



## Art Institute of Chicago Tour Inspired by the Jubilee of Mercy

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In partnership, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Archdiocese of Chicago's Department of Parish Vitality and Mission have created a tour inspired by the Jubilee of Mercy. This art tour will be available from October through December 2016.

In *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)*, Pope Francis asks us to "attend to the 'way of beauty' (*via pulchritudinis*).” He says, “Each particular Church should encourage the use of the arts in evangelization, building on the treasures of the past but also drawing upon the wide variety of contemporary expressions so as to transmit the faith in a new ‘language of parables.’” (par. 167)

We hope that through the beauty of these works, you will prayerfully reflect upon the spiritual works of mercy, encounter the living Christ, and as a result, invite others to take the tour.

There are seven works of art in this art tour. Each work reflects a Spiritual Work of Mercy – those acts of compassion that we offer to help our neighbors with their spiritual and emotional needs. For each work of art, you will find a scripture reference, a short reflection, and questions for you to consider.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy include:

- Counsel the doubtful
- Instruct the unknowing
- Admonish the sinner
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Forgive injuries
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Pray for the living and the dead

Please use this tool however best suites you and your group. A few suggestions are:

- If you are taking a guided tour, you may want to take some notes along the way and at the end of the tour, gather with your group for shared reflections – small group or altogether.
- If you are taking a self-guided tour alone or with a few others, you may go slower and answer the questions together along the way.
- In either case, you may want to bring along a small notebook or journal to jot down your thoughts and how each work of art moves your spirit.

Thank you for taking the time to visit the Art Institute and experience how Christ can speak to us through art that was created by artists throughout two millennia.

*Note: This is to be used in conjunction with the Art Institute Mini-Tour Guide, which has descriptions of each work. Please read the descriptions on your mini-tour card to better understand the work and artist's vision. These are available at the Art Institute or for download at [www.jubileemercy.org](http://www.jubileemercy.org).*

**Prayer to start your tour:**

*Jesus, thank you for this day and the opportunity to walk the “way of beauty” to find you in all that we see and experience in these galleries. Please send forth your spirit to open our hearts, minds, and souls to these artists and what they are trying to communicate to us through their gifts and talents. We ask you to help us come to a deeper understanding of the Spiritual Works of Mercy so that we can move from this place and this experience to bring your mercy to all we encounter. We ask this through you who live and reign with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

**Gallery 211**

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***Penitent Saint Peter (1628/32) by Jusepe de Ribera***

**Scripture Reflection:** “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.’ He went out and began to weep bitterly.” Luke 22:61-62

**Spiritual Work of Mercy:** Forgive Injuries

In this moment, Saint Peter realizes that he failed. He did exactly as Jesus predicted, he denied knowing him, being his friend, being someone Jesus trusted. He did this, not once, but three times. Peter never imagined he would ever deny Jesus. But Jesus knew the power that fear holds over us, what fear would do to his closest friend and most trusted disciple. Jesus knows our failings, too. He knows that we try and have the best of intentions, but we sometimes fail him. Jesus, however, always offers us forgiveness, no matter how many times we deny him.

Take in Peter’s face and expression. What is going through Peter’s mind; what is he asking of God?

Have you ever felt what Peter is feeling in this moment? Have you ever asked God or someone else to forgive you? What kind of strength or courage did it take to ask for forgiveness?

Is there someone in your life who needs your forgiveness even if they are not able to ask for it? If so, will you pray for the grace to forgive those who have hurt you, injured you, or caused you harm?

*Jesus, as you forgave Peter, please help me to forgive those who have hurt me. I cannot do it alone. Please give me the strength to seek forgiveness and to offer forgiveness as a way to show your mercy to others.*



## Gallery 211

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### ***The Crucifixion (1627) by Francisco de Zurbarán***

**Scripture Reflection:** "But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed." Isa 53:5

**Spiritual Work of Mercy:** Bear wrongs patiently

In Luke's Gospel, the crucifixion scene follows the interrogation by Pontius Pilate. Jesus remains silent – no defense. When he is put on the cross, however, he utters the words, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34). Luke then tells us about the two criminals who are on either side of him. One taunts him, the other accepts his punishment and asks Jesus to remember him. Jesus says the most comforting and loving words to this fellow human being, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43). Even in severe, excruciating pain, he reassured that criminal and asked the Father to forgive all who participated in his crucifixion.

Jesus is so patient. He isn't angry or vengeful. It is hard to be patient with others and ourselves, but we are asked to do just that. As you reflect on the image of Christ before you, what do the contrasts between the darkness and the light say to you?

Has your spouse, child, friend, or loved one ever said something painful to you? Did you stop caring or loving them? Why or why not?

Has someone ever misunderstood a situation you were in and you were not able to offer a defense? Did you feel alone and in darkness? Who offered you light?

Is there someone in your life who is struggling, who might not be the nicest to you, but could use your presence and reassurance that they are not alone?

*Jesus, it is not easy to be misunderstood or hurt by others. Help me to bear the wrongs patiently and remember that life is challenging for all of us. You always know the truth about me and you know the hearts of all. Help me to reach out and show your merciful love even when it is hard.*



## Gallery 206

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

**Scripture Reflection:** “Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and what he told her.” John 20:18

**Spiritual Work of Mercy:** Instruct the unknowing

Mary holds the urn full of oil to go anoint and prepare Jesus’s body for burial, but the tomb is empty. She runs to find Peter and John who return to the tomb with her. After witnessing the empty tomb, they leave. Mary stays by the tomb weeping. In her vulnerable, painful state, someone reaches out to her and asks her why she is crying. Her back to him, she begs this man, she mistakes for the gardener, to tell her where her friend’s body has been taken. And then, everything changes. Jesus calls her by name, “Mary!” In that simple call of her by name, Mary recognizes her friend, the LORD.

Mary is the first witness to the resurrection. Jesus instructs her to go, to tell the others, and Mary does just that. She didn’t understand what it all meant or what would happen next, she just knew that Jesus was alive, he had risen, and filled with joy, she went to share that Good News with the others.

In the *Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis tells us, “Anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries,’ but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples.’”

When you look at Mary’s face, what do you see? Do you think this scene is before or after the resurrection? Why?

Have you encountered the Risen Christ? If so, what was that experience like for you? Have you shared your encounter of Christ with others?

If you have not encountered the Risen Christ, are you open to meeting Jesus? Is there someone in your life who has met Jesus and who might be willing to introduce you? If so, will you pray for the grace and openness to discover more?

What does Pope Francis mean by “missionary disciples”? How do you see yourself in these words?

*Jesus, thank you for your offer of friendship. Please help me understand more fully what you mean to my life at every stage. And help me be confident in instructing the unknowing, to share you, my friend, with others who do not know you with as much joy and fidelity as Mary Magdalene.*



## Gallery 202

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

**Scripture Reflection:** "and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Luke 2:34-35

**Spiritual Work of Mercy:** Comfort the sorrowful

If someone close to you has died, you know intimately the pain of loss. Mary's grief was all so human. She did not know the end of the story. She witnessed her son being tortured and murdered in a horrendous way. She suffered greatly. It must have been so confusing for her to have sacrificed so much to bring Jesus into this world only to have the world reject him. Mary was not alone in her grief. She was comforted by the other women and St. John at the foot of the cross.

As you reflect on this painting, can you see Simeon's prophesy that Mary's heart would be pierced?

If you have ever lost someone, how important was it to have the presence of others? In what ways did they comfort you? How much did their promise of prayers mean to you?

When friends or family have lost someone, how have you comforted them? What are some ways in which we can each provide comfort to the sorrowful?

*Jesus, you remind us that none of us are exempt from sorrow. Your mother wept for you and even you wept at Lazarus' tomb. If we love deeply, we will lose greatly. Please give us the grace to bring your loving mercy to those who are struggling.*



## Gallery 101

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

**Scripture Reflection:** “Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough.” Luke 13:24

**Spiritual Work of Mercy:** Pray for the living and the dead

In the description of this sculpture, we read that bodhisattvas are believed to be human beings who are able to reach enlightenment, but instead, choose to guide others. They are compassionate beings who are “eternal helpers of Buddha.” Elsewhere, we learn the path of a bodhisattva is the most challenging and difficult for anyone to choose— only a few are able to follow this arduous monastic path, but it is considered the most glorious journey to take.

If we look to our own Catholic tradition, we can consider the saints who have lived lives of holiness to be our merciful guides on the path to holiness. Throughout the ages, these human beings have been compassionate souls who have sought to help the suffering and who have always had prayer at the center of their lives. We constantly ask the saints to pray for us to the Lord, our God, to intercede on our behalf, or to help us just get through a tough time that they may have encountered themselves. They remind us that we are not alone on this journey. They are eternal helpers of God.

As you look at the sculpture and consider the bodhisattvas role in Buddhism, what saints do you think of and why?

When someone tells you they will pray for you or that they have been praying for you, does that bring comfort to you? If so, in what way?

Is there someone, living or deceased, who could benefit from your prayers? If so, will you please say a quick prayer for them today?

*Jesus, prayer was central to your life’s journey. You often escaped the crowds to have a conversation with your father. You have invited saints to be our spiritual guides in every age. Let them teach us how to pray to you and to remember that our prayers are merciful and make a difference in people’s lives.*



## Gallery 265

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

**Scripture Reflection:** “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18

**Spiritual Work of Mercy:** Counsel the doubtful

The cross is *the* symbol of our faith. It speaks to our sufferings, our strength, and our resiliency. It represents the “power of God.” Only God can take an instrument of death and make it into the road to everlasting life. As Georgia O’Keeffe walked through the New Mexico desert at night, she saw crosses everywhere. She is quoted as saying they were “like a thin dark veil of the Catholic Church spread over the New Mexico landscape.” In this piece, O’Keeffe magnifies the size and prominence of the cross in the foreground with the hills behind. The cross is strong and powerful. It stands as a bulwark in the face of doubt.

As you look at this artwork, consider your own life, how does the cross fit into the landscape of your life? The message of the cross is challenging. St. Paul says that the message of the cross is foolish to those who do not believe. Has there been a time when you have doubted the message of the cross, doubted God’s power? If so, how did you move through that doubt?

Have you ever offered hope and counsel to someone who doubted God’s love and presence? If so, how did that help the other person? Did you see it as a work of mercy?

*Jesus, we sometimes doubt the power of God. We get lost in our worries, fears, and shortcomings. Help us focus on your cross and remember that all things are possible with God – new life can come from death. Please guide us to bring mercy to others by offering counsel to all who doubt your love and mercy.*



## Gallery 395

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### **White Crucifixion (1938) by Marc Chagall**

**Scripture Reflection:** “But as for me, I will look to the LORD, I will wait for God my savior; my God will hear me! Do not rejoice over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will arise; though I sit in darkness, the LORD is my light.” Micah 7:7-8

**Spiritual Work of Mercy:** Admonish the sinner

Through his art, Chagall admonished the sinners in the only way he could, and reminds us today and generations to come of what was happening in his time and place. When you look up the word “admonish” on the Merriam-Webster.com, you will see two simple definitions – “to speak to (someone) in a way that expresses disapproval or criticism” and “to tell or urge (someone) to do something.” This painting speaks to both of these definitions – Chagall is criticizing the actions of the Nazi’s and he is urging Christians to do something about it.

It is easy to see in this piece the importance of admonishing the sinner, to call out the sin and to hope to find a way to stop it. In our own lives, with our loved ones or friends, it may not be as easy to “admonish” someone, but we are told it is merciful.

As you look at this painting, reflect on how admonishing the sinner is merciful. Have you ever stood up for something or someone that you believed in and expressed criticism or challenged a situation? If so, explain. Has another person ever admonished you for a behavior, something you said, or a situation you were in? If so, was it merciful?

Is there a way to admonish the sinner without judging the person or criticizing him or her? What does that look like?

*Jesus, it can be hard to urge or challenge others to think or act a different way. We ask you to help us not to judge, but through love, seek the betterment of others and ourselves. And in so doing, help us to have the strength and courage to challenge those who are hurting others or themselves.*

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### **Prayer at the end of the Tour:**

*Jesus, thank you for all of the beauty in our world and for this time of reflection. We ask you to continue to guide us in your ways of mercy so that we can bring your compassion and love to those who need it most. We ask this through you who live and reign with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*