



VATICAN UNVEILED

For Immediate Release

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Vatican Unveiled: An Exploration of Legacies

***Largest Private Collection of Papal Artifacts Outside of Rome to be
on Exhibit in Duluth, MN; Father Richard Kunst, Curator***

August 19-21, 2022 | DECC - City Side Convention Center

Duluth, MN What started out as a hobby of collecting presidential autographs, turned into a papal passion for Duluth native, Father Richard Kunst. Through the years, his love of his faith propelled him to build what is believed to be the largest collection of Papal artifacts outside of Rome. The full collection is staggering and includes rarities connected to the papacy, canonized saints and notable individuals in history—including Napoleon.

Father Kunst started this collection while working for the U.S. Senate. Over the years, it continued to grow and became so substantial that colleagues encouraged him to share these significant artifacts through a public viewing. The first viewing was held in 2004 in Duluth, commemorating the end of Pope John Paul II's *Jubilee Year*.

“My mission is to educate people about the Church, to help grow an appreciation for the papacy and share the beauty of our faith.” states, Father Richard Kunst, curator. “For many people, this is the closest they will ever get to a Pope, or the Vatican; it’s my belief that you cannot love what you know little about”.

Father Kunst goes on to share that the collection is historically important, even for those who are not Catholic. “The history of the Catholic Church has been influential in the formation of



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our world today”. A prime example is the influence of Pope John Paul II. He was a leader whose religious convictions defined a new approach to world politics—and changed the course of history. As even his critics conceded, Pope John Paul II played a crucial role in some of the most momentous events of our time, including the collapse of European communism, the quest for peace in the Middle East, and the democratic transformation of Latin America.

The Vatican Collection has been viewed by the likes of George Weigel, a leading Catholic theologian, and Crux editor, John Allen Jr. [The Papacy: A Living History](#), (a series about the Collection and hosted by Fr. Kunst) aired for two seasons on EWTN and was part of numerous media outlets covering stories about the Collection over the past many years.

The collection has grown immeasurably since 2004 and now includes:

- Cross from Mother Teresa’s Habit (on loan from Bishop Brom)
- Relics of the True Cross owned by Pope Clement XI
- Many notable items from the life of Pope John Paul II
- Signed letter from Napoleon Bonaparte discussing his strategy for managing Pope Pius VII during his assault on the Papal States
- Items from Pope Francis to Pope St. Victor I (189-199)
- A relic from the original chair of St. Peter himself
- Rare treasures from historic Conclaves and Swiss Guard

Not only will Father Kunst be sharing his collection with the world, he’s turned it into a **fundraiser** that will benefit [Stella Maris Academy](#), Catholic schools of Duluth, and [Star of the North Maternity Home](#), with maternity home locations in the Twin Ports and the Iron Range.

The event is ticketed and open to the public. It will include over 150 artifacts, presentations by Father Kunst, a Vatican store, a sponsors’ gala dinner at the Kitchi Gammi Club, and VIP Evening at the DECC hosted by Mark Hall Patton, of the famed TV show, ***Pawn Stars***.

Interviews and an early look at the artifacts will be available by contacting Monica Hendrickson, Vatican Unveiled Committee Chair, at 218-348-2268. You can also email us at: hello@vaticanunveiled.com. More information can be found on the event [website](#), <https://vaticanunveiled.com>.