

Vatican Museums Report

Report Volume LIX

Winter 2023

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



From the President of the Governorate of the Vatican City State

CARDINAL FERNANDO VÉRGEZ ALZAGA, L.C.

My dear Patrons,

It is with immense gratitude that I participate in the 40th Anniversary of the foundation of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums. Your organization, since its inception, has been faithfully tied to the Vatican's historic art collections and we can say that it is thanks to your help and support that the Vatican Museums can offer the splendor of its many artefacts to millions of visitors from around the world.

In your mission to conserve, restore and promote this artistic heritage, your effort, in a sense, is an investment in art, in history, and in culture, with a perspective not only limited to the present but indeed projected to the future. The newly restored artworks are therefore preserved for posterity and, as such, we hope to perpetuate human memory as witness to its highest aspirations.

Art, in the intentions of many artists whose works are here conserved, can be an effective means to draw one's attention toward God and the human condition – to offer viewers a reason for contemplation and hope. Therefore, I believe the celebration of the Patrons' 40th Anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on your mission, to make friends and renew ties, and to pray together to the Creator in gratitude for all that exists.

I conclude by assuring you of my prayers and I ask the Lord to continue to inspire you in your service and in your personal commitment to the preservation of this unique heritage, so that its beauty and significance may open new horizons for all. With a thankful heart, I impart my pastoral blessing to you and your loved ones, in the name of Jesus and Mary Most Holy.



Card. Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, L.C. in the Synod Hall on the opening day of the 40th PAVM Anniversary celebrations

From the Secretary General of the Governorate of the Vatican City State

SISTER RAFFAELLA PETRINI, F.S.E.

Dear Patrons,

In these past 40 years, since the establishment of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums, your indispensable contribution in supporting one of the oldest and most venerable museums has never been lacking. The Vatican City State, as you know, is the smallest sovereign state in the world, with a concentration of over 2000 years of history within its 44 hectares (c.110 acres), carved out of the former Papal States by the Lateran Treaty of 1929. It was deemed enough territory to guarantee the Pope his freedom in the governance of the universal Church. For millions of Catholics it represents the center of our religious identity.

Vatican City is also an atypical state with atypical museums. It receives no tax revenues to either sustain or help finance the necessary conservation and restoration efforts of its immense art collections. The Governorate of



Sr. Raffaella Petrini with Card. Fernando Vérgez



Sr. Raffaella Petrini, F.S.E. arrives at the Synod Hall

Vatican City State must therefore rely on the generosity of its faithful Patrons, as it would not be possible to carry out many necessary interventions.

For this reason, I join Cardinal Vérgez in renewing our deep gratitude for your support in the conservation of an exceptional collection which offers all pilgrims and visitors alike the possibility to enjoy the fruits of what human genius can accomplish through divine inspiration.

To all the Patrons, here and at home, to the Chapter Leaders whom I personally thank for their time and dedication, please accept my sincere congratulations for this milestone which will be recorded in the Vatican Museums' millenarian history.

Pax et bonum.

From the Director of the Vatican Museums

DR. BARBARA JATTA

Dear distinguished Patrons,

On behalf of the entire staff of the Vatican Museums, I have the great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you on this momentous occasion – the 40th Anniversary of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums.

We gather not only to celebrate four decades of meticulous preservation and unwavering commitment to art and heritage, but this is also a time to reflect upon the Patrons’ journey that has brought us to this remarkable juncture.

In 1980 I participated in an internship in the Vatican Museums, and I fondly remember the calm authority of Prof. Carlo Pietrangeli, Director of the Vatican Museums at that time. He took the brilliant idea of the esteemed Administrative Manager of the Museums, Dr. Walter Persegati, in conjunction with many benefactors and philanthropists, and started a strong collaboration in support of the needs of our Institution.

For forty years, Patrons from around the world have been aligned with our dedicated team of curators, conservators, and restoration experts to breathe new life into history’s most cherished artifacts and masterpieces found within the collection of the Vatican Museums.

Through this partnership, we have witnessed the resurrection of faded canvases, the revival of diminished pigments, and the rebirth of artifacts that reveal the timeless stories of art and history, a collection in the name of faith.

This anniversary marks a significant milestone in our endeavor to safeguard the legacy of human creativity and it is a moment to show our appreciation for the dedication of our Patrons to these narratives.

As we stand at the crossroads of tradition and progress, let us take this opportunity to reflect on the achievements



Dr. Barbara Jatta in Castel Gandolfo, overlooking lake Albano

of the past while envisioning a future that holds even greater promises for the preservation and appreciation of artistic heritage.

I would like to extend a heartfelt gratitude to each and every individual who has contributed to the PAVM journey – from the Patrons who have supported our mission, to the many dedicated staff who daily are of service to the Vatican Museums.

During this 40th Anniversary of our dear Patrons, may all our efforts continue to ignite curiosity, inspire awe, and foster a deeper connection with the beauty, the spirit, and the ongoing mission of the Vatican Museums.

From the Coordinator of the Office of Relations with the Patrons of the Arts

MONSIGNOR TERENCE HOGAN

Dear Patrons and Friends,

Over the past four decades, the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums have led the way, not only as observers, but even more as trusted leaders on a unique journey of support and promotion of restoring and conserving some of the world’s greatest cultural inheritance found in the Vatican Museums. The dedication of each Patron stands as a true testament to the understanding that every generation has a collective responsibility to preserve the ongoing legacy and boundless opportunity to connect art, history, society and faith.

The forty-year legacy of patronage continues as we remember those who have gone before us whose courage and insight established a solid foundation, and we join together during this anniversary realizing our collective responsibility to continue with the same vigor of those pioneer Patrons whose shoulders we stand upon today. Today, with our diverse traditions, talents and artistic understandings of Patrons worldwide, we continue to actively share in the mission of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums to “...inspire, elevate, and reveal the human spirit” (Mission Statement 2022). Thus, if we are united in this quest, coming generations will also be inspired to nurture the artistic and cultural heritage of which they have inherited.

This anniversary embraces many memories and celebrates a myriad of accomplishments between individuals whether they be a generous donor, a talented restorer, or a dedicated staff member, who have come together with knowledge and understanding that what has been achieved is for the ages. None of this is ordinary, for all of this is consequential because conservation is more than a task, it is a type of tapestry blending the separate with the other, the one becomes many. This collaboration between Patrons and the Vatican Museums is woven in

a way that at first seems hidden, perhaps unremarkable, but once completed bursts forth in a fire and blending of color that perhaps no one might imagine, but many will someday notice.

Please know that your generosity as a Patron is cherished beyond measure. Your dedication, collaboration and shared commitment are intricately woven into the fabric of the very life and existence of the Vatican Museums and our future is one of boundless potential.

May God, the Creator of all good things, continue to bless you and your loved ones, particularly those who have gone before us, and may the generosity that you have shown be blessed by the same Lord’s continued care and guidance.



Msgr. Terence Hogan and Dr. Jatta, welcome the Patrons during an event of the 40th PAVM Anniversary celebrations

Thanks to Your Commitment

THESE PROJECTS ARE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EVER

Dejeuner sur l'herbe

BELGIUM CHAPTER – Christina Gidwitz

Félix Edouard Vallotton was born in 1865 Lausanne, Switzerland. He was a Swiss and French painter, associated with the group of artists known as Les Nabis, young French artists active in Paris from 1888 until 1900, who played a large part in the transition from impressionism to abstract art, symbolism and other early movements of modernism. Vallotton painted portraits, landscapes, nudes, still lifes, and other subjects in an unemotional, realistic style. He made *Dejeuner sur l'herbe*, after *Majális* (Picnic in May) of Pál Szinyei Merse, most likely at the end of the 1880s. This painting is in a moment of intense maturation for Vallotton, on the borderline between loyalty to academic teaching and the definition of his own original language. The work became part of the Vatican collections in



1963, ten years before the birth of the Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art. Given the relatively good preservation of the pictorial part, the intervention aimed to provide a new frame and recover the part of the painting folded at the edges with a reinforcement of the perimeter. Restorer **Rosanna Giardina** replaced the underframe with a new wooden expansion and tied up the frayed fibers of the original cloth and then used a thermoplastic adhesive or ready-made strips. Through heat, the adhesive and new cloth adhered to the original fabric. A light cleaning of the pictorial film was necessary, and afterward, the restorer filled in the necessary gaps.

Forty-Hour Decorative Stand

OHIO CHAPTER

The Forty Hours' Devotion is a traditional Roman Catholic liturgical action in which continuous prayer is made for 40 hours before the Blessed Sacrament in solemn exposition. The number 40 is also associated with the rain at the time of the flood, years on the way to the Promised Land, and Jesus fasting for 40 days before beginning his public ministry. This large artwork in wood is composed of several different pieces that are connected and was completed in the XVIII Century. Fallen wooden parts needed to be fixed and assembled: there were many holes, visible abrasions of the gilded surface, cracks, scratches and grooves. Thanks to the curator **Alessandra Rodolfo**, to head restorer **Francesca Persegati** and restorers **Stefano Tombesi**, **Massimo Alesi**, and **Marco De Pillis** the glorious stand will be soon on display in the Vatican Museums.



Two Side Tapestries of Clement VII

ITALIAN & INTERNATIONAL CHAPTER – Nishimoto Family, Olessia Kantor, Galileo Foundation

During the preliminary restoration steps, the tapestries have been documented with photos and graphics, submitted to chemical/physical investigations, cleaned with aqueous method and the parts not coeval to the work have been removed. The large tapestries made of wool, silk and gilt silver, were set upon a frame and fully supported on the back with a linen fabric previously dyed with a specific color. Finally, the restorers lined the entire tapestry with lightweight cotton fabric. The restoration was directed by curator **Alessandra Rodolfo**, technically supervised by the head restorer of the Tapestries Laboratory **Chiara Pavan**, and carried out in the various stages by restorers **Laura Pace Morino**, **Emanuela Pignataro**, **Viola Ceppetelli**, **Sr. Maria Smolen**, FMM.



Adoration of the Magi

NEW YORK CHAPTER – Donna D'Urso in loving memory of Camillo J. and Florence D'Urso

The panel dates back to 1477. The painter of the panel, Ludovico Urbani (San Severino Marche, 1460 – 1493), was active in the Marche region. The *Adoration of the Magi* might be part of a triptych. The panel was subject to an anoxic treatment and an accurate scientific analysis. At the end of the investigations, the restorers discussed the obtained data and they completed the cleaning phase with greater clarity. The intervention will allow

further and comparative studies with other works by the same author. The applied methodology included even a delicate restoration of the wooden support. At the end of the intervention, the work was placed in a Clima-Frame a dynamic, bio-compatible, moisture stabilizer, into a prepared compartment to safe-guard the artwork. This restoration involved the Painting and Wood Laboratory with **Rossana Giardina**, **Massimo Alesi** and **Marco De Pillis**.



Ongoing Restorations

THESE PROJECTS WILL BE COMPLETED SOON

Restoration of Copies of the Paintings in Roman Catacombs

TEXAS CHAPTER – Richard Kelly

In the 19th century, several painters specializing in copies, including Carlo Ruspi and Silvestro Bossi, produced 34 facsimile paintings of the frescoes in the catacombs. These frescoes, kept in the Pius Christian Museum, are considered a unique documentation because they are related to early Christian archaeological discoveries. The copies were made in tempera on industrial-grade paper, lined with canvas, and mounted on wooden frames. Restorer **Alessandra Terrei** from the the Paper Laboratory coordinated by **Chiara Fornaciari** has been working on this material for several years. The work was in a poor state of preservation; in particular, the surface showed the presence of consistent and inconsistent deposits, insect droppings, stains of various kinds mostly resulting from moisture. Also noted were the presence of abrasions, dust on the pictorial layer, gaps, lifting of the paper and color falls.



Wooden Sarcophagus

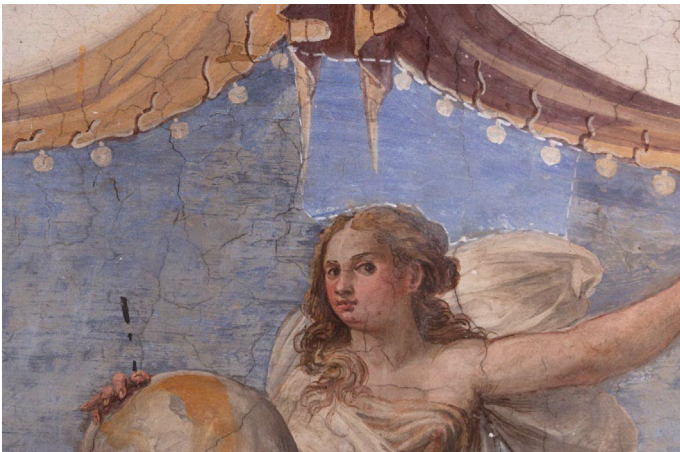
CALIFORNIA CHAPTER – Ed and Mary Hall

The decoration dates the coffin to the XXVI Dynasty (664–525 B.C.), a time of great splendor following the long period of crisis at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. The restoration is part of the Vatican Coffin Project, the study of polychrome Egyptian coffins, initiated in 2008 by the Egyptian Antiquities Department with curator **Alessia Amenta** and many other important institutions the world over. Morphometric investigations will allow, where possible, and where necessary, the reassembling of the different elements of the coffin and the reconstruction of missing parts.

Thirty-Five Enamels in Copper

MONACO CHAPTER – Liana Marabini

This series of beautiful copper plates by an unknown artist from Limoges, in painted enamel, with the Stories of the Passion of Christ are being restored along with the Scientific Research Laboratory, coordinated by **Dr. Fabio Morresi**. The lab applied the same protocol to all pieces: XRF mapping by M6 Jetstream for the chemical composition of the glazes and alloy and infrared False Color for the study of metamerism of the color fields of the glazes. This extensive study led to the selection of solvents used by the restorer **Barbara Pinto Folicaldi** to remove the protective products used in previous restorations. All artworks will now go through subsequent operations of removing corrosion salts, removing further dirt, and consolidating the glass pastes.



Ducal Hall

NEW YORK & CALIFORNIA CHAPTERS

Since February 2023, following the results of the analysis of the Scientific Research Laboratory and the various cleaning tests, the cleaning of the paintings of the Vault of the *Aula Secunda* (Second Hall) in the Ducal Hall and the marble coats of arms started. The surface of the Vault is mostly painted on plaster with a base of lime and pozzolan, on which the white background was painted with lime. The analysis revealed ancient pigments and several previous restorations. It was necessary to carry out a targeted cleaning to remove the blackened layer on the pictorial surface. From April until early August 2023, restorers performed a consolidation of the Bernini drapery and additional cleaning to better study the older painted layers. By comparing the tessellations with the 18th century engraving showing the original design of the curtain with the arms of Alexander VII, it was found that the painting matched the ancient design. Our thanks goes to the restorers involved in this project: **Paolo Violini, Francesco Pranter, Federica Cecchetti, Filippo Leopardi, Arabella Bertelli De Angelis, Simone Virdia with Francesca Forniti, Giulia Mastrangeli, Lucilla Monardi, Francesco Sonni and Zdravka Sabotnova**.

Chapter Visits

FALL 2023

In the fall 2023 the ORPAVM was very happy to welcome back to the Vatican Museums representatives of **Bank of America, Patrons of the Italian & International Chapter** (September 6), the **Michigan Chapter** (October 2-5) and the **Louisiana Chapter** (October 23-27). To book your next Chapter Visit please contact the ORPAVM.



Louisiana Patrons in the Gallery of the Maps



Bank of America event in the Octagonal Courtyard



William Lazaro Jr., Judy Sullivan, Wynonia Lazaro, Linda Vincent and Cary Vincent (LA) in the Octagonal Courtyard



Michigan Patrons in the Sistine Chapel



Michael Vales, Denice Derbes, Barbara Jatta, Bernadette Cordaro Boyd and Carter Jesse Boyd (LA)

40th Anniversary PAV M

Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums

From November 6 to 10, 2023, we celebrated the 40th Anniversary of patronage in the Vatican Museums with the presence of more than 300 Patrons from the United States, Europe, and Asia. This special week featured numerous events inside and outside Vatican City, in a spirit of deep gratitude and appreciation towards the passionate contributions and unwavering support of our many benefactors over the last 40 years. The celebrations started with a conference in the Vatican Synod Hall held by the Vatican Museum curators **Micol Forti** and **Alessandra Rodolfo** and chief restorer **Francesca Persegati**, on major restorations and significant anniversaries for the Museums, such as the bicentenary of the death of Antonio Canova, first director, the centenary of the Painting Restoration Laboratory, and the 50th Anniversary of the Vatican Modern and Contemporary Art Collection. Afterward, a very special lunch was hosted for the first time at the Pontifical North American College, where the Patrons were welcomed by the Rector of the NAC, **Msgr. Thomas Powers** and his wonderful staff. Later that day the Vatican Museums hosted the Patrons for an unprecedented evening visit to three major museum sectors: the Pinacoteca, the Pius Christian Museum, and

the Anima Mundi Ethnological Museum, ending with a relaxing yet lively cocktail hour in the Museum galleries. Tuesday was dedicated to beauty and nature, with an excursion to the historic Papal Villas at Castel Gandolfo followed by a lunch at the local renowned restaurant Villa del Cardinale. On Wednesday evening, a moment of prayer and thanksgiving was made possible with the celebration of Holy Mass at St. Mary Major Basilica. Thursday was perhaps the highlight of the week at the private audience with our Holy Father Pope Francis, who personally greeted all the Patrons, one by one. The day culminated with a gala dinner in the beautiful Braccio Nuovo sculpture Gallery. These special celebrations concluded with a solemn Holy Mass celebrated by **Card. Fernando Vérgez** at St. Peter's Basilica. We have been blessed by so many Patrons who, with their presence, physically and spiritually, have renewed their sense of friendship and belonging to their "big family" in the Vatican. We sincerely thank everyone who was able to come and join us for this marvelous and memorable week of celebrations. Your joy and kindness made our work all the more worthwhile.



From the Left: Barbara Jatta, Sr. Raffaella Petrini, Card. Fernando Vérgez, Msgr. Terence Hogan, Micol Forti, Francesca Persegati, Alessandra Rodolfo in the Synod Hall



Donna D'Urso (NY) and Barbara Jatta in the Ethnological Museum Anima Mundi



Don Gao & Family, Chiara Lorenzetti (ORPAVM) and assistant curator Nadia Fiussello in the Anima Mundi Museum



Debra and Tom Mauro (Canada) in the Sistine Chapel



Private Audience with His Holiness Pope Francis in the Clementine Hall, Apostolic Palace (copyright Foto © Vatican Media)



Patrons at the North American College on the Janiculum Hill



From the left: Debra Colletti and Scott Cooper (CA), Johan Van Parys (MN&ND) and Sr. Raffaella Petrini during Mass



Billy Dingman and Debbie Wert in the Sistine Chapel (FL)



Sabrina Zappia and Amy Gallant Sullivan (IT&INT) with their awards



Bishop Rolandas Makrickas celebrating Holy Mass in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major



Card. Fernando Vérgez presenting awards to Lorraine Dodero (OH)



Sr. Raffaella Petrini, Card. Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State and Barbara Jatta at the Gala Dinner in the Braccio Nuovo Gallery



Card. Fernando Vérgez presenting an award to Kim and Ben Chang (Asia Chapter)

Year of Canova

2023 CELEBRATIONS

The Vatican Museums pay tribute to the great sculptor Antonio Canova by dedicating an original project to a wide selection of his work within the Vatican City State. The exhibition is curated by Alessandra Rodolfo, head of the Department for 17th-18th Century Art. The heart of the Canovian celebrations is in the presentation of the new permanent installation, in the Sala delle Dame which, for the first time, will welcome the general public to this precious unseen nucleus of works. None of these exhibitions or celebrations would be possible without the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums.

We would like to specifically acknowledge the Altig Family, whose patronage over the years is evident when visiting the various galleries dedicated to the artistic legacy of Canova, with a special mention of their adoption of the sculpture's famous marble statue of Perseus.



Rick and Lisa Altig, Gail James (NW) in the Braccio Nuovo Gallery



Sala delle Dame, Vatican Museums



Mary Viator and the Florida Chapter at the inauguration of the Pius Christian Museum



Revealing the Pius Christian Museum

2023 INAUGURATION

After years of dedication and support towards the restoration of the historical patrimony found in the Pius Christian Museum, in a joyous ribbon cutting ceremony, the Florida Chapter had the opportunity to formally unveil the restoration works that had been completed. The inauguration took place on November 6. On aperitif with the Curators, during the PAVM 40th Anniversary was an opportunity to celebrate the Florida Chapter and its many Patrons for their generous contributions, Chapter Leader Mary Viator had the opportunity to cut the ribbon as Vatican Museums Director Barbara Jatta and Patrons Coordinator Monsignor Hogan happily looked on in encouragement. The grand reveal was another historic moment for the Patrons of the Arts.

Bon Voyage Sophia !

For four years with the ORPAVM, Sophia has contributed to the daily operations, Patron projects, Chapter visits, Wishbooks, and the US Office. Outside of the office she participated in *Donne in Vaticano*, an organization dedicated to promoting the visibility of women working in the Vatican, and was a member of the Vatican Women's Soccer Team. She came to the Vatican Museums after obtaining work experience in the contemporary art world with photographer Annie Leibovitz.

Sophia hopes to pursue higher education in the future, especially influenced by her Bachelor of Arts degree, specializing in the Art History from Sarah Lawrence College and her exchange year at Oxford University.

While we are excited for her to start this next chapter in her professional life, we will certainly miss her energy and charisma in the Vatican Office since she was an integral member of the team. Please remember to keep her in your thoughts and prayers as she embarks on this new journey!



The ORPAVM staff. From the Left : Martina Suozzo, Sophia Spralja, Chiara Lorenzetti, Lindy Nieuwpoort, Sara Savoldello and Annarita Imperio

New access to the Necropolis of the Via Triumphalis

As of November 17, 2023 it is possible to visit the Necropolis of the Via Triumphalis, also known as the Santa Rosa Necropolis, from a new and elegant entrance. The initiative, in anticipation of the Jubilee Year 2025, enhances a unique archaeological site that recounts the life and culture of mainly middle-class Roman society. It is an opportunity to explore the fascinating itinerary of what is known as: *Life and Death in the Rome of the Caesars*. The artifacts one encounters, offer a glimpse into the daily life and burial customs of those resting on the ancient hill, outside the ancient city walls. The cemetery area of the Via Triumphalis was first discovered in the late 1950's with excavations



Inauguration of the new access to the Necropolis

having started in 1956, during the construction of an underground parking lot, and continuing until 1958. A second area, connecting two archaeological sites, was discovered in 2003 and, in 2011, the necessary excavation work was generously financed by the PAVM Canada Chapter. The Washington D.C. Chapter adopted the conservation and maintenance of the Santa Rosa Necropolis at the beginning of 2023.



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