

## 100 days in office, coronated Messiah

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Arms outstretched, he wears crown of thorns on his brow

Drew Zahn



On his 100th day in office, President Obama will be "crowned" in messianic imagery at New York City's Union Square.

Artist Michael D'Antuono's painting "The Truth" - featuring Obama with his arms outstretched and wearing a crown of thorns upon his head - will be unveiled on April 29 at the Square's South Plaza.

According to a statement released about the portrait, "The 30" x 54" acrylic painting on canvas depicts President Obama appearing much like Jesus Christ on the Cross: atop his head, a crown of thorns; behind him, the dark veil being lifted (or lowered) on the Presidential Seal. But is he revealing or concealing, and is he being crucified or glorified?"

Even the title of the piece, "The Truth," suggests a play on biblical themes, as Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

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"More than a presidential portrait," writes D'Antuono on a website touting the painting, "'The Truth' is a politically, religiously and socially-charged statement on our nation's current political climate and deep partisan divide that is sure to create a dialogue."

Like others in the news who have depicted Obama in Christ-like imagery, D'Antuono

insists he isn't claiming the man is Messiah, but only inviting "individual interpretations."

"'The Truth,' like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder," claims the exhibit's press release.

D'Antuono even invites the public to email him with reactions to the piece, answering his posed question, "What's your truth?"

As WND has reported, D'Antuono follows others who have cast Obama in messianic imagery.



Clark's Obama sculpture, riding a donkey at the Iowa Capitol

In January, artist Matthew J. Clark paraded a sculpture of Obama riding a donkey and preceded by waving palm fronds, reminiscent of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in the 21st chapter of Matthew as foretold by the prophet Zechariah: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass."

Like D'Antuono, Clark was also unclear about whether his piece was proclaiming Obama to be the Christ or making some social commentary. Clark's website described the sculpture in vague terms:

"This project was inspired by my thoughts about 'icons' and religious symbols and whether they represent truth or merely represent," Clark's website reads. "The sculpture poses a question that relates to social conventions, metaphysics, and the collective response of society in reaction to fearful and uncertain times, but doesn't impose an answer. For me, it has much more to do with the general public as followers than any leader granted power."

Others, such as Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, have been far clearer in their nearly religious adoration of Obama. As WND reported, Farrakhan declared last year that when Obama talks, "the Messiah is absolutely speaking."

Addressing a large crowd behind a podium with a Nation of Islam Saviour's Day 2008 sign, Farrakhan proclaimed, "You are the instruments that God is going to use to bring about universal change, and that is why Barack has captured the youth. And he has involved young people in a political process that they didn't care anything about. That's a sign. When the Messiah speaks, the youth will hear, and the Messiah is absolutely speaking."

Farrakhan pointed out that the man Nation of Islam followers refer to as "the Savior," Fard Muhammad, had a black father and a white mother, just as Obama did.

"A black man with a white mother became a savior to us," he said. "A black man with a white mother could turn out to be one who can lift America from her fall."

WND previously reported a website called ["Is Barack Obama the Messiah?"](#); capturing the wave of euphoria that followed the Democratic senator's remarkable rise.

The site is topped by an Obama quote strategically ripped from a Jan. 7 speech at Dartmouth College just before the New Hampshire Primary in which he told students, "... a light will shine through that window, a beam of light will come down upon you, you will experience an epiphany, and you will suddenly realize that you must go to the polls and vote" for Obama.

WND also reported on near-religious experiences surrounding Obama on the campaign trail, as supporters who came to hear him speak on several occasions fainted in the middle of the candidate's speeches. As WND reported, some compared the fainting to fanatical swooning in the midst of a mesmerizing preacher; others, like radio host Michael Medved, thought the collapses were staged moments; and still others believed it was simply a matter of people standing in the crowds too long and growing dehydrated.

P.J. Gladnick of NewsBusters, in an article about D'Antuono's painting on the eve of the Obama administration's 100-day-mark, notes that the messianic parallels begun early in the presidential campaign don't seem to be stopping:

"The artist quite clearly portrays Obama as a latter day Christ-like figure, considering the outstretched arms and the crown of thorns. Obama worship, complete with halo images, has been noted before," writes Gladnick, "but it was nothing compared to current expressions in awe of 'The One' as we approach his hundredth day in office on Wednesday."

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