



HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE

23 March 2016

PRESS RELEASE

OFFICE OF PAPAL CHARITIES

“Homeless Jesus” in the Vatican

A life-size statue represents a homeless man lying on a bench, shrouded entirely in a blanket except for the feet. The feet, wounded by the nails of the crucifixion, identify the figure as Jesus. This bronze sculpture was installed, during Holy Week of the Jubilee of Mercy, in the Sant’Egidio courtyard of the Vatican, at the entrance to the Office of Papal Charities (Elemosineria Apostolica).

The highly realistic work was created by Canadian sculptor Timothy P. Schmalz. The artist had the idea of representing the person of Christ in this original way several years ago when he saw a homeless man sleeping on a bench outdoors during the Christmas holidays. "When we see the marginalized," the sculptor wrote, "we should see Jesus Christ. In the person of the poor and the least, is the presence and face of Christ: *Every time you did it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me*" (Mt 25:40).

On 20 November 2013, during a general audience in St. Peter's Square, the sculptor had the opportunity to present a small model of the homeless Jesus to Pope Francis. "When the Pope saw the work – Schmalz told a journalist in the United States – he touched the knees and feet and prayed. Pope Francis is doing just that, reaching out to the marginalized."



(Bronze cast – courtyard of the Papal Charities, Vatican City)

A sculpture by the same artist representing Jesus as a beggar is located near the main entrance of the Holy Spirit Hospital, near the Vatican.

The statue was donated by a Canadian patron who was the artist's first supporter when Schmalz was just 20 years old. In 2013, the first "Homeless Jesus" bronze cast was installed at Regis College, the Jesuit Theological College in Toronto, Canada. Other casts have been installed in various places around the world: Australia, Cuba, India, Ireland, Spain and the United States; while discussions are under way for also placing it in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Poland, South Africa.

The artist, Timothy Schmalz, can be reached in Canada for interviews at 001.519.664.0621



(General Audience – Saint Peter's Square – 25 November 2013)

Holy Spirit Hospital, near the Vatican:

