

Christmas 2009



Occasions 2010



Christmas 2009

This set, issued by MaltaPost on 30th November 2009, is made up of 3 stamps featuring Old Masters depicting Our Lady as a mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The €0.19 value shows Mary showing her Son, who with a raised right hand is seen blessing whoever is in front of Him. Entitled 'Mater Admirabilis', this painting (Tempera on panel) is 71.5cm x 55cm and is painted in the manner of Alessandro Botticelli (1440-1510). This early Renaissance Florentine artist is considered as one of the most influential painters of his time. The original painting is found at the Malta National Museum of FineArts.

The second stamp in this set is called 'Madonna and Child'. It is 108cm x 91cm Oil on Canvas by Corrado Giacchino, a late Neapolitan Baroque artist (1703-1765). The image depicts Our Lady with her Child on her lap in a dramatic gesture. This painting too is part of the fabulous collection in our National Museum of fineArts.

Painted by the followers of Simone Cantarini is the replica found on the €0.63 value. This Italian etcher and painter of the Bolognese School was born in Oropezza The original painting is Oil on Canvas, measures 116.2cm x 88.9cm. and is found in a private collection.

The design of this set was prepared by MaltaPost plc and printed by Printex Ltd., using the offset process. Each stamp measures 44.00mm x 31.0mm. And has a perforation of 13.9 x 14 (comb). The paper is watermarked with Maltese Crosses.

Ref: MaltaPost Official Bulletin no 278.

Occasions 2010

A set of 8 stamps entitled 'Occasions' was issued by MaltaPost on 17 March 2010. The aim of these stamps was to be used in Personalised stamp issues. One of these stamps shows the famous painting 'The Marriage of the Virgin' by Philippe de Champaigne. This particular 'Occasion Stamp' was popular and even today, over a year later it is widely used especially on envelopes carrying wedding invitations.

The original oil on panel was painted in circa 1644 and is 71.5 cm (28.1 in) in height and 143.5 cm (56.5 in) in width. It is found at the Wallace Collection, London.

Philippe de Champaigne was born in Brussels of a poor family in 1602. In 1621 he moved to Paris, where he worked with Nicolas Poussin on the decoration of the Palais du Luxembourg under the direction of Nicolas Duchesne, whose daughter he married. Later in life Philippe worked for the Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis, and for Cardinal Richelieu, (for whom he decorated the Palais Cardinal). Champaigne produced a very large number of paintings, mainly religious works and portraits. Influenced by Rubens at the beginning of his career; his style later became more austere.

Printed by Printex Ltd with the Offset process it is 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size, 13.9 x 14.0 (comb) as perforation and watermarked with Maltese Crosses. This set was prepared by Sean Cini, an officer in the MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau.

Ref: MaltaPost Official Bulletin no 281. Wikipedia; Philippe de Champaigne.

Christmas 2010

An other set is of 3 stamps reproducing Old Masters paintings and depicting Our Lady as a protective mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ was issued on 9 November 2010.

The €0.19 value shows 'The Adoration of the Magi' This painting (Oil on Canvas) is owned by the Lombard Bank - Malta and was painted at the Studio of Valerio Castello (1624-1659) This Baroque period Italian painter was very active during his short life. The figures in this painting are full of movement and the composition is very interesting.

The second stamp in this set is called 'The Flight into Egypt'. It is Oil on Canvas and attributed to Filippo Paladini, a Tuscan master, whose style was strongly influenced by Caravaggio. Originally the painting served as the main altarpiece in the small church dedicated to St. Joseph in the Citadel, Gozo. Today it is located in the Cathedral Museum in the same Citadel. The image depicts Our Lady with her Child on a donkey with two 'puttini' on top. Saint Joseph is seen leading the way to safety.

The last of the set is the €0.63 value. This Oil on Canvas painting is found just beneath the main altarpiece in Saint George's Basilica, Victoria, and Gozo. It is attributed to the early 1700's French painter Pierre Guillemin. Almost nothing is known about the history of this work or when and how it arrived at Saint George's Basilica. What is known is that until recently there was a great devotion for this Madonna. It was so popular that this painting used to be placed on the main altar during the month of May, hence its title Madonna di Maggio.

The design of this set was prepared by MaltaPost plc and printed by Printex Ltd., using the offset process. Each stamp measures 44.00mm x 31.0mm. And has a perforation of 13.9 x 14 (comb). The paper is watermarked with Maltese Crosses.

Ref: MaltaPost stamp official bulletin no.287.

Christmas 2011

An other Christmas set of 3 stamps depicting Old Master paintings and representing the Holy Family was issued by MaltaPost on 15 November 2011. All three values (€0.20, €0.37 and €0.63) depicts the Virgin Mary holding Baby Jesus. The set was designed by MaltaPost plc and printed by Printex Ltd using the offset method. Each stamp measures 44.0mm x 32.0mm with perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb) and watermarked with Maltese Crosses.

The €0.20 stamp shows also Saint Joseph looking over his wife and the Baby who is caressing his mother's shoulder as if trying to make space for His 'father' to get in the picture. The original painting called 'The Holy Family in an Interior' is the work of followers of Marcello Venusti and it is oil on canvas measuring 111.2 x 82.2cm.

The €0.37 value is 'The Madonna and Child with infant Saint John the Baptist' It is also oil on canvas with the original measuring 109.4 x 89.6cm and was executed by the Tuscan School (circa 1600). The subject of this painting was very popular during the Renaissance period.

The last stamp in this set, the €0.63 value shows once more the complete Holy Family. Entitled 'The Rest on the Flight into Egypt' it is attributed to the Circle of Pietro van Mol and was painted in the first half of the 16th century. The original is also oil on canvas measuring 121.8 x 33.1cm.

Ref: MaltaPost stamp official bulletin no.295 /Antonio Espinosa Rodriguez.

Anthony Grech

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