



*An update from the Michigan Chapter of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums*



### In case you missed it

Our Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums—Michigan Chapter (PAVM-MI) co-chair, John Hale, recently visited Rome and facilitated interviews for Teresa Tomeo and her Sirius XM radio program, “Catholic Connection”, with Fr. Kevin Lixey, International Director of the Vatican of the Arts in the Vatican Museums Patrons, and Dr. Barbara Jatta, Director of the Vatican Museums.

Please enjoy these two interviews that speak to the amazing work and mission of the Vatican Museums and the Vatican Patrons. We especially thank Teresa Tomeo (also a PAVM-MI member) for highlighting all of this good work!

You can listen to the interviews from Rome by clicking on this link at about the 26 minute mark: <https://avemariaradio.net/catholic-connection-06-11-2021-2/>



## Two Out of Four Restorations Completed



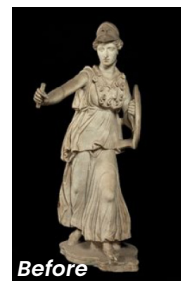
Before



After



After



Before

*Before and after photos: Musa (left), Athena (right), and Agar-Agar cleaning of Athena's shield (below).*

**Y**ou may recall from our last “Renovatio” Newsletter, that the PAVM-MI Chapter agreed to fund four marble artworks from the Niche of Apollo de Belvedere in the Vatican Museums. Overseeing the restoration project is the Vatican Museum’s Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities. We are pleased to share that two of the four marble pieces have been completely restored: the “Statue of Athena Promachos” and the “Statue of Musa”.

The Statue of Musa (muse) is not a solid marble sculpture, although it appears to be one block of solid stone. This is not unusual according to the Vatican Museum’s restoration team. There are a number of reasons why an artist would choose to do this, be it structural or historical. This statue was created by Angelini and Filippo Tenti, and rediscovered during an excavation that began in 1783. Numerous parts of

the sculpture, those missing and those not connected due to oxidation, were all considerations during the restoration process. The construction of a retractable pin was designed to solve some challenging connections as a conservative solution for the left hand and palm.

The Statue of Athena Promachos restoration work was completed in late 2020. The statue is composed of Pentelic and Luna marble. The first cleaning of the entire surface was completed with deionized water, Japanese paper and rinsed in tepid water using a latex sponge. Numerous cleaning tests with applications of Japanese paper and/or Agar-Agar (a jelly-like material that is obtained from red algae), were also conducted. The Agar-Agar allowed for the removal of unwanted deposits on the surface of the marble while respecting the “noble patina” (colors resulting from oxidation

over time). Finally grouting was completed where needed, and cracks in the marble were sealed using a mortar composed of sifted marble powder and lime putty.

These two fully restored marble statues will continue as Vatican Museum treasures thanks to restoration funding by the PAVM-MI Chapter. We look forward to sharing more about the remaining two marble pieces currently undergoing restoration: “The Statue of a Female Figure” and “The Front of a Continuous Frise Sarcophagus”.



Before



After

# Q & A

*Fr. Kevin Lixey, LC*  
PAVM International Director



## A great love for beauty in new and exciting ways

*Keeping our members informed about the work of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums (PAVM), especially in Rome and within the Vatican Museums, is a responsibility the PAVM-Michigan Chapter takes seriously. Recently we had an opportunity to interview Fr. Kevin Lixey, LC, who is the PAVM International Director based in Rome. We're excited to share some very exciting educational opportunities, events and sites to see inside and outside of the Vatican Museums through 2022.*

**It seems like there were many new and innovative ways of reaching PAVM members during the worldwide pandemic, the shutdown of the Vatican Museums, and placing trips and events on hold for all Chapters around the globe. What are some of the exciting things that have emerged from this time and how can they be utilized in the future?**

With our museums closed on and off since the pandemic, and few PAVM visitors during that time, it has allowed more hours for my staff and I to focus on highlighting the incredible work of our restorers, as well as our curators, who help us to delve deeper into an appreciation of the Vatican collection.

In the spring of 2020, we launched a lecture series dedicated to the papal apartments, and in particular, to the artist Raphael Sanzio as we celebrated 500 years since his passing. These were offered live, via Zoom sessions, in times for the United States, European and Asian audiences. Based on its success, and after cutting our teeth on this new technology (learning how to host 500-person capacity webinars), we decided to launch the PAVM "Insiders Course" which would be a virtual course in all things Patrons: in-depth close-ups of a particular collection, various facets of restoration, and academic insights from scholars both inside the Vatican and from around the world. With just two members from our PAVM staff, and the Vatican Museums video photographer, we set out to interview different curators and restorers each

month, as we systematically work our way through the Vatican collection in just two years. I am also indebted to Liz Lev for her help in putting the entire program together. Each month also features a one-hour Zoom lecture, followed by a live Q&A, and the following week our museum director, curators and even with our restorers giving viewers unprecedented live access to the museum's expertise. We are currently halfway through creating the second year program. PAVM members who complete the two-year course will receive a diploma-like PAVM certificate. Season Two begins this coming October, and will run through May 2022. I highly recommend it!

**The "Insiders Course" classes had a very good participation rate for the first time it was offered. What are the plans for repeating the course, and perhaps offering new courses?**

After Season Two of the "Insiders Course", we will be quite busy with our PAVM Chapters visiting us again in person. In fact, it will be quite challenging this fall as we accommodate numerous returning Chapters who will visit us in Rome, while simultaneously providing monthly content and attention to the "Insiders Course."

What has happened, as a result of this successful course, is that it sparked the Vatican Museums itself to produce much more video content. The "Insiders Course" has motivated the curators to share their knowledge in new ways utilizing technology. So much more to come from the Vatican Museums, so stay tuned.

**What exciting new Vatican Museums installations and exhibitions can we look forward to in 2021-2022?**

There will be a Raphael conference this September; a rescheduling of what was slated for the year of Raphael in 2020. We will have a Piranesi exhibition in 2022, as well as Canova in 2022 in the Braccio di Carlo Magno exhibition space in the Vatican.

**As the International Director for the PAVM, what would you like the Michigan Chapter members to know about traveling to Rome in the fall of 2021 for a Chapter visit?**

We can't wait to see you again! The museums have never looked this good. Especially three of the four walls of the Bramante Courtyard, with its newly restored majestic, bronze pine cone and the newly restored fountain.

The Room of Constantine by Raphael and his school, has been three-quarters of the way restored and new works of Raphael discovered.

Last but not least, PAVM-MI members can see their newly restored Raphael tapestry, which is now hanging in the heart of the Hall of Raphael, with a new lighting system to boot. Plus, visitors can enjoy the partially renovated state-of-the-art displays in the Anima Mundi Ethnological Museum where these incredible art and artifacts, gifted to popes through the years are now on display. It is one of the latest projects of the PAVM featured in the 2021 Wishbook.

# BEHOLD...

## *The Blinding of Elymas*

# RESTORED

**W**hen a 16<sup>th</sup> century Raphael tapestry owned by the Vatican Museums requires restoration, one thing is certain, it will take many years to accomplish the complex and tedious work of skilled and dedicated artisan hands. That certainly has been the case with Raphael's "Blinding of Elymas" tapestry that dates back to the early 1500's. This biblical scene from the Acts of the Apostles, was taken from a Raphael "cartoon" (a full-scale drawing prepared for a work of art, including tapestries), then woven in a Pieter van Aelst workshop located in Brussels. In other words, the great Raphael did not weave the tapestry, but the detailed and colorful artwork (cartoon) is definitely of his hand.

Restoration began on the 579 x 501 cm (approximately 19 ft. x 16.50 ft) tapestry of woven threads of wool, silk, gold and silver in 2015. The project, funded by the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums – Michigan Chapter, has also been the highlight of several chapter pilgrimages to Rome over the years. Members were invited behind the scenes, to see the tapestry in its deteriorated condition, as the restorers worked in the large tapestry restoration laboratory. To watch the team of restorers select just the right shade of thread for a particular portion of the tapestry, and painstakingly weave in one stitch of thread at a time, was amazing to see. Many are struck by the thousands of spools of thread, that were hand-dyed in the laboratory, to complete the project as close to the original as possible. Often times, from one spool of thread to the next, the untrained eye could barely see any change from



***A rare glimpse of a Raphael tapestry in the process of restoration***

one shade of a color to the next miniscule step down in the dye. The trained eye knew it was important to have those subtle changing hues readily available – crucial towards the final restoration as a whole.

Before any weaving or stitching on the tapestry began, preparation work had to be documented and implemented. Fibers and dyes in the tapestry were identified, evaluated for any damage by pollutants, and the state of preservation determined. In a collaborative effort with the Scientific Research Cabinet, it was decided to clean the entire tapestry. Following extensive tests, including stability tests on the dyed yarns, conclusive evidence confirmed the tapestry could be washed in an aqueous solution. Rolling the large tapestry, it was immersed carefully in a liquid solution and cleaned by sponging. Later the tapestry was mounted on a frame.

Dealing with gaps and missing yarns were also part of the restoration process. Small and larger dyed linen fabrics were used to support the areas that needed



continuity and structure. The entire tapestry was later lined with a light cotton fabric to complete the restoration.

Thankfully, the "Blinding of Elymas" has been given new life by Dr. Rodolfo, Curator of the Tapestries and Fabrics Dept., Chiara Pavan of the Tapestries and Fabrics Restoration Laboratory, as well as restorers Laura Pace Morino, Pignataro Emanuela, Ceppetelli Viola, Smolen Sister Maria, and the Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums – Michigan Chapter.

Members traveling to Rome with the Michigan Chapter in September will have an opportunity to see this amazing tapestry displayed in the Pinacoteca in the Hall of Raphael with his other beautiful tapestries.



## We're going to Rome – COME WITH US!

**J**oin the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums Michigan, Texas and Georgia Chapters for a tour of Rome and the Vatican Museums from November 6-12, 2021. Tour the famous Renaissance Villa Farnesina with Dr. Liz Lez, visit Ostia Antica on the beautiful Roman coast, attend a General Papal Audience with the Holy Father, visit the Vatican Museums Restoration Labs, tour the Santa Rosa Scavi, along with private after-hours tour of the Sistine Chapel with a private reception and gala candlelight dinner in the Vatican Museums, and more. Daily Mass will be celebrated at Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, Tre Fontane Abbey, Mother Teresa's Rome Convent, and at the Chapel of the Governor's Palace in the Vatican City State.

Availability is limited. Pricing begins at \$3,399 per person based on double occupancy (land only). To learn more and to book online, go to: [www.ctscentral.net/michiganpatrons-italy-202111](http://www.ctscentral.net/michiganpatrons-italy-202111) or call **(866) 466-2202** to speak to a reservation specialist.

*Please Note: In order to participate in the tour, you must be a member of the PAVM. To check your membership status, or to become a member, contact the Michigan Chapter at **(313) 565-8888** or visit **MIPatrons.com***

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*Renovatio* covers news and events for the Michigan Chapter of the Patrons. The Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums is a select group of people dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of the vast and unique collection of art contained in the Vatican Museums. The name of the publication, *Renovatio*, is the Latin translation of the word *renewal*.

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**Michigan Chapter**  
Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums

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