



40th Anniversary

PAV M

Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums

PATRONS OF THE ARTS IN THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

A STORY THAT HAS LASTED FOR 40 YEARS

For centuries, the Vatican Pontiffs have enacted a system of patronage of the arts to facilitate the creation of some of the most significant masterpieces in art history. One calls to mind Pope Julius II, who employed Michelangelo and Raphael to create the iconic frescoes of the Sistine Chapel and the School of Athens at the height of the Renaissance; the will to support an artistic legacy has always been at the heart of the Vatican's idea for humanity.

Our PAVM Chapters trace their roots to Pope Paul VI and his desire to create a Vatican Collection of inspired Modern art. In 1969, Monsignor Pasquale Macchi, then secretary to Pope Paul VI (Later Archbishop of Loreto), came to the United States to curate such a collection. To assist the Vatican Museums in securing the art that the Vatican Museums' curators wished to acquire, a committee was formed in New York City. The key person for this project was Executive Vice President Larry Fleischman, who successfully encouraged artists, art collectors, and foundations to contribute desired works. The work of the Committee in collecting art thinned after fifty-four acquisitions as space was limited in the Museums, but interest was already circulating around art conservation.

These same *Friends* who aided in acquiring modern art for the Vatican also undertook the building of the first state-of-the-art marble restoration laboratory in the Vatican Museums. The second project of this committee was to inaugurate a great Vatican art exhibition in the United States. This exhibition traveled the U.S.A. (New York City, Chicago and San Francisco) from 1983 to 1984 and was a significant success.

Following that exhibition, several persons of goodwill and generosity interested not only in modern art but also in the conservation and restoration of older pieces wanted to help the Vatican Museums. To accommodate that work, a California group under the leadership of the Archbishops of San Francisco and Los Angeles was formed. It was Walter Persegati (Vatican Museums), Monsignor Clark (New York), Father Miles Riley (California), and Father William Lion (Chicago) who, toward the end of the tour, decided that if the Friends of the Vatican Museums had remained dedicated to the Vatican Museums for nearly ten years and continued to do excellent work through generous donors, then there was room for an organization capable of attracting others inspired by the recent Vatican Museums exhibition who were prepared to help in the permanent support of patronage.

In 1983, the organization of Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums was formed in California and New York. In the following time, local patron chapters in many North American states and other countries were established. Through the generosity of several donors over a history of more than forty years, the Patrons have accomplished the restoration of some of the most monumental works of art and architecture in the Vatican Museums. The most notable are the famous frescoes of the Raphael Rooms and the Gallery of the Maps, the Pauline Chapel, the Gallery of the Candelabras, the Vatican Gardens, the Pontifical Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs, the Bramante's Pinecone Courtyard and the Ethnological Museum *Anima Mundi*. In addition to these extensive endeavors, the Patrons have restored hundreds of Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and Modern paintings, sculptures, tapestries and decorative arts. They strongly support the nine different restoration laboratories in the Vatican Museums and apply our efforts and resources to all artistic aspects of the Holy See, such as the frescoes in the vaults of the Holy Stairs sanctuary or the archaeological site unearthed beneath the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls.

At the beginning of November 2023, patrons from around the globe will gather in Rome to celebrate our organization's fortieth anniversary. Five days of events to acknowledge the significant contributions the Patrons have made throughout the years to promote, restore, and conserve the vast and unique Vatican Museums' collection.