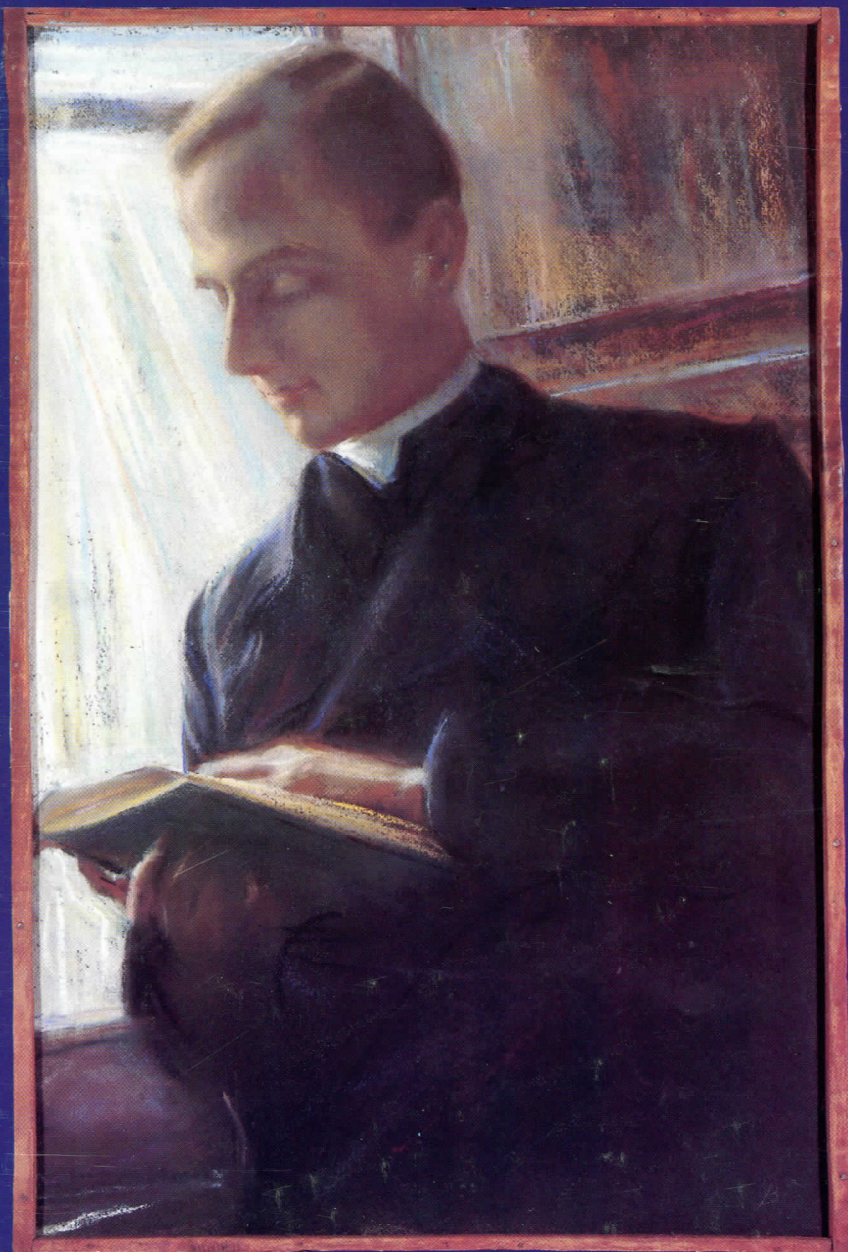


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# VATICAN



## An Unknown Paul

Paul VI is often described  
as the "intransigent"  
Pope of Humanae Vitae.  
But he was a cultured and  
sensitive man who loved art  
— even modern art —  
as a reflection of the soul's  
spiritual longings



**CRISIS IN RELIGIOUS LIFE: VATICAN RESPONSE**





Lorenzo Lotto's 1510-12 depiction of the Transfiguration, an event of particular significance for Paul VI) (Ricanati Pinocateca)

***“Perhaps it was the Transfiguration, more than any other moment in the Lord’s life, at least in terms of its esthetic beauty, which inspired his faith, and although we cannot say it was Paul VI’s choice to end his earthly life on that anniversary in 1978, it was reported to be his fervent desire.”***

**Father Carlo Cremona  
“Pope Montini, In Contemplation of Beauty”**



Pericle Fazzini,  
*The Resurrected Christ*,  
commissioned by  
Paul VI for the Papal  
Audience Hall, Vatican  
City, 1977



*"Paul VI called upon artists to collaborate with him in his sacerdotal ministry, to render accessible, in his words, the world of the spirit, to capture the spiritual riches of heaven, and clothe them in words, in colors, in forms, in accessibility."*

*Mons. Francesco Marchisano, President, Pontifical Commission for the Church's Cultural Patrimony, "Introduction to the Conference"*



Fabrizio Clerici was one of the modern artists to contribute to the Vatican's Modern Art Collection and painted *La Speranza* in 1956



*"I honor the memory of a Pope with an extremely moving humanity and an incredibly profound sensitivity, especially for art. Paul VI, in spite of his many cares and duties, never abandoned his role of intermediary, energetic and committed, between the Church, 'his Church,' culture in general, and contemporary art in particular."*  
Fabrizio Clerici, "My Meeting With Paul VI"



*Pierluigi Nervi's Papal Audience Hall,  
Vatican City, commissioned by Paul VI, and  
constructed between 1964-1971*



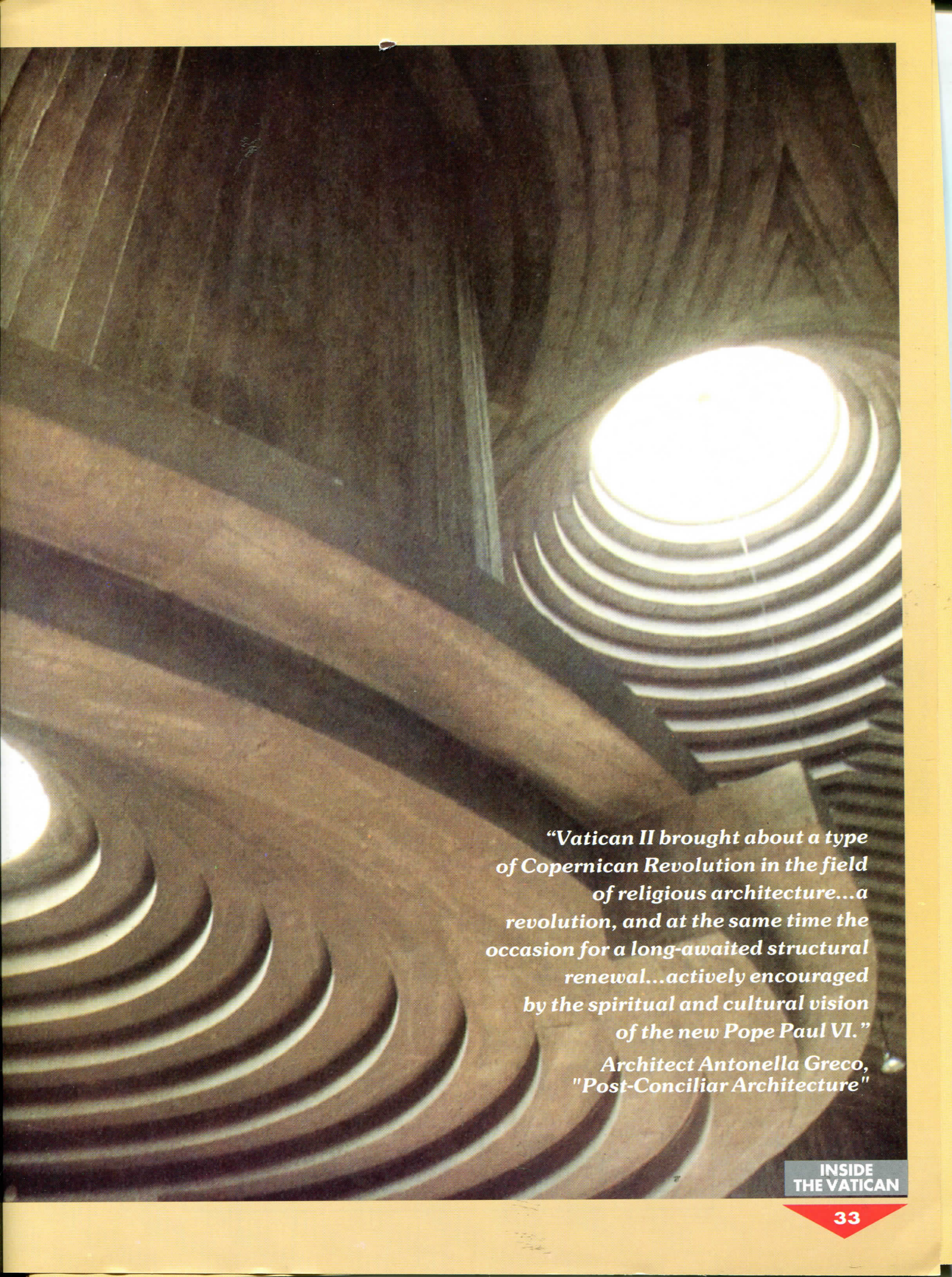
***“Paul VI was profoundly committed to a  
liturgical renewal, and he wished  
this to take place in worthy surroundings,  
in churches rich with artistic  
masterpieces, inspired by contemplation  
of the divine...”***

***Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop  
of Milan, “Message for the Conference”***

*The Church of the Holy Family in Salerno,  
a project approved by Paul VI  
and built in 1977 by the contemporary Italian  
architects Paolo Portoghesi  
and Vittorio Gigliotti*





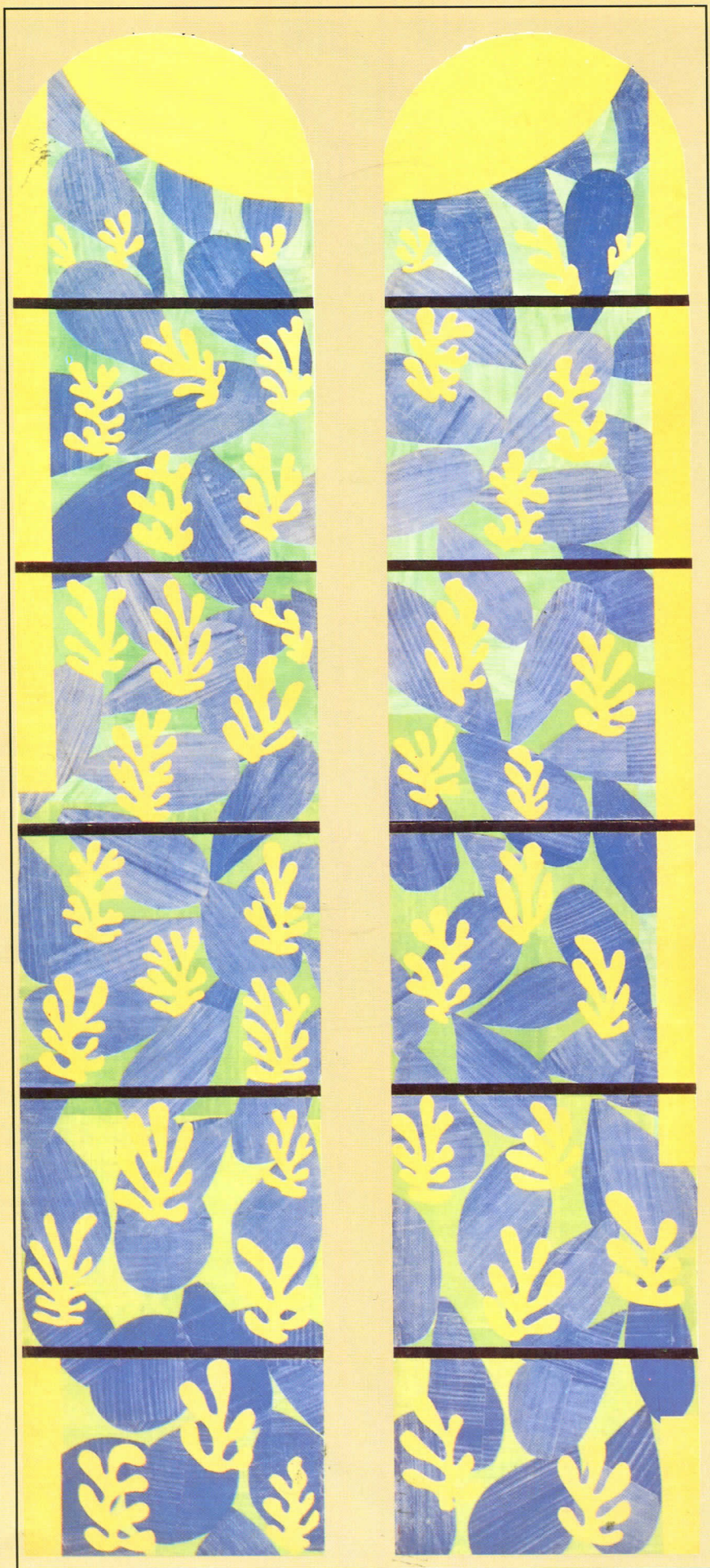


*"Vatican II brought about a type of Copernican Revolution in the field of religious architecture...a revolution, and at the same time the occasion for a long-awaited structural renewal...actively encouraged by the spiritual and cultural vision of the new Pope Paul VI."*

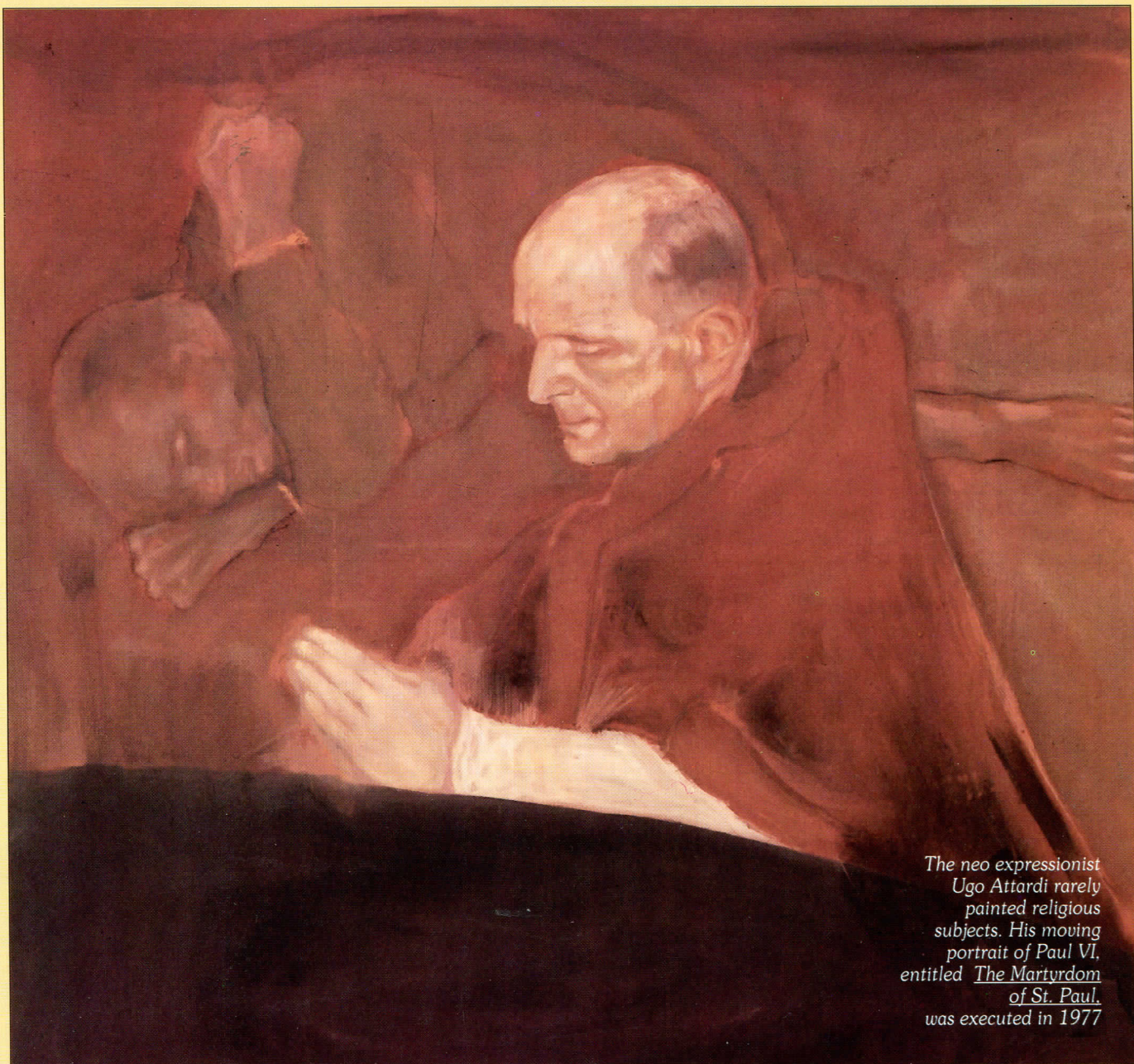
*Architect Antonella Greco,  
"Post-Conciliar Architecture"*



The modern  
French artist  
Henri Matisse  
painted this Tree  
of Life in 1951  
and contributed  
it to the Vatican  
Museums in 1977







The neo expressionist Ugo Attardi rarely painted religious subjects. His moving portrait of Paul VI, entitled The Martyrdom of St. Paul, was executed in 1977

***“ ... Paul VI’s affinity for art, and the efforts he made for a renewed alliance with artists was not just the hobby of a sensitive man, but rather an imperative of his mission: to convoke all forces which could serve the true, the good and the beautiful... in order to restore to man the meaning of life.”***

***Mons. Francesco Marchisano, President of the Pontifical Commission for the Church’s Cultural Patrimony, “Introduction”***



## **The Papacy and Art**

**T**he Papacy has been Western civilization's most munificent patron of the arts. From 320 A.D. when the Church of St. Peter was built on the site of the saint's tomb, popes have preserved, collected and commissioned works of art. Throughout the centuries, great painters, sculptors and craftsmen have looked to the Vatican as both their benefactor and as a safeguard of their works. Today the Vatican Museums represent the single longest and most influential collecting tradition in the Western world. But the Vatican is more than a magnificent cemetery for masterpieces of the past. A new museum, the Collection of Modern Religious Art, created in 1973 by Paul VI, attests the Church's conviction that twentieth-century artists such as Henri Matisse, Georges Rouault and Andre Derain express modern man's aspirations for beauty and a deeper spiritual life.

## **Paul VI and Art**

**P**aul VI (1963-1978), Pope of the Second Vatican Council and of the encyclical *Humane Vitae*, was also the architect of the Vatican's reconciliation with artists. At a May 7 1964 meeting with artists in the Sistine Chapel (could there be a more appropriate setting?), the Pope lamented that the long tradition of a mutually enriching relationship between artists and the Church seemed to have been interrupted in the twentieth century. "We must again become allies. We must ask of you the possibilities which the Lord has given you...we must leave to your voices the free and powerful song of which you are capable." For Paul VI modern artists were important enough to receive a "Message to Artists" (December 8, 1965) at the close of the Second Vatican Council. "Today as yesterday, the Church has need of you and turns to you. The world we live in has a vital need for beauty - to save us from the depths of despair."

The fruit of Paul VI's rapprochement between the Church and modern art was his inauguration, on June 23, 1973, of the Vatican Museum's collection of modern painting, sculpture and graphic arts. In response to the Pope's open invitation, artists, collectors and public and private institutions contributed more than 500 works, coordinated by the Pope's private secretary Monsignor Pasquale Macchi, and displayed in 55 rooms of the Papal Palace. According to Paul VI, the exhibit recognized "the spiritual significance of the modern artist, who is at once poet and prophet, according to the spirit of the modern age."

## **Conference on Paul VI and Humanism**

**T**he profound and fruitful link between Paul VI and art was explored at a November 25 conference held in the Clementine Room of Rome's magnificent Altieri Palace. Organized by Nelide Giammarco of "Shakespeare and Company" (a Rome-based cultural organization which has behind it two other successful conferences dedicated to papal patrons of the arts, Sixtus V in 1987, and Innocent X in 1990, and now plans a traveling exhibit of recent works of sacred art), gathered together Italy's most respected cultural and ecclesiastical experts. According to Giammarco, the idea of the conference was suggested by Archbishop Renato R. Martino, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer to the United Nations, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Paul VI's accession to the papal throne and to coincide with the initiation of his beatification process. The objective of the conference, again according to Giammarco, was to discover "the spiritual and cultural motives which inspired this very humanist Pope to regain contemporary art and artists for the service of the Church and its faithful."

On the following pages we quote observations on the relationship between Paul VI and art by some of the conference participants. We also express our appreciation to the Logart Press for generously allowing us to publish art works from their beautiful catalogue *Paul VI: Humanismo fra Arte e Letteratura*.

## **Balla's Portrait of the Young Giovanni Battista Montini**

**T**he "coup" of the November 25 conference was the discovery and presentation - for the first time ever in public - of a large pastel sketch of Paul VI as a young man. The portrait (shown on page 27), which belongs to a private Roman collection (given by Montini as a wedding gift to his close friends Pia and Guido Gonella and now in the family collection held their children) was brought to light by art historian Guiseppe Appella and attributed by art historian and critic Professor Maurizio Calvesi to the Italian futurist painter Giacomo Balla. According to Prof. Calvesi, the picture should be dated around 1924 or 1925, when the young (27-28 years) priest (Montini was ordained in 1920) was studying at Rome's Gregorian University. Anyone who sees this portrait is struck, as Prof. Calvesi notes, by the "delicate spirituality" of the subject, totally immersed in his reading and haloed by a diffuse backlighting.

by JUNE HAGER