

Resurrezione de Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo dei Polacchi



Resurrezione di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo dei Polacchi is a 19th century convent church, the second Polish national church in Rome after San Stanislao alle Botteghe Oscure. It is just north of the bottom of the Spanish Steps in the rione Campo Marzio. The dedication is to the Resurrection.

History

The Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ ([Resurrectionists](#)) was founded in 1842, when seven Polish clerics took vows in the catacombs of San Sebastiano fuori le Mura. (1)

In 1866 the congregation was instrumental in founding the Pontifical Polish College (Pontificio Collegio Polacco) as a seminary for Polish priests. This is now located at Piazza Remuria 2/A on the Aventine. (1)

A hostel for travellers called the Villino Margherita was purchased in 1885, and the congregation immediately began building a church next to it. The architect of which was Pio Piacentini. The church was Consecrated in 1889. (1)

In 1979 there was a controversial and artistically unfortunate restoration and re-ordering of the interior, which saw much of the original decorative work destroyed and replaced with bare walls. (1)

The convent has been the headquarters of the Resurrectionists since its foundation. As well as the Generalate, the complex provides accommodation for Polish seminary students and has a small community of Sisters of the Good Samaritan who actually take care of the church. (1)

Exterior

The layout is rectangular, with an external three-sided apse. The edifice is a single nave of four bays with no aisles, in red brick with the architectural details in white stone. The roof is flat, despite the façade having a pediment. The style is neo-Romanesque, with Gothic influences. (1)

The left hand side wall is party with the convent building, but the right hand one is visible and has gigantic square stone pilasters separating the bays. Each bay has two windows. (1)

Façade

The façade has two-storeys, separated by an entablature. The entrance has no porch, but the doorway is surrounded by a thin twisted string-course and has square Composite pilasters on either side. Above is a large semi-circular tympanum containing a relief of the *Resurrection*. A pair of round-headed windows flanks the entrance, and there is a dedicatory inscription on the frieze of the entablature immediately above the tympanum. (1)

A pair of pilasters without capitals frame the first storey of the façade, and are continued by another pair on the second storey, except that these have Doric capitals. They frame an identical pair of round-headed windows flanking a round window, and support an entablature containing a frieze of a miniature blind arcade carved in relief. A triangular pediment crowns the composition, within which is a tondo containing a chi-rho and alpha-omega. (1)

Campanile

There is a four-storey campanile attached to the right side, with the window in the second storey matching the paired windows in the façade. Those in the third and fourth storeys, which face three ways, have vaguely Gothic two-light tracery with the central mullions being thin twisted columns with capitals. The campanile is crowned with a stumpy shingled spire, and the roofline has a frieze of pendant Gothic arches. (1)

In the courtyard outside the church there are three items worth noting: A statue of *Nicholas Copernicus* sculpted by Oscar Sosnowski. Relics of Antiquity uncovered during the digging of the foundation for the church which are fixed in the wall. A marble bas-relief of the Risen Christ, a gift from the Chicago province in 1954. (2)

Interior:Nave

The single nave has a vaulted ceiling supported by tall, thin Corinthian grey marble semi-columns separating the bays. The right hand wall has a pair of windows high up in each bay, but the left hand one does not because the convent is here. (1)

The walls are now bare, in a pale yellow. This is the result of a destructive restoration of the interior in 1979. Beforehand, the walls had their original fresco patterning of geometric diapering and scrollwork with figurative panels showing saints. Hopefully the original rich flooring, of tiling in chamfered squares with a cross motif, survives under the modern plain floor covering. (1)

At the entrance to the church, on the left and identified by an appropriate plaque rest the remains of the founders, transferred here from the Roman Verano cemetery. Just above this is a second larger and striking plaque honouring the first Fathers. (2)

There are several pictures hanging on the side walls:

The Ascension by Henryk Siemiradzki, *The Founders of the Resurrectionists Making Their First Vows* and *The Approval of the Resurrectionist Congregation* by Franciszek Unierzynski, *Noli Me Tangere* and *St Thomas Resolves His Doubt* by Franciszek Drudowski. (1) (2)

Over the entrance is a relief sculpture of *The Risen Christ* by Pius Welonski, and the holy water fonts at the entrance are by Viktor Brodski. (2)

The side altars are dedicated to the Crucifix (to the right) and Our Lady of Good Counsel. On the right side of the nave is a memorial to Maria Przeździecka, 1890 with a medallion by Władysław Oleszczyński. On the left is a monument commemorating the foundation of the congregation, with busts of the founders, 1892. (1)

Sanctuary

Before the 1979 re-ordering, the sanctuary occupied the last bay of the nave and the apse. It was marked off by a balustrade carved with flowers, which was destroyed. Nowadays, the pro populo altar and the badly designed choir stalls occupy two bays of the nave. (1)

The apse has a high triumphal arch with a molded archivolt supported by a pair of tall, thin grey marble columns. The three-sided apse has three large round-headed windows, inserted into Gothic arches and separated by two further columns. The original fresco patterning has been allowed to remain on the stone window frames. (1)

The polychrome stone altar, which has alabaster panels, is described as "from an old Roman basilica". Above it is a small arched aedicule set into the wall, which now contains a statue of *Our Lady of Mentorella*. The marble niche-throne is a gift from Prince Ladislaus Czartoryski.

The three windows have stained glass, featuring the *Risen Christ*, *Our Lady* and *St Joseph*. This is by the firm of Mayer in Monaco. (1)

Artists and Architects:

Franciszek Drudowski (20th cent), Polish painter
Franciszek Unierzynski (20th cent), Polish painter
Henryk [Siemiradzki](#) (1843-1902), Polish painter
Oscar [Sosnowski](#) (1880-1939), Polish sculptor
Pio [Piacentini](#) (1846-1928), Italian architect
Pius Welonski (20th cent), Polish sculptor
Viktor Brodski (20th cent), Polish sculptor
Władysław [Oleszczyński](#) (1807-1866), Polish sculptor

Location:

Address: Via di San Sebastianello 11

Coord: [41° 54' 26.6" N, 12° 28' 56.4" E](#)

Links and sources:

1. http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Resurrezione_de_Nostro_Signore_Ges%C3%B9_Cristo_dei_Polacchi
2. <http://www.resurrectionist.net/English/G/chapel.cfm>