

Diverse and complex, this mixed-media masterwork, *Sacrament of Penance*, is an inspired glimpse into the life of billionaire entrepreneur, Tom Monaghan by Indiana artist Kris Gebhardt. Monaghan, an orphan raised by the Catholic Church, is the founder of Ann Arbor, Michigan's Domino's Pizza, past owner of the Detroit Tigers, founder of the town of Ave Maria and Ave Maria University. Gebhardt built Monaghan's security detail in the mid eighties to protect the CEO and his family after a failed kidnapping attempt.

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In *Sacrament*, several of Gebhardt's signature techniques begin to emerge in the physical piece. Once again creating on reclaimed wood with charcoal, oil, acrylic, latex and chalk along with "scrap" color, these elements layer to create a rich commentary on a rags-to-riches story of American triumph in the face of adversity. Is the painting's gritty background a subtle nod to the notorious opulence and sinister history of organized religion? The deep red robes of a Cardinal drape over a sad diminutive man adorned only with a crucifix around his neck. Instead of the usual dangling body of Jesus Christ, one solitary golden domino is front and center on the cross. No longer peering through rose-colored glasses Gebhardt starts to lead us through the rabbit hole to a place where the viewer may begin to see the subject in many ways.

Is Monaghan a modern day saint, or is he covering something up? Is he hiding behind his immense fortune and creating a grand illusion? Perhaps the church is making up their rules? Is the struggle here the church's overwhelming eagerness to take and take from Monaghan to a point where they elevate him to an idol? Finally, the title *Sacrament of Penance* refers to the common Catholic practice of confession. Whether viewing the confessions of the Catholic Church or the confessions of a mere man, we may never know, however Kris Gebhardt gives us much to think about.