



POSTAL NEWS

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National contact: Tatiana Roy
860-982-6191
tatiana.l.roy@usps.gov
usps.com/news

Local contact: Stephen Doherty
617-529-8751
stephen.n.doherty@usps.gov
usps.com/news



Postal Service Issues New Christmas Stamp *'Virgin and Child' Inspired by an Italian Renaissance Painting*

BOSTON — The U.S. Postal Service issued the “Virgin and Child” Christmas Forever stamp today during a dedication ceremony at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

“I am honored to represent the Postal Service as we dedicate a Christmas stamp that features one of the most revered images in the world — the Virgin Mary holding her infant child, Jesus,” said U.S. Postal Service Organization Development Vice President Jenny Utterback, who served as the dedicating official. “It’s a beautiful piece of art, with particular meaning this time of year. I choose my holiday cards with care, sign them with love or best wishes, and may write a personal note inside. Holiday cards are a special way to connect with family and friends. The stamp on the envelope holds significance as well.”

Depicting the tender bond between a mother and her child, interpretations of the Virgin Mary with the Christ child take innumerable forms in the Christian art of the Italian Renaissance. This stamp features “Virgin and Child,” an oil-on-panel painting from the first half of the 16th century by an unidentified Florentine artist.

Art historians have long speculated about the identity of this artist and have sometimes associated this painting and related paintings with the names of various 16th-century figures. Scholars now attribute this “Virgin and Child” to a Florentine artist who has been known since the late 1960s as the Master of the Scandicci Lamentation. The name is based on similarities in style evident in a painting called “The Lamentation on the Dead Christ” made for a church in the town of Scandicci, near Florence.

Italian Renaissance artists were often inspired to imitate the compositions of their contemporaries. Scholars believe that this artist based the poses of the Virgin Mary and the Christ child in this painting on the two central figures in the “Madonna of the Baldacchino,” an unfinished altarpiece made by the painter Raphael for a church in Florence between 1506 and 1508.

The “Virgin and Child” painting is in the Robert Dawson Evans Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts,

Boston. Art director Greg Breeding designed the stamp.

The Virgin and Child stamp is sold in booklets of 20. News of the stamps is being shared with the hashtag **#VirginAndChildStamps**.

Postal Products

Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through the [Postal Store](#) at usps.com/shopstamps, by calling 844-737-7826, by mail through [USA Philatelic](#) or at Post Office locations nationwide.

The Postal Service generally 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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