

# St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York

**Traditionally Speaking** by S. Casarotto, cs 9/7/08

## Artist with Faith

Recently I visited in Cleveland the traveling exhibit "Vatican Splendors". Among others, I admired the marble bust of Pope Pius VII by Antonio Canova, one of the greatest artists of 17th century. It does not happen often that a piece of art may be seen only inches away, revealing all the details and the strokes of a master.

Antonio Canova was born in Possagno, near Venice, and brought to Rome by Card. Scipione Borghese. Here, Canova, then 22, became acquainted with the works of Michelangelo, Raffaello and Bernini. Besides working in the villa of his protector, Canova erected the funeral monuments to Pope Clement XII in St. Peter's Basilica and of Clement XIV in the Basilica of the Holy Apostles. By 1797, Canova was busy replacing works taken by the French. He made the Venus Italica to replace the Medici Venus stolen from the Uffizi in Florence and the Perseus for the Vatican Museums after the Apollo Belvedere was taken to the Louvre. One of Canova's greatest works was Pauline Bonaparte-Borghese, a portrait of Napoleon's favorite sister, represented as Venus. It won the Golden Apple prize at the competition of Paris. It was through his association with Bonaparte that Canova was able to retrieve the Laocoon and the Apollo Borghese taken from the Vatican Museums along with Raffaello's last work The Transfiguration for St. Peter's Basilica.

One curiosity: Canova never chiseled any of the statues he is famous for! He limited himself to make plaster casts which were given to professional carvers. The master then gave the final touches. Perfection always lies in the details. Canova's diary reveals that the master attended mass regularly and worried about arriving late. "Attend mass before doing anything else", was his wise resolve.

**LITURGICAL ABUSES** - Customs in the liturgy change from place to place and from time to time. Many customs eventually are officially accepted by the universal Church and become norms. Other customs are tolerated and as such they have some weight of law. Some people call abuses what in fact are revived old legitimate customs. Others abuses are implementations of norms and practices people are not familiar with. In addition, not all abuses are the same. Some pertain to the validity of the Mass and the Sacraments, others reveal a deficiency in Eucharistic faith and ecclesiology, others still contribute to a confusion of roles among the people of God. Some innovations are simply bad taste, so bad that at times people should be charged with criminal stupidity! For example, what have balloons and soap bubbles to do with Catholic weddings? That they are going to be short-lived, as, tragically, statistics show? Then the nuptial march could be Tiny bubbles...

*"The Council declares that the Church has always had the power to establish or change, in the dispensation of the sacrament, excepting their substance, those things which, according to the variety of circumstance, time and place, it judges most useful and to the advantage of those who receive them or of the veneration of the sacraments themselves." (Council of Trent, DS 1728)*