

"Saint Francis in New York"

(November 08, 2014)



The Canticle of Creatures and other Franciscan manuscripts from the 13th century. A unique exhibition in the United States. For the first time at the United Nations and the Brooklyn Borough Hall

"Friar Francis: Traces, Words and Images." This is the title of an exhibition that will be held in New York, first at the United Nations (November 17-28) and then at the Brooklyn Borough Hall (December 2, 2014-January 14, 2015). It is the first time that manuscripts of the 13th and 14th centuries and Papal Bulls relating to the Saint of Assisi will be on show in the U. S.

The exhibition consists of 19 artifacts from the Ancient Fund of the City Library of Assisi, part of the library of the Sacred Convent in Assisi.



The exclusive and unique exhibition dedicated to St. Francis will be opened on Monday, November 17 at 6:30 p.m. by authorities and dignitaries from Italy, the United States and elsewhere.

The heart of the exhibition is the Codex 338, a collection of the first writings and documents relating to St. Francis and the order of the Friars Minor, containing The Canticle of Creatures, considered the starting point of Italian literature. Each year some six million people visit the Basilica of St. Francis, about 40 percent of them Americans. This is proof that Franciscan spirituality has again become a reference point and model for many people, thanks, above all, to Pope Francis, who puts the message of the Saint of Assisi into practice. The exhibition allows the visitor to get to better know, appreciate and understand Francis of Assisi, who is known to the world as a man and saint of the people, of peace and fraternity.

The exhibition is divided into three sections.

- The first, "Traces", includes documents which closely illustrate the historic journey of the saint. The cornerstone of this part of the exhibition is the Codex 338, a miscellany that contains the oldest existing copies of the writings of the Saint of Assisi. Deriving from the 13th century, it contains, among other objects, the 12 chapters of the Regula fratrum minorum, or, the Rule of the Friars Minor, approved in 1223 by Pope Honorius III, with which Francis gave to the brothers in the community a spiritual direction and a series of practical norms by which to govern their daily lives. Manuscript 338 also contains the Laudes creaturarum, better known as The Canticle of Creatures, considered the first work in the ancient Italian vulgate and which has been recognized since the 18th century as the oldest poetic text of Italian literature.

The first part of the exhibition also includes several Papal Bulls, including one from the year 1220 where the saint's name appears in an official document for the first time.

- The second section of the exhibition, "Words," includes the oldest biographies of the saint, among them several rare codices and a fragment of the Vita beati Francisci by Tommaso da Celano, the oldest work dedicated to St Francis.

This section also includes the extremely rare Memoriale in desiderio animae o Vita Seconda from 1247, copies from the early 14th century of the Legenda Maior e la Legenda Minor by Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, and the Fioretti di San Francesco, the celebrated hagiography of Francis in the Italian vulgate, which is characterized by a idealized, popular, portrayal of the saint which is still used today in many languages.

- The third section, "Images", consists of a selection of miniature illustrated codices depicting the saint of Assisi. Among these is an antiphonary, a Franciscan breviary, a missal and the Bible of Giovanni da Parma.

Starting with words that tell the story of the Franciscan friar, the exhibition continues with images that celebrate sanctity with documents that use language and beauty to simplify and spread the spiritual physiognomy of the saint.

Locations of the exhibition

The United Nations

1st Ave and 46th Street - New York

One B neck

November 17-28, 2014



Brooklyn Borough Hall (open to the public)

209 Joralemon Street - Brooklyn, NY

December 2, 2014-January 14, 2015

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