



SPRING 2019

## Announcing the new logo

A new logo was launched, recently, by the International Office of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums in Rome. The Vatican's traditional coat of arms was redrawn to maintain traditional elements representative of the institution's rich history, yet easily recognizable for a high-impact visual within the modern world. PAVM, an acronym for the Patrons, is capitalized and centered within the logo for a bold new look.



# A Night to Remember in the D

**O**n the evening of December 11, 2018, the City of Detroit was aglow with festive Christmas decorations and lights. The anticipation of the holidays was in the air, but never so much as that night at the Detroit Athletic Club (DAC). Michigan members of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums, and their guests, began arriving for the annual pre-holiday Advent Dinner.

Once inside the DAC, the lobby enticed visitors to cozy up to the massive blazing fireplace, gaze upon the sparkling floor to ceiling Christmas tree, and just be in awe of this historic Detroit architectural treasure. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were served in the Reading Room before dinner – a nice opportunity to say hello to old acquaintances and be introduced to new members and guests.

The five-course dinner was served in the upstairs Ponchartrain Room. Within this lovely space, tables were set and decorated in Italian holiday flair that beckoned the group to locate their seating and enjoy this feast for the eyes before the dinner began. Adding to the theme, each table was cleverly named after a city in Italy. Through the buzz of laughter and good conversation, wine



was served at each table before the opening prayer and introductory comments. Reviewing the dinner courses on the menu, it wasn't long until we all heard, "bon appetito!"

While coffee and dessert were being served, the evening's program began. The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) Director, Salvador Salort-Pons, gave a wonderful overview of significant Christian art in the DIA's European and Decorative Arts collection. One piece in particular, the Bernini *Chair of St. Peter* revealed a direct connection between the Vatican and Detroit. He also mentioned that the DIA had recently acquired a study drawing of the chair that has been attributed to the workshop of Bernini. Concluding, Director Salort-Pons invited all in attendance

to visit the DIA to see these art historic pieces.

Elizabeth Moore, the Advent Dinner Committee Chair, was in charge of planning and overseeing all aspects of the dinner. In addition to our gratitude for a job well done, she has shared the good news that 2018 was the largest attendance for this annual event in the history of the Michigan Chapter. We would also like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Lourdes Andaya for her gift of those delicious dinner favors, as well as Eileen Dluzynski and Jeanne Stevenson for their behind the scenes work.

Whether you attended or not in 2018, you'll want to do so this next Advent season. Circle your calendars now for **Tuesday, December 10, 2019** at the Shinola Hotel in Detroit. We look forward to seeing you all there! ❁

# Right here in DETROIT



For more than 67 years, there has been a direct connection between St. Peter's Basilica in the

Vatican and The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). Following the 2018 PAVM-MI Advent Dinner at the Detroit Athletic Club, DIA Director, Salvador Salort-Pons, gave a most interesting and educational presentation that included the terracotta model of the *Chair of St. Peter* by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, as well as the newly acquired drawing titled the "Study of St. Peter's Cattedra".

The only Bernini clay sculptural model of the *Chair of St. Peter* to survive was purchased by The Founders Society for The Detroit Institute of Arts in 1952. Pope Alexander VII was responsible for commissioning the Bernini sculpture in 1657. Bernini personally presented this beautiful, reddish-brown clay model to the Pontiff on Palm Sunday 1658. In 1981, a reference to this presentation was found in the diary of Pope Alexander VII. The maquette or bozetto, according to the "Model for the cathedra petri" written by Alan P. Darr, Ph.D. and Senior Curator of the European Art Department and Walter B. Ford II Family Curator of European Sculpture & Decorative Arts, "is therefore the most significant artistic document for this important commission."

Bernini was commissioned to create this sculpture, but the word "sculpture" does not fully embrace the scope of this commission. The completed bronze sculpture for the

apse of the basilica was to be the new reliquary for the episcopal wooden and ivory chair of St. Peter the Apostle, the first Pope of the Catholic Church. This was the actual chair that St. Peter preached and taught from. Considered as one of the greatest artists of his time, and fully understanding what he was commissioned to do, Bernini looked upon the completed sculpture of the cathedra petri as his single most significant work related to the basilica. Under Popes Urban VIII and Innocent X, Bernini was also commissioned and completed the baldacchino over the high altar/tomb of St. Peter, as well as the plaza in front of the basilica.

of the altar is thereby made clear. The teaching chair of Peter says more than a picture could say. It expresses the abiding presence of the Apostle, who as teacher remains present in his successors. The chair of the Apostle is a sign of nobility – it is the throne of truth ..."

Dimensions of the architectural model measures 23"H x 11.50"W x 11"D. It remains unclear as to how this particular model survived, but its very survival is precisely why this great treasure can be on permanent display at the DIA, right here in Detroit.

Of particular beauty and interest are the bas reliefs that Bernini added to the chair. The inside back of the chair depicts the resurrected Christ commissioning

Peter to "Feed My Sheep." The outside left and right sides of the chair depict Jesus giving Peter the keys to the Kingdom, and Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles. In front, just beneath the seat, the scene of the miraculous catch of fish is represented. The reliquary was designed to highlight the most important moments in St. Peter's life as one of Jesus' Apostles, but also as the first Vicar of Christ on earth.

As one can imagine,

often a final product will have drifted somewhat from the approved model. Apparently, however, the maquette is surprisingly close in appearance to the final sculpture that was cast in 1656. Scenes that did change include a floral design instead of the miraculous catch of fish, as well as a scale of the standing angels to the left and right. The final sculpture, encasing the *Chair of St. Peter*,

*"The teaching chair of Peter says more than a picture could say. It expresses the abiding presence of the Apostle, who as teacher remains present in his successors. The chair of the Apostle is a sign of nobility – it is the throne of truth."*

– JOSEPH CARDINAL RATZINGER

In the "Primacy of Love: The Chair Altar of Saint Peter's in Rome" by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, he speaks about the importance of this chair. "... the empty cathedra made of gilded bronze, in which a wooden chair from the ninth century is embedded, held for a long time to be the cathedra of the Apostle Peter and for this reason placed in this location. The meaning of this part



# Rome is just around the corner

The Michigan and Georgia PAVM chapters are hosting a "Patrons of the Arts Tour of Italy" – a member's trip to Rome on September 2-8, 2019. Coordinated by Corporate Travel Service, all the details and special access has been arranged for a most spectacular trip.

Highlights of the trip include: attendance at the Papal Audience in St. Peter's Square (pending the Pontiff's schedule), a tour of the restoration projects of the Vatican Patrons, a visit to Castel Gandolfo to tour the Papal Gardens, a private reception for the Patrons hosted by Mrs. Ambassador Gingrich at Villa Richardson (pending the Ambassador's schedule), a visit to the recently restored Scala Santa (the Holy Stairs), a visit to Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and a

private visit to the Palazzo Borghese, an after-hours visit to the Sistine Chapel, a Patrons Gala reception and dinner in the Vatican Museums, and much more.

Complete information and reservation materials are available through Corporate Travel Services (CTSCentral.net) or the Michigan Patrons (MIPatrons.com). ❀



is part of a larger Bernini sculpture in the apse of St. Peter's Basilica above the Altar of St. Peter.

A visit to the DIA to see this amazing Bernini sculptural model is well worth the trip. Look for the terracotta chair in a glass-enclosed, free-standing display case in the middle of the European: Medieval and Renaissance Galleries (W220, Level 2). For more information: [www.dia.org](http://www.dia.org) ❀

#### References:

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Grigaut, P.L. (1952-53). A Terracotta Model of St. Peter's Cattedra. *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, XXXII (3), 65-68.

Ratzinger, J. (2006, December). *Primacy of Love: The Chair Altar of Saint Peter's in Rome*. Retrieved from [http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2006/ratzinger\\_primacylove\\_dec06.asp](http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2006/ratzinger_primacylove_dec06.asp)

**Photo above:** "The Chair of St. Peter" (1658). Terracotta sculptural model by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini.

**Photo Right:** The massive sculpture on the Altar of St. Peter, was created to include Bernini's "Chair of St. Peter" reliquary.



# The Blinding of Elymas

THE RESTORATION of a 500 year old tapestry by Raphael, *The Blinding of Elymas*, has been a slow-going and labor-intensive project. Thread by thread the color and wholeness of the tapestry is returning, as if coming back to life the way the artist intended all along. The Michigan Patrons and the Stange Trust and its Trustee, David Stone, agreed to fund this project several years ago. According to Dr. Romina Cometti, Restoration Projects Manager for the International Patrons Office in Rome, the completion of the tapestry "... is scheduled for the end of 2020."

A recent visit to the tapestry restoration lab in the Vatican, was simply an exciting place to be granted access. Getting up close and personal to the work of the great Italian Renaissance artist, Raphael, with an opportunity to speak with those who were actually working on the restoration, was beyond a chance in a lifetime.

This large tapestry, measuring in the neighborhood of 10'x13', requires many colors and varying shades of each color of thread and yarn used. Dr. Cometti reports, "The restoration of the tapestry ... has proceeded in these months with the dying of the supports and yarns necessary for the consolidation intervention."

Sometimes a past restoration requires removal and/or correction before the current restoration can continue. One example is the restoration of an eyebrow/eyelid area within the Raphael tapestry. Dr. Cometti shares "... the work of a previous restoration intervention was removed, then alternately stitched with suitable colors." She continues, "Simultaneously, we are preparing the

loom for weaving of the lateral selvages (the self-finished edge of the fabric), as those present are not original and are woven with warp pattern and style contrary to the rest of the tapestry."

The end of 2020 is just 19 months away. With great anticipation, we are looking forward to hearing that *The Blinding of Elymas* tapestry has been fully restored and ready for the world to see once again. ♣



*Photo above: The large, fragile tapestry is expertly restored in small sections before moving to the remaining areas requiring skilled attention.*



BEFORE



AFTER

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*Renovatio* covers news and events for the Michigan Chapter of the Patrons. The Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums is a select group of people dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of the vast and unique collection of art contained in the Vatican Museums. The name of the publication, *Renovatio*, is the Latin translation of the word renewal. **For more information or to join the Michigan Chapter of the Patrons, contact Membership Chair Maureen Soens at [dpartistry@comcast.net](mailto:dpartistry@comcast.net) or (248) 842-5126.**

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