

San Marone



San Marone is a late 19th century convent church dedication is to St [Maro](#). This is the national church in Rome of Lebanon, and is the Rome headquarters of the Syrian Maronite Church of Antioch which is one of the Eastern Catholic Churches in communion with the Holy See. Members of this church are known as Maronites. (1)

History:

This church is the successor of an old convent attached to the (now deconsecrated) church of San Giovanni dei Maroniti which was founded in the early Middle Ages as San Giovanni della Ficozza, and was named after a local noble family. However, the date and circumstances of the foundation are unknown and the first documentary reference to it dates to 1199. Back then, it was dependent on the church of San Marcello al Corso but became parochial in the later Middle Ages. Members of the family are on record in donating money for renovations in 1224 and 1409. (1)

A college for clergy of the Maronite rite was founded in an adjacent house in 1584, and the church was granted to it. Hence, it became the national church of the Maronites in Rome. There was a restoration in 1700. The complex was damaged during the French occupation firstly in 1798, and

then plundered by French soldiers in 1808. It was re-consecrated in 1846, but the monastery was again suppressed with all others in the city by the new Italian government in 1873. This left the Maronites in Rome without a headquarters. (1)

In 1886, a project was put in place to build a new church, monastery and hospice in the newly laid-out Ludovisi district, but progress was slow. **Andrea Busiri Vici** took over as architect in 1891, and was completed in 1902. Andrea's son **Carlo Busiri Vici** collaborated in the project, and completed the attached monastery by 1914. The project was supervised by the great Maronite patriarch Elias Peter [Hoayek](#). (1)

The interior was restored in 1936. (1)

The monastery attached was converted into a hotel in the late 20th century, which may explain why the church has mistakenly appeared on a published list of deconsecrated churches. It is still very much open and active. The hotel is presently closed, "undergoing renovation". It was known as the Hotel Dinesen. The stencil paintwork of the church interior is also at present being restored. (1)

Exterior:

The church is entirely surrounded by other buildings, except for the façade. It is a small edifice on a rectangular plan. The façade is described as "neo-Baroque" (barocchetto), and has been unkindly described as looking like the entrance of a major railway station. There are two storeys, of red brick with architectural details in white stucco and the carved bits in travertine limestone. (1)

The first storey is brick on a stone plinth and is dominated by an enormous entrance archway, the side walls and barrel vault of which are curved inwards. The coffered vault rests on an entablature, which is continued across the façade on each side. Above the wooden entrance doorcase, which has a triangular pediment, is a round window below the vault. (1)

Either side of the arch is a doorway with a stone archivolt enclosing a lunette window above the lintel. These two doors are part of the hotel. Above each is another, smaller round window (oculus). Either side of the entrance arch archivolt, which has a garland, is a pair of derivative Composite pilasters flanking a narrow rectangular window. This has a balustrade with two square apertures having mullions in the form of a Maltese cross. (1)

These pilasters support an entablature which divides the storeys, and which has strigillate decoration on its frieze. Above, the lower second storey has an arcade of three arched windows with brick pilasters and identical balustrades to the windows below, and this arcade is flanked by a pair of rectangular windows with pilasters again replicating those in the first storey. (1)

The second storey pilasters support a third entablature with a dedicatory inscription on its cornice: Deo sacrum in honore Sancti Maronis, A. D. MCMXIII. The year 1914 was when the whole convent complex was finally consecrated. (1)

There is a low attic on the flat roofline, with four posts and molded lunette archivolts bearing acanthus finials at each end. (1)

Interior:

The interior is small and lacks notable artworks, but is pretty. The rectangular area is divided into three bays by transverse arches, and the walls either side of the entrance have an inward curve. (1)

The interior walls are attractively stencilled in geometric patterns incorporating rosettes, in pastel colors. The arches are striped in light and dark grey, with frescoes of saints in tondi in the spandrels of the arch in front of the sanctuary. (1)

There is a rectangular niche in the right hand wall, displaying an icon of Maronite saints including St Sharbel and some liturgical items. (1)

The sanctuary occupies the far bay, and is delineated by a heavy arched marble balustrade on each side. The small altar is against the far wall, and above it is a fresco of *St Maro* flanked by painted curtain hangings. Above this fresco is a large shallow arched window, with frescoes of cedars of Lebanon on each side. The sanctuary ceiling has the *Dove of the Holy Spirit* on a blue background with rosettes, and the *Lamb of God with the Cross* is on a similar background on the ceiling panel in front of the sanctuary arch. (1)

Mass is celebrated here in the Maronite rite at 11:00 on Sundays. The church seems to be open early in the morning, and is a peaceful place to visit. The locality is not on the way to anywhere, and tourists are absent.

Location:

Address: Via Aurora 6 (rione Ludovisi)

Coord: [41° 54' 28.6" N, 12° 29' 14.4" E](#)

Links and sources:

1. http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/San_Marone
2. http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti_dettaglio.asp?ID_schede=1019
3. <http://www.060608.it/en/cultura-e-svago/luoghi-di-culto-di-interesse-storico-artistico/chiese-cattoliche/san-marone.html>
4. <http://www.parrocchiamaronitaroma.it/>
5. http://www.vicariatusurbis.org/?page_id=188&ID=712

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTCgRr2BKHI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H15RZSQ8Bb8>