

IN GLORY AND PRAISE

A THOUSAND YEARS OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE IN MORAVIA II

OLOMOUC ARCHDIOCESAN MUSEUM | PERMANENT EXPOSITION

from 2. 6. 2016

The Olomouc Archdiocesan Museum was founded in the year 1998 as a joint project of the Roman-Catholic Church and the Czech State. The aim was to establish a specialised institution which would research, preserve and present exemplars of ecclesiastical art culture of a church origin from the historical territory of the Olomouc Archdiocese. On the basis of this agreement, wide co-operation came into being between the Olomouc Archbishopric, which provided the new organisation of the historical building of the Olomouc chapter deanery and the majority of the exhibited works of art, and the Olomouc Museum of Art which took over the care of the reconstruction of the building, specialised administration, restoration of the collections and preparation of the exhibition.

The founding of the Archdiocesan Museum is closely linked with the historic visit of John Paul II to Olomouc in the year 1995 when the Pope repeatedly called for the museum's establishment. The concept of an Archdiocesan museum springs not only from the continuity of the local spiritual tradition, reaching back to the period of Great Moravia, but also the uninterrupted line of art collecting and enlightened support of artistic culture from the side of the Olomouc bishops and archbishops. The placing of the museum on the site of the former appanage Olomouc Přemyslid Castle on St. Wenceslas Hill fully corresponds to both its historical importance, as well as the spiritual character of the locale which as early as the year 1141 served as the seat of the episcopal church of the Moravian metropolitans.

The Olomouc Archdiocesan Museum is a unique institution within the Czech Republic. The works of art exhibited in its permanent exhibition were mostly acquired from church lenders while additionally coming from the collections of both regional and state museums and galleries. A not insignificant number of them have their origin directly from the property of the Olomouc Archbishopric as well as the Olomouc Museum of Art. They summarise a selection of the most valuable and most significant items from the preserved art treasures of Moravia, created over the course of more than one thousand years. The concentration of these, up until now scattered ecclesiastical exemplars, in the Archdiocesan Museum will guarantee not only their safety but also first and foremost their systematic study and scientific presentation.

The painting *Adoration of the Shepherds* by El Greco will be part of the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Olomouc Archdiocesan Museum, which is part of the Olomouc Museum of Art. Works of the world-famous Spanish mannerist painter will be lent to Olomouc by the famous Metropolitan Museum in New York in exchange for the loan of Titian's painting *Apollo and Marsyas*

from the collections of the Olomouc Archdiocese. The exchange is further evidence of the excellent cooperation between the Archdiocese of Olomouc and the Olomouc Museum of Art, which cares for the church collections concentrated at the Kroměříž chateau.

The world-famous painting *Apollo and Marsyas* (after 1550) by the Italian Renaissance painter Titian moved from Kroměříž Chateau to the Metropolitan Museum in mid-February. One of the most valuable paintings in the world has been exhibited in the Met Breuer, the newly opened museum building, designed by architect Marcel Breuer, since March 2. The loan, according to the Archbishop of Olomouc Jan Graubner, is an extraordinary opportunity to present the Czech Republic. „The Titian's painting is the work of world importance and many galleries are interested in borrowing it. It is not possible to oblige everyone because frequent relocations would do harm to the painting. The loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, however, is an exceptional event. Among other things it is representation of our country and our care for cultural monuments and perhaps also an invitation for American tourists to visit Kroměříž,” said Graubner.

According to the archbishop the loan is of seminal importance because the Olomouc Museum of Art succeeded in agreeing on reciprocal cooperation with the Metropolitan Museum. „In Olomouc, in turn, a gem from the collections of the Metropolitan Museum - painting Adoration of the Shepherds by Spanish mannerist painter El Greco - which in the Czech Republic has not been exhibited yet“ will appear, the Archbishop supplied.

The painting from 1605 - 1610 will be a major attraction of the June celebration of the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Olomouc Archdiocesan Museum. „It is a great honour for us and at the same time confirmation of our repute, because one of the most important museums in the world perceives us as trustworthy and important partner,” said museum director Michal Soukup.

But El Greco's painting is not the only new thing the Archdiocesan Museum is preparing for the jubilee. „On this occasion the permanent exhibition, representing about three hundred art gems from state-owned and church collections, will be altered and supplemented as a complex. We will focus on larger thematic interconnection of individual parts, increasing the attractiveness of the installation and its contents,” explained Soukup. Due to the demanding reinstallation however, the permanent exhibition will be closed on March 7, and it will reopen officially on June 2. Adoration of the Shepherds by El Greco will be a part of the permanent exhibition until September 4.

The Titian's painting did not travel to New York alone. Another unique painting from Kroměříž Archiepiscopal collections accompanied it- a double portrait of the English king Charles I and his wife Henrietta Maria (1632-1634), the author of which is a Flemish Baroque painter Anthonis van Dyck. „Painting by the most talented follower of Pieter Paul Rubens is on show at the Frick Collection, the

museum founded in the former residence of the industrialist, financier and arts patron Henry Clay Frick. Importance of Kroměříž painting is illustrated by the fact that the organizers used it for the invitation card," said Soukup. The exhibition entitled Van Dyck: The Anatomy of Portraiture will be open until June 5.

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