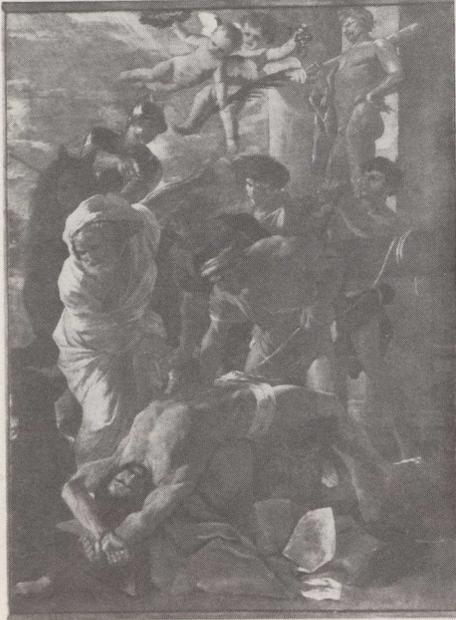


## Unique Italian art masterpieces in Canada

*Vatican Splendour: Masterpieces of Baroque Art* will provide residents and visitors in four major Canadian cities this year with a unique opportunity to view many art masterpieces from the Vatican collections in Italy that have never before been seen in North America.



*Poussin's The Martyrdom of St. Erasmus, oil on canvas, in the National Gallery.*

The exhibition, sponsored by Northern Telecom Canada, was organized by the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa where it was on view from March 6 to May 11. Canadian collaborators that will show the exhibition over the coming year are:

- the Vancouver Art Gallery — June 12 to September 2;
- the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto — October 4 to November 30; and
- the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts — December 18 to February 15, 1987.

Of the 52 masterpieces in *Vatican Splendour*, 47 are from the Vatican collections including the Vatican museums and art galleries, the Vatican Library, the Vatican Secret Archive, the Sistine Chapel, the basilicas of St. Peter, Santa Maria Maggiore and San Giovanni in Laterano. Only eight of the works were included in the Vatican exhibition shown in the United States in 1983-84.

The Vatican treasures are complemented by three paintings and the marble Bernini bust from the National Gallery's European collections, as well as another Bernini bust on loan to the Art Gallery of Ontario.

### Renowned altar piece

Domenichino's monumental altar piece of the *The Last Communion of St. Jerome*, a large painting of exceptional beauty and grandeur,

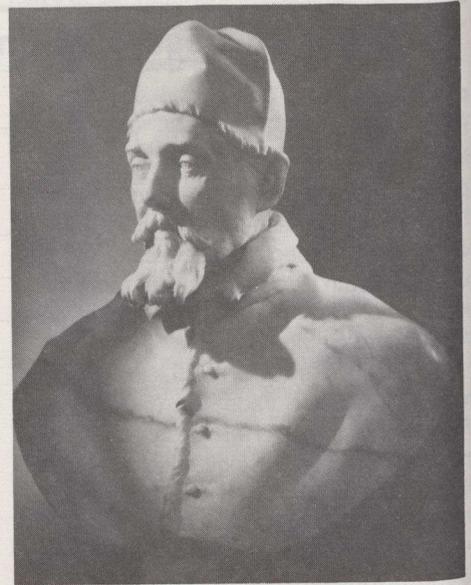
measuring 4.19 by 2.56 metres, is the focal point of the exhibition. Painted in 1614, it was taken to Paris by Napoleon after his Italian campaign. The richness of colour and intricate detail make it a prime example of seventeenth century art and one of the best known and most copied masterpieces of that period.

Other beautiful Vatican treasures include paintings such as Andrea Sacchi's *St. Gregory and the Miracle of the Corporal* and Poussin's *Martyrdom of St Erasmus*; Gian Lorenzo Bernini's terracotta figure of *Charity* as well as Alessandro Algardi's *The Baptism of Christ* in the same medium; colourful vestments such as those with the *Arms of Pope Urban VIII* and the *Papal Mantle of Clement IX*; and commemorative medals like the one in honour of Alexander VII, with *Androcles and the Lion*.

The National Gallery's own notable collection of Baroque art that is on view includes the *Entombment of Christ* by Rubens, the modello for the *Martyrdom of St Erasmus* by Poussin, Sacchi's *Portrait of Cardinal Lelio Biscia* and the superb marble *Bust of Urban VIII* by Bernini.

### Art: a reflection of life

The show successfully conveys the spirit of seventeenth century baroque art in Rome, which is relived through the genius of such great artists as Bernini, Rubens, Poussin,



*Bust of Pope Urban VIII by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, c. 1632, in the National Gallery.*

Carracci, Algardi, Cortona, Guercino, Meratta, Sacchi, Valentin, Domenichino and many others. Their magnificent paintings, sculptures, tapestries, vestments, medals and decorative pieces were commissioned when Roman churches were refurbished by Patrician families and members of the Papal court.

In the exhibition, embroidered ceremonial robes provide an example of what the people in the paintings are wearing, making it easy to understand how heavy the robes were and the importance of the processions in which they were worn. The medals stamped with



*Pope Urban VIII Consecrates the Basilica of St. Peter, a tapestry from the Vatican Museum that was made by Barberini in Rome.*