Religious tourism and the new evangelization: theory and best practice in the pastoral promotion of the Church’s cultural heritage

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ABSTRACT
This case study correlates religious tourism with the new evangelization of the Catholic Church. It addresses the Church’s involvement with contemporary travel by communicating the Christian faith. Here, two methodical guidelines are presented: the ‘framing of religious tourism’ in its evangelizing context and the ‘reframing of secular mass tourism’ within the Church’s anthropological view of man. The article’s first part (nos. 2 – 4) deals with the reasons why the Catholic Church promotes her artistic heritage as a pastoral tourist product. This is because she is aware of the original cultural setting of the heritage which requires also a religious communication. The second part (nos. 5 – 6) explains how the Church’s evangelizing promotion could have a pastoral influence also on secular tourism by providing a framework of Christian anthropology. The analysis of ‘best practice’ in the third part (no. 7) examines six international cases of this approach: Grande Museo del Duomo in Florence, Baroque churches of the Philippines (UNESCO World Heritage List), Catechesis through Christian art by a Diocesan Office in Florence, European federation ‘Ars et Fides’, Santiago de Compostela as ‘European City of Culture’ in the year 2000 and the ‘Holy Week Celebration’ in León (Spain) as a tourism event.

1. The original cultural setting of the Church’s artistic heritage

Travel occupies an important aspect of the human condition. In modern times, touristic travel has served also as an occasion to nourish the spiritual longings of the human person. The Catholic Church, especially since the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965), has recognized these facts in her desire to be in dialogue with the contemporary world and in her pastoral attention to tourism as a legitimate way of spending man’s leisure time. The pastoral care of tourists, in the understanding of the Catholic Church based on her official pronouncements, may be understood as an
attempt to address anthropological matters that are relevant to ‘the proper nature of man, his problems and his experiences in trying to know and perfect both himself and the world’, and also in order to communicate the Christian message of faith.¹

To nourish the spiritual needs of travelers is today an important part of the Church’s responsibility in her pastoral concern for tourists. This is especially achieved when the Church communicates the faith in various ways to travelers, especially prominent in such pastoral care of religious tourists as the employment of sacred art and architecture as opportunities for catechesis. The concept of ‘religious tourism’ may be understood, according to the consensus of many authors, as a mixed combination of both religious pilgrimage and secular tourism.² According to Estela Marine-Roig, religious tourism is not necessarily limited to the desire to visit shrines and religious sites for the sole purpose of participating in religious acts. In so far as the destinations are concerned, there may be also historical and cultural dimensions that attract the attention of many secular travelers who want to be part of the original experience connected with those religious sites.³

The Catholic Church, therefore, does not respond passively to the complex reality of religious tourism. In her current call to a new evangelization, the Church envisions a creative approach to use every opportunity to re-propose the Gospel to secularized societies. For this reason, the present article recalls the fact that the new evangelization can provide a framework for religious tourism according to the original cultural setting of the artistic heritage and by corresponding to the needs of the communication of faith in a growing secular environment.

In trying to understand the reasons for the proposed correlation between religious tourism and new evangelization, specifically as part of the Church’s work of faith communication, we must be aware of the original cultural setting of the Church’s artistic heritage. In his 2014 interview in Florence with the author, Timothy Verdon stated that it is important that the Church demonstrates the underlying logic or raison d’être for which her religious and artistic cultural patrimony was created and by which it should be perceived.⁴ This artistic heritage has been specifically made within the context of the Church’s liturgy, worship or catechesis in order to render perceptible and possible the presence of God.⁵

With regard to this context, Christian identity has always been transmitted through both verbal and visual communications, as Ralf van Bühren points out. Christian art and architecture ‘is a huge heritage, with which the Catholic Church has gained great experience. Since the third and fourth centuries, she has communicated meaningfully through sacred spaces and the visual arts, especially through images’.⁶

The same is true for the Church today. In 2000, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States (now USCCB) published liturgical guidelines for art and architecture in worship.⁷ The document makes clear that: ‘authentic art is integral to the Church at prayer because these objects and actions are ‘signs and symbols’ of the supernatural word and expressions of the divine presence’.⁸ This is done so as not to deprive these objects of their original setting in order that these objects are allowed to have the capacity to say what they have to say.⁹

To do away with the obvious acknowledgement that religious tourism at Christian sites should expose the visitors to what is essential in the Church’s life, would mean
misreading the meaning or not seeing the real value of the Christian artifacts. Timothy Verdon graphically expressed this methodology in terms of visiting an old person who is just sitting in a home for the old. In this metaphor, one sees an old man or woman in an ‘anonymous setting’ but one realizes that the same person ‘once had a life’ — be it a family, a house, his or her own things. However, it is now hard to imagine what that life was all about because one only sees the elderly person in that anonymous setting. The same must then be made in the case of religious tourism, where the Church should present the Christian artifacts in their original cultural setting which includes also the communication of faith.

This article, therefore, undertakes an academic approach to determining the relationship between religious tourism and the communication of the faith within the scope of new evangelization. On the one hand, it becomes evident that such an approach will necessarily have to include an inquiry into the correlation between the increasing religious tourism today and the pastoral goals of the Catholic Church. Such an inquiry seeks to establish the criteria and conditions that create the need for a pastoral attention to religious tourism. Here, the call to a new evangelization is suggested as a framework for this pastoral attention.

On the other hand, while it is clear that the Church is not responsible for the development of human mobility in general, it is nonetheless important that the Church responds actively to secular tourism because she is willing to become more responsive in her involvement and engagement with the contemporary world. This establishes the reason why the Church needs to reframe secular mass tourism within the Christian anthropological vision of man. In what follows, this study will explain the Church’s involvement in promoting the pastoral care of religious tourism (nos. 2 – 4) and in addressing or redirecting secular travel (nos. 5 – 6) through six international examples of best practice of this approach (no. 7).

2. Framing religious tourism within the new evangelization

The question about the new evangelization may be seen as an examination of the way in which Christian communities today live their faith and bear witness to it in society. In this regard, the Synod of Bishops stated in 2012 that the new evangelization becomes a process of reading and deciphering also ‘new sectors which have emerged in human history’ which ‘might be turned into places for proclaiming the Gospel and experiencing the Church’. These sectors, according to the Synod of Bishops, encompass ‘cultures, society, economics, civic life and religion’. It is significant here that ‘the cultural sector was seen as a priority’ in the work of evangelization and pastoral care.

Prevalent in the Western world is the perception that the cultural situation of our times would be synonymous with secularizing trends, which envisage life in this world without any reference to the transcendent. Hence, these secularizing trends would enter into the cultural life of the people and create a mentality that God is absent. Such a ‘death of God’ mentality gives way to hedonism and materialism and eliminates the question about God in the person’s life so much that the people revert to a neo-pagan lifestyle. However, the world is still the common ground on which
believers and non-believers interact and share values of a common humanity. It is this human element which remains the ‘natural point’ and ‘privileged place’ of evangelization.

Therefore, it is an important task of for Christians to facilitate an encounter with people by continuing to look and search for what is truly human. Also in the context of the new evangelization, the Holy See took pastoral initiatives, such as in the ‘Courtyard of the Gentiles’, a structure of the Pontifical Council for Culture, of which it is one of the departments. The goal of the Church’s new evangelization is to help individuals and society respond to the challenges of today’s world by being firmly anchored in the tradition of the Christian faith. This is to protect humanity from the ill effects of a culture that is ‘a so-called culture which is short-lived, immediately gratifying and based on mere appearance or a society incapable of looking to either the past or the future’. The challenge remains as to how the Church should effectively communicate the wisdom of the Christian tradition.

An important part of this tradition is the Church’s pastoral attention to the cultural heritage. It includes the promotion of the Christian anthropological view of man (nos. 5 – 6) and of the communication of faith (nos. 2 – 4). Both efforts provide an inspiring framework for religious tourism which is based on the ‘come and see approach’.

3. The ‘come and see approach’ in religious tourism

To encapsulate the pastoral value of religious tourism for the Church, a consistent and non-threatening pedagogy of the faith could attract people. The artistic patrimony of the Church can open the doors to all in a welcoming gesture. It would fulfill the image of a Church – in the words of Pope Francis in his post-synodal exhortation on the new evangelization (2013) – that ‘goes forth’ to share the ‘joy of the Gospel that fills the lives of all who encounter Jesus’. It has its model in Jesus’ own gesture of opening his abode to the seeker or the curious by inviting them all to ‘come and see’.

The ‘come and see approach’ in religious tourism could express a teaching method of faith communication proper to the traditional pastoral use of art in the Church. It is also responsive to the demands of a new evangelization. Communicating the Christian faith in the new evangelization, as proposed again in 2012 by the Synod of Bishops, requires a specific pedagogy, a mode of teaching or transmitting. It borrows from the spiritual perspectives of Benedict XVI in his letter proclaiming the year of faith. The faith to be transmitted should be ‘professed, celebrated, lived and prayed’. The same Synod of Bishops attests that for this very end, Saint John Paul II has given the Church the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the double purpose of setting forth the basic tenets of the faith and of indicating the pedagogy for its transmission. The Synod of Bishops also recognized the difficulty involved because the secularization of culture has also shown that the various methods of catechesis ‘are not always allowed to reach full development in transmitting the faith’. For this reason, the Synod of Bishops envisioned a catechesis that is basic, yet complete, and able to transmit fully ‘the core elements of the faith, and, at the same time, knows
how to speak to people today, in their culture, while listening to their questions and inspiring their search for truth, goodness and beauty.\textsuperscript{31}

Timothy Verdon believes that the artistic, religious and cultural heritage of the Church can effectively communicate the message of faith even to the most secular of tourists.\textsuperscript{32} According to him, such optimism is legitimate and also affirmed by cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in his introduction to the \textit{Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church} (2005) which makes a very strong statement that today sacred images can say more than books because we live in an image oriented civilization where people spend more time watching TV than reading.\textsuperscript{33}

For Verdon, this statement was made by one who is both a writer and theologian but has come to affirm that images nowadays speak louder than words. Moreover, in the course of history, the Church may have written tens of thousands of books, but she has created many millions of artworks. Also in the past, it has been taken for granted, according to Verdon, that most people will learn the Church’s teachings more from images than from books. This was not intended only as a kind of didactic solution to a problem \textit{al ribasso} because the poor ignorant people cannot read books and therefore, they must be given a kind of ‘\textit{Biblia pauperum}’.\textsuperscript{34}

Actually, it concerns the real meaning of the use of art in the Church, which is related to the way in which Christians understand the mediation of salvation. Verdon emphasized that salvation is not mere words but consists of the Word Become Flesh. The reason for the Incarnation of the divine Word is explained in the Prologue of Saint John – so that humanity can finally see.\textsuperscript{35} This is a shift, as Verdon explains, from a God in the Old Testament\textsuperscript{36} who does not want to be seen to a God who does want to be seen in Christ. Therefore, art and architecture in the pastoral and cultural life of the Church extends in history the dynamism of the Incarnation.\textsuperscript{37} This is true only of Christianity and not of any other religious systems where art merely illustrates personages and stories or gives decorative patterns.\textsuperscript{38} In Christianity, the fact of seeing or touching is profoundly related to the actual theological content of faith, which is that of a spiritual God who becomes an incarnated person we can see and touch.\textsuperscript{39}

This is what gives Christian artistic, religious and cultural heritage a particular power of mediation because it ‘communicates something that is not a parallel meaning of the faith, but the very meaning of the faith’.\textsuperscript{40} Verdon offered the insight that ‘when people get to heaven, there will not be books but a vision’.\textsuperscript{41} Seeing in Christian art the visual symbolic presence of Christ is an anticipation of that kind of full and immediate vision in heaven that humanity will have of God himself. Beauty in nature and culture gives people a sense of the great beauty that humanity is destined to see because humanity is destined to see God. Saint Thomas Aquinas explained that ‘God is said to be beautiful, as being the cause of the harmony and clarity of the universe’.\textsuperscript{42} People who draw near the church building should have ‘an impression of great beauty’.\textsuperscript{43} In the first place, it is an aesthetic beauty that draws people to see the Christian artworks. But if humanity lingers for a while, they will realize that the aesthetic beauty of Christian art and architecture manifests also an inner and spiritual beauty.\textsuperscript{44}

In the service rendered to tourists in the Church’s pastoral attention to art, Verdon believes that the Church today is called to address whole generations of
people from all over the world who might be ignorant of religious subjects and no longer feel that religion could form a meaningful part of their lives. A possible response to this situation is to find appropriate ways to attract the tourists’ attention. In today’s visual culture, one of the ways is through spectacle. The artistic works themselves are spectacle because of their beauty, meaning, size or precious materials. Within an initial approach, a message can be communicated that should not be very complicated and may not always be explicitly catechetical because many tourists do not have much time or sufficient knowledge of culture or theology. To these people, Verdon sees the communication of faith taking place here because already a simple recounting of the historical significance of the Church’s artistic, religious and cultural heritage keeps the tourists interested.\textsuperscript{45}

Tourists are often deeply moved because in the present culture they ‘do not have the occasion to hear certain words, or hear certain themes or the concepts that religion talks about like life and death, good and evil, heaven and hell’.\textsuperscript{46} These issues are presented in a simple way that is non-proselytizing. Hence, during the visit of a church building or a museum with Christian art, there are occasions to reflect on these themes, which no other source in society provides today.\textsuperscript{47} In this respect, the evangelizing ‘come and see approach’ in religious tourism as a visual pedagogy can respond to what Pope Francis refers to as taking ‘the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the center of the evangelizing activity and efforts at Church renewal’.\textsuperscript{48}

Finally, Verdon believes that it is significant that the artworks, especially in Europe, manifest to the people a Judeo-Christian basis of culture. This basic influence has continued to accompany the cultural developments during the Renaissance period and has also served as a basis for our contemporary culture.\textsuperscript{49} These lessons from history correct the common prejudice that ‘contemporary society should be conceived under a cultural climate devoid of any sense of the transcendent’.\textsuperscript{50}

4. The Church’s cultural heritage as a regular tourist destination

In tourism studies, very popular church buildings are classified as ‘high profile places’ or ‘primary nuclei’ with attributes which are ‘influential in making the decision to visit the respective place’.\textsuperscript{51} In Great Britain, church architecture is listed among the six most popular tourist destinations in 1988.\textsuperscript{52} Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris was reported to be ‘the most popular tourist attraction in Europe’ with a reported 13.5 million annual visitors (in 2006).\textsuperscript{53} Antoni Gaudi’s Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Familia is Spain’s most visited monument with 2.26 million annual visitors (in 2004).\textsuperscript{54}

Several other church buildings in Germany and Italy, including the major basilicas, are equally popular as tourist destinations.\textsuperscript{55} In Western Europe, tourists are said to visit churches more often during their travels than they normally do at home.\textsuperscript{56} The head of the ‘Catholic Unit for Tourism and Leisure Pastoral Care’ in France has claimed that ‘churches have become tourist products’.\textsuperscript{57} While it is true that tourists who visit religious or pilgrimage sites are performing the usual tourist rites like
‘sightseeing, photographing and souvenir-hunting’, in the ‘familiar religious environment’ they also ‘perform basic religious acts’.58

The capacity of the Catholic Church to let the growing phenomenon of religious tourism include also an effective transmission of the Christian faith is currently challenged by ‘the blurring of lines’ between pilgrimage and tourism that might be responsible for ‘an increase in religiously and spiritually motivated travel’.59 Pilgrims and tourists are different; however, they continue to ‘form a continuum of inseparable elements’.60 Pilgrimage and tourism overlap each other so much so that ‘a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist’.61 Instances of overlapping include the following: pilgrims and tourists use the same infrastructure for travel; travelers combine pilgrimage with family vacation; pilgrimages include visits to other tourist attractions; tourists visit pilgrimage sites; pilgrims and tourists are indistinguishable at restaurants and souvenir shops; travelers split their itineraries as pilgrims and as tourists; pilgrim centers have non-religious entertainments; pilgrimage sites have alliances with other cultural institutions and organizations; organized pilgrimages also have days off for visiting tourists facilities.62

Regarding the meaning of pilgrimage and tourism, many scholars in the 1990s, including ecclesiastics, continue to establish similarities between the two,63 although some authors prefer to insist on the separation of their meaning.64 The risk for blurring of the distinctions in this ‘Mixed Interest Tourism’ is obvious, of course. Michel Bauer, however, insists that the public image of tourism continues to be linked with ‘banality, frivolity, and consumptions’ while pilgrimages are ‘associated with seriousness and commitment’.65 In any case, the Church’s efforts to transmit the faith in religious tourism would be superficial without emphasizing the specific Christian elements in the sites’ promotion and in the cultivation of the visitors’ experience. Within ‘Mixed Interest Tourism’, there is certainly the need to find the right angle of framing religious tourism in the Church’s evangelization.66

5. Reframing secular tourism within the Church’s anthropological vision of man

The possibilities of reframing the secular mass tourism from being exclusively associated with banality, a superficial event or consumer mentality into a more profound reality are not remote, if the refinement of the senses, the expansion of the spirit and the enrichment of experience are promoted.

Since the 1950s, the Church has focused with attention and courage on the tourist phenomenon being closely associated with the use of leisure time.67 This involvement of the Church has initiated a ‘reframing’ process that allows to bring about the consequences of an ethical equilibrium and of spirituality in tourism.68 Carlo Mazza identifies the historical-cultural context of the Church’s concern for mass tourism, in a general perspective, as a ‘res nova’ in the wake of the industrial revolution that has provided laborers the possibility to have time for themselves.69 This granting of free time became an opportunity for leisure connected with tourism activities. It has become an important idea for humanity in terms of rest and recreation.70 More significantly, it offers a sense of cultural value to humanity.
This cultural or anthropological value is viewed as something that helps bring about the realization of an elevated sense of self-affirmation in man, both from the ethical and the anthropological point of view. The reason is that this anthropological value defines man’s identity, dignity, faculties, potentialities, relational nature, interior dimension and capacity for transcendence so as not to reduce him to being considered as a mere instrument or as a functional tool. Furthermore, the use of man’s leisure and free time helps to bring about a vision of humanity that is according to the Christian tradition.

The Catholic Church has tried to reframe secular tourism within the Christian anthropological vision of man. She proposes to promote a tourism that is disassociated from negative connotations, such as idleness and vice, within a consumerist, materialist, nihilist or hedonist mentality. It is for this same reason that the Second Vatican Council supported a vision of the use of free time for leisure as a period for personal growth for nurturing interpersonal relationships, and not only for the rest from work.

In this regard, according to Carlo Mazza, the Catholic Church since the mid-1960s has situated the use of free time within the ambient of culture as being directed towards the fulfillment of the human person as such. The pastoral perspectives pursued by the Church in her succeeding documents – notably Peregrinans in terra (1969), Chiesa e mobilità umana (1978) and Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Tourism (2001) – provide indications or practical guidelines to address the impact of tourism on contemporary man for such concerns as ecology, economics and globalization. The Church through her ordinary magisterium continues to address the phenomenon of tourism in her messages during the World Tourism Day every 27 September of each year.

6. Mass tourism and the evangelizing response to the desire for the infinite

The necessity to reframe mass tourism within the Church’s anthropological view of man finds a more direct argument in Evangelii Gaudium (2013). There Pope Francis points out that the Church’s proclamation of the faith is ‘capable of responding to the desire for the infinite which abides in every human heart’. The evangelizing activity also demands ‘the use of eloquent symbols, insertion into a broader growth process and the integration of every dimension of the person within a communal journey of hearing and response’. For Francis, it would be desirable that each particular Church should encourage the use of the arts in evangelization, building on the treasures of the past but also drawing upon the wide variety of contemporary expressions so as to transmit the faith in a new “language of parables”.

Evangelii Gaudium also refers to the presence of an ‘authentic Christian faith’ in several areas of today’s societies ‘which has its own expressions and means of showing its relationship to the Church’:

The Christian substratum of certain peoples – most of all in the West – is a living reality. Here we find, especially among the most needy, a moral resource which preserves the values of an authentic Christian humanism. Seeing reality with the eyes of
faith, we cannot fail to acknowledge what the Holy Spirit is sowing. It would show a lack of trust in his free and unstinting activity to think that authentic Christian values are absent where great numbers of people have received baptism and express their faith and solidarity with others in a variety of ways.\(^8\)\(^1\)

Pope Francis emphasized that the presence of an ‘evangelized popular culture’ which subsists and survives even in the most secular of environments can manifest a capacity that does not just draw strength from numbers, but has a lot of potential which must be acknowledged with gratitude. It can allow an evangelized culture to grow, one that contains the values of faith and solidarity that are capable of encouraging the development of a just and believing society.\(^8\)\(^2\) All this could also be possible in places of the Church’s artistic heritage through the direct contact between these Christians and tourists.

As the Church continues to engage in the pastoral care of tourists, she will be able to positively influence the practice of mass tourism towards the desired ends because ‘missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity’.\(^8\)\(^3\) Reframing mass tourism within the Christian anthropology of man can then be seen as part of the Church’s mission to pass on the faith in the context of a creative and fresh methodology envisioned by the new evangelization.

7. Models of best practice

After Vatican II, the Catholic Church was again awake to the great pastoral potentials of Christian art and architecture.\(^8\)\(^4\) This also affected her concerns regarding tourism to religious sites. Here, the Church wanted to carry out the task of communicating the Christian faith within the context of the anthropological view of man (nos. 5 – 6) and of the new evangelization (nos. 2 – 4). Several initiatives have been undertaken to promote ancient pilgrimage sites and traditional religious festivities and rites as touristic products. These pastoral initiatives blend well with the current tourism model referred to as ‘special interest tourism’ (SIT), defined by Weiler and Hall as something that occurs when ‘traveler’s motivation and decision-making are primarily determined by a particular special interest with a focus either on activity/ies and/or destinations and settings’.\(^8\)\(^5\) In this regard, religious tourism as a unique cultural experience has found a niche within SIT.

Several projects have been undertaken by local churches today to transmit the Christian faith through their cultural heritage resources. Local churches have also collaborated with secular institutions to carry out proposals for the pastoral promotion of religious tourism and the pastoral care of both sites and tourists. Moreover, visits to religious sites are made more convenient with the use of the tools of information technology and of modern travel. This chapter 7 highlights some examples of ‘best practice’ in the pastoral concern for religious tourism.

7.1 Archdiocese of Florence: the Grande Museo del Duomo

The Grande Museo del Duomo in Florence is a building complex, a ‘single great museum’\(^8\)\(^6\) that consists of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, Brunelleschi’s
Dome, Giotto’s Bell Tower, the Baptistry of San Giovanni, the Roman archaeological site of the Crypt of Santa Reparata and the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo. It was designed to promote the rich Christian cultural heritage of the Church of Florence.

The group of buildings is located at the Piazza del Duomo and the Piazza San Giovanni, the historical center of the religious life of Florence. This area, situated at the northeast of the Roman Florentia, calls to mind ‘the new Jerusalem’ where ‘God lives among men’. The complex evokes the ‘city of God’ that gives witness to the age-old belief expressed in scriptures about the solidarity between God and man: ‘he will make his home among them, they shall be his people, and he will be their God’ (Rev 21:3). This perspective is also reflected in the name of the piazza referring to where the whole complex is situated: ‘Duomo’ — which is a word derived probably from the Latin term ‘domus Dei’, to mean ‘house of God’. In fact, the church building was constructed by the Opera del Duomo — the establishment responsible for the construction, conservation and maintenance of the Cathedral — as a house of God among his people. Hence, the goal Opera del Duomo invites all visitors to admire this house embellished by the Florentines over the centuries with works of art and faith.

The Baptistry of San Giovanni is the oldest building structure in the square and was believed to be a former pagan temple later converted for Christian use. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, three sets of bronze doors were made to represent biblical stories which invite every believer to live a life of faith. The door of the south side is the oldest and was made by Andrea Pisano in the 1330s to depict the life of St. John the Baptist, the patron of Florence. Between 1402 and 1425, Lorenzo Ghiberti made the north door to depict the life of Christ and between 1425 and 1450 the east door, referred to by Michelangelo as the ‘Gates of Paradise’, was made to depict scenes from the Old Testament. The dome of the baptistry as seen from the font below contains the influence of Byzantine art in Italy from the thirteenth century showing the giant figure of Christ and images of death and resurrection to illustrate the profound meaning of baptism:

> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

The building of the Cathedral was begun around 1296 after most of the mosaic decoration inside the baptistery was nearly completed by the Florentine government. This was to replace the old church dedicated to Santa Reparata, which was crumbling at this time. The Cathedral as it stands today is the result of 170 years of work. The new Cathedral in honor of Santa Maria del Fiore was constructed out of public funds, and for this reason, the artworks in the aisles reflect a ‘civic program’ that honors illustrious men.

Santa Reparata represents not the old Church but the excavation site from the ancient Cathedral of Santa Reparata. A major archaeological dig from 1965 to 1973 revealed the remains of the old basilica of Santa Reparata as evidence of early Christianity in Florence. The access is through a stairway in the second bay of the right aisle inside the present Cathedral. The old Church was constructed upon the
remains of fifth-century houses and elements of later constructions of the church up to the mid-1300s.

The Bell Tower was started by Giotto in 1334, and after his death, Andrea Pisano continued the work until later Francesco Talenti completed the project. The edifice contains a rich sculptural decoration of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with 56 reliefs on two registers and 16 life-size statues in the niches, all by Florentine artists.

The Dome of the Cathedral consists of two interconnected ogival shells and was built between 1420 and 1436 after design by Filippo Brunelleschi. A lantern crowns the dome, as designed by Brunelleschi but installed only in 1461 after his death, with a gilt copper ball and cross on top of it, installed in 1468 and containing holy relics based on a design by Andrea del Verrocchio. A fresco is painted on the inner shell representing The Last Judgment (1572 – 1579) by Giorgio Vasari and Federico Zuccari.95

The Museo dell’Opera del Duomo is located at number 9, Piazza del Duomo. After expansion and extensive renovation, the museum reopened in October 2015. Originally, the building served as a work storage space for the office of the Cathedral Works since the Middle Ages – which is where Michelangelo carved the famous David, which was originally commissioned for the Duomo or the Cathedral. The Museo dell’Opera del Duomo today houses the original sculptures of the Cathedral complex including Arnolfo’s unfinished façade, the panels of Lorenzo Ghiberti’s Gates of Paradise, wooden models of the dome and lantern, the design plans, reliquaries from the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, vestments and the second of Michelangelo’s three Pietàs.

According to the director of the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Msgr. Timothy Verdon, the exhibition must not be misunderstood to mean that the works in this building have become mere museum artifacts. It is rather to highlight that every art object exhibited in this complex was commissioned by the Opera del Duomo to give expression to the Christian faith and worship.96 Also the word of welcome to the tourists given by Giuseppe Betori, since 2008 the Archbishop of Florence, points to this Christian identity of the Grande Museo del Duomo:

Our Church greets you with a legacy of faith embodied by extraordinary beauty in the sites you are visiting and the images around you. Everything you are admiring here was created to express Christianity, as a way to encourage the praise of God that issues from this faith and thus give it meaning. To grasp these splendors fully we must look beyond their formal values in order to understand their religious roots, the meaning of faith that they strive to express, and the worship and devotion for which they were created.97

In Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, most people in Florence came probably for the liturgy and saw these works of religious art along the side. During the Renaissance, some people already began to come to the Church to visit only the artworks. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries scholars and those who loved art would ask and come to see the works of art that were stored in warehouses until the first museum was built in 1891.

Today the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo has undergone a major development in the way that art, history and faith are efficiently communicated to international tourists. Its focus is to exhibit the artworks in a way that shows the underlying meaning
for which these works came to be. These works were meant to be perceived in the context of Christian faith, prayer, liturgy and cultural representation for which they were made. The old museum placed some huge pieces in constricted spaces, whereas the today’s much bigger museum allows for displaying the monumental works almost in their original settings. This was made possible because of the recent acquisition of a theatre building near the museum.

The objective of the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo is to strongly remind tourists that the western cultural heritage is mainly inspired by the Judeo-Christian tradition. It recalls that Christian faith is not only a fact of medieval history but part of the beginning modern age, starting with the Renaissance. The new museum is a visual spectacle in itself, an institutional response to the contemporary needs and expectations in ‘specialized interest tourism’ (SIT).

7.2. UNESCO World Heritage List: the baroque churches of the Philippines

Pastoral activity with the help of church architecture and ecclesiastical museums is still a work in progress in the Philippines. In 2006, the ‘Archdiocesan Museum of Cebu’ (AMC) was reopened in Cebu City. It is located next to the Metropolitan Cathedral and offers exhibitions and guided tours. ‘As an ecclesiastical museum, AMC is designed and mandated to serve as a tool for evangelization and re-evangelization’, said Fr. Brian C. Brigoli, the director of the museum, in his encouragement to the public schools of the Cebu Province to visit the museum to learn the rich history of the Church from the Spanish era until today.

‘Unlike other museums that focus on valuable art or historical artifacts’, said Brigoli, ‘religious museums also face the challenge of inspiring guests to reflect on their faith’. Therefore, he wants to let the school students engage with the ‘religious objects that are no longer in use today, and what they reveal about the lives of church communities’.

The UNESCO World Heritage project is another example of such a collaboration between the Catholic Church and secular agencies, even in the different area of the conservation of cultural heritage. Currently, there are 591 Catholic church buildings around the world listed under this UNESCO project. In 2008, the list of religious sites, which also covers non-Catholic churches, has reached 851 properties in 141 states that represent the world’s most prestigious sites. In 2018, the list includes 1092 properties from 167 state parties that form part of the cultural, natural and mixed heritage as having an ‘outstanding universal value’. Religious sites commonly serve as tourist attractions on a global scale. There are those sites that are conserved or preserved to be promoted as main tourist attractions, in addition to stimulating local or national pride.

Some of the mentioned churches being classified as UNESCO world heritage are located in the Philippines: Manila, Santa Maria, Pacay and Miag-ao. They are valued for their architectural designs that are considered as a unique reinterpretation of the European Baroque by Chinese and Philippine craftsmen. These church buildings, constructed between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, form part of the Spanish period in Philippine history. These churches have established a building design that significantly influenced the architecture of other local churches in the
Philippines. Their style and design are considered outstanding examples of the Filipino interpretation as a fusion of European church design with local materials (stones or bricks, consolidated lime) and decorative motifs. This creative fusion has resulted in a new church-building tradition. The common attributes of these churches include their monumental which reflects a protective-like fortress appearance to help ward off pirates as well as to respond to the seismic activities in the geologic conditions.

The buildings have specific features like altars (retablos) of high baroque style, the employment of buttresses (in the volutes of contrafuertes) and pyramidal finials in the wall facades. Included in the common features are walls separating the chapels, an ornate iconography of naïf/folk pediment. In pictures of the life of Christ and of the saints, the figures are dressed in local or traditional clothing. Bell towers are attached to the main part of the church. The churches follow the Law of the Indies enacted by Philip II in 1563 for all colonial Spanish settlements. These Baroque churches continue to be used for liturgical celebrations today. The government efforts are directed to the restoration and conservation in the retention of their original materials and its substantial baroque features.

These Philippine churches are legally owned, administered and managed by Church authorities. The management system allows the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) to serve as overall site managers. The NCCA works with other agencies like the National Museum (NM) and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) to help implement conservation and restoration projects. All three agencies actively collaborate with the Catholic Church authorities as owners and with other stakeholders. The daily management of activities is the responsibility of the Church authorities. A tripartite agreement (between NCCA, NM, NHCP and the Church authorities) is in place for the conservation and management of the World Heritage and nationally designated heritage sites.\(^{107}\)

The abovementioned Baroque churches are also covered and protected through the National Heritage Law (Republic Act 10066) and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines Law (Republic Act 10086) that promulgate laws to ensure their proper safeguarding, protection, conservation management and use as religious edifices.\(^{108}\) On 29 May 2008, an agreement between the Holy See and the republic of the Philippines has been ratified on the cultural heritage of the Catholic Church in the Philippines.\(^{109}\) In 2013, a concordat on the cultural heritage of the Catholic Church in the Philippines was established between the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines. This concordat ‘recognizes the need for protecting and conserving the artistic, historic, scientific, spiritual, and other intangible values inherent in those movable and immovable properties which constitute the cultural heritage of the Catholic Church.’\(^{110}\)

Conservation and restoration projects are carried out and implemented through the national cultural agencies that work to ensure a regular monitoring of the concerns, threats and problems of these churches’ state of conservation. Canon Law is also to be observed and applied by the Catholic authorities to the conservation of the cultural heritage of the Church. In canon 1216, the Church stipulates that ‘in building and restoration of Churches the advice of experts is to be used, and the principles
and norms of the liturgy and sacred art are to be observed.\textsuperscript{111} The site manager makes sure that works are carried out according to World Heritage standards to maintain the ‘outstanding universal value’ of these churches. A Technical Working Committee (TWC) is also established as part of the NCCA team of experts to maintain the highest standards of conservation measures afforded to World Heritage properties. The involvement of the local communities as stakeholders is encouraged and sought in consultations. Finally, the involvement of Church authorities covers all aspects so that the conservation projects are undertaken at their level as owners of the properties.

7.3. Archdiocese of Florence: catechesis through the Diocesan Office of Sacred Art

In Florence, the creation of a specific office for the use of art in catechesis was a direct response to the message of John Paul II during the ‘ad limina’ visit of the Bishops from Tuscany. The Pope reminded them of the special calling of the Church in Tuscany to use the universal language of beauty and goodness in the works of art as a means to communicate today the Christian message to all people.\textsuperscript{112} Cardinal Silvano Piovanelli, from 1983 to 2001 archbishop of Florence, responded to the current pastoral challenges by establishing a new Ufficio Diocesano per la Catechesi attraverso l’Arte\textsuperscript{113} which today is part of the ‘Ufficio Diocesano dell’Arte Sacra e dei Beni Culturali Ecclesiastici’ (‘Diocesan Office of Sacred Art and Church Cultural Heritage’).\textsuperscript{114}

The objective of this ‘Ufficio Diocesano per la Catechesi attraverso l’Arte’ in Florence was to reach out to everyone, both to the believers and the non-believers, through an educational approach that trains people to possess an adequate knowledge of how to arrive at a basic or key understanding of European Christian art.\textsuperscript{115} This pastoral initiative in Florence also attempted to remedy a simplistic or falsifying approach to sacred art among the many people who come to visit art museums, cathedrals and churches but do not know how to decode the full meaning of what they are viewing. The office’s program includes three specific audiences.

7.3.1. Conferences for the general public

The program for the general public recognizes that among many tourists and even among citizens of Florence, who pass by the city’s monuments and artworks, there is not a clear idea of their religious and cultural message.\textsuperscript{116} The program was first created in 1990 – 1991. It offers five conferences for the general public of Florence inside the baptistery and is entitled Alla riscoperta di Piazza del Duomo. Every year, the monuments in the piazza, which include the baptistery, the cathedral’s interior, the bell tower, the dome and the façade of the cathedral are examined and studied in terms of the evolution of styles, iconography and the charitable institutes that provide a methodical ‘framework’ to these religious monuments. Collaboration with the University of Florence involves the presence of teachers who provide scientific information.\textsuperscript{117} Timothy Verdon also presents two conferences on the religious key that
unlocks the message of the examined works. He has also edited a book on these conferences.\textsuperscript{118}

\textbf{7.3.2. School program}

The second project began in 1992 and addresses the needs of school students.\textsuperscript{119} The course uses a didactic model for understanding the Christian meaning of the monuments on the Piazza del Duomo proposed by the schoolteachers.\textsuperscript{120} Its objective is to help students to understand the historical roots of Christianity in Florence that have produced artworks and to offer key concepts of understanding God’s word. To this end, ten meetings inside the baptistery are held for a selected number of students from elementary to high school.\textsuperscript{121} The themes are from the catechism and are with regard to the biblical images of the mosaic depicted on the baptistery’s dome and of its bronze doors.\textsuperscript{122}

Lest these meetings occur in isolation, it was seen as useful to continue the course program in the classroom setting. Every year six meetings are organized with accompanying handouts intended for teachers.\textsuperscript{123} The school program has been given the recognition by the Minister of Education.\textsuperscript{124}

\textbf{7.3.3. Tourism project}

The third program is designed to enhance the experience of tourists visiting Florence by introducing them to the transcendent values of Christian art. It is meant to counteract the lack of culture and the experience of banality that becomes overly associated with mass tourism.\textsuperscript{125} This is achieved by helping tourists overcome their inability to read the deeper meaning of artworks in Florence. With the proper intervention brought about by the presence of volunteer guides in the cathedral and other churches, it is possible to deepen the audience’s reception.

In Florence, this tourism program is connected with a special guide service in welcoming visitors offered by the European federation of \textit{Ars et Fides}, which was made possible through the efforts of Cardinal Piovanelli.\textsuperscript{126} The program involves 10 to 15 young students in the months of July and August who offer guide services for tourists visiting the Santa Maria del Fiore cathedral after they have received an intensive training by Timothy Verdon on conducting guided tours.\textsuperscript{127} In 1992 – 1993, in collaboration with the rector of the archdiocesan seminary, Monsignor Fabrizio Porcinai, also a group of seminarians became involved in the special ministry of welcoming tourists.\textsuperscript{128} In 1996, on the occasion of the 7\textsuperscript{th} centenary of the cathedral, a permanent group of guides have been in place. Verdon also has written some materials to provide basic information and methodology on managing the tourist visits of tourists.\textsuperscript{129}

\textbf{7.4. Bruges: the European federation ‘Ars et Fides’}

\textit{Ars et Fides} is a European federation of associations and groups,\textsuperscript{130} headquartered in Bruges, that was established for the sole aim of ‘welcoming visitors to religious monuments’.\textsuperscript{131} The goals of the federation are to offer to its member associations and groups the opportunity to know each other, to provide mutual support, to help
recruiting members, to offer assistance in preparatory works, reflections, trainings and the exchange of members. The federation members see themselves as belonging to Christian communities and they strive to present artistic monuments in terms of their historical, artistic and Christian dimensions for the purpose of ‘exchanging ideas and sharing diverse spiritual and cultural traditions. The members render their service free of charge.

The federation Ars et Fides provides also a Christian pastoral service to the tourists who visit the religious sites. It strives to communicate the Christian inspiration that has shaped European culture and history. Ars et Fides facilitates the exchanges between various Christian churches and the contact between national and international institutions. Since 1996, Timothy Verdon continues to serve as the current president of the federation.

The approach of Ars et Fides in providing guided tours to monuments for tourists follows a precise spirit: ‘to present a monument in the ‘Ars et Fides’ way is to express the deep value of art (ARS), presenting it in the context of faith (FIDES) of a specific religious site’. The methodology presupposes knowledge of scientific information, ‘but such information alone is not sufficient to explain the soul of the work of the religious art’. It should be understood clearly that the goal of the federation is not evangelization but fidelity to the original context of the work, that is ‘to express the experience of the faith-community for which the monument was built and (or) which uses it – much as if the owner of a castle were explaining his home’s meaning, or a monk that of his monastery.

The federation demonstrates the experience of faith in a given culture, place or history to help tourists uncover the religious faith from the human, social, artistic and symbolic values that has shaped the monuments. Hence, the methodology may be summed up to mean: ‘To present a religious monument in the ‘Ars et Fides’ spirit is to be faithful to all aspects of the message intended in the stones which make up the monument, and in the community which worships there.’

7.5. Tourism and Holy Week in León, Spain

A successful promotion of tourism we can find in the rituals of Holy Week in León, a city in northwest of Spain. Marketing material posted on a promotional website describes León’s Holy Week tradition as dating back to the sixteenth century and as ‘a truly inexhaustible source of emotional moments and beautiful imagery’. The same marketing material describes the experience:

For ten days, starting with the spectacular procession on the Friday before Palm Sunday leaving the Church of Our Lady of the Way, popularly known as the Market Church, to the release of doves on Resurrection Sunday on Cathedral Square, locals and visitors share a Holy Week experience with no equal.

In the practice of the León’s Holy Week processions, Los Pasos were and always will be the ‘centerpiece’ because the ‘imagery of the sorrowful Virgin and the crucified Christ conveys the principal symbolic theme of the ritual: the passion, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ’. It is significant to note that in 1908, El Diario de León featured an article on the same annual holy week procession which severely
criticized’ the event: ‘The truth is that the pasos were always ugly, bad, and anti-aesthetic. … they neither excite piety nor move our devotion’. The transformation of the event into its present popularity as a general tourist destination is made possible through the efforts of the confraternity, El Dulce Nombre de Jesús, which coordinates the yearly procession since the very beginning.

Among the recent promotional work done by the confraternity was the application document, prepared in 1983 for the Office of the Secretary of State for Tourism in order to attract also a nonlocal and secular audience. Julián Marne Martínez, the head of the confraternity petitioned to the Secretary of State for Tourism that the procession referred to as Los Pasos and a related activity called La Ronda be designated as of ‘National Touristic Interest’. The application document also claimed the artistic value of each paso by identifying the name of the sculptor and the year of its completion. The request was supported by several letters of recommendation, which were coming from several sectors like the government, the local Church and the business community. These letters of recommendation emphasized by reiteration references to tradition which was associated with ‘antiquity’, ‘continuity’, ‘originality’ and ‘popularity’. The letters of support also pointed out the financial or economic benefits for the commercial and leisure trades of the city. The application was finally approved in 1985.

The celebration of Holy Week in León presents an image of religious tradition as a reflection of sociocultural unity among ‘the people of the province of León’. More importantly, it introduces also a ‘new conception’ of the Holy Week as a ‘holiday’. The 1983 application to the state tourism authorities ‘formally embraced and advocated tourism as a legitimate image and practice in the ritual’. Mark Tate points out that the successful application established the Holy Week celebration in León as a tourist product in which local traditions are chosen and promoted nationally and internationally. It is significant that Los Pasos that have been valued in the past according to their capacity to excite piety and devotion are today valued on how well they are able to attract tourists. However, the ‘more evolved situation’ of the current practice also means that ‘Holy Week is an occasion to rest, seek entertainment, and travel’. The involvement of tourism in a religious observance also includes the involvement of ‘secular participation in the performance of a religious and civil-religious ritual’. The positive assumption is ‘that there is an inherent good’ that tourists find the traditional Holy Week observance ‘desirable’. As the confraternity document (1983) argues in its application, Los Pasos represent a longstanding tradition ‘imbued with an aura of authenticity by virtue of the fact that it re-creates a performance today’ dating back to ‘a long time ago’.

### 7.6. ‘European City of Culture’ in 2000: Santiago de Compostela

At the beginning of the new millennium, the Council of Ministers of the European Union awarded to Santiago de Compostela in Spain the honor of being named a ‘European City of Culture’. The competition (1984 – 1995) to receive this recognition was fierce. The distinctive award also came with several benefits for the recipient. Moreover, for many Europeans, the decision affirmed that Santiago de
Compostela is an important Christian pilgrimage site being a ‘favored destination for travelers since the middle ages’. During other periods in history, the city dedicated to Saint James has received similar honors because of its accompanying religious fame and because of the ‘advocacy of various church and secular authorities’. The devotion to Saint James is connected with a longstanding Christian tradition that has been preserved for centuries.

Christian tradition holds that the Apostle James had travelled to the Iberian Peninsula to preach Christianity. The same tradition holds that Saint James was later executed by Herod upon the apostle’s return to Jerusalem. His body was kept in a boat of Jaffa and his relics arrived at the Atlantic coast of Galicia. A noblewoman named Lupa immediately offered a family tomb for the saint’s body. In the ninth century, the relics of the apostle and those of his two disciples were discovered by a hermit named Pelayo on a hilltop close to what is today the city of Santiago de Compostela. Bishop Theodomir and Pope Leo III (795 – 816) confirmed the discovery and pilgrimage to the site began. King Alfonso II of Asturias (c. 760 – 842) built a chapel on the exact spot. The popularity of the shrine of Saint James was not immediate, but grew due to the efforts of many who in later history promoted the pilgrimage.

The shrine’s gradual ‘ascendance as the third in a triad of key Christian shrines’ was not the result of simple word-of-mouth testimonies but of organized efforts by authorities like that of the Archbishop of Santiago, Diego Gelmírez, who travelled through France and Italy in the early twelfth century to promote the pilgrimage to the shrine. In the later twelfth century, Archbishop Suárez de Deza from Galicia promoted the city and the shrine with the establishment of the Jubilee or Holy Year that was celebrated every time the feast of Saint James would fall on a Sunday. This was celebrated for the first time in 1182 under the blessing of King Ferdinand II. In 1480, Ferdinand and Isabel as Catholic monarchs named the city of the Apostle James the seat of the territorial government. Hospitals for pilgrims were built.

*Santiago de Compostela* continued to be a prominent Catholic site when Leo XIII in 1884 reaffirmed the validity of the relics of Saint James. In 1940, the government of Franco named the entire city as a ‘national monument’. In 1984, UNESCO classified the whole city as an international site of ‘Cultural Patrimony for Humanity’. The local government sponsored extensive cultural renewal and also tourism development projects when the city competed for the European City of Culture awards. The history of *Santiago de Compostela* shows a consistent pattern in which the place promotes itself as both a religious and a cultural center in Western Europe.

The ‘City of Culture’ competition is principally organized as part of the programs of the European Union to promote ‘European identities’ among the citizens of all member states. It is also connected with the idea that one of the most ‘viable’ products of Europe is its own cultural and historical heritage that it needs to be marketed both to EU and non-EU visitors. It is important to highlight that the bid made by *Santiago de Compostela* shows that the need to maintain and stimulate touristic industries is not only for economic reasons, but also the constitution of broad conceptual categories, such as history, religious traditions, nationalism, the environment, and “Europe” itself.
Roseman is, therefore, of the opinion that the choice in favor of Santiago de Compostela as one of the nine cities chosen as a cultural capital at the beginning of the new millennium demonstrates that sacred places have ‘influenced the apparently secular description of why certain sites draw tourists’. In its bid for the award of distinction, the promoters of Santiago de Compostela emphasized that:

Galicia participated in the Middle ages in the most advanced European cultural production ... and is at present inserted in the process of construction of the European Union, that in an intense and ideal form, symbolizes the Jacobean (Pilgrimage) Route.

Hence, Santiago de Compostela has served the cause of the European Union ‘as a catalyzing center of thought, art, knowledge, and culture, which in another time arrived only via the pilgrimage way’.

Here, it is just possible that the Catholic Church’s evangelizing promotion of tourism had an influence by having provided a framework of Christian anthropology.

8. Anthropological and faith-based orientations

After the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965), as stated above, the Catholic Church has responded to growing tourist travel by providing cultural information and spiritual nourishment to the visitors of religious sites. In this, the Church expresses her pastoral concern for people on the move. Her pastoral efforts were affected by secular mass tourism in terms of the social and moral impact that mobility brings into the people’s lives. Beyond that, the Church sought to direct travelling as an opportunity for the enrichment of human life and for the promotion of anthropological values in the world as well as for establishing ties of fraternity among the people.

Nevertheless, there could be a danger that the increasing popularity of religious tourism might be dictated by the trends of the secular tourism market as a mere consumer product for paying travelers. Here, the pastoral call of the Catholic Church to a new evangelization provides the opportunity to direct the goals of religious tourism with an anthropological and faith-based orientation. Information and communication technologies provide an improved service access to the public and can promote religious sites as tourist destinations.

In this regard, the Church’s attention to religious tourism could stimulate the communication of the original cultural setting of the artistic heritage of Christianity. It might even bring the people back to the faith. In a largely secularized environment that is suspicious of the Church’s evangelization efforts, a holistic catechesis at religious sites will not suffer from biased opposition when it takes into consideration also the historical–cultural context. This multifaceted issue will need further practical experiences and communication studies.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.
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Notes

1. Vatican Council II (1965), no. 62, cf. no. 4. *Gaudium et spes* makes a brief reference to the social phenomenon of tourism in general under the category of cultural education where this aspect of culture is placed within the context of Christian thinking.
2. Marine-Roig (2015), 26.
3. Ibid.
4. Verdon (2014).
5. Verdon (2012b, Firenze cristiana); Verdon (2002).
6. Bühren (2017), 64-65; cf. Verdon (2009); Verdon (2012a, Breve storia dell’arte sacra cristiana).
7. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2000).
8. Ibid., no. 5.
9. Ibid.
10. Verdon (2014). The personal website of Timothy Verdon (Verdon 2018) offers the following information about him: ‘Born in the United States (New Jersey, 1946), Verdon is an art historian formed at Yale University (Ph.D. 1975). He has lived in Italy for more than fifty years and since 1994 is a Roman Catholic priest in Florence, where he directs the Diocesan Office of Sacred Art and Church Cultural Heritage and the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo. He is in addition academic director of the Ecumenical Center for Art and Spirituality ‘Mount Tabor’, at Barga (LU). Author of books and articles on sacred art in Italian and English, he has been a Consultant to the Vatican Commission for Church Cultural Heritage and a Fellow of the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies (Villa I Tatti), and currently teaches in the Florence Program of Stanford University. He writes regularly for the cultural page of the Osservatore Romano and between 2010 – 2015 has curated art exhibitions in Turin, Florence, Seoul, Washington, D.C. and New York. Timothy Verdon lives in Florence, Italy, where he is a Canon of the Cathedral’ (http://timothyverdon.com/bio-cv/).
11. Synod of Bishops (2012), no. 51.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., no. 52; cf. Verdon (2002).
14. Synod of Bishops (2012), no. 52.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., no. 53.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., no. 54.
20. Ibid.
21. The ‘Courtyard of the Gentiles’ was inaugurated in Paris 2011 to encourage the meeting and dialogue between believers and non-believers, cf. Pontifical Council for Culture (2018).
22. Synod of Bishops (2012), no. 14.
23. Ibid., no. 62.
24. Ibid.
25. Cf. Pope Francis (2013), nos. 1, 24.
26. See Jn 1:39: ‘He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying …’ (translation from: The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible 2010).
27. Synod of Bishops (2012), no. 100.
28. Cf. Pope Benedict XVI (2011), no. 9: ‘At the same time, we make it our prayer that believers’ witness of life may grow in credibility. To rediscover the content of the faith that is professed, celebrated, lived and prayed, and to reflect on the act of faith, is a task that every believer must make his own, especially in the course of this Year’.
29. Synod of Bishops (2012), no. 101.
30. Ibid., no. 104.
31. Ibid.
32. Verdon (2014).
33. Ibid. Cf. Ratzinger (2005).
34. Verdon (2014). The literal meaning of ‘Biblia pauperum’ is ‘Bible of the poor’. The original meaning of the expression remains uncertain although it may refer to a medieval form of preaching associated with the illiterate preachers from the lower class or poor clergyman. ‘Biblia pauperum’ is also associated with picture bibles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries used for preaching. These popular books contained only few explanatory notes, and they rather placed a series of biblical pictures in the centre. They may have originated in Germany or the Netherlands. Several subjects portrayed in the ‘Biblia pauperum’ books are also found in paintings, sculptures, tapestries, and stained glass. Cf. Murray and Murray (2014), 64.
35. Verdon (2014). Cf. Jn 1:14: ‘And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father’ (translation from: The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible 2010).
36. Ex 33:18-23: ‘Moses said, “I beg you, show me your glory.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name «The LORD»; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live.” And the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen”’ (translation from: The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible 2010).
37. Verdon (2014).
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid. Cf. 1 Jn 1:1-3: ‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’ (translation from: The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible 2010).
40. Verdon (2014).
41. Ibid.
42. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica II – II, Q. 145, Art. 2, co.
43. Verdon (2014).
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Pope Francis (2013), no. 164.
49. Verdon (2014). See also O’Callaghan (2017).
50. Verdon (2014).
51. Stausberg (2011), 79.
52. Ibid., 76.
53. Ibid., 79.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., 80.
57. Ibid., 82.
58. Ibid., 88.
59. Olsen and Timothy (2006), 6.
60. Ibid.
61. Rocha (2006), 113.
62. Stausberg (2011), 64-65.
63. Ibid., 20-23, 25, 29, 54, 56-57, 88.
64. Ibid., 19-20, 28-29, 54-55, 99, 223.
65. Bauer (1993), 26; cf. Vitor (2007), 83-84, 87.
66. Cf. Wiśniewski (2018).
67. Mazza (2007), 158.
68. Ibid.; cf. L'impiego del tempo libero come attuale problema sociale (1960).
69. Mazza (2007), 158.
70. Cf. Ibid., p. 159.
71. Cf. Ibid.
72. Cf. Ibid. On the Christian anthropological view of man cf. Guardini (1976); Guardini (1961); Pieper (1952).
73. Cf. Mazza (2007), 159.
74. Vatican Council II (1965), no. 61: ‘May this leisure be used properly to relax, to fortify the health of soul and body through spontaneous study and activity, through tourism which refines man’s character and enriches him with understanding of others, through sports activity which helps to preserve equilibrium of spirit even in the community, and to establish fraternal relations among men of all conditions, nations and races’.
75. Mazza (2007), 159.
76. Congregation for the Clergy (1969); Pontifical Commission for the Spiritual Care of Migrants and Itinerants (1978); Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples (2001).
77. Mazza (2007), 160.
78. Pope Francis (2013), no. 165.
79. Ibid., no. 166.
80. Ibid., no. 167.
81. Ibid., no. 68.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid., no. 15.
84. Bühren (2008), 401-449, 542-601.
85. Weiler and Hall (1992), introduction.
86. Information for this section is taken from the official website (Florence, ‘Grande Museo del Duomo’ 2018), the official tourist brochure (Florence, ‘Piazza del Duomo’, sine anno), which is available at the site, and from an oral interview by the author with Timothy Verdon (Verdon 2014). The brochure is offered by the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore to visitors inside the baptistery not as guidebook but to help illustrate, through the highlighted examples, the religious meaning of the monuments. The text of the brochure was written by Timothy Verdon in coordination with Maria Fossi Todorow and the ‘Diocesan Office for Catechesis through Art’.
87. Florence, ‘Grande Museo del Duomo’ (2018).
88. From Florence, ‘Piazza del Duomo’ (sine anno). See also Rev 21:18-19.
89. Murray and Murray (2014), 151.
90. Verdon (2012b, Firenze cristiana), 60.
91. Ibid.
92. Florence, ‘Piazza del Duomo’ (sine anno).
93. Rom 6:3-4 (translation from: The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible 2010).
94. Florence, ‘Grande Museo del Duomo’ (2018), here: https://www.museumflorence.com/monuments/5-crypt.
95. Florence, ‘Grande Museo del Duomo’ (2018), cf. https://www.museumflorence.com/monuments/2-dome.
96. Verdon (2014).
97. Text from Florence, ‘Piazza del Duomo’ (sine anno).
98. Verdon (2014).
99. Brigoli (2018).
100. Amante (2017)
101. GCatholic.org (2018).
102. Stausberg (2011), 97.
103. United Nations, UNESCO, World Heritage Centre (2018, World Heritage List), see also https://whc.unesco.org/en/interactive-map/ and https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/.
104. United Nations, UNESCO, World Heritage Centre (2018, World Heritage List).
105. Ibid.
106. United Nations, UNESCO, World Heritage Centre (2018, Baroque Churches of the Philippines).
107. United Nations, UNESCO, World Heritage Centre (2018, World Heritage List).
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Becker-Ritterspach and Rodriguez-Java (2018), 60.
111. The Code of Canon Law (1983), can. 1216.
112. Pope John Paul II (1991), no. 7: ‘Dappertutto la terra toscana è nota come matrice di un umanesimo che porta visibili le impronte della fede cristiana. Essa ha il compito di rilanciare il messaggio universale della bellezza e della bontà, un tempo facilmente comprensibile da tutti; ricchi mercanti o modesti artigiani, grandi della Signoria o poveri lavoratori. Le vostre opere d’arte costituiscono anch’esse un formidabile strumento di catechesi’; see also in Fossi Todorow (2002), 25, where the author explains the office’s origin as a result of the mentioned ‘ad limina’ visit.
113. Fossi Todorow (2002), 25.
114. Florence, Curia of the Archdiocese (2018).
115. Fossi Todorow (2002), 25.
116. Ibid., 27.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid., 28.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid., 29.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Ars et Fides (2015).
131. Ars et Fides (1988).
132.  Ibid.
133.  Ibid.
134.  Ibid.
135.  Ibid.
136.  Ibid.
137.  Ibid.
138.  Ars et Fides (1995).
139.  Ibid.
140.  Ibid.
141.  Ibid.
142.  Ibid.
143.  Tate (2004), 110.
144.  León, Ayuntamiento (2018).
145.  Ibid.
146.  Tate (2004), 110.
147.  Ibid., 110-111. The text appears as quoted in the article.
148.  Ibid., 110.
149.  Ibid., 111.
150.  Ibid., 112.
151.  Ibid., 111-112.
152.  Ibid., 115.
153.  Ibid., 112.
154.  Ibid., 118.
155.  Ibid., 119.
156.  Ibid., 121.
157.  Ibid.
158.  Ibid., 120.
159.  Ibid., 117.
160.  Ibid., 114.
161.  Ibid.
162.  Roseman (2004), 68.
163.  Ibid.
164.  Ibid.
165.  Ibid.
166.  Ibid., 74.
167.  Ibid., 75-76.
168.  Ibid., 83.
169.  Ibid.
170.  Ibid.
171.  Ibid.
172.  Ibid., 78. The text appears as quoted in the article.
173.  Ibid., 79.

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