

*Consider the Lilies*, by Charalambos Epaminonda

art selection and comment by [John Kohan](#) in the [January 1, 2020](#) issue



Icons in the Byzantine style traditionally depict their subjects as fixed for all time in recognizable poses against symbolic backdrops. Charalambos Epaminonda, a Greek Orthodox painter from Cyprus, challenges these conventions in his image of the Sermon on the Mount. We know we have stepped into sacred space from the stylized figures, the flattened perspective, and the disproportionate size of the

seated Christ, but the cubistic color fragments and spidery white lines vibrate with an energy very much of this world. You almost feel as if Jesus must raise his voice for his call to “consider the lilies” to be heard by the crowd of largely skeptical or indifferent listeners, who are measuring out cloth, modeling fashion accessories, and taking too much thought for tomorrow. At least, the little child with a “bird of the air” perched on its finger at the feet of Jesus has gotten the message. So has the grass of the field in the aureole above Christ’s head, all astir at this lesson from nature about God’s providential care. Trained in both art and theology, Epaminonda affords us a heavenly window onto the ways of the world.