

# Santa Maria delle Grazie al Trionfale



Santa Maria delle Grazie al Trionfale is a mid 20th century parish and titular church at Piazza Santa Maria delle Grazie 5, in the Trionfale quarter. It is just north-west of the Vatican, and near the Cipro metro station. The dedication is to the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of Our Lady of Graces.

## History

The edifice was designed by Tullio Rossi and Franco Formari, and built in 1941 as a replacement for the demolished Santa Maria delle Grazie a Porta Angelica, pulled down in 1939. The parish was set up in the same year.

The church was made titular in 1985, and the first cardinal priest was Silvano Piovanelli. He died in 2016, and was replaced by Joseph William Tobin in the same year.

## Exterior

### Layout and fabric

The exterior is neo-Romanesque in pinkish-grey brick, a typical work by Tullio Rossi.

The nave has seven bays, with side aisles. The central nave side walls have the bays separated by shallow blind pilasters merging into a matching architrave, these pilasters framing large recessed zones with singly-stepped edges. Each zone contains a rectangular window, above which is a proud square panel. Everything is in brick. The nave roof is in blackish composition, but it looks as if it were once tiled. It also covers the transept. The side aisles have single-pitched tiled roofs.

The single-bay transept is just slightly wider than the central nave on each side, and is flanked on each side by a square side-chapel with a flat roof. These two chapels occupy the ends of the aisles.

The far side of the church displays three windowless apses, a larger central one for the sanctuary and two smaller ones for the side chapels just mentioned. These apses are also decorated with very shallow blind pilasters and , but the central apse has a second storey above the architrave. The roofs of these apses are semi-conical, in composition. The gable above the central apse has an outline pediment formed by a thin molding.

The left hand aisle has a third side chapel towards its far end, also square but with a pitched and tiled roof having a little hip. It has a large round-headed window in its outer wall.

### Campanili

The church is unusual in having two campanili, one disused. The latter one is on top of the priests' house on the far right hand side of the church, and consists of three square brick pillars joined seamlessly at the top rather like a set of English cricket stumps. It has a little pitched, hipped and tiled cap. The bell-hanging arrangements have been removed.

It seems that this was the first campanile, and was replaced with a decent tower job when money became available. The tower campanile is attached to the near end of the left hand aisle, set back from the façade, and is a tall blank brick tower. Each side has three shallow pilasters topped by a merged architrave -the same "cricket stumps" motif as in the old campanile, but stretched. The bellchamber is above a projecting stone cornice, and has two vertical rectangular soundholes on each side. There is a tiled pyramidal cap with overhanging eaves.

### Façade

The façade is two-storey, mostly in brick with a few architectural details in stone. The first storey has a flight of stone steps along its entire width, and a low matching stone plinth. Five blind brick pilasters support a horizontal stone entablature with a projecting cornice and a dedicatory inscription on its frieze: B[eatae] V[irgini] Mariae, gratiarum matri, a[nno] D[omini] MCMXLI. Each of the five wall zones defined by the pilasters contains a large recessed panel with a stepped edge, the stepping running into the plinth but not along the ground. There are three entrances, corresponding to nave and aisles, in the middle and outer zones with the central entrance being bigger. The doorcases are in stone. Oddly, the central doorcase is simply set into the recessed panel but the two side ones have the stepping continued along their lintels to create smaller recessed panels above them.

The central entrance has a raised horizontal cornice on which is the coat-of-arms in relief of Pope Pius XII.

Above the entablature is an attic plinth, with posts corresponding to the pilasters below. This has a projecting cornice, but no entablature. At the ends are two statues of angels.

The second storey is in the same style as the first, with four pilasters, three sunken panels and a crowning entablature with the frieze in brick. There is a triangular pediment, with a strongly projecting stone cornice and gable but a blank brick tympanum. The gable is slightly higher than that of the nave roof behind. In the central panel of this storey is a single rectangular window with a stone frame, two pairs of tassels at the lower corners and its own little triangular pediment. This is the only window in the façade.

## **Interior**

### Layout and fabric

The interior is basilical in layout, with a central nave having side aisles separated by arcades, then a transept and then a sanctuary apse. The surfaces are mostly in white, unless specified below.

The arcades have seven arches on each side, with square piers. The arches have completely undecorated archivolts, but their springers are supported by impost plates themselves supported by semi-columns in green marble. On the front face of each pier is a pilaster strip in pink, which runs up to a projecting cornice at the level of the top of the side aisle roof. This cornice runs round the entire interior. The pilasters have simplified Doric capitals.

In between the pilasters below the cornice are fourteen frescoes depicting the Mysteries of the Rosary by Giuseppe Ciotti (1898-1991).

Above the cornice in the nave side walls are seven large rectangular windows on each side. The ceiling is flat, white and undecorated, with a central large panel the entire length of the nave and fourteen square side panels.

The transept has a triumphal arch, with a semi-circular archivolt in grey that almost touches the ceiling. The square engaged supporting piers have pseudo-capitals formed by the cornice just mentioned.

The sanctuary apse has a triumphal arch in the same style, enclosing a conch. The apse wall has six pilaster strips in pink supporting the cornice, and these are continued in the conch by ribs which meet at the apex. The apse has no other decoration, and its other surfaces are in greyish green.

#### Salvaged artworks

The church contains several items salvaged from its demolished predecessor. Most famous is the Byzantine icon of Our Lady, Mother of Graces which has recently been provided with its own chapel.

The richly Baroque polychrome marble Marian altar (the high altar of the demolished church) is found in the far left hand chapel.

The Sacred Heart altar in the right hand aisle chapel are also salvage, as is a painting of the Madonna and Child ascribed to Maratta.

There is also a painting by Umberto Colonna of Our Lady appearing to Pope Pius V.

#### **Access**

The church is open, according to the Diocese:  
6:45 to 12:00, 16:00 to 19:45.

#### **Liturgy**

Mass is celebrated:

Weekdays 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 18:30;

Sundays and Solemnities:

7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:15, 12:30, 17:30, 19:00.

Rosary is recited daily at 18:00.

#### **Location:**

Addr: Piazza Santa Maria delle Grazie 5 - 00136 ROMA

Coord: [41° 54' 25.9"N 12° 26' 56.7"E](#)

#### **External links**

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[Official diocesan webpage](#)

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