



Renovatio

From the Michigan Chapter of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums SPRING 2012

Upcoming EVENTS

May 30, 2012

Cocktail Reception and Dinner with the Commander of the Swiss Guards, Comandante Daniel Anrig

6:30 pm Reception
(Dinner at 7:30 pm)

Tre Monti Restaurant

695 E. Big Beaver Rd,
Troy (behind the San
Marino Club)

\$100.00 per person

RSVP by May 25th
to Mary at 248-357-0999
or tonyrea_area@hotmail.com

August 24, 2012

Private Evening at the Detroit Institute of Arts with Dr. Elizabeth Lev

Fall 2012

Patrons Art weekend in Chicago

December 4, 2012

Patrons Advent Evening with Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron



Welcome to the first issue of *Renovatio*, a newsletter dedicated to keep you informed on news and events for the Michigan Chapter of the Patrons of the Arts. The publication name, *Renovatio*, is the Latin translation for “renewal”. It speaks of the mission of the Patrons – to preserve and perpetuate the vast and unique collection of art contained in the Vatican Museums.

Enjoyable evening & enlightening lecture by Liz Lev

On Friday, August 26, Stephanie Germack Kerzic warmly welcomed the Patrons to her lovely Grosse Pointe home on the shores of Lake St. Claire. Patrick and Stephanie began the evening with a reception in their beautiful living room, which opened to a patio that offered a spectacular view of the lake with its water traffic and the Canadian shore in the distance. The hors d’oeuvres and wine were delicious as was the lavish buffet that was offered to us on their lower level.

The program began with an informative update on the work and aspirations of the Michigan chapter of the Patrons by Tony Rea and John Hale, who supplemented their discussion with a power-point presentation.



Msgr. Hogan, Florida Chapter and Dr. Elizabeth Lev.



Patrons event at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kerzic.

The highlight of the evening was a lecture by Elizabeth Lev, who displayed the breadth of her knowledge by moving from her specialty, Renaissance Art, to discuss how the Church used art to combat secularism in the eighteenth century, and what role the Vatican Museums played in evangelization. We learned that the museums, apart from the objects they display, are works of art in themselves and powerful tools in spreading the Church’s message.

Great food, exceptional company, and Liz made for a wonderful evening for those of us who are privileged to be members of the Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums, Michigan Chapter. By Dorothy Carson

An experience of a Lifetime



Our recent visit to Italy with the Michigan Chapter of the Patrons of the Arts was a complete success. Miguel and I have been to Tuscany, Florence, and Rome several times, but having our Michigan Chapter's leadership, along with Carolina Rea, tailor and prepare our trip to the smallest detail made it truly an amazing, one-of-a-kind experience.

Our group met at the Castello del Nero, a 15th-century palace in the heart of the Chianti wine country, recently renovated into a luxury 5-star hotel and spa.

Attention to every detail and personalized care are the landmarks of this hotel, where a welcome reception was prepared for our group, allowing us to watch the sunset from the terrace with a breath-taking view of the rolling Tuscan hills. Dinner at the picturesque La Locanda Pietracupa, one of Tony Rea's hand-picked restaurants, was just the beginning of ten magical days.

Our journey started the next morning with our first scheduled activity, a visit to a local Chianti winery (we had our priorities straight). San Martino a Cozzi is a small, family-owned winery, producing some of the best Chianti Classico for the past seven

generations. The wine-tasting and lunch prepared for us were a special treat before we continued our travels to Sienna.

Sienna is a beautiful medieval town, with its world famous Piazza del Campo that hosts a horse race every year for only the past 800 years or so on the feast of Our Lady. A guided tour of the Basilica of San Domenico, the resting place of Saint Catherine of Sienna, was the highlight of our day, as we stopped and prayed by the Saint's relics. A visit to the Palazzo Pubblico and a gourmet dinner prepared by Chef Pino di Cicco in his restaurant, Antica Osteria, concluded a magical day.

Our next day took us to Florence, to a day of exclusive, privileged exploration of art and history that is not available to the public. An up-close view from the scaffolding of the restoration of the frescoes by Agnolo Gaddi at the Church of Santa Croce, representing the Biblical and factual history of the Cross of Our Lord, was both an artistic and spiritual treat. We then proceeded with a guided tour of the Palazzo Vecchio, Accademia and Uffizi, immersing ourselves in our travel escorts for the day: Cimabue, Giotto, Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Gentile de Fabriano, de la Robbia, Bellini, Ghirlandaio, Botticelli, Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian. The beauty of their art is contagious to the spirit, a true tribute to human genius, a gift of God to human history. Our visit to Florence concluded with a walk inside the Vasari Corridor, a private elevated passage that was for exclusive use of the Medici, connecting Palazzo Vecchio with Palazzo Pitti, containing the world's largest collection of self-portraits, not open to the public. Dinner at the private courtyard of



Michigan Patrons in the Vatican Museums.



Michigan Patrons on the Etruscan Terrace.



Fr. Mark addressing Michigan Patrons on the Etruscan Terrace.

La Toppa in the Tuscan village of San Donato was a worthy conclusion of day in artistic paradise.

Our art and spiritual pilgrimage takes us to our final destination...The Eternal City. Every time Miguel and I return to Rome, we experience something new. But I tell you, nothing beats a VIP itinerary prepared by Carolina Rea to really unlock the beauty of Rome and especially the Vatican. Three magical days where prepared for us, filled with activities that are not available to the public. Holy

Mass celebrated by Fr. Haydu at the tomb of Blessed John Paul II in Saint Peter's basilica opened our stay in Rome. Miguel and I, along with Jerry and Carolyn Andre, renewed our wedding vows during Mass

with Fr. Haydu ("What God unites, man shall not separate").

A visit to the Necropolis of Santa Rosa, still in excavation and not open to the public, was followed by an inspection of the restoration works of the fountain of Saint Damaso (sponsored by our chapter).

Lunch at the Etruscan Terrace with a stunning view of Saint Peter's Basilica and the Cortile de la Pigna of the Vatican Museum was memorable as well, before our cocktail reception at the U.S. Embassy to the Vatican State.

Our last day in Rome was both moving and unforgettable. The

Papal Audience in the Paul VI Auditorium was the highlight of our pilgrimage. It brought us great pride and joy to see our very own Patrons, Dr. Lourdes Andaya and Tony Rugiero,



Fr. Mark celebrating Mass at the Tomb of Blessed John Paul II.

step up to greet the Holy Father. Tony almost did not let go of Pope Benedict's hand, as tears were brought to his eyes, and all of us watched. We will never forget this moment. How much closer can one get to God's Grace, than this moment...

As if these special treats of God were not yet enough, a private mass by Cardinal Lajolo, Head of the Vatican State, was celebrated for us in the oldest church of the Vatican, Santo Stefano, which dates to the fourth century.

During our last evening we strolled after dark in a private tour to the Vatican Museums, guided by our own Michigan Chapter honorary member, Dr. Liz Lev. The Sistine Chapel is far more beautiful at night and when empty. The Pauline Chapel was wide open for our group, and in the Borgia Apartments, still under restoration and not open to the public yet, we could climb again on the scaffolding to appreciate the beauty of Pinturicchio's work, along with his finger prints still visible on some areas of the frescoes.

A magical week came to an end with a Gala Dinner at the Casina in the Vatican Gardens, the seat of the Pontifical Institute of Science. We exchanged memories, addresses, phone numbers, and renewed our commitment to support our beloved Jesus Christ and his Church, and the legacy of the Vatican Museums as witness of the beauty of God reflected in art.

"John Hale and Tony Rea:
Don't leave home without them"

— By Irene and Miguel Lis-Planells



David, Elizabeth and Anna Hale with Swiss Guard.

M E M B E R S P O T L I G H T
Member of the Board of Directors

Maureen Soens



Maureen Soens
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE and expertise has kept artist, author and product developer, Maureen Soens, on the leading edge of decorative paint design. She resides in Rochester Hills with her husband Ken and has two grown married children. Having studied with renowned experts in the art of decorative finishes from all over the world, her skills and talents are utilized to create realistic and fantasy finishes. She has extensive background in residential as well as commercial work including healthcare facilities, offices, banks, retail stores and churches.

Maureen has designed and conducted continuing projects for 16th century Naworth Castle in Brampton, England, where she leads a group of American artisans in decorating this ancient gem for the Honorable Philip Howard and family.

She has been invited as a keynote speaker in the field of decorative painting

for national organizations in the arts of preservation and contemporary painting and has authored a book for the "Do-it-Yourself" consumer on Venetian Plaster Techniques, entitled, *Italian Plaster Techniques*. Her work has been published in magazines and books, and has been featured on television in both the United States and Great Britain.

Maureen has had a successful decorative painting business, (Decorative Paint Artistry) for over 20 years. Although she works as a professional in the field, her passion for teaching consumers how to do it themselves inspired her to work closely with the painting industry in developing new user-friendly products. Recently, she and her husband were issued a patent for their work in creating a paint release product that is marketed by Fauxline Products. She continues to study the latest in color trends and paint applications and enjoys sharing her enthusiasm with others.

After visiting the Vatican Museums in 2009 with the Michigan Patrons, Maureen's passion for the arts was further fueled. She returned home with an enthusiasm to share the excitement of preserving these precious gems and to create an awareness of the work of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums.

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Renovatio, published biannually, 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:

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