



# IL CENACOLO

*ITALIAN CULTURAL CLUB*  
*Founded in 1928 San Francisco, California*

Regular Thursday Meetings, Noon to 2:00 P.M.

Post Office Box 475119, San Francisco CA 94147-5119

[www.ilcenacolosf.org](http://www.ilcenacolosf.org)

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## THIS MONTH'S SPEAKERS

All Meetings at Fior d'Italia, 2237 Mason Street, San Francisco

### Thursday, February 2, 2012

Speaker: Chris Denesi

Title: Fellow Cenacolista and Athlete

Topic: "My Experience in Triathlon and Ironman Competitions"

### Thursday, February 9, 2012

Speaker: Ross Adkins

Title: Fellow Cenacolista

Topic: "Jimmy Roselli: The Greatest Singer of Neapolitan Popular Song"

### Thursday, February 16, 2012

Speaker: Charlie Walther

Title: Marine Engineer and Entrepreneur

Topic: "The Fastest Ship in the Navy"

### Thursday, February 23, 2012

Speaker: Joe Calderaro

Title: Retired IRS Technical Director

Topic: "My Life in the IRS"

*February programs arranged by John Benson.*

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## **PROGRAM PROFILES**

**February 2012**

### **February 2, 2012: Chris Denesi**

**Fellow Cenacolista (a very new member) Chris Denesi started participating in triathlons in 2001 and Ironmans in 2003. Chris will share his experiences in these competitions and tell us what it takes to do this on a regular basis! He will also talk about his recent 7-day bike ride down the California Coast.**

### **February 9, 2012: Ross Adkins**

**“Jimmy Roselli: The Greatest Singer of Neapolitan Popular Song (1925-2010). Why have you never heard of him?”**

**Is it possible that the best Italian-American singer of popular song was born on South Monroe Street in Hoboken, NJ, rather than Dolly Sinatra’s son Frank, born on North Monroe Street in the same era? Why did Sinatra’s career go to the heights while J.R.’s career never got recognition until late in his life? How did J.R., who was born into a broken home in the United States, given a shoeshine box at age 9 and told to make a living, achieve a pure Neapolitan sound? What was the subtext behind J.R.’s signature songs such as “Mala-femmena” and “Guaglione”? Finally, what does all this have to do with the hat check girl at the “El Morocco” in the late forties and early fifties?**

**These and other questions will be answered by our speaker accompanied by selections from the Jimmy Roselli Songbook in his personal collection.**

### **February 16, 2011: Charlie Walther**

**Charlie Walther graduated from the California Maritime Academy with a BS in Marine Engineering. His career took him through the US Naval Reserve as a Lieutenant, the US Coast Guard as a licensed Chief Engineer, and for over twenty years he worked at Crowley Maritime as engineering assistant, vessel Chief Engineer, and during the last five years as Corporate Director of Engineering. In 1989, he started Walther Engineering, where he provides engineering and project management for ferries, tankers and tugs, with emphasis on diesel power.**

**In 2010, Charlie spoke to Il Cenacolo about the new ferries for the San Francisco Bay. Today he will speak about the Xcraft, the fastest surface ship in the United States Navy, and perhaps, the world. It is 265 feet long, has 78,000 horsepower, twin enhanced 747 engines for speed power and diesels for endurance. In sea trials, it has traveled as fast as 54 knots. It was built by Nichols Brothers for the contractor L3Titan Corporation for the US Navy over 20 months, at a cost of \$100 million, and was completed on time and on budget. Charlie was the senior technical representative and provided the interface with the builder, the contractor, and the Navy, and was instrumental in many aspects of the project management and construction supervision.**

### **February 23, 2011: Joe Calderaro**

**Back by popular demand! Joe is the retired IRS technical director for Northern California who will share some information about how the IRS functions and some amusing stories he has encountered during his career.**

## **FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT**

**February 2012**

*Greetings, Cenacolisti!*

Now that we are heading into February, I, probably like many of you, am eagerly awaiting the coming of Spring. We received a real pelting of rain while I was sitting composing this letter. We do need it and I am thankful for the deluge at times; we also like the beautiful mild springtime that is descending upon our winter months. One can never say that the Bay Area winters are predictable; we know that they aren't like winters in other parts of the country! Although our weather this year has been mild, the darkness of winter days of December and January gets bleak about this time of year. But as the days begin to lengthen, I'm buoyed by the fact that the exuberance of Spring and Summer is just around the corner. Il Cenacolo has settled into a pattern of regular weekly programs. No special dinners or Thursdays off for awhile; just fine Thursday luncheon programs to entertain and enlighten us all.

I want to thank David Giannini, our Treasurer and a Past-President, for presenting four diverse and very interesting speakers in January. As always, David's month was filled with fascinating presentations and continued our endeavor to provide diversity, enlightenment and entertainment in our presentations. I hope you enjoyed the January program as much as I did.

February's speaker's list also looks very interesting and varied. I want to thank John Benson, who has found a number of interesting and accomplished speakers. I know I am looking forward to hearing these during the month. See the first page of this Bulletin for the presentations that will be offered. I hope you can attend some, if not all, of the presentations.

My Alla Corrente last month dealt with Giorgione, one of the important artists of the Italian Renaissance, but in a city outside Florence and Rome. The exhibit at the DeYoung museum on paintings of Venice during the Renaissance is on display until February 12. This month's Alla Corrente considers the life and works of probably the greatest artist of the Venetian Renaissance. . . Titian. Some of his works are on display in the exhibit as well. I hope you have a chance to see them "up close and personal" in the exhibit and that you enjoy the Alla Corrente essay.

I know this is an early announcement, but many of us need to plan future events several months in advance to be sure that we are able to attend. So. . . this year's Opera Outing will be held at the Seghesio Family Winery in Healdsburg. Something different this year. . . we are returning to an Italian outdoor picnic like we had at Monte Rosso for years. It will be held in the Grove of the winery (the area where we had wine and appetizers before the dinner). We are working with Dana (our wonderful contact at the winery) and the chef to have a picnic dinner similar to the ones we had for years before we moved to Seghesio (bread, wine, salad, pasta, chicken, and dessert). We will keep you informed about how this event and its menu are shaping up. The date has been set for Sunday September 16, 2012. Please plan on attending and watch for the reservation form coming this summer.

It's that time of year again!! We are looking for gentlemen who wish to serve as Board members or officers. Election will be at our annual meeting in June. If you are interested in serving or if you wish to nominate someone who is interested in serving, please contact me or one of the other Board members or officers. Please consider this service to Il Cenacolo; we need people who are willing to serve.

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**FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT, *Continued***  
**February 2012**

Leonardo da Vinci Society has two excellent programs coming up in February and March. On February 14, Keith Devlin (the “Math Guy” on NPR) from Stanford University will speak on “Fibonacci’s Arithmetical Revolution and the Birth of Modern Finance.” It will be a presentation about Fibonacci’s role in bringing Arabic mathematical formulations and numerals to Western Europe. Also, Fibonacci was responsible for the “double entry” bookkeeping that has become the norm for modern-day finance. Sounds like a very engrossing topic. The time is 7:30-9:30 and the place is the The Museo Italo Americano at Fort Mason (Bldg. C).

The March program of the Leonardo da Vinci Society will present Michael Stehr, an artist and art historian, who will speak about “St Peter’s Basilica, the Greatest Landmark in Western Culture.” Time and place for this event are the same as the February program. Another great lecture on a terrific topic!!

Finally, I hope to see you at the Fior during February for several, if not all, of the month’s programs. It’s hard to beat the luncheon, wine, and camaraderie for the price. And as always, very interesting, informative, and entertaining speakers.

Ciao.  
Jim Boitano, il Presidente

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Sunday, September 16, 2012  
Il Cenacolo’s Opera Outing, Seghesio Family Winery, Healdsburg, CA  
Mark you calendars!

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**LEONARDO DA VINCI SOCIETY PROGRAMS**  
Museo ItaloAmericano, Fort Mason, Bldg. C.  
7:30-9:30 PM

February 14, 2012  
Keith Devlin, Stanford University  
“Fibonacci’s Arithmetical Revolution and the Birth of Modern Finance”

March 6, 2012  
Michael Stehr, Artist and Art Historian  
“St. Peter’s Basilica, the Greatest Landmark in Western Culture”

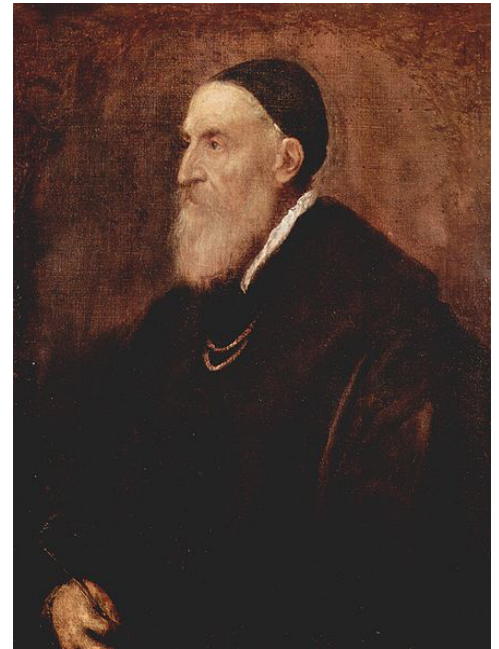
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## ALLA CORRENTE

### Titian

Tiziano Vecelli or Tiziano Vecellio (c. 1488/1490-27 August 1576), known in English as Titian, was an Italian painter, the most important member of the 16th-century Venetian school. He was born in Pieve di Cadore, near Belluno (in Veneto), in the Republic of Venice. During his lifetime he was often called *da Cadore*, taken from the place of his birth. Recognized by his contemporaries as “The Sun Amidst Small Stars” (recalling the famous final line of Dante’s *Paradiso*), Titian was one of the most versatile of Italian painters, equally adept with portraits, landscape backgrounds, and mythological and religious subjects. His painting methods, particularly in the application and use of color, would exercise a profound influence not only on painters of the Italian Renaissance, but on future generations of Western art.

During the course of his long life, Titian’s artistic manner changed drastically but he retained a lifelong interest in color. Although his mature works may not contain the vivid, luminous tints of his earlier pieces, their loose brushwork and subtlety of polychromatic modulations are without precedent in the history of Western art.



*Titian*

At the age of about ten to twelve, he and his brother Francesco Vecellio, who also became a painter of some note in Venice, were sent to an uncle in Venice to find an apprenticeship with a local painter. The minor painter Sebastian Zuccato, whose sons became well-known mosaicists, and who may have been a family friend, arranged for the brothers to enter the studio of the elderly Gentile Bellini, from which they later transferred to that of his brother Giovanni Bellini. At that time the Bellinis, especially Giovanni, were the leading artists in the city. There Titian found a group of young men about his own age, among them Giovanni Palma da Serinalta, Lorenzo Lotto, Sebastiano Luciani, and Giorgio da Castelfranco, nicknamed Giorgione.

Titian joined Giorgione as an assistant, but many contemporary critics already found his work more impressive; for example, in the exterior frescoes (now almost totally destroyed) that they did for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (state-warehouse for the German merchants), and their relationship evidently had a significant element of rivalry. Distinguishing between their work at this period remains a subject of scholarly controversy, and there has been a substantial movement of attributions away from Giorgione to Titian in the 20th century, with little traffic the other way. One of the earliest known works of Titian, *Christ Carrying the Cross* in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, depicting the Ecce Homo scene, was long regarded as the work of Giorgione. The two young masters were likewise recognized as the two leaders of their new school of “arte moderna,” which is characterized by paintings made more flexible, freed from symmetry and the remnants of hieratic conventions still to be found in the works of Giovanni Bellini.

Between 1507-1508 Giorgione was commissioned by the state to create frescoes on the re-erected Fondaco dei Tedeschi. Titian and Morto da Feltre worked along with him, and some fragments of paintings remain, probably by Giorgione. Some of their work is known, in part, through the engravings of Fontana. After Giorgione’s early death in 1510, Titian continued to paint Giorgionesque subjects for some time, though his style developed its own features, including bold and expressive brushwork.

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## ALLA CORRENTE, *Continued*

### Titian

Titian's talent in fresco is shown in those he painted in 1511 at Padua in the Carmelite church and in the Scuola del Santo, some of which have been preserved, among them the *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, and three scenes (*Miracoli di sant'Antonio*) from the life of St. Anthony of Padua: *The Miracle of the Jealous Husband* which depicts the murder of a young woman by her husband, *A Child Testifying to Its Mother's Innocence*, and *The Saint Healing the Young Man with a Broken Limb*.

From Padua in 1512, Titian returned to Venice; and in 1513 he obtained a broker's patent, termed "La Sanseria" or "Senseria" (a privilege much coveted by rising or risen artists), in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi and became superintendent of the government works. He was charged to complete the paintings left unfinished by Giovanni Bellini in the hall of the great council in the ducal palace. He set up an atelier on the Grand Canal at San Samuele. It was not until 1516, after the death of Giovanni Bellini, that he came into actual enjoyment of his patent. At the same time he entered an exclusive arrangement for painting. The patent yielded him a good annuity of 20 crowns and exempted him from certain taxes—in return, he was required to paint likenesses of the successive Doges of his time at the fixed price of eight crowns each. The actual number he painted was five.



*Assumption of the Virgin*

During the period (1516-1530), which may be called the period of his mastery and maturity, the artist moved on from his early Giorgionesque style; he undertook larger and more complex subjects and for the first time attempted a monumental style. Giorgione had died in 1510 and Giovanni Bellini in 1516, leaving Titian unrivaled in the Venetian School. For 60 years he was to be the undisputed master of Venetian painting. In 1516 he completed his famous masterpiece, the *Assumption of the Virgin (Assunta)* for the high altar of the church of the Frari. This extraordinary piece of colorism took Titian two years to complete. Its dynamic three-tier composition and color scheme, executed on a grand scale rarely before seen in Italy, established him as the preeminent painter north of Rome and created a great sensation. The Signoria took note, and observed that Titian was neglecting his work in the hall of the great council.

The pictorial structure of the *Assumption*—that of uniting in the same composition two or three scenes superimposed on different levels: earth and heaven, the temporal and the infinite—was continued in a series of works such as the retable of San Domenico at Ancona (1520), the retable of Brescia (1522), and the retable of San Niccolò (1523), each time attaining to a higher and more perfect conception, finally reaching a classic formula in the *Pesaro Madonna*, (better known as the *Madonna di Ca' Pesaro*) (c. 1519-1526). This perhaps is his most studied work, in which his patiently developed plan is set forth with supreme display of order and freedom, originality and style. Here Titian gave a new conception of the traditional groups of donors and holy persons moving in aerial space, the plans and different degrees set in an architectural framework.

Titian was now at the height of his fame, and towards 1521, following the production of a figure of St. Sebastian for the papal legate in Brescia, purchasers pressed for his work. To this period belongs a more extraordinary work, *The Death of St. Peter Martyr* (1530), formerly in the Dominican Church of San Zanipolo, and

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## ALLA CORRENTE, *Continued*

### Titian

destroyed by an Austrian shell in 1867. Only copies and engravings of this proto-Baroque picture remain; it combined extreme violence and a landscape, mostly consisting of a great tree, that pressed into the scene and seemed to accentuate the drama in a way that looks forward to the Baroque.

Titian simultaneously continued his series of small Madonnas which he treated amid beautiful landscapes in the manner of genre pictures or poetic pastorals, the *Virgin with the Rabbit* being the finished type of these pictures. Another work of the same period is the *Entombment*. This was also the period of the three large and famous mythological scenes for the camerino of Alfonso d'Este in Ferrara: *The Andrians*, *the Worship of Venus* and *the Bacchus and Ariadne* (1520-23). Finally this was the period when he composed the half-length figures and busts of young women, probably courtesans, such as *Flora of the Uffizi*, or *Woman at the Mirror*.

Titian's wife, Cecilia—a barber's daughter from his hometown village of Cadore—was a young woman who had been his housekeeper and mistress for some five years. Cecilia had already borne Titian two sons, Pomponio and Orazio, when in 1525 she fell seriously ill. Titian, wishing to legitimize his children, married her. The marriage was a happy one and Cecilia recovered and bore him two more children, both daughters. Only one of them, Lavinia, survived. Titian's favorite child was Orazio, who became his assistant.

In August 1530 Cecilia died while giving birth to their daughter Lavinia, and with his two boys plus infant girl he moved his household, and convinced his sister Orsa to come from Cadore to take charge of the household. The mansion was in the Biri Grande, then a fashionable suburb at the extreme end of Venice, on the sea, with beautiful gardens and a view towards Murano.

During the next period (1530-1550), Titian developed the style introduced by his dramatic *Death of St. Peter Martyr*. The Venetian government, dissatisfied with Titian's neglect of the work for the ducal palace, ordered him in 1538 to refund the money which he had received, and Pordenone, his rival of recent years, was installed in his place. However, at the end of a year Pordenone died, and Titian, who meanwhile applied himself diligently to painting in the hall the *Battle of Cadore*, was reinstated. This major battle scene was lost along with so many other major works of Venetian artists by the great fire which destroyed all the old pictures in the great chambers of the Doge's Palace in 1577. It represented in life-size the moment at which the Venetian general, D'Alviano attacked the enemy with horses and men crashing down into a stream, and was the artist's most important attempt at a tumultuous and heroic scene of movement to rival Raphael's *Battle of Constantine* and the equally ill-fated *Battle of Cascina* of Michelangelo and *The Battle of Anghiari* of Leonardo (both unfinished). The *Speech of the Marquis del Vasto* (1541) was also partly destroyed by fire. But this period of the master's work is still represented by the *Presentation of the Blessed Virgin* (1539), one of his most popular canvasses, and by the *Ecce Homo* (1541). Despite its loss, the painting had a great influence on Bolognese art and Rubens, both in the handling of details and the general effect of horses, soldiers, lictors, and powerful stirrings of crowds at the foot of a stairway, lit by torches with the flapping of banners against the sky.

Titian's unmatched handling of color is exemplified by his *Danaë with Nursemaid*, one of several mythological paintings, or "poesie" ("poems") as the painter called them, done for Philip II of Spain. Less successful were the pendentives of the cupola at Santa Maria della Salute (*Death of Abel*, *Sacrifice of Abraham*, *David and Goliath*). These violent scenes viewed in perspective from below—like the famous pendentives of the Sistine Chapel Ceiling—were by their very nature in unfavorable situations. They were nevertheless much admired and imitated, Rubens among others applying this system to his forty ceilings of the Jesuit church at Antwerp.

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## ALLA CORRENTE, *Continued*

### Titian

At this time also, during his visit to Rome, Titian began his series of reclining Venuses (*The Venus of Urbino*, *Venus and Love*, and *Venus and the Organ-Player*), in which one can see the effect of the impression produced on him by contact with ancient sculpture. Giorgione had already dealt with the subject in his Dresden picture, finished by Titian, but here the whole meaning of the scene is changed by using a purple drapery instead of a landscape background.

Titian had from the beginning of his career shown himself to be a masterful portrait-painter, in works like *La Bella* (Eleanora de Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino). He painted the likenesses of princes, or Doges, cardinals or monks, and artists or writers. Titian is compared to Rembrandt and Velázquez in portrait painting, with the interior life of the former, and the clearness, certainty, and obviousness of the latter. Titian's state portrait of Emperor Charles V (1548) established a new genre, that of the grand equestrian portrait. The composition is steeped both in the Roman tradition of equestrian sculpture and in the medieval representations of an ideal Christian knight, but the weary figure and face have a subtlety few such representations attempt.

As a matter of professional and worldly success, Titian's position from about this time is regarded as equal only to that of Raphael, Michelangelo, and at a later-date Rubens. In 1540 he received a pension from D'Avalos, marquis del Vasto, and an annuity of 200 crowns (which was afterwards doubled) from Charles V from the treasury of Milan. Another source of profit, for he was always interested in money, was a contract obtained in 1542 for supplying grain to Cadore, where he visited almost every year and where he was both generous and influential. Titian had a favorite villa on Manza Hill (in front of the church of Castello Roganzuolo) from which (we may infer) he made his chief observations of landscape form and effect. The so-called Titian's mill, constantly discernible in his studies, is at Collontola, near Belluno.

Titian visited Rome in 1546, and obtained the "freedom of the city"—his immediate predecessor in that honor having been Michelangelo in 1537. This meant that he had access to nearly any place he wanted to visit while in Rome. At this time, he could have succeeded the painter Sebastiano del Piombo in his lucrative office as holder of the piombo or Papal seal, and he was prepared to take holy orders for this purpose; but the project lapsed since he was summoned away from Venice in 1547 to paint Charles V and others in Augsburg. (This was when he painted the picture described above of Charles V in 1548). He was there again in 1550, and painted the portrait of Philip II which was sent to England and proved useful in Philip's suit for the hand of Queen Mary.



*The Rape of Europa*

During the last twenty-six years of his life (1550–1576) Titian worked mainly for Philip II and as a portrait-painter. An absolute perfectionist, he kept some pictures in his studio for ten years, never tiring of returning to them and retouching them, constantly adding new expressions which were more refined, concise, and subtle. He also finished off many copies of his earlier works done by his pupils, giving rise to numerous problems of attribution and priority among versions of his works, which were also very widely copied and faked outside his studio during his lifetime and afterwards.

For Philip II he painted a series of large mythological paintings known as the "poesie", mostly from Ovid,

## ALLA CORRENTE, *Continued*

### Titian

which are regarded as among his greatest works. Thanks to the prudishness of Philip's successors, these were later mostly given as gifts and only two remain in the Prado. Titian was producing religious works for Philip at the same time. The "poesie" series began with *Venus and Adonis*, and *Danaë*; both were sent to Philip in 1553. *Diana and Actaeon* and *Diana and Callisto*, were finished in 1559, then *Perseus and Andromeda* and *The Rape of Europa* were sent to Philip in 1562. *The Death of Actaeon* was begun in 1559; Titian worked on it for many years, but never completed nor delivered it. Another painting that apparently remained in his studio at his death is the powerful, even "repellent", *Flaying of Marsyas*. Another violent masterpiece is the *Tarquin and Lucretia*.

For each of the problems he successively faced, Titian furnished a new and more perfect solution. He never again equaled the emotion and tragedy of the *The Crowning with Thorns*; in the expression of the mysterious and the divine, he never equaled the poetry of *The Pilgrims of Emmaus*; while in superb and heroic brilliancy he never again executed anything grander than *The Doge Grimani Adoring Faith* or *The Trinity*. On the other hand, from the standpoint of flesh tints, his most moving pictures are those of his old age, such as the poesie and also the *Antiope*. He even attempted problems of chiaroscuro in fantastic night effects (*Martyrdom of St. Laurence*, and *St. Jerome*).

He was at the Council of Trent around 1555; there is a finished sketch of *The Council Fathers*. Titian's friend Aretino died suddenly in 1556, and another close intimate, the sculptor and architect Jacopo Sansovino, in 1570. In September 1565 Titian went to Cadore and designed the decorations for the church at Pieve, partly executed by his pupils. One of these is a Transfiguration, another an Annunciation inscribed "Titianus fecit" ("Titian made this") as a protest against the disparagement by some people who argued about his supposed failing artistic abilities.

Around 1560 Titian painted the oil on canvas *Sacra Conversazione: The Madonna and Child with Saints Luke and Catherine of Alexandria*, a derivative on the motif of Madonna and Child. It is suggested that members of Titian's Venice workshop probably painted the curtain and St. Luke because of the lower quality of those parts.

He continued to accept commissions to the end of his life. He had selected as the place for his burial the chapel of the Crucifix in the Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, the church of the Franciscan Order; in return for a grave, he offered the Franciscans a picture of the Pietà, representing himself and his son Orazio before the Savior; the other figure in the composition was a sibyl (mixing a religious theme with a classical figure). This work he nearly finished, but some differences arose between the Franciscans and Titian regarding it, and so he decided to be interred in his native Pieve.

Titian was (depending on his unknown birthdate) probably in his late eighties when the plague raging in Venice took him on August 27, 1576. He was the only victim of the Venice plague to be given a church burial. He was interred in the Frari (Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari), as he had first intended, and his Pietà was finished by Palma the Younger. He lies near his own famous painting, the *Madonna di Ca' Pesaro*. Originally, no memorial marked his grave; it was not until much later that the Austrian rulers of Venice commissioned Canova to provide the large monument. Immediately after Titian's own death, his son and assistant Orazio died of the same epidemic. Titian's sumptuous mansion was plundered during the plague by thieves.

-Adapted from Wikipedia