

SCALA SANTA

Total Cost € 1.955.000,00

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

A restoration plan has been developed based on previous restorations. This study included archival research, graphic surveys, photographic documentation, UV and IP surveys, scientific analysis and conducting a test cleaning of the paintings. The necessity clearly emerged for a general intervention and conservation dictated by the serious state of degradation and general poor state of the works. Maybe the more important conclusion is that of creating a renewed interest in the historical artistic and liturgical aspects of the extraordinary iconographic content of this decorative scheme.

The state of conservation of the room is generally precarious but the damage varies, thus leaving a clear priority of intervention for conservation and subdividing the internal restoration of the Sanctuary in six successive parts: *Cappella di San Silvestro*, *Cappella di San Lorenzo*, Holy Stairs, Stairs on the left, Stairs on the right, and the Atrio (lobby/entry/hallway). Due to the extreme decay of the *Cappella di San Silvestro*, work has already been done and paid for. Due to the latest technology in the field of illumination, it is apparent that new lighting is necessary in the Sanctuary thus allowing an accurate reading of the paintings.



The Scala Sancta, or Holy Stairs, form part of the millennial tradition of holy sites in the city of Rome. The Capella Palatina of the *Santa Sanctorum* located at the top of the stairs was the first papal chapel, and in the 1500's Sixtus V had it completely redone. This construction marks the passage from the Renaissance to the Baroque period in Rome.

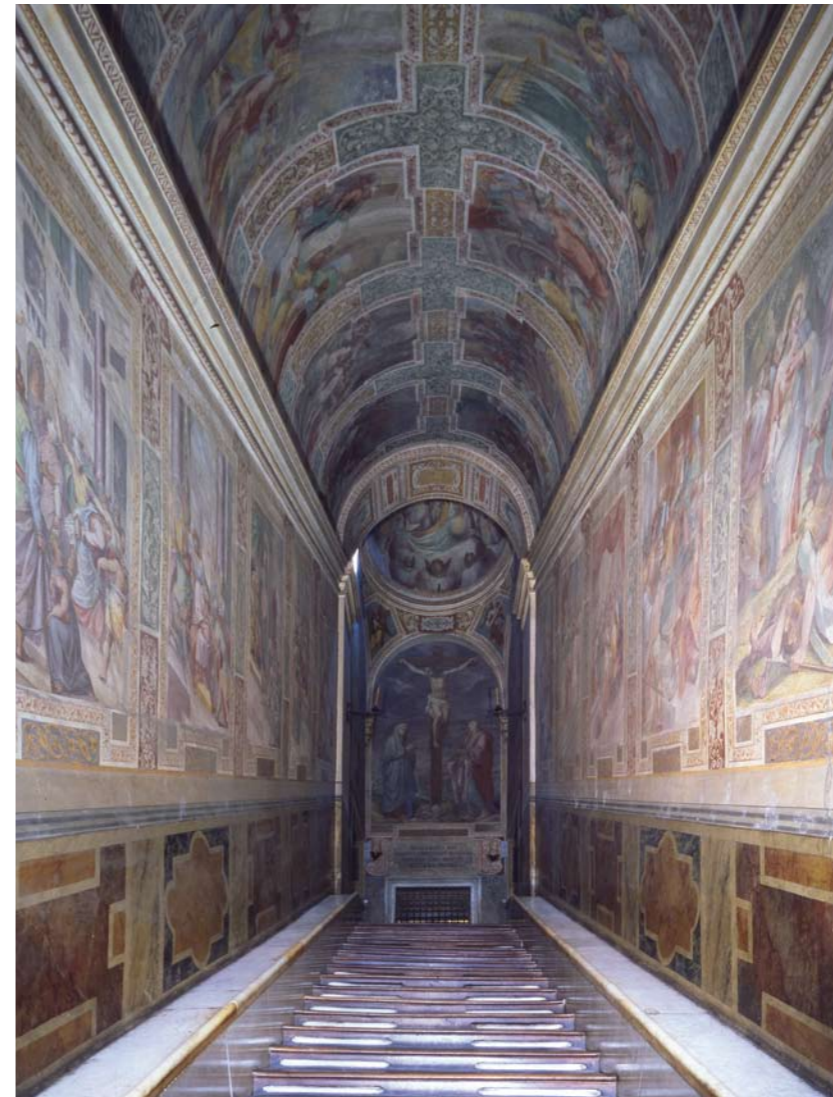
According to Christian tradition, the Holy Stairs are the steps that led up to the praetorium of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem, which Jesus Christ would have used during his Passion to go up to his way to trial. The stairs are thought to have been brought to Rome in the 4th century by St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. For centuries, the Scala Santa has attracted Christian pilgrims who wish to honor the Passion of Jesus.

It consists of twenty-eight white marble steps, now encased by wooden overlays, located in a building which incorporates part of the old Lateran Palace opposite the Basilica of Saint John Lateran. They are situated next to a church which was built on ground brought from Mount Calvary. The stairs lead to the *Sancta Sanctorum* (*Holy of Holies*), the personal chapel of the early popes in the Lateran palace.

In the Middle Ages they were known as *Scala Pilati* (Stairs of Pilate). From old plans, we can gather that they led to a corridor of the Lateran Palace, near the Chapel of St. Sylvester, and were covered with a special roof. In 1589, Sixtus V destroyed the then ruined old papal palace to rebuild a new one and ordered the Holy Stairs be transferred to their present site resting before the *Sancta Sanctorum*, which received its name from the many precious relics preserved there, including the celebrated icon of the face of Christ called the *Santissimi Salvatore Acheiropoieton* ("not made by human hands") which, on certain occasions, was carried through Rome in procession.

The architect Domenico Fontana redesigned the internal sanctuary constructing a kind of devotional mystical path through which one passes via the Holy Stairs to end at the Chapel of *Sancta Sanctorum*. All four areas of this cinquecento structure have been the goal of our restoration project. A new ambiance was created at the entry (*L'Atrio*). Then, five stair wells were created to lead people up one way and down another (*le Cinque Scale*). To the left of the *Sancta Sanctorum* was built the Chapel of St. Lawrence (*Capella di San Lorenzo*), and to the right, the Chapel of St. Sylvester (*Capella di San Silvestro*). These two chapels encase and crown the old papal chapel. The driving figurative in this new set of spaces was motivated by the concept of the faithful on their pilgrimage.

After many sketches by Cesare Nebbia and Giovanni Guerra, the



frescoes were created in only two years. This cycle of pictures form part of a particular historic artistic moment, namely the insertion in Roman painting culture of the "*fiammigna* of landscape" school that had a lot of influence in developing figurative in the years to come.

Today, the Holy Stairs is the most visited Christian site after the Vatican, with a minimum of 2000 faithful per day, and often reaches 15,000 a day. Each year, more than two million people from every country in the world, both Christians and people of all faiths make a pilgrimage to Rome and include the Holy Stairs as a destination.

Following the recent restoration of the *Sancta Sanctorum* and the *Cappella di San Silvestro*, the old papal chapel that constituted the heart of the Sanctuary, the frescoes and the decorations created in the four environments that Sixtus V built crowning the chapel are in need of intervention. These elements include the Atrium, the five frescoed stairwells, the *Capella di San Silvestro* and the *Capella di San Lorenzo*. We have already paid for the *Sancta Sanctorum* and the *Cappella di San Silvestro*. We now must complete the other three elements.

The painting cycle, completed in 1589, is the last major Roman work of the 1500's and is in a serious state of decay.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

Phase 1: The Atrium

- This phase will include the preparatory work to setting up the site (electrical, structural, special access, security and scaffolding, etc), the price to restore the frescoes, the works a tempera, the marble restoration, photographic and graphic documentation of previous interventions and documentation of the present intervention. The total cost for this work to be done over a 12 month period of time will come to: € 333.000,00

Phase 2: The *Capella di San Lorenzo*

- This phase will include the preparatory work for setting up the site (electrical, structural, special access, security and scaffolding, etc), the price to restore the frescoes, the tempera works, the marble restoration, photographic and graphic documentation of previous interventions and documentation of the present intervention. The total cost for this work to be done over a 12 month period of time will come to: € 443.000,00

Phase 3, 4 & 5: The *Scala Santa* and their parallel stairs.

- This phase will include the Holy Stairs and the two parallel staircases on each side. A total of five staircases are included in this phase. The costs cover the preparatory work to setting up the site (electrical, structural, special access, security and scaffolding, etc), the intervention on the frescoes, the intervention a tempera, the marble restoration work, photographic and graphic documentation of previous interventions and documentation of the present intervention. The total cost for this work to be done over a 12 month period of time will come to: € 1.179.000,00