THEIR MAJESTIES KING JUAN CARLOS AND QUEEN SOFIA CUT RIBBON ON NEW LIGHTING AT ST. MARY MAJOR BASILICA

- Endesa Foundation signed an agreement with the Vatican last year to supply lighting for this basilica, which has strong ties with Spain stretching back to the reign of Charles V.

- Enel X has been responsible for restoration and adaptation of lighting, under the supervision of the Vatican City State Governorate’s Department of Technical Services.

- Project designed to showcase this basilica’s beauty using the most advanced energy efficiency and saving techniques around and the best in artistic illumination.

**Madrid, 19 January 2018.** Rome’s St. Mary Major basilica is now more beautiful and sustainable than ever thanks to an agreement between the Endesa Foundation and the Vatican City State Governorate to carry out a lighting project, which was unveiled to the public today. Their Majesties King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia were guests of honour at the ceremony at which HM Juan Carlos – appointed honorary protocanon of the basilica in 1977 – gave a speech alongside hosts, His Most Reverend Eminence Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko and His Most Reverend Eminence Cardinal Santos Abril y Castelló; the Foundation’s chairman, Borja Prado; Enel chairman, Maria Patrizia Grieco; and the soprano singer, Ainhoa Arteta.

Chairman of Endesa and its foundation, Borja Prado, highlighted that “it is an honour and a privilege to light this basilica, which plays a key role in history, culture and the strong bonds between Spain and The Vatican. The Endesa Foundation’s work on the lighting is more than just a good deed; it is a pledge to society to protect a legacy that reminds us what people with extraordinary talent and grand ideas can achieve”.

Endesa Foundation chairman, Borja Prado, Cardinal Santos Abril y Castelló and Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko met at St. Mary Major last May to launch this iconic project to illuminate one of the four Papal basilicas in Rome; a basilica that has extremely close connections with Spain. The Endesa Foundation joined this project to enhance the beauty of this highly emblematic basilica using the most advanced energy efficiency and saving techniques, with a view to cutting the required power and energy consumption by up to 80% while offering the best possible artistic illumination. Enel X
(the new division of advanced energy services of Enel) has been responsible for restoring and adapting the basilica’s lighting, drawing on its extensive track record and experience in the culture of lighting, using light as a key media of expression and excellence in the design and construction of the installation.

Work was carried out in several areas of the basilica: the altar and baldachin, the baptistery, the vault and altarpiece of the Pauline Chapel, the Cesi Chapel, the Cross Chapel, the Sforza Chapel, the counter-façade and central aisle nave and transepts, side aisle, side chapel, and the Ave Regina Pacis statue.

St. Mary Major basilica was built in the middle of the fourth century on the orders of Pope Liberius. Situated on the summit of the Esquiline Hill, this basilica is considered to be the largest church dedicated to the Virgin Mary in Rome. It is one of the four patriarchal basilicas in the Italian capital and the only one to have retained its paleo-Christian structures.

Spain has had very close ties with St. Mary Major since its beginnings. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, followed by his grandson Philip III and great grandson Philip IV contributed through numerous donations to enhance the basilica’s splendour, thereby becoming benefactors of St. Mary Major.

There is also a statue of the Spanish king Philip IV (1605-1665) in the portico of the St. Mary Major Roman basilica.

In 1953, following the signing of the Concordat between the Holy See and Spain, it was agreed that every Spanish king would be named honorary protocanons of the Liberius Chapter of the St. Mary Major basilica. In 1977, His Majesty King Juan Carlos I accepted his appointment as honorary protocanon.

**About the Endesa Foundation**

The Endesa Foundation, chaired by Borja Prado, has a clear commitment to social development through its educational projects, training for employment, environmental pledge and cultural initiatives.

It runs educational projects, promoting initiatives aimed at transforming and innovating education at all levels and fostering academic excellence in universities through scholarships, grants and academic chairs.

It supports employment training projects, focusing on the promotion of talent, aimed at people at risk of social exclusion, low-income young entrepreneurs and professionals over the age of 50.

It implements environment-related initiatives related to ecological culture education and specific projects for the improvement of natural environments and areas used for industrial purposes.

Lastly, but by no means least, the foundation continues to work on the illumination of historical-artistic heritage properties and promoting, restoring and preserving art and culture.