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Mattia Preti masterpiece to be restored

The Martyrdom of St Catherine was donated in 1659.

The National Student Travel Foundation (NSTF) is commissioning the restoration of a Mattia Preti masterpiece to mark its 30th anniversary.

Preti donated the painting The Martyrdom of St Catherine in 1659 to the knights of the Italian langue and it was placed as an altarpiece at St Catherine church, adjoining Auberge d'Italie in Valletta, to manifest his desire to be raised in rank within the Order.



Sante Guido Restauro e Conservazione di Opere d'Arte will be responsible for the restoration of the painting. The organisation is also responsible for the restoration of the altar on the tomb of St Paul and of the bronze monument of Pope Sisto IV della Rovere, both at the Vatican.

They are also involved in the restoration of the Triumphal Arches and the façade of St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta.

NSTF chairman Giuseppe Mifsud Bonnici said: "We are honoured to be responsible for the conservation of one of Preti's most prestigious works."

NSTF is also embarking on an educational programme during the restoration project. This includes a series of public seminars by Italian and Maltese experts, workshops for students as young as eight, seminars for older students and scholarships in Malta and Italy for youngsters interested in pursuing a career in restoration.

The first seminar will take place tomorrow at 7 p.m. at St Catherine of Italy church in Valletta. A talk will be given by the rector of St Catherine of Italy church and History of Art senior lecturer at University of Malta, Don Gino Gauci on *Il Martirio di Santa Caterina a Santa Caterina d'Italia e le altre copie - un confronto*. The seminar will continue with a lecture by Dr Stefano Ridolfi, senior lecturer at La Sapienza University in Rome on *Indagini scientifiche non distruttive sui dipinti su tela: il Martirio di Santa Caterina di Mattia Preti*.

Public seminars will be held until the end of April.
