

# November Symposium and Only U.S. Public Exhibition of "Pieta" Will Commemorate 43rd Anniversary of JFK's Death

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A week-long symposium about the life and legacy of President John F. Kennedy accompanies the first opportunity for the public to see the "Pieta" by acclaimed portraiture painter Mark Balma ([www.sharingthemoment.org](http://www.sharingthemoment.org)) from November 15 - 22, 2006, in the Cathedral of St. Paul ([www.cathedralsaintpaul.org](http://www.cathedralsaintpaul.org) and Selby and Summit in St. Paul, Minnesota). Following the exhibition and symposium, the 5-feet by 7-feet oil tempera painting will leave the country to be presented to the Vatican art collections. All events are free and open to the public.

A renowned international artist who's painted several presidential portraits (see Balma/Pieta Backgrounder), Balma's painting depicts the moment that the presidential limousine pulled up to the emergency room entrance of Parkland Hospital in Dallas on November 22, 1963. The visual image first appeared to artist Mark Balma in the Dallas/Fort Worth airport in 2002. When he decided two years later to "paint the picture out of his mind's eye," he drew inspiration from one obscure line in the controversial Warren Commission Report on the Assassination. It reads, "*For a moment, Mrs. Kennedy refused to release the president whom she held in her lap.*" This scene has been confirmed to be historically accurate, but was never photographed or recorded.

**Symposium Events** in the Cathedral's Sacred Heart Chapel include:

## **Wednesday, November 15 at 12:00 noon. Opening Ceremony**

Prayer service led by Father Joseph Johnson, Rector of the Cathedral, and the unveiling of the painting "Pieta" with the U.S. Marines Honor Corps.

## **First public viewing of the painting "Pieta" by Mark Balma**

Throughout the week from November 15 -22, the painting "Pieta" by Mark Balma will be exhibited for public viewing in the Sacred Heart Chapel of the Cathedral from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Additional materials related to the creation of the painting will be displayed in the Founders Chapel, including the replica of the pink suit, model of the presidential limousine, and preliminary drawings and sketches.

## **Thursday, November 16 at 7:00 p.m. Talk by Governor Arne Carlson**

*"The JFK Assassination: Its Impact on America's History."*

A history major in college, Carlson has maintained a longtime interest in studying how the death of President Kennedy has affected our nation. He served Minnesota for thirty years in a variety of offices including state legislator, state auditor, and governor. In a statewide poll, Carlson was named with Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale as the individuals who made the most significant contributions to Minnesota in the 20th century. He is currently the chairman of RiverSource Funds.

## **Friday, November 17 at 7:00 p.m. Talk by art historian Mark Thistlethwaite**

*"History Painting in America: What It Is, What It Does, Why It Matters"*

Professor Mark Thistlethwaite speaks on the art of history painting in America and how the painting "Pieta" fits into that tradition. Chair of the art history department of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, Thistlethwaite has received awards and recognition for his teaching and lecturing. His areas of expertise include art of the 19th century and contemporary art with a particular interest in history painting. In addition to his scholarly activities, he serves as a trustee of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth and chairs the Fort Worth Art Commission.

**Sunday, November 19 at 2:00 p.m. Panel discussion: "Remembering Kennedy"**

Roger Banks was a student studying history at the University of New Mexico in 1960 when President John F. Kennedy announced the creation of the Peace Corps in a speech at the University of Michigan. Banks was among the first to participate in the program, serving a small village in Punjab, India, from 1963 -1965. He will talk about the formative years of the Peace Corps and its vision. Joining him will be a recently Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who will talk about the current Peace Corps program and how its vision has been sustained. In addition, President Kennedy's visit to the Twin Cities and his attendance at Mass in the Cathedral 1962 will be remembered. His arrival at the Cathedral was captured on 8mm film, which will be shown for the first time publicly.

**Sunday, November 19 at 3:00 p.m. Talk by artist Mark Balma**

***"Creating â Pieta':The Year-Long Journey and Its Stories"***

Mark Balma created the history painting "Pieta" over a period of one year in 2004. His talk will explore the challenging journey of creating "Pieta," the surprises he encountered along the way, and the responses to the painting from museums, media and the public. The composition appeared in his mind's eye in the Dallas, Texas, airport where he was completing a portrait commission. Months later, as he began the work, the surprises and coincidences began. For example, the scene he pictured in his mind is historically accurate, but it was never photographed.

**Monday, November 20 at 7:00 p.m. Talk by Judge John Tunheim**

***"The JFK Assassination:Opening Its History for Public Review"***

U.S. District Judge John Tunheim will talk about his experiences as chairman of the committee created by Congress in 1994 to review and make public government records related to the JFK assassination, the Assassination Records Review Board. The Zapruder film footage will be shown. The talk will include the issues that led to creation of the committee and the personalities of the people involved with the assassination. Appointed district judge in 1995, Judge Tunheim served as the senior appointed official in Attorney General Skip Humphrey's office for nearly ten years.

**Tuesday, November 21 at 7:00 p.m. Talk by Colleen Carroll Campbell**

***"The Kennedy Compromise"***

When President John F. Kennedy addressed a skeptical and largely anti-Catholic crowd at the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in September 1960, he promised that he would sever his Catholic faith from his political decisions. That promise propelled him to election as America's first Catholic President. It also encouraged a gap between private faith and public service. Journalist, author and former speechwriter for President George H. Bush, Colleen Carroll Campbell, will chronicle the development of this separation between faith and works in Catholic politics, its consequences for the Church and the culture, and the possibilities for a more integrated public witness by Catholic politics in the years to come.

**Wednesday, November 22 at 12:00 noon. Closing Ceremony**

Prayer service on the anniversary of the death of President John F. Kennedy led by Father Joseph Johnson.  
Veiling of the painting "Pieta" and retirement of the U.S. Marines Honor Guard.

For more information or to interview Mark Balma about the event please contact Martin Keller,  
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