



Pier Luigi Nervi and the magic of cement

"The most beautiful material mankind has ever invented". "A genuine miracle". Thus spoke Italian Architect Pier Luigi Nervi of reinforced concrete: an innovative, durable and elastic material that Nervi shaped into spectacular and daring structures thanks to his thorough knowledge of structural construction techniques and a very personal way of turning architecture into an ongoing dialogue between different expressive forms, attention to aesthetic details and futuristic use of technology.

Italcementi worked with Nervi on many of his achievements, sharing with him the courage to experiment, the commitment to fostering research seriousness and integrity based on strict scientific methods and, last but not least, his conviction that "the ability to create molten stone - cement - that can be modeled in any shape, and superior to natural stone because of its stress resistance, has something magical in it".

Together with Italcementi's Bergamo-based Research Centre, Nervi performed detailed analyses on cementitious products to overcome difficulties that might be encountered during construction site and make the most of the natural plasticity and ductility of cement identifying optimum mixes in terms of both strength properties and artistic quality. Among the architectural landmarks developed from this close relationship are the Paul VI Audience Hall in Vatican City and the Pirelli Tower in Milan.

Supporting the *PIER LUIGI NERVI. Architettura come sfida/Architecture as a challenge* research project is meant to be a way to pay tribute to a great master of architecture and a chance to witness the commitment that Italcementi has always had to research and innovation vis-à-vis the construction industry.