

Santa Maria Mediatrice



Santa Maria Mediatrice dei Francescani is a mid 20th century century convent church just off the Via Aurelia and south of the west end of Vatican City. This is in the Aurelio quarter. The dedication is to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under her title of Mediatrix of Graces.

History

The Franciscan Friars Minor had their headquarters at Santa Maria in Aracoeli for over six hundred years, before they were ejected by the Italian government in 1873. They then founded a new Generalate or headquarters at Sant'Antonio da Padova a Via Merulana, with a college attached. However, having two institutions on one site proved difficult as the college grew in size. The answer was to found a separate Generalate on a new site.

The church was begun in 1940 for this new headquarters, and finished in 1950. The architect was Giovanni Muzio, best known for the new Basilica of the Annunciation at Nazareth.

Exterior

The exterior is in brown brick with travertine limestone trim, on an octagonal plan. The entrance façade occupies one face of the domed octagonal nave. The doorway has a wide stone frame carved in geometric decoration, enclosing a transom window above the door. This is flanked by two pairs of stone Corinthian columns. Each pair supports a horizontal cornice, but the latter do not connect over the door. These short

cornices support two more pairs of similar columns; the inner two of these support an archivolt, and the outer two have two more cornices.

Above the door is a large rectangular window with a representation of Our Lady, then a relief of the emblem of the Order (two human arms in front of a cross) and finally, on top of the arch, a symbolic mountain familiar on churches and other historic mountains elsewhere in Rome. Here it represents Monte Verna, where St Francis received the stigmata.

The façade continues up as a blank wall to the roofline, with two small round-headed windows. Over the roofline you can see the lantern of the nave cupola, in the form of an octagonal aedicule with Corinthian pilasters at the corners. The ogee cap in copper has a ball finial. The dome sectors also look as if they are in copper.

Interior

The floor plan is unusual, consisting of two rooms separated by a mighty triumphal arch, composed of a double row of marble columns, under which is placed the altar: the first room, octagonal in shape, is dominated by a dome, and acts as the central nave of the church used to gather the faithful who attend religious celebrations; and the second room, a rectangular plan with coffered ceiling and stalls for the monks, acts as chorus to welcome the community of Franciscans. This plan has old roots, here executed with a modern flavor

The inside of the dome is covered with mosaics representing the *Church Militant, Suffering and Triumphant*, the work of Giorgio Quaroni, Adriano Alessandrini and Ugo Chyurlia, depicting the Virgin enthroned among saints, angels and prophets and symbols of the four evangelists.

Two side altars: in the left there is a relief of Francis Nagni depicting Mary Mediatrix, in the right altar the work of Ivan Mestrovic showing the stigmata of St. Francis.

In the choir is a great fresco by Gisberto Ceracchini of the *Apotheosis of the Franciscan Order*.

Location:

Addr: Via Cori 4/Via Santa Maria Mediatrix, 00177 Roma

Coord: [41° 53' 53.8"N 12° 26' 44.3"E](#)

External links:

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[Official diocesan web-page](#)

[GCatholic Web-page](#)

[Italian Wikipedia page](#)

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