

## THIS WEEK IN ROME: BROKEN



### ***"Angels Unawares"***

We were struck by this sculpture tucked into the side of St Peter's Basilica Plaza since 2019. People bunched on a boat. We stopped, studied expressions. We were hit with this thought, "We're all emigrants, all on the same boat passing through, none of us here for long; all filled with hope and fear."



A strangeness emerged. No Vatican guide mentioned this profound message, just steps away.



All of us sojourners, dead or alive depict a wake-up call from God: "I, Your Maker, take joy in each stumbling downfall that proves your love for walking. I love when you choose my ways, not yours."

Only when you fall and fail on your own broken road, can you grow up into the gentle, patient person I designed."

The Capuchin crypt celebrates brokenness. It contains the skeletal remains of 3,700 bodies believed to be Capuchin friars. Each room has hundreds of bones—one is full of arms, another legs or pelvises or skulls.

An inscription reads, "As you are, we once were. As we are, you will be."



### **Broken Things**

*God uses broken things.*

*It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength.*

*It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume.*

*It is Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever—*

**Vance Havner**  
(for whom Vance was named)



This sphere within a sphere sits in the Vatican interior courtyard. The outside is shiny and perfect. The inside is broken. The whole sculpture spins in a circle, like our earth.

The message? Inside we are all like our island home, Earth: broken and spinning in space. Brokenness is a normal part of our journey toward wholeness and holiness. Doubt is an essential ingredient for Simon to become Peter, for our lesser self to become our whole and holy self.