

Museum of **SAN**
MARCO
Florence

masterpieces
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Walking with Fra Angelico 7
Marilena Tamassia

Works 44

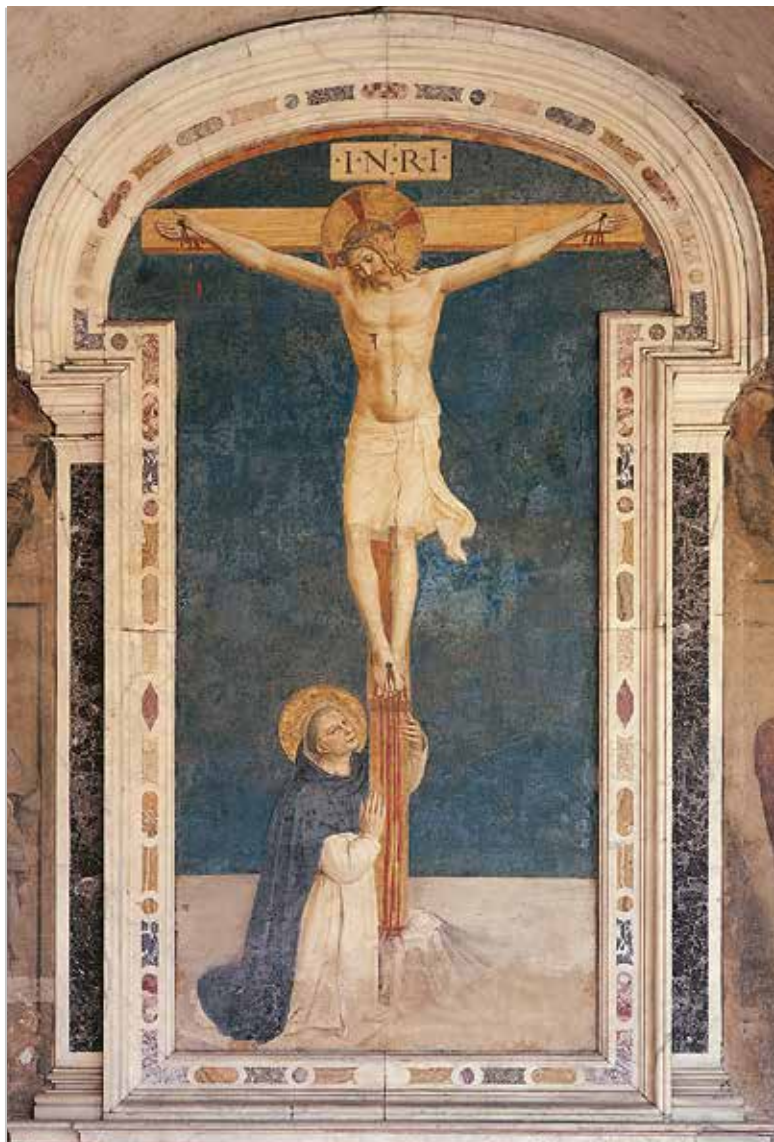


Walking with Fra Angelico

Museums usually display works of art in different settings to the ones for which they were originally conceived. This is not the case in the Museum of San Marco, where Fra Angelico's works are on display. The artist's masterpieces are, for the most part, still in their place of origin: the Dominican convent built by Michelozzo and funded by Cosimo de' Medici that remains virtually unchanged to the present day.

The Museum of San Marco, however, is not exclusively defined by the presence of Fra Angelico's art. It encompasses various aspects of Florentine art and the history of the Dominican Order.

The Museum of San Marco is located in the oldest part of the convent, which, together with the church, was built by the Silvestrian monks (the order of Benedictine monks on Mount Fano). The complex was in a place called Cafaggio, outside the walls of Florence, a hundred metres away from the newly founded convent of the Santissima Annunziata. In 1250 the oratory of the *Company of San Marco* stood on the site, which was inhabited by the Silvestrians from 1290 onwards. Shortly after 1300, the Order decided to build a new convent with a church on the land and on 8 March 1300 the first stone was laid. A charismatic Dominican friar from the beginning of the fifteenth century, Giovanni Dominici, features prominently in the convent's history. He inspired the Strict Observance reform movement that advocated a return to the origins of the Dominican Order. In 1418 he put



Fra Angelico
St. Dominic at the Cross, c. 1442
fresco, 340 × 206 cm

