

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# *The* VATICAN IS COMING TO PITTSBURGH



**Andrew E. Masich**  
President & CEO

Visitors no longer have to travel to Rome to see some of the world's greatest art and historical artifacts. This fall, one of the largest Vatican collections to ever tour North America is coming to Pittsburgh. Beginning October 2, the History Center is proud to host *Vatican Splendors:*

*A Journey through Faith and Art*, a 10,000-square-foot exhibition presenting objects that illustrate 2,000 years of art, history, and culture.



**T**hanks to support from Bishop David Zubik, Father Ron Lengwin, and the Diocese of Pittsburgh—who made the initial request to the Vatican—the History Center is one of only three venues in North America to host this extraordinary exhibition.

Presented by Federated Investors, Inc. and UPMC, *Vatican Splendors* provides visitors with a rare opportunity to see nearly 200 pieces of artwork and historical objects from the Vatican Museums, one of the world's greatest collections.

The assemblage of Vatican artifacts is simply astonishing.

Original works by Michelangelo, as well as a first-generation cast of the Pietà from St. Peter's Basilica—the original is behind bulletproof glass in Rome—will be shown alongside signed documents and personal objects he used in work on the Sistine Chapel.

Visitors will flock to the 17th century works by Bernini, including carved, gilded angels and a baroque urn depicting the Last Supper from the Basilica of Saint Mary Major.

Historical objects from the modern and ancient basilicas of Saint Peter's in Rome are featured along with four of the surviving Papal portraits created at the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls in the 13th century, and archeological objects discovered at the tombs of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

Some items in the *Vatican Splendors* exhibition have never been seen by the public, such as Guercino's c. 1650 *Portrait of Christ with Crown of Thorns*, a painting whose realistic, powerful image of Christ inspired many other works. Others, such as a reliquary containing the remains of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, have never traveled outside the Vatican walls.

Visitors will also be able to touch a bronze cast of the hand of Pope John Paul II, which will be exhibited alongside a sheet of his handwritten poetry.



**Portrait of a Cherub,  
Giacomo Zoboli.  
1742–1748,  
oil on canvas.**

The Reverenda  
Fabbrica of Saint Peter,  
Vatican City State.



**Chalice of  
Pope John Paul II,  
2001. Gilt silver,  
vitreous gems.**

Vatican City State.

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One reason the Vatican chose Pittsburgh as a venue is the large population of residents who identify themselves as Catholic. With roots in the early settlement of the region, there is a long, rich history of Catholicism here. To share this important story, the History Center has worked closely with Bishop Zubik and the Diocese of Pittsburgh and others to collect and exhibit more than 50 rarely seen artifacts and historical documents. These objects connect visitors to the history of the church and include exceptional pieces used by the 12 men who have shepherded the flock as bishop, including the journal of the first Bishop Michael O'Connor and ceremonial and religious artifacts such as a beautiful amethyst and diamond pectoral cross worn by Bishop Leonard.

These regional treasures also tell the story of those that settled this region, immigrants from

around the world who relied on their faith to provide hope and guidance as they made their way in a new land. Often their ethnicity was expressed in the saints they prayed to or in the religious objects that adorned their churches and assisted in their practice of faith.

The work of the church also reached beyond the walls of individual buildings into the community.

To tell that story the History Center, through the generous donation of Slippery Rock University Foundation and the dedicated work of the many sister groups in Western Pennsylvania, is proud to present an exhibit highlighting the contributions of women religious to healthcare in this region. The exhibition—shown in conjunction with *Vatican Splendors*—gives voice to the 16 sister groups who came to this region to care for immigrant communities, orphans, and the aged. These women came to perform acts of service and through these acts became business women, social welfare activists, educators, and nurses, impacting our region in ways their pioneers could never have imagined. ☀

**Cast of Pietà from  
Saint Peter's Basilica,  
Michelangelo Buonarroti.  
From original 1499.**

Vatican City State.





Caliper of  
Michelangelo  
Buonarroti.  
16th century, iron.

The Reverenda Fabbrica of Saint Peter,  
Vatican City State.

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This recreated environment takes visitors  
onto the scaffolding near the ceiling of the  
Sistine Chapel to explore how Michelangelo  
painted his famous frescoes.

Photo © 2010 Vatican Splendors.



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This gold and silver reliquary contains bones that for centuries have been believed to belong to Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and possibly other saints including Anne and Joseph. The sacred nature of such artifacts allows the faithful to be close to those worthy of veneration.

Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Vatican City State.



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**RIGHT: Statue of Saint Paul.**  
19th century, gilt metal.

Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples,  
Vatican City State.

**BELOW: Madonna del Sassoferato,**  
Giovanni Battista Salvi  
(known as *il Sassoferato*).  
17th century, oil on copper.

Vatican City State.





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**Halberdier, Half-dress.**  
20th century, cloth, metal.

Papal Swiss Guard, Vatican City State.



Visitors will have the opportunity to encounter the late Pope John Paul II at this touchable bronze cast of his hand, created in October 2002 by Cecco Bonanotte.

Vatican City State.



**Altar cross (1952) from**  
The Chapel of the Blessed  
Virgin at Sacred Heart  
Church in Shadyside.

Photo by Elise Canup.





**ABOVE:** Little Sisters of the Poor returning from a begging trip, c. 1930.



**LEFT:** Example of a begging basket used by the Little Sisters of the Poor. Begging has been a central part of each day for the sisters since their founding in 1839 by Jeanne Jugan. Faced with a household of elderly, Jugan went out daily to ask for the provisions to care for the needy in her home.

Gift of Slippery Rock University Foundation and the Little Sisters of the Poor.