

Catholicism, the term used to include all form of the Catholic faith, has been a part of humanity for thousands of years and plays a vital role in the development of our civilization, culture and society, diversifying from philosophy, law, sciences to education and the arts, since the beginning of the Anno Domini epoch.¹ From enforcing first form of laws, creating a sense of humaneness among people, inventing the University and initially introducing the idea of “free-market economics”, the Catholic Church was one of the major determinant of the events in our history and has greatly contributed to how the world is today.² Due to the overwhelming number of contributions, Catholicism’s contribution to the arts tends to be overshadowed, however, without much of their patronage and their pivotal job as the drive for artistic innovation, artworks existing today might have never existed. Hence, one of the most important contribution from Catholicism on is their contribution to the arts, music, and architecture.

With no doubt, we have either heard about or have seen paintings or sculptures from renowned Renaissance artists like Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Angelico, Botticelli and Brunelleschi, whom were mostly artists under the service of the papacy.³ The Catholic Church, mainly the upper class ecclesiastical officials, such as the Pope or the Bishops, financially supports these artists and hires them to produce religious artworks, which focused on portraying strong religious messages. On top of that, many of the paintings were biblically themed, emphasizing on the teachings of Jesus and the Creation of Human, namely “The Creation of Adam” and “David” by Michelangelo, “The Last Supper” by Leonardo Da Vinci, and “Sistine Madonna”

¹ Wikipedia Contributors. “Role of the Catholic Church in Western Civilization” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 20 Jan, 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_the_Catholic_Church_in_Western_civilization>

² Woods Jr, Thomas E. *How The Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*. Washington: Regnery Publishing, Inc 2005. Print.

³ Wikipedia Contributors. “Role of the Catholic Church in Western Civilization” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 20 Jan, 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_the_Catholic_Church_in_Western_civilization>

by Raphael.⁴ With this support, art flourished greatly and survived through the rough and hectic course of our history, especially the wars and the Byzantine iconoclasm.⁵ Moreover, it created a window for artistic innovations, such as realism from Giotto's painting called Franciscan Stations of the Cross, which later gave rise to three-dimensional techniques, and Brunelleschi's innovation on using one-point linear perspective in his paintings.⁶ Furthermore, genres of art were even created as offspring of the Roman Catholic Art, specifically Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, High Renaissance and Baroque Art.⁷ This evidently shows us how Catholicism did not only carry out a single role as a source of faith, but it played an equally crucial role in the development of art.

Similarly, music was under major influence from the Church and shared an intricate connected relationship with Catholicism. Fascinatingly, the western music and its tradition has its source of origin from the catholic monks' attempt to make their religious rituals in the Church the same through out the world and their attempt created many music pieces of liturgical music.⁸ This lead to the development of European Classical Music, starting from the church's Gregorian Chant that lead to the invention of (do-re-me-fa-so-la) mnemonic by Guido of Arezzo, a monk of the Benedictine order and a music theorist during the Medieval period.⁹ During the 10th century polyphonic music, or music with two or more melodic voices, was introduced by cathedral schools, which was later supported as a musical innovation by Pope Clement VI and used in a polyphonic

⁴ Wikipedia Contributors. "Role of the Catholic Church in Western Civilization" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 20 Jan, 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_the_Catholic_Church_in_Western_civilization>

⁵ Wikipedia Contributors. "Role of the Catholic Church in Western Civilization" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 20 Jan, 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_the_Catholic_Church_in_Western_civilization>

⁶ Fr Andrew Pinsent. "What the Church has given the World" *Catholic Herald*. 28 Jan, 2012. <<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/features/2011/05/06/what-the-church-has-given-the-world/>>

⁷ Fr Andrew Pinsent "What the Church has given the World" *Catholic Herald*. 28 Jan, 2012. <<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/features/2011/05/06/what-the-church-has-given-the-world/>>

⁸ Wikipedia Contributors. "Role of the Catholic Church in Western Civilization" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 20 Jan, 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_the_Catholic_Church_in_Western_civilization>

⁹ Fr Andrew Pinsent "What the Church has given the World" *Catholic Herald*. 28 Jan, 2012. <<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/features/2011/05/06/what-the-church-has-given-the-world/>>

mass called La Messe de Nostre Dame.¹⁰ They also encouraged many of the students to familiarize themselves with music, especially the Baroque style which was known to convey emotional feelings that motivate the religious faith.¹¹ Furthermore, genres of music were also created under the influence of catholicism, such as the hymn, the oratorio and the well-known and existing opera.¹² Another important contribution was from Franz Joseph Haydn or the Father of the Symphony and String Quartet, who was a devoted Catholic and had musical influences since childhood from St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna.¹³ Other familiar names like Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Antonio Lucio Vivaldi were all prolific and prominent composers whose works such as "Ode's to Joy", "Ave Verum Corpus" and "Gloria" were greatly shaped by the Church's forms of liturgical music.¹⁴ Catholicism has contributed substantially in the development of early forms of music into the variety of genres of music we have today.

The fine arts of western architecture in historical and even some new buildings throughout Europe and other parts of the world seen today have originally developed from the early form of architecture of cathedrals, basilicas and abbey churches. Examples of these well-known cathedrals, basilicas and abbey churches existing today includes St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Notre Dame de Paris cathedral and Abbey of St Denis in Paris and St Mark's Basilica in Venice.¹⁵ As Catholicism spreads throughout the Roman Empire and other parts of the world, so does the architecture styles of Early Christian, Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque, which later led to

¹⁰ Wikipedia Contributors. "Polyphony" 2 Feb, 2012. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyphony>>

¹¹ Wikipedia Contributors. "Role of the Catholic Church in Western Civilization" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 20 Jan, 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_the_Catholic_Church_in_Western_civilization>

¹² Fr Andrew Pinsent "What the Church has given the World" *Catholic Herald*. 28 Jan, 2012. <<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/features/2011/05/06/what-the-church-has-given-the-world/>>

¹³ Wikipedia Contributors. "Role of the Catholic Church in Western Civilization" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 20 Jan, 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Haydn>

¹⁴ Fr Andrew Pinsent "What the Church has given the World" *Catholic Herald*. 28 Jan, 2012. <<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/features/2011/05/06/what-the-church-has-given-the-world/>>

¹⁵ Wikipedia Contributors. "Architecture of Cathedrals and Great Churches" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 5 Feb, 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architecture_of_cathedrals_and_great_churches>

the flourishing of many new styles as different local tools, techniques and materials were used.¹⁶ On an account of the spread of the popularity of Church architecture through centuries and millennia, Baroque styles developed into Rococo, then American Colonial, then Victorian architecture and eventually into the 20th century architecture of modernism, formalism and more.¹⁷ In short, the variety of architecture styles and techniques we have today in fruitful numbers was gradually progressed from the architecture of the oldern day Church.

The Catholic Church has been a great inspiration for originality among artists and has been one of the greatest patronages of art of all time, through many chaotic downfalls and dark ages of empires. The degree of importance of the arts differ between individuals, however, as the power shifts from one hand to another, the Catholic Church has maintained it at high degrees for the duration of centuries. Furthermore, they are the strong force that helps civilizations bloom in an aesthetic manner, stimulating hidden artistic talents in the population. All in all, it led to the creation of wide variety of significant artworks that substantially acts as a primary source for historians to understand the past more vividly. In conclusion, Catholicism has been more than just a religion to many adherents, but it was the key engine to the fabrication of our entire art history.

¹⁶ Craven, Jackie. "Architecture Timeline" 5 Feb, 2012.
<<http://architecture.about.com/cs/historicperiods/a/timeline.htm>>

¹⁷ Craven, Jackie. "Architecture Timeline" 5 Feb, 2012.
<<http://architecture.about.com/cs/historicperiods/a/timeline.htm>>