



THE STAIRCASE OF HONOUR

The Staircase of Honour of the Quirinale Palace was built in 1609 by the architect Flaminio Ponzio. The double-ramp staircase allows guests direct access to the two main rooms of the palace: the Great Hall of the Cuirassiers and the Grand Ballroom. This architectural solution was particularly functional at the time of the popes, when the other rooms of the Palace could not be crossed as they mostly comprised the private quarters of the Pontiff.

Where the two ramps cross over, an ample landing opens onto the Quirinale Palace gardens. From this position you can admire the fresco by Melozzo da Forlì depicting *Christ in Glory between Angels and Apostles*. This work, dating back to around 1480, once covered the apsidal conch over the choir of the Church of the Holy Apostles. When the church was completely restored, Pope Clement XI ordered this large fragment of fresco to be detached and conserved. It was moved to the Grand Staircase of the Quirinale Palace in 1711 and positioned at such a height as to retain the original view from below. Other fragments of Melozzo's original fresco – the famous *Musician Angels* – are kept in the Vatican Museum.