

Santi Maria e Gallicano



San Gallicano is the 18th century Baroque church or chapel of the hospital of San Gallicano, which occupies the west side of Via di San Gallicano in Trastevere. The façade faces down the Vicolo di Mazzamorelli to the Viale di Trastevere. However, the entrance to the complex is at Via delle Fratte di Trastevere 52 (turn left at façade, then right).

According to his legend, St Gallicanus was a Roman consul and army commander in the reign of the emperor Constantine. He converted to Christianity in 330, retired to Ostia and built a hospital there as a charitable activity. This is why he is remembered here. The full dedication of the church is Santi Maria e Gallicano.

The church is no longer listed by the Diocese, and online comments indicate that no liturgical events occur there. Presumably it has been deconsecrated.

History

The original hospital was founded in 1724 by Pope Benedict XIII, who commissioned Filippo Raguzzini as architect. The latter is more famous for his layout in the piazza outside Sant'Ignazio. The church was consecrated in 1726.

The institution was intended for poor people suffering from skin diseases such as ringworm and scabies, and also from those more serious diseases such as typhus which cause skin lesions or rashes. However, those suffering from syphilis were specifically excluded (they went to San Giacomo in Augusta).

The history of the church is completely bound up with that of the hospital, which survives as an institution (although not on this site). It was initially administered by Benedictine monks, apparently.

After 1870, the hospital was secularized. It became famous for its pioneering work in dermatology, and especially in treating venereal disease.

There was a restoration of the church in 1925.

The hospital survived for a surprisingly long time in its 18th century accommodation, but the buildings were grossly unsuitable for a modern hospital and so the institution finally moved to purpose-built premises at Via Eleno Chianesi south of EUR in 2000.

The old premises is now the headquarters of the Istituto Nazionale per la Promozione della Salute delle Popolazioni Migranti e per il Contrasto delle Malattie della Povertà. This is a national medical institution dedicated to the special health problems of migrants, especially poor and rootless ones. It was established in 2007, and finally set up here in 2012. It operates a walk-in clinic for such people, many of whom are homeless in the centre of Rome.

It is not immediately obvious when the church was closed down, but presumably this was when the last residential patients were moved out at the end of the 20th century.

Exterior

The 18th century hospital is a long range running down the street, with the church in the middle and separate wards for men and women on each side. Despite being attached structurally to these wards, architecturally the church has its own identity. It occupies a square site, and has a pyramidal tiled roof which is higher than the roofs of the wards on either side. There is a bellcote or campanile over the right hand side of the far external wall, but this is invisible from the street.

Façade

Raguzzini deliberately located the façade opposite the Vicolo di Mazzamorelli, so as to give a view of it at the end of that street. It is of brick, rendered in a cream color.

The rather complex design plays with the convention of having two storeys, in that the side elevations are separated by an entablature while the central elevation is a unified design from top to bottom. There are five vertical zones in the composition; the two outermost ones are flat, the next two in have a quarter-circle cove (inward curve) to the projecting central zone, which is again flat.

The façade has a double plinth, the first foundational one of stone and the second, high one being panelled with blank tablets with incurved corners.

The two outermost zones of the "first storey" are each bounded by a pair of Composite pilasters standing on the second plinth, the outer ones tripletted and the inner ones doubletted along the outer edge. The doublet and triplet strips do not, however, have capital fragments as is usual in Baroque design. These pilasters support an entablature with a strongly projecting cornice, which is posted above the pilasters. In between the pilasters are two round-headed tablets with raised frames, and above these are two bosses of leaves. In between the pilaster capitals are bands of decoration deriving from the triglyph expanded.

The inner side zone of the "first storey", the ones with the curve, are fitted in next to the inner pilasters of the outer zones and end in a pair of tripletted pilasters like the ones on the outer corners. The entablature on each side end in a pair of prominent posts over these.

The central zone has a large entrance archway, with a recessed doorway. The Doric capitals of the impost are joined as a string course over the molded doorcase, creating a tympanum containing a stucco relief. This depicts a heart with the motto Amor Dei ("Love of God"), within palm fronds and with a bouquet of flowers above. The lintel of the doorcase has the date 1726.

Above the entrance arch is a large recessed window with a slightly curved lintel, which interrupts the entablature dividing the "storeys". In the top of the window embrasure is another stucco relief, featuring flowers and palm fronds. Above the window in turn is a third boss of leaves, and then the flat and corniced roofline. Above this is an ornate pseudo-pediment assembled out of curlicues, bearing a metal cross finial.

The "second storey" above the entablature on either side of the central zone has two curved zones matching the ones below, each with a pair of pilasters in a vaguely Doric style. These support the roofline cornice. These zones are flanked by a pair of curlicued sweeps. The roofline has four flaming urn finials flanking the pseudo-pediment.

Interior

The small interior is on a basically pentagonal plan, with the entrance in one angle, the high altar in the opposite short side and two side altars in the other two angles. There is a cupola vault.

The altarpieces of the three altars are all by Marco Benefial. The main altarpiece depicts The Madonna and Child with St Gallicano and Hospital Patients, and the two side altarpieces depict St Philip Neri and Our Lady of the Snows.

Access

There is no public access. It is not even clear who has responsibility for the building, so as to be able to give permission for a private visit. When the hospital moved, it took its telephone number with it. The church has only been accessible through the hospital for some time, with the main entrance kept permanently locked up.

Location:

Address: Via di San Gallicano 26

Coord: [41°53'19.1"N 12°28'22.2"E](#)

External links

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[Italian Wikipedia page](#)

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