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Delivering Christmas Wishes with Madonna and Child by Bachiacca *Famed Italian Painter's Artwork Adorns Holiday Stamp*

SANTA FE, NM — The U.S. Postal Service is offering its customers a timeless Christmas image this holiday season with today's dedication of the Madonna and Child by Bachiacca holiday stamp. The ceremony took place inside the historic Loretto Chapel.

The public is invited to share the news using the hashtags **#ChristmasStamps and ReligiousStamps**.

"Today, we dedicate a Christmas stamp that features one of the most revered images in the world, Madonna embracing her infant son, Jesus," said U.S. Postal Service Customer Experience Vice President Kelly Sigmon. "Through the years, the Postal Service has selected stamp artwork that touches on various aspects of the holiday and its significance to our customers, and this year we continue that tradition with the Madonna and Child by Bachiacca Forever stamp."

Joining Sigmon in the ceremony were Loretto Chapel Docent Richard Lindsley and Albuquerque Museum Director Andrew Connors. U.S. Postal Service Director Stamp Services Mary-Anne Penner served as the master of ceremonies.

"The iconic and resonant image of Madonna and Child is a crucial part of the Christmas story," said Connors. "For several centuries here in New Mexico, depictions of the Christ child and his mother have been made by traditional artists hoping to replicate the grandeur and humanity characteristic of the European painters such as Bachiacca."

Five centuries ago, Francesco d'Ubertino Verdi (1494–1557), the Italian Renaissance painter known as Bachiacca, was a versatile and popular Florentine artist. Today his oil-and-gold-on-panel painting *Madonna and Child* still evokes the timeless traditions of Christmas.

Bachiacca met the needs of his patrons by skillfully adapting to changing fashions, whether creating large altarpieces, small paintings, wall and ceiling decorations, or designs for intricate tapestries. His compositions emphasize ornament and landscape backgrounds, and art historians note his eye for exotic costuming and his careful depictions of animals and plants.

Around 1540, Bachiacca became a court painter to the duke of Florence, Cosimo de' Medici, who had made the Palazzo Vecchio his residence and required an artist for a wide range of interior decoration. For nearly the rest of his life, Bachiacca created ceiling decorations for the duke and duchess, as well as mural and easel paintings, tapestries, costumes and masks.

Dated from the early 1520s, the *Madonna and Child* stamp shows Christ clutching a bouquet of jasmine, a symbol of divine love.

This painting is part of the Jack and Belle Linsky Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. William J. Gicker served as art director and Greg Breeding was the designer.

The *Madonna and Child* by Bachiacca stamps are being issued as Forever stamps in booklets of 20. Forever stamps are always equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price.

Customers may purchase these stamps and other philatelic products through the Postal Store at usps.com/shop, by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724), by mail through *USA Philatelic*, or at Post Office locations nationwide.

Information on ordering first-day-of-issue postmarks and covers is at usps.com/shop under "Collectors." A video of the ceremony will be available on the Postal Service's [Facebook page](#).

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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