

A Passion Legend

A post-biblical legend developed about the goldfinch being a witness to the humiliating march of Jesus carrying the cross to Golgotha. A goldfinch flew above the staggering figure of Jesus and was distressed by the crown of thorns on his head. As the legend tells it, the goldfinch flew down and tried to pluck off the thorns. As the bird plucked at thorns some of Jesus' blood dripped onto the goldfinch's head. Hence the origin of the red feathers on its head is explained as originating from this event.

Its natural diet of consuming thorns and thistles is also enlisted in the details of the tale, to emphasise that in the tragedy of Jesus' torture and execution that even animals bore witness.



In Art, it frequently appears with the Christ Child, showing the close connection between the Incarnation and Passion.

The fact that it still has these markings and this diet reflect that Jesus is always with us even today.

