



TEXAS CHAPTER REPORT

Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums



Texas Board members and Patrons experience a personalized tour of Rome.

Texas Chapter Visits Rome

On October 1, a diverse group of people from the western United States embarked on a week-long pilgrimage to Rome hosted by the Texas Chapter of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums. It was a wonderful week filled with awe for history and art. The patrons viewed some of the oldest artworks in Europe and were granted access to little known spots in the Vatican, including behind-the-scenes looks at the work done in its renowned restoration labs.

Among the participants were Texas Chapter Leader Lori Wrinkle, along with board members Carol Ikard, Gary Tigges and Joe Popolo. Jill Alexy of Martyrian Journeys guided the patrons through Rome. The group enjoyed the hospitality of Hotel Horti 14, a new boutique hotel in Trastevere.

The pilgrimage officially began with the celebration of Mass in the Basilica of San Francesco a Ripa, after which the patrons were given the opportunity to pray in the cell of St. Francis of Assisi. After the Mass, the International Director, Fr. Kevin Lixey LC, and other members of the Patrons' Vatican office welcomed the group with a cocktail greeting on the roof terrace overlooking the Basilica of Santa Cecilia.

The following day, the patrons attended the Papal Audience in Piazza San Pietro, occupying seats on the *sagrato*, i.e. within two hundred feet of the pope. Two of the group, Lori Wrinkle and Texas Patron Doug Burke, were invited to greet Pope Francis, and took the opportunity to gift him with a white Stetson cowboy hat in honor of the group's Texas origins.

IN THIS ISSUE

TEXAS CHAPTER VISITS ROME

1

ANNUAL CHAPTER LEADERS MEETING

NOLI ME TANGERE TAPESTRY

3

MEET THE INTERNS

4

They also visited the Palazzo Colonna, the ancestral palace of an old Roman family. Its halls are filled with masterpieces by famous artists. The palace has belonged to the prestigious Colonna family for over twenty generations. Among the many decorated rooms, the great ball room has a breathtaking ceiling fresco which depicts the naval Battle of Lepanto in 1571 led by the commander of the papal fleet, Marcantonio II Colonna.

In the early morning on Thursday, Ms. Alexy led the Texas Patrons on a tour of the Basilica of San Pietro, starting at the *porta santa* (literally “door of prayer,” a back entrance into the church). Daniel Hennessy, the Executive Director, enjoyed watching the patrons’ reactions to entering through the *porta santa*. “It took my breath away,” Hennessy said, “as it does every time.” His delight in the beauty of the interior of the basilica was reignited by the guests’ enthusiasm. “It was wonderful to see their wonder, their joy and their awe.”

In the afternoon, the group toured the Vatican gardens and the restoration labs. They viewed the recently finished Our Lady of Guadalupe statue, a recent restoration project of the Texas Chapter, in the Vatican gardens. Dr. Romina Cometti then guided the group to the Tapestry and Painting restoration laboratories of the Vatican Museums. In the Tapestry restoration laboratory, the group saw the most recently adopted project, *Noli Me Tangere*, actively being repaired. The Texas patrons watched restoration specialists demonstrate the elaborate techniques and instruments they use.

Texas Board Member Joe Popolo appreciated the daily celebration of the Mass: “We got to experience the Eucharist in so many special and private locations, experience the incredible beauty of our various settings and reflect on the wonder of the Church and our role in it.” Among the churches where Mass was celebrated for the patrons was the Basilica de San Pellegrino in Vaticano (the one-time church of the Swiss Guard) and Santa Maria Maggiore, one of the four papal basilicas which holds the recently restored *Salus Populi Romani* icon in one of its chapels.

The Texas Patrons returned to the Vatican Museums for a Saturday evening exclusive tour after-hours. They viewed magnificent works in the Tapestry Gallery and stared at the *Creation of Adam* by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. The guests also enjoyed a glass of prosecco under the stars in the Octagonal Courtyard, and later were served dinner in the Gallery of Busts and Statues.

For their last day in Italy, the Texas Board Members and patrons visited the Apostolic Palace in Castel Gandolfo, the former summer residence of the pope, overlooking Lake Albano. Their trip concluded with the celebration of evening Mass at the Abbey of Grottaferata, an 8th century Basilian monastery, and a farewell dinner at Frascati, where they visited De Sanctis Winery.

Every visitor will be enchanted by the Eternal City, but the fervor of the group resulted in a delightful trip. “The group was wonderful,” Hennessy said. Their joy made the trip to Rome exceptionally impressive to the former Rome resident. “I didn’t want it to end.”

Right: In addition to taking in the sites of Rome, Patrons take time to enjoy one another’s presence.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2020

February 28–March 1: Visit from the International Director

Fr. Kevin Lixey, International Director of PAVM, will be visiting the Texas patrons in Dallas, Houston, and Austin. Details coming soon.

April 26: Spanish Art Conservation at the Meadows Museum in Dallas

Join the Texas Chapter at the Meadows Museum, along with the Director, Dr. Mark Roglán, for an exploration of Spanish art and a discussion of the importance and challenges of art conservation.

2021

Official Texas Chapter Pilgrimage to Rome and the Vatican

The Texas Chapter of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums makes an official visit to the Vatican every other year. We would love for you to join us in 2021. Exact dates to be announced.



Above: Patrons visit the Sistine Hall of the Vatican Library, designed in the 15th century.



Annual North American Leaders Meeting

The weekend of September 13-15, Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums chapter leaders from Canada, Singapore, and 16 of the United States gathered at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington D.C. They participated in the annual Chapter Leaders Meeting. Board members Carol Ikard and Dr. Gary Tigges represented the Texas Chapter at the event. They were provided the opportunity to discuss the goals of the chapter with persons such as Dr. Barbara Jatta (Director of the Vatican Museums), Msgr. Terence Hogan (National Chaplain for the US Patrons) and Denise Molitsky (Coordinator for the North American Office), as well as Rev. Kevin Lixey LC, International Director and members of his staff, Sara Savoldello and Romina Cometti.

The event provided a space for discussion among chapters regarding the best practices for fundraising projects, increasing patronage and communicating with the North American Service Office (NASO). Some of the projects mentioned were ones the Texas Chapter is currently working on, such as the *Scala Sancta* and the *Noli Me Tangere*.



Fr. Kevin Lixey, L.C. and Director Barbara Jatta gift Cardinal Dolan a print from the Vatican Library.

Texas Board Member, Carol Ikard said the speakers from the Vatican Museums accomplished “bringing Rome to us” by discussing their work. Romina Cometti, the Projects Restoration Manager, invited the numerous chapters to consider supporting infrastructure improvements, over and above direct conservation of specific pieces.

Structural elements, like air conditioning, have a critical influence on future restorations, but are often difficult to get funded due to such projects being invisible to the average visitor.

A significant occurrence at the Leader’s meeting was the formation of the North American Service Office.

The Leader’s Meeting concluded with a lecture by Dr. Barbara Jatta on her vision for the Vatican Museums and the PAVM. She emphasized maintaining efficient communication between Rome and the various chapters and connecting with other major museums. Encouraging patron involvement was another goal Dr. Jatta proposed to the chapter leaders.

Texas Board members Carol Ikard and Dr. Gary Tigges viewed the weekend as a success. Ikard said she was “amazed at the volume of business that we reviewed.” She witnessed a “great effort by board members across the country to support the Rome office in their efforts to restore artworks.” Due to the reliable support of the PAVM chapters, the Vatican Museums continues to exhibit wonderful centuries-old art.

The weekend primarily focused on “analyzing possibilities for fundraisers,” according to Ikard. In the future, Dr. Gary Tigges believes projects of the Texas Chapter will become more “collective.” Major art restoration projects will continue, but with less emphasis on individual chapter projects. Towards the end of the North American Leaders Meeting, Dr. Tigges perceived that there will be a transition from regular art restoration projects to fundraisers for more eco-friendly infrastructure improvements in the Vatican Museums.



A restorer at the Vatican Museum removes worn thread from the tapestry.

The Noli Me Tangere Tapestry

In July of this year, the Board voted to adopt the conservation project of this 16th century tapestry. The project has an overall cost of €288,100 (USD \$320,000 approx.), and is scheduled to be completed by July of 2021. After the initial grant of \$50,000, the Texas Chapter is committed to raising the remaining \$270,000 over the next two years.

The tapestry was created in the first half of the 16th century: drawn by students of Raphael in Rome, and woven by the workshop of Pieter Van Aelst in Brussels. It was part of a series of 12 tapestries depicting scenes from the life of Christ, and would have originally hung in the *Sala Ducale* or *Sala Reggia* of the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican.

Meet the Interns

The Texas Chapter has, for the first time, enlisted the valuable help of interns from the University of Dallas. The four young women presented here are helping us create this newsletter, update and overhaul our website, and plan events. Working and learning with them has been a great joy. For their part, being connected to the Texas Chapter has opened up opportunities for exploring the world of art restoration and philanthropy, for meeting some of the Board members, and for connecting with key players in the DFW art conservation scene. We are grateful for their help and look forward to making such internships a strong tradition.

– Daniel J. Hennessy, Executive Director

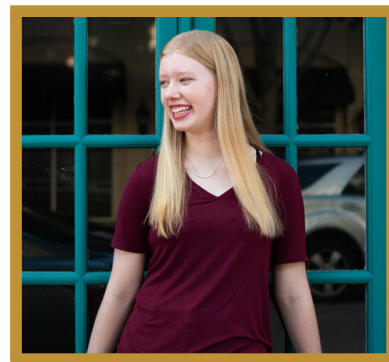


Emily Alvarado, *Event Coordinator*

Emily is an undergraduate freshman pursuing a double major in Theology and Spanish. Along with the PAVM Texas team, Emily also serves as the Marketing Intern at the Irving Schools Foundation. She hopes to pursue a career in Education after graduation. Emily is very excited to promote PAVM's mission of art restoration and preservation and can't wait to visit Rome in Spring 2021. Emily enjoys reading about art and history, exploring fashion, and traveling. She can't wait to see everything come to life in Rome. Ultimately, she is very excited to learn more about the non-profit world and is very grateful to have this opportunity.

Alexa Hassell, *Event Coordinator*

Alexa is currently a freshman at UD. A Texas native herself, she has never explored outside of the country, but she will study abroad in Rome in the summer of 2020 and hopes to make frequent trips to Italy over the coming four years (especially Florence)! With the dream to become an art lawyer, Alexa is a double major in Politics and Italian on the pre-law track. She would love to work for an international art law firm dedicated to the restitution of stolen work which would allow her to travel to Italy every year. In her free time, Alexa enjoys ice skating and sharing her love of the sport by teaching young skaters! Being a member of the internship team with the Texas Chapter is a unique opportunity to spread the word about preserving artistic treasures and learn more about the Vatican Museums.



Alisa Nascimento, *Website Design & Management*

Alisa is a junior art major, studying printmaking. She currently calls San Francisco, CA home and in her spare time enjoys sports, sewing, and cooking with her family and friends. Having focused mainly in creating art, Alisa is intrigued by the world of art conservation. She is excited to discover more about such a vital aspect of art and to learn about what attracts patrons to the arts. Alisa studied abroad in Rome in the fall of 2018 and visited the Vatican Museums, among many other art galleries. Her fascination with the preservation of artworks for future generations is reignited every time she explores an art museum. Alisa hopes that this experience with the PAVM will deepen her understanding of the curatorial and conservational side of art.

Mia Samaniego, *Newsletter Publisher*

Mia is a Junior English major. She grew up in Centennial, CO. Mia applied to PAVM because she valued the opportunity to write for a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the arts in the Vatican Museums. Mia has visited Rome twice, once in July 2016 and most recently in November 2018. She values the variety of art in the Vatican Museums and the history preserved through the labor of conservators. Mia aspires to be a journalist or author.

