



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN  
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF  
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

*At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land*

## In Rome the exhibition “Menorah: worship, history and myth”



The seven-armed candelabrum, forged on the basis of the divine indications given to Moses, was taken by Roman troops from the Temple of Jerusalem. All traces of this object were definitively lost with the sack of Rome by the vandals led by Genseric.

Jerusalem and Rome. There are so many elements linking these two cities. An exhibition hosted in the Charlemagne Wing in the Vatican and in the Jewish Museum of Rome from May 16 to July 23 - the first born of a collaboration between the Vatican City State and the Jewish community of Rome – is emphasizing one: the Menorah.

A seven-armed candelabrum made of pure gold by Moses following the detailed instructions received from the Lord, the Menorah was then placed in the first Temple of Jerusalem. Over the centuries this object, whose pilgrimage has accompanied those of the people of Israel, has become a strong symbol of Jewish culture and religion. The Menorah metaphorically conjures up the light of the Lord, who through the Torah leads man to spiritual fullness, and the number seven of arms has led many to see a clear link with the biblical Shabbat, the seventh day of the week.

Historian Flavio Giuseppe recounts Tito's triumphal entry to Rome after the victory in Israel, culminating in the destruction of the second Temple of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and among the objects brought to Rome, he also describes the famous seven-armed candelabrum. It is also carved into the Triumphal Arch erected at the foot of the Palatine Hill, the Arch of Tito (81-82 AD). It was then placed in the Temple of Peace built by Vespasian at the Forum. In the 5th century with the sack of Rome by the Vandals, all traces of the Menorah were lost and all the hypotheses of where it was brought became the stuff of legend.

What remains, however, is the value associated with this symbol, sometimes even in the Christian world, especially in the medieval age, in the liturgical context, but above all in the Jewish one where it is a carrier of spiritual significance and identity to the point that it was chosen as the main element in the coat of arms for the State of Israel.

In addition to the vicissitudes of history, the Menorah remains for us all an invitation to be bearers of the light of the living God.

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