

An inter-  
diocesan  
collaboration  
for schools and  
churches in  
London &  
Southwark  
Dioceses



# The Pieta Prayer Resource



# What do you know about this artwork?

- What event is it capturing?
- Who or what is it depicting?
- What clues or evidence have informed your assertion?
  
- What thoughts, feelings or connections does this sculpture bring to your mind?
- What impact -if any - does the scene have on you?

This sculpture is Michelangelo's first commissioned artwork. It was completed in 1498-99. It is called...

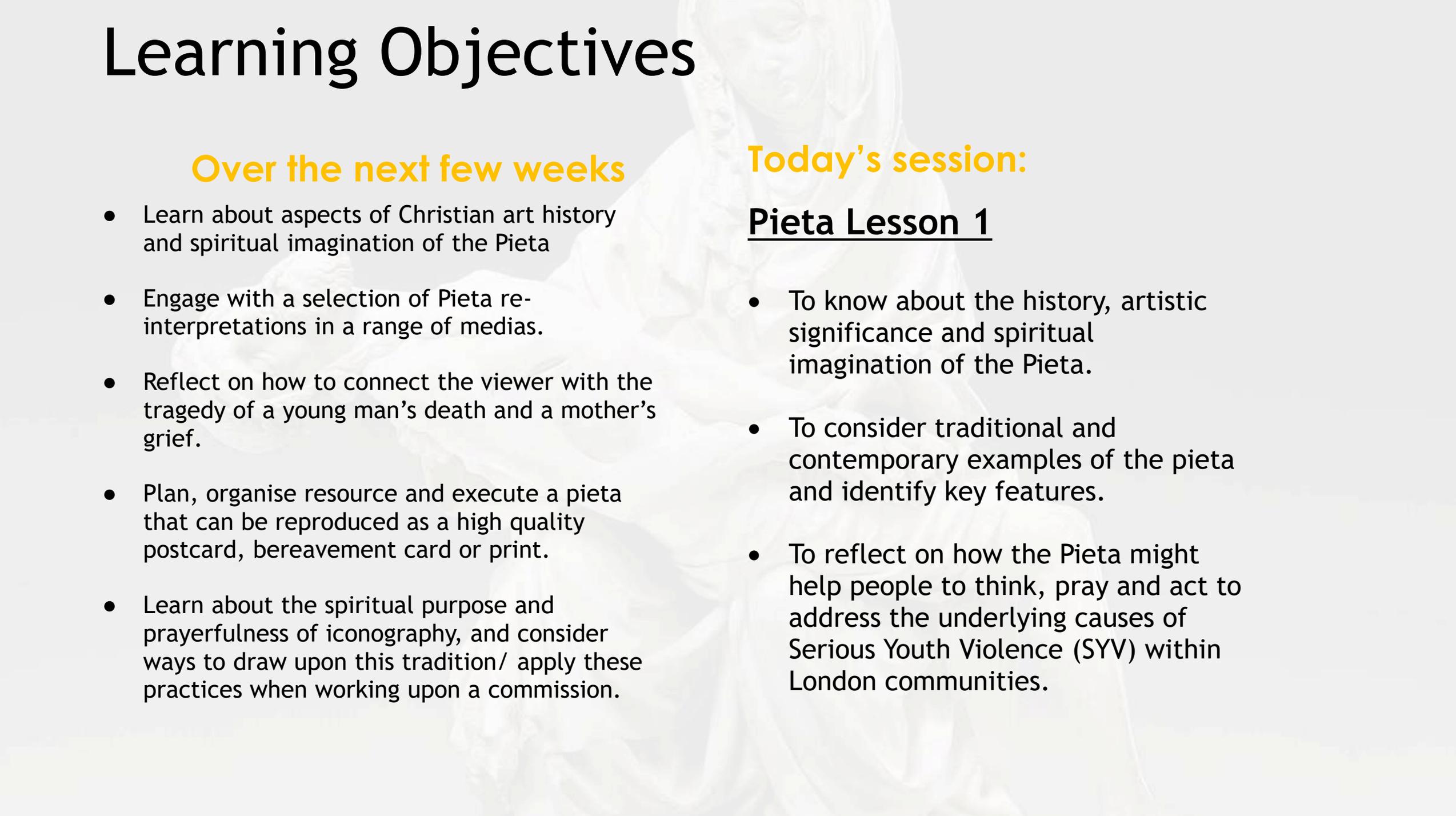
The image shows a close-up of a marble sculpture depicting the Pieta. The Virgin Mary is shown in a state of deep grief, her head bowed and eyes cast down at the body of her dead son, Jesus. She is wearing a simple, draped garment with a head covering. Jesus is lying in her arms, his body pale and lifeless. The background is a rough, textured stone wall.

## ‘The Pieta’

is a traditional Christian art form, which depicts the Virgin Mary grieving dead son, Jesus and holding him tenderly after the crucifixion. It has been an important part of Christian visual culture for over 600 years. This scene is not described in the Bible, but its imaginative power has encouraged Christians to reflect on the death of Christ, the uniquely deep grief of the Mother of God, and the desolation of Good Friday. Though sometimes images of the Mother of God mourning her Son show them alongside other people, Pieta images usually depict Mary and Jesus alone.

‘Pieta’ is a Latin word which can be translated as pity or compassion. It is also close to the English word ‘piety’, which is an expression of faithfulness in devotion and discipleship.

# Learning Objectives



## Over the next few weeks

- Learn about aspects of Christian art history and spiritual imagination of the Pieta
- Engage with a selection of Pieta re-interpretations in a range of medias.
- Reflect on how to connect the viewer with the tragedy of a young man's death and a mother's grief.
- Plan, organise resource and execute a pieta that can be reproduced as a high quality postcard, bereavement card or print.
- Learn about the spiritual purpose and prayerfulness of iconography, and consider ways to draw upon this tradition/ apply these practices when working upon a commission.

## Today's session:

### Pieta Lesson 1

- To know about the history, artistic significance and spiritual imagination of the Pieta.
- To consider traditional and contemporary examples of the pieta and identify key features.
- To reflect on how the Pieta might help people to think, pray and act to address the underlying causes of Serious Youth Violence (SYV) within London communities.

# Why are we doing this?

## REASONS...

- Creative/Technical:



Create an high quality prayer resource, that can be used in CE schools & churches so that communities are regularly praying about contextual safeguarding, community safety and SYV.

- Pastoral:



Create safe spaces and prayer opportunities for students and young people to pray about their concerns, anxieties, experiences, grief and trauma, whether at school or in church.

- Spiritual Disciplines & Development :



Develop confident prayer writing skills as well as using Christian imagery and imagination to help students and young people draw near to God through personal and collective prayer.

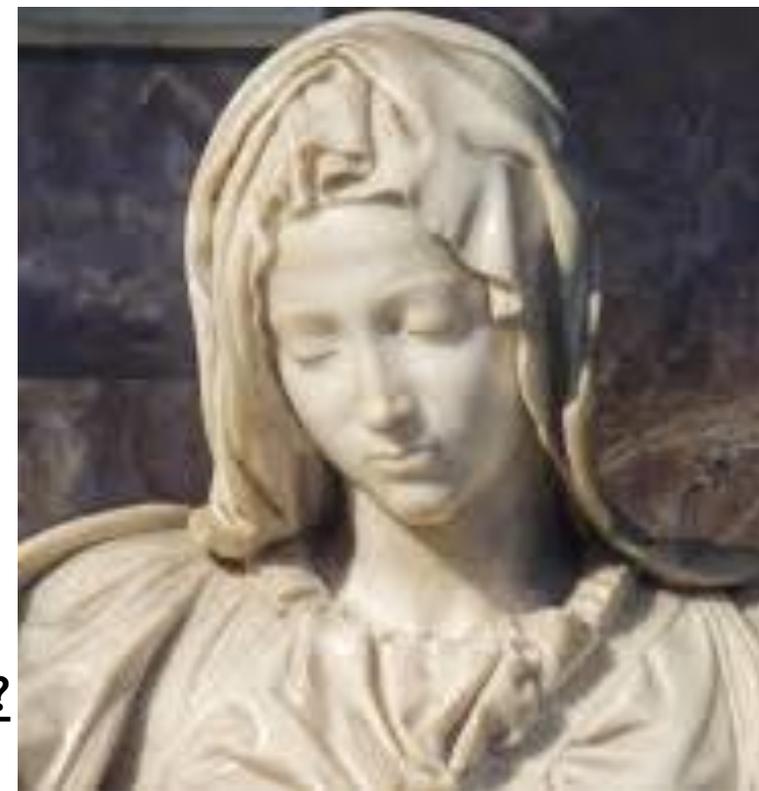
- Existential:



Ensure students and young people in schools and churches feel well-supported in relation to their experiences of 'peer on peer' aggression and abuse; contextual safeguarding and community violence. Their concerns are seen, heard and regularly prayed about.



What do you notice about Mary and Jesus' faces?



What do you notice?

- Age
- Gender
- Culture & Ethnicity
- What clues are there that this Pietà was made within the Western Christian tradition?

Talk with a partner about:

Reflection, Symmetry & Shape?

Suffering or Serenity?

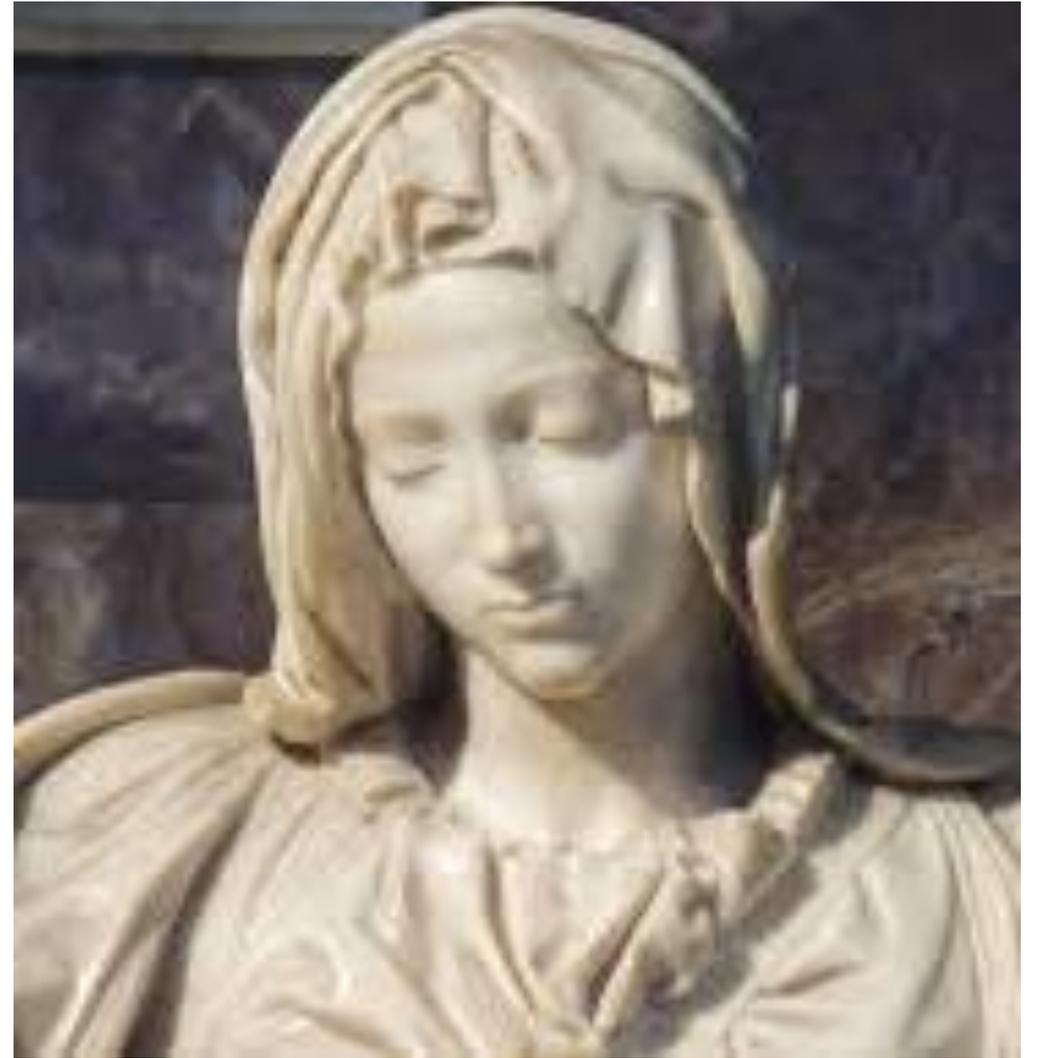
Peace, Piety or Pity?

Use of Time & Space?

Connection?



What do you notice about Mary and Jesus' faces?



Click on the image above to watch a short video analysis.



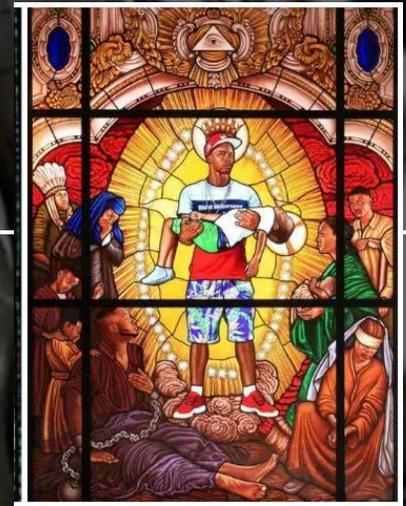
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There are many examples of Pieta images in all kinds of different styles, histories, media, and contexts.

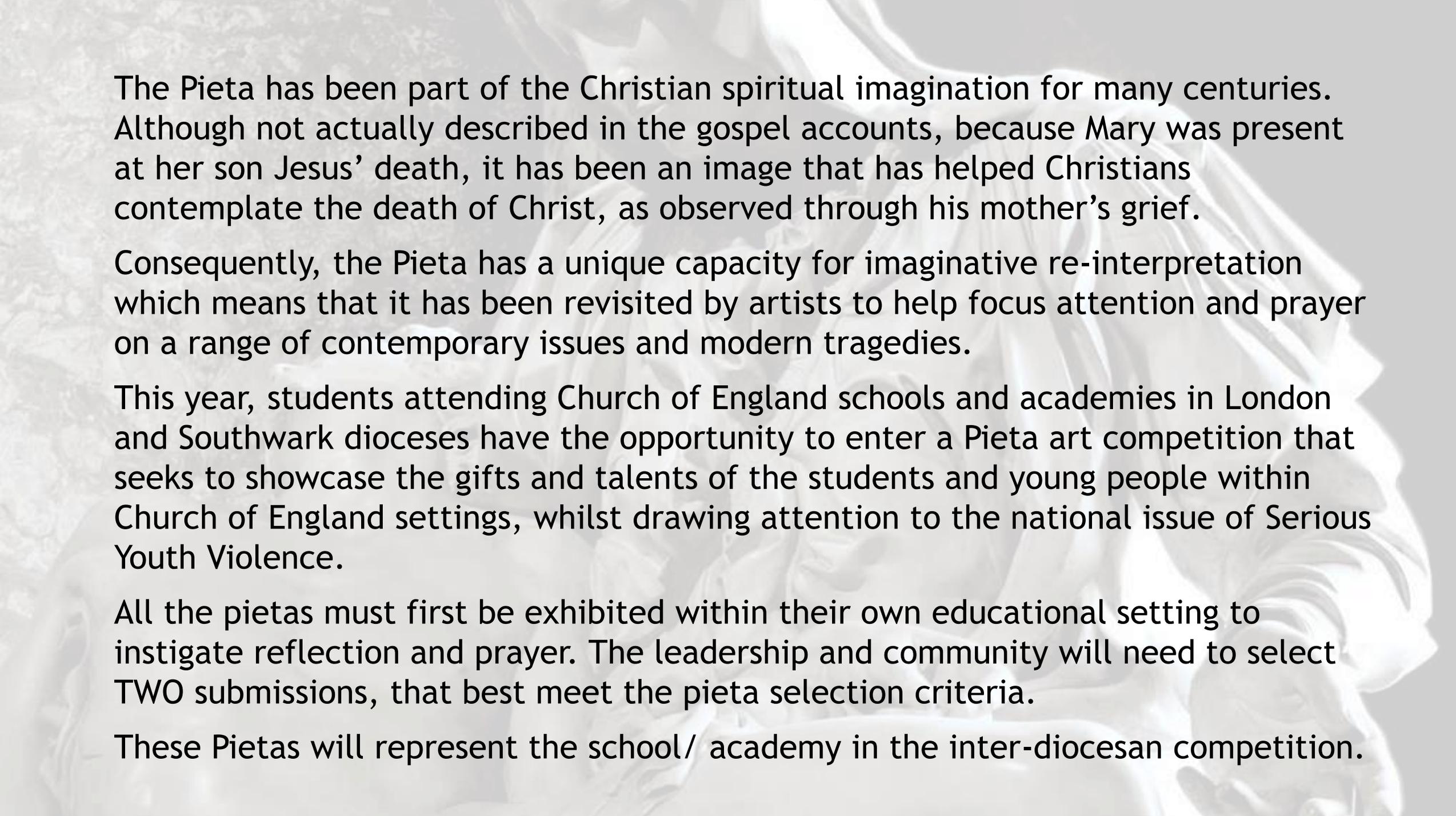
The most famous Pieta is Michelangelo's marble sculpture in Rome. However, a Pieta image can be in any medium, from paint and textiles to photography and stained glass.

Here are some examples:

Click on an image to find out more about the pieta...







The Pietà has been part of the Christian spiritual imagination for many centuries. Although not actually described in the gospel accounts, because Mary was present at her son Jesus' death, it has been an image that has helped Christians contemplate the death of Christ, as observed through his mother's grief.

Consequently, the Pietà has a unique capacity for imaginative re-interpretation which means that it has been revisited by artists to help focus attention and prayer on a range of contemporary issues and modern tragedies.

This year, students attending Church of England schools and academies in London and Southwark dioceses have the opportunity to enter a Pietà art competition that seeks to showcase the gifts and talents of the students and young people within Church of England settings, whilst drawing attention to the national issue of Serious Youth Violence.

All the pietas must first be exhibited within their own educational setting to instigate reflection and prayer. The leadership and community will need to select TWO submissions, that best meet the pieta selection criteria.

These Pietas will represent the school/ academy in the inter-diocesan competition.

# The London & Southwark Dioceses' Pieta Prayer Competition

## The Brief:

- These works of art will be used to reflect upon grief, as a source of prayer, and to comfort the bereaved. They can be in any medium and any size, bearing in mind that the final form in which the image will be shared will be as a postcard, bereavement card, and larger-scale print.
- The works of art will be closely connected with liturgy and worship. As prints, cards, and postcards, the art will provide opportunities for people to connect deeply with the Christian reality of Christ's death and his mother's suffering, as well as the urgent need for justice and an end to violence in our communities.

## The Selection Criteria:

Entries will be judged based on the work of art's engagement with:

- Contemporary life.
- Local community and school context.
- The drama and grief of Christ's death and Mary's pain.
- Spirituality and prayer.
- 'Pity' and 'compassion' as concepts and experiences.
- The unique qualities and characteristics of the medium (photography, paint, etc)
- Suitability for the final format (postcard and print).

# The London & Southwark Dioceses' Pieta Prayer Competition/ Commission

## The school-based competition:

- Will run from 5<sup>th</sup> January - 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- Must include a school-based exhibition of all the entries. This exhibition should be at least 3 days long (from 26<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> April 2023) to allow the wider school community to appreciate the pietas.
- Will require that high resolution photos of ALL the pietas **MUST** be taken on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
- The school leaders and community must select TWO submissions that will be entered to represent the school must be uploaded to the Compassionate Communities website by 2pm on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023
- Schools/ Academies will be asked to display all the entries on their website as an ongoing record and celebration of student efforts.
- Resources for students and staff to write their own prayers will be provided and there will be an opportunity for prayers to be uploaded to a website create a bank of free intercession resources.

## The inter-diocesan competition:

- Will only accept TWO submissions from each individually named school/academy. These entries will form the competition long list.
- The long list will be remotely viewed by an inter-diocesan, ecumenical and panel of judges between 11<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> February, and reduced to a short list of up to 20 entries on 17<sup>th</sup> February. **Irrespective of the total number of entries received, this short list will be made up of no more than TEN entries from each respective diocese.**
- The panel of judges will physically meet in May 2023 to select the SIX finalists from each diocese.
- From within the finalists group, ONE overall winner will be selected to represent each diocese.
- The finalists and winning entries will be announced on the LDBS and SDBE websites as well as on the Compassionate Communities website.

# The London & Southwark Dioceses' Pieta Competition/ Commission

## What will happen next?:

- The five runner up finalists from London diocese and the five runner up finalists from Southwark diocese will be published as a collection of ten postcards which will be available for purchase through Church House and other appropriate outlets.
- The winning entry for London diocese and the winning entry for Southwark diocese will each be published as individual bereavement cards that can be purchased through Church House and other appropriate outlets.
- The two winning entries will be used by their respective dioceses to help focus prayer, signpost and connect resources and help brand the diocesan work done to promote community safety and interrupt serious youth violence.

## What will happen later in the year:

- All twelve finalist images will be used to develop a high quality prayer resource that will be available for use in schools and churches. This resource will include A4 copies of the finalist pietas with liturgy and intercessions that can be used regularly and in times of need. This resource will be priced to recover design and reproduction costs.
- All twelve finalists will be invited to celebration event(s) to recognise their work and skills.
- **By submitting entries to the long list all schools, students and parent/carer/adults agree to the free use, display and reproduction of the images within London & Southwark dioceses for the purposes of promoting community safety and contextual safeguarding, and interrupting serious youth violence.**
- Any proceeds raised will be strictly used to cover the reproduction costs for resources or ring-fenced to support church based interventions that specifically promote community safety, contextual safeguarding and wellbeing for young people who are at risk.



# The Pieta Prayer Resource

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An inter-diocesan collaboration  
for schools and churches in  
London & Southwark Dioceses

# Pieta Resource Project Aims

- To develop a new prayer resource for schools and churches in London & Southwark Diocese.
- To learn from, create and showcase contemporary religious art.
- To prompt regular prayer.
- To publish a range of postcards, bereavement notecards and larger canvas prints for display.



# Why are we doing this?

## REASONS...

- Creative/Technical:



Create an high quality prayer resource, that can be used in CE schools & churches so that communities are regularly praying about contextual safeguarding, community safety and SYV.

- Pastoral:



Create safe spaces and prayer opportunities for students and young people to pray about their concerns, anxieties, experiences, grief and trauma, whether at school or in church.

- Spiritual Disciplines & Development :



Develop confident prayer writing skills as well as using Christian imagery and imagination to help students and young people draw near to God through personal and collective prayer.

- Existential:



Ensure students and young people in schools and churches feel well-supported in relation to their experiences of 'peer on peer' aggression and abuse; contextual safeguarding and community violence. Their concerns are seen, heard and regularly prayed about.

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- Know about the spiritual purpose and prayerfulness of iconography, and consider ways to draw upon this tradition/ apply these practices when working upon a commission.

## Today's session:

### Pieta Lesson 2

- To engage with a wider range of modern and contemporary examples of the pieta and reflect on their social relevance, critique and impact
- To develop a success criteria for an effective pieta.
- To be able to consider how the Pieta might be used to reflect the diverse range of young people affected by contextual risk and community violence



The Kent State Pietà

*Pieta* is a Philippine television daytime drama series that aired from October 27, 2008 to May 1, 2009,



It is important to be aware that although Christianity is an Afro-Asiatic religion because of European colonialism, Western Christian art forms have heavily influenced global Christian practices and so have been inserted into a wide range of cultures. This means that the Pieta is well-known outside of Europe.



*Filipino theatre artists perform a "La Pieta" scene during a short musical about the killings under the Philippine government's anti-drug campaign, in Pandacan city, metro Manila, Philippines*

*April 2, 2017.  
REUTERS/Romeo Ranoco*



Pietà yemenita 2012 by Maria Paola Ceccarini

Pieta, 1930s by Lin Fengmian, Cernuschi Museum, Paris

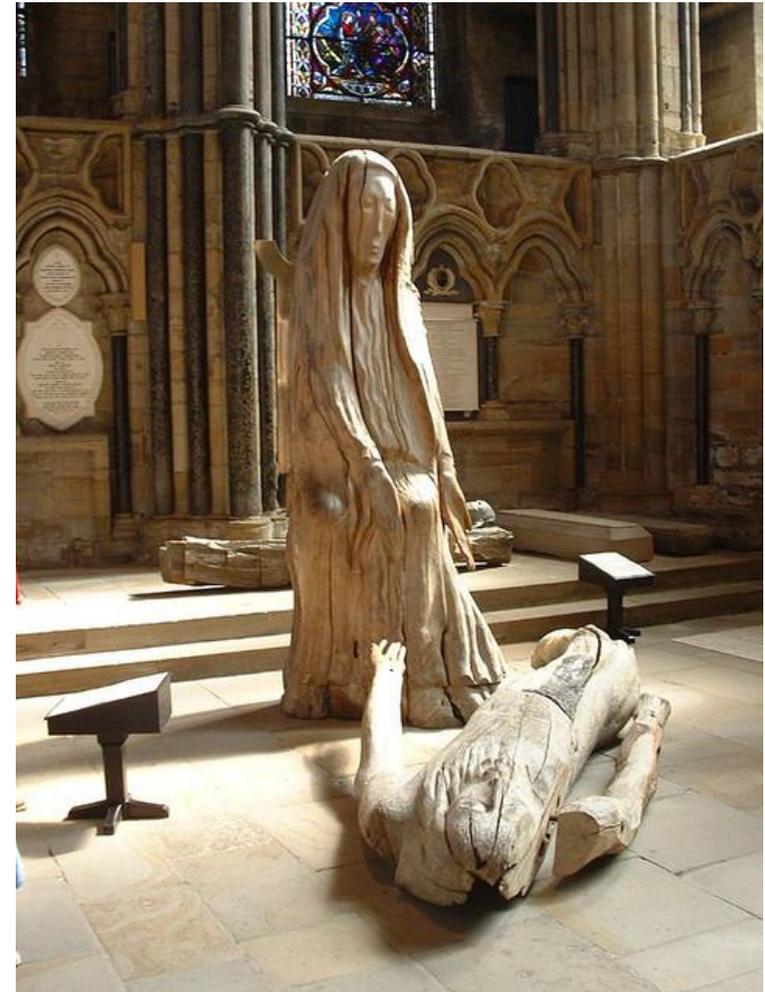


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The Röttgen Pietà  
Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn

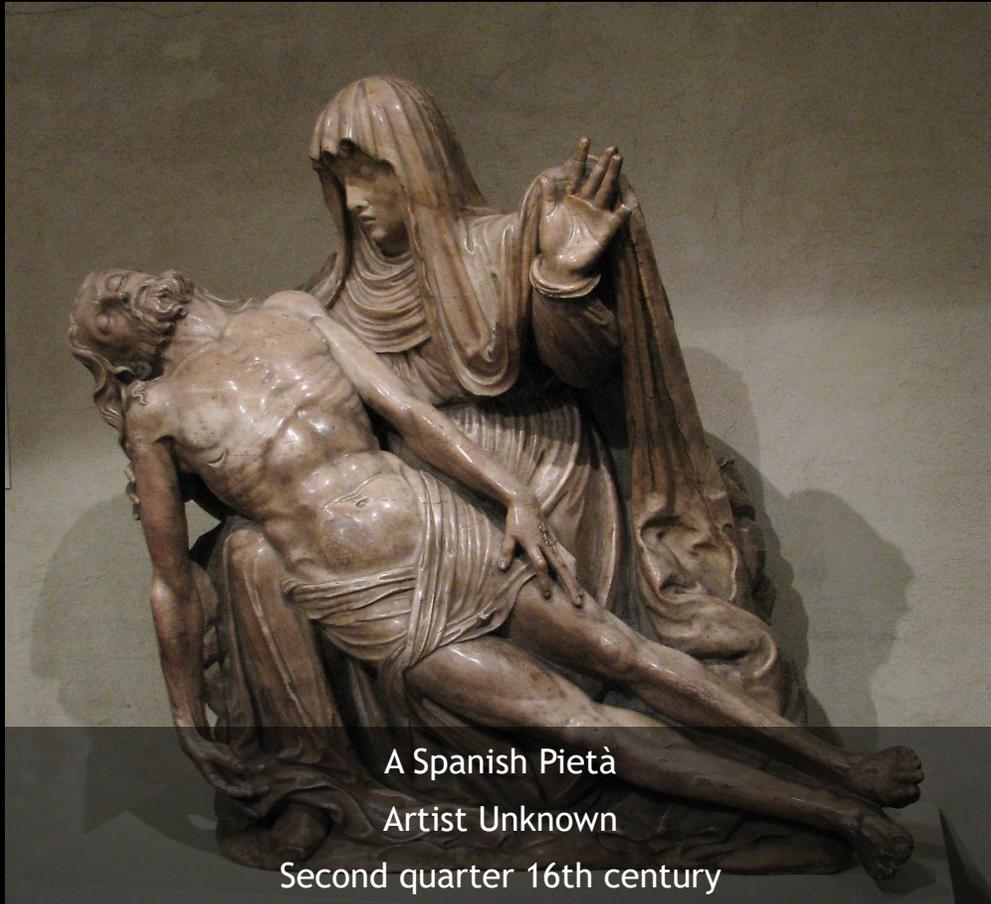


Click on the  
images to  
listen to an  
analysis or  
read a  
reflection.



Pieta by Fenwick Lawson at  
Durham Cathedral

Think about how the posture of Christ's body adds drama and movement as well as information about the context



A Spanish Pietà  
Artist Unknown  
Second quarter 16th century



Armenian Cathedral of Lviv, Ukraine  
Tweeted 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
Credit: Tim Le Berre



American Pieta by  
Michael Owens

Shanequa Gay 'Pieta'  
Oglethorpe University, Georgia



Click on the image to listen a video interview with Shanequa who explores the reasoning and underlying themes within her spiritually and religiously influenced art works.



Sometimes an artist will incorporate the pieta sentiment within a broader narrative, but usually the attention of viewer is drawn to the central relationship between Mary and her son.

- Can you find the pieta motif within this piece?
- Can you guess who the artist might be?
- What do you think they were trying to communicate?
- Click on the image to find out more.







- How does the artist, Kollwitz express Mary's emotion through
  - Body language?
  - Facial expression?
  - Focus?
- 
- What does this communicate to the onlooker?



# Further teaching resources or research sources

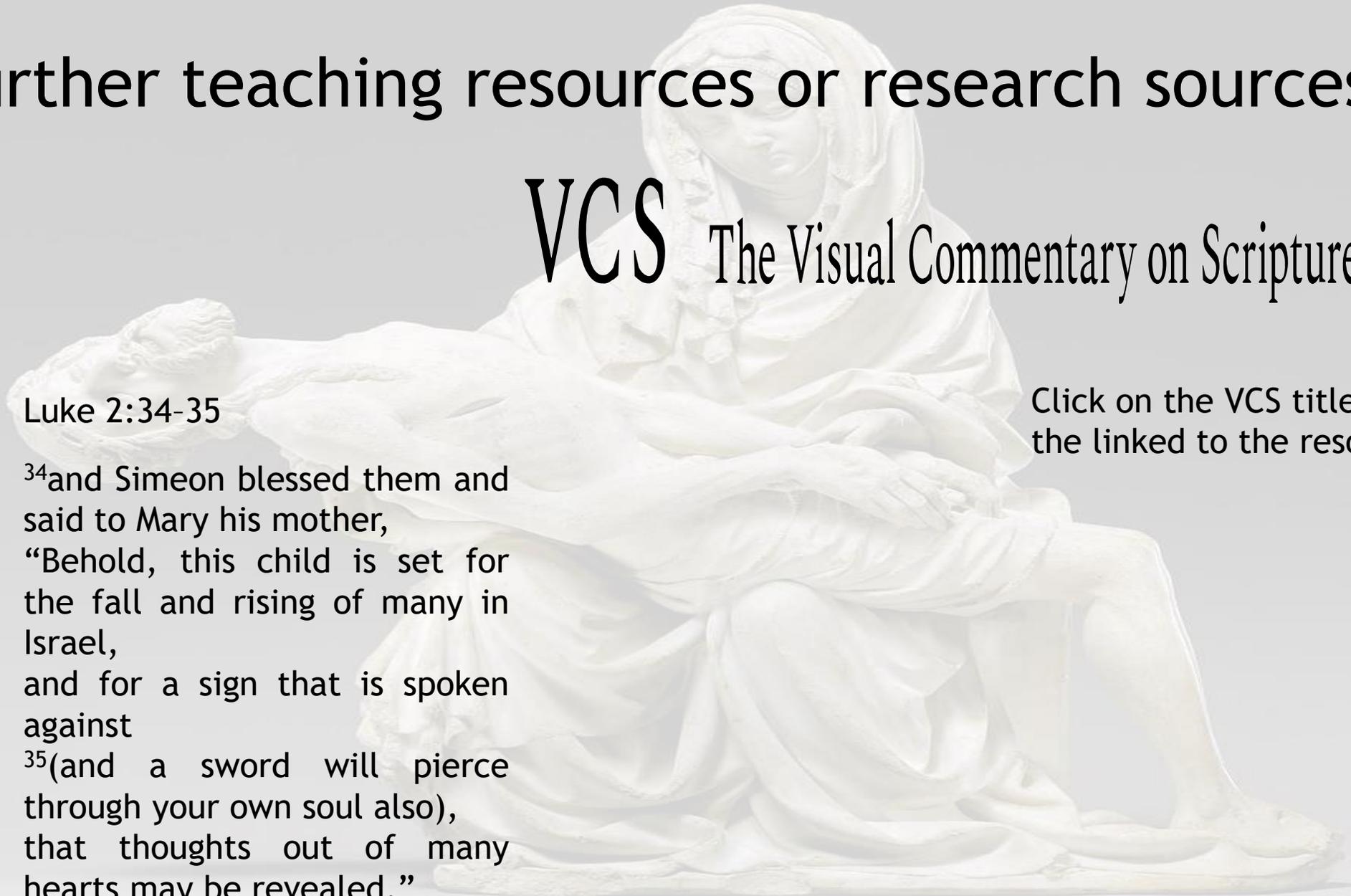
## VCS The Visual Commentary on Scripture

Luke 2:34-35

<sup>34</sup>and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against

<sup>35</sup>(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.”

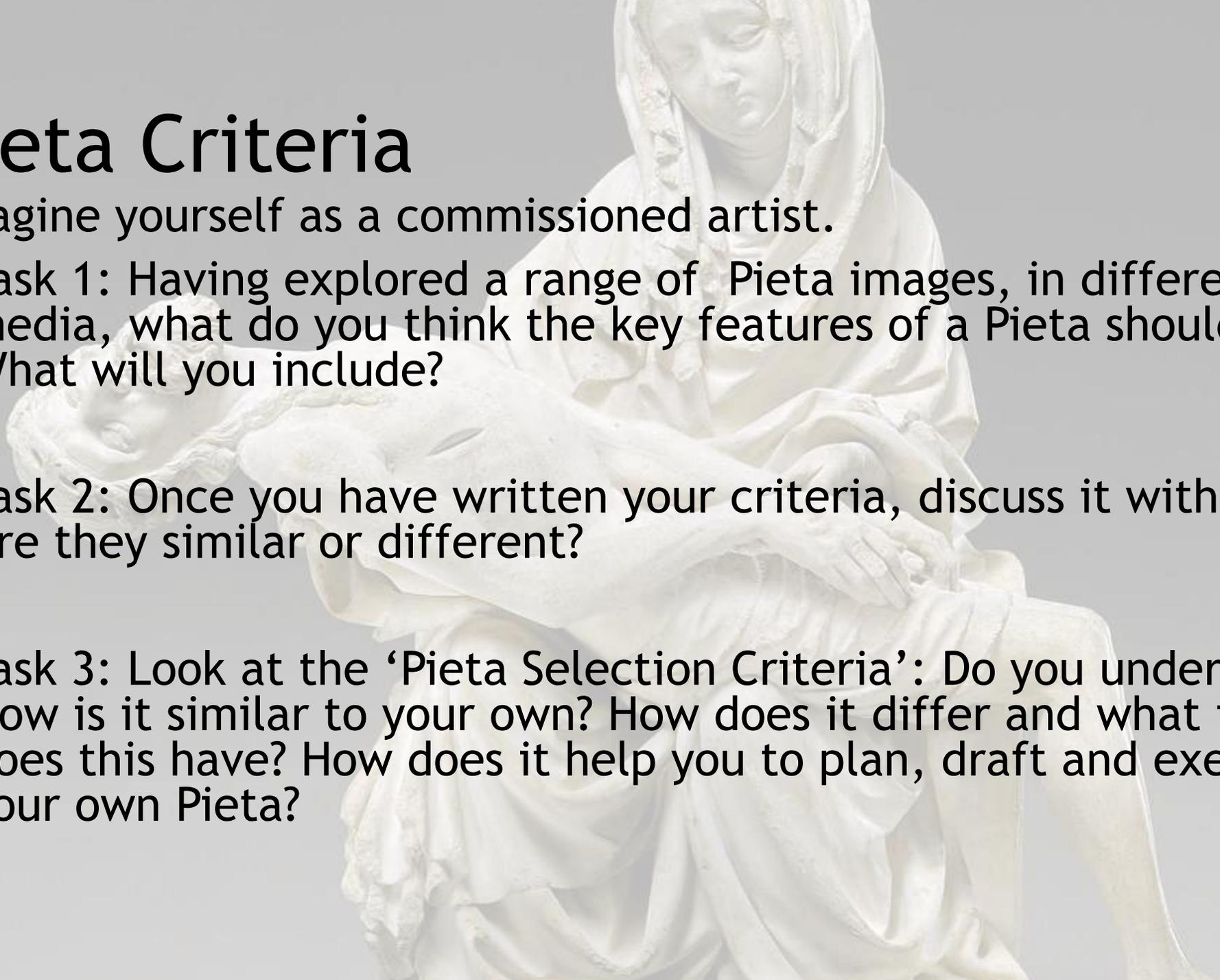
Click on the VCS title to be linked to the resources



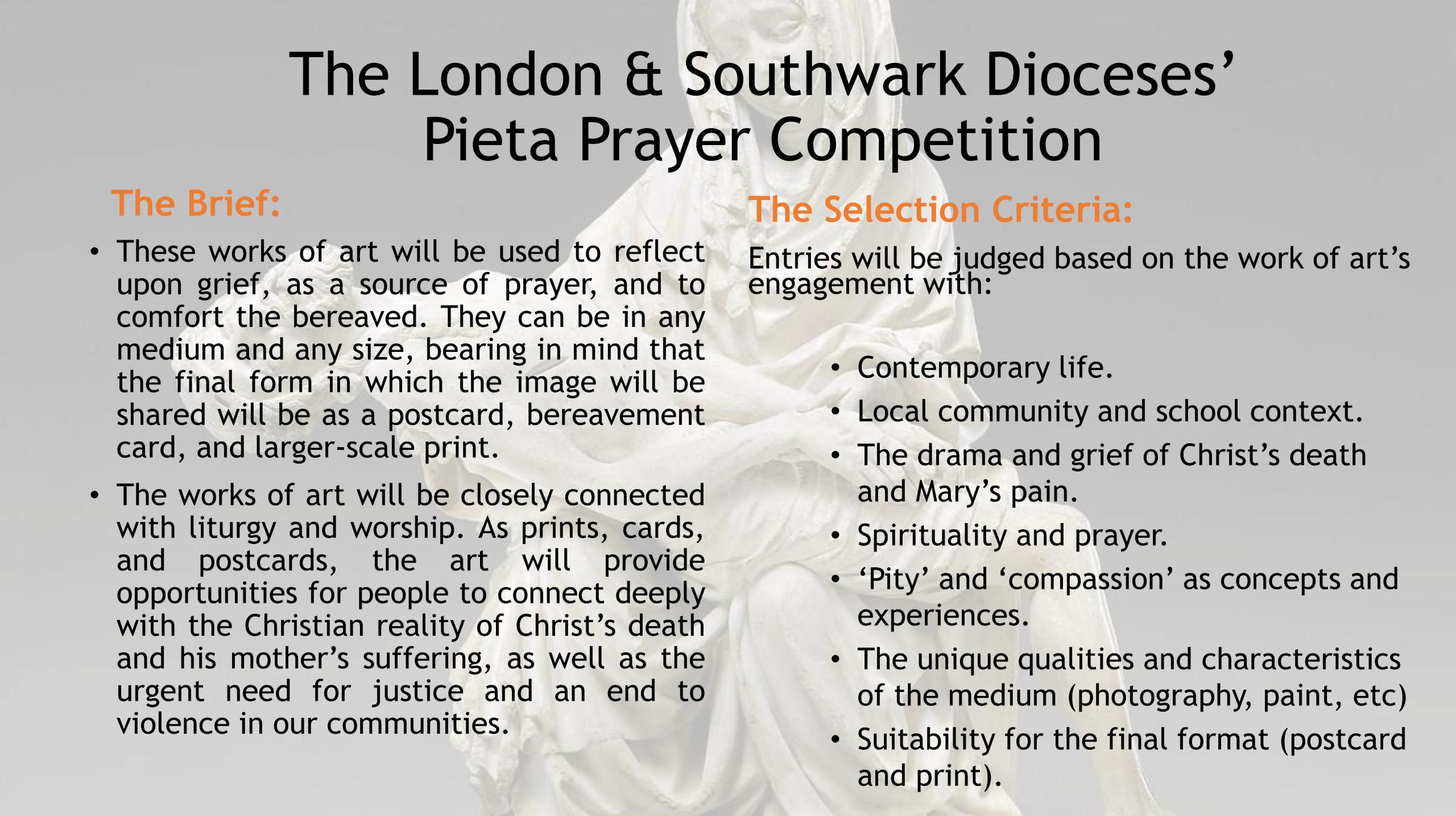
# Pieta Criteria

Imagine yourself as a commissioned artist.

- Task 1: Having explored a range of Pieta images, in different media, what do you think the key features of a Pieta should be? What will you include?
- Task 2: Once you have written your criteria, discuss it with a peer. Are they similar or different?
- Task 3: Look at the ‘Pieta Selection Criteria’: Do you understand it? How is it similar to your own? How does it differ and what impact does this have? How does it help you to plan, draft and execute your own Pieta?



# The London & Southwark Dioceses' Pieta Prayer Competition



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- The unique qualities and characteristics of the medium (photography, paint, etc)
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# The London & Southwark Dioceses' Pieta Prayer Competition/ Commission

## The school-based competition:

- Will run from 5<sup>th</sup> January - 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
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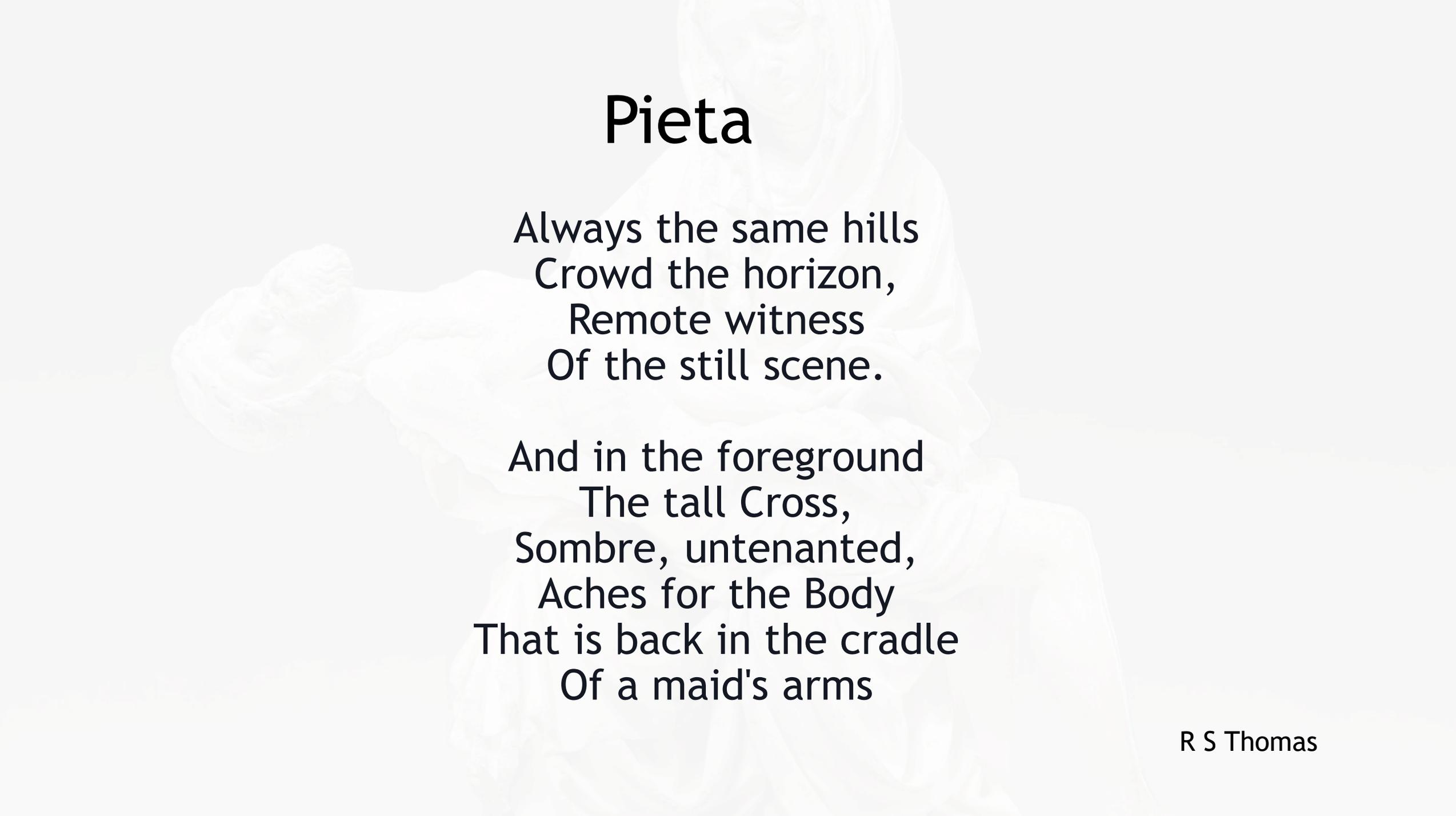


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# The Pieta & Prayer Resource

# Prayer

- Prayer is a form of communication that can range from thoughts, simple words to pleas, questions and conversation. Spoken or unspoken they are directed to God. They may be personal and private or corporate and public. They can be extemporaneous or more liturgically structured.
- Whether they are short poems or extended prefaces they form us to think, speak and reflect on God. They teach us to turn towards God, with the trusting expectation that God is present and will hear us. They create space for us to hear from God.
- Prayer helps us to acknowledge, connect and grow in relationship with God. Prayer works to change our hearts. In this way, prayer changes our relationships and even our approach to our circumstances. Over time, within the will and purposes of God, prayer can and do change our world.



# Pieta

Always the same hills  
Crowd the horizon,  
Remote witness  
Of the still scene.

And in the foreground  
The tall Cross,  
Sombre, untenanted,  
Aches for the Body  
That is back in the cradle  
Of a maid's arms

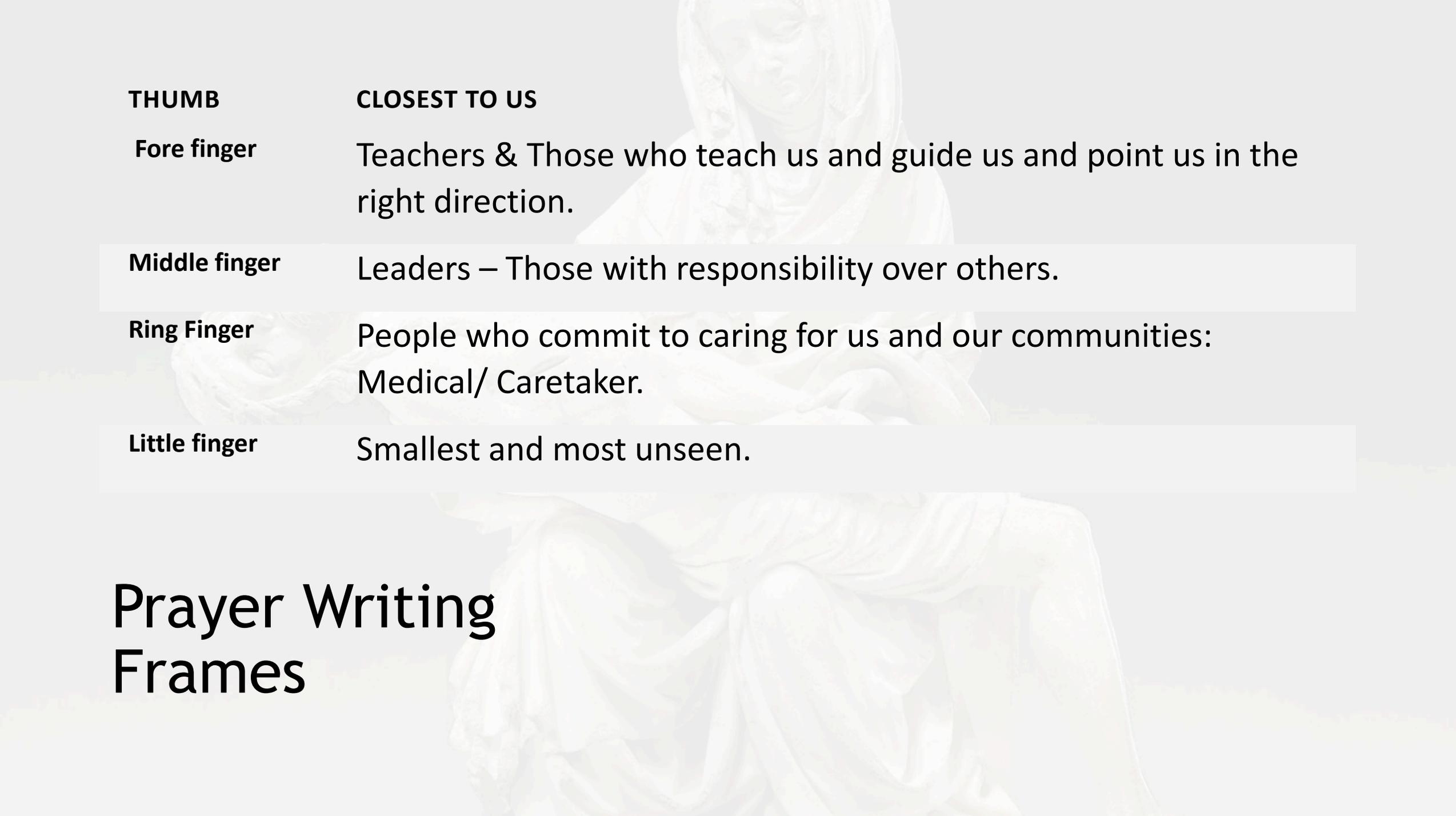
# Further teaching resources or research sources

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Luke 2:34-35

<sup>34</sup>and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,  
“Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel,  
and for a sign that is spoken against  
<sup>35</sup>(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also),  
that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.”

Click on the VCS title to be linked to the resources



**THUMB**

**Fore finger**

**CLOSEST TO US**

Teachers & Those who teach us and guide us and point us in the right direction.

**Middle finger**

Leaders – Those with responsibility over others.

**Ring Finger**

People who commit to caring for us and our communities:  
Medical/ Caretaker.

**Little finger**

Smallest and most unseen.

# Prayer Writing Frames

# Prayer Writing Frames

Theme	Section	Intercessions Sentence starters	Purpose/ Intent/ SC
Opening up to God	Opening Address	Loving/ Merciful/Gracious God,	Relational Opening/ Orientation setting Articulating the nature and personhood of God Giving thanks and voicing needs/challenges
		We give you thanks for...  We bring to you our needs and the needs of your world BECAUSE.... Call: Lord in your mercy Response: Hear our prayer	
The Church	Local community/ congregation		Giving thanks and voicing needs/challenges
	Diocesan		For Senior Area & Diocesan Clergy Giving thanks and voicing needs/challenges
	National	Call: Lord in your mercy Response: Hear our prayer	Giving thanks and voicing needs/challenges
The World	Environmental Economic Social Political Human International concerns: War/ Famine/ Pestilence	Call: Lord in your mercy Response: Hear our prayer	
	Healing of the Sick & Communion of Saints		
Sick & Dying	Sick & Dying		
	Dead	We pray for those who have died recently...  We pray for those whose Anniversary of death...  Recently deceased... Particularly those that who died last night and were alone, afraid, unprepared or died by violence... We pray for their families as they hear this news We pray for those whose Anniversary of death...	Recently deceased... Particularly those that who died last night and were alone, afraid, unprepared or died by violence... We pray for their families as they hear this news We pray for those whose Anniversary of death...

