

Sant'Antonio Abate all'Esquilino



Sant'Antonio Abate all'Esquilino, or the **Russian Church**, is the Russian national church in Rome.

History:

The church was built in 1308 next to a 5th century church, Sant'Andrea Cata Barbara. A hospital was built next to the church in 1259, and the Antonines moved in. The church was restored/reconstructed in 1481 during the papacy of Sixtus IV.

By the end of the 16th century, the old church had collapsed into a ruin. The church was rebuilt in the 18th century, in the Baroque style. In 1877 the church was closed to worship.

In 1928 the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies and the *Russicum*, the Russian College, were built next to the church.

In 1932 Pius XI ordered work on the façade and the portal, completed by Antonio Muñoz. The church was then given to the Jesuit fathers of the *Russicum* College. It retains its dedication to St Anthony Abbot, but is generally known only as the Russian Church.

Before 1932, a ceremony known as the *Blessing of the Beasts* took place here on St Anthony's feast day, 17 January, since he is a patron of animals. This is now moved to the piazza outside Sant' Eusebio.

Exterior:

The façade of the church was reconstructed under Pius XI. Most of what you see is from the 18th century restoration, but a Romanesque doorway facing Via Carlo Alberto is from the medieval church. The doorway, dating from 1269, is the work of the Vassalletto.

Interior:

The interior, with 8th century designs, has a three nave plan divided by pilasters. The church, modified in order to perform the orthodox rite, presents a partition with three doors. In the centre is the “Royal Door”, open only in the solemn moments of the celebrations.

At the beginning of the right nave is the chapel dedicated to S.Teresa (Domenico Fontana, 1583), with 18th century stuccoes.

The church has frescoes by Giovanni Battista Lombardelli (ca. 1540-1592) illustrating the life of S. Antonio, as well as works by Nicolo Circignani, known as Pomarancio (ca. 1520-1596).

The drum of the dome was frescoed by Nicolò Cirignani (1585).

The church is arranged according to the needs of Byzantine liturgy, with a beautiful iconostasis. These alterations were done after 1932.

Liturgy:

On Saturday evenings, Solemn Vespers is sung (7 PM).

On Sundays, it is possible to attend the Divine Liturgy (Mass), prayed in the Church Slavonic language (10 AM).

Location:

Address: Via Carlo Alberto, 2a

Coord: [41° 53' 49"N 12° 30' 1.5"E](#)

Info:

Telephone: 0039 06 4486981

Open: Saturday 18:30-20:00 Sunday 09:30-11:00

Links:

http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Sant%27Antonio_Abate_all%27Esquilino

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<http://www.060608.it/en/cultura-e-svago/luoghi-di-culto-di-interesse-storico-artistico/cattolici/sant-antonio-abate-all-esquilino.html>