

Santa Maria dell'Orto



Santa Maria dell'Orto is a 16th century guild church with a fabulous Baroque interior in Trastevere. The dedication is to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under a special title of "Our Lady of the Garden". The whole edifice is dedicated to the Madonna and several scholars maintain that the whole church is full of symbols related to the Holy Virgin. This is the Japanese national church in Rome where you can find Mass in Japanese. [1] [10]

Among the important and ancient churches of Trastevere, one of the most unusual and interesting is certainly **Santa Maria dell'Orto**. [4]

Nowadays Santa Maria dell'Orto is not easy to find because it is surrounded by modern edifices such as a 19th-century school, a Bersaglieri barrack and an ugly 20th-century apartment building in the background. [10]

History

The foundation of the church began as a result of popular devotion to an icon of Our Lady. At the end of the 15th century, the part of Trastevere towards the port of Ripa Grande was almost uninhabited and almost entirely planted with vegetable gardens. The story is that a small-holder in Trastevere with an incurable infirmity, having seen an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in a very old wall inside a garden, vowed that if he healed from the infirmity he would hold a perpetual lamp lit in front of the aforementioned figure. The person recovered and kept his promise, and as a result he put up an icon next to the gate into his land (orto means "garden", but also "smallholding" or a small farm). This was venerated by the locals and miracles were reported, which led to the construction of a small devotional chapel around the icon. The date of this is uncertain, but 1488

has been claimed as the foundation year (the first documentary reference to the chapel is 1494). [1] [2] [3]

In 1492 Pope Alexander VI gave a charter to the new Fraternità di Santa Maria dell'Orto, which was a guild inviting membership from professional people working on smallholdings. As well as market gardeners, the membership included craftsmen and pork butchers; the latter could raise their own pigs for slaughter, and so counted as smallholders. A small hospital of the Confraternity, already functioning and set up at the same time as the association was formed. [1] [2]

The brotherhood wished to build a full-sized church, and initiated the project in 1489. The original architect, who proposed a plan based on a Greek cross with a central dome, is unknown. Work stopped in 1513, presumably because money ran out, but resumed a decade later and the church was finally consecrated (although not finished) in 1524. In this period the architect may have been **Sebastiano da Como**, who was paid for his services despite his lack of architectural experience. [1] [3]

Then there was another hiatus, and finally the finishing period of building activity took place between 1542 and 1563. The current basilica shape was designed by **Guidetto Guidetti**, one of Michelangelo's most brilliant pupils, and he recognized that the previous work was sub-standard for the purpose of providing a dome. So, he converted the plan to that of a Latin cross and inserted cross-vaulting instead of a dome. Final internal decorations were completed in 1579. [1] [2] [3]

The façade was begun by **Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola**, who received geometric assistance from **Giovanni Giovannoni**. It was completed by **Francesco Capriani da Volterra** in 1577. In 1765 there was a restoration of the façade by **Nicola Giansimoni** who installed a clock under the terminal tympanum, and the 11 curious travertine obelisks along the roofline. [1] [3] [4] [10] [c]

The Archconfraternity

The building project was not realized by the confraternity alone, but was a joint effort with several guilds or Università of professional people in the retail and craft trades. Women were members as well, unusually. In 1588 the brotherhood was given the status of an Archconfraternity by Sixtus V. This ran a hospital for its members, offered dowries for poor unmarried women (who had to be "honest" as well), and accumulated substantial property in the 17th century which was the time of its greatest prosperity. [1] [2]

Over time, thirteen universities (corporations) of arts and crafts joined the Archconfraternity, competing with each other to embellish and adorn the church, lavishing large sums into it to ensure the work of distinguished artists: in fact, decorations of fruit and vegetables appear everywhere signs of the Universities of Ortolani and Fruttaroli, mills and small scales in memory of the Molinari and Pizzicaroli. [2]

Japanese Catholics

Since 2008 the church is the reference church of the Catholic Japanese community in Rome. The association of the church with the Catholics of Japan is an old one. Before the Japanese ruling establishment decided on a policy of destroying Christianity in the country (the first Japanese martyrs were in 1597), a delegation of four Japanese Catholics came to Rome in 1585. This was the so-called Tenshō Embassy, which consisted of four young noblemen. As part of the reception, they were treated to a trip down the Tiber to the open sea. A storm put the party in serious danger, and they invoked Our Lady of the Garden because they had visited this church before embarking. The storm ceased, and this gave rise to the tradition of celebrating Mass with the Japanese expatriate community on 8 June, the anniversary of the event. One of the delegation was Julian Nakaura (Nakaura Julian), who was tortured to death as a Jesuit priest in 1633 and later beatified. An icon of him is in the church. [1] [8] [10]

Baroque makeover

The prosperity of the archconfraternity allowed it to commission Baroque decorative elements in fresco and stucco work which make up the luscious sumptuousness of the interior today. The first

stage of an ambitious makeover project for the interior were drawn up in 1699 by **Luigi Barattone**, and completed by 1706. This involved the apse, transept and side aisles. Then **Gabriele Valvassori**, who was the architect of the church between 1734 and 1758, continued work on the nave which was completed in 1730. **Simone Giorgini**, **Leonardo Retti** and **Michel Maille** were responsible for the stucco figures, and **Nicolangelo Aldini** with **Giuseppe Bilancioni** were responsible for the garlands of fruit and flowers which are such a prominent feature of the church's interior. **Valvassori** was succeeded as chief architect by **Nicola Giansimoni**. [1] [2] [3] [c]

The frescoes were added by **Giuseppe** and **Andrea Orazi**, **Giacinto Calandrucci**, **Andrea Procaccini** and **Giovanni Battista Parodi**. **Valvassori** was also responsible for the floor, laid in 1747 in a unified geometric pattern. [1]

There was a restoration of the church in 1825 by **Leopoldo Buzzi**, sponsored by the guild of millers (Università dei Molinari). [1] [3]

The Roman Republic of 1849 proved a disaster, since the hospital was closed and never re-opened. In 1852 the Papal government took over the empty hospital building for a tobacco factory, and used the original garden for an extension (tobacco was a government monopoly). [1] [2]

Most of Archconfraternity's remaining property was sequestered by the Italian government after the fall of the Papal government in 1870, but it managed to avoid suppression and remained in possession of the church. [1] [4]

It had to repair serious damage in 1891, caused by an explosion of 225 metric tons of gunpowder stored at a fort at Pozzo Pantaleo on the Via Portuense. [1]

The 20th century saw a decline in the fortunes of the edifice, engendered by the Archconfraternity's loss of income. The surrounding area became dominated by industry and secular institutions, and in the 1950's the Archconfraternity closed the church except for occasional Masses. Serious damage was done to the fabric by nearby building operations, and the church was almost lost. [1] [2]

The Archconfraternity, owner of the building but stripped of its substantial assets following the government confiscations that took place after 1870, to solve these serious and urgent problems, turned to the Ministry for Cultural Heritage which, with its own funding and through the Superintendency for Environmental and Architectural Heritage of Rome, starting from 1984 implemented a series of consolidation and restoration interventions that averted the most serious risks for the monument and also partially restored its original shining image to the church. The building is now mostly in good condition, and has been regularly open since 2008. [1] [2]

It is justified pastorally by being used by the expatriate Japanese Catholic community, although it is not yet listed as a national church and no regular liturgical events in Japanese are advertised. [1]

Exterior

The church has a plan of a Latin cross, and is a straightforward edifice of a nave of three bays with side aisles, followed by a transept and then a sanctuary of a single bay with a semi-circular apse. The ends of the transepts also have apses containing chapels, and there are three rectangular external chapels off each side aisle. Hence, there is a total of eight side chapels. [1]

The fabric is in brick. The nave and transept are under the same pitched and tiled roof. The short presbyterium has a roof at a slightly lower level. [1]

There is no campanile, but on the end of the left transept is an interesting bellcote designed like a miniature ancient Roman triumphal arch. There are three arches for the bells, two small ones and the central one larger, and four engaged derivative Corinthian columns on each side. The composition is crowned by a triangular pediment. [1]

Façade (1)

Unfortunately, the building of a large school opposite in the 19th century means that it is difficult to get a good view of the wide two-story façade in its entirety. [1]

The building material is red brick, with architectural details in travertine. The composition is dominated by the entrance propylaeum, which has a pair of large stone Ionic columns in the round, supporting an entablature and a segmental pediment which intrudes into the upper story. The propylaeum is brought forward from the plane of the façade, and within it is a recessed arch containing the actual doorway. The latter has plain moulding, and the former a pair of brick Doric pilasters fitting against the columns. The tympanum of the arch is empty (except for the standard coat of arms of the diocese), and the stone capitals of the pilasters are extended across the façade as a string course. The entablature of the propylaeum is also extended in the same way to provide the entablature of the first story, and its frieze bears a dedicatory inscription. The cornice is denticulate. [1]

An inscription runs along the entablature: "AEDICULAM DIRUPT(A)M VIRG(INIS) DEIPAR(AE) HORTENSISQUE IN HANC AEDEM MUTARUNT SOCII DEDICAR(UNT) HOSPITIO AUXER(UNT) AD EGENOS ALLEN(DOS) SUO SUMPTU ET RELIG(IONE)" that is, "The ruined chapel of the Virgin Mother of God and the Garden the brothers transformed into this church, dedicated it, added a hospice to feed the poor at their own expense and with devotion". [9]

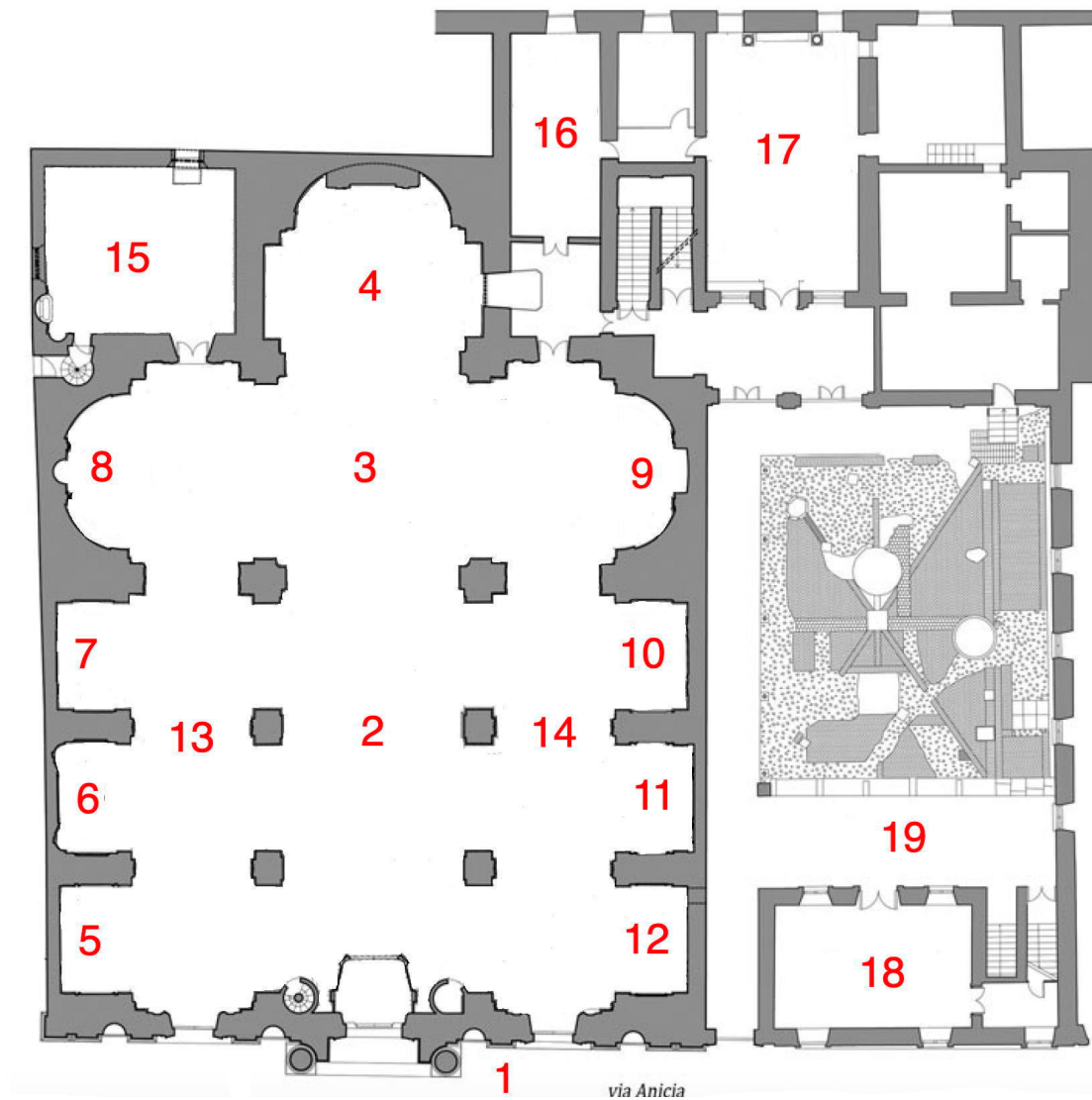
To either side of the propylaeum are four Ionic brick pilasters, irregularly spaced. Between the first two on either side are the aisle doors, smaller with triangular pediments. Above these is a pair of lunette windows, and four blank round-headed niches complete the ensemble. [1]

The second story has four Corinthian brick pilasters supporting an architrave and cornice only, with an undersized triangular pediment over the inner two only. There is a large round-headed window in a rectangular frame, and above this is a clock face. These features are 18th century, and replace an oculus. A pair of blank round-headed niches are inserted between the pilasters. [1] [3]

If you pay attention to the clock you'll notice that it shows 6 hours instead of 12 and just one pointer. It's not working today, but 6 hour clocks were commonplace in Italy from the 15th to the 17th centuries. The so-called Italian hour has its origin in medieval times and in the monastic tradition of dividing the day according to prayer times. The pointer reached 6 at sunset and it was reset every two weeks in conformity with the sunset changes throughout the year. During the 15th century sunset was an important concept. In fact, with the fading of daylight farmers and other people stopped working and the gates in the ancient cities' walls were closed. [10]

On the roofline are several "obelisk" finials (actually elongated pyramids), probably added in 1762. There are three on each side over the first story and five shorter ones on top of the second, making a total of eleven. [1]

Plan



Interior

The church interior, with three naves divided by pillars, is incredibly lush, and has beautiful frescoes and stucco work as well as polychrome marble revetting. Today, the church still has decorations from the 16th and 17th centuries. However, the lavish Baroque interior dates from the 18th century. [1] [8]

The interior has a social historical witness, as it demonstrates the existence of a confident and wealthy middle-class in Rome at the time of its creation. There is a refreshing lack of the bombastic funerary memorials, heraldic totems and coats-of-arms that the Roman nobility liberally displayed in other churches. [1]

Nave (2)

The short nave has three bays with arcades. The arches are separated by gigantic Ionic pilasters with swagged capitals, which support an entablature which runs around the interior. The barrel-vaulted ceiling springs from this. There are three large rectangular windows in each nave side wall, the tops set into triangular lunettes in the vault. [1]

The arcade archivolts spring from Doric impostes, have garlands on their intradoses and more vegetation in their spandrels. Over the central arch on each side are plaques proclaiming that "The Guild of Small Shopkeepers Did This" (*Università dei Pizzicaroli fece fare*). [1]

The ornate ceiling has a central fresco panel showing the *Assumption* by **Calandrucci** of 1707. The impressive stucco work was executed by **Gabriele Valvassori**, and includes more plaques mentioning the shopkeepers. [1]

Over the entrance is the organ gallery, the instrument itself dating from the middle of the 19th century. The case is spectacular, being in the form of an ancient triumphal arch with four Ionic semi-columns separating three archways (the central one larger). On top are two stucco angels playing trumpets. The solid gallery balustrade has a central panel with an epigraph proclaiming the restoration by the millers in 1825, and to the sides are two interesting landscapes of the Tiber waterfront dating from that restoration. Appropriately, they feature floating flour-mills driven by the river current. [1] [2]

The entrance doorcase in walnut was installed in 1784 by the millers. [1] [2]

The floor is worth examining. The entire church was paved in one design by **Valvassori**, and the high-quality white and grey marble geometric floor that resulted displays epigraphs from several of the guilds associated with the church. One of these, in the central nave, proclaims the guild of small shopkeepers yet again, with the year 1756. This is when the floor was finished; it was actually begun in 1747, and different guilds paid for various sections of it over the nine years that it took to raise the money. You can see the various years of completion of these sections in the other guild epigraphs elsewhere. [1] [2]

The triumphal arch of the transept has an exceptionally lush festoon on its archivolt. Above, there are two putti holding a ribbon that reads *Deipara Triumphanti* "to the triumphant Mother of God". They are accompanied by two allegorical figures alluding to attributes of Our Lady. The one on the right holds the Rod of Aaron and has the sun-disc on her breast, while the one on the left holds a mandolin (a psalterium), and is accompanied by a lamb. The assemblage is by **Leonardo Retti**. [1]

Above these figures is a large tablet proclaiming not only "the shopkeepers did this", but also "and they paid for it" -just to make sure you got the message after all. [1]

Crossing (3)

The crossing of the transept has a shallow little saucer cupola on pendentives. The frescoes here were joint efforts in 1706 by **Giuseppe** and **Andrea Orazi**. The main cupola fresco shows *The Immaculate Conception* surrounded by stucco cherubs frolicking in the vegetation, and the pendentives show *The Virtues of Our Lady*. The design of the stucco work is by **Barattone**, and executed by **Leonardo Retti** and **Simone Giorgini**. [1]

In the floor below is the best of the guild floor epigraphs. This one belonged to the guild of fruit-sellers (*Università dei Fruttaroli*) 1747, and is a spectacular piece of pietra dura work involving yellow Siena marble and a wreath containing the various fruits then on offer. There is quite a variety. The putti on the intrados of the sanctuary triumphal arch hold a ribbon also mentioning this guild, so presumably they paid for the decoration of the crossing. [1]

Sanctuary (4)

The sanctuary has a single bay, with an apse and an arched recess in each side wall. The altar aedicule is against the far wall, and above it is a window in the conch with mostly clear glass but containing 18th century stained glass showing the Marian monogram made up of orange tree foliage and fruit. On either side of the window, behind the stucco angels, are frescoes of the *Annunciation*, with the *Virgin Mary* on the left, and *Archangel Gabriel* on the right. [1]

The apse wall is divided into two registers by a cornice. The fresco scheme which completely covers it and the conch above is a joint effort by **Federico Zuccari** and **Taddeo Zuccari**, who were brothers. It dates from 1556. The wall panels show scenes from the *Life of Our Lady*, with her *Marriage to*

Joseph and the Nativity to the left, and the *Visitation* and *Escape to Egypt* to the right. The latter is unusual, for it features two angels bending tree branches down for the Christ-Child to play with. This is not part of the iconographic tradition for this event. [1]

The side wall niches contain paintings by **Giovanni Baglione**, who also did those in the vault. To the left, the main painting shows *The Annunciation to St Joseph*, and the lunette above shows *The Angel Warns St Joseph to Flee to Egypt*. To the right, the main work is *The Birth of Our Lady*, and above is *The Prophecy to SS Joachim and Anna* (the latter were her parents, who were warned of the significance of her birth beforehand). [1]

The vault has three panels, showing *The Death of Our Lady*, *The Assumption* and *The Coronation of Our Lady in Heaven*. [1]

High altar

The altar was designed by **Giacomo della Porta**. The aedicule has a pair of Corinthian columns in multi-colored pavonazzetto marble, supporting an entablature and a broken and separated segmental pediment. In the gap are curlicues flanking a putto's head. The altar as a whole was restored by **Valvassori**, and finished in 1755. The frieze of the entablature ascribes the altar to the fruit-sellers.

[1] [5]

On the pediment halves used to be stucco angels by **Giorgini** and **Retti**. [1]

The altarpiece is the original 15th century fresco icon, in an elliptical tondo surrounded by a gilded glory with putti. It depicts the **Madonna and Child**, and has kept the jeweled crowns attached in 1657 (most venerated icons of Our Lady in the city crowned in such a way have had their crowns removed in restorations). The extraordinary magnetism of the image is mainly due to the incredible color of the eyes, painted with shades of blue, green and gray. In the very first years of 1500 it appears that the image underwent a first restoration by **Antoniazio Romano** or his pupil but many others followed, the last in 1978. [1] [2]

Because there is now an "altar pro populo" for Mass facing the congregation, the high altar is the home of an enormous *Macchina delle Quarantore*. On the evening of Holy Thursday the monumental Forty Hours Machine is set up, a 19th-century structure (but based on a 17th-century design, with floral motifs) of carved and gilded wood on which 213 candles are placed which illuminate the entire apse. It is in memory of the forty hours (*quaranta ore*) that passed, according to an ancient tradition, between Christ's crucifixion and his resurrection. It is probably the last of its kind still to be set up in Italy! [1] [4]

The side aisles and chapels are described in an clockwise order, beginning to the left of the entrance. [1]

Left hand aisle (13)

The left hand aisle vault has three tondi, frescoed by **Giovanni Battista Parodi**. They are, bottom to top, *The Glory of St Sebastian*, *The Glory of St John the Baptist* and *The Glory of St Charles Borromeo*. The vault in the left transept has *The Glory of St Francis* by **Mario Garzi**.

The counterfaçade here has a fresco of *The Adoration of the Shepherds* by **Giuseppe** and **Andrea Orazi**.

The carved marble holy water stoup, or possibly baptismal font, here dates from the end of the 15th century, and has a representation of the *Madonna and Child* on the bowl. It is thought to have come from the original devotional chapel which this church replaced. [a]

At the front of the aisle is the door to the sacristy. In the oval above the door is *Meeting between Gioacchino and Anna*, by **Andrea Procaccini** (1704). The stucco angel holding the oval is by **Leonardo Retti**. [a]

Sacristy (15)

The door at the end of the left aisle leads to the sacristy. The large room was built around 1560, when the pillar to the left of the apse was demolished. The architecture is typically 18th-century, starting with the impressive wooden cabinets, donated in part by the University of the Molinari Masters and in part by that of the Pollaroli. On the top of this last wardrobe, there is a superb turkey that makes the wheel with a wingspan of about 150 cm., a valuable and unique work, also from the 18th century, carved from a single wooden block. Some guides incorrectly report that the turkey was made to celebrate the arrival of the first turkey from America (first half of the 16th century). The fountain in the corner was donated by the University of Pizzicaroli and bears the indication of the jubilee year 1700, which suggests that it is the work of **Barattone**, at that time the architect of S. Maria dell'Orto. The vault, decorated with various monochromatic decorative elements, has in the center the *Immaculate Conception* - much remodeled - attributed to an anonymous artist inspired by Baglione. [2]

Chapel of St Sebastian (5)

The first chapel on the left is dedicated to St Sebastian. The altar aedicule has two Corinthian columns of porphyry, topped with stucco angels on either side of the window. The paintings are by **Baglione**, with *St Sebastian healed by Angels* in the altarpiece, *St Anthony of Padua* on the right wall and *St Bonaventure* on the left wall. These were executed in 1624. [1] [a]

The sponsors were the Guild of Greengrocers (Università dei Hortolani). [a]

Chapel of St John the Baptist (6)

The second chapel on the left is dedicated to St John the Baptist.

The altarpiece depicts *The Baptism of Christ*, and is by **Corrado Giaquinto** (1750). The side wall paintings are by **Giuseppe Ranucci** 1750, and shows *St John Preaching* to the right, and the *Beheaded of St John* to the left. [1] [5]

The sponsors were the Guild of the Shopkeepers (Università dei Pizzicaroli). [1]

Chapel of Sts Ambrose, Charles and Bernard (7)

The third chapel on the left is dedicated to Sts Ambrose, Charles Borromeo and Bernard of Siena. According to the inscription on the left wall the chapel was restored and dedicated in 1641. This chapel was also restored by **Leopoldo Buzzi** in 1825. The altarpiece by **Baglione** depicts the *Three Saints with the Madonna and Child*. He also painted *St Ambrose restraining a maddened horse* on the right wall, and *St Charles visiting plague sufferers* on the left. These three works were executed in 1641. *God the Father* is depicted in the vault. [1] [3] [a]

The sponsors were the University of Shoemakers and Cobblers (Università dei Ciabattini). [1] [a]

Chapel of St Francis of Assisi (8)

The left hand end of the transept is a chapel dedicated to St Francis of Assisi. The altarpiece is a 17th century statue of him, and the frescoes showing scenes from his life are by **Nicolò Martinelli (Da Pesaro)**. They are: [1] [a]

<i>The Renunciation of the goods</i>	(Top left)
<i>The Crib in Greccio</i>	(Bottom left)
<i>The Dream of Innocent III</i>	(Top right)
<i>The Approval of the Rule</i>	(Bottom right)

The vault showing *The Glory of St Francis* is by Luigi **Garzi**, with help from his son **Mario**. The far wall tondo depicts *Sts Joachim and Anne*, and is by **Andrea Procaccini** with more angels by **Retti**. [1] [6]

The inscription on the left wall documents redecorating and rededication thr chapel from St.

Sebastian to St. Francis in 1545.

The sponsors were the millers (Università dei Molinari). [1]

Right hand aisle (14)

The right hand aisle vault has three tondi, frescoed by **Giuseppe** and **Andrea Orazi** again 1708. They are, bottom to top, *The Glory of Our Lady*, *The Glory of St Catherine* and *The Glory of St Bartholomew*. [1]

The counterfaçade here has a depiction of *The Dream of Joseph* by **Andrea Orazi**, 1706. The confessional dates to 1755, and has a water-mill on it as a reminder of the guild of millers (Università dei Molinari) that donated it. A matching confessional is in the same place in the other aisle. [1] [2]

The door on the right of the nave leads to the Hall of Clothing. In the oval above the door is *Descent of the Holy Spirit* by **Andrea Procaccini** (1704). The stucco angels holding the oval is by **Leonardo Retti**. [a]

This door opens onto a room, frescoed with fake tombstones in memory of the benefactors, which precedes the clothing room of the archconfraternity, within which they had their own altars. From here you enter the oratory, built in 1563 and richly decorated in 1702-1706 with stuccos and frescoes in the manner of Giacinto Calandrucci, partly attributed to Giovanni Odazzi. [7] [9]

Aula del Vestiario (16)

This is a room for members of the Confraternity to change for special ceremonies. The walnut furniture was made by the cabinetmakers **Eugenio** and **Giacomo Bacci**, members of the Confraternity, between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The one hundred and twelve cabinets, destined to keep the personal objects of the confreres, confirm how numerous members of the Sodality were once upon a time. The ceiling is covered with squares with polychrome inscriptions, ranging from the mid-16th century to around the 17th century, which recall bequests and donations for the celebration of the Holy Masses of Suffrage. [2]

Chapel of the Crucifix (9)

The right hand end of the transept is the Chapel of the Crucifixion, with an altarpiece crucifix from the 17th century. The *Scenes from the Passion* depicted in the apse are by **Trométta**, (1595): [1] [a]

<i>Flagellation</i>	(Top left)
<i>The Climb to Calvary</i>	(Bottom left)
<i>Pietà</i>	(Top right)
<i>Deposition</i>	(Bottom right)

The vault fresco here is of the *Resurrection*, by **Calandrucci** 1703 who also did the angels holding the *Instruments of the Passion* on the arch intrados and in the conch. [1]

The sponsors were the guild of chicken merchants (Università dei Pollaroli).

A curious part of the decoration is said to be a beautifully carved turkey. It was placed here in the 18th century by the Guild of Chicken-sellers, to commemorate the arrival of the first turkey from America. The wooden bird is hidden in the sacristy rooms, and can only be seen with a booked visit by appointment. [1] [11]

Chapel of Sts James, Bartholomew and Victoria (10)

The dedication of the third chapel is given as Sts James, Bartholomew and Victoria. The altarpiece is a *Madonna and Child with Saints* by **Giovanni Baglione** of 1630. [1]

On the altar itself is an icon of *Bl Julian Nakaura*. The icon features Nakaura as a young man, although he was well into his sixties when he was executed. This is probably because Nakaura was

only seventeen years old when he visited the Eternal City as a member of the Tenshō embassy. In the background we see the facade of the Santa Maria dell'Orto and the river Tiber. [8]

Baglione also executed *The Martyrdom of St Andrew* to the left wall, and *The Martyrdom of a Deacon* (it is not clear which saint this is) on the right wall. The vault is 19th century, and presumably depicts *St Victoria* with angels because the female saint in the central tondo is holding the palm of martyrdom. [1]

The inscription to the left of the altar, dated 1630, documents the dedication of the chapel.

The sponsors were the guild of the shoemaker (Università dei Scarpinelli). [a]

Chapel of St Catherine of Alexandria (11)

The second chapel on the right is dedicated to St Catherine of Alexandria, and the altarpiece depicting *Mystical Wedding of Saint Catherine* is by **Filippo Zucchetti** (1711). The side wall works were painted by an unknown artist, depicting *St Peter* and *St Paul*. The vault showing angels with symbols of martyrdom is by Tommaso Cardani, 1711. The vault fresco has some engaging putti. The frescoes were restored in 1970-71. [1] [3] [7] [a]

The sponsors were the guild of pasta-makers and traders (Università dei Vermicellai). [a]

Chapel of the Annunciation (12)

The first chapel on the right is dedicated to the Annunciation to Our Lady, and has the *Annunciation* of 1561 by **Federico Zuccari** as its altarpiece. The fresco was restored in 1998. [7] [a]

The chapel was restored in 1825 by **Leopoldo Buzzi**. The two works on the side walls are by **Virginio Monti**, depicting *St Joseph* on the left (1878) and the *Archangel Gabriel* on the right (1875). They are the result of this artist's first public commission. Unfortunately, the fresco work in the vault has been destroyed by rain getting in. [1] [3]

The inscription on the right wall is in memory of Rosato Speculino who died in 1543. He was in the service of Clement VII Medici and Paul III Farnese. His son Anselmo financed the restoration of the chapel. [2]

The inscription on the left wall documents a restoration in 1881, and lists the sponsors. The inscription to the right of the altar documents a restoration of the altarpiece in 1998.

The sponsors were the University of Merchants and Brokers of Ripa and Pipetta (Università dei Sensali). [1] [2] [a]

Access

The church is a little tricky to find; the easiest way is to get the number 8 tram to Piazza Mastai, exit that piazza by the north-east corner (Via della Luce), then take the first right twice.

As at July 2014, the church's website illustrates a general problem with trying to find out when Rome's churches are open. The Italian and English versions have different opening times!

English:

The church is open (EXCEPT July and August): Weekdays 9:30 to 12:30, 15:30 to 18:30, Sundays 10:00 to 12:00. (Note that there is no afternoon opening advertised on the English version of the church's website.)

The owner of the church is the Arciconfraternita di Santa Maria dell'Orto (Brotherhood of St. Mary of the Garden), which is responsible for all aspects of its administration. For further information and elucidation you can try e-mailing: info@santamariadellorto.it

Liturgy

Mass is celebrated on Sundays at 11:00.

This is the last church in Rome to have a Macchina delle Quarantore on Holy Thursday, which is an enormous 213-candle candelabrum lit before the altar.

The feast-day of Our Lady of the Garden is the third Sunday in October. For the celebration the church is decked out with fruit and vegetables, and apples are blessed and distributed at the end of Mass to those attending the ceremony, because the icon was originally located in an orchard.

[10] [12]

Location:

Coord: [41°53'13"N 12°28'30"E](#)

Address:

10, Via Anicia - 00153 Rome

Phone:

00390658301874

E-mail:

santamariadellorto@virgilio.it

Artists and Architects:

Andrea Antonio Orazi (1670–c.1749), Italian painter

Andrea [Procaccini](#) (1671-1734), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Antoniazio [Romano](#) (1430?-1512?), Italian Early Renaissance painter (also see [here](#))

Corrado [Giaquinto](#) (1703-1765), Italian painter of the Rococo period (also see [here](#))

Eugenio Bacci (20th century), Italian cabinetmaker

Federico [Zuccari](#) (1541-1609), Italian Mannerist painter and architect

Filippo Zucchetti (1648-1712), Italian painter and draughtsman

Francesco [Capriani](#) da Volterra (1535-1594), Italian architect

Gabriele [Valvassori](#) (1683-1761), Italian architect of the late-Baroque period

Giacinto [Calandrucci](#) (1646-1707), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Giacomo (Jacopo) [Barozzi da Vignola](#) (1507-1573), one of the great Italian architects of 16th century Mannerism

Giacomo [della Porta](#) (c.1533-1602), Italian sculptor and architect (also see [here](#))

Giovanni [Baglione](#) [aka *il Sordo del Barozzo*] (1566-1643), Italian Late Mannerist and Early Baroque painter

Giacomo Bacci (20th century), Italian cabinetmaker

Giovanni Battista [Parodi](#) (1674-1730), Italian painter

Giuseppe Bilancioni (18th cent.), Italian stucco artist

Giuseppe Orazi (18th cent.), Italian painter

Giuseppe Ranucci (18th cent.), Italian painter

Guidetto [Guidetti](#) (d. 1564), Italian architect

Leonardo [Retti](#) (d. 1714), Italian sculptor

Leopoldo Buzzi (19th cent.), Italian architect

Luigi Barattone (18th cent.), Italian architect

Luigi [Garzi](#) (1638-1721), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Mario Garzi (17th cent), Italian painter, son of Luigi

Michel [Maille](#) [aka *Michele Maglia*] (1643-1703), French sculptor

Niccolò [Martinelli](#) da Pesaro [aka *il Trometta*] (1535-1611), Italian painter

Nicola [Giansimoni](#) (1727-1800), Italian architect

Nicolangelo Aldini (18th cent.), Italian stucco artist

Sebastiano da Como (16th cent.), Italian architect

Simone [Giorgini](#) (active 1677-1712), Italian sculptor

Taddeo [Zuccari](#) (or Zuccaro) (1529-1566), Italian painter of the Roman Mannerist School

Tommaso Cardani (18th cent.), Italian painter

Virginio [Monti](#) (1852-1942), Italian painter

Sources and Links

1. [Roman Churches Wiki](#)
 2. [Archconfraternity web site](#)
 3. [Info.Roma web site](#)
 4. [L'Asimo d'Oro web site](#)
 5. [Roma Insueta blog](#)
 6. [French Wikipedia page for Mario Garzi](#)
 7. [MiaRoma blog](#)
 8. [Corvinus blog](#)
 9. [Romano Impero blog](#)
 10. [Your Personal Guide to Trastevere blog](#)
 11. [Finestre sull'Arte web site](#)
 12. [Roomassa blog](#)
- a. Info from church
- b. Funghi, Michele; IL COMPLESSO ARCHITETTONICO: LE TRE ARTI MAGGIORI IN SANTA MARIA DELL'ORTO; 2018 ; Pp. 125-244
- c. Dizionario storico biografico del Lazio: personaggi e famiglie nel Lazio (esclusa Roma) dall'antichità al XX secolo , coordinamento e cura di S. Franchi e O. Sartori, Roma, IBIMUS, 2009, vol. 2, p. 929

Other links

[Church web site](#)
[Archconfraternity Facebook page](#)
[English Wikipedia page](#)
[Italian Wikipedia page](#)
[RomaSegreta web page](#)
[YouTube](#)