

Press Release

Seminar “Terra Mariana 1186-1888” on Tuesday March 10 from 3pm in the Vatican Apostolic Library

The album “Terra Mariana 1186-1888” reflects the history of the Christian faith in the territories of Latvia and Estonia - formerly known as "Livonia", and also known as the "Land of Mary" (Terra Mariana). The album was originally made in one single copy and then presented by noblemen of Baltic Polish heritage as a gift to Pope Leo XIII in 1888. In terms of the particular idea, the content, and the quality of its execution, it has no equal in the Baltic. The album contains a wealth of visual and textual material on Livonian castles, castle ruins, churches, coats of arms of the noble families, seals, information and illustrations of important historical figures, and prints of ancient silver and gold coins. The original copy is kept in the Vatican Apostolic Library.

In 2007, the National Library of Latvia and the Vatican Apostolic Library signed an agreement on a joint publication of the album “Terra Mariana 1186-1888” in ten identical full-size copies and 1000 smaller copies. In 2008-2009, the ten facsimile copies were printed at Franco Cosimo Panini Editore publishing house in Italy, which is experienced with the production of facsimile editions. In 2011, the facsimile reproductions were delivered to Riga, while the work for the preparation and publishing of 1000 copies and academic annotations was completed in March 2014.

From 1 January 2015, Latvia has started the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first time. Therefore during Latvia`s Presidency of the Council of Europe, Embassy of Latvia to the Holy See in cooperation with Vatican Apostolic Library will organize a seminar “Terra Mariana 1186-1888” on March 10th at 15.00 in the Vatican Apostolic Library.

The seminar will be chaired by Vice Prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Library Dr Ambrogio Piazzoni and welcoming remarks will be delivered by President of the Pontifical Council for Culture Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi and Prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Library Msgr. Cesare Pasini. The speeches will be delivered by Archbishop – Metropolitan of Riga Zbignevs Stankevičs and Director of the Latvian National Library Dr. Andris Vilks as well Representative of Latvian Academy of Arts Dr. Ruta Kaminska and initiator of the joint publication of the album Ambassador Alberts Sarkanis. The conclusions will be made by Ambassador of Latvia to the Holy See Dr. Einars Semanis.

Auditorium of the Seminar includes the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, Representatives of the Vatican Secretariat of States, academics and researchers as well as Latvian intelligentsia in Rome.

Contact for journalists: dace.rutka@mfa.gov.lv