

Book offers guide to Vatican artwork

Cindy Wooden/CNS

VATICAN CITY — For early morning Masses, daytime prayers near the tomb of St. Peter or simple tourism, a climb down to the grottoes under St. Peter's Basilica is a normal part of a visit to the church.

While the tombs of popes, Catholic royalty and Vatican officials are clearly marked, the artwork — including ancient mosaics and frescoes from the original fourth-century basilica — is not.

As part of an Italian-government sponsored series of guidebooks to important Rome churches, an official at the basilica has written a 128-page illustrated guide to the subterranean treasures.

The *Vatican Grottoes* issue of the *Roma Sacra* series, published July 1, was written by Bishop Vittorio Lanzani, the delegate for the administration of St. Peter's Basilica.

Released only in Italian, the guidebook eventually will be released in English by the publisher, as has been done with two previous issues on the art and architecture of St. Peter's Basilica.

Alfredo Maria Pergolizzi, an archivist at the basilica, said the book is the first detailed guide to the grottoes written since the under-

ground space was opened to the general public in 1950.

Visits were severely limited until Pope Pius XII authorized the opening following the 1941-49 excavation of the lower-level necropolis where St. Peter's tomb is.

In fact, beginning in 1617 and for more than 200 years, women could visit the grotto only on the Monday after Pentecost and laymen were allowed in only on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

"Transgressors will be excommunicated," said the Latin inscription on a plaque that hung near the entrance.

By the late 1800s, Catholics could request access on any day, but the request had to be in writing. A clerical guide and a watchman carrying a torch accompanied the visitors.

One thing is quite clear from Bishop Lanzani's research: With the exception of St. Peter's tomb, the concept of a "final" resting place has never been given absolute priority at the Vatican.

Pope John Paul II's decision to move the tomb of Blessed Pope John XXIII from the grotto to the main body of the basilica in 2001 was simply the most recent transfer.

Bishop Lanzani's book also includes the first photographs of two

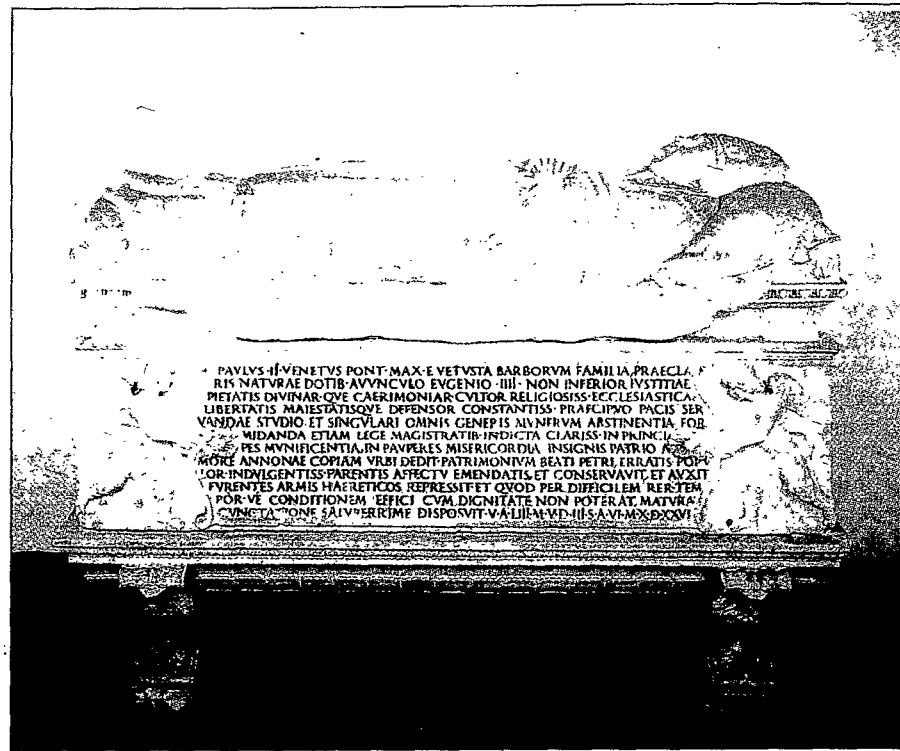


Photo courtesy Fabbrica di San Pietro/CNS

The empty sarcophagus of Pope Paul II is found in the grottoes under St. Peter's Basilica. A new guidebook tells that the remains of the 15th-century pope were lost in 1606 when papal tombs were transferred from the fourth-century Basilica of St. Peter to the new church.

newly restored Marian chapels in the grottoes.

The two chapels are named after long-venerated Marian images transferred from the old basilica. Rough translations of the titles would be: Our Lady of the Slap and Our Lady of Women in Labor.

The guidebook also includes the history of the Clementine Chapel where Mass is celebrated each

morning in front of a grill through which the faithful can see the remains of the altar the Emperor Constantine ordered erected over St. Peter's tomb in 324.

Pope Clement VIII, for whom the chapel is named, had an outside ramp excavated into the grottoes in 1593 so he could pray near the tomb day or night without anyone seeing him.

Book details life of Catholic who signed Declaration

T. Jensen Lacey/CNS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Charles Carroll, as one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, helped establish democracy in America.

As the pre-eminent Catholic politician of his day and the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, he worked much of his life to win political and civil rights for American Catholics.

"Carroll almost single-handedly obtained religious freedom and political rights for American Catholics, who formerly had suffered from oppressive penal laws which denied them the right to vote and to worship in public," said Scott McDermott of Nashville, the author of a new book, *Charles Carroll of Carrollton: Faithful Revolutionary*.

McDermott hopes through his book Carroll's life will be remembered by more people, especially Catholics.

"He set a great example and, based on his contribution and that



of the Catholic soldiers in the American Revolution, of whom there were many, Americans realized that you could be a Catholic and also a good citizen," McDermott said in an interview with the *Tennessee Register*, newspaper of the Nashville Diocese.

"Prior to that, Catholics were considered to be potential traitors, partly because of the number of infamous plots and rebellions when Catholics were involved. His example was crucial to what Catholics are today," he said.

Born in Maryland in 1737, Charles Carroll was sent by his father to Belgium, where he studied at the Jesuit Academy of St. Omers. It was there that young Carroll studied the writings of Thomas

Aquinas, Robert Bellarmine and Francisco de Suarez, helping to shape his political philosophy.

After Carroll's return to Maryland in 1765, he began lobbying for repeal of the Stamp Act.

"When he was elected to the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, it was a profound victory for Catholic Americans, and was the beginning of religious tolerance on this continent," McDermott said.

Risking not only his fortune but his very life, Carroll signed the Declaration of Independence on Aug. 2, 1776.

"Had it not been for Carroll, all the new states might have created Protestant religious establishments," said McDermott. "This act exploded the theory that the United States had a Protestant identity."

After the Revolutionary War was over, Carroll had a seat in the first U.S. Senate, while working doggedly for Catholic emancipation as he supported the Bill of Rights with his cousin, Daniel Carroll, who was in

the House of Representatives.

When John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826, Carroll became the only surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence. He spent his final years as a national hero, and died at the age of 95 in 1832.

McDermott said he hoped the book about Carroll would empower Catholics "to get involved with the political process, and support political candidates who are aware of the Christian tradition and are willing to support it."

"I feel a lot of Catholics now are disenfranchised in a similar way to Carroll's inability to vote," he added. "Catholics feel hopeless because neither party represents Catholic teachings. Reading this book may make more Catholics aware that the U.S. is still based on these founding principles and Catholics need to become more aware of this and realize that they, too, can be instruments of positive change."

Chu

Rob Cullivan/CNS

CHURCHVILLY" Lejniaks said her uncle, Don, a communicant at Church.

"I don't think the world," she said. "Oh, I don't know Cooney response?"

If Satan is his because Cooney Catholic, having and communion cent's since his away in 1990. O even serves on t including the day 94th birthday, J. "I figure it's special now that "You feel a li church."

Actually, Cooney close to St. Vincent several decades and usher in ad the altar. He not devout family thers of St. Joseph Anne Elizabeth died on Dec. 28 Dorothy Cooney, order's infirmar other sister, Ros in Chili.

Ogden-born Cooney family of 12, he is 118-year-old honor said he holds a "wpy hour" every d is open to the eve borhood — and world.

The son of a farmer he was driving a plowing the land

"I liked it all said of farming, j a young man, he off when a semi-

Beautiful

