



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **K of C Museum to premiere exhibition of Vatican art**

(NEW HAVEN, Conn.) — Throughout the history of Christianity, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary has been as vast in its expression as it has been strong in its fervor. Often that devotion is centered on a particular virtue for which Mary is renowned and depicted in art.

At various occasions, certain artistic representations of Blessed Mother around the world have been recognized by the Vatican for their antiquity, popularity among the local faithful, and even reported miracles through Mary's intercession. As a formal acknowledgement and encouragement of such devotion, the Vatican's Chapter of St. Peter's Basilica has "crowned" these Marian images, thus promoting a universal veneration.

On Mothers Day, May 8, the Knights of Columbus Museum will premiere a new exhibition of this Marian art, *Full of Grace: Crowned Madonnas from the Vatican Basilica*. The show, which runs through Jan. 8, 2012, will feature several works from the 17th and 18th centuries.

The distinction of being "crowned," which traces to the 16th century, is both literal and figurative. The artwork is affixed with a crown as an indication of the honor. The crown also serves to illustrate and foster Catholic teaching of Mary's title and role as Queen of Heaven.

During the centuries, the Vatican has assembled a collection of reproductions of these crowned pieces of art. In cooperation with the Chapter of St. Peter's Basilica, the Knights of Columbus Museum will present more than 90 of these Marian images in the exhibition, offering both a history of the practice as well as a glimpse at the process of their restoration and preservation.

Curating the exhibition from Rome is Dr. Pietro Zander, the archaeologist in charge of the Vatican Necropolis for the Fabbrica di San Pietro, which maintains the basilica and its sacred art. Dr. Zander directed the restoration of Saint Peter's tomb and other Vatican artistic treasures, including the images on display.

"The Knights of Columbus is pleased and grateful for the opportunity to share these historic paintings with an American audience," said Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson. "They are not only works of art, but stories of people's faith and culture."

In addition to the works on loan from St. Peter's Basilica, the exhibition will include a bronze reproduction of Michelangelo's *Pieta*, which is among the most famous of the Crowned Madonna's. The original, carved from Carrara marble by the famous Renaissance artist in 1498-99, is a masterpiece and ranks among the world's most renowned works of Christian art. The bronze was cast by the world-famous Marinelli Foundry in Florence, Italy, as one of limited edition of nine authorized by the Vatican. It is on loan from Vescovo Buonarroti Art LLC in Nevada.

The Museum is located at 1 State Street in New Haven and is open daily from 10-5. Admission and parking are free. For more information, please call 203-865-0400 or visit [kofcmuseum.org](http://kofcmuseum.org).

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