

Ensuring a safe space for worshippers.

National Sanctuary of Our Lady of Aparecida merged parallel video management systems onto a single Milestone platform.

**Organization:**

National Sanctuary of Our Lady of Aparecida

Location:

Aparecida/São Paulo, Brazil

Industry segment:

Religious institution

Application:

Video surveillance and access control

Axis partners:

SilliS Security Intelligence, Milestone Systems

Mission

The National Sanctuary of Our Lady of Aparecida had been expanding and updating its video surveillance system in stages for nearly a decade. But with expansion came a break in continuity. While the cathedral had standardized on Axis cameras, the cameras covering the cathedral and those covering the hotels, event center and other facilities were controlled by two different video management systems at two separate locations. The basilica's security managers felt that converging the two systems onto a single platform and monitoring from a single command center would help them be more proactive in protecting the property.

Solution

SilliS Security Intelligence, a technology integrator and Axis gold partner, unified the disparate systems onto a robust XProtect® Corporate video management system (VMS) from Milestone Systems residing at the sanctuary's Data Control Center.

SilliS installed AXIS Optimizer, giving security managers control over Axis camera features and settings – auto-focus, privacy masking, etc. – directly from the XProtect® dashboard. To support the sanctuary online programming and livestreaming of sanctuary services, SilliS installed AXIS Streaming Assistant which allows compatible HDTV-quality Axis cameras to operate as broadcast cameras.

Result

Instead of waiting for camera images to arrive by email, security uses the Milestone dashboard to see and respond to events in real-time. Security now remotely manages camera settings, sets rules to detect and trigger notifications, and more – which greatly improves day-to-day operations. Because of the versatility of Axis cameras, the basilica has been able to use them for livestreaming church services and educational programs to parishioners and guests unable to attend in person due to the pandemic, infirmity, or other issues.



Welcoming the faithful

The Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady Aparecida in Brazil is the largest cathedral and the second largest Catholic church in the world next to the St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. Located between the major cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the sanctuary includes a hall, chapels, a museum, music education center, a shopping mall, medical clinic, support center, restaurants, and a parking lot that accommodates thousands of buses and cars a day.

To ensure parishioners and guests a safe and peaceful visit, the cathedral maintains security agents which it augments with military police during special high-attendance events like pilgrimage festivals and visits by the Pope and other high-profile dignitaries. For added support, the Basilica hired SilliS Security Intelligence to deploy nearly 400 Axis video cameras across the property to help security monitor activity and quickly respond to any issues that might arise.

Unifying video management

Initially, all the Axis cameras deployed in sacred space ran on one video management system while those deployed in commercial space ran on another. With camera counts continuing to grow, eventually managing parallel platforms became unwieldy, slowing the flow of critical information which often hampered security's response time to incidents. The sanctuary decided it was time to move to a more robust, integrated platform security could monitor and manage from a central command center.

"Moving to the Milestone XProtect® video management system allowed us to concentrate the surveillance of our entire complex all in one place," says Luísa Viera, IT Manager for Basilica of Our Lady Aparecida. "With the addition of AXIS Optimizer, our security team can manage all our Axis cameras remotely from the Milestone dashboard. They can perform tasks like auto-focusing, activating guard tours for the PTZ [pan/tilt/zoom] cameras, and even access image metadata to SmartSearch for people, objects and events of interest."

Inside the command center a video wall containing six 55-inch screens give security staff real-time access to every camera in the sanctuary. A secondary command center inside the Hotel Rainha in the commercial complex is staffed 24/7 to provide the area with additional monitoring capability.

Marcel Minotelli, director of SilliS Security Intelligence, points to the importance of matching the right camera to the needs of the project. "We've been charged with designing and implementing more than 30 monitoring points," he explains. "Because Axis cameras are fully compatible with the Milestone platform, we have a lot of options. We can choose models based on the criteria of the project, whether it be HDTV resolution, high-powered zoom, vandal protection, laser focus, wide field of view, or other features."

Reaching out through the airwaves

To reach as many of the faithful as possible, the Basilica uses Axis cameras to livestream masses and broadcast programming on its six internet TV channels. "Because of the pandemic, remote access has grown significantly," says Luísa Viera. "To make sure we give viewers the highest quality, livestreaming video and audio, we installed broadcast-quality, Axis bullet-style network cameras with 50mm lenses in places like the central altar, the chapels, the Niche of Our Lady, and the Footbridge of the Faith."





AXIS Streaming Assistant allows the sanctuary church to integrate their broadcasts with Skype, Adobe Flash Media, and other streaming services their parishioners might use when live viewing masses and accessing church TV programs over the internet. With the cameras' Zipstream feature, the cathedral is able to reduce the bandwidth needed to transmit broadcasts without sacrificing video quality.

Maintaining safety protocols

While most Axis cameras are used for routine surveillance or live broadcasting, they've also played a role in access control. Since the pandemic, authorities have restricted in-person attendance at masses to 2500. This limitation occurred from June to October 2021. Previously the limit was 1,000 people per celebration. Currently they are without this limitation, with the possibility of hosting 100% of the occupation (35,000 people) inside the Basilica. These determinations were for the interior of the Basilica, however access to the National Shrine Complex was never limited, with free entry of pedestrians and cars in the other areas.

The cameras have also been instrumental in helping security maintain safety protocols. Before visitors enter, the Basilica authorities check temperature and offer hand sanitizer. They also issue masks and remind visitors about social distancing. Upon entering the facility, staff rely on the cameras to help verify that visitors are using their masks correctly and maintaining enough distance from each other.

The security team also uses the Axis cameras to manage the flow of cars, bus caravans, trucks and even motorhomes in and out the sanctuary's parking lots. The cameras help to ensure that drivers park their vehicles in the appropriate designated area and don't block traffic lanes.

Providing a welcoming sanctuary

More than 12 million parishioners and visitors flock to Basilica of Our Lady Aparecida a year. Authorities at the Basilica take responsibility for making visitors feel welcomed and protected during their stay so that they will want to return. With such a small security staff, that task would be nearly impossible without the help of Axis cameras and the Milestone video management system.

“The convergence of Milestone and Axis has given us more agility to make decisions proactively. Now we know exactly where to act and can track events as they progress from camera to camera along an entire route. This is something that would be impossible without a single management platform.”

Luísa Viera, IT Manager for National Sanctuary of Our Lady of Aparecida.



About Axis Communications

Axis enables a smarter and safer world by creating network solutions that provide insights for improving security and new ways of doing business. As the industry leader in network video, Axis offers products and services for video surveillance and analytics, access control, intercom and audio systems. Axis has more than 3,800 dedicated employees in over 50 countries and collaborates with partners worldwide to deliver customer solutions. Axis was founded in 1984 and has its headquarters in Lund, Sweden.

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