

## *Heritage Choir Newsletter #11 – Rome, Italy*

*It's Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. Today, you will continue your guided tour of the Vatican Museums - Sistine Chapel.....*



The Vatican's **Sistine Chapel**, consecrated to the Virgin Mary in 1483, was created by Renaissance men: Sixtus IV and Julius II, popes who commissioned its artworks in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, and the artists Sandro Botticelli, Pietro Perugino, and, most famously, Michelangelo, who transformed the chapel into a glory to behold.

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni was better known as a sculptor when Pope Julius II tapped him to illuminate the Sistine Chapel. Known to the world as Michelangelo, the Florentine was just 24 when he sculpted his renowned "Pietà," a tender depiction of the Virgin Mary cradling the lifeless body of her son. His towering "David" revealed his mastery of sculpting the human form.

For all the skill and beauty of his work with a chisel, it is perhaps his work with a brush for which he is remembered most of all. The bold colors and striking composition of his frescoes in the Sistine Chapel still awe viewers with their power and emotion. The Sistine ceiling and the "Last Judgment" stand as a testament to Michelangelo's genius as a painter and evolution as an artist.

The Sistine ceiling was completed in 1512, a little before the Protestant Reformation. On the west wall, the "Last Judgment" fresco was unveiled nearly three decades later, as the effects of Martin Luther's revolution spread across Europe. Both works reflect the spirit and themes of the times: the Renaissance love of the human body; the tension between wealth and faith; and, above all, an explosively vibrant rendering of the great stories of the Bible.

Next, after some free time on your own, we will meet again as a group for an afternoon performance at Oratoria del Caravita or All Saints Church.....**to be continued in next week's Newsletter**

### **Rome "Fun Fact" #11**

Michelangelo's frescoes, painted in bright colors to be visible from the floor, took four years, tormenting the artist, who penned a poem complaining of his aching spine. Completing the ceiling in 1512, he returned 24 years later to paint the "Last Judgment" on the altar wall.

**Well plastered:** Michelangelo's ceiling has lost only one piece in 500 years. In 1797, an explosion from a nearby gunpowder depot caused a chunk of sky in "The Great Flood" to fall to the floor.

**With a Little Support:** Contrary to popular belief, Michelangelo did not paint his masterpiece flat on his back but was supported while leaning backward onto scaffolding he cleverly engineered.