

Santi Antonio e Annibale Maria



Santi Antonio e Annibale Maria is a mid 20th century parish and titular church in the Tuscolano district, on the Via Tuscolana just east of the Re di Roma metro station. The joint dedication is to St Anthony of Padua and St Hannibal-Mary di Francia (this is the only church in Rome dedicated to the latter saint).

History

This complex was part of the establishment in Rome of a new religious family founded by St Hannibal-Mary di Francia at the end of the 19th century, the "*Rogate*". This has the dual charism of prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and care for destitute people of any race or belief, especially orphans.

The saint was a nobleman of Messina in Sicily, who became a diocesan priest and cathedral canon in 1878. He was shocked by the gross material and cultural poverty of deracinated former peasantry migrating to the city, and in 1883 founded the first of the "Antonian Orphanages" under the patronage of St Anthony of Padua. In 1887 he founded the "Daughters of Divine Zeal" (*Figlie del Divin Zelo* -FDZ) to help with the work, and in 1897 the male congregation of the "Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus" (RCI) as well as secular institutes for clerics and laypeople.

The Rogationists established themselves in Rome in 1945, at the church of Santa Caterina della Rota, with the intention of founding an orphanage for boys. However, the site was too cramped. The Orfanotrofio Antoniano Maschile was thus established on the present Via Rogazionisti in 1947. The Rogationists then went on to build the church and convent complex for themselves in 1948.

Meanwhile an orphanage complex for girls had been founded in 1924 at the present Sant'Antonio a Circonvallazione Appia by the FDZ as the female branch of the Rogare religious family.

The parish was set up in 1956, and entrusted to the Rogationists. It and the church were originally dedicated to St Anthony of Padua alone, the actual consecration only taking place in 1965.

The church fell into serious disrepair alarmingly quickly. The restoration works were extensive enough for the building to need re-consecration, which took place in 2009 after a complete re-fit of the sanctuary by the architect Osvaldo Valeri.

Meanwhile, in 2008 the dedication was officially changed by decree of the Cardinal Vicar of the diocese to Santi Antonio e Annibale Maria in order to give the congregation's founding saint a church dedicated to him in Rome.

Exterior

The church was designed by Raffaele Bocconi, and is his only one in Rome. It was completed in 1948 after a year's work, in a developed neo-Romanesque style which info.roma calls *razionalista*.

The plan is basilical, being rectangular with no apse. There is a central nave with very narrow side aisles, and a transept in which is the sanctuary. The exterior roof of the central nave and transept is flat, and butts onto the very tall convent building attached to the far end of the church.

Façade

Surrounding buildings mean that only the façade and campanile have a street presence. The façade is in white stone, laid in vertical rectangular slabs with the courses separated by narrow horizontal strips. There are three entrances, the two aisle ones being of normal size with a rectangular recess over each. These have been recently provided with two mosaics of the patron saints by Ivan Rupnik.

The central door is enormous, and the stonework around it is grey with the narrow horizontal courses in white passing through it. Above the lintel is a tympanum in the shape of a pentagon with vertical sides, and the doorframe encloses this with a triangular point on top. It contains a bronze relief of St Anthony preaching.

Above the entrance is a row of five rectangular windows with bronze grilles having a triangular pattern. These windows are separated by stone mullions, and above these is a corresponding row of pentagonal windows having the same shape as the tympanum and separated from the main windows by a string course. The aisle zones of the façade are prolonged upwards so as to reach the level of the tops of the rectangular windows, whereupon they slope inwards to join the main nave zone of the façade. Before they reach this, they drop down vertically to leave a point resembling the one above the tympanum. The façade has a false gable, as the roof is almost flat behind it.

Campanile

The detached campanile is to the right of the façade, and the parish hall's frontage is wedged into the gap in a rather awkward and architecturally undignified way.

The campanile is the tallest in Rome, at 47 metres. After a stone plinth, it has nine identical storeys each consisting of a stone string course on which are walls in pink brick with a window at the left edge of the side corresponding to the church façade. The stairs are behind this vertical row of windows. At the top

there is a triple set of sound holes on each side in stone, in the same style as the windows in the façade. The roof is gabled, and has a little stone finial on a cross plan.

Statue

In the little park of the piazza is a statue in bronze of St Hannibal in a realistic style, shown seated and welcoming children. It was inaugurated in 2006.

Interior

The nave has six bays, with four side chapels off the third and fifth bays. That of Our Lady is to the left of the fifth bay, and that St Anthony is to the right opposite. The latter has a large 18th century painting of his having a vision of the Christ-child, and the former an interesting modern triptych fresco.

The nave and aisles are separated by square piers clad in black stone, and these are matched by pilasters in the outer side walls of the very narrow aisles. Above each pier is a concrete pseudo-capital in the shape of a V, formed of two concrete slabs meeting above the pier and with their jutting portions chamfered. This element is in a light grey, as are the other structural elements of the interior (otherwise, the décor is white with some pale yellow). The V is continued as a pair of large but thin vertical rectangular concrete pier-slabs which support the roof, and which are continued over the shallowly pitched ceiling as double beams.

Above the aisles are galleries, fronted by a rectangular frontal in each bay which is panelled in varnished vertical planking and which has a backwards slope to the top edge. These frontals are above the Vs of the piers.

On the square piers are Stations of the Cross in bronze. The aisles have horizontal rectangular windows, one in each bay (apart from the chapels, which have windows in their side walls) with fenestration in coloured triangular panes.

Sanctuary

The sanctuary is of the same width as the nave and has the same design. It is of one bay, deeper than a nave bay, with galleries on both sides. To the left is the baptistery with the font and a painting of The Baptism of Christ, and to the right are the choir stalls.

Structurally, the sanctuary and nave are separated by a sort of triumphal arch, created by having four vertical concrete slabs on each side instead of two, continued as beams across the ceiling.

The interior is dominated by the large mosaic on the wall behind the altar, which has two registers. The top one depicts Christ in glory with saints, and the bottom one has the two patrons of the church. This is entitled You Give Them Something to Eat (Mt 14:16), with St Anthony giving material bread to poor people and St Hannibal-Mary providing spiritual bread in the form of the Eucharist.

Behind the free-standing altar is a large baldacchino for the tabernacle. It is a tripod in bronze, the two front legs having bronze panels with Eucharistic themes and the back leg bearing a crucifix over the actual tabernacle, which is accompanied by bronze flying angels. The three vertical legs support three marble beams in a triangle, which bear an epigraph Rogate ergo Dominum messis, ut mittat operarios in messem suam ("Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest" -the charism statement of the Rogationists). The corners of the triangle bear a bronze spire in the form of an inverted three-petalled lily flower.

The sanctuary furnishings provided in the 2009 restoration are polychrome marble work of very high quality. There is the high altar itself, with a matching ambo and president's chair, as well as a new font. The altar and ambo are decorated with olive tree motifs in patinated bronze.

Access

The church is open:

Weekdays (except July and August) 6:45 to 12:00, and 16:30 to 20:00.

Sundays, Solemnities and daily in July and August: 7:00 to 12:00, and 17:00 to 20:00.

No bus route passes the church, and the easiest way to get here is to walk from the Re di Roma metro station along the Via Vercelli.

Liturgy

Mass is celebrated:

Weekdays 7:30, 9:00 (not July and August) and 19:00;

Sundays and Solemnities 7:30, 9:00 (not August), 10:30, 12:00, 19:00.

St Hannibal-Mary is commemorated here with a Solemnity on 1 June.

Location:

Address: Piazza Asti 10

Coord: [41°52'52.6"N 12°31'13.1"E](#)

External links

[Roman Churches Wiki](#)

[Official diocesan web-page](#)

[Italian Wikipedia page](#)

[Parish website](#)

[Info.roma web-page](#)

[Gallery on Rogationist website](#)

[Youtube video of exterior](#)