

San Gregorio Settimo



San Gregorio VII (San Gregorio Settimo) is a mid 20th century parish and titular church, to the south of Vatican City, and in the Aurelio district. The dedication is to Pope Gregory VII Hildebrand, the famous reforming pope of the 11th century.

History

This parish church was completed in 1959, and its decoration finished 1960-1961. It was provided for a parish erected by Pope Pius XII in 1952. The architects were Mario Paniconi and Giulio Pediconi. The parish is served by the Franciscan Friars Minor.

Exterior

The plan of the church is rectangular, with a nave and an attached external porch. The edifice has an interesting construction. The roof is held up by ten large reinforced concrete piers on each side and four at front and back, with two piers on each corner, and is structurally independent of the walls. The piers project outwards, and have been given a slight batter. The walls end before they reach the roof, and the space between them is filled with glass. The piers where they cross the glass do not have any concrete cladding, only the steel reinforcing, giving the first impression that the strip of glass window is continuous. There is another window strip a third of the way up the side walls, with a concrete string course above, but this strip

is broken by the piers. The exterior walls themselves are in red brick, decorated with horizontal stripes of red infill. Above the lower window strip each wall panel in between the piers is decorated with a thin white cross as well.

The entrance façade has the same design, except that the lower window strip is replaced by the large white concrete entrance porch, stretching across the width of the frontage. This has a flat roof and a tall fascia, and is supported by a pair of concrete pillars at the corners. The fascia has nine square panels, the central one bearing a mosaic of the risen Christ and the others decorated with an X. The gable is decorated with thin diagonal concrete struts which divide the triangular area into three triangles, then two squares and on top a square. The panels between the struts are filled with an orange cement grids which match the brickwork in colour, and in which the holes are little squares arranged as lozenges.

The roof has a steep pitch, and has a total of eighteen dormer gables, nine on each side. Along each side roofline is a line of five small gables over every other exterior wall panel. Above these is a row of four larger gables, placed above the gaps between the smaller ones. The effect is rather spectacular. The vertical faces in these gables are filled with the same sort of concrete grille as in the main entrance gable.

There is a tall free-standing tower campanile at the far right hand corner of the church. This recalls the old Romanesque campanili of the city in its design. Four thin concrete piers form the corners of the tower, which is divided into seven storeys by the insertion of concrete floors. The sides are otherwise open, and you can see a central spiral staircase twisting its way to the bellchamber. Each face of the tower has a very thin pilaster strip running up it, and the tower itself tapers to the top. It is capped by a skeleton cupola made out of metal rods in the form of a pyramid.

Interior

The roof inside is open, trussed with concrete beams and supported by the tapered concrete piers that you saw on the outside. Similarly, the walls are naked red brick laid in a square coffering pattern. The sanctuary is substantially elevated, and is approached by a flight of steps.

Flanking the entrance are two interesting high-relief panel sculptures set into the walls, featuring scenes from the career of St Francis of Assisi. To the right is The Dream of Pope Innocent III, and to the left The Approval of the Franciscan Rule by Pope Honorius III. These are by Luigi Venturini.

Hanging over the bottom of the flight of steps leading up to the altar is a bronze Calvary, showing Christ crucified with Our Lady and St John in attendance. This is by Pericle Fazzini. Either side of the stairs and on the wall behind the altar is a series of ten fresco panels by Luigi Montanarini, the central one depicting the apotheosis of the patron saint.

The church has an icon of the Madonna and Child being venerated by Pope St Gregory VII and St Francis, which has the title of Madonna del Gelsomino or "Our Lady of Jasmine" from the bush in front of her.

Access

According to the Diocese, the church is open:

6:30 to 12:30, 16:00 to 19:30.

Liturgy

Mass is celebrated, according to the parish website:

Weekdays 7:00 (not July and August), 8:00, 18:00 (19:00 in summer);

Sundays and Solemnities 8:30, 10:00, 11:30 (not July and August), 18:00 (19:00 in summer).

The Rosary is recited at 17:15 on weekdays.

Vespers is celebrated at 19:30 daily.

Location:

Address: 4 Via del Cottolengo (Via Gregorio VII)

Coord: [41°53'53.1"N 12°27'00.9"E](#)

External links

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