

Palm Sunday
April 2, 2023
Year of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ark of the New Covenant

“Art is a very eloquent witness, because it does not speak to the ears but directly to the soul, through its lines and colors.” (Luigi Gambero, Mary and the Fathers of the Church, p.85)

I begin with two statements. The first, on Palm Sunday, due to the lengthy reading of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church asks that any reflection to be given today should be brief. The second, located in the catacombs of Priscilla, on the via Salaria, one will find the fresco entitled *The Virgin with Prophet*. This fresco is thought to be one of the oldest pictorial representations of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is dated back to the early second century.

I wanted you to be aware of this as I relate an article published on March 21, 2023 by the Catholic News Agency. Their report stated an art exhibit entitled “#8M Visual Manifestos” (8M stands for March 8, International Women’s Day) on display at the Rector’s office of the National University of Cuyo, was attacked and destroyed on the afternoon of March 20, 2023. The Social Ministry of the Archdiocese of Mendoza issued a statement which expressed solidarity “with the artists who saw the fruit of their work and effort damaged.”

Unless you are familiar with the story, you might be wondering why was this exhibit destroyed. The exhibit had previously drawn criticism from various Christian groups, especially those who profess the Catholic faith, for its vulgar art. The two pieces in question: a depiction of the Crucifixion of Jesus using the nude body of a woman with the head of a donkey, and an image of a female body part which was to represent the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I contrast these two examples of “Christian art” for this purpose: Christians used art as a means to both honor and teach their love and devotion of Jesus, Mary His Mother, the Angels and the Saints. We have seen the use of icons, pictures, paintings, statues, sacred music, classical music and architecture, all used to help Christians in their desire to know and love God more. The palms you held as we began symbolically remind us that we too can be as fickle as the crowd was in Jerusalem that day. We can wave them and praise Jesus on one day and call for His Crucifixion on another. As we begin this Holy Week, please reflect upon your relationship with Jesus; most importantly, if it has been longer than one year, please go to confession. Confess your sins, hear His words of forgiveness, and be reconciled with God. I very much want to assist you in this and will commit extra time to make this a reality. Therefore, I will be available in our confessional on Wednesday night from 5PM to 6PM during the Holy Hour in which the Blessed Sacrament is placed upon our altar for veneration. May God bless each of you as we journey again with Jesus upon His ***Via Dolorosa*** for our salvation.