



JACOB JORDAENS
(1593 - 1678)

“The Triumph of the Eucharist”
Oil on canvas
Signed with monogram central below: “J. Jor. Fe.”

Preparatory model for the work held at the National Gallery of Ireland.

Provenance:
Sotheby’s New York, 1992.
Spanish private collection

Dimensions: 120 x 81 cm

THE ARTIST

Jacob Jordaens was one of the most prominent painters of the Flemish Baroque. Though often overshadowed by Rubens and Van Dyck during their lifetimes, Jordaens emerged as the leading figure in Antwerp following their deaths in the early 1640s. A pupil of Adam van Noort (also Rubens' teacher), Jordaens remained in Antwerp his entire life, never making the customary journey to Italy. Instead, he absorbed and transformed the lessons of his predecessors into a rich, personal style.

He was known for his secular compositions, mythological subjects, and religious paintings, many of which were produced for local churches and civic institutions. His clients were typically middle-class or ecclesiastical, and only later in life did he begin to receive royal commissions, including from Charles I of England and Queen Christina of Sweden.

While he collaborated with Rubens, Jordaens maintained an independent artistic identity, eschewing courtly idealization in favor of robust naturalism and dynamic figuration. He ran a large workshop, producing ambitious altarpieces, tapestry designs, and genre scenes.

THE ARTWORK

This “**Triumph of the Eucharist**” is a richly allegorical composition celebrating the Catholic belief in the Real Presence, the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ during the consecration of the Mass. Likely conceived as a preparatory modello for the large-scale altarpiece now in the National Gallery of Ireland, this version shows several pentimenti and compositional adjustments that attest to the artist’s hand and evolving design.

At the apex of the composition, the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove, surrounded by radiant putti and glory clouds. Below, enthroned on a lion, a female figure holding a monstrance likely represents either the Church (Ecclesia) or Divine Love (*Amor Divinus*), an ambiguity explored further in art-historical literature. The presence of the lion may allude both to the Flemish Lion (*Vlaamse Leeuw*) and to iconography derived from Rubens, who similarly associated lions with personifications. The artwork is reminiscent of Rubens' *Assumption* compositions. The gathering of saints around the Eucharist reflects Tridentine Catholic theology, affirming the centrality of the sacrament and its veneration by the entire Church.



Jacob Jordaens, *Veneration of the Eucharist*, 211 x 173 mm. The Morgan Library & Museum



Jacob Jordaens, *The Veneration of the Eucharist*, oil on panel, early 1630s. National Gallery of Ireland