

<i>Project Title</i>	"Litany of Loreto"
<i>Image Title</i>	"Mater Christi – Mother of Christ"
<i>Medium</i>	Iris giclee print on Arches Cold Press
<i>Size example</i>	" Mater Christi " 30" x 30" unframed
<i>Artist</i>	Lisa A. Johnston
<i>Style</i>	Montage Photography
<i>Synopsis</i>	This image is part of a series currently in progress and is a visual study on the names given to Mary the mother of Jesus in the "Litany of Loreto", a solemn litany of titles sung or prayed in honour of the Virgin Mary. The imagery is concerned with examining these <i>titles</i> through contemporary photographic technique which is supplied heavily with the vigorous usage of religious and poetic literary symbolism and iconography.

*Particular Image Background  
And Reference Notes*

This particular image "Mater Christi – Mother of Christ" is a visual interpretation of this title and theme. As reference points for understanding the imagery the following quotations are invited:



Predestined from eternity by that decree of divine providence which determined the incarnation of the Word to be the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin was in this earth the virgin Mother of the Redeemer, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. she presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace.  
[Lumen Gentium 61]

"Co-operating with divine grace, Mary was like that flower, till then unknown, which, white and fragrant, grew amid the thorns of this valley of tears, the most pleasing flower to him who delights only amid the lilies. By that vow which seemed for ever to preclude her from the title of mother, the chaste young Virgin approached the dignity of Mother of God, and crossing the barrier which separated the ancient from the New Law, plunged into the ocean of evangelical virtues." – Msgr. Romulad Gentilucci

From a composition by Renaissance composer Josquin des Prez (ca. 1450/1455–1521):

Gaude, virgo mater Christi,	Rejoice, virgin mother of Christ
Quae per aurem concepisti,	Who hast conceived by ear,
Gabriele nuntio.	With Gabriel as messenger.
Gaude, quia Deo plena	Rejoice, for full of God
Peperisti sine poena,	Thou gavest birth without pain,
Cum pudoris lilio.	With the lily of purity.
Gaude, quia tui nati	Rejoice, for the resurrection
Quem dolebas mortem pati,	Of thy Son now shines,
Fulget resurrectio.	Whose death thou mourned,
Gaude Christo ascendente,	Rejoice, as Christ ascends,
Et in coelum te vidente,	And, in thy sight, is carried
Motu fertur proprio.	Into heaven by his own strength.
Gaude que post ipsum scandis,	Rejoice, thou who riseth after him
Et est honor tibi grandis,	And to whom great honor is due
In caeli palatio.	In the palace of heaven,
Ubi fructus ventris tui,	Where the fruit of thy womb
Nobis detur per te frui,	Is granted us, through thee, to enjoy
In perenni gaudio.	In eternal rejoicing.
Alleluia. Alleluia.	

*Visual Symbols*

Contained within this image are many symbolisms including:

- **Red Rose** – Red represents the ardent love with which the heart of Mary was always inflamed towards God. The red signifies the mortification of her flesh and her compassion for the world. Red also symbolizes the blood of the cross which she was to stand under.
- **Tree/Twigs with Buds** – The "tree of life" from the Garden of Eden in Genesis. The bud spoken of by the Prophet Isaias: *In that day the bud of the Lord shall be in magnificence and glory, and the fruit of the earth shall be high, and a great joy to them that shall have escaped of Israel.* [Isaias 4:2.]
- **Doves nest** - The image of the doves nest is symbolic of the home of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in this case, is to make its home in the womb of the Virgin. The image is duplicitous and also serves as an image of foreshadowing a crown of thorns which symbolizes the ultimate sorrowful mystery and passion of Jesus.
- **Crucifix (sea sailfish bone)** – a reminder of Christ's passion, this bone symbolizes Christ body upon the cross.
- **Myrrh** – A gift brought by Caspar, one of the three wisemen who followed the star to Bethlehem. The myrrh plant contains various medicinal uses. This gift represents Christ's human nature, the Suffering Savior, the Great Physician, and the Passion. Because myrrh was used in the embalming or anointing of the dead, it came to represent mortality, suffering, and sorrow. Nicodemus brought "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds" to prepare Jesus's body for burial [John 19:39]. "Myrrh and aloes, by their bitterness, their pleasant perfume, and their preserving qualities, represent the penance by which we preserve our souls from the corruption of sin and the pleasing odor of a good report rising before God" -- Thomas Aquinas – [Summa Theologica v. 5 p. 694] The psalmist portrays Christ as a king upon His wedding day being clothed in garments "scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia" [Psa 45:8]
- **Green** - color is an emblem of spring, hope, and victory.