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Prepare For The Met Gala With Historic And Contemporary Religious Jewels



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The annual Met Gala has turned to religion as its inspiration for this year's event with the theme, "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination."

Often called "fashion's biggest night," the Costume Institute Gala, its formal name, has earned legendary status with an extremely vetted VIP guest list and a red carpet showcase that is among the most important fashion stages in the world. This year's fundraiser for the Met's Costume Institute will be held May 7.

Catholic jewels, like other religious outfits and accessories, have historical symbolic meaning, serve as a personal symbol of one's faith, and is an inspiration for fashion. Below is a selection of vintage and contemporary jewels that reflects all of these uses.



M.S. Rau Antiques

Pope Paul VI's diamond pectoral cross

M.S. Rau Antiques of New Orleans has two papal jewels once owned by Pope Paul VI, who served as the leader of the Catholic Church from 1963 until his death in 1978.

The first is a carved 18k yellow gold pectoral cross decorated with 12 mine-cut diamonds and emeralds. Pectoral crosses are given to clergy who attain the rank of bishop or higher. It is valued at \$1.25 million.



M.S. Rau Antiques

Pope Paul VI's diamond ring

The second jewel is a ring centered with a 13-carat round white diamond surrounded by 14 smaller round diamonds set in platinum and flanked by two diamond pavé squares inset with a cross made of rubies. It's valued at \$650,000.



A La Vieille Russie
Fabergé Panagia

[A La Vieille Russie](#), an art and antiques dealer and Fabergé specialist, has a Fabergé Panagia pendant by renowned Fabergé workmaster, Henrik Wigstrom, circa 1910, made of gold, diamonds, sapphires, pearls and enamel. Wearing a Panagia, or icon pendant, distinguishes an Orthodox bishop from other clergy. This medallion of Christ Pantocrator is based on an 11th-century Byzantine image at the Met Museum.



S. J. Phillips

18th Century diamond floral cross pendant

The cross has been a powerful symbol of the Christian faith since the 2nd Century. For an early depiction of a jeweled cross, London vintage jeweler, [S.J. Phillips](#), has a 1770 silver and diamond floral cross pendant with openworked asymmetrical floral trails.



L'Armoire
Antique crystal cross

L'Armoire, a women's boutique in New Canaan, Conn., has an antique crystal cross set in 18k gold, from early 1800s England. It's valued at \$3,500.



L J Cross
Open cross ring

For a modern take on the symbol, a gold and diamond pave open cross ring is on offer at the appropriately named New York boutique, [L J Cross](#). It retails for \$2,200.



[Les Enluminures](#)

One of two collars for an Abbess

For something quite different, antiques dealer, [Les Enluminures](#) (Paris, New York, Chicago), has “Two Collars For An Abbess,” made in 17th Century Spain. Each necklace is more than two feet in length, made of six strands of irregularly shaped small beads of carved and polished jet, interspersed with slightly larger faceted beads and rectangular bar and diamond shapes in varying sizes. The long necklaces are worn by the Abbess, the head of an abbey of nuns.

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