

Exhibition explores concept of womanhood represented by Mary

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On view until April 12, “Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea,” is a landmark exhibition at the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA), bringing together masterworks from major museums, churches and private collections in Europe and the United States. Iconic and devotional, but also laden with social and political meaning, the image of the Virgin Mary has influenced Western sensibility since the sixth century.

“Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea” explores the concept of womanhood represented by the Virgin Mary as well as the social and sacred functions her image has served through time. Organized by NMWA, the exhibition brings together more than 60 Renaissance- and Baroque-era masterworks. Divided into six

thematic sections, the exhibition presents images of Mary as a daughter, cousin, and wife; the mother of an infant; a bereaved parent; the protagonist in a rich life story developed through the centuries; a link between heaven and earth; and an active participant in the lives of those who revere her.

The exhibition features works made by both female and male artists. Paintings by Sofonisba Anguissola, Artemisia Gentileschi, Orsola Maddalena Caccia (an Ursuline nun who ran a bustling painting studio in her convent in northern Italy), and Elisabetta Sirani highlight the varied ways in which women artists conceptualized the subject of Mary. These artists’ works are featured alongside treasured Marian paintings, sculptures, and drawings by Fra Filippo Lippi,



Botticelli, Michelangelo, Pontormo, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and others.



Respect for Life

At left, during Catholic Schools Week, Donna Canvin, chairperson, Respect for Life group at St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish, Kendall Park, and her daughter, Grace, pose after a Respect for Life presentation at the school. The students were encouraged as a service project to begin a pro-life youth group. Right, math/religion teacher Nicole Farrell poses with seventh-graders holding up their “You are precious to me” hearts with their gifts and talents on it. — *photo courtesy of St. Augustine of Canterbury School*



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