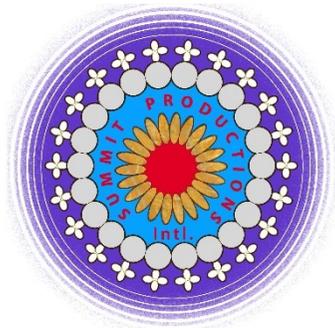


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Julianus Deiulio

# POLARIS MUNDI

THE LEONARDO UNVEILED

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To Leonardo da Vinci, *celestial and wondrous*

# INTRODUCTION

This book was created to discuss the secrets of the *Salvator Mundi*, the final painting by Leonardo which was sold at Christie's in New York in November 2017 for the incredible sum of \$450 million dollars approximately, which is the highest sum ever registered for a sale in an auction. The work represents Jesus Christ, the beneficent, holding a crystal sphere representing the world. In the painting of the globe, however, the phenomenon of refraction does not appear, and it's precisely this supposed error - an error which Leonardo would surely not have made – that has caused so much heated debate over time. Contemporary critics seem divided on the origins of the work, some claim that the painting is not the fruit of Leonardo's mastery, while others are convinced of the authenticity of the work. The latter is at the moment the most favored opinion.

The clamor caused by this sudden entry into world news, with its relative lively debate, has caused the characters of our story (an astrologer, a painter, and a geometrician, to embrace the theory of the authenticity of the *Salvator Mundi* resulting in a long period of research, leading to their increasing wonder and emotional discovery of the keys to many arcane messages scattered throughout this artwork. The painting has revealed itself as a puzzle to be examined and re-examined continuously, until reaching the impressive goal of revealing its profound meaning. At least this is our aim.

Here we have a real and true uncovering of an enigma that has required both articulate reasoning and analytical procedures. Because of the vastness of the topics referred to, the research has been laborious, and they immediately gave rise to the need for a procedure capable of collecting the mental processes and paths suggested by the work through a not too complicated narrative key, in order to avoid ending up in a veritable riddle of semantic and labyrinthian terminology. The simplest way to proceed is to recount the events exactly as they developed.

This is how the narrative device of presenting the evidence in a series of debates between friends in a cultural salon came to be born. It is a sort of symposium of platonic matrices in which ideas are developed separately and independently, that allows the reader to choose the path and the order he considers to be the most suitable. Whatever the choice, it will always relate to *constructing* a gnoseological pathway which will enable the assimilation of notions and concepts, which sooner

or later will be fruitful. The reader can be sure of this.

Furthermore, even the protagonists of this story experienced events in this same way, passing unexpectedly from one topic of discussion to another regarding the painting, in a tumultuous sequence of discoveries that have created the necessity to re-order ideas and re-examine the conclusions that led them to formulate their results. And because objects and subjects are suddenly *revealed* through figures, symbols, geometry, characters and analogies, the protagonists are led to deep reflections. The reader is unconcerned by the possibility that he too may be affected by this analytical process, which is absolutely normal, and at the same time rather wonderful. It is nevertheless not a question of finding the right narrative key to be able to confront the sort of *labyrinth* expressed in the image of Christ, in which the *real* protagonist of the work remains the eternal author. In relation to the five hundredth anniversary of Leonardo's death, (2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019), it has been necessary to examine the complexities of this mysterious and charismatic character, or at least attempt to do so via an analytical procedure which delves into both Leonardo's life and his works. The characters of the story help to reconstruct Leonardo's biographical profile and his personality, both in a historical context, but also regarding lesser-known aspects of the artist. These are all aspects that will emerge in accordance with the above-mentioned narrative.

For the moment let us stop here, underlining only that the author has preferred to remain hidden behind a pseudonym. It is a question either of modesty or immodesty, and for the reader who will have the final say, it is hoped that the reading of this book will be encouraged to embark in a personal voyage of discovery which emulates Leonardo's principles, (to cultivate his arts and virtues), and those of Dante, ("You were not meant to live like beasts, but to follow virtue and knowledge"). An unavoidable need in a contemporary world which is increasingly materialistic, where culture and knowledge play a secondary role, while the seekers of knowledge should represent the guiding light, the *Polaris Mundi*, as in the title of this book.

The three characters who will guide the reader in his journey through the different aspects of the painting have cultivated different cultural experiences within the same sphere of interest in the world of the arts. And according to their diverse experiences, they will interpret the symbolism of the *Salvator Mundi*.

Louise Deiulio – professional astrologer, ex professor of letters – she lends her attention to classic myths through the zodiac constellations that emerge through the painting.

Chiara Fontecolma – respected painter and art teacher – she brings to life the

forms hidden in the ‘folds’ and the colors of the painting, revealing its *multiformity*.

Flavio d’Aulico – surveyor and son of Louise, and whose love for art and history unite frequently with measurement and surveying – he attempts to bring to light the geometric symbolism hidden in the painting and hopes to examine them with reference to Leonardo da Vinci’s other works and life.

All three characters live under the same roof in an old Roman house, dedicated to the custodian of peace, Janus, the two-faced divinity whose gaze looks back both to the past and to the future. His Latin name, *ianus* is derived from *ianua*, (door), and the month of January, named after him, *ianuarius*; and the month was dedicated to him, because January was seen as “the gateway of the year.” In addition, the symbolism of the threshold – considered as a change of state of consciousness – is very significant. So much so that in the Middle Ages Janus was considered to be a prophetic anticipation of Christ, who in the Gospel according to John revealed himself to be “the gateway.” With such similarities in mind, we enter the *domus* where the meetings take place following the rhythms of the year, and we find ourselves in harmony with the condition of the human heart. The reader will be able to ascertain through the elaboration of the painting that Leonardo himself was inspired to follow this pathway.

Among the astrolabs and stellar maps seen in Louise’s astrology chamber, under the infinite power of the skies, abides the meeting between the zodiac and the myth, in reference to the constellations mentioned by Dante in the *Divine Comedy*.

Chiara’s painting studio is full of canvasses and paintbrushes in beautiful colors. This is the “anthroposophical theatre” in the interpretation of Leonardo’s painting.

Flavio’s study, with its compasses, slide rules and the surveyor’s concrete knowledge, becomes the heart of the study of the graphic illustrations in the painting.

In the chamber of festivities of the *domus* (Janus’ chamber), we will finally celebrate the wisdom of the ancient mysteries which are hidden in the painting through encounters specially identified in various themes.

Welcome.



*The entrance of the domus.*

*ARIES*

I<sup>st</sup> week. March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Palm Sunday. Louise's Salon.

*The lantern of the world approaches mortals  
by varied paths, but on that way which links  
four circles with three crosses, it emerges  
joined to a better constellation and  
along a better course, and it can temper  
and stamp the world's wax more in its own manner*  
Dante, *Paradise I*

The process of rapprochement will be enacted every Sunday to celebrate the five-hundred-year anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci. It will develop over a period of fifty-two weeks, in accordance with the rhythms of the seasons of the year. During this time, we will analyze the multiple aspects of the *Salvator Mundi*. Each month we will deal with four topics: astrology and myth, form and color, geometry and symbols, and ancient wisdom. We will also apply a variety of learning keys, many of which are derived from anthroposophy, the science of the spirit created by Rudolf Steiner. Every trimester we will direct our attention more specifically to the four principal seasonal feasts, and with this in mind it seems of particular significance to start with the day when Holy Week starts, Palm Sunday. It is a day that celebrates the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem, and this image of the triumphant Christ is also depicted in the painting. Even the ancient Romans noted that March 25 was the day when the sun stood above the celestial equator, and this is the reason why the first Christians interpreted it not only as the day of the Resurrection, but also as the day of the creation of the world. The Resurrection and the Annunciation both happened on this day.

We will begin our voyage through the zodiac with its first sign, Aries,

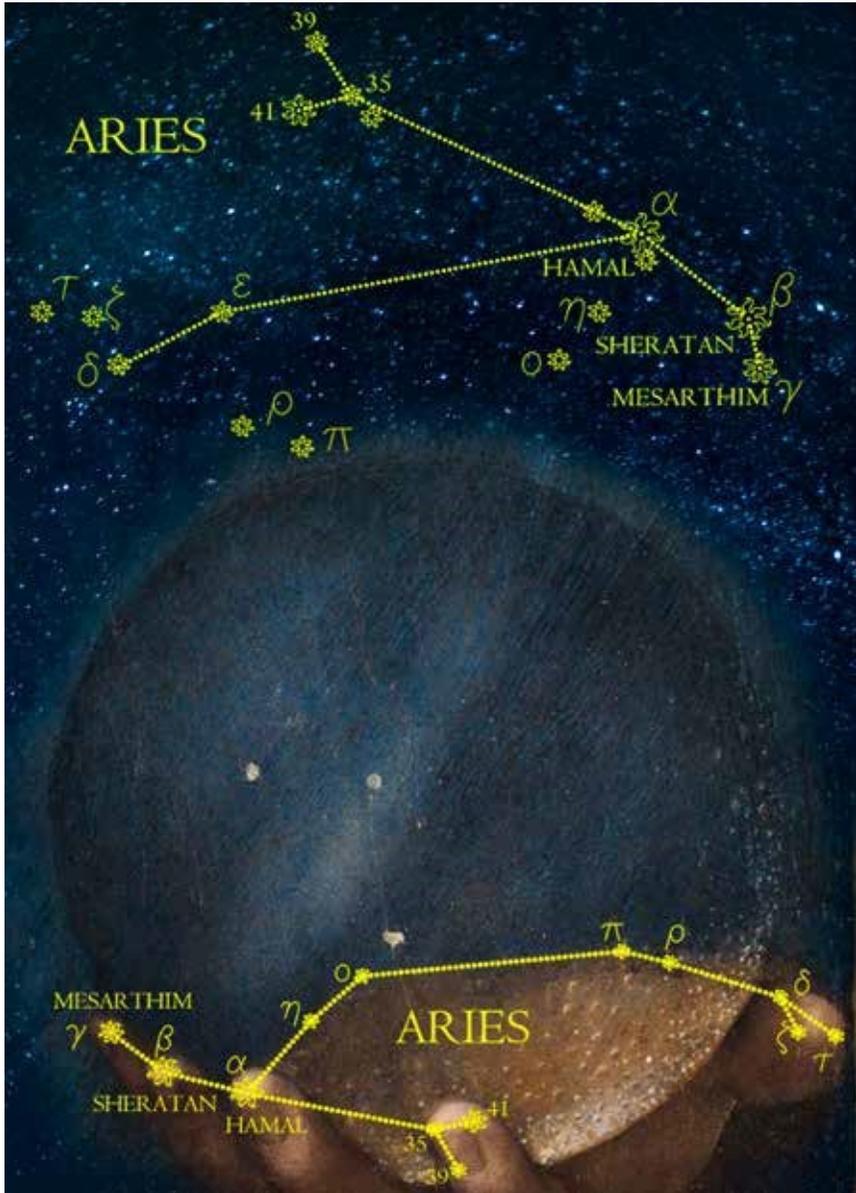
returning to the verses written by Dante “the lantern of the world” (the sun) rises by “varied paths” (points). It is where the “four circles” (those of the horizon, the ecliptic, the celestial equator and one of the principal meridians, the equinoctial colure), form “three crosses, along a better course”, (the spring equinox), “joined a better constellation” (the constellation of Aries) as “it emerges joined”, (conjunction of the sun and Aries), “stamp the world’s wax”, (the terrestrial material), “it can temper and stamp in its own manner.” model and mould the image to resemble a divinity.

We find Aries again in the first canticle of Hell, “when divine love first moved those beautiful things”, or rather the moment in which God created the world. The cross of the sun, formed by the equinoctial colure and equator, interpreted even by ancient Christians as the symbol of passion and the resurrection of Christ. Leonardo himself was born under the sign of Aries and the reference to the four circles and the three crosses reminds us of the four cardinal virtues, (Wisdom, Justice, Strength, and Temperance), and the three theological virtues, (Faith, Hope and Charity), as in the three crosses of Golgotha. With the first sign of the zodiac we enter a divine dimension.

In the light of Dante’s verses, we will go on to analyze the globe of the *Mundi* represented in the painting, where it is easy to note how the hand of Christ that is holding the sphere has particularly luminous fingertips. The palm of the same hand, which stands out due to the transparency of the sphere, has a particular form – it is very pronounced – and doesn’t seem to be a faithful representation of a real hand. Now let us imagine turning the constellation upside down, and let us consider the most luminous extremities of the fingertips as if they were stars, bearing in mind that from an astronomical point of view the Aries’ asterism is formed by three main stars: *Harnal* sometimes called *Alfa Aries*. *Sheratan*, also called, *Beta Aries*. *Mesarthim*, also known as *Gamma Aries*. In this way we can verify that the three stars of Aries have the same proportions of the luminous fingertips on Christ’s hand, which correspond respectively to the three fingers, (middle finger, ring finger and little finger).

Not only this: if we superimpose the constellations, making them coincide

with the three stars mentioned it is possible to see that even the index finger corresponds to the group of three stars in Aries, (known as 35, 39, and 41), and we can see that even the thumb corresponds with the stars, *Delta*, *Tao* and *Zeta*.



*The refraction of the constellation of Aries in the Mundi globe.*

Let us analyze the interior of the Mundi. If we trace a broken line across the conjunctions between the stars in the constellation, (*Delta, Ro, Pi, Omicron, Eta, Alpha*), we note that the shape obtained can be perfectly superimposed over the palm of the left hand of Christ reflected in the globe. The globe painted in the *Salvator Mundi* thus represents the world exactly at the moment of creation, with Aries rising.

We can reference the verses of the *Divine Comedy* in the interpretation of the painting, it is therefore demonstrable that the phenomenon of refraction in the interior of the globe is truly verifiable. The image in the *Mundi* is in fact the refraction of the constellation of *Aries* rising over the horizon, the asterism is specular in the painting with respect to the astronomic reality. The square shape of Christ's palm, and its relative luminosity reminds us of a sort of mantle, and this can also be found in the myth of the *Golden Fleece* which characterizes Aries: the fleece obtained by Jason with the help of the Argonauts, the heroes who form the crew of the ship *Argo*.

The meeting finishes here. Following Sunday, we will talk about *The Last Supper* with Chiara – a topic suitable for Easter Sunday – because in this painting Leonardo has placed numerous zodiacal elements.

*O company elect to the great supper  
of the Lamb benedight, who feedeth you  
so that for ever full is your desire.  
Dante Paradise Canticle XXIV*