



SANCTITY PICTURED

The Art of the
Dominican and Franciscan Orders
in Renaissance Italy



October 31, 2014–January 25, 2015

Beginning in the early thirteenth century, Italy was transformed by two innovative new religious orders known as the Dominicans, founded by Saint Dominic of Caleruega (1170–1221; canonized 1234), and the Franciscans, founded by Saint Francis of Assisi (1181/82–1226; canonized 1228). Whereas earlier religious orders, such as the Benedictines, had cloistered themselves in rural monasteries and lived off income from their property, the Dominicans and Franciscans settled in Italy's growing cities and lived as mendicants, or beggars, who preached to laymen and women.

Both orders took a vow of poverty, but soon after the deaths of their founders they were building churches that rivaled cathedrals in size and splendor throughout Italy. With financial assistance from city governments, popes, and the laity, Dominican and Franciscan churches were constructed and filled with altarpieces, crucifixes, fresco cycles, illuminated manuscripts, liturgical objects, and sculpted tombs. Art became integral to the missions of these orders. Many works are narrative scenes focusing on the Dominican

and Franciscan saints whose miracles sanctified contemporary Italian life. The two orders also favored tender and compassionate representations of the Virgin and Christ that appeal to the viewer's emotions.

Sanctity Pictured is the first major exhibition anywhere to explore the significant contribution made by the Dominicans and Franciscans to the artistic revolution known as the Renaissance that occurred in Italy during the years 1200 to 1550. It brings together works of art made in Italian cities including Assisi, Bologna, Florence, Naples, Siena, and Venice now in the collections of twenty-eight American museums and libraries, along with special loans from the Vatican Library and Vatican Museums that have never before been seen in the United States. The exhibition, which is being presented exclusively at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, is the first dedicated to



Italian Renaissance art in Nashville since 1934.

Trinita Kennedy, curator
Frist Center for the Visual Arts

Glossary of terms frequently used in the exhibition

altarpiece A painting or sculpture standing behind an altar in a church.

antiphonary A book containing the sung parts of the **Divine Office**, usually in a large format so that several people may sing from it at once.

Canonize, canonization The process by which a person is declared a **saint**, worthy of veneration in all Catholic churches.

Christ's Passion The sufferings of Christ between the night of the Last Supper and his death. Scenes from the Passion are often the subject of painted cycles made for the Franciscans in particular.

confraternity A lay organization of Christian piety and charity.

convent A community of nuns, bound by vows to a religious life under a superior, or a building that houses them.

cutting Material cut from a manuscript, most often an illuminated initial.

diptych A pair of painted panels of equal size, usually hinged to open and close like a book. The format was frequently used for portable private devotional images.

Divine Office Daily cycle of devotions based on the Jewish practice of praying at appointed hours.

feast day A holy day celebrated in commemoration of a sacred mystery or event or a holy person, such as Christ, the Virgin, or a **saint**, often on the anniversary of his or her death.

fresco (Italian, "fresh") A wall painting, usually executed using pigments applied to fresh, wet plaster.

friar A brother, or male member, of one of the **mendicant** religious orders.

friary A community of **friars**, bound by vows to a religious life under a superior, or a building that houses them.

gold leaf Thin sheets of hammered gold.

gradual A liturgical book containing the part of the Mass sung by a choir.

habit The distinctive clothing worn by a **religious order**.

heretic A person who holds or advocates controversial opinions, especially one who publically opposes the officially accepted beliefs of the Catholic Church.

illumination The process of decorating a manuscript with bright colors, in particular with gold and silver, which reflect light.

martyr A person who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce his or her religious beliefs.

mendicant A beggar. Members of mendicant **religious orders** take a vow of poverty, do not hold property, and beg for their food and shelter.

missal A book containing all the prayers and responses for the celebration of Mass.

panel painting A painting executed on a wood support.

parchment A writing surface made from treated skins of animals.

predella The long horizontal structure supporting the main panels of an **altarpiece** commonly decorated with diminutive images of **saints** or with narratives of their lives.

relic A venerated body part or object associated with a **saint**.

religious order An organization of persons living under the same religious **rule**.

rule The code of discipline or body of regulations observed by a **religious order**.

saint A deceased person officially recognized by the Catholic Church as being worthy of public veneration and capable of interceding for people on earth.

stigmata (Greek, "mark") Christ's five wounds from his Crucifixion: one in each hand, one in each foot, and one in his side. A stigmatic is a person with the same marks.

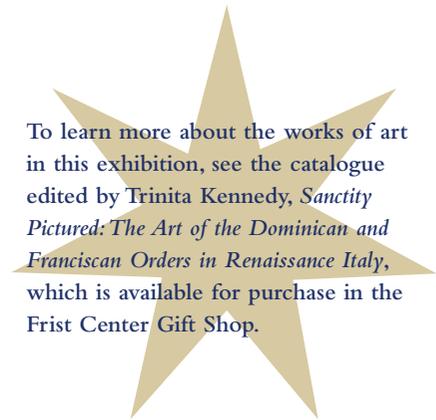
tempera Paint using egg yolk as the binding agent for the pigments.

tramezzo screen A screen commonly found in Dominican and Franciscan churches in Renaissance Italy that separated the sacred area of the choir and high altar from the public area of the nave.

triptych A painting consisting of three parts.

polyptych An **altarpiece** consisting of several panels.

vita panel A painting of a large standing figure of Christ or a **saint** framed by scenes from his or her life (*vita*) and/or posthumous miracles.



Cover: Italian, probably active in Bologna. Dominican and Franciscan Friars Singing at Lecterns, from the Abbey Bible (fol. 224r), ca. 1250-62. Tempera and gold leaf on parchment, leaf 10 9/16 x 7 3/4 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2011.23.224; **Interior:** *Antiphonarium Basilicae Sancti Petri* (detail of fol. 78r), ca. 1270. Parchment with ink, paint, and gold, 13 3/8 x 9 1/4 in. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS B. 87. © 2014 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana



*T*his exhibition is organized by Trinita Kennedy, curator,
Frist Center for the Visual Arts.

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The exhibition is made possible in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and the Robert Lehman Foundation, and support from the Friends of Italian Art. The exhibition catalogue is published with the assistance of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and Furthermore: a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund.

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Belmont University and Ocean Way Recording Studios donated recording time and professional expertise in the production of the audio tour. Schola Pacis—Nelson Berry, Riley Bryant, Gregg Colson, Rick Seay, Chris Simonsen, and Matt Smyth—and the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia contributed their time and talents to perform the musical selections for the audio tour. Audio engineer Chris Hinson donated his services to record the Dominican Sisters in the Chapel of St. Cecilia.

The Frist Center for the Visual Arts is supported in part by:



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