

A New Life



Michelangelo sculpted the Pietà in 1498–1499, taking less than two years to complete. His depiction of the body of Jesus on the lap of his mother Mary after the Crucifixion on the rock of Golgatha is one of the most famous pieces of sculpture known by so many across the world.

Showing the "religious vision of abandonment and a serene face of the Son", Michelangelo did not want his version of the Pietà to represent death, but rather a representation of the communion between man and God through Christ's gift of life.

For the 1964 New York World's Fair, the Vatican loaned the Pietà for installation in the Vatican pavilion. A conveyor belt moved people, who stood in line for hours, past the sculpture. It is housed in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City and is the only piece Michelangelo ever signed.

Several decades ago, St. Leo was gifted with a beautiful representation of the Pietà in memory of the

Schuchart Family. Over the years, the wear and tear, fragments of the more fragile areas of the statue cracked or missing, and chipping paint called a friend of the parish to totally refurbish our Pietà. To repaint it with its former colors would have shown the flaws; it was decided to paint it all one color, especially in keeping with the make-up of our parish—all one people. After months and months of prayerful restoration, our Pietà finally came home, quite appropriately, the day before Ash Wednesday.

As we celebrate Holy Week and Easter, we are grateful for Michelangelo's reminder of the ultimate gift in our midst. The St. Leo Pietà has been given a new life; let us all celebrate a season of renewal in our own lives as Lent ends and as we rejoice in the hope and joy of Easter's Alleluias!

- Stephanie Sepate

