbon Holy Family* and the *Baltimore Agnus Dei*. Josefa skillfully integrated the spiritual reforms of the Counter-Reformation with the Baroque style in both paintings, emphasising the physical and spiritual aspects of nature. Her paintings were visually appealing, with pleasing colours and intricate detailing. Her use of emblematic and mystical symbolism added to their spiritual significance, resulting in devotional paintings that profoundly affected viewers.

**Keywords:** *Agnus Dei*, Holy Family, flora and fauna, cartouche, emblems, Christian symbolism, Baroque Portuguese

## Introduction

The Portuguese Baroque painter Josefa de Óbidos (1630–1684) is known by several names; in this article I will refer to her by her significant Christian name, Josefa, which means ‘Exalted by God.’ Researching Josefa’s paintings has been confusing due to the multiple surnames by which she has been referred to in the literature. These multiple surnames include her father’s last name, Figueira, her mother’s, Ayala, and the city where she lived most of her life, Óbidos in Portugal. Hence she is found as Josefa Figueira, Josefa de Ayala, Josefa de Óbidos, Josefa de Figueira of Ayala, Josefa de Ayala Cabrera, and Josefa de Ayala Figueira D’Óbidos. However, she signed her works as *Josepha em Óbidos*.

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This essay consists of two parts. The first part narrates a brief biography of Josefa and her profession. The second part analyses the Christian symbolism portrayed in the flora and fauna of her religious paintings, namely the *Lisbon Holy Family* and the *Baltimore Agnus Dei*.<sup>2</sup>

## Part I: Josefa’s Artistic Life

Josefa Figueira de Ayala de Óbidos was born and baptised on 20 February 1630 at the Romanesque Saint Vincent church in Seville (Marques de Gama, 1986b, pp. 1-20). Her father, Baltazar Gómes Figueira (1604–1674), hailed from Óbidos, Portugal, and her mother, Catarina Camache Cabrera Romero of Ayala (m. 1629), came from Ayala in Andalusia. Josefa’s father painted landscapes, religious subjects, and still-lives (*bodegones*). He moved from Óbidos in 1624 to Seville for military service and then stayed in Seville to improve his artistic skills (Serrão *et al.*, 1997a, entry 24, p. 136; Estrela *et al.*, 2005, pp. 13-14). This Andalusian city was renowned as an artistic centre since Diego Velázquez (1599–1660), Knight of the Order of Santiago, was its native painter. His *oeuvre* ranged from sacred subjects or religious art to profane themes, including *bodegones*, landscapes, and mythological paintings (Tiffany, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> He was the first to record a biography of Josefa. For recent scholarship, see Serrão, 1993; Serrão *et al.* 1997b; Serrão *et al.* 1997a, pp. 182–183; Marques de Gama, 1986a, pp. 1–20; Marques de Gama, 1986b, pp. 99–101; Estrela *et al.*, 2005; Andrade, 2015; Azambuja, 2009/2017; and Oliveira Caetano, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Because I discuss several versions of Josefa’s *Holy Family* and *Agnus Dei* paintings, I append to their name here the city in which the paintings are now located.

While residing and serving in Seville, Josefa's father became friends with Joao Ortiz de Ayala, a passionate art collector with a vast painting collection. He also assisted Ortiz with his artistic endeavours. Ortiz had a lovely daughter named Catarina Camacho de Cabrera y Romero, who later became Josefa's mother after she married Baltazar Gómes Figueira at the end of 1629.

After the independence of Portugal from Spain, around 1634, Josefa's father wanted to return to his homeland, Óbidos, so the family moved there from Seville. The city name "Óbidos" is of Roman-Celtic origin, deriving from the Latin word *oppidum*, meaning citadel. The family emigration from Seville to Óbidos was protracted; Josefa remained in Seville for another six years under the tutelage of her godfather, Francisco de Herrera, the Elder (1576–1656), a painter of religious themes, and her maternal uncle, Bernabé of Ayala (1600–1678), also a biblical painter and a follower of the Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664) (Delenda and Ros de Barbero, 2009-2010).

Like other female painters during the Early Modern Era who came from families of painters, Josefa learned the art from her father and assisted him in his atelier, also studying his collection of prints, which consisted of engravings composed by Cornelis Cort (1533–1578), a Dutch engraver who spent twelve years in Italy (Bologna, Florence, Rome, and Venice) reproducing works of prominent painters in those cities (Carracci, Zuccari, Raphael, and Titian, respectively) (Dabbs, 2009, pp.2015-2019). In this she followed in the footsteps of renowned painters such as Barbara Longhi of Ravenna with Luca Longhi (De Girolami Cheney, 2023a), Lavinia Fontana of Bologna with Prospero Fontana (De Girolami Cheney, 2020), Artemisia Gentileschi of Tuscany with Orazio Gentileschi (Barker, 2022), and Elisabetta Sirani of Bologna with Giovanni Andrea Sirani (Modesti, 2015). Josefa was fortunate to receive extra artistic guidance from her godfather and maternal uncle.

In 1640, Josefa returned to Portugal and continued her studies in Coimbra. She resided at the Augustinian convent of Santa Cruz as a boarder. In 1527 the congregation had founded the Collegium Sapientiae, affiliated with the University of Coimbra, as a centre for academic research and teaching. According to her first biographer, Damiao de Froes Perym, Josefa was an enthusiastic reader, particularly of spiritual and devotional texts. During her time at the religious academy, she found inspiration and likely studied books on the Jesuits, Saint Francis, and the mystical writings of Saint Theresa of Avila (1515–1582), a Spanish religious reformer who founded the Discalced Carmelites and supported the Counter-Reformation movement (de Froes Perym, 1736-1740, p. 495). Coimbra was a unique academic and cultural hub with an exceptional university that provided various literary and visual resources on topics such as nature (flora and fauna), Christian theology, and symbolic references, both physical and metaphysical.

As a result of her remarkable artistic ability and Augustinian education in Coimbra, Josefa received a commission from the University of Coimbra to design

some images for their *Estatutos*, Books of Rules. That she received such a commission at a young age is testimony to her abilities. Two of the engravings she composed represent notable female images: Saint Catherine of Alexandria, signed and dated “Josefa [d] Ayala em Coimbra 1646,”<sup>3</sup> and a woman as a personification of Wisdom or the Academy. This latter image derives from a *figurazione* or emblem on the same subject—Academia—in Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* (De Girolami Cheney, 2000, pp. 203-229).

This vital commission acknowledged her artistic talent. The Lisbon Academy of Art awarded her membership based on her exceptional abilities, which she demonstrated through her expertise in various techniques such as drawing and painting with oils and watercolours, ceramics, and metals (da Costa, 1931). In painting, Josefa excelled in depicting themes of landscapes (*vedute*), portraiture, still-lives (*bodegones*), and religious narratives.

She had an energetic personality, was a lover of jewellery and textiles (embroideries, velvet, and silk), was a supportive member of her community, and a cattle and landowner. As an animal lover with a humorous character, she named her cows Elegant, Cherry, and Beauty (Marques de Gama, 1986b, pp. 1-20). Although no documentation suggests that Josefa married, we can access information regarding her education and daily routines at home as a cow-woman, farmer, and landowner. Her last will, which G. M. de Sequeira found, revealed that her father had passed away in 1676 (Estrela *et al.*, 2005, p. 24). After his death, she, her mother, and two nieces continued to reside in Óbidos as affluent landowners. When Josefa died in 1684, she left all her possessions and lands to her nieces (*Inventário Artístico de Portugal*, 1949, p. 73).

In her paintings, Josefa’s style—which featured varied, rich, and brilliant colours—visualised the Baroque style that delighted in capturing the effects of the natural world. Scrutiny of physical aspects of nature and its components—vegetation, flora, fauna, and landscapes—was realised in a concrete composition. Light effects bathe the objects to provide inanimate forms the same substance as animated forms. This illusionary effect is achieved using reflective lights and skilful manipulation of perspective within the space. Josefa invented a theatrical scene with her *bodegones* (**Figure 1**).

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<sup>3</sup> For *The Estatutos of the University of Coimbra*, 1653, see <https://books.google.pt/books?id=bz836fyh5T8C&pg=PR10&dq=%22josefa%20de%20óbidos%22%20assinada&hl=pt-PT&pg=PR1#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed 15 May 2023); and for an image of Wisdom or Academy, see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Josefa\\_de\\_Óbidos\\_-\\_Insígnia\\_da\\_Universidade\\_de\\_Coimbra.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Josefa_de_Óbidos_-_Insígnia_da_Universidade_de_Coimbra.jpg) (accessed 15 May 2023). See Jean Andrews, “Josefa de Ayala e Cabrera’s St. Catherine of Alexandria Altarpiece and Female Empowerment,” in Jeremy Roe and Jean Andrews (eds.), *Representing Women’s Political Identity in the Early Modern Iberian World* (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2020), chap. 5, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351010122>.



Figure 1. Josefa de Óbidos, *Still Life with Flowers and Sweets*, oil on canvas, 1676. Museu Municipal de Santarém. Signed and dated *Josepha em Obidos, 1676*.

This drama is enacted by the inclusion and arrangements of flora and fauna compositions, where objects in these *bodegones* are physically designed to appear metaphorically to engage in a private dialogue through their entities, colours, shapes, textures, and spatial relationships. The same interlocution or interchange of conversation is emblematically implied in the formation of elaborate floral patterns of garlands, plants, and cartouche designs in her religious paintings (**Figures 2–5**).



Figure 2. Josefa de Óbidos, *Holy Family (Gloria in Altissimis Deo)*, 1669, oil on canvas. Photo credit and Courtesy: ©COLECCIÓN BBV and ©DAVID MECHA RODRÍGUEZ.



Figure 3. Josefa de Óbidos, *Sacrificial Lamb (Agnus Dei)*, 1660, oil on canvas. The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, MD.



Figure 4. Josefa de Óbidos, *Sacrificial Lamb (Agnus Dei)*, 1670, oil on canvas. Museu Regional, Évora.



Figure 5. Josefa de Óbidos, *Sacrificial Lamb (Agnus Dei)*, 1680, oil on canvas. Congregado Basilica, Braga.

The sensual or tactile quality perceived in her paintings reflects the scientific and philosophical currents of the seventeenth century concerning the natural elements (air, fire, water, earth) and the perception of physical phenomena through the senses (taste, smell, sight, sound, and hearing). The discovery of the New World significantly influenced the creation of cabinets of curiosities or rooms filled with unique and rare objects. These objects were categorised as precious artworks (*artificialia*), rare natural items (*naturalia*), scientific instruments (*scientifica*), and exotic artifacts (*exotica*). Hence this type of chamber was called a cabinet of curiosities or wonders. This “marvellous world” collection included publications on flora and fauna and emblem books explaining the esoteric meanings and composing rebuses for the reader’s delight (**Figures 6a and 6b**) (Bleichmar, 2008, pp. 63-77; Impey and MacGregor, 2001).



Figure 6a. Francesco Imperato, Cabinet of Curiosity, engraving from *Historia naturale di Ferrante Imperato napolitano* (Venice, 1672).



Figure 6b. Ole Worm, Cabinet of Curiosity, engraving in *Museum Wormiani Historia*, Denmark.

Of course, the Portuguese supremacy in navigation travel and the discovery of new lands in Africa and Asia further contributed to the conception of the exotic, natural, and magical in Nature.

However, along with this natural world or physical realm was also the metaphysical or spiritual realm. The strong impact of the Counter-Reformation in



Catholic countries such as Italy, France, Flanders, Spain, and Portugal infused religious imagery with Christian symbolism and mysticism. The proliferation of printed books on natural phenomena was paralleled by the production of religious and emblematic books to facilitate the conversion of non-Christians. During the Counter-Reformation, artists often received help from humanists and theologians in creating symbolic conceits and puzzle-like (rebus) designs for their secular artwork. This same level of effort was also put into religious paintings, promoting Christian conversion. The Jesuits notably influenced this movement, primarily through the Catholic Portuguese explorers in Asia (Brockey, 2014; Ross, 1994).

Josefa skilfully visualises Christian symbolism and celebratory rituals in her religious paintings, delving into the mysteries of the faith through the Lamb representing the Passion of Christ, the bread and wine representing the Last Supper, and Christ's birth alluding to human salvation. Her academic and religious education from a convent, coupled with her artistic training from her family, allowed her to expertly capture these solid moral teachings, religious sentiments, and cultural themes in her artwork.

## **PART II: Josefa's Sacred Paintings**

Josefa's collection of both sacred and secular works is impressive. Still, only two of her religious paintings are considered here: the *Holy Family (Gloria in Altissimis Deo)* of 1669, oil on canvas, now part of the Colección BBVA (**Figure 2**); and the *Sacrificial Lamb (Agnus Dei)*, 1660, oil on canvas, now at The Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, MD (**Figure 3**) (Möbius, 1982).

The Counter-Reformation wars and the struggle for the economic balance of power in Europe brought about religious and political changes that, in turn, resulted in an artistic chasm and chaos. The Catholic Church now postulated hierarchical and standardised spiritual and devotional imagery criteria (Prodi, 1967).<sup>4</sup> Religious art now conveyed exemplary Christian behaviour, as noted in saints, where conversion, piety, and the need for the institutionalised Church and its beliefs became fundamental. In addition, the imagery had to appeal to the public, which could see their own similar struggles depicted in the painted image and could emulate the lives of saints and hope for Christian salvation. The Church of the Counter-Reformation applauded emblematic images depicting this hope.

During this period, artists in Europe found inspiration in symbolic themes. They crafted paintings that explored the transient nature of life, which could be impacted by events such as plagues, wars, and natural disasters. The artwork skilfully depicted the limitations and fallibility of human beings while emphasising the importance of spiritual beliefs in finding purpose in life. Many devout Christians

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<sup>4</sup> See also: Schroeder, 1978, p. 216; O'Malley, 2002; O'Malley, 2012, pp. 24–28; Prodi, 2014; Pigozzi, 2015; Bosch, 2020), pp. 37–51.

held the conviction that life on this earth is fleeting and that eternal life could be achieved through the birth, suffering, and redemption of Jesus Christ. Josefa, too, embraced this religious spirit, combining the emblematic early Christian tradition with the illusionistic and decorative Baroque style as painted in the *Lisbon Holy Family* and *Baltimore Agnus Dei*.

#### A. Josefa's Artistic Conceits

To understand the imagery and conceptualisation of Josefa's emblematic paintings and religious iconography, two theoretical constructs can be used: symbolic and visual. The symbolic construct is based on the visual composition of an emblem found in spiritual and moral texts, which contains a Greek or Latin *motto* (title or *inscriptio*), a *pictura* (picture), and an *epigram* (short poem or *subscriptio*) (Wade, 2023). The epigram is usually an explanatory note about the picture, which includes an educational or moral message. The epigram may accompany the picture's design below it or may appear separately. Illustrated Jesuit books of prayers and moral books are examples of this artistic composition, as seen in *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu* by Jean Bolland (Bolland, 1640). In his Emblem 96, the Latin *motto* states: "Hoc sat opium est," which means "To possess little is wealth" or "Small load, great ease" (**Figures 7a and 7b**).



Figure 7a. Jean Bolland, Emblem, "To possess little is wealth. Small load, great ease," engravings in *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesus* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1640).



Figure 7b. Jean Bolland, Emblem, "To possess little is wealth. Small load, great ease," engravings in *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesus* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1640).

The *pictura* is composed of an elaborate cartouche decorated with a large mask carrying flowery garlands at the centre top and clusters of fruits hanging from scrolls on the side. Inside the cartouche, a rectangular frame encloses a landscape view of a skyscape and hilly mountains seen in the background. In contrast, the foreground shows a pilgrim's long rod resting on a small bag, symbolising a life without material possessions. This emblem hence conveys the moral message of humility and moderation as virtues for a good Christian to emulate in a life's journey.

Another moral instructional book is Diego Saavedra Fajardo's *Idea de un Principe Politico Christiano* (Saavedra Fajardo, 1655; Arranz, 2006, pp. 33-41). The Latin motto of his Emblem 76, "Consilia consiliis frustantur," means "Plans break plans" (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Diego Saavedra Fajardo, Emblem 76, "Consilia consiliis frustantur" ("Plans break plans"), engraving in *Idea de un Principe Politico Christiano* (Munich: Nicolao Enrico, 1640 and Milan: Nicolao Enrico, 1642).

The *pictura* features a decorative cartouche framed through the scrolls with hanging fruits; inside an oval frame, a landscape is depicted with a vast skyline and a vast meadow with small bushes. A large ribbon displays the Latin motto at the top of the oval frame. On the left side of the landscape are two trees. One tree is decaying, and its remaining trunk rests on the adjacent blooming tree, hoping for healing. This visual construct alerts the viewer to the danger of adhering to false hope (the dying tree) rather than to the truth (healthy tree) (Jeremiah 27:1–11). The

moral implication of the poor judgement alluded to by the formation of trees is expanded upon in the vignette of the two unusual animal creatures. One long, thin branch holds a parrot and its nest.

The second branch is shorter and thicker, containing a serpent wrapped around it. Although the vicious reptile is ready to launch into the parrot's nest, the parrot knows it is an act of futility because the serpent cannot move to a taller and weaker branch where the nest hangs. Since Antiquity, parrots have been known for their savvy in constructing their nests on tall trees with bird feathers and hanging them from a slender tree's branch. This light construction and only one entrance hole into the nest prevents serpents from eating the parrots' babies, since they cannot wrap around the delicate stem (*ivi*, p. 39). Hence the moral message is about acting with prudence and wisdom and deflecting evil by living a Christian life (*ivi*, p. 36).

In these emblematic examples, and in Josefa's religious paintings of the *Holy Family* and *Agnus Dei*, as we shall see, the imagery is situated within a cartouche design that comprises three distinct sections. The first section features an ornate frame that emulates the appearance of parchment texture. The frame is adorned with horizontal and vertical scrolls that have rolled-up ends. The scrolls are adorned with hanging garlands that bear fruit or floral decorations, enhancing the overall visual appeal. The second section houses a symbolic image, rebus, or picture that conveys a moral message. The painting depicts various subjects, including objects, animals, landscapes, and people. Finally, the third section consists of a *motto* that appears as a ribbon above the picture or wraps around an object. This *motto*, often containing a biblical reference, helps clarify and decode the image's symbolic moral or religious message.

The second applied construct is visual and draws inspiration from the Italian Renaissance theory on perception, precisely the concept of Leon Battista Alberti's window motif and the power of the sense of sight described by Leonardo da Vinci (1462–1519) (Shlain, 1991, pp. 56-57 and pp. 77-78; Kemp, 1990, pp. 158-172). Alberti (1404–1472) created an illusion of a theatrical stage that shows a picture within a picture, convening layered visual elements and meanings (Edgerton, 2006). Leonardo emphasised that the eye was the essential human organ because the “eye is the window of the soul [mind],” which helps in understanding the natural world (Shlain, 1991, p. 77). Through this function, the artist's eye captures in painting—through effects, aerial perspective (*sfumato*), and the graduation of colours—the reality of nature, especially seen in landscape scenes.

These Italian Renaissance optical insights were assimilated years later by Italian Baroque artists in their paintings displaying illusionism, tenebrism, and *sfumato* techniques. With these techniques, reality and the essence of nature were portrayed in their landscape and still-life paintings, as visualised by Josefa. Her *bodegones*, for instance, depict an arrangement of flowers, fruits, and pastries in a perspectival manner, creating a visual collection that also includes a series of

vignettes (**Figure 1**). Similarly, her *vedute* are artistic creations that symbolise the seasons and cycles of the months, expressing the complexities of perception and the joy of life. They are metaphorical jewels of nature (**Figure 9**) (De Girolami Cheney, 2023b).



*Figure 9. Josefa de Óbidos, April, 1668, oil on canvas. Private Collection. Photo Courtesy: Joaquim Oliveira Caetano, Anísio Franco, José Alberto Seabra Carvalho.*

In her religious paintings through a metaphysical construct, Josefa expertly captured the essence of the Albertian window motif and the Leonardesque perception of seeing. The vivid chromatic splendour she employed provides a spiritual backdrop for enacting biblical narratives, as evidenced in **Figures 2–5**. Using emblematic visual frames, the devotional imagery is depicted with skilful painting techniques, such as the cartouche.

Josefa's religious paintings exemplify the Baroque illusionism style, which involves a dynamic interplay of perspective between the real and the metaphysical. The contrast is between what is natural (inside the cartouche) and what is constructed or framed around it (artificial). This style was greatly influenced by moral and spiritual teachings that originated from the Counter-Reformation movement in Catholic countries such as Portugal. The ultimate objectives were to promote adoration and love for God and to cultivate piety (Schroeder, 1978, p. 216). During the Counter-Reformation, it was imperative to utilise holy images to invoke memories (*memoria*) and spiritual experiences (*exitatio*) in the faithful (*ibid.*). Josefa's religious paintings adhere to these prescripts with utmost fidelity.

## B. The Holy Family (*Gloria in Altissimis Deo*)

Josefa's *Lisbon Holy Family* (**Figure 2**) embodies the religious sentiments of the Counter-Reformation. The image's primary objectives are to elicit spirituality and promote Christian devotion. Josefa's style aligns with the naturalism of the century, but her innovation lies in emphasising the fusion of naturalism with spirituality. In addition, the artist's careful attention to detail in portraying the human form, delicate facial expressions, vibrant use of colour, the striking play of light, and skilful use of perspective and texture all contribute to the powerful impact of the image.

The overall composition is cleverly painted to resemble a theatrical scene depicting divine and natural realms, recalling medieval *tableaux vivants*, sacred theatrical plays, and celebratory religious processions during the Passion of Christ (Reynolds, 2000; Norman, 2001). The grey cartouche, which resembles a scroll, engraving, or stone relief, is artistically designed. This motif is reminiscent of holy texts, where messages are written as icons for remembrance. The acanthus leaves in the corners of the cartouche are intricately constructed to symbolise the tribulations of Christ's Passion, as described in Hosea 2:7 (Levi D'Ancona, 1977, p.34).<sup>5</sup>

A red string of beads wraps around the design on the open scrolls, leading to a big sash resembling a theatre curtain's opening for the Nativity religious performance. Bouquets on both sides of the cartouche emphasise the significance of the scroll frame. The flowers on the left and right of the Nativity iconographically associate with the Virgin Mary's iconography, Christ's Passion, and Christian virtues.

Extensive research on the indigenous flowers of Óbidos, to understand the significance of Josefa's flowers and plants, was conducted by Sónia Talhê Azambuja, who consulted the Portuguese source, *Tratado das significações das plantas, flores, e fruttos, que se refrem na Sagrada Escrittura* (*Meaning of the Plants, Flowers and Fruits referred to in Sacred Scripture*), published in Lisbon in 1622 by Fray Isidoro De Barreira for the identification of Josefa's flowers and plants in her paintings (Levi D'Ancona, 1977).<sup>6</sup> Ana Hatherly researched the poetry of Sórora Maria do Céu, a renowned poetess from Portugal. Her studies mainly centred on the intricate symbolism of flowers in the religious paintings of Josepha (Serrão *et al.*, 1997a, pp. 81-84). Mirella Levi D'Ancona's research on flowers and

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<sup>5</sup> I am thankful for Dr. Brendan Cole's assistance. He is a British Independent Scholar of Art History who specialises in flora.

<sup>6</sup> See also Azambuja, 2009/2017, relying on Fray Isidoro De Barreira, *Tratado das significações das plantas, flores, e fruttos, que se refrem na Sagrada Escrittura: tradas de divina e humans letras, com suas breves considerações* (Lisbon: Pedro Craesbeeck, 1622; repr. Lisbon: Oficina de Manuel Lopes Ferreira, 1698); and <https://www.portugalwildlife.com/Flowers.html> (accessed 15 May 2023).

plants in Italian art during the Renaissance is significant. Her analysis of the symbolism of flowers and references to classical, biblical, and Christian sources provide important insights into the floral iconography in Josefa's religious imagery (Levi D'Ancona, 1977).

On the left side of the cartouche, the flowers are identified as lavender carnations, known as the Flower of God, a symbol of divine love (*ivi*, p. 79). The many white daisies or chamomile flowers are symbols of Salvation and Resurrection (*ivi*, p. 78), as well as innocence and Incarnation (*ivi*, p. 124). The white jasmine as divine love is associated with the Virgin Mary's prudence during the Passion of her Son (*ivi*, p. 194). The orange poppy refers to induced sleep and death as Christ's Crucifixion (*ivi*, p. 321). The pomegranate flower symbolises charity, fortitude, and Resurrection (*ivi*, pp. 316-317), while the pink peony symbolises Salvation (*ivi*, p. 301).

On the right side of the cartouche, similar flowers are seen, such as daisies, jasmines, and peonies, but Josefa added a cornflower associated with the healing of wounds as in Christ's Crucifixion (*ivi*, p. 113); and a limp yellow chrysanthemum, a symbol of death, referring to Christ's Crucifixion (*ivi*, p. 96). This wilted flower contrasts with the open white camellias, symbols of love, purity, sacrifice, and Christ's Resurrection.

The flowers mentioned in this text have essential meanings closely tied to religious beliefs and figures, particularly in Christian traditions where certain flowers hold symbolic significance. For instance, pink roses or peonies are associated with grace and virtue, while daisies and camellias represent innocence and salvation. Jasmines are commonly linked to gratitude, and cornflowers indicate love. Lastly, red flowers often symbolise sacrifice.

In this Nativity scene, Josefa's fondness for animals is evident. In the stable, behind Mary can be seen a donkey and an ox. Josefa has imbued these animals with unique personalities and associated them with floral imagery and their significance. In the scene, the donkey, representing the Old Testament, momentarily stops eating grass or wheat and looks up to recognise the importance of the event—the birth of the Messiah. In contrast, the sacred event moved the ox, symbolising the New Testament, to tears of joy in witnessing the holy moment—the presence of the divine loving infant—as it also gazes at the jasmine flower that alludes to the love of Christ. In enhancing the spiritual atmosphere in the stable, Josefa depicted the ox amidst charming small purple flowers resembling violets or myosotis. These flowers hold significance as they symbolise the gift of Salvation (*ivi*, p. 237). In this painting, Christian iconography is visualised with the symbolism of the Old and New Testaments, adding the dimension of historical time to the holy moment.

The cartouche is beautifully decorated with two floral arrangements that perfectly complement the colours of the holy figures in the scene. The shades of red, pink, blue-violet, white, and yellow are seamlessly blended, creating a natural and harmonious combination that echoes the beauty of Heaven. Using the colours



of these flowers, Josefa skilfully conveyed symbolic meaning in a mystical scene. Thus the bright colour scheme and the interaction of the holy figures highlight the Nativity scene. Joseph holds a white candle and adores the newborn Child, adding to the radiant golden glow. The light from Joseph is natural, while the divine light radiating from the star above the infant Christ is golden and symbolises the heavenly light infused by the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove above the Infant Christ.

Opposite Joseph, Mary lovingly faces her newborn child and humbly joins her hands to adore him, understanding the significance of his birth on Earth. Both parents kneel in front of their child, placed in a wooden basket that functions as a crib. Rolled-up hay behind the head of the child serves as a pillow. There are two white cloths on the crib. One is a simple rag with frayed edges, representing the baby's humble birth. The blue ladder design on its edges refers to the Christian symbol of Jacob's Ladder (Genesis 28:10–17). Christ is often called "the ideal Jacob's Ladder" because of his journey from divinity to humanity on Earth (John 1:51). This divine transit was to save humankind. The second fabric is a soft cloth that partially covers the Christ Child. The material symbolises the loincloth that Christ will wear during his Crucifixion and Entombment. The way Christ's arms are raised and his legs are crossed allude to the Crucifixion, an inevitable event in his life (1 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 12:12–13). Christ's orant position is a gentle way of greeting and praising his mother, Mary. Interestingly, while all the figures wear halos with golden rims, only the infant Christ and his mother, Mary, have a star shining at the centre of their halo. This represents their divine nature and human bond.

The upper part of the painting presents a brilliant golden sky that captivates the viewer's attention. The clouds are skilfully shaped to resemble the Holy Spirit as a dove, which blesses and participates in the sacred event. Furthermore, a white banner gracefully hangs above the scene of the Holy Family from the cartouche's upper frame, delicately supported by daisies and carnations, amplifying the divine significance of the moment. The daisies symbolise sweet love and allude to the Incarnation of Christ, while the carnations, the so-called the Flower of God, symbolise divinity and love (*ivi*, p. 79). Josefa commemorated this beautiful moment in the painting by skilfully including a Latin inscription on the banner that reads "Gloria in Altissimis Deo," which translates to "Gloria to God in the Highest." This phrase originates from the Gospel of Luke (2:14), where it is said that angels sang to signal God's arrival on Earth.<sup>7</sup> Josefa creatively portrayed a magical scene that combines colours, textures, and space with the Holy Family's tenderness and reverence. This painting invites devotees to honour and pray humbly.

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<sup>7</sup> For the full version of the hymn, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloria\\_in\\_excelsis\\_Deo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloria_in_excelsis_Deo) (accessed 15 May 2023).

### **C. *The Sacrificial Lamb (Agnus Dei)***

Josefa introduced a new kind of devotional painting with the *Sacrificial Lamb (Agnus Dei)*, portraying a solo image of the Lamb. This single imagery reduced the scene's complex iconography of the Lamb to a simple composition yet with impactful mystical signification. In addition, the artist placed the resting tied-up sheep inside a cartouche design with cords, garlands, and flowers, similar to the *Nativity* and *Holy Family* paintings.

Josefa drew creative inspiration from Christian religious paintings that depicted the Adoration of the Shepherds, a scene that portrays the birth of Jesus Christ, and solo images of the Sacrificial Lamb. These paintings often represent the lamb, sheep, or ram with bound feet, symbolising Jesus's sacrifice for humanity. Her artistic style was influenced by her family and renowned Spanish Baroque artists such as Murillo, Velazquez, and Zurbarán. Among these artists, Zurbarán's *Jerez Adoration of the Shepherds*, painted in 1638, is an exceptional artwork and a prototype example of the Adoration of the Shepherds during the Baroque era in Spain and Portugal. This painting was commissioned for the Monastery of Nuestra Señora de la Defensión in Cadiz and now can be found in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Grenoble (**Figure 10**).



Figure 10. Francisco Zurbarán, *Jerez Adoration of the Shepherds*, 1638, oil on canvas. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Grenoble.

The scene represents the birth of Christ combining two realms: the celestial, where a choir of angels with musical instruments sings *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* (Luke 2:14); and the terrestrial, where the shepherds, mesmerised by the brilliant light, adore the divine child (Luke 2:16–20). Zurbarán's artistic depiction features shepherds presenting a basket filled with eggs, symbolising fertility and the sanctity of life, and sheep with bound feet, signifying penance. The bound lamb holds significant Christian connotations. Firstly, it represents the prophecy that the Lamb of God would be born and subsequently sacrificed to atone for human sins. Secondly, it embodies hope for spiritual salvation, as this sacrifice will ultimately lead to the redemption of humanity.

Josefa was inspired by her father's *Pascal Lamb and Still-Lifes*, painted between 1645 and 1650, now located in the Museu Regional at Évora (**Figure 11**), as well as by Zurbarán's paintings on the theme of *Agnus Dei*.



*Figure 11.* Baltazar Gómes Figueira, *Pascal Lamb and Still-lifes*, 1645, oil on canvas. Museu Regional, Évora. Photo credit: Jaime Silva.

The inspiration primarily came from Zurbarán's realistic art style with tenebrism and the symbolic message of mystical devotion to the Sacrificial Lamb. In his solo image of *Agnus Dei* of 1638, oil on canvas, now located in the San Diego Museum of Art (**Figure 12**), Zurbarán portrayed the bound Lamb as a symbol of sacrifice and redemption. The attention to detail and use of dark shadows creates a sense of depth and drama, emphasising the importance of the mystical Lamb.



Figure 12. Francisco Zurbarán, *Agnus Dei (The Lamb of God)*, 1638, oil on canvas, San Diego Museum of Art, CA.

The painting depicts a lamb with its legs tied, representing purity, kindness, and obedience. The Latin inscription at the base reads “Tanguam Agnus,” which means “As a Lamb.” This refers to a biblical passage in the Acts of the Apostles (8:32): “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (NKJV), where Jesus is compared to a sheep being led to slaughter, remaining silent, like a gentle lamb before its shearer. Another similar version of Zurbarán’s *Agnus Dei* of 1635, painted on canvas, without a halo around the sheep, can be seen at the Museo del Prado in Madrid.<sup>8</sup>

During the Baroque era, painters began to take a fresh approach to nature, as seen in Caravaggio’s style. This Italian Baroque painter emphasised naturalism in forms, created a sense of immediacy in space, and introduced the technique of tenebrism. This stark contrast between light and dark was a reminder that paintings were often painted by candlelight. Josefa’s artistic style can be described as influenced by Baroque imaging, characterised by its dynamic movement and striking contrasts, evoking an illumination from within the painting. Her religious paintings intended to establish a moving visual and spiritual connection between the portrayed imagery and the viewer. Thus her solo images of the Sacrificial Lamb were skilfully created using naturalism and tenebrism techniques.

Josefa created several versions of *Agnus Dei* in this style (Serrão *et al.* 1997a, p. 124; Estrela and Serrão, 2005, pp. 79-82). Josefa chose to portray a hornless sheep in her solo depiction of the Sacrificial Lamb, unlike her father’s

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<sup>8</sup> For the image, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnus\\_Dei\\_%28Zurbarán%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnus_Dei_%28Zurbarán%29) (accessed 15 May 2023).

painting of the solo *Agnus Dei* at the Museu Regional at Évora and Zurbarán’s solo *Agnus Dei* at the Prado Museum.<sup>9</sup> According to the Psalms, the horn symbolises God’s fortitude (Psalm 18:2), but she wanted to depict the humbleness of God, which is reflected in the hornless sheep with bound legs. One early version of the *Sacrificial Lamb (Agnus Dei)* is now at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, MD. This version is dated 1660 but is unsigned (**Figure 3**) (Sullivan, 1978, pp. 22-35; Sullivan, 1981, pp. 87-93). Another unsigned version was painted between 1660 and 1670 and is currently located at the Museu Regional at Évora (inventory no. 1126) (**Figure 4**). A third version of the *Agnus Dei*, signed and dated 1680, is now in Braga (Irmandade de Nossa Senhora das Dores e Santa Ana dos Congregados) (**Figure 5**).<sup>10</sup> To understand the unique characteristics of the Baltimore version, we must compare it to the Évora and Braga versions in a broader context. It is important to note that there are significant differences among the three versions.

### Évora Agnus Dei

The inventory of 1675 belonging to Baltazar Gómes Figueira lists a household belonging to their family estate, which includes a recorded second version of the *Agnus Dei* of 1660–1670 (**Figure 11**). Entries for Josefa’s paintings read: “Cordeiro (painting a lamb) and a *fruteiro* (fruit painting) with a head of a *carneiro* (ram or mutton) (Serrão *et al.*, 1997a, p. 124; Estrela and Serrão, 2005, p. 23). The *Évora Agnus Dei* has more intricate decorations than the Baltimore version. The decorations include a garland surrounding the sepulchral altar and feature Eucharistic symbols such as sheaves of wheat representing the Body of Christ and clusters of black and white grapes symbolising the spilling of Christ’s blood (Levi D’Ancona, 1977, p. 162). These grapes represent the wine and blood of Christ during the Last Supper and sacrifice of the Mass, and they hold significant Christian symbolism (Matthew 26:28). The cartouche is surrounded by spring flowers such as lilies, marigolds, daisies, jasmine, roses, poppies, narcissus, and asters. These flowers allude to the time of the Passover, symbolising Christ’s triumph over death and the assurance of paradise through his Resurrection.

Within the cartouche, a divine scene unfolds. A cherubic figure gazes down upon a gentle lamb, which is tenderly and securely bound to a sacrificial table. The cherub’s wings are intricately adorned with acanthus leaves, signifying the presence of divine protection and guidance during the sacrificial ritual. The lamb, seemingly

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<sup>9</sup> For the images, see *ivi*, pp. 81–82.

<sup>10</sup> There are three other versions of *Agnus Dei* mentioned in Estrela and Serrão, 2005. Two versions exist in private collections, one of which depicts the lamb solely with a halo and no flowers while the other shows the lamb with a halo and at least seven jasmine flowers displayed horizontally in front of the lamb. The third painting mentioned is a part of the art collection found in the Palace of the Dukes of Braganza at Guimaraes in Portugal. Despite its beauty, the painting does not show the lamb with a halo and flowers.

accepting of its fate, gazes intently at the flowers carefully placed before it. Among the flowers are delicate rose petals, symbolising love, and humble hyssop flowers, denoting penitence and humility, a genuinely serene and spiritual image of reverence and solemnity (*ivi*, p. 181). The lamb appears to be intently fixated upon a cluster of petals arranged in the shape of a cross, thus indicating that a sacrifice may be imminent. The animal's feet are bound, which suggests that it is currently undergoing a period of hardship and that an unfavourable outcome is potentially on the horizon. However, a sense of hope still pervades the scene, as indicated by the lamb's halo, which boasts a prominent star at its centre.

Additionally, the cherub that is gazing at the lamb serves as a further symbol of optimism and spiritual renewal. The message is emphasised through a flower festival surrounding the cartouche, symbolising the arrival of spring and a chance for a new beginning—a rebirth. This beautiful scene has a strong Easter aesthetic that can fill one's heart and spirit with positivity toward the Christian faith.

### **Braga Agnus Dei**

Josepha's *Braga Agnus Dei* (**Figure 5**) was created for the Brotherhood of Our Lady of Sorrows in Braga, a well-known ecclesiastical seat with a hilltop Sanctuary of Born Jesus, built by the town's Brotherhood of the Holy Trinity during the Renaissance, an allusion to Heaven. The painting features a cartouche with an impressive floral decoration (Serrão *et al.*, 1997a, p. 126). On the stone slab, a beautiful arrangement of flowers represents Christ's Resurrection and a new paradise. The flowers include roses, marigolds, asters, lilies, daisies, hyssops, orange blossoms, poppies, and forget-me-nots. Golden ropes bind the flowers, which stand out against the flat stone. Two sword lilies frame the wreath, symbolising Mary's sorrows. A cherub looks at the viewer from the top of the wreath, surrounded by clusters of jasmine flowers. When analysing the representations of cherubs in Braga and Évora, it is essential to note that the cherub in Braga's depiction engages with the viewer through direct eye contact, unlike the cherub in Évora's depiction, and that the *Évora* portrayal of the sacrificial table does not incorporate floral arrangements.

### **Baltimore Agnus Dei**

Josefa depicted another Paschal Lamb scene in the *Baltimore Agnus Dei* of 1660 (**Figure 3**). This painting revealed the iconography of the sacrificial lamb as a solo image (Chilton, 1992, pp. 45-67 and pp. 137-154). Her painting invites compassion. In this version, she has reduced the vision to an unadorned grey cartouche and a sacrificial scene of a bound lamb resting on a table. A dramatic stage is created with a charcoal grey background where the lamb is displayed. The innocent haloed lamb with bound feet lays on a cold sacrificial slab.

The blossoms strewn on the stone slab are a carnation and hyssop. Both flowers are associated with the Passion of Christ. The carnation is the Flower of God, a traditional symbol of divine love (Levi D’Ancona, 1977, p. 80). The hyssop, known in Hebrew for “Holy Name,” meaning the holy name of God, symbolises penitence and humility because this flower grows in solitary places among stones (like the stone on which the lamb rests) (*ivi*, p. 87). The flower is also a symbol of innocence and baptism—“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7). The hyssop is also a plant with diuretic and purgative powers and therefore symbolises penitence and forgiveness of sins to those who truly repent, that is, a symbol of spiritual cleansing. The lamb’s eye gazes at the flower, recognising its own predicament and faith. The lamb’s facial expression indicates that it comprehends the seriousness of its circumstances and unavoidable destiny.

The inscription on the slab announces this predicament. In Latin, the caption on the table’s edge describes the role of Christ as a sacrificial Lamb on the altar. The inscription reads: “Occisus Ab Origine Mundi,” which derives from Revelation 13:8 and translates to “The Lamb who was slain for [the original sins] or the [salvation] of the world.” This citation also serves as a poignant representation of the foundational Christian belief in the sacrificial lamb as a symbol of Christ, whose blood helps purify believers’ sins, as outlined in Matthew 26:38. Per the statement, attaining salvation requires individuals to acknowledge and wholeheartedly embrace Christ’s sacrificial act and Crucifixion. This atonable act is considered a fundamental aspect of the Christian faith and an essential step toward achieving eternal redemption.

## **Conclusion**

For her *Holy Family*, Josefa chose the Nativity story from the Gospel of Luke for her imagery (Luke 2:1–14). Upon arriving in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and lovingly wrapped him in swaddling clothes before placing him in a manger. In the still of the night, an Angel of the Lord appeared to nearby shepherds, announcing a blessed event that filled their hearts with joy and wonder. He guided them to a stable where they found an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes in an animal feed-box. Suddenly, heavenly hosts appeared, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom God is pleased.”

Josefa envisioned a beautiful scene where angels sing and glorify this miraculous moment by depicting a message written in Latin on the banner above the cartouche as “Gloria in Altissimis Deo.” She created a scene inside a stable where a nude child is partially covered with homemade clothes and rests in a straw-filled feed-box.



Biblical scholars link Luke's depiction of baby Jesus being swaddled in clothes to various Old Testament verses about loving parents caring for a child (Wisdom 7:4, Job 38:8–9, and Ezekiel 16:4). It is worth noting that in the Gospel of Luke, this analogy is mentioned again. But the second time, it describes the death of Jesus with his body being wrapped in a linen cloth and placed in a rock-hewn tomb (Luke 23:53).

After her education in the Augustinian Academy, Josefa likely remembered Saint Augustine's poignant remark on the Nativity: "Oh Infinity becomes manifest, O marvelous humility, wherein is hidden the total divinity." She also reflected on how Mary was the first to understand God's word at the Annunciation and now witnesses the Nativity. In this portrayal, Josefa depicted Mary in a humble position, kneeling before her son's crib with her hands folded. Despite her exalted status as the mother of God, Mary adores her son. In contrast, Joseph is portrayed as the human father who kneels in front of the crib, holding a candle, seeking illumination to understand this miraculous moment.

In the *Holy Family* or Nativity scene, Josefa combined the historical event of Jesus's birth with the mystical transformation of God into a human form. Jesus is born in Bethlehem to humble parents. After his birth, his body was wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a feed-box. The evangelist Luke connects this moment to the Old Testament prophecies about God's promises of salvation to humanity.

The themes of forgiveness and salvation in Josefa's *Holy Family* are given a mystical reinterpretation in *Agnus Dei* versions. In Christian iconography, the bound lamb has always symbolised innocence, gentleness, patience, and humility among shepherds, representing important qualities in physical and metaphysical conceits. In her *Agnus Dei* paintings, Josefa used numerous Christian symbols that hold significant value in the faith's doctrine. These include a cartouche and cherubs, representing salvation's essential aspects. The phrase "*Pauci vero electi*" from Matthew 22:14 is closely related to this religious theme of redemption. This phrase translates to "Only a few have been chosen," highlighting the exclusivity of the chosen ones and their deep connection with the divine.

While studying at the Augustinian Convent of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, Josefa also found inspiration in the book *The Names of Christ* by Fray Louis de Leon. He referred to Christ as a shepherd in his writings, as mentioned in the *Song of Songs* (Serrão *et al.*, 1997a, p. 128). As a devout reader of spiritual literature, Josefa translated her great zeal and fervour into the visualisation of religious imagery in her paintings.

Christian iconography traces the Lamb's origin back to the Old Testament, representing sacrifice as *Agnus Dei* (Schiller, 1972, pp. 117-122). During ancient times, lambs played a significant role in religious rituals. The Hebrews, for instance, utilised lambs for sacrificial purposes to evade the tenth plague that God imposed on Egypt. The ceremony, known as *Agnus Dei*, was performed to allow Moses and

his people to leave Egypt. The lamb's sacrifice was shared in various religious ceremonies, symbolising innocence and purity (Exodus 11–12). This tradition stems from the Passover or Easter Lamb typology as *Agnus Paschal* (*ivi*, p. 177).

In addition, the lamb was a significant symbol of sacrifice in several religious contexts, especially in the Bible. It is referenced in various stories, including Cain and Abel, Abraham and Isaac, Joachim and Anne, and the Cleansing of the Temple. As Christianity developed, the image of the lamb's significance became a powerful representation of Christ's sacrifice. The Suffering Servant was meant to remain silent before his shearer and be led like a sheep to the slaughter, as it was prophesied to relate to Christ in Isaiah 53:7 and John 1:29.

John the Baptist first recognised Christ as the Messiah, referring to him as the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Today, this reference is used in the liturgy as a nod to *Agnus Dei*. The blood of the lamb symbolises Christ's redeeming blood shed on the cross and foreshadows the death of Christ, which ultimately brings salvation to the world. This symbolism is rooted in the feast of Passover, which commemorates when the Jews in Egypt were saved by brushing their house doors with the blood of a young slaughtered lamb.

In 1 Peter 1:19, Peter affirms Isaiah's prophecy that the death of Christ, symbolised by the lamb's sacrifice, is like the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. Furthermore, Jesus is repeatedly referred to as the lamb in John 1:29. Immaculate whiteness of the lamb in Christian iconography is a powerful metaphor for the triumph of renewal and the victory of life over death. Ultimately, the lamb has become an enduring symbol of sacrifice, redemption, and salvation within Christian iconography.

Hence, during the Baroque period, using the term "lamb" as a symbolic representation of Christ was a common metaphor in various religious texts and teachings. This symbolic reference was associated with the sacrificial nature of Christ's death and his role as the ultimate sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. The lamb also symbolised purity, innocence, and humility as qualities of Christ's human nature. This metaphor was a powerful reminder of the significance of Christ's sacrifice and the depth of his love for humanity. Baroque pastoral dramas, like medieval *tableaux vivants*, proclaimed and glorified the sanctity of Christ as noted by the Spanish playwright of the Golden Age, Calderon de la Barca (1660–1661) in his book on *The Lamb of Isaiah*, where the lifeless lamb represents Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross (Pinillos, 1996). Furthermore, mystics such as the Augustinian admirer of Saint Theresa of Avila, Luis de Leon, in his book *De los nombres de Cristo* (1572–1585), used the attributes of the lamb to represent the virtues of Christ (Brown, 1991, p. 268). These mystics regarded Christ as a lamb in a symbolic way, attributing to him the virtues associated with innocence and

sacrifice. Josefa followed this tradition in her pictorial imagery of Christ as a lamb.<sup>11</sup>

The religious paintings—*Lisbon Holy Family* and *Baltimore Agnus Dei*—created by Josefa, are captivating and thought-provoking, following the devotional precepts of the Counter-Reformation. They evoke contemplation on matters of faith and spirituality. The skilful incorporation of Christian symbols, a dynamic composition arrangement, and vivid colours depict stunning imagery that draws the attention of any observer. Thus these paintings deeply move and inspire those who view them on an emotional and spiritual level.

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<sup>11</sup> The Agnus Dei symbolism was also associated with the iconography of *Salvator Mundi* and *Arma Christi*, which I discussed in Liana De Girolami Cheney, “Josefa D’Óbidos: Portuguese Religious Art,” at the International Conference, Mediterranean Studies Association, University of Coimbra, Portugal, May 27–31, 1999. See also Schiller, 1972, 2:196–122, for *Salvator Mundi*; and 2:188–197, for *Arma Christi*. The van Eyck Brothers visualised the connections with the Lamb and Arms Christi in their Ghent Altar, completed in 1432. For the image, see [https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghent\\_Altarpiece#/media/File:Lamgods\\_open.jpg](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghent_Altarpiece#/media/File:Lamgods_open.jpg) (accessed 15 May 2023).

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