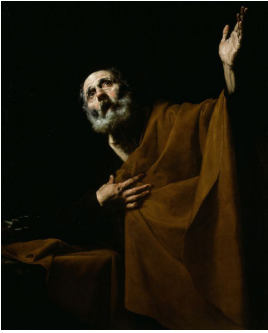


MINI-TOUR

Year of Mercy

Inspired by Pope Francis's designation of 2016 as the Year of Mercy, the Art Institute partnered with the Archdiocese of Chicago to create a tour that explores artworks featuring themes of compassion and forgiveness.



GALLERY 211

Penitent Saint Peter (1628/32)

by Jusepe de Ribera

Under the influence of Caravaggio, Ribera often painted humble figures from dramatic narratives bathed in equally dramatic lighting. In this depiction of the apostle Saint Peter, Ribera draws from a story recounted in all four Gospels. At the Last Supper, Jesus predicted that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed the following morning. Peter refused to believe it, but the prediction nonetheless came to pass. This

painting depicts the moment Peter asks for forgiveness, one hand reaching upward and the other pressed to his chest in acknowledgement of his weakness.



GALLERY 211

The Crucifixion (1627) by Francisco de Zurbarán

Recognizing the educational and inspirational value of visual images, the Catholic Church encouraged artists to adopt a style of easy readability and dramatic fervor in the 17th century. The stark background and strong lighting of this crucifixion scene exemplify this idea. Zurbarán painted it for a monastery in Seville, and in the dimly lit chapel where it was installed, the austere figure of Christ inspired awe in worshippers. Zurbarán envisioned the crucified Christ suspended outside of time and place, conveying intense religious feeling and inspiring a deeply meditative response to his sacrifice.



GALLERY 206

Mary Magdalene (1540/50) by Moretto da Brescia (Alessandro Bonvicino)

Viewers in the 16th century could easily identify Mary Magdalene in this portrait because of the saint's long red hair and the urn in hand, which held expensive oils meant to anoint Jesus's body after his death. In the Bible, Mary Magdalene, who represents divine mercy, is the first to see Jesus after his resurrection. Pope Francis recognizes her as an influential example of the power of compassion; he recently elevated the saint's July 22 memorial day to a feast day.



GALLERY 202

***Mater Dolorosa (Sorrowing Virgin) (1480/1500)*
by the workshop of Dieric Bouts**

This emotional painting presents the Virgin as a sorrowful witness to the suffering of Christ and a stand-in for humankind in her relationship with Jesus. Based on other surviving examples, it seems likely that this work was once part of a pair, the accompanying image featuring Jesus with a crown of thorns. The gold background sets the Virgin apart from a specific time and place in this image. Primary emphasis is placed on her emotional state, her eyes brimming over with tears and her gaze focused on her son's redemptive sacrifice.

ming over with tears and her gaze focused on her son's redemptive sacrifice.



GALLERY 101

Bodhisattva (about 725/50), Chinese, Tang Dynasty

In the Buddhist faith, bodhisattvas are compassionate beings who have attained enlightenment but willingly postpone their entry into nirvana—release from the endless cycle of suffering, death, and rebirth—to remain in this world and help other living beings along their spiritual paths. They act as the eternal attendants of the Buddha, embodying his boundless mercy. Whereas Buddhas are depicted as sternly formal, bodhisattvas like this may appear quite relaxed. Traces of pigment indicate that this example was originally brightly painted, while its large scale suggests that it originally furnished a cave temple

carved into the face of a mountain.



GALLERY 265

***Black Cross, New Mexico (1929)*
by Georgia O'Keeffe**

"I saw the crosses so often . . . spread over the New Mexico landscape," said Georgia O'Keeffe about her first visit to Taos, New Mexico, in the summer of 1929. What she encountered during late-night walks in the desert were probably crosses erected near remote moradas, or chapels, by secret Catholic brotherhoods called Penitentes. She painted the cross just as she saw it: "big and strong, put together with wooden pegs." For O'Keeffe, "painting the crosses was a way of painting the country," a beloved region

where, in 1949, she settled permanently and worked almost until her death at the age of 98.



GALLERY 395

White Crucifixion (1938) by Marc Chagall

One of the museum's most significant paintings by Marc Chagall—and the Pope's favorite—is *White Crucifixion*. Made in 1937, it was the artist's first canvas to feature the image of Christ as a Jewish martyr and dramatically call attention to the persecution and suffering of European Jews in the 1930s. Chagall stressed the Jewish identity of Jesus in several ways: he replaced his traditional loincloth with a prayer shawl, his crown of thorns with a head cloth, and the mourning angels with

three biblical patriarchs and a matriarch. On either side of the cross, Chagall illustrated the devastation of the pogroms—on the left, a village is pillaged and burned, and on the right, a synagogue and its Torah ark go up in flames. By linking the martyred Jesus with the persecuted Jews and the Crucifixion with contemporary events, Chagall's painting passionately weaves an allegory identifying the Nazis with Christ's tormentors, warning of the moral implications of their actions.

For a tour reflection guide, please visit www.jubileemercy.org.