



## URBAN VIII DEDICATES THE BASILICA OF ST. PETER

### TECHNICAL NOTES

The tapestry is part of the famous series of ten pieces dedicated to the *Life of Pope Urban VIII Barberini* (1623-1644), created by the Barberini Manufacture in Rome between 1663 and 1679, commissioned by the cultured nephew of the pope, Cardinal Francesco, with the aim of glorifying the deeds of his now deceased uncle.

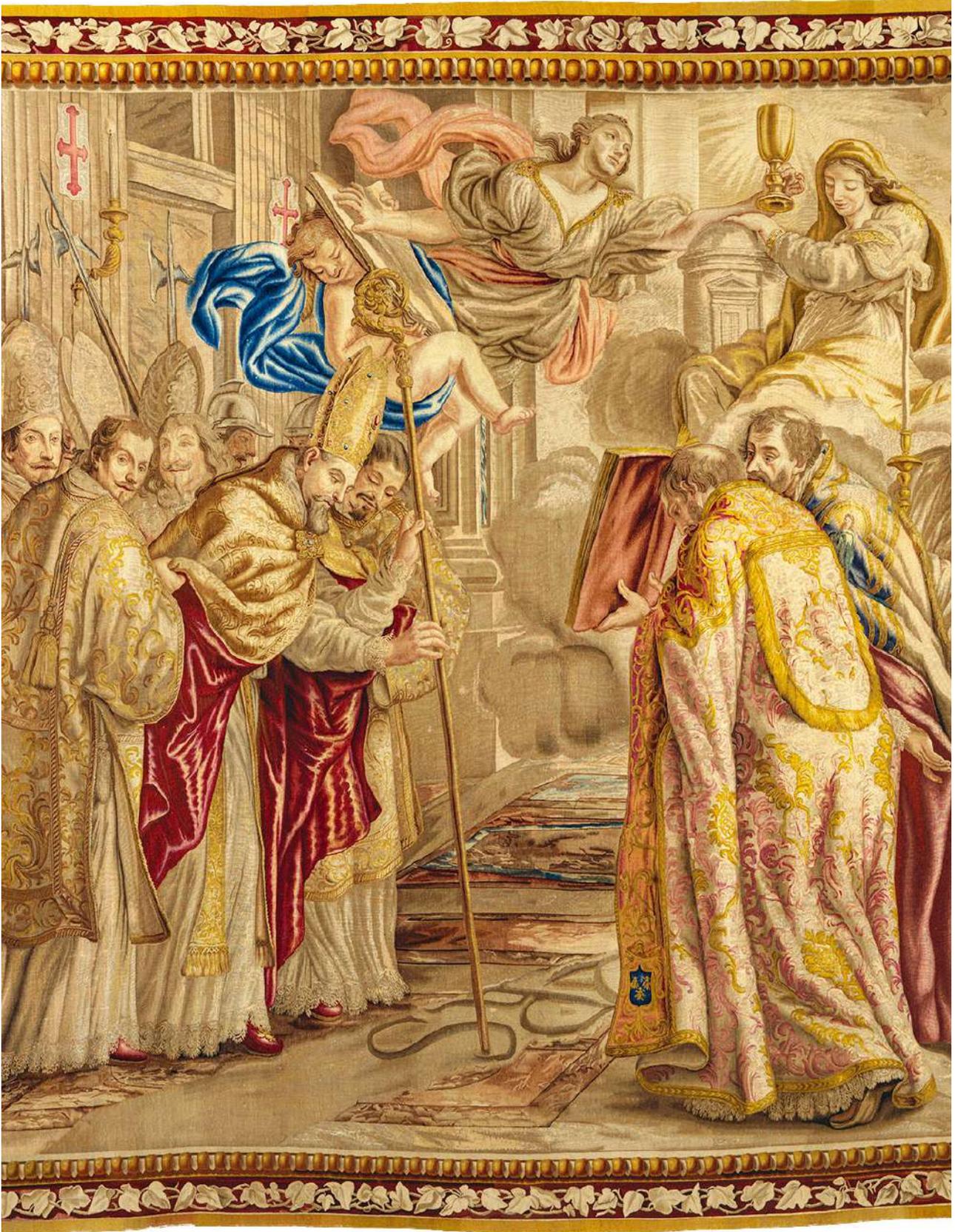
The cycle, originally intended for the decoration of the hall in Palazzo Barberini, depicts the key moments of the pontiff's life intertwined with crucial events in the political reality of the Papal States. Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669), a major figure in the Roman artistic scene, was responsible for the project, particularly for the preparatory cartoons until his death in 1669, when his pupil and collaborator Ciro Ferri (1634-1689) took over, assisted by other painters linked to the same artistic circle and the Barberini court.

In the tapestries, representations of historical figures are suggestively mixed with allegorical figures, such as Peace, Plague, Religion. The celebratory intent is evident from the first scene with the young Maffeo being appointed doctor at the University of Pisa to the moment when the pope receives the joint homage of the Catholic Nations. The scene with the papal election also testifies to the desire to accurately document events, displaying at the center of the story the counting of the ballots that led to the rightful ascent of Urban VIII to the See of Peter.

The tapestry on display describes in rich detail the pope, surrounded by personalities from the curia and the Roman nobility, in the act of dedicating the new basilica of Saint Peter on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1626, while the allegories of Faith and Religion watch the solemn ceremony from above.

The preparatory drawing of this elaborate scene, preserved in the National Galleries of Ancient Art at the Palazzo Barberini, is the work of the painter and mosaics artist Fabio Cristofani (1610/20-1689), while the execution of the cloth was entrusted to Maria Maddalena della Riviera, completed in 1673.





«Pope Urban VIII dedicates Saint Peter's Basilica on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1626»