

## Beyond divine

Milano, 1945. Convent refectory next to Santa Maria delle Grazie's sanctuary. On the background it is projected the image of the "L'ultima cena" di Leonardo. In front of this, the stool where Leonardo sits, his clothes covered with colours and pigments. He watches the painting putting his back away from the audience.

**Leonardo:** (voice out loud, annoyed and sarcastic tone) "It's an aberration... you risk excommunication... and the halos?". (he runs a hand through his hair, he turns back and he becomes aware of the audience). "You are here too... seeing this a-b-e-r-r-a-t-i-o-n, (he points to the "L'ultima cena").

In order to make these monks understand that my Cenacolo is not a fresco, I think it took longer than I could have invented the mystique to paint this work on wall. I told them right away: don't rush me, otherwise you can call again Donato Montorfano. My work, my rules.

I don't bend over time, man needs its own moments, he needs calm to think and fresco hasn't all this time, (he rubs his hands on his dress), it deserves every possible attention for a short time, then it's done, what you've created lasts and the rest is history.

Quick draft, a short drying period of plaster, no, no, NO! (firm tone), I'm not doing this, I call the shots, not wall or pigments, not even these hard-nuts monks. I require revisions, accuracy, not fast strokes or sudden movements. Gesù rose after three days, God has done his work in seven days. Me, Leonardo, I will take four years! It sounds reasonable. We just need time, instead of running like crazy, we have to take deep breaths and spend hours, even days without doing anything, watching, instead of going straight to action. In these dark times often we act without thinking and damages are obvious. The story about the halo held sway between monks for entire weeks, dissertations, battles of rhetoric and theology, insults to my character, assaults and battery... all this for the halos. I understand the importance that some gold little circles may have above the heads of the twelve apostles, sorry, eleven, we don't involve Giuda... if I'd put him the gold halo too, we'd have a body to show for it, and I'd be the one, but, sure as hell, Gesù didn't bring me back to life as friend Lazarus.

Anyway: not halos, not injuries for weeks, I was almost driven out... so, I reminded them Holy Spirit had yet to descend on them. Everybody quiet, everybody, all silent. The torment I had to endure, struggles between them... vanished. One by one, they started to leave refectory where they were meeting to kick me out, last of them to close the line speaks to me, hushed and solemn - *you were right Master!* - I was thrilled. One minute before Padre Conciliazione wanted to jump to my throat for the missing halos, a few seconds later he grovels at my feet. Intellect I say, where did you put the intellect? You are all talk and dogma, all words and blinders on.

If the diatribe didn't end here, I could have accepted it, but my Giuda is no good too - Master Leonardo if you ask me... *Mr Da Vinci you are wrong... your lordship you forgot that...* - do you know why this new charges? Because the Iscariota is in the middle of the apostles. I asked many times - why would I put him aside? the answer is always the same, identical and thick: - because it's him, Giuda!

I understand it is Giuda, the traitor, I understand that if he wasn't there, by now, we wouldn't be so sad about our Lord, but if I put Giuda aside and all the others together, eating, drinking and having fun, the viewer wouldn't even have to try the taste of surprise! It would understand immediately the guy's got something wrong, it is a bad person, it hides something.

Let's highlight it with a nice beam of light and write - *the antagonist, it's the one!!* - where is pathos? Where is the anticipation of knowing who is the sinful? Let's put him between the others, let's make discovery more charming, let's play with viewer, let's make it more involved in what is going on!

And yet, in this moment it's true Giuda grobbles the bag full of money, that soundrel... but the others don't know that!

Gesù daid – *verily I say to you, one of you will betray me* – he didn't say – *Eih Giuda... what are you doing? Why did you sell me out?* Gesù was the same until the end, he knew that if he revealed their names, they would have beat him up, there was some of them not really peacefull.

Inclusive church eh? Let's forgive our enemies? Let's turn the other cheek? Better not to remind it to this friars, otherwise Ludovico il Moro sends me to some place forgotten by everyone! The goods will be praised, sinners deserves hell. A dicothomy so simple to be unreal, lokk at Sant'Agostino... fortunately he isn't born today or else the love of holy and apostholic church would tear him to peaces, litteraly. I fight the ingenious semplicity, but extremeley dangerous, in which this catholicism has played a forceful role!

This exactly why, in the fragment behind me, I focused on human being drama, because if we don't use our biggest gift God gave us, what will remain of us? Bipeds animals! Look There, Pietro (*He look at him*), the passion driving men to imprudence, ready to cut Malco'ws ear with the knife, innocent, slave of the high priest, when his guilt is the arrest of Cristo, he is out of anger and, with treatening behaviour, he turns its own sharp justice to the traitor hidden between guests. The founder of church, we are talking about Gesù's heir, from him popes derives and he's the one who cuts the eir of a man! It's him! Is it possible being wrong and at thesame time being really forgiven? If you are wrong for this church, for this world, why have we only to die? Being indicated as outcasts?

And why is Giuda hidden between theme? Because in every place, among comrades, there will be always the one ready to give up, betray, too weak for the burden has been entrusted to him. And just like every traitor knowing its sins, he's calm and still, as Gesù, victim and murderer. Isn't this perhaps the paradox of this life, victim and murderer being the same outwardly? But inside small and vast universes of swirling and contrasting emotions follow each other? Everyone following its own way, its own pacific resignation or the wild affermation of one's conviction.

Protagonists know what their roles are. Determined by theirself, by the events or by destiny, all around there's chaos... everyone else is shaken, feared, certaintes crumbling, crushing, roads suddently breaking off, they collapse on each other. Bartollomeo lays his hand on the table and he turns Cristo: he doesn't believe in terribles words he heard and he ask a sign of confirmation. Giacomo Minore lays a hand on andrea's arm and with the other hand he touches Pietro's shoulder. Andrea stands still and he raises his hand up on high with palm facing outward, he wants to distract from his guilt. Giacomo sits and he spreads his arms, he has nothing to hide. With his finger all tense, Tommaso bends to Cristo. Filippo stands with his hands on his chest as a token of innocence. Matteo opens his arms to Cristo, but his torso and his face are rearward-facing, and Taddeo is in anguish, he turns his hand up on high.

Look at them restless after this words, while Gesù is frozen, he opens his arms towards destiny, he's given up, he performs his duty. If I 'd made him look up just for a moment he would have a view of the cross. It is an announcement breaking into the room like an explosion bending bodies, an immense roar. Cristo in the middle, imperturbed and in a deeply and gloomy loneliness, he has already taken a divine detachment. And here more than in every moment of this life on this earth, he expresses his nature: the acceptance of itself, of his own purpose, sacrificing for everyone without any distinction of race and sex. Just like mother church did not for eons after him. Don't you see the beauty of this moment? World complexity is described with only thirteenth charachters. Whe can only tune our souls and see if we can feel the same armony in front of my Gesù, in front of this powerfull and tragic instant. We've been fighting ourselves and we almost scream against that God made man, then running away. Don't we feel like him? If they warned us about dangers, would't we run away? There's a greatness in those arms opened wide towards the world, in that embrace accepting everyone, a warning, reminding us to not stop believing in our humanity; to face problems with a peacefull heart and a clear mind. It is a neverending fight between good and evil, light and pain, between this God's child and a murderer hidden in the shadow. But if even Gesù did not defeated evil who are we, mortals among mortals, in order to dare overcome him? We can only continue fighting evil eradicating it

from our hearts... there will be one day when we stop chaining our minds to false rules imposed to us, and then, then we will ride the sky, we will fight oceans, we'll defeat prejudices, we will become what we are, setting us free from miserable and poor thoughts and we will fly.

I wonder (*he looks at the audience*) how do we claim the right to deny life to those who suffer? Did we become the worst of our own humanity? Who will be able to forgive us?

Foolishness is a mortal thing, don't you agree? You can't seriously tell me you think a human defect is unbeatable? I gave myself and for Church I'm just a bastard. Don't let the others determine what you are, only you can set the limits on your mind and your hearts. Don't do it!