



## *The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane*

I would like to start this series by focusing on this piece painted between 1600 and 1605 by El Greco. Born Domenikos Theotokopoulos in the Kingdom of Candia, known today as the island of Crete.

Last Sunday Reverend Adam posed many questions about the nature of Jesus' crucifixion. Chiefly among them was "why?", **why did Jesus have to die?** When I consider the question myself I think about the agony in the garden and how Jesus himself struggled with that exact question. Although Jesus ponders if He might be exempt from His deathly fate He never gives in to fear and anguish.

In this piece El Greco's marriage of Byzantine and Expressionistic styles creates an environment of palpable emotions. The slightly elongated figure of Christ at the center conversing with the angel of the Lord is bathed in white light that pushes back against the shadows around them. The shading is so deep that the darkness almost seems solid.

The apostles slumber in that darkness unaware of what the future holds for them and the Messiah. Unaware that the question Jesus struggles with in that moment will be pondered by Christians all over the world centuries later.