

Santissimo Nome di Maria a Via Latina



SS Nome di Maria a Via Latina is a late 20th century parish and titular church in the Appio Latino quarter, just to the east of the Parco della Caffarella. The dedication is to the Holy Name of Mary.

History

The parish has its origins in a vice-curacy of the earlier parish of San Giovanni Battista de Rossi, which was established in 1956 and entrusted to the Marianists. The fully-fledged parish was set up in 1963, but it then had to wait seventeen years for a permanent church. This was built in 1980, and consecrated in the following year. The church was made titular in 1985.

Exterior

The unusual and intriguing modernist design is by Aldo Ortolani, this is his only church in Rome. The plan is based on a square with the major axis on the diagonal, and the corners of the square at the entrance and behind the altar truncated to form an irregular hexagon. The fabric is in reinforced concrete throughout.

The edifice begins with twenty monumental concrete slabs erected on the sides of the square, five on each side and all of them aligned with the major axis from entrance to altar. These slabs decrease in height from the major axis outwards, and the inner pair at front and back are much further apart than the spacing between the others. The pouring of the concrete for them was done in batches, and the seams as well as the shuttering marks are left visible.

The next element in the edifice is the insertion of U-shaped concrete troughs between every set of four slabs, except in between the inner four. These troughs parallel the major axis, and are attached so that the front and back ends of each are in line with the vertical edges of the supporting slab nearest the major axis, but the outer side edge is aligned with the tops of the slabs at that side.

Then follows the insertion of narrow screen walls under the troughs. These are on an L-shaped plan, with rounded corners. The long arm of each L is attached to the outer side of each supporting slab, about halfway along. The short arm curves outwards if the wall is in the entrance frontage, but inwards if it is in the altar frontage. There are horizontal gaps between the walls and the troughs above (which are not supported by them), and between the walls and the adjacent slabs further out.

The church is attached to the priests' accommodation and offices by a wide connecting wing leading off the far left hand side. These ancillary structures are of no architectural interest.

As mentioned, the corners of the square forming the plan of the church are occupied by the entrance, sanctuary and two side chapels. The chapels are two concrete semi-cylinders with flat roofs.

In between the four inner structural slabs, the central zone of the church on the major axis is covered by a flat concrete roof which is the highest part of the edifice. This has a pair of square skylights over the altar, side by side, and a horizontal window strip just under it at either end, over the entrance and sanctuary.

The corner of the altar end is occupied by a curved screen wall, which starts vertical below the window strip and sweeps down and outwards until it ends at a horizontal edge facing outwards, over stained glass windows enclosing the semi-cylindrical sanctuary wall which is free-standing.

The entrance frontage has a similar curved blank façade below the window strip, with its bottom outward-facing edge bearing a dedicatory inscription and forming a floating canopy over the entrance. The doors of the latter are carved and varnished vertical wooden planking.

Campanile

There is a tall campanile, formed simply of two narrow concrete slabs in the form of an L. The bells are hung in the angle. There is a metal cross on the top.

Interior

Like the exterior, the interior is entirely in exposed grey concrete with the shuttering marks visible. This might sound grim, but the unified single space is redeemed by the quality of the abstract stained glass in the horizontal and vertical window strips, the colours of which are dominated by azure blue. The glass is by Costantino Ruggeri.

The floor is in red tile, contrasting with the blue windows, but the sanctuary area is paved in travertine limestone and is raised on two steps.

Behind the altar is a free-standing semi-cylindrical apse wall in smooth limestone, surrounded by vertical and horizontal window strips which are mostly magenta (instead of blue). Above this is the main sanctuary wall, which has an upward and outward sweep of raw concrete on which is a figure of Christ crucified without a cross.

Side chapels

The two chapels are much more intimate spaces, and here the glass is also blue. The left hand one is the baptistery, and the right hand one is dedicated to Our Lady of the Pillar (a Spanish devotion) and contains a statue of her.

Each chapel has a free-standing semi-cylinder in concrete, surrounded by window strips to the sides and above. Above the top window strip is a floating semi-circular roof, only supported by reinforcing rods. Above this in turn is another horizontal window strip, so the roof gives the impression of being suspended in mid-air. The floor is a circular platform.

Liturgy

According to the Diocese, Mass is celebrated:

Weekdays 9:30 (not Saturdays), 19:00;

Sundays and Solemnities 8:30, 10:30, 12:00 (not summer), 19:00.

Location:

Address: Via Centuripe 18/22

Coord: [41°52'16.1"N 12°30'41.2"E](#)

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