

## 46. **Advice to the Young**

In 1972, I was listening to the evening news when I heard that Michelangelo's *Pietà* in the Vatican had been vandalized, and I begin to cry hysterically. At first I thought that I was crying because a great work of art had been damaged. Even though I love sculpture and painting, I do not love them so well as to weep the night away. It has taken me years to really understand why this event a continent away affected me so deeply.

When I was an 18-year-old, I had been in Rome, less than a block away from the *Pietà*. Not knowing it was anything I might ever want to see, I walked right by. The person I was then preferred shopping for sandals to looking at some old carved marble.

During the four years from 1968 to 1972, I changed. Pictures I had seen of the *Pietà* awed me and also awakened a lifelong interest in art. Like a converted sinner, my new passion was powerful and I went "crazy" for art. A little of the "madness" still lingers, and more than any other work of art from all time and all places, I had wanted to see the *Pietà*.

I knew that I would have ample time to return to Rome and touch Mary's cold alabaster hands. I was wrong. I have the time, I've been to Rome, I've stood before her in the Vatican, but her fingers are broken.

That's my advice to youth. Go to Rome or learn to fly or build a cabin NOW. Whatever your dream may be, do it now. You are young, but you really don't have time. In a flash, forever is gone.