

*Pentecost*, by Giorgio Vasari

Art selection and commentary by [Heidi J. Hornik](#) and [Mikeal C. Parsons](#)

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Scala / Art Resource, NY

The painter and architect Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) was best known for writing biographies of artists, which were compiled in nine volumes. But Vasari was an accomplished artist himself, and among his many achievements was the renovation project for Santa Croce in Florence, to which he contributed several paintings, including his rendition of the day of Pentecost. Vasari follows artistic convention by

depicting the Spirit as a dove along with descending beams of light. Mary occupies her traditional location in the center of the scene, representing the church. Unlike many of his predecessors, Vasari depicts those receiving the Spirit as including many more than just Mary and the apostles. The upper register of the painting is crowded with putti, or cherubic angels, who point to the descending dove.