HISTORIC EXHIBITION: VATICAN SPLENDORS MAKES EXCLUSIVE EAST COAST STOP IN PHILADELPHIA AT THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE THIS SEPTEMBER

EXHIBIT COINCIDES WITH THE MOMENTOUS PAPAL VISIT AND THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES – PHILADELPHIA 2015 CONGRESS


PHILADELPHIA (June 5, 2015) The Franklin Institute, the most-visited museum in Pennsylvania, has announced plans to host the exclusive East Coast destination of Vatican Splendors, beginning September 19. The exhibition, timed to take place during the historic Papal Visit (September 26-27) and the 2015 World Meeting of Families Congress in Philadelphia (September 22-25), explores the historical and cultural impact of the Vatican over the span of 2,000 years through significantly relevant objects straight from the Vatican in Rome, Italy. Every object in the exhibition tells its own story, together forming a great historical mosaic of the Vatican—and many of the artifacts have never before been on public view at the Vatican in Rome.

Highlights of the nearly 10,000 square-foot exhibition include documents signed by Michelangelo, tools used in work on the Sistine Chapel and Basilica of Saint Peter’s, works by masters including Bernini and Guercino, artwork dating back to the first century, venerated remains (bone fragments) of Saints Peter and Paul, relics discovered at the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul, and historical objects from the modern and ancient basilicas of Saint Peter’s in Rome.

The exhibition is organized into 11 galleries that illustrate the evolution of the Church, with thematic areas highlighting important developments, people and events tied to the history of the Vatican, reflected in both important historical objects and artistic expression from different eras. The objects are presented in galleries and recreated environments designed to enhance the understanding of their historical and artistic significance. Visitors will feel transported to the Vatican, from the underground catacombs where the remains of Saint Peter were discovered to the magnificent papal chambers found above ground. From the sights and sounds of the grand Basilica to a touchable cast of Saint John Paul II’s hand, the exhibition is a multi-sensory experience.

“There could not be a more fitting exhibition to bring to Philadelphia this fall than Vatican Splendors,” explains Larry Dubinski, President and CEO of The Franklin Institute. “Hosting an exhibit of this caliber during such a momentous time for Philadelphia and the world is truly remarkable and for anyone participating in the World Meeting of Families or the Papal Visit and mass, Vatican Splendors will unquestionably add an unforgettable layer to that once-in-a-lifetime experience.”
The Franklin Institute is the only East Coast stop for the exhibition, the first of a two-city North American tour, after which the items will return to the Vatican, from which they cannot be absent for more than a year. The collection of priceless artifacts will be housed in the climate-controlled exhibit gallery in the Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion at The Franklin Institute.

“What an extraordinary opportunity for all those who will be in Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families and Pope Francis’ visit to experience Vatican Splendors at The Franklin Institute,” said Donna Crilley Farrell, Executive Director of the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015. “The exquisite art work, relics and artifacts that will travel here from Rome are a perfect complement to the events of the week, especially in providing families from across the region and around the world with a wonderful way to create memories during this special time in the City.”

Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter said, “Philadelphia is the big city for big events—and big exhibitions, and there are few greater or more meaningful in content than Vatican Splendors. Having had the opportunity to personally experience the Vatican Museum in March 2014, I am thrilled to welcome to Philadelphia this exhibit, which features many of the same precious objects I saw in Vatican City. Making this exhibit open and available to the public immediately before we host the World Meeting of Families and Pope Francis is a wonderful way to prepare for that event and make it even more accessible to everyone.”

Vatican Splendors is organized and circulated in conjunction with the Congregazione per l’Evangelizzazione dei Popoli of the Vatican City State. Items in the collection—which include mosaics, frescoes, paintings by Renaissance masters, works by well-known sculptors, intricately embroidered silk vestments, precious objects from the Papal Mass, uniforms of the Papal Swiss Guard, historical maps and documents and relics are on loan from The Reverenda Fabbrica of Saint Peter, the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls, the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, the Vatican Library, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the Apostolic Floreria, the Papal Swiss Guard, the Vatican Museums, and private collections. The exhibition is produced by Evergreen Exhibitions.

Vatican Splendors will be open Thursday through Saturday from 9:30am-9pm, with last exhibit entry at 7:30pm; Sunday through Wednesday from 9:30am-5pm, with last exhibit entry at 3:30pm. Tickets are now on sale.

TICKET INFORMATION

Vatican Splendors
September 19, 2015-February 15, 2016

Daytime Tickets (Includes General Admission to The Franklin Institute)
Adults $34.95; Children (ages 3-11) $28.95

Evening Tickets (5pm-close)
Adults: $22.95; Children (ages 3-11) $14.95

NOTE TO EDITORS: High-Resolution images and exhibit b-roll are available for download at https://www.fi.edu/press-room/presskits user: presspass
About Evergreen Exhibitions
Evergreen Exhibitions is a world leader in providing high quality, state-of-the-art exhibitions in collaboration with more than 200 leading museums and research institutions in the United States and internationally.

About The Franklin Institute
Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania’s most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for learning about science by offering access to hands-on science education. For more information, visit www.fi.edu.