



POSTAL NEWS

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Postal Service Announces New Virgin and Child Forever Stamp at American Stamp Dealers Association Stamp Show

Holy Family Forever Stamp Reissued as Pane of 20 Stamps

High-resolution images of the stamps are available for media use only by emailing roy.a.betts@usps.gov.

NEW YORK — The U.S. Postal Service today unveiled two Christmas Forever stamps during the American Stamp Dealers Association stamp show in New York.

The new Virgin and Child stamp by Jan Gossaert features a detail of Gossaert's 1531 oil-on-wood painting, *Virgin and Child*, from the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art. The stamp goes on sale nationwide today as a booklet of 20 stamps.

Draped in purple and blue, the Virgin Mary supports her own head by leaning on one of her hands. According to art historians, this pose was an unusual way to depict the Virgin Mary in Gossaert's time and may have been meant to evoke both sadness and contemplation by reminding viewers of earlier artistic depictions of ancient scholars, St. Joseph in Nativity scenes, and mourners at the Crucifixion.

Supported by the Virgin Mary's other hand, a curly-haired infant Jesus loosely draped in a white cloth looks to the viewer's right and holds a bunch of red currants, which scholars have interpreted as foreshadowing Christ's future suffering.

This is the second time a Gossaert painting has appeared on a U.S. stamp. In 2002, the U.S. Postal Service issued a Christmas stamp that featured a detail of Gossaert's circa-1520 oil-on-panel *Madonna and Child*.

Gossaert is credited with being one of the first artists to bring the innovations of the Italian Renaissance to northern Europe. Richard Sheaff served as art director for this issue.

Also, the Postal Service announced the issuance of the Holy Family Forever Stamp in a new format as a pane of 20 stamps.

First issued in 2012 as booklets, the Holy Family stamp celebrates Christmas with a scene from the Nativity story that reminds us of the joys of the season: family, togetherness and the birth of Jesus. The stamp depicts Joseph leading a donkey that carries Mary and the baby Jesus, guided by a star shining in the twilight of a desert sky. Art director William Gicker, designer Greg Breeding and illustrator Nancy Stahl created this evocative image of the Holy Family.

The Virgin and Child by Jan Gossaert and the Holy Family stamps may be purchased at local Post Offices, online at usps.com/stamps or by calling 800- STAMP24 (800-782-6724). Additionally, the stamps are being sold on ebay.com/stamps. Forever stamps are good for mailing 1-ounce First-Class Mail letters anytime in the future regardless of price changes.

Customers may view the Holy Family and Virgin and Child by Jan Gossaert Forever stamps, as well as many of this year's other stamps, on Facebook at facebook.com/USPSStamps, on Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheperf.com/2013-preview. Beyond the Perf is the Postal Service's online site for information on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmark of Virgin and Child by Jan Gossaert Forever Stamp

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamps at local Post Offices, at usps.com/stamps or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should apply the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Virgin and Child by Jan Gossaert Stamp
Special Events Coordinator
380 W. 33rd Street, Room 4032
New York, NY 10199-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark for fewer than 50 requests. All orders must be postmarked by Dec. 11.

Ordering First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at usps.com/stamps or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014

Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products for Jan Gossaert Forever Stamp

There are four philatelic products available:

- [688710, Keepsake \(Booklet and Digital Color Postmark Set\), \\$10.95](#)
- [688716, First-Day Cover, \\$.90](#)
- [688721, Digital Color Postmark, \\$1.61](#)
- [688730, Ceremony Program, \\$6.95](#)

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmark of Holy Family Forever Stamp

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamps at local Post Offices, at usps.com/stamps or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should apply the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

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U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products for Holy Family Forever Stamp

There are eight philatelic products available:

- [582006, Press Sheet with Die Cuts, \\$92.00 \(print quantity of 2,500\)](#)
- [582008, Press Sheet w/o Die Cuts, \\$92.00 \(print quantity of 2,500\)](#)
- [582010, Keepsake \(Pane and Digital Color Postmark Set\), \\$10.95](#)
- [582016, First-Day Cover, \\$.90](#)
- [582021, Digital Color Postmark, \\$1.61](#)
- [582030, Ceremony Program, \\$6.95](#)
- 582031, Stamp Deck Card, \$.95
- 582032, Stamp Deck Card with Digital Color Postmark, \$1.96

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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Please Note: For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at usps.com/news/welcome.htm.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation: 152 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With more than 31,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private-sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 42nd in the 2012 Fortune 500. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for seven years and the fourth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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