

# Vatican Museums Report

Report Volume LVIII

Summer 2023

Office of Relations with the Patrons  
of the Arts in the Vatican Museums





# From the Director of the Vatican Museums

DIRECTOR BARBARA JATTA

Dear Patrons and friends,

We are experiencing a great transformation in our Museums. Now that the difficult pandemic period is over, we can look confidently toward the future.

I am especially pleased to have two newly appointed deputy directors who will assist me in managing this grand and complex institution: Giandomenico Spinola (artistic-scientific area) and Alberto Albanesi (management-administrative area). One year has passed since we lost a great collaborator and friend, the Scientific Director of the Applied Arts Department, Guido Cornini. On April 20, 2023, we dedicated a symposium to his legacy, which included intense, moving and heartfelt participation from friends and colleagues. July also marks one year since the passing of our dear Cristina De Medici, paper restorer of the Vatican Museums, whom many of the Patrons had the opportunity to meet. In our commitment to furthering education, numerous public conferences (Giovedì dei Musei - Thursdays at the Museums) of distinguished scientific content took place this year. One lecture featured artefacts from the Medieval and Modern Ceramics department, restored thanks to the generous contribution from the Carey Family of the California Patrons Chapter. This contribution helped sustain the new exhibit spaces for ceramic arts, including exquisite artefacts from the ancient Apothecary of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, inaugurated and opened to the public in May 2023. Many important milestones also coincide this year. On June 23, 2023, in the presence of the Holy Father, we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art, attended by numerous artists in the Sistine Chapel. This new, innovative department made history for the Vatican when it was specifically wished for and commissioned by Pope St. Paul VI. This year also marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Museums' Painting and Wood Restoration Laboratory, internationally renowned for its excellence and for the professionalism of its restorers, scientists and technicians. 2023 also commemorates the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our



*Dr. Barbara Jatta during a Patrons event*

faithful "Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums," an association born in 1983 from a brilliant idea of the Vatican Museums Secretary, Walter Persegati, of esteemed memory. With the support of a small group of dedicated benefactors and philanthropists, his tenure left an indelible mark in renovating and opening the museums to the whole world.

We have been working on various conservation and restoration projects in the Pope's Museums, thanks to your generous enthusiasm and support. We are grateful to all the Patrons for visiting the Vatican and organizing events throughout the world to promote the Patrons' mission. Profound gratitude also goes to our major donors and their important support of those special projects, which allow for the constant conservation and renewal of the Vatican collections.

With this greeting, I send you and your families my most sincere wishes for peace, health and serenity.

# From Monsignor Terence Hogan

COORDINATOR OF THE OFFICE OF RELATIONS WITH THE PATRONS OF THE ARTS IN THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

My dear Patrons and friends,

This entire year, 2023, marks 40 years of patronage by you, our beloved Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums. During these 40 years, thanks to the dedication of our Patrons, the ability of art to inspire, elevate, and reveal the human spirit continues through the restoration and conservation of the works of art found throughout the Vatican Museums' collections.

Together, with our outstanding staff of the Office of Relations with Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums (ORPAVM), I have the great privilege of working with Patrons and Chapters from throughout the world, so to further our most worthy purpose and mission. I especially wish to acknowledge the President of the Vatican City State, H.E. Cardinal Fernando Vergèz Alzaga, the Secretary General, Sister Raffaella Petrini, F.S.E. and the offices of the Governorate of the Vatican City State, as well as Dr. Barbara Jatta and the entire Vatican Museums' staff with whom we daily collaborate to carry out the vital work of our Patrons.

The ORPAVM continues to have the privilege of welcoming numerous Patrons from around the world as they visit Vatican Museums and explore the many projects they have helped restore. In addition, the Office of Relations is pleased to welcome Lindy Nieuwpoort, who uses her talents and experience in guiding multilingual tours to offer support to the office with the organization of our daily and Chapter visits, as well as editorial and translation work for us. Romina Cometti has taken a full-time position in the Ethnological Museum Anima Mundi after many years working with the Patrons. Since last summer, the ORPAVM has hosted the Canada, Belgium, New York, Illinois, Asia, Italian and International Chapters for several days at a time, with highlights such as visiting the restoration laboratories, the Vatican Gardens, as well as other areas found within the Vatican City State. These memorable visits always include a private visit to



*Msgr. Hogan in the Office of Relations with the Patrons of the Arts*

the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel. Moreover, we were also honored to host the Catholic Extension Society and representatives of the Bank of America, who have both adopted projects.

I have also had the wonderful opportunity to visit a number of our Patron Chapters over the last six months: Illinois, Washington, D.C., Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, New York, Texas, Florida and Canada. In the future, and as time permits, I look forward to visiting all our Chapters. In a special way, I wish to thank the Leaders of these Chapters for their warm welcome and hospitality. These gatherings are so important in renewing old acquaintances and meeting new Patrons.

Finally, I wish to thank the new USA Board of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums who have offered their time to assist in the reorganization of the USA Office located in Chicago: President, Lorraine Doderio; Secretary, Debra Coletti; Treasurer, Anthony McLaughlin, and Board members: Donna D'Urso, Art Lohsen, and Mary Viator. I also wish to acknowledge those who collaborated in this effort: Anne Shea, Debra Mauro, and Marina Perna. May God bless you today and every day.



# Thanks to Your Commitment

THESE PROJECTS ARE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EVER

## Triptych of the Madonna and Child and Saints by the Master of Barga

NEW YORK CHAPTER – In loving memory of Lee Romanelli

This edition of the newsletter includes a cover image of the completed restoration of the Triptych of the Madonna and Child with Saints by the Master of Barga. The New York Chapter’s commitment enabled restorer **Marco Pratelli** to delicately recover the precious pigments and clean the three decorated panels. Beyond the restoration, this work of art has a deeper meaning for the New York Chapter. In light of the passing of beloved Chapter President, Mrs. Lee Romanelli, in 2018, the board, under the guidance of Donna D’Urso, decided to adopt this project in honor of Mrs. Romanelli’s years of enthusiasm, influence, and devotion to the Patrons of the Arts and the New York Chapter. Before her passing, she received, in a formal presentation, the Bernini Award that



acknowledged her contributions to the Vatican Museums. The legacy of Lee Romanelli will continue to inspire us all, and we will remember her exuberant spirit upon entering the Pinacoteca (Vatican Museums Painting Gallery) because Curator **Fabrizio Biferali** decided to exhibit this Triptych in room III of the Pinacoteca to create a stylistic and chronological dialogue among the works of other great masters from the 15<sup>th</sup> century like Fra Angelico and Benozzi Gozzoli. Thank you again to the New York Chapter for their ongoing generosity.

## Triclinium Leoninum

John and Virginia Gildea

The Triclinium Leoninum is located at the monumental hall of the ancient Episcopal Complex of the Lateran Palace. The fragility of a particular type of mortar, especially the areas exposed to air pollution, caused the mosaic’s deterioration. The Scientific Research Laboratory conducted a careful study of the properties of the original material, and Head Restorer **Roberto Cassio** of the Mosaic Laboratory performed an initial cleaning of the entire mosaic surface and targeted a sampling of the mortar and *tesserae* to identify the most optimal solution for consolidation. They then isolated a specific plaster and decided to remove it from the gilded sections along the edges. After the work finished in February, the restorers will now observe any new future fluctuations.



## Four Icons from the Tower of Pope John XXIII

MICHIGAN CHAPTER – Patrice and Dale Chiara, Kristan and John Hale, Teresa Tomeo Pastore and Deacon Dominick Pastore

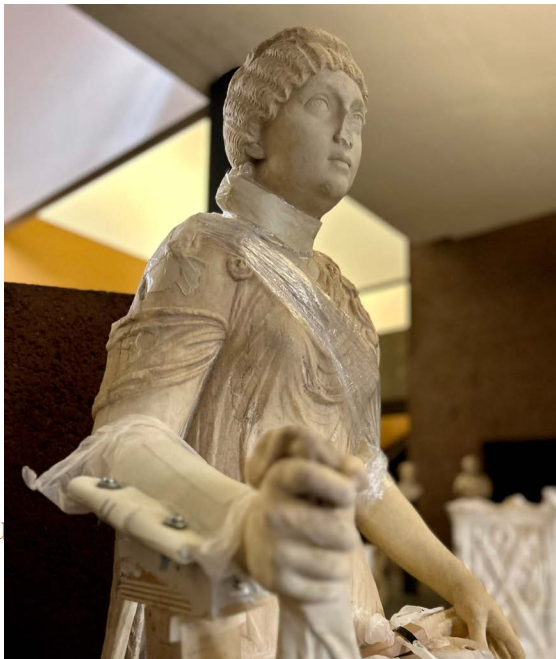
The restoration began in April 2022 with an anoxic treatment of all four icons. Restorer **Paolo Zaccagnini** of the Metal and Ceramic Laboratory removed and restored the metal covers (called *rize*). Restorers **Marco de Pillis** and **Massimo Alesi** of the Painting and Wood Laboratory repaired the wooden cases. **Rosanna Giardina** and **Federica Cecchetti** then inspected the entire pictorial surface and the back of the icons, finding seals, engravings, and inscriptions that enrich and validate information on the dating and provenance of these artefacts. Given the complexity of the different materials, the Scientific Research Laboratory performed an X-fluorescence analysis that provided additional insights regarding the different layers. The restoration concluded in May 2023.

## Statue of a Season, known as Flora

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER – Hall Family

The Statue of a Season, known as Flora, needed urgent restoration to curb its precarious condition. During the final stage of the work this past June, restorer **Stefano Spada** of the Stone Materials Laboratory reattached the right arm, proving to be a very delicate process. Spada made a ‘brace’ to keep it in the correct position during the restoration, which was useful in the transportation of the

statue to the Gregorian Profane Museum, where it is now on display. Previously, it was at the Pinacoteca Terrace, the site of the lion’s head and fountain basin. Now the fountain is accessible again to the public, and a granite amphora of neoclassical production, commissioned by Pius VI Braschi (1775–1799), has been placed in the above niche.





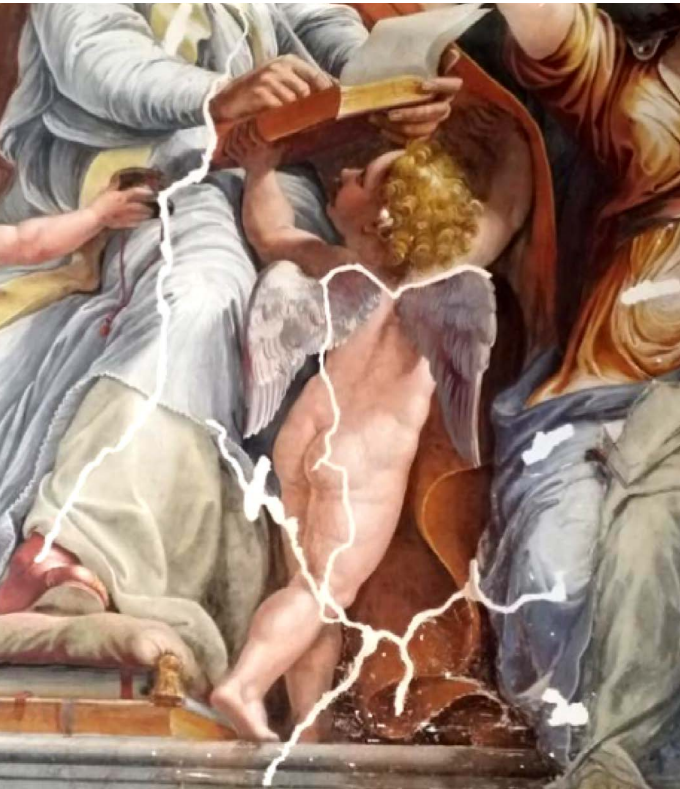
# Ongoing Restorations

THESE PROJECTS WILL BE COMPLETED SOON

## Colossal Head of Augustus Mattei and Corinthian Capital

NORTHWEST CHAPTER – Altig Family, Gail James and Deborah Hardie

The restoration of the Colossal Head of Augustus Mattei and the Corinthian Capital is currently in progress. The Scientific Research Laboratory removed and analyzed the resin and marble dust inserts, made during the previous restoration in 1987, and placed them into the missing parts of the marble head to determine the best way to proceed. Restorers **Michela Gottardo** and **Anna Lea Mattozzi** of the Stone Materials Laboratory eliminated the lead cover over the head because it was causing chemical reactions between the different materials.



## Room of Constantine

NEW YORK CHAPTER

After the restorers completed the South, East, and West Walls, work began on the North Wall, depicting the 'Donation of Rome', painted by Giulio Romano, a collaborator of Raphael. This restoration includes the frieze area of Sixtus V and the vault. The Scientific Research Laboratory has performed a photographic campaign using UV and Infrared, which has helped them identify the various layers of the fresco and previous restoration stages.

Currently, the Head Restorers **Francesca Persegati** and **Fabio Piacentini**, with the help of 13 other restorers, are cleaning the wall by removing surface deposits and consolidating plaster and paint film.



## Noli Me Tangere Tapestry

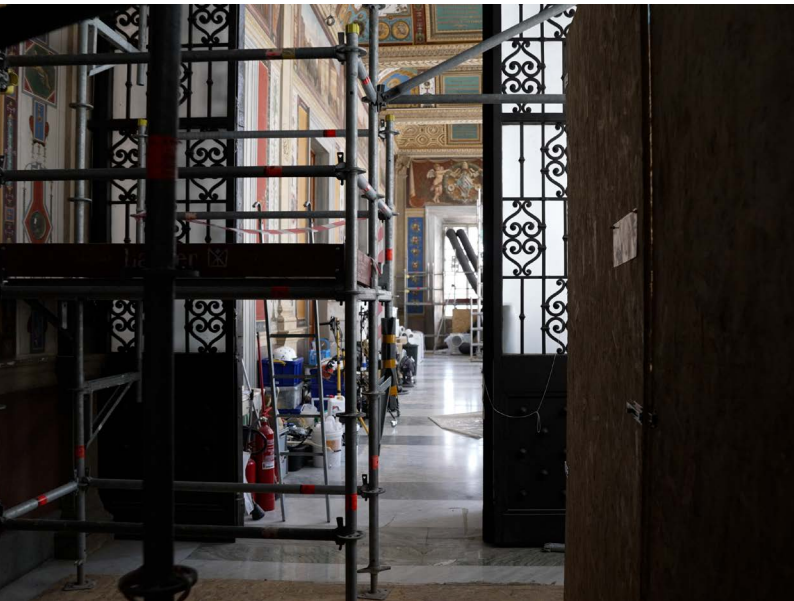
TEXAS & BELGIUM CHAPTER

Due to the size and complexity of the tapestry, both the Texas and the Belgium Chapters supported this restoration. The fibers were weak and missing in several areas, creating severe damage to the tapestry. Over the past few months, Head Restorer **Chiara Pavan** has worked on the reinforcement of the fabric by doing alternating stitches. Since each area needed special dyes, she created different colors for the silk and wool threads. When the various yarns were prepared, she placed linen supports on the back of the tapestry and blocked the areas where the texture was missing.

## Restoration of the Decorations of the Third Loggia

OHIO CHAPTER – Connie Frankino

There is an ongoing restoration for the Decorations of the Third Loggia in the Apostolic Palace. Alessandro Mantovani and Pietro Galli made these decorations in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under Pope Pius IX Mastai Ferretti. The Painting and Wood Laboratory is working closely with the Scientific Research Laboratory for graphic documentation to determine the right course of action. Restorers **Chiara Nortarstefano** and **Francesca Cencia** are now working on the inferior parts of the walls since they finished the ceilings and its decorations. They will conclude the restoration by the end of 2023.



## Midnight Mass

ITALIAN & INTERNATIONAL CHAPTER and Olessia Kantor

This painting shows visible damage to the canvas, and the first step in the restoration will be a scientific analysis. The Scientific Research Laboratory will use the M6-XRF laser to scan the painting. Restorers will be able to better comprehend the artist's creative process, allowing them to discuss the right cleaning methods to consolidate the painting.



# Chapter Visits

SPRING 2023

During the months of March, April and May we had the great pleasure of receiving Patrons from the **Italian & International, Catholic Extension Society & Illinois, Asia and Belgium Chapters**. Each Chapter visit allows us to meet with our Patrons to reconnect with new and existing members.



Sr. Raffaella Petrini F.S.E and Madame Solvay in the Octagonal Courtyard, Vatican Museums



The Patrons from the Asia Chapter in the Sistine Chapel with Sr. Emanuela Edwards MDR in the centre

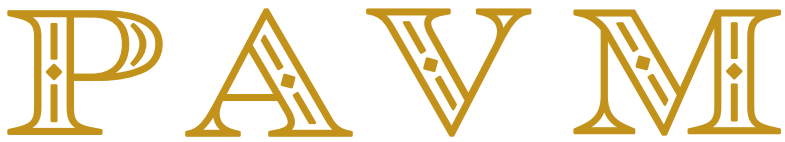


The Catholic Extension Society in the Braccio Nuovo, Vatican Museums



Italian and International Chapter with Dr. Jatta in the Sistine Chapel

# 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



## Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums

In commemoration of our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we have been looking back at our legacy and revisiting our origins. It's impressive to think that an exhibition that toured America, with some of the most precious works of art from the pope's collection, was the catalyst for our organization's development, capable of attracting those inspired by art's ability to astonish and elevate. From the beginning, patronage has been fundamental to the restorations taking place within the Vatican Museums and the surrounding City State, which is a true testament to our worldwide community of Patrons. Representing all corners of the world, we have been able to engage minds and hearts to reach beyond the galleries and gardens. Our

anniversary is a true reminder that only through the generosity of our Patrons we can accomplish our mission. Over the four decades that this anniversary celebrates, we have been able to establish and maintain a strong bond of commitment among our members who come from around the globe. At this time, we wish to honor and remember all our Patrons, both living and deceased, who have dedicated their time, talent and treasure to furthering our mission. We look forward to embracing the future in hopes of inspiring the next generation to reveal the human spirit through their commitment to the restoration needs of the Vatican Museums.



Newsletter Cover - 1990



Newsletter Cover - 2003



From Left: Lindy Nieuwpoort, Sara Savoldello, Msgr. Terence Hogan, Sophia Spralja, Chiara Lorenzetti, Annarita Imperio and Martina Suozzo



# Patrons in the Vatican

## OUR DAILY VISITS



Eugene Ceccotti's family (California Chapter) with Msgr. Terence Hogan on the ORPAVM terrace



Debra and Tom Mauro's family (Canada Chapter) with the curator Alessandra Rodolfo and restorers Francesca Persegati and Laura Baldelli



Ed and Mary Hall (California Chapter) with the Flora statue in the Stone Materials Laboratory



Dennis Cremin (Illinois Chapter), brother of Mary Hall, is next to the previous location of the Flora statue, which has been replaced by the amphora. The fountain on the Pinacoteca Terrace is accessible again to visitors after undergoing restoration.



Mei Wen with mosaic restorers Paolo Monaldi, Roberto Cassio and Daniele Belladonna at the Holy Stairs Sanctuary



Camille and Rory Kelleher (New York Chapter) next to the Apollo del Belvedere



Ken and Jan De Luca (Ohio Chapter) on the Pinacoteca terrace



Paola Casey and Family (California Chapter)



Paul Stabbins and Raul Casas Marquez (Canada Chapter) in the Bramante Courtyard



Msgr. Terence Hogan, Sara Savoldello and Hugh M. Dempsey (Washington DC Chapter) on the ORPAVM terrace



Msgr. Terence Hogan, Johnnie and Kimberly George, David Hanna (Georgia Chapter) in the ORPAVM





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