

Museum of the Bible Gains Access to Precious Historic Roman Documents, Artifacts

People will soon get a unique opportunity to see ancient cultural treasures from Rome with a visit to Washington. Museum of the Bible, the 430,000-square-foot museum that opens this November just three blocks from the U.S. Capitol, announced today an agreement with the Rome State Archive (Archivio di Stato di Roma) to bring three temporary exhibits to the U.S. beginning in 2018. The three-year agreement between Washington's newest museum and the historical research institute will bring a variety of archival documents, prints and paintings to the D.C. museum for three- to six-month exhibits each year to illustrate the Bible's impact on life in early modern Rome.

"The Rome State Archive is honored that we have been asked to bring such a wide array of historical items to Museum of the Bible over the course of the next three years," said Rome State Archive Director Paolo Buonora, Ph.D. "We have a unique opportunity to showcase the impact the Bible, and the religious spirit and morality deriving from it, has had on everyday life by examining its foundational influence in Rome, one of the world's oldest and most culturally rich and spiritual cities."

The first exhibit, opening in the second half of 2018, will be built around the theme of the works of mercy and social welfare in Rome from the 13th through 19th centuries, which are derived from the principles of mercy found in the Bible.

The second exhibit will open in 2019 and center on the theme of catastrophes in early modern and modern Rome. The exhibit will demonstrate how such natural and man-made disasters were

perceived by the people, including those who viewed them as consistent with the biblical narratives of the great flood and the 10 plagues, and chronicled them in writings, visual arts and other cultural works.

The third exhibit, opening in 2020, will focus on the celebrated visit to the seven pilgrim churches of Rome. This was a pilgrimage to the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, as well as to the relics and sites relating to the life and death of the apostles and the first Christian martyrs. This exhibition will also highlight how the architectural and artistic features of these churches were consistent with the purpose of these religious buildings.

“Museum of the Bible is privileged to join with some of the world’s greatest scholarly and cultural institutions to help tell the story of the Bible’s history and impact on our world,” said Museum of the Bible President Cary Summers. “When Museum of the Bible began looking for partners to help demonstrate how the Bible and its principles have influenced daily life, ancient Rome’s position as the city of the Pope inevitably led us to the Rome State Archive. This collaborative effort will allow guests of Museum of the Bible to get a rich picture of the Bible’s impact on Roman and European society and this very important city across the ages.”

Museum of the Bible has allocated some 20,000 square feet to visiting museums, libraries and scholarly institutions, including partners like the Rome State Archive and Israel Antiquities Authority. {eoa}