

[The Coronation of the Virgin](#) by [Fra Angelico](#)

Original Lithographic Bookplate - Main Subject: Religion & Belief

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**Dimensions (As Shown)**  
8W x 9H Inches  
20.32W x 22.86H cm

**Medium**  
Original Lithographic Bookplate

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**About Fra Angelico**

Fra Angelico ("Brother Angel"), born Guido di Pietro near Castello di Vicchio in Tuscany, 1387 and died at Rome, 1455. He was a famous Italian painter of the early Renaissance Florentine School.

He was known to his peers as Fra Giovanni da Fiesole and earned his nickname through his unusually pious nature. He was called Angelico (Italian for "angelic") and Beato (Italian for "blessed") because the paintings he did were of calm, religious subjects and because of his extraordinary personal piety.

He is documented as a painter in Florence during the period 1417-1418 and took his vows as a Dominican monk in nearby Fiesole sometime between 1418 and about 1421. Considering the number of documented commissions he received, he must have had light religious responsibilities. One of his most extensive projects was the decoration of the Dominican Monastery of San Marco in Florence between 1435 and 1445. Fra Angelico went to work at the Vatican in Rome in 1445, and the frescoes at San Marco were completed by his assistants several years later.

Angelico combined the influence of the elegantly decorative Gothic style of Gentile da Fabriano with the more realistic style of such Renaissance masters as the painter Masaccio and the sculptors Donatello and Ghiberti, all of whom worked in Florence. Angelico was also aware of the theories of perspective. His skill in creating monumental figures, representing motion, and suggesting deep space through the use of linear perspective, especially in the Roman frescoes, mark him as one of the foremost painters of the Renaissance.

Among the frescoes attributed entirely to Angelico by most scholars is the Annunciation in a monk's cell of the monastery named above. Nearly everything about the painting is in keeping with its location. The arched frame echoes the curvature of the cell wall, and the plain white interior or the illusionistic space appears almost to be a nichelike extension of the cell's space. Although the bottom edge of the painting is above normal eye level, the effect is that of looking through a window onto a scene taking place in a cloister portico. In the painting the ceiling is supported by the wall on one side and by slender Ionic columns on the other. The artist used minimal perspective indications. Gabriele and Mary are simplified figures enhanced with plain but glowing draperies whose folds are noticeably affected by gravity. The natural light falls from the left to model the forms, but a supernatural radiance lights Gabriel's hands and face, which ought to be in shadow, and creates a spotlight effect on the back wall. The scene is a vision within a vision.

He died in the Dominican convent in Rome on March 18, 1455 and was buried in the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva, where his tombstone still exists. His most important pupil was Benozzo Gozzoli and he had considerable influence on Italian painting.

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