

iGuzzini enhances the Pontifical Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs with new lighting

17 May 2019 - iGuzzini, a leading Italian company in the architectural and museum lighting sector, is the technical sponsor of the new lighting for the Holy Stairs complex, developed together with the main restoration work that will be completed by Easter 2020.

Arising from the synergy between the Passionist Fathers (custodians of the complex since 1853) and the Vatican Museums (a worldwide centre of excellence in the field of conservation), the shrine conservation project has taken place in several stages: it started in the nineties with restoration of the chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum, continued in 2000, and then with the whole cycle of frescoes commissioned by Sixtus V, from 2012.

For the first time, in nearly 300 years, until the day of Pentecost (9 June 2019), the faithful can climb the 28 steps of the Holy Stairs, touching the original white marble, which is temporarily without its wooden cladding while it is being restored, originally commissioned by Pope Innocent XIII in 1723. According to tradition, Jesus climbed the staircase in the monumental complex near St. John Lateran to reach the hall of the palace in Jerusalem, where Pilate condemned him to death. The Stairs were taken to Rome around 326 by St. Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine.

The work done by the company, defined together with Master Restorer Paolo Violini and Architect Francesco Pezzini, uses diffused and homogeneous lighting to enhance the religious and contemplative experience of the faithful. The new system has two goals: on the one hand the need to improve the colour perception of the decorative cycles in the complex, including the red shades; and on the other hand, the need to improve the energy efficiency of the space. To this end, all the devices use the latest generation of high colour rendering index LEDs, with DALI protocol for simple control of the system and lighting effects.

The lighting project involves the whole monument complex, but special emphasis was given to the staircase, the vaults of which host sixteenth-century frescoes, and the Sancta Sanctorum, the ancient private chapel of the popes. Underscore devices with various colour temperatures were used in the former area to restore the colours of the pictorial cycles for visitors. The latter area also has Laser Blade Tunable White devices, custom designed to enhance the artistic and religious value of the site, while keeping a low visual profile.

"We are pleased to have contributed to enhancing a place with so much historical, cultural and spiritual value," declared Adolfo Guzzini, President Emeritus of iGuzzini. "Thanks to the iGuzzini lighting, the Holy Stairs complex, a treasure trove of Rome's Christian religiousness, can be seen in all its detail. The new lightning project promotes spiritual and artistic use of this sacred place, making the experience even more exciting for the faithful and visitors."

iGuzzini illuminazione was founded in 1959 and is an international leading group in the architectural lighting sector. It has approximately 1500 employees dedicated to the study, design and production of smart interior and exterior lighting systems in partnership with leading architects, lighting designers, engineers and research centres worldwide. It is based in Recanati (Italy), with operations in over 20 countries across 5 continents. iGuzzini works to use light to improve the relationship between humans and the environment through research, industry, technology and knowledge, in places of culture, work, retail, cities, infrastructure and hospitality & living. In 2018, the company's consolidated revenue reached € 238 million, recording a 20% increase over the last 5 years. As of 2019 iGuzzini is part of the Fagerhult Group. For more information: www.iguzzini.com

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