



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Life-size replica of Michelangelo's *Pietà* at Cathedral for a limited engagement**

February 15, 2010

(St. Paul, MN) The Cathedral Heritage Foundation and the Cathedral of Saint Paul has been selected as the first exhibit venue on a nationwide tour for a replica of Michelangelo's *Pietà* (*pea-ay-TAH*). The life size sculpture depicts the Virgin Mary holding the body of her son Jesus Christ after his death. The marble casting of the original sculpture in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, will be available for public viewing beginning Ash Wednesday\*, February 17<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, April 11<sup>th</sup> in the Sacred Heart Chapel of the Cathedral of Saint Paul, at the corners of Summit and Selby Avenue, St. Paul. This special exhibit, created under exclusive license with the Vatican Observatory Foundation by Vescovo Buonarroti Art, will be available to the public free of charge.

"This is one of the greatest sculptures ever created and it has inspired countless visitors who see it at St. Peter's Basilica each year," said the Very Reverend Joseph R. Johnson, Rector of the Cathedral of Saint Paul. "To have the first replica during the Lenten season has a special significance."

Vescovo Buonarroti Art has the first-ever worldwide exclusive license agreement with the Vatican Observatory Foundation (VOF), to produce and distribute the official replica of Michelangelo's *Pietà*. World class artisans made the casting from a bonded marble blend and the results are said to be faithful to the original, including the visibility of Michelangelo's own signature across the sash of Mary's dress. *Pietà* is the only work Michelangelo ever signed. "We wanted to start the nationwide tour at one of the most beautiful cathedrals in the country and that is why we selected the Cathedral of Saint Paul for our first stop," said Steven Bishop, owner of Vescovo Buonarroti Art, a Nevada-based limited liability company.

(MORE)

Bishop held a premiere public launch for two days last month during the Sundance Film Festival in his Park City, Utah penthouse. “Even given some of the worldly-type of visitors the festival attracts, I still saw the affect the spiritual beauty had on them. They were taken aback by the size of it and simply expressed awe,” said Bishop. The replica coming to the Cathedral of Saint Paul is one of four sculptures touring different regions of the world.

\*\* Special calendar note:

**A special art lecture will be held Sunday, Feb 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Paul.** Art historian, Kara ZumBahlen, an instructor with the College of Visual Arts in St. Paul, will give historical background on Michelangelo and his masterpiece. This event is free and open to the public.

*VOF, a fundraising arm of The Vatican Observatory (The scientific branch of the Vatican, under the direction of the Office of the Holy See) will receive a royalty resulting from all revenues generated by Vescovo's sales which fall under its licensing agreement with the VOF. All royalties will go towards the furtherance of astronomy and scientific research.*

*For more information on Michelangelo's art and the casting of his Pietà, go to [www.lapieta.com](http://www.lapieta.com).*

*The Cathedral Heritage Foundation (CHF) is a secular, charitable organization dedicated to the preservation of the Cathedral of Saint Paul and the fostering of its cultural programs.*

*To learn more about CHF, visit our website at [www.cathedralheritagefoundation.org](http://www.cathedralheritagefoundation.org).*

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\*Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season for Christians worldwide. For Ash Wednesday Mass times at the Cathedral go to [www.cathedralsaintpaul.org](http://www.cathedralsaintpaul.org) and click on Mass Schedule.