

# Christian World View

Truth

Athens in Rome

# Vatican City · Apostolic Palace · “Room of Segnatura” Raphael · fresco paintings · 1508-1511

## The Parnassus

[ the dwelling place of the gods ]

Arts · “beauty”



The Disputation of the Sacrament  
[ the Eucharist ]  
Theology · “supernatural truth”

The School of Athens  
[ truth by human reason ]  
Philosophy · “natural truth”

The Cardinal Virtues and the Law  
[ fortitude · prudence · temperance ]  
Justice · “good”



## Vatican Museums

“The Room of the Segnatura contains Raphael's most famous frescoes. Besides being the first work executed by the great artist in the Vatican they mark the beginning of the high Renaissance. The room takes its name from the highest court of the Holy See, the "Segnatura Gratiae et Iustitiae", which was presided over by the pontiff and used to meet in this room around the middle of the 16th century. Originally the room was used by Julius II (pontiff from 1503 to 1513) as a library and private office. The iconographic program of the frescoes, which were painted between 1508 and 1511, is related to this function. It was certainly established by a theologian and meant to represent the three greatest categories of the human spirit: Truth, Good and Beauty. Supernatural Truth is illustrated in the Disputation of the Most Holy Sacrament (theology), while rational Truth is illustrated in the School of Athens (philosophy). Good is expressed in the Cardinal and Theological Virtues and the Law. Beauty is represented in the Parnassus with Apollo and the Muses. The frescoes of the ceiling are connected with the scenes below them. The allegorical figures of Theology, Philosophy, Justice and Poetry allude in fact to the faculties of the spirit painted on the corresponding walls. Under Leo X (pontiff from 1513 to 1521) the room was used as a small study and music room, in which the pontiff also kept his collection of musical instruments. The original furnishings of the time of Julius II were removed and replaced with a new wooden wainscot, the work of Fra Giovanni da Verona. The wood covered all the walls with the exception of that of the Parnassus, where, for reasons of space, the same decoration, still visible today, was painted in fresco. The wooden wainscot was probably destroyed following the Sack of Rome in 1527 and in its place, during the pontificate of Paul III (pontiff from 1534 to 1549) a wainscot in chiaroscuro was painted by Perin del Vaga.”

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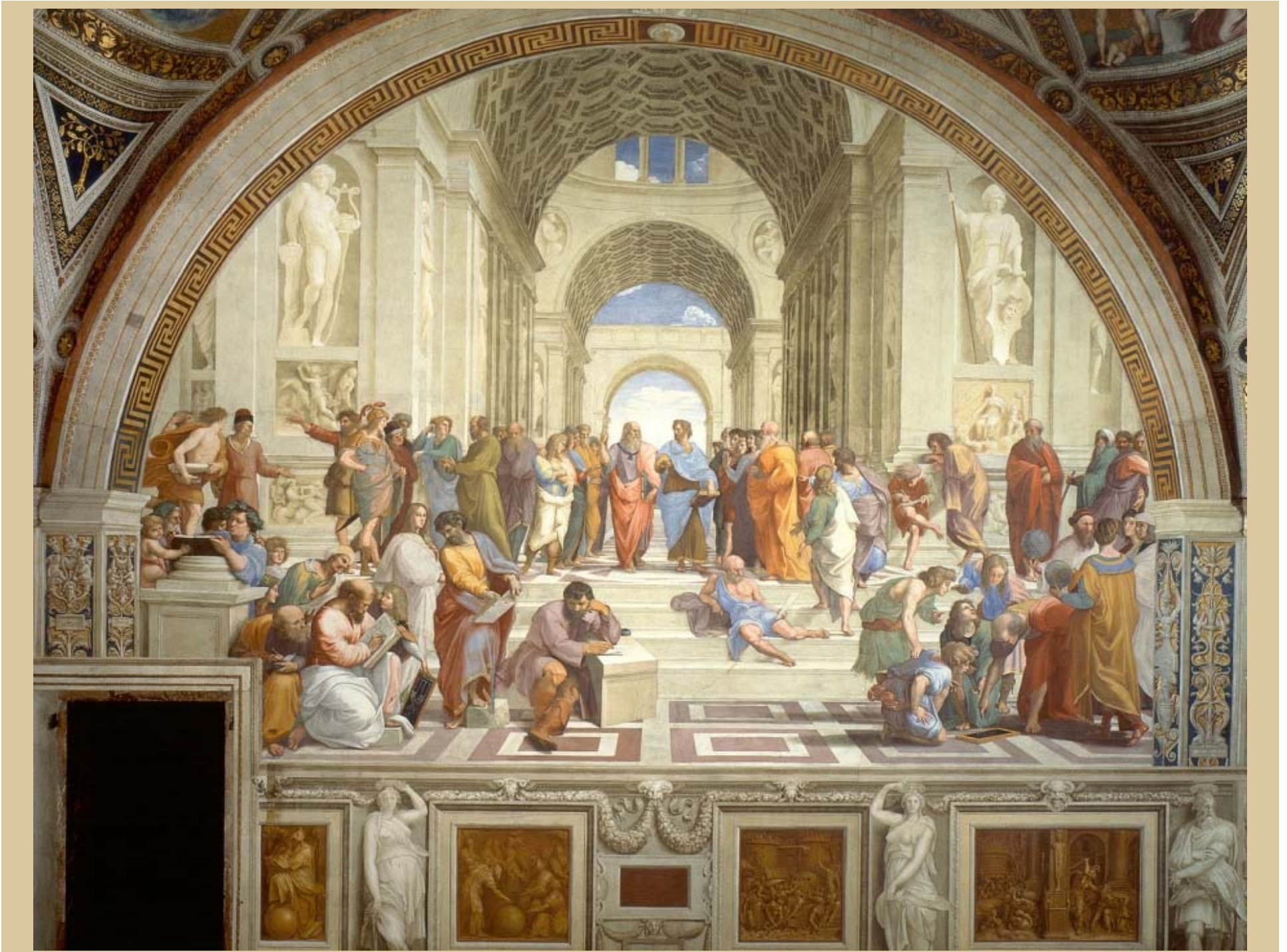
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“On the wall corresponding to Theology, is the fresco of the so-called Disputation of the Most Holy Sacrament, the title of which should more rightly be that of the Triumph of Religion. At the sides of the Most Holy Trinity (with God the Father, Christ between the Virgin and St John the Baptist, and the Holy Spirit in the center) is the Triumphant Church, with patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament alternated with apostles and martyrs, seated in a hemicycle on the clouds. The personages are (from left to right for the viewer). St Peter, Adam, St John the Evangelist, David, St Laurence, Judas Maccabees, St Stephen, Moses, St James the elder, Abraham, St Paul. On the ground, at the sides of the altar on which the Most Holy Sacrament dominates, is the Militant Church. On the marble thrones closest to the altar sit four Fathers of the Latin Church: St Gregory the Great (a portrait of Julius II), St Jerome, St Ambrose and St Augustine.” – **Vatican Museums**







- 1: Zeno of Citium
- 2: Epicurus Possibly, the image of two philosophers, who were typically shown in pairs during the Renaissance: Heraclitus, the "weeping" philosopher, and Democritus, the "laughing" philosopher.
- 3: unknown (believed to be Raphael)
- 4: Boethius or Anaximander or Empedocles?
- 5: Averroes
- 6: Pythagoras
- 7: Alcibiades or Alexander the Great?
- 8: Antisthenes or Xenophon or Timon?
- 9: Raphael, Fornarina as a personification of Love or Francesco Maria della Rovere?
- 10: Aeschines or Xenophon?
- 11: Parmenides? (Leonardo da Vinci)
- 12: Socrates
- 13: Heraclitus (Michelangelo)
- 14: Plato (Leonardo da Vinci)
- 15: Aristotle (Giuliano da Sangallo)
- 16: Diogenes of Sinope
- 17: Plotinus (Donatello?)
- 18: Euclid or Archimedes with students (Bramante?)
- 19: Strabo or Zoroaster? (Baldassare Castiglione)
- 20: Ptolemy? R: Apelles (Raphael)
- 21: Protogenes (Il Sodoma, Perugino, or Timoteo Viti)

“The most famous philosophers of ancient times move within an imposing Renaissance architecture which is inspired by Bramante's project for the renewal of the early Christian basilica of St Peter. Some of these are easily recognizable. In the center Plato points upwards with a finger and holds his book *Timeus* in his hand, flanked by Aristotle with *Ethics*; Pythagoras is shown in the foreground intent on explaining the diatesseron. Diogenes is lying on the stairs with a dish, while the pessimist philosopher, Heraclitus, a portrait of Michelangelo, is leaning against a block of marble, writing on a sheet of paper. Michelangelo was in those years executing the paintings in the nearby Sistine Chapel. On the right we see Euclid, who is teaching geometry to his pupils, Zoroaster holding the heavenly sphere and Ptolemy holding the earthly sphere. The personage on the extreme right with the black beret is a self-portrait of Raphael.” – **Vatican Museum**

**Plato**



**Aristotle**

**Leonardo Da Vinci**

