



## Magnificent Crivelli Dazzles Anew

The California Chapter is thrilled to announce that the restoration of Carlo Crivelli's five-section paneled polyptych **Madonna and Child with the Saints** has been completed, thanks to the (frequent) generosity of the **Ahmanson Family!**

Carlo Crivelli (1463 - 1494), an early Renaissance painter from Venice, was known for his use of gold in the late Gothic style. As Dr. Guido Cornini, Deputy Director of the Museums, has explained, although Crivelli used many of the innovations in painting of his time, his style displays a nostalgia for

medieval art. During the time the large polyptych was in the Painting Restoration Laboratory undergoing its rebirth, the piece was always a showstopper for Patrons visiting the laboratory. The laborious restoration involved removing the "over painting" of previous restorative attempts to uncover its original brilliant colors.

The year 2019 marked thirty-five years of diplomatic relations *continued on page 6*



*Federica Cecchetti beams with pride*

# Patrons Enjoy Double Event In San Diego

On September 21, 2019 the California Patrons gathered in San Diego for a daylong event that included visits to the University of San Diego and the Mission San Diego de Alcalá. The first stop was the Hoehn Family Galleries, on the University of San Diego campus, for the exhibit **Christ: Life, Death and Resurrection**. On display were more than 40 drawings and prints from the British Museum's collection of Italian Renaissance prints and drawings. Dating from the 1400s to the 1800s, the works depict the life of Jesus Christ, starting with his birth in Bethlehem, his Crucifixion at Golgotha outside of Jerusalem, and finally his Resurrection. Some of these compositions were intended for public churches where they would provide instruction to worshippers about the life of Christ. Others were intended for devotional study in homes of patrons, where owners often installed them in private chapels and areas of

the home meant for prayer and introspection.

The highlight of the show was **Michelangelo's The Three Crosses** (1521 - 1524), showing Christ nailed to the cross and placed between the two thieves. It is one of the few large-scale, fully finished drawings by the Italian Renaissance painter and sculptor to survive to our

present time. Using a medium of red chalk and touches of wash, Michelangelo placed the scene within two triangular spaces: the mourners at the foot of the cross, and the crosses themselves in another. This composition draws the viewer's gaze upward, directly to the body of Christ. Christ hangs exhausted from the cross, emphasizing his human nature and vulnerability.

The tour was followed by lunch onsite in a private room in Founder's Hall. Patrons enjoyed an ample buffet of sandwiches, salads and desserts before proceeding to our next stop: the **Mission of San Diego de Alcalá** for a docent led tour. The year 2019 marked the 250th anniversary of the Mission. Its original location was near the ancient Kumeyaay village of Kosa'aa, known today as Old Town San Diego. It was the first of 21 Spanish missions established by Father Junipero Serra. Father Serra chose this site for the mission because of its proximity to Indian villages, a reliable source of water, and fertile land. American Indian laborers cultivated wheat, barley, corn, and beans in the fields and tended orchards and



*Roma and Massimo Latini and Richard Van Meter*



*Sherry Van Meter and Camille Gembacz*



*Brian Chase, Kapil Mabendra and James Low*



*Patricia Manzo*

## San Diego

*Continued*

vegetable gardens. By 1797, the mission had cultivated 50,000 acres, supported by an extensive irrigation system.

The church burned during an Indian uprising in 1775. The second church, constructed 1776-77, was replaced by a larger adobe church in 1780, which in turn was damaged by an earthquake in 1803. The present church, parts of which date back to 1808 to 1813, is the fourth constructed at the site.

This inaugural Patrons double-header event was well received and will serve as an impetus for future all day Patrons events! ■



*Scott Cooper, Bruce Brown, Greg Stanislawski and Thad Gembacz*



*In the gift shop*



*The Three Crosses*

## Carpegna Plates Returned To Their Splendor

The California Chapter is pleased to announce that thirty-four glazed hand painted ceramic plates, part of the collection of Cardinal Gaspare Carpegna (1625-1714), have been restored thanks to the generosity of the **Carey Family**. After a months' long exhibition at the Apostolic Palace of Castel Gandolfo (where according to historical records they were displayed in 1743!), the Carpegna Collection returned to its permanent display in the Vatican Museums at the end of 2019 in time for the Vatican Museums' celebrations for the 500th anniversary of the death of Renaissance master Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520).

Throughout the Middle Ages, the manufacture of painted pottery and ceramic utensils, often



with whimsical shapes and bright surface decorations, was typical of Italian artisans. Cities in Italy, such as Viterbo and Orvieto, were known for this type of tableware, including plates, pots, jugs and trays. The skilled Majolica masters of Urbino that produced these Carpegna Plates utilized traditional techniques, as well as innovations developed during the Renaissance, and were influenced by Raphael and his school. Four thematic groups can be identified in the myriad of drawings and decorations that adorn the plates.

They range from a biblical group inspired by the Old Testament and the Gospel, to mythological scenes, and literary and allegorical subjects.

The client who commissioned the plates is unknown. In 1756 Pope Benedict XIV purchased the collection.

Because of the perceived licentious nature of some of the scenes, Pope Leo XIII sold the plates, but they were repurchased under pressure from the public! After a lengthy restoration by the Metals and Ceramics Restoration Laboratory, the Carpegna Plates were returned to their glory and now reside at the Museums in special wall showcases that were purchased and installed especially for them.

Many thanks to the Careys for underwriting the restoration of this enchanting collection! ■

# Patrons Celebrate Biennial Gala Dinner



*Gerald and Karen Wagner*



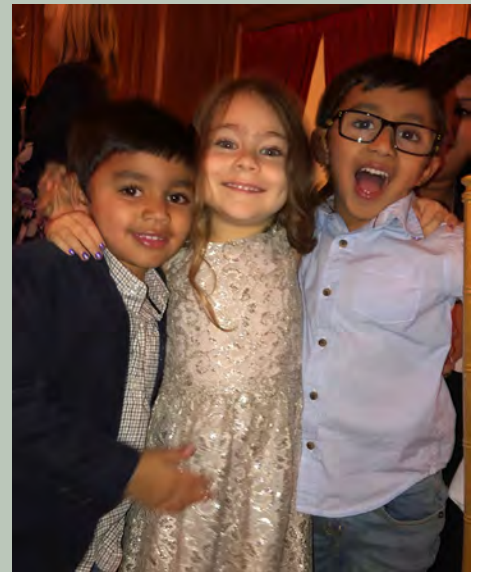
*Fr. Kevin Lixey and Sophia Spralja*



*Dr. Guido Cornini*



*Edward and Sara Nowak*



*Future Patrons*



*Bruce Brown, Barbara Nielsen  
and Judith Brown*



*Gene Ceccotti and Gina Maas*

On November 2, 2019, more than sixty Patrons attended the California Chapter's Gala Dinner at the California Club in downtown Los Angeles. This biennial dinner is always well-attended as it is a chance for Patrons to spend time catching up with friends, to enjoy a sit-down three course dinner, and to hear from a distinguished speaker. For the first time, this year's Distinguished Speaker Series featured one of the Vatican Museums' own: **Dr. Guido Cornini**, the Deputy Director of the Vatican Museums. We hope that this is the start of a tradition that will see many more illustrious members of the staff of the Museums make their way to sunny California!

In addition to Deputy Director, Dr. Cornini's other positions at the Vatican Museums include serving as curator of the Department of Decorative Arts and Head of the Department of XV-XVI Century Art. He graduated with honors in 1981 from the University of Rome "La Sapienza". His thesis on the last period of Botticelli was published and he graduated Cum Laude. In 1982 he received a degree in Secondary School education with a focus on History of Art. He was accepted into the PhD program in History at the University of Rome. In 1988 Dr. Cornini became the Scientific Director of the Photographic Archives of the Vatican Museums. He oversaw the reorganization of the main halls of the Sacred (2005) and Profane (2013) Museums. In 2012 - 2013, he



*Abbott Hayes and Richard and Sherry Van Meter*

curated the exhibition Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael and the Glory of the Renaissance, Italian Art 1300 - 1600 (Seoul, December 2012 - March 2013), which presented the masters of Renaissance art to the Korean public for the first time. He is the author of over a hundred publications, including numerous magazine articles and exhibition catalogues.

Dr. Cornini gave an extensive overview of the Museums and the Restoration Laboratories. His power point presentation was an impressive reminder of the Museums' artistic patrimony and the effort that goes into keeping these treasures safe and in good condition. The highlight was the status report of the ongoing three year restoration of the facade and infrastructure of the Bramante Courtyard.

Also in attendance was **Fr. Kevin Lixey**, International Director of the Vatican Patrons. The seeming ease with which he



*Joe Incaudo and Michael Feeley*

is present at our frequent events, makes one almost forget that he, like Dr. Cornini, traveled all the way from Italy to be with us! We warmly welcomed **Sophia Spralja**, our newest California Chapter sponsored intern. At the beginning of 2020 Sophia left for Italy to serve in the Patrons Office at the Museums. ■

## Crivelli

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*A work in progress*

between the Holy See and the United States. To commemorate the occasion, **Dr. Barbara Jatta**, the Director of the Vatican Museums, and **Callista Gingrich**, United States Ambassador to the Holy See, collaborated on and opened an exhibition entitled **Crivelli's Gold**, a collection of three of the master's works, including this Madonna and Child with the Saints. This exhibit was the first one to feature works curated only from Vatican Patrons sponsored restorations. On the evening of November 13th, over two hundred people gathered to hear Ambassador Gingrich, Dr. Jatta, International Director **Fr. Kevin Lixey**, and exhibition curator **Dr. Guido Cornini** speak on the significant impact of American patronage on the restoration of art in the Vatican Museums, as well as the discoveries made during the restoration of the Crivelli works on view. ■



On Monday November 18, 2019, the Patrons who contribute at the Restorer level of support made their way to the Getty Center in Brentwood to tour the exhibit **Manet and Modern Beauty**. The exhibit was a collaboration between the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago. As usual, the Getty staff rolled out the red carpet for us. We were fortunate to tour with one of the curators of the exhibit, Scott Allan.

The French artist Edouard Manet was one of his generation's great painters of modern life. He challenged the old masters and upturned the art world in the 1860s. The subject of **Manet and Modern Beauty** catalogues his later works prior to his early death at the age of fifty-one after a prolonged illness. Starting in the late 1870s, Manet produced a different body of work: stylish portraits, rich still lifes, and scenes of elegant fashion, gardens, leisurely pastimes, and cafe life.

One of the larger pieces on



*Roses and Lilacs in a Crystal Vase*

# Restorers Tour Manet Beauty

display, **Boating** (1874 - 75), was produced after Manet spent time working with Claude Monet. Manet rarely worked on commission; he preferred to showcase his work in the Salon venue so as to reach a massive audience. The work was displayed at the 1879 Salon. The painting's vivid blues and whites, cropped composition, and strong lines were considered groundbreaking and propelled Manet to the forefront of Impressionism.

Portraiture was essential to Manet's goal to be a painter of modern life. In his portraiture work, he aimed to depict not just the individual subject, but to capture the period in which he lived by representing social types such as the chic parisienne or the fashionable male.

A highlight of the exhibit, **Jeanne (Spring)** (1881), depicts a young model and actress in her fashionable outfit as the embodiment of spring. This was the first of an unfinished series on the seasons. Jeanne typifies the parisienne: pretty, chic, dressed in a floral accented dress, gloves, frilly bonnet and parasol. Reportedly Manet himself selected the ensemble, making the rounds

of dressmakers and milliners.

A fascinating coda to this exhibit was the collection of rarely seen letters Manet wrote to his friends. They featured exquisite illustrations of fruits and flowers; garden scenes, which themselves often feature elegantly attired women; and flower studies, all consummate expressions of Manet's favorite subjects at the end of life.

The group adjourned to the always reliable Bel Air Restaurant for a leisurely three course, sit down luncheon. ■



*Randy and Greg Stanislawski*



*Therese Wolf, Elsa Behney and Bruce Brown*



*Camille and Thad Gembacz*



*Boating*



*Jeanne (Spring)*

## Special Welcome To The Northwest Chapter

**O**n January 1, 2020, co-Chairman James Low announced the future collaboration of the California Chapter and the Northwest Chapter. A portion of those remarks follow: “The California Chapter wholeheartedly welcomes the Northwest Chapter into the fold. A special thank you to Northwest Chapter President, Gabe Hanzeli, for reaching out to us and suggesting our two chapters work much more closely together moving forward.

“While most of this is strictly administrative in nature, we are particularly excited about

blending our two chapters so that we all have many opportunities to be with each other during local events and international chapter trips.”

Mr. Hanzeli, in turn made the following announcement to that group: “The NW Patrons Chapter will continue as an official chapter within the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums. As such, it will continue to select its own projects, raise funds, have a website and newsletter, and have our NW Chapter events; but our members have access to the events of the California Chapter as well, which is wonderful.

“As part of this administrative

merger, the California Patrons office will handle administrative matters, website operations and distribution of our newsletter. This will allow the NW Chapter board to focus on our members and projects instead of paperwork! We thank the California chapter for this support.”

Both California and Northwest Patrons look forward to many years of working towards the shared mission of supporting the artistic treasures and infrastructure at the Vatican Museums, participating in artistic and cultural gatherings, and traveling the world! ■

## Pope Pius IX Painting Returns To The Carriage Museum

**T**he California Chapter’s sponsorship of the restoration of **Greeting and Thanksgiving of Pope Pius IX to King Ferdinand** (c. 1855) has been completed and this historical work now resides in the Carriage Museum in Vatican City. The Chapter undertook this donation in appreciation of the ten year tenure of **Fr. Mark Haydu**, former International Director of the Patrons of the Arts.

The oil on canvas by Filippo Bigioli had sustained small gaps and tears. A previously applied protective coating had discolored and muted the original rich and brilliant palette. The canvas had become unmoored from its wooden frame.

The restoration was conducted by the Painting Restoration Laboratory. A biocidal wood preservative was applied by brush. The frame was removed and the rusty nails that had affixed



the canvas to the frame were replaced with steel ones. The dusty, yellowed coating on the paint was removed with a water soaked sponge and further with a mixture of solvents. The tears were repaired with a fabric treated with resin and attached using a heat process. ■



CALIFORNIA PATRONS  
OF THE ARTS IN THE  
VATICAN MUSEUMS

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