

# Chiesa della Sapienza



**Chiesa della Sapienza** is a 20th century university church in the Tiburtino district. The dedication is to Wisdom as a cardinal virtue and an attribute of Christ. The church is also known as Divina Sapienza or "Holy Wisdom", but the Diocese prefers Chiesa della Sapienza.

This place of worship is often referred to as a chapel, including by the University authorities, but the Diocese regards it as a church. The difference between a church and a chapel is that the former should have unrestricted public access at times.

## History

The ancestor of this church is Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza, at the original home of La Sapienza -Università di Roma. However when the University became a secular institution in 1870, it began its massive expansion and its small palazzo in the rione Sant'Eustachio became completely inadequate.

In response, the Fascist government built a dedicated new campus for the University, which was opened in 1935. This occupies a large gated site just west of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura. Initially, no church was provided.

In 1947, Pope Pius XII put up the funds to have a church built. The architect was Marcello Piacentini, who had already designed several buildings on the campus, and he began work in the following year. Construction continued until 1952.

Initially the church was administered by diocesan clergy, but in 1958 the Jesuits took over. They remain in charge.

## Exterior

The church has an elliptical plan. There is a shallow rectangular entrance narthex and a rectangular apse, but otherwise the entire body of the church is under the shallow saucer dome. The exterior walls are in brick with four rectangular pilasters lacking capitals in relief on each side wall, and a round window high up on each section of wall in between. The roofline cornice and entrance façade are in stone.

On the cornice is an inscription in Latin from the Book of Sirach, 1:1: Sapientia a Deo est, et cum illo fuit semper et est ante aevum. ("Wisdom is with God, is with him always and has been since the beginning of time"). Over the entrance is a statue of Our Lady of Wisdom by Arturo Dazzi, and by the entrance is a marble statue of Christ the Teacher by Romano Romanelli.

## Interior

The interior has a large fresco of Christ the Lawgiver Being Venerated by Our Lady and the Saints by Giovanni Brancaccio, also a bronze crucifix by Venanzo Crocetti.

In the crypt is a Pietà by Giovanni Prini.

## Liturgy

Mass is celebrated:

Weekdays 8:20 (with Lauds), 12:15 and 19:00.

Saturdays 8:30 (without Lauds)

Sundays 19:30

## Location:

Address: Piazzale Aldo Moro 1 (through gate, first left)

Coord: [41°54'12.8"N 12°30'45.2"E](#)

## External links

[Roman Churches Wiki](#)

[Official diocesan web-page](#)

[Italian Wikipedia page](#)

[Church's website](#)

[Info.roma web-page](#)