

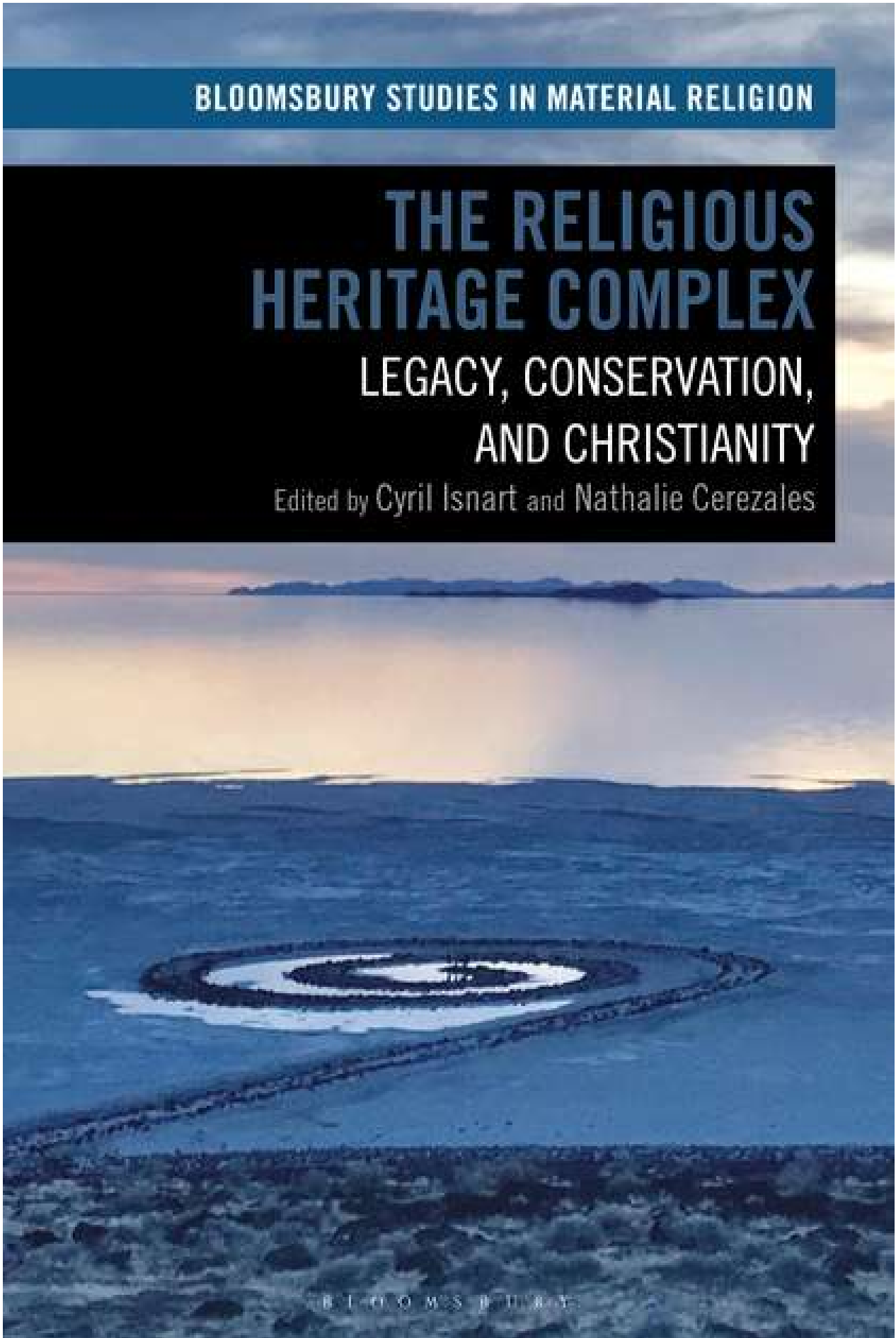
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# THE RELIGIOUS HERITAGE COMPLEX

## LEGACY, CONSERVATION, AND CHRISTIANITY

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# The Religious Heritage Complex in Italy

## Faith, Tourism, and the Church

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Italy's religious heritage, consisting of sanctuaries, churches, monuments and expressions of popular art, devotion and piety, is the greatest part of its cultural heritage. This can be observed not only in old Italian towns, but also in the countryside and mountainous areas. The Catholic Church's general inventory of Italian Catholic heritage comprises more than 64,000 buildings, monuments, and other properties classified as "houses of worship" and more than 4 million historic and artistic heritage objects in a project that, over the past twenty years, has involved almost every Italian diocese.<sup>1</sup>

This brief overview explains how Italy is a stimulating case study of the religious heritage complex. In Italy, an examination of the Catholic Church reveals a problematic relationship between the Holy See and the Republic of Italy (and previously the Kingdom). Their respective attitudes towards the religious *habitus* of conservation of the past and, *policy* of the care of the religious past in heritage contexts seem largely incompatible, for historical and political reasons. Indeed, the clarification of mutual relations took place in a particular period of Italian history: the Concordat dates back to 1929, when fascists were in complete control. Nevertheless, the Church looks at art and heritage as points of both conservation and care of the religious past. For the Italian state, a migration of the holy has not been carried out, above all because an aesthetic (and not religious) *habitus* of preserving the heritage was originally pursued (Baldacci 2014: 47–9), although at times it was of religious interest. This chapter will discuss how the sense of religious heritage in Italy is managed, following two main directions that are focused on the Catholic Church's role as the main actor in this peculiar modality of the religious heritage complex.

First, the Catholic Church claims that it has a monopoly on Italian historical and artistic heritage. If this is true regarding visibility and urban development, it is increasingly less evident with heritage-making conservation strategies, which also involve other religious groups and denominations in Italy. The reality is that the Italian Republic and Catholic Church are two legal and social systems whose heritage-making and conservation aims are partly irreconcilable. The Italian republic, charged with implementing the Constitution, seeks to protect and preserve the memory of the national community (Codice 2004: art. 1–2). The Catholic Church, however, officially considers sacred arts and heritage as a way of sensitizing the “People of God” as part of its mission. The promotion of the Gospel, especially Christ’s death and resurrection (*kerygma*), is the reason why a pontifical commission for cultural heritage of the Church (Pontifical commission 1999: no. 6<sup>2</sup>) was created.

Second, since modern tourism began, religious heritage sites have always been visited both as leisure pursuits and as ways of gaining knowledge. Nowadays, their role in cultural tourism is questioned not from a secular but from a religious point of view. Here, religious *habitus* of caring for the past intersects with a social interest for religious and spiritual goods. The Church does not contrast the creation of touristic resources but affirms—and indeed re-affirms—the inner sense of its heritage. In Italy, cultural tourism is an important sector within the tourism industry. Religious heritage is a part of this tourist circuit, with its own worship-based and religious goals. From the secular point of view, places of worship and sacred objects could be, and sometimes are predominantly regarded as, tourist attractions, while from the religious point of view, a reflection about the role of tourism and its pastoral care addresses the possibility of an authentic spiritual encounter between heritage and tourists.

The first part of this chapter will briefly describe the historical transition from the heritage of the Church to churches as cultural heritage sites of religious interest. The second part will develop the normative agency of Catholic heritage. In the third part, I will present the aim of tourism according to the Catholic Church. The fourth and fifth parts will discuss strategies of negotiation between the Catholic Church and contemporary society through defense and re-appropriation practices in the use of its heritage.

## Religious Property in Italy: A Cultural Heritage

The Catholic Church has always been engaged in heritage-making and protection for political, status, and liturgical reasons. The presence of the Church in most of

Italy shows the characteristics of a diffused and implicit culture that, from the unification period (in the mid nineteenth century), has become a more specific and specialized one. The Concordat signed between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy was revised between the 1980s and the 1990s, but has not yet clarified the requirements of worship (Feliciani 1995) since these can also include requirements relating to the educational and spiritual mission of the Church.

Only in 2005 did Italy and the Holy See sign the constitutional reforms that are so crucial to the safeguarding of cultural contexts (Dalla Vedova 2005: 29–30). Thus, the Catholic Church recognizes the importance of promoting the knowledge, the contextualization, and the consideration of historical works, including ecclesiastical museums, libraries, and archives, while also taking into account their conservation and their use from a pastoral perspective.

What is at stake for the Church is not only the transmission of the past but, above all, an aim for the future. In this sense, as Catholic tradition consists of both material and intangible culture, the Church's actions in the religious heritage complex implies a normative agency for all (believers or not). Legally, religious cultural goods are what the Ecclesiastical Law refers to as *res mixtae*, which are domains that are managed jointly by the Church and individual states for their specific interest (Camassa 2013: 118–23). Thus Catholic heritage is simultaneously under the purview of both church and state in Italy. However, state autonomy therein is limited, because religious heritage protection depends on the principle of religious use. This juxtaposition of heritage regimes began a slow resolution process when the general inventory started in 1996. This has the practical aims of promoting knowledge and protection of ecclesiastical goods as well as other, non-religious aims, and it has also permitted a collaboration between the Italian Catholic Church and the Republic of Italy (UNBCE 2014).

## Normative Agency of Catholic Heritage

### The Church and its Heritage

Church heritage, just like all religious heritage, has an “inherent livingness” (Stovel et al. 2005: 1), but it also may be alive in the sense of fostering a vital force or (also a supernatural) power in all its expressions. If it is clear that heritage and lived religion are not separate domains, religions always produce forms of heritage.

For the Catholic Church, this process involves both spontaneous and unintentional production of goods, so while it combines the religious *habitus* of caring for the past with conscious practices of heritage-making, it always looks at the future as a horizon of salvation. Church heritage represents memories that each person should have to connect with deeply, rather than look at or visit (Rech 2016: 214).

Piety is the most important quality of religious heritage because it expresses the reason of creation, which is liturgical or decorative, in order to illustrate a particular dogma or a special event in the Holy Scripture (Balboni 1994: 49). In other words, the explicit purpose of Catholic heritage concerns both the life of Christians and the profession of faith in incarnation, revelation, and redemption through Christ to the world, witnessing fidelity to the Gospel and the Church's service to men (Menis 1994: 35).

Such a view also implies a normative agency for all (believers or not) in approaching sacred spaces and objects: according to theologians, Catholic heritage can only be encountered and rather than merely admired (Chenis 2008). The romantic tourist gaze in search of the authentic masterpiece inside a church, in light of its salvation goal, is considered by the Catholic Church a sort of outrage, if not a heresy.

### Church, Culture, and the Modern World

Thus, the example of the Catholic Church in Italy is indicative of the issues related to religious/spiritual conservation and the interpretation of the material and intangible value of heritage. After 1989, the Roman Curia began to look at the conservation of its heritage from a universal perspective and regulated heritage-making and conservation at different levels: universal Church, national or regional episcopal conferences, dioceses, institutes of consecrated life, confraternities, and associations. In 1988, the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor bonus* regulated the Roman Curia, creating the Pontifical Commission for Preserving the Patrimony of Art and History. It "has the duty of acting as curator for the artistic and historical patrimony of the whole Church" (John Paul II 1988: art. 99) and is administered by the presidency of the Congregation for the Clergy. In the 1980s, the role of the Commission was revised in terms of "enhancement of the historical and artistic heritage of the Church essentially in order to promote cultural and pastoral animation. The variety of goods that the Church has produced in two millennia is not only the fossil trace of its past, but the living testimony of what it has been able to express through the centuries through faith, culture and Christian art"

(Pontifical Commission 1999<sup>3</sup>). This change reflects the necessity to look at the world for both believers and non-believers; the creation of heritage stimulates direct communication between worshipers in the Church and between the Church and the world around it, enriching both the Church and the various cultures, as recommended in an important Italian Episcopal Conference document (referred to from this point on as CEI 1992: 312).

In 1993, the Pontifical Commission was renamed “for the cultural patrimony of the Church” and linked to the Pontifical Council for Culture (John Paul II 1993: art. 4 III<sup>4</sup>). The opportunity to open things up to modernity lies in the heritage purposes of cult and liturgy: it may broaden conservative interest in the scope of a “full” enhancement of the historical and artistic heritage (Elberti and Valdarnini 2017). This is a living heritage that may be used for culture, catechesis, worship, and charity. Heritage involves Christian communities defending Christian meanings in a period of socio-cultural change. When the Italian Episcopal Conference published its mission statement in 1992, it stated “as the borders between the countries of Europe and the world are increasingly more open, the need is felt to keep alive the link with tradition” (CEI 1992: 316). In the case of the Catholic Church, the religious heritage complex also intersects with an overlapping of values in the aesthetic, memorial, ritual, spiritual, and cultural valuation of such goods.

In the institutional work on heritage conservation and heritage-making, the Catholic Church affirms its aim of revelation and salvation in liturgical actions as it outlined in the Constitution on the sacred liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (referred to from this point as SC 1963: no. 122). In the Church’s opinion, this is the only proper view on sacred arts and objects. However, the purposes of the Second Vatican Council slowly seem to specify and act in society, reconnecting the past and its materiality to modern and contemporary society and varied contemporary lifestyles. Heritage caring and promotion practices, especially enhancing and animating the true sense of Catholic heritage, are religious activities such as liturgy and catechesis, training activities, and cultural activities such as concerts and expositions.

The Church is aware that it represents the destination of many tourists’ visits. Affirming that mass tourism is an expression of the civilization of leisure time (CEI 1992: 333), it acknowledges the plurality of values in heritage uses. Clarifying that tourism “is often characterized by the search for new knowledge and by the desire for cultural growth and rediscovery of historical and artistic heritage” (CEI 1992: 333), it opens up to initiatives which satisfy visitors’ needs for cultural leisure activities.

## The Catholic Church and the Enhancement of Religious Heritage: The Inner Sense of Tourism

After the Second Vatican Council, Christians and the Catholic Church decided to aim to “live in history,”<sup>5</sup> affirming the role of the Church in the contemporary world, especially through several commitments in the public sphere introduced in the constitution *Gaudium et spes*. The challenge for the Church is to confront some main modern social phenomena and attempt to define their role in accordance with the Gospel spirit.

Among these modern phenomena, mobility and tourism are seen as educational opportunities; tourism needs both pastoral theology and action (GS 1965: 61). Church teachings have been developed since Pius XII’s pontification, through early speeches to tourist organizations and, later, in specific reflections during the Second Vatican Council (PCMI 2009). In John XXIII’s speech to the conference which discussed tourism and pastoral care, the pope said that opening up to the horizons of graceful supernatural life “is the ultimate goal of seeing, of wandering, of enjoying the beauties that the hands of the Heavenly Father has sown in creation, as a footprint of his wisdom and eternal beauty” (John XXIII 1963 in PCMI 2009).

Mobility and tourist activity would be conceived at the theological level, aimed at “human promotion,” but it is undeniably a part of modern lifestyles. The People of God might be “sensitised to authentic values that the phenomenon implies not only from the mere spiritual point of view but also from the human one,” as we read in the Directory on tourism pastoral care, *Peregrinans in terra* (Sacra congregatio 1969: 1022). According to the internal logic of “homo viator” and the consequent pedagogic function of travel, men and the Church are considered pilgrims on the Earth and this idea induces one to conceive of life as a route (Chenis 2000). Following a long and still active socio-anthropological debate, it can be ascertained that the figures of pilgrim and tourist are not in contrast to the Church’s vision if they are intended as “pilgrims on the way of beauty.” From this perspective, artistic and historical heritage is interpreted “as a pathway of evangelisation of cultures and dialogue with non-believers” (PCC 2006: II.3). In particular during the preparation of the Jubilee event in 2000, the Church had developed a long-term reflection on theological and pastoral considerations about tourists and pilgrims towards its heritage.

From a secular point of view, religious heritage is a touristic resource. In interpreting and enlarging the Church’s position, however, I would add that it



is “notwithstanding” its religious and liturgical goals. Inside the broader process of the migration of the holy, there is a transformation in the social significance of the sacred heritage and the nature of the movement towards it. Originating in a large current trend of interest in spiritual activities, holy places and figures and religious heritage are nowadays more closely linked because of an added leisure value. Thus, some places of worship become part of a number of things that “must be seen” during one’s lifetime. This increases the importance of materiality of religious heritage despite its symbolic, hagiographic, and liturgical meanings.

Indeed, religious heritage also acquires a touristic value for a quantitative reason. The main part of Church heritage is more acquainted with tourists than worshipers or devotees. With the exception of some important pilgrimage places, church attendance has plummeted. There are also fewer “inhabited” places and houses of worship, because of the fall in religious vocations and the small number of consecrated people who could manage the sheer volume of sacred places. Priests as well as lay people and heritage experts have to be educated in the meanings of Christian art and culture (Enchiridion 2002: 843–5). Among the different concrete proposals for the pastoral care of culture, cultural heritage and religious tourism are expected “to point out some initiatives which may safeguard, restore and make the most of the existing religious cultural heritage, and also pass on to future generations the treasures of Christian culture” (PCC 1999: 37).

## Defensive Strategies

According to Church teachings, religious heritage represents a memory with which each tourist may “associate.” This means that the non-religious “tourist gaze” on religious heritage can, at most, be tolerated by the Catholic Church. The great proponent of salvation could negotiate its role in society by affirming its mission to accept secular heritage. At least two defensive strategies are apparent. The first consists of drawing a clear distinction between the cultural and touristic use of heritage on one hand, and the cultural aim of this heritage on the other. The second is a defensive negotiation of the relationship between the institution of salvation and heritage institutions, the latter of which oppose the intensive attempts to revitalize religious life with touristic uses of heritage sites. These strategies will be briefly illustrated.

## Regulation of Tourist Access

Typically, the Church regulates guided or free tours in churches, and forbids them during mass or liturgical services. In many cases, internal spaces for tourist circulation are clearly established, although some chapels or places are expressly off limits to visitors (e.g. the chapel of the Blessed Blood: CEI 1992: 334). In some cases, in Italy and abroad, an admission fee is levied. In major churches, it is quite common to pay to visit specific collections—such as Church treasure—because, even if they are incorporated into the sacred space of a place of worship, they are in fact “museum pieces.” In Italy, the “museum management” of churches via an admission fee affects between sixty and eighty houses of worship and almost all are tourist attractions (Beltrami 2017; Franceschi 2014: 12–17). In these cases, every type of visit is strictly controlled and the relationship between cult and culture has proven to be quite complex. The local church’s choice to charge an admission fee could be interpreted as the implicit acknowledgement that the Church patrimony is cultural heritage and many people who enter are (only) tourists. This seems to be the manifestation of a break between the universal Catholic Church and the rest of the world. On one hand, there are faith, ecclesial life, liturgical actions and institutional religiosity, and on the other, there is cultural and heritage tourism.

The value of religious cultural heritage is separated between its historical-cultural interest and its devotional and liturgical function. With regards to paid access, this heritage-making is subordinated to religious duty; the Church would prefer a distinction between cultural heritage value and the transmission of religious *habitus*. If a fee is demanded for access, the religious cultural heritage is not interpreted in the light of the evangelizing mission of the Church, but its value as witness, memory, and history of the Church and its material culture are nevertheless recognized.

The debate over whether to charge admission fee for churches has gone on for some time, above all because the ordinary (and extraordinary) maintenance of churches is expensive. The issue is, from the legislative point of view, far from resolved (Feliciani 2010). A note from the Italian Episcopal Conference entitled “The access to churches” attests to the commitment of the Italian bishops, as far as their authority allows, to limit and possibly stop the discussed (and debatable) phenomenon of paid entrance to churches (Franceschi 2014: 50). Bishops affirm the universal fruition that would reflect the universality of the Church’s mission as exhorted by Pope Francis in his apostolical *Evangelium Gaudium*: “The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open” (2013: n. 47).

Local churches, however, have to find their own ways to “enhance alternative forms of funding able to grant economic resources” (Franceschi 2014: 51).

In this example, the religious heritage complex functions on multiple levels. The Church *habitus* of heritage conservation contrasts with contemporary secular policy of heritage care of the past. In fact, the latter increasingly privileges the economic sustainability of heritage, in addition through religious and cultural tourism, while the religious *habitus* of conservation is once again affirmed as concrete evidence of faith and an inner opportunity for pastoral care and heritage presentation to the world.

### Revitalization of Religious Life

Some churches are no longer parish hubs—if they ever were, as was the case for many shrines for example—and have hosted different religious congregations in their history. Each one has brought its own character to the pastoral animation of the sacred place and also to the people who chose to attend religious services in those churches alone. Strong pastoral choices about the way in which the Gospel was preached could overwhelm, regain, or meet the specific sense of that sacred space. This attitude corresponds to a way of offering more abundant means of salvation. The specific nature of the heritage should be encountered through all five senses and not only sight. The value of religious cultural heritage passes through the whole aesthetic fruition of heritage—on the one hand, there is the faith, but on the other, tourists could also be or become believers and it is the Church’s task to present all the spiritual value of the heritage.

According to Verdon, the present time is an era of transitions because “everyone wants to question the past, looking for a meaning in history, wondering if there can be continuity between past and future” (Verdon 2002: 15). In 2000, the year of the Catholic Church’s Jubilee, Italians found themselves to be both pilgrims and like tourists in their homeland. In the light of Christ’s incarnation, rather than being a “patrimony’ frozen in the past, heritage constitutes capital invested in the future. Generated by faith, such works invite those who look at them to achieve ‘works’ of another kind: solidarity and love, justice and peace” (Verdon 2002: 15).

This is an interpretation of the phenomenon of religious heritage tourism, which defends the deep sense of the spiritual encounter. It could be experienced as an opening to Providence, which could enlighten and convert someone. Over the many years of research on pilgrimage, religious tourism, and religious heritage, priests interviewed about the religious heritage role in tourism nearly always

affirmed this hope.<sup>6</sup> This sentiment is accompanied by a profound conviction about the Church's ultimate goals with regards to heritage-making. Analytically, the religious heritage complex, as observed in fieldwork, can be expressed as the cultural relationship among the materiality of traces, the immateriality of religious meanings, and the transcendent power of sacred images. These meanings and power are not acknowledged in contemporary society but are omnipresent in the Church, where such conversion is a sign of the Holy Spirit.

### Re-appropriation of the Inner Sense of Catholic Heritage

The challenge for the Catholic Church is to make the inner sense of its heritage also more visible by means of an enculturation of the Gospel through visual and contemporary arts and architecture. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church faced an intensification in secularization and non-religious tourism. Cultural tourism is a generally secular activity that is based upon the historical and artistic value of religious heritage.

#### ***Via pulchritudinis: Pilgrims and Tourists to the Source of Beauty***

In Italy during the 1990s, a “cultural project” to foster and accomplish a dialogue between the Catholic Church and contemporary society was launched. A dual and complementary perspective is given in the first proposal for this initiative, which aimed to “make ordinary pastoral care attractive and incisive” and to “support the lay faithful in their duty to express the fruitfulness of faith in family and social life, in scientific and philosophical research, and in arts” (Presidenza CEI 1997: 2). The “specific contents of the project reside in the ever-renewed mediation of Christian anthropology in relation to concrete and changing historical situations” (Presidenza CEI, 1997: 2)<sup>7</sup>.

The dual cultural and religious identity of religious heritage necessarily implies a complex reading that considers the living and lived heritage, to ensure both its current understanding and its sustainability. This cultural mediation is developed as a heritage pedagogy that is interpreted as starting from the truth of the incarnation. Truth is the other side of beauty, according to the catechism of the Catholic Church. Wisdom, beauty, artistic heritage, and faith go hand-in-hand. In the Christian arts wisdom has to overwhelm all the other qualities of the human spirit and reveals their relationship with God the Creator, because art is a form of practical wisdom that combines knowledge and skills to give form to

the truth of a reality in a language accessible to eye and ear (Bellinati 1994: 6). The value of religious cultural heritage lies in its being a living witness of the Gospel. Through art, the Church can evangelize, pray, and speak to the sensibility of those who do not share the faith.

The relationship that the Church proposes between beauty, artistic heritage, and devotion is fully realized in small groups of devoted lay people. One example is the youth apostolate of the Society of Jesus where groups of young people called Communities of Living Stones speak to “beggars of meaning and light” within some Christian monuments (PV 2014: 5). These young people usually join the Communities of Living Stones after one year of Ignatian spiritual exercises. They receive specific and “scientific” (in their words, during an ethnographic encounter) training during which they learn about the artistic and architectural characteristics of the Christian buildings and monuments they dwell in within a community. In the meanwhile, as a community, they pray and are involved in meditation on a specific theme, led by an ordained Jesuit, that improves their understanding of that monument.

### **A Religiously Educated and Trained Civil Society**

In order to develop activities that help people to better understand the buildings and objects belonging to religious heritage, the Pontifical Council for Culture explicitly suggests “the creation of ‘Catholic guide’ organizations” (PCC 1999: 37) which would provide tourists with a high-quality cultural service backed up by the witness of faith. Those guides are trained experts in the true meanings and values of Catholic heritage and can disclose the authentic sense of themes, figures, symbols, and objects in sacred art. Their activity could also reveal the authentic purpose and use of those works of art. The criteria of objective authenticity<sup>8</sup> often linked to the material dimensions of religion are secondary to the background of the existential authenticity that guides witness during their service (Belhassen et al. 2008: 679–83; Feldman 2015: 54–7).

The approach is relatively common in Europe, where many associations organize training courses for young (or retired) people (Rech 2013a; Rech 2016). When enquiring into this phenomenon of volunteer service and specific religious training, I was directed towards the specific cultural mediation they learn and offer to visitors. As Caillet argues, for cultural mediation and cultural action, this implies a definite training for knowledge and some innate skills (1994: 68–9): heritage interpretation in religious properties is not simply an issue of artistic, historical, or iconographic contents but also of moral attitudes. In the religious domain, those

are complex to articulate in a harmonious way because a basic ambivalence persists both for the audience and the exponents (Gauthier 2005). When a volunteer guide encounters a visitor, the inherently religious dimension of these kinds of art and heritage can only lead once again to a tug-of-war between serving knowledge or serving faith. And, more generally, are these two domains separable in this context? Volunteers are not only asked to demonstrate a “cultural charity” and to provide an introduction to the religious meanings of religious buildings, but cultural animation and action are also—more or less—implicitly part of their mission. What the Church considers the mediation of the “authentic” religious heritage message and meaning takes a back seat to a heritage they continue to perceive as theirs. They are, above all, a welcoming and graceful presence when they guide and meet tourists and visitors, offering their service in a voluntary capacity.

In Italy, certain organizations demonstrate the importance of being or becoming active and engaged citizens who demonstrate “their” attachment and affection for “their” heritage along with a concern for religious meanings and symbolic understanding (Rech 2013b). The value of religious cultural heritage lies in participating in it and in creating awareness of the specific significance that the religious status brings with it. When one enters a church, one is granted access to the entire body of the Church through the symbolic and metaphoric language of the sacred art contained therein. Visitors are informed about the initiatory path that the sacred architecture represents when they cross the threshold of the church, which is a gateway into a sacred space. Inside the church, walking along the Sacred Road (the central aisle of the hall) leads to the presbytery. This path is often geographically oriented from west to east, or from darkness into light. These specific meanings inherent to the church experience are a part of the religious heritage complex that volunteers and associations endeavor to transmit to churchgoers and tourists alike. Their aim is also to protect this patrimony of knowledge from secularization and religious indifference. What is interesting to underline about the religious heritage complex is that in the social realm, it is a unique form of heritage experience despite its inner—religious or not—motivations.

## Conclusion

Both religious and secular institutions agree that heritage value should not be sought in the qualitative degree of the components that constitute it, but rather in its existential relationship with the human community that produced it. From

the secular point of view on heritage, the cultural value connects the historical value of the object, building, or practice to its conservation and transmission. From the heritage-making perspective, a fundamental selective criterion, from which all the others are derived and which responds to the anthropological vision of the cultural goods, is its social representativeness. This discriminating category is the degree of representativeness that an object possesses in relation to the place, time, and culture of people that produced it (Menis 1994: 34). It is a criterion that exalts, above all, the essential nexus between object, building, or practice and the cultural matrix that has transmitted a sign of its inner vitality through it.

In the Italian context of the relationship between the Holy See and the Republic of Italy, it is implicitly assumed that this matrix is Christian and specifically Catholic. Nevertheless, for today's Church, there is a sort of break between the awareness of being legitimate holders of the management of sacredness and realizing that they have lost their monopoly on that sacredness. From this point of view, it is probably plausible to question whether the Catholic Church in Italy is able to manage this religious heritage complex: a recent conference asked "Does God still live here?" Pope Francis' answer was that "the building of a church or its new use are not operations that can be treated only in terms of their technical or economic profile, but which must be evaluated according to the spirit of prophecy" (2018).

From the religious point of view, the role of heritage and its historic value should always be tied to the role of living assessment and context. Considerations about beauty in the artistic heritage are linked closely to the possibility of revelation and the belief in it. I would argue that heritage-making is a modern practice that entails, above all, a care for the past. Nevertheless, for the Catholic Church, it makes sense only when considering the future, until the hereafter and the end of time. Christians live in history and the Church seems to be aware that heritage tourism is basically inauthentic (Watson 2015: 42–4). For this reason, among the different strategies of defence and re-appropriation, Catholic heritage needs all the expertise that theological, symbolic, hagiographic, and liturgical knowledge can bring to the reproduction of the religious heritage complex. In accepting tourism and tourists in places of worship, religious institutions can fulfil the religious goal of charity and present the mystical and mystagogical dimensions of conversion.





- 13 Presentation brochure: *Agissons pour le plus grand musée de France*, [www.leplusgrandmusee.fr](http://www.leplusgrandmusee.fr).
- 14 Speech given by the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Bernard Cazeneuve, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the cathedral of Sainte-Marie de Créteil and its cultural space, September 20, 2015.
- 15 Among the many initiatives, we can cite the activities of the association *Rencontre avec le patrimoine religieux* (1992), as well as the references listed in the cultural pages of the website [Narthex.fr](http://Narthex.fr) of the Sacred Art department of the Bishops' Conference, specifically the *Guides du patrimoine chrétien* (Narthex/Le Pèlerin).

## Chapter 6

- 1 The BeWeB project is a systematic inventory conducted by Italian dioceses and ecclesiastical cultural institutions on their historical, artistic, archival, and library assets: Caputo (2013) and Russo (2014); [https://beweb.chiesacattolica.it/?l=en\\_GB](https://beweb.chiesacattolica.it/?l=en_GB).
- 2 The vocabulary is quite sensitive and, in the case of the Catholic Church, reflects the progressive adaptation to a universal sight rather than re-situating in the local (and Italian) context (Bondaz *et al.*, 2014: 17–24). See also: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_commissions/pcchc/documents/rc\\_com\\_pcchc\\_pro\\_20011008\\_it.html#Rapporto\\_con\\_gli\\_Organismi\\_nazionali\\_e\\_internazionali\\_della\\_Pontificia\\_Commissione\\_per\\_i\\_Beni\\_Culturali\\_della\\_Chiesa](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/pcchc/documents/rc_com_pcchc_pro_20011008_it.html#Rapporto_con_gli_Organismi_nazionali_e_internazionali_della_Pontificia_Commissione_per_i_Beni_Culturali_della_Chiesa) (accessed April 18, 2019).
- 3 The Documents of the Pontifical Commission are available on: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_commissions/pcchc/documents/rc\\_com\\_pcchc\\_pro\\_20011008\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/pcchc/documents/rc_com_pcchc_pro_20011008_it.html) (accessed April 18, 2019).
- 4 In the translations of Vatican documents, the term “heritage” appears along with other similar expressions. According to Graburn, what is transmitted over time can be variously called “inheritance,” “heritage,” “tradition,” “birth right,” and so on, but he argues that patrimony is usually for male-centered societies (2000: 69). If the first “universal” pontifical commission is said to be “for the patrimony of art and history,” the actual commission is variously entitled for cultural patrimony or heritage of the Church, even if the terms vary across English translations.
- 5 The historian of the Second Vatican Council, Alberigo, analyzes the last part of the Council (1965) highlighting the debates about religious freedom and pastoral care and their role to open a dialogue between the Catholic Church, on one side, and other religions, Christian denominations and atheists, on the other side. These debates led to approve four important documents about the role of the Church in modern times (Alberigo 2005: 131–62).
- 6 In some cases, even if the sacred image is contested for theological and environmental reasons, a magnanimous and positive attitude prevail in religious



institutions: see, for example, the case of the Thinking Christ of Dolomites in Rech (2015).

- 7 This theme carried on during the pontificate of Benedict XVI: Introvigne (2010).
- 8 In heritage, in arts and in tourist experience: see Lindholm (2008); Zhu (2012); MacCannell (1976).

## Chapter 7

- 1 This article is written with the support of the Treilles Foundation. The Treilles Foundation, created by Anne Gruner Schlumberger, aims to open up and enrich the dialogue between sciences and art, in order to take forward artistic creation and research. It also welcomes researchers and writers in its *domaine des Treilles* (Var). See [www.les-treilles.com](http://www.les-treilles.com)
- 2 Juan Álvarez Mendízabal was Public Treasury minister and government president (1834–36).
- 3 I am grateful to María Bolaños and the Museo Nacional de Escultura for providing me the Museum's *Pasos* images.
- 4 These images now removed from their altars are somehow dethroned from Olympus and their prestige has disappeared; they have become objects of admiration for artists and of sorrow, not to say ridiculous, for Protestants, instead of veneration and fear.
- 5 The San Gregorio College was a former theological college, established by Isabel I of Castile's confessor, and belongs to the list of monuments protected by the Spanish state.

## Chapter 8

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