

## Saints Exhibition Welcomes Pope Francis to Milan

Samantha Janazzo (March 28, 2017)



Holy Father came to Milano for a brief visitation packed with insightful speeches, blessings of the less fortunate, and a 44 piece art exhibition in Palazzo Reale to last until early June. The exhibit includes 44 artistic works, including pieces by Titian and Guercino and "Ecstasy of St. Francis of Assisi," a work recovered last year from an earthquake-ravaged church in Accumoli.

On Saturday, March 25, [Pope Francis](#) [2] graced the [Lombardy](#) [3] capitol [Milan](#) [4] with his holy presence, deeming this the first Papal visiting since 2012. Hundreds of thousands of revelers gathered around to hear his compelling works about our intrinsic duty to protect those less fortunate, particularly the impoverished.

Honoring the Holy Father's mid-Lenten visit, Curator [Daniela Porro](#) [5] has compiled an itinerary of 44 devotional pieces that honor the Catholic tradition; most of the pieces are on loan from the [Vatican Museum](#) [6] and [Saint Peter's Treasury](#) [7], among other collections that cover the periods of the 14th to the 19th centuries.



This incredible spread of Catholic masterpieces in mediums from sculpture to oil paintings by some of the history's most influential names. The exhibition will be available for viewing in [Palazzo Reale](#) [8] until June 4, among these artists are [Titian](#) [9], [Guercino](#) [10], [Maratta](#) [11], [Sodoma](#) [12], and more. Palazzo Reale is one of the most influential cultural centers in Italy and is known for hosting internationally renowned works of art since its conversion to a museum from a royal palace and government building at the turn of the 20th century.

The exhibition is divided into three sections focuses on Italy's beloved saints [Saint Francis of Assisi](#) [13], [Saint Catherine of Siena](#) [14], as well as Milan's patrons [Saint Ambrose](#) [15] and [Saint Carlo Borromeo](#) [16]. There is also a showcase of the first century patrons [Saint Peter](#) [17] and [Saint Paul](#) [18]. Both the selected depictions of the saints and the exhibited artwork demonstrate the diffusion of religion in Italy and represent spirituality throughout Italy.

Angelo Caloia, the chair of the promotional committee states "we couldn't have the Pope in Milan without also having an event that honored His Magistracy." Many were granted the opportunity to pray with the Pope outside Milan's gothic style Duomo, to witness him pray over and dine with the inmates and staff in the St. Vittore Prison, and to celebrate outdoor mass with the him and 14 Cardinals in [Monza Park](#) [19].

The final stop before returning to the Vatican was at Milan's Saint Siro Stadium where His Holiness addressed a crowd of 80,000 people strong. Among them was an invited congregation of adolescents who have either recently completed their confirmation- or are in the process of completing it. Pope Francis offered them a special blessing, including their parents and sponsors.

It was a special occasion for Milan who met the Pontiff for this first time this weekend; in 2012 his predecessor [Benedict XVI](#) [20] visited and before that was [Saint John Paul II](#) [21]'s bi-visitation in the 1980s.

From the historic works of art depicting the Catholic Church's adored saints, to the influential words of Saint Francis about humility and helping the poor, Milan was blessed and honored to have hosted the Holy Father this weekend.

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- [6] <http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani.html>
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