

## San Lorenzo da Brindisi (Deconsecrated)



**San Lorenzo da Brindisi a Ludovisi** is a deconsecrated early 20th century convent church in the rione Ludovisi, on the corner with Via Puglia. The dedication was to St Lawrence of Brindisi.

### History

The convent was founded by the Capuchins at the end of the 20th century, as a replacement for their former Generalate (headquarters) at Santa Maria della Concezione dei Cappuccini. This had been expropriated by the Italian government in 1873.

Although the church still exists, the old convent attached was mostly demolished in order to make way for the access road (the present Via Vittorio Veneto) to the new suburb being built on the site of the Villa Ludovisi from 1885. The friars, however, kept control of the old church and have a small convent there now.

The friars founded a house of studies called Collegio di San Lorenzo da Brindisi in 1908, which at first was located near Santi Quattro Coronati. However, the premises were inadequate so the friars decided to rebuild

the Ludovisi convent to house the college as well as their Generalate. For the two institutions they built an impressive and very expensive church. This was finished in 1910, and the main college building to the right was completed in 1911.

There was an expansion of the college premises in 1939.

However, after the Second World War the friars began to abandon the complex. In 1954 they moved the Generalate to Santa Maria Regina dei Minori, after that complex had been vacated by the Cappuccine nuns in their earlier move to Corpus Christi alla Garbatella.

Then, in 1962, the decision was taken to re-locate the college in new purpose-built premises on a green-field suburban site. So, in 1968 the college was moved to Circolvallazione Occidentale 6850, just north of the junction of that road with the Via di Magliana.

The convent was abandoned as a religious institution, and the church was deconsecrated, gutted and turned into a conference centre. This was despite protest.

## Exterior

The architect was Giovan Battista Milani, who provided a nave with side aisles in a lush and monumental neo-Lombard Romanesque style. The material is red brick, with travertine limestone for the high-quality architectural detailing. The church is high for its width, which makes for an impressive façade.

There are six bays to the nave, as can be seen from the left hand side wall. Very unusually, each bay has its own round-headed doorway in this wall, and is separated from its neighbours by a brick pilaster running up to a stone cornice along the aisle roofline. Each pilaster has a stone impost from which spring arches in shallow relief in the brickwork, one for each bay.

The main nave walls are supported by flying buttresses; these are among the best in Rome. They spring from brick pilasters topped by inverted plinths. The nave walls have round-headed windows with floating archivolt, and their rooflines have dentillated cornices.

Oddly, there does not seem to be a campanile.

### Façade

The façade is a superb piece of design. It is dominated by a huge arch over the entrance, which occupies the entire width of the nave frontage between two corner pilasters which run to the full height of the façade. The very wide archivolt has several orders of moldings in stone and brick, and unexpectedly the outer ones of these spring from a carved course of stone (rather like a pair of stretched pilaster capitals) with no corresponding molding below. The two inner brick moldings, however, spring from two pairs of thin columns in a derivative Corinthian style.

The arch encloses an arcade forming three windows, springing from four thin pillars each embellished with a pair of columns in the same style. Above this arcade is a tympanum in the curve of the main arch, and this displays a carved relief of the Blessed Sacrament surrounded by scrollwork and being venerated by peacocks.

Above this enormous arch is a large wheel window, of sixteen spokes enclosed in a carved and dished frame. Below this to right and left are two square plaques with heraldic shields in relief. Finally, there is a decorative arcade under the roofline, supported on little columns on corbels. The cornice is dentillated to match those of the side walls.

The single doorway has a gabled propylaeum enclosing an arch of the same style as that above. The tympanum of this has a relief by Galileo Chini depicting *Christ with SS Francis and Dominic*.

The aisle frontages show a pair of round-headed windows, framed by thin columns and with wide archivolts bearing shallow relief carving. The sloping rooflines above support a pair of flying buttresses, and each of these is embellished with an arcade of four arches ascending stepwise. The outer edges of the façade have a pair of pilasters ending in inverted plinths.

## Interior

There were six side chapels.

The altarpieces were mostly anonymous and depicted, anticlockwise: SS Felix of Cantalice, Charles Borromeo and Philip Neri; St Joseph (by an artist called Cremonini); St Veronica Giuliani; St Francis of Assisi; St Bonaventure (Cremonini again), and St Fidelis of Sigmaringen. The main altarpiece was by Cremonini, and the depictions to left and right of St Claire and St Elizabeth of Hungary were by Virginio Monti.

## Location:

Coordinates: [41°54'33"N 12°29'43"E](#)

Address:

Via Sicilia (east end)

## External links

[Roman Churches Wiki](#)

[Italian Wikipedia page](#)

["De Alvariis" gallery on Flickr](#)

[Info.roma web-page](#)