



ARCHBISHOP FISICHELLA PRESENTS NEW EXHIBIT: THE PATH OF PETER



Vatican City, 5 February 2013 (VIS) - This morning in the Holy See Press Office, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation, announced details of the exhibit "The Path of Peter" (Castel Sant'Angelo, 6 February–1 May 2013) that will be opened at 6:00pm tomorrow by Cardinal Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone S.D.B. Also participating in the press conference were Don Alessio Geretti, curator of the exhibit, and Daniela Porro, superintendent of the Consortium of Roman Museums. The exhibit, one of the initiatives of the Year of Faith, is a collaborative effort between nine countries and will include pieces ranging from the 4th and 5th centuries all the way to the beginning of the 20th century.

"First of all, it's good to explain the 'why' of this exhibit," said the archbishop. "Faith isn't just the commitment of believers. It expresses humanity's need to look within in order to understand the desire for God that is inscribed on the heart of each person. This cultural moment we are living in is strongly characterized by contradictory movements ... On the one hand it seems that there is a general feeling of fatigue and indifference that even affects our faith. It makes it seem limited to a small group of persons and as if it no longer held any appeal to the new generations. On the other hand, there is the excessive enthusiasm for scientific progress and new lifestyles as if these were the solutions to today's serious problems. Not infrequently in this case, we come to the claim that it is good to limit faith's sphere to the private, denying its social or cultural effect. At the same time, however, it is easy to see that the desire to enjoy the beauty of nature and works of art is constantly increasing. ... Today, fortunately, we are still looking for something that is more important and more profound, because the spirit is moved by the desire to know and to admire ... seeking to contemplate a beauty that is not transient because it has created culture and extends through the centuries, always arousing wonder and marvel for

the genius of the artist and for what they have known how to create, motivated by their faith and their interpretive abilities."

"It is precisely to reinforce this desire and to give voice to the nostalgia for God, often latent in many persons," the prelate continued, "that we have decided to organize this exhibit as a journey through the centuries to come to know one of the persons who has always stimulated the minds of artists to try to understand his mystery and give it voice. We wanted to narrate 'The Path of Peter' in art ... Peter is the image of humanity that seeks and that finds and that, after having found, follows. Unfortunately he is also weak and commits betrayal but he still knows how to ask forgiveness. Moved by love, by a unique and sweeping experience, he leaves everything behind in order to proclaim the mystery of Christ's Resurrection to the world. It is a true journey of faith, without rest, that artists have captured ... in many works that witness to its beauty."

"This exhibit is a path for growing in faith but it is also a challenge to recognize the necessity of believing as a response to the question of meaning that life poses. Looking upon the work of art, believers and non-believers have different reactions, but beauty expresses a call to one and all to listen to the message that can be perceived in the silence of contemplation. ... This is one of the reasons why we thought that the exhibit shouldn't take place in a religious space but in an open space where all might have access without prejudices, moved only by the interest in art. True art, on the other hand, knows how to challenge us and it's good not to force one's hand with too many words so as not to run the risk of trivializing its message."