



On October 16, 2010, the feast day of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, local artist Virginia Thomas presented a painting, to Fr. Dan Powell, friends, and fellow parishioners of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish in Lower Paxton Township. The painting is Thomas's rendering of the original "The Apparition of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque" by Francesco Podesti painted in 1864.

The inspiration for the artwork came while Thomas, and Fr. Powell were discussing the anticipated move to the new church that was, at the time under construction. Members of the parish would soon be leaving behind a mural of St. Margaret Mary and The Sacred Heart of Jesus that adorned the walls of the church. Thomas shared her idea of painting a picture with several friends who are fellow parishioners. One thing led to another and on February 19, 2010 Fr. Powell and Thomas were sitting in a pew of the church looking at images of St Margaret Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus on her laptop.

Thomas was particularly fond of a specific painting but did not know the name of the artist or where the painting was hung. She continued her research and by the next day had discovered that this painting was hanging in The Vatican Museums' Collection of Art in Rome! It was at that moment, she knew in her heart that this was the image that needed to paint for the new church. Little did she know that this was just the beginning of an amazing journey. Thomas kept a journal, took photographs of her painting through the entire painting process, and has saved all correspondence and documents from The Vatican Museums, whose permission was needed, to reproduce this painting.

"This painting, a gift for my parish family, is a symbol of faith, courage, perseverance, and patience."

Thank you all so much for your support.