

Santa Maria Regina Apostolorum



Santa Maria Regina Apostolorum is a 20th century Fascist-era parish and convent church in the Della Vittoria quarter north of Vatican City. The dedication is to the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of "Queen of the Apostles" (Regina apostolorum in Latin).

History

The origins of the church lie with a project by the Italian-American province of the Pallottines to found a college of higher studies in Rome, which was inaugurated in 1924 and finally completed in 1926. The architect was Carlo Lepri.

At the time, the area was being developed as a suburb and the house chapel of the Collegio Reginae Apostolorum was used as a public Mass centre. However, as the numbers attending Mass grew this became inconvenient and it was decided to build a proper church. The decision to do so was taken in 1935, the centenary of the foundation of the Pallottines by St Vincent Pallotti.

The parish was consequently founded in 1936. The church was designed by Luigi Francassini Guidi, and completed in the same year in a neo-Baroque style.

The Pallottines remain in charge. However, recently the college was closed down (this action was not publicised), and at present (2017) the parish is under an administrator pro tem. Unfortunately its future is not secure, as there are two much larger churches within a short distance -San Gioacchino in Prati and Sacro Cuore di Cristo Re.

Exterior

Rather unfortunately for the church's civic identity, it is part of a terrace of buildings and its street frontage is joined onto its neighbours on either side.

The edifice has a single nave of five bays, a transept of the same width and a three-sided apse. The apse has its own architectural identity, with a tiled roof in three sectors, but the nave and transept are topped by an attic storey and the neighbouring buildings abut on both sides.

Façade

The three-storey façade is in grey for the architectural details such as pilasters and entablatures, and cream-coloured render for the window surrounds. The window frames are in limestone.

The first storey is topped by an entablature without an architrave, and has a single entrance with a molded doorcase. There is a fairly high plinth flanking the entrance, which is approached by a flight of steps. The entablature is brought forward over the doorcase lintel, and a pair of posts inserted between the latter and the cornice. On this proud section of entablature is a triangular pediment which intrudes into the second storey. A pair of blind pilasters melding with the frieze are adjacent to the doorcase, and another pair are at the corners. The two wall panels thus created each contains a round-headed window with a molded frame, and has a border of a thin slightly raised strip inserted into all four sides.

The second storey is also topped by an entablature, but this has a full architrave and a cornice with modillions. Four blind pilasters without bases meld into the architrave, creating another three wall panels which contain large windows. The one in the centre is round-headed, but the side ones are vertically rectangular. They all have molded frames. The rectangular windows are topped by a pair of square panels with limestone relief carvings showing plants associated symbolically with Our Lady -a rose to the left, and an olive tree to the right.

The third storey is actually a free-standing screen wall masking the attic storey frontage behind -the roof of the church proper is marked by the second entablature. This wall has four stubby Doric pilasters supporting a simple cornice (no entablature), with a small projecting triangular pediment over the central pair. This has a broken cornice. Below the pediment is a dedication tablet in creamy white, reading: D[eo] O[ptimo] M[aximo], B[eatae] V[irgini] Mariae Reginae Apost[olorum], and above it is a relief coat-of-arms which intrudes into the tympanum of the pediment. A pair of double volutes in shallow relief flanks the inner two pilasters, and the outer pilasters each bear the crest of the Chigi family -six mountains and a star.

Interior

Nave

The single nave is painted in white and pastel shades of pale brown, tan and cream. A dearth of natural light makes a cool decor advantageous.

The bays are divided by gigantic blind pilasters which are narrowly tripletted along their edges and which support massive horizontal roof beams. A deep but simple entablature runs down each side wall, behind the pilasters, and the areas of wall created by the ceiling, pilasters and entablatures are treated as slightly recessed and framed blank zones.

The entrance bay is enclosed as a lobby, beneath a gallery. Over the latter, the windows in the counterfaçade have stained glass. The middle round-headed one depicts the Madonna and Child.

The second and fourth bays have side doors with triangular pediments. The third bay has a pair of side chapels which are round-headed niches into which the altars are fitted. Above the entablature in this bay is a pair of rectangular windows -the left hand one gives natural light from a light-well, but the right hand one looks into the interior of the adjacent building.

The flat ceiling in between the support beams has large coffers in the same paint scheme as the walls.

Sanctuary

The sanctuary comprises transept and apse, and is entered via three steps up.

The transept is entered through a tall triumphal arch flanked by a pair of blind pilasters themselves flanked by the rounded far corners of the nave. The arch is undecorated, except for a Baroque tablet on the nave reading *Euentes docete omnes gentes* i("Go out and teach all nations").

The crossing of the transept has a shallow saucer dome with integral pendentives, and the side arches creating the pendentives are over choir galleries fitting into the ends of the transept. The far dome arch is the triumphal arch of the apse, and this has winged putto's heads on its archivolt springers.

The apse contains the altar, the round-headed altarpiece of which depicts Pentecost -Our Lady is shown receiving the Holy Spirit with the apostles. The motto reads *Et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu Sancto* ("And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"). This altarpiece is in a frame which occupies the entire far wall of the three-sided apse above the altar, and this frame has a broken triangular pediment which intrudes into the apse conch. In the pediment sit two stucco angels venerating a fiery cross.

The side walls of the apse each have a large rectangular window fenestrated in alabaster sheets. The conch is simply decorated with a pair of ribs.

The altar is unusual, because the tabernacle is on the frontal. The latter is in white marble with a pair of venerating angels in shallow relief. The tabernacle itself is round with the Chi-rho symbol, and is surrounded with an annulus of stained glass having a rayed pattern in white, black and yellow.

Liturgy

Mass is celebrated:

Weekdays 7:45, 10:00, 18:30;

Sundays and Solemnities 9:00, 11:00, 12:15, 18:30.

Location:

Address: Via Giuseppe Ferrari 1

Coord: [41°54'48.8"N 12°27'52.4"E](#)

External links

[Roman Churches Wiki](#)

[Wikimedia Commons Photo Index](#)

[Official diocesan web-page](#)

[Italian Wikipedia page](#)

[Info.roma web-page](#)

["Viaggispirituali" web-page](#)

[Pallottine web-page](#)