

Audio Tour Content for "The Treasures of Heaven Vatican Museum Exhibition"

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601.

Introduction

Welcome to "The Treasures of Heaven Vatican Museum Exhibition."

I believe we all know there exists in the middle of Rome, the Capital of Italy, another tiny City State called the Vatican City, unique in all the world. The Pope is not only the Vatican City State's political leader, but also leader of the world's 1.25 billion Catholics, and as God's representative in the secular world has a degree of influence that reaches far and wide.

Liturgy has always been an essential element of religion; and the rich history and culture of the Catholic Church has likewise developed a beautiful and delicate ritual form, which includes vestments and sacred vessels used in rituals. These manifest both gorgeous art forms and sacred religious significance. For centuries, these vestments and sacred vessels have been added to the collection of the sacristy by the Holy See. Various Popes have worn or used these artifacts in important rituals during this time and many have never before been publicly displayed. In this rare exhibition, the Holy See has lent a total of 60 artifacts.

Section 1

602.

Aureate chasuble with stole and maniple of Pope Pius XI

"The Treasures of Heaven Vatican Museum Exhibition" is arranged according to the Liturgical Year, altar items, popes and history, sacraments and church, and mission to the East, spread over five units.

The first item presented is the Golden chasuble with stole belonging to Pope Pius XI who reigned from 1922-1939. It was donated to the Pope by the Minorite Franciscan Order, crafted by Franciscan sisters from the monastery of St. Clare of the Sacred Heart in Mazamet (France), in 1926, on the occasion of the 7th centenary from the death of Saint Francis of Assisi.

The chasuble is divided into panels showing scenes from the life of St. Francis, images of Pope Pius XI, scenes depicting missions, Holy Mary between angels and saints, scenes of the Crusades, and the depiction of a ship with the Basilica of St. Peter, symbolizing the Church.

The current Pope Francis has taken St Francis of Assisi as a model, standing on the side of the poor, being a new voice for the world's conscience. Pope Francis attaches great importance to harmony between man and nature, and recently he published an encyclical entitled "Laudato si' – Praise be to you", highlighting the variety of environmental and ecological issues facing the earth. It expresses the hope that people will follow the example of St. Francis, reflecting concern for nature, justice for the poor, social responsibility and commitment to inner peace.

Section 2

Stop No.

603.

Petrinian keys of Leo XIII

Now we are entering the section dealing with popes and history. Jesus assigned to Peter the role of chief disciple and leader of the church. Symbolically, Peter received the keys of the kingdom, and this began the tradition of the successor of Peter being the Pope, the leader of all Catholics and in modern times, the head of Vatican City State. The pope traditionally exercised authority and nowadays the emphasis is mainly on welfare, peace, human rights and directed to all mankind.

In this unit, there are 14 Pope's miters, various apparel, accessories and sacred items, presented here to highlight some of the more distinguished popes.

Here we show the Petrine keys of St Peter presented to Pope Leo 13th in 1903. The top section,

which serves as a grip, is circular in shape and fully embossed. It bears a Greek cross with four flowers at the corners, and all around fine engravings in the shape of curls can be seen. Moving downwards, before the perforated barrel, a pommel engraving is present. The part of the keys to be inserted in the lock is in the shape of a parallelepiped, with a perforated design representing a cross. The keys are made up of two parts that can be screwed together.

Stop No.

604.

Jeweled closure of Servant of God Pope Benedict XIII

Tiara of Blessed Pope Pius IX

What you see here is the jeweled closure, a vestment worn over the shoulders, belonging to the Servant of God Pope Benedict XIII who reigned from 1724 to 1730. This tiara was crafted in Rome in 1729. In the center of a plate embossed with arabesques, the Holy Spirit is represented as a dove, with four rays set with diamonds. The area around the tiara is studded with precious stones: at the top a large aquamarine, flanked by two pink stones, and at the bottom two large garnets with another garnet surrounded by diamonds at the center. All around emeralds can be found. The back is decorated with four depictions surrounded by curls and arabesques: at the top Our Lady of the Rosary with child, at the bottom the coat of arms of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) and on the sides St. Philip Neri and St. Dominic.

Another item here is the Tiara donated in 1854 by Her Royal Highness Isabel II of Bourbon (1830–1904), Queen of Spain (1833–1870) to Pope Pius IX (1846–1878). The tiara is made in silver fabric, with a "sugar loaf" form, surmounted by an elegant tangle of leaves and branches and crowned by a globe. On top, the cross rises out of a graceful wreath of branches, leaves and flowers in gold with pearls and diamonds. The lappets are made in silver foil cloth, with large gold embroidery depicting the keys and the dove. The image of a lamb can be found on the lower part of the tiara.

Stop No.

605.

Chasuble with stole of Saint Pope John Paul II

This section of the exhibit features items belonging to Saint Pope John Paul II. It includes a mitre, chasuble with stole, zucchetto and dark red moccasins. This is a full set of the pope's formal clothing. The front of the mitre is divided into four sections by a girdle in the shape of a golden cross edged with brown, which also delimits the lower band. The four sections bear embroidered concentric semicircles, and in the lower part, the symbols of the Evangelists (John and Luke on the front, Matthew and Mark on the back). The two lappets are made in the same fabric as the base of the mitre, with the embroidered coat of arms of Pope John Paul II.

The zucchetto and shoes were donated by his former personal secretary who is now the archbishop of Krakow in Poland.

In this area there is also the Pectoral Cross with chain of Pope Benedict XVI which was donated to Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of his meeting with Representatives of other religious faiths that took place in the Vatican on April 25, 2005 at the start of his pontificate.

Finally there is a Green Chasuble with stole belonging to the current Pope Francis.

Stop No.

606.

Fisherman's ring of Pope Benedict XVI

Another item of papal interest is the Fisherman's ring, or Ring of the fisherman. St. Peter, the first pope, was a fisherman who became a "fisher of men". The Ring of the Fisherman symbolizes this aspect of the papacy and each pope receives a new gold ring engraved with his name when he becomes pope.

Upon a papal death, the ring is ceremonially crushed in the presence of other cardinals by the Chancellor, in order to prevent the sealing of backdated, forged documents during the interregnum,

or sede vacante.

When Pope Benedict resigned, his ring was not destroyed and so we are able to see it in this exhibition. The oval depicts St. Peter in the boat, bent down to pull the net; under him, the sea with three fish (number connected to the Holy Trinity) and at the top the name Benedictus 16th is engraved. The band is formed by two stylized fishes that originate at the sides of the setting and descending symmetrically, run with the rear fins into a Greek cross, representing the cross of the pallium.

Section 3

Stop No.

607.

Chasuble with stole of Saint Pope John Paul II

You are now entering the part of this exhibition which is about the liturgical year. The Liturgical year commemorates the major events in the life of Christ. The main parts are Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, the Resurrection period and the remainder of the year which is called Ordinary Time. The liturgical vestments and accessories for each period are different colors.

The first item you see is a Chinese-inspired chasuble with stole, a gift to Pope John Paul II and added to the Treasury on October 15, 1998.

It represents Our Lady of Immaculate Conception and can also be used during Advent.

On the back, there is an image of Mary in Chinese style, with a halo of stars, each with a sky blue stone (12). On Mary's headpiece, 9 small stones of various colors can be seen. Mary is resting her feet on a blue cloud held up by six Chinese angels, and a similar design as that found on the front is used. The stole has the same border as the chasuble, with three orange crosses and a fringe at the bottom; the maniple is similar in design to the stole. The chalice veil is characterized by the same border and an orange cross.

Stop No.

608.

Processional cross of Saint Pope John Paul II

Next is the processional cross of Saint Pope John Paul II. The image of Jesus Crucified is depicted in an original way, suspended entirely by his hands, with his legs arranged obliquely and a fluttering robe on his back; the halo is golden. Moving down, another representation depicting Christ's agony in the garden of olives can be seen, then continuing to descend downwards, and a stole woven with the coat of arms of Pope John Paul II (1978–2005). The staff contains an irregular section and fits on a marble and silver base. Here is another complex embossed depiction representing Christ Resurrected along with five other figures.

The cross was donated to Pope John Paul II (1978–2005) on the occasion of the Canonization of San Jean Gabriel Perboyre C.M. (Congregation of the Mission) on June 2, 1996

This very modern piece of art is alive with marvelous mystery and imagery. It is used during Holy Week and the Easter Season.

Stop No.

609.

Red mantle with stole of Pope John XXIII

Worthy of special mention in this exhibition is the Red mantle with stole belonging to Pope John XXIII (1958-1963). Saint Pope John XXIII was one of the most respected of bygone popes. He convened the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, saying he wanted to "Throw *open the windows* of the church and let the fresh air of the spirit blow through". In April 1963 he published the famous encyclical "Pacem in terris -Peace on Earth." In Italy he is called "The Good Pope" and he was canonized on April 27, 2014. He is best known for his care of the poor, his straightforward, good friendly image, and his strong will to promote the modernization of the Catholic Church. The

current Pope Francis had praised Saint Pope John the twenty-third as a great preacher. The Mantle with stole is embroidered in red foil with lilies in golden thread. Towards the inside, embroidery in golden thread and golden foil depicting large floral motifs and curls and the papal insignia in golden thread, silver, polychrome silk and beads. The stole has the same motifs as the mantle and three floral crosses in a sunburst pattern. The two sections of the stole are joined by a cordon made in golden thread with two bows with twisted fringes.

Stop No.
610.

Scepter of Besançon Blessed Pope Pius IX

What you see now is the Sceptre of Besancon, offered by the Archbishop of Besançon to Pope Pius IX on the occasion of his Episcopal Jubilee in 1877.

The scepter is usually held by the Pope during public meeting or ceremonies. It usually takes the form of a long staff topped by a cross. In the case of this exhibit, the gold-plated silver scepter, composed of six sections, all rich in numerous types of embossing and decorations, is topped by a statue of the Virgin on the throne. On the sections of the staff, important moments from the history of the diocese of Besancon are represented. In the bottom part, the four figures of the Holy founders of the diocese with St. Peter: St. Lino with the keys and a chalice, Bishop Ferreol and his deacon Ferjeux. Next is St. Coletta, seen kneeling down, followed by St. Vincent Ferrier. The latter is carrying a banner with the monogram of Mary and presenting Archbishop Thiébaud de Roucemont with a letter announcing the end of the Great Schism of 1417; The next section depicts Claude de la Baume, surrounded by soldiers, who brings together the inhabitants of Besançon under the banner of the Immaculate, to confront the Protestant troops that threatened the city in June 1575. Below, St. Peter Fourrier is seen distributing votive notes in praise of Mary to victims of The Plague. He is followed by Archbishop Claude d'Achey, seen dedicating his diocese to Mary Immaculate.

Section 4
Stop No.

611.

The Altar

Continuing on, the next section we come to concerns the altar. In a Catholic church, the altar is the main focus of the church, the central sacred space symbolizing the presence of Christ among us. During the celebration of the Eucharist, the officiating priest and concelebrants will gather around the altar upon which are offered unleavened bread and wine which become the body and blood of Christ, the spiritual food of the faithful. The faithful also remember that Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world when he accepted death on the cross in order to save us.

It is recorded in the Bible that Abraham, the father of faith, and Moses, who brought the people out of Egypt, built altars in commemoration of major life moments. For Christians, it is natural to see the altar and recall the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples. In the early Church, the tombs of the martyrs were often used as altars. Today that tradition is continued, and there is a hole in the centre of the altar where some holy martyr's remains will be placed.

Stop No.
621.

Altar frontal of Pope Innocent X

The altar is covered with a fitted fabric called an altarcloth on which are placed the cross, candlesticks and other sacred vessels. This exhibit shows an Altar frontal, from the papacy of Pope Innocent X, who reigned from 1644 to 1655. This richly decorated cloth was placed in front of the altar. Catholics will think of St Claire who clung to the altar cloth rather than be forced to return home after she had vowed to give up everything and follow Christ. Most touching is the reverence

St Claire had for the Blessed Sacrament; even on her sickbed, she kept busy embroidering an altar cloth.

The antependium is divided into two sections by a band embroidered in gold with fringed ends. On the upper part, six bees embroidered in golden thread can be seen, typical of Pope Urban VIII Barberini's coat of arms, along with three small suns. On the wider lower part, a central crucifix richly embroidered in gold, with a sunburst at the four corners; at the sides of the crucifix, two coats of arms of Pope Innocent X on a red background. In addition, there are six other bees corresponding to the Barberini coat of arms and six small suns.

Stop No.

613.

Sacred Vessels of Blessed Pope Pius IX

The main items in this part of the exhibit are the sacred vessels of Blessed Pope Pius IX who reigned from 1846 to 1878 and includes a ciborium, a chalice and paten, small cruets, bells, small candle holders, holy water ewer and sprinkler. Worthy of particular mention is the chalice with paten belong to Blessed Pope Pius IX. During the last supper, Jesus established the sacrament of the Eucharist. Today when we celebrate the Eucharist Liturgy, it is both a remembrance and a re-enactment of the last supper and the events surrounding the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The bread which becomes the Body of Christ rests on the paten, and the wine which becomes the blood of Christ, is contained in the chalice.

The items on display are by the French designer Pierre Paulsen and were made for the 1867 Paris World's Fair. Pope Benedict XVI has been used these sacred vessels on many important occasions. The inscription on the bottom of the chalice reads " Ego sum vitis vera et Pater meus agricola est" which means "I am the true vine and my father is the vinedresser".

Section 5

Stop No.

614.

Sacraments

As we live our Catholic faith-life in the world of today, Christ comes to us in ways that are fitted to the times, in other words through sacraments, which are the means by which the Living God can grow and develop in our lives. "Sacraments" are both a sign and a symbol, generating grace, established and entrusted to the Church by Christ himself. Through the sacraments God's life infuses our bodies. Each sacrament is carried out according to certain manner and form which both signifies and effects the grace proper to that sacrament. Believers who are receptive to the sacraments experience salvation, become renewed and united with Christ.

In the New Testament Catholic identify a total of seven sacraments established by Christ; Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. Therefore, in the section on the sacraments, you will see exhibited items related to the sacraments as used by various popes.

Stop No.

615.

Silver case for sacred chrism and oil for catechumens of Servant of God Pope Benedict XIII

Appearing next in the exhibition is a Silver case for sacred chrism and oil for catechumens. This is a very old jar, crafted in 1726 during the papacy of Pope Benedict XIII. It is a small silver jar set on an oval plate. The jar is divided into two parts so that it can hold on the one side the Holy Chrism and on the other, the Oil of Catechumens. This distinction is also emphasized by the inscriptions found on the lid, which is flat and divided in half by a hinge. The under plate is oval in shape, with a fluted outer edge and bears a Memorial inscription on the concave part.

Chrism or "Oil of Gladness," is olive oil mixed with a small amount of balm or balsam. It is used in

Confirmation, Baptism, in the consecration of a Bishop, the consecration of a various things such as churches, chalices, patens, and bells.

The Oil of Catechumens is used in Baptism along with water, in the consecration of churches, in the blessing of Altars, in the ordination of priests, and, sometimes, in the crowning of Catholic kings and queens.

A third oil, called the Oil of the Sick is used in the sacrament of anointing of the sick.

Stop No.

616.

Devotional Cross of Servant of God Pope Pius VII

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that anyone who receives the sacrament of reconciliation receives the forgiveness of God and is reconciled with the Church. This sacrament includes the special graces of repentance, penance, confession and forgiveness. It is also called the sacrament of confession. Older churches often have a confession box with two doors, one on either side of the priest who sits in the middle. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the biggest graces in their lives, because through this Sacrament we can renew our souls, unload the burden of guilt from the past, be re-admitted to the love of God, and be filled with new courage and resolve. In this exhibit, we can see that the Servant of God Pope Pius VII Devotional cross. Representing the faithful being reconciled with the love of the Lord, this wooden crucifix painted by hand, inserted in a wooden case fitted with a glass cover that can be opened, and lined on the inside in red foil cloth adorned with a sunburst in silver foil was said to have been used by Pope Pius VII (1800–1823) during his exile in France.

Stop No.

617.

Ecce Homo: Altarpiece of Pope Leo XIII

The pax was an object used in the Middle Ages and Renaissance for the Kiss of Peace in the Catholic Mass. Direct kissing among the celebrants and congregation was replaced by each in turn kissing the pax, which was carried around those present. Ecce Homo: Altarpiece, dated from 1887, belonged to Pope Leo 13th. It takes the shape of a shrine in neo-Gothic style, made in gilded silver with set stones and enamels. The central part of the tablet displays a large embossed representation of the Ecce Homo "Behold the Man" in silver. Jesus has his hands clasped, and between them holds the cane; his head is bowed down, with the crown of thorns and a rich halo covered in transparent stones (probably small diamonds). On the sides, on the twisted columns, two embossed angels can be seen, with their hands folded on their chest and a red teardrop shaped stone of the head of each. The lower part of the pax portrays the embossed coat of arms of Pope Leo XIII. The suffering Jesus is a symbol of the sacrament of anointing of the sick. Through this sacrament the grace of God brings comfort and healing to body and soul.

Stop No.

618.

Mandyllion of Edessa

Before entering the Mission to the East section, there is a special exhibit item said to be a third to fifth century icon of the Mandyllion of Edessa. The painting seems to have been made as a replacement for a nearly identical icon in Genoa (St. Bartholomew of the Armenians), most likely when the latter was enclosed in its fourteenth-century frame. The Vatican and Genoa faces both replicate Byzantium's most venerated icon, the Mandyllion, claimed to have been created when a painter dispatched to the Holy Land by King Abgar of Edessa (Urfa in Modern Turkey) was unable to capture Christ's visage using traditional artistic means because of the radiance emanating from the divine face. Washing his face and drying it on a towel, the Lord caused the portrait to be miraculously transferred onto the cloth. When the Mandyllion was brought back to Edessa, it cured Abgar of leprosy, acting as if it were Christ himself, who had left actual relics behind before

ascending to heaven.

Section 6

Stop No.

619.

Reliquary and relic of St. Francis Xavier

The most significant relics of the Mission to The East are those of St. Francis Xavier. Reliquary and Relic of St. Francis Xavier. This relic container dates to between 1843 and the end of the 19th century. The large funerary casket contains the remains of St. Francis Xavier (1506–1552). He was a Jesuit priest and apostle of India and Japan, patron saint of missionaries, beatified by Pope Paul V in 1619 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on March 12, 1622, along with the founder of the Jesuit order, St. Ignatius of Loyola.

St. Francis Xavier was a Spanish Catholic missionaries, one of the earliest Jesuits, he was among the first of the Jesuits to undertake the Mission to the East Asia. He was the first to go to Japan and he had a deep desire to go to China. However, as he awaited permission to cross to the Mainland, he died of malaria on Shangchuan Island in 1552

Stop No.

620.

Urns of the Holy Doors

Brick of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica

Brick of the Holy Door of St. John Lateran

On December 8 last year, Pope Francis announced a special Jubilee Year, a Holy Year of Mercy to begin on December 8 2015, the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second Vatican Council, and conclude on November 20 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. According to tradition a special Holy Year Door is opened in the four Roman Basilicas at the beginning of the Holy Year and walled up again at its close. Jubilee years have been celebrated every 25 years since 1450. Jubilee years were very popular times for pilgrimage and large numbers of the faithful would travel to Rome during the course of the year. Pieces of masonry from the unblocked door were much sought-after as relics. The brick on exhibit here was used for the closing of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica at the end of the Extraordinary Year of the Redemption 1983/84, and extracted at the beginning of the next Jubilee (2000). The closing ceremony was celebrated by the reigning Pontiff, Pope John Paul II (1978–2005).

Nowadays, in the interests of safety, the wall is taken down beforehand by masons and the Pope then symbolically opens the door to inaugurate the Jubilee Year.