

## Natività di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo degli Agonizzanti



**Natività di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo degli Agonizzanti** (Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Strugglers ) is a former confraternity church which overlooks the Piazza Pasquino in the Rione Parione. (1)

### History:

The church had its remote origin in the foundation in 1616 of the Confraternita della Natività di Gesù Cristo at the nearby church of Sant'Agostino. This pious society for laypeople was dedicated to obtaining suffrages for the souls in Purgatory, and to the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament. It also took on the work of assisting those dying and those about to be executed for capital crimes, hence the nickname Agonizzanti as a reference to those about to die. (1)

The confraternity spent the rest of the century moving from church to church, until it finally obtained permission to build their own from Pope Innocent XII (1691-1700). The work was carried out in 1692. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the church was also used by the Università dei Pellicciari which was the guild of furriers. (1)

There was a major restoration in 1862, when the façade was rebuilt in Baroque style. (1)

The church has been used for worship by the expatriate Congolese (Kinshasha) in Rome since 1994. (1)

### **Exterior:**

The façade is of a single storey, inserted into the larger edifice of which the church is part. It has four Composite pilasters, raised on a pair of high plinths either side of the door. These pilasters support an entablature crowned with a triangular pediment decorated with modillions and with a blank tympanum, and on the frieze of the entablature is the inscription:

**Deo Iesu Infanti Sacrum**  
("Holy Place to God the Infant Jesus").

There is a single entrance with a bronze door and a molded doorcase. Over the lintel is another inscription **Gloria in Excelsis Deo**, and there is a dedicatory inscription on a marble tablet above this in turn, which has a frame decorated with curlicues. It commemorates the 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration: **Archisodalitii Animis morientium in extremo agone iuvandis auspice Pio IX P[ontifice] M[aximo] instauratum et ornatum anno Chr[isti] MDCCCLXII.** (1)

There is a pair of round-headed niches in between the pilasters either side of the door, and these have conchs decorated with scallop work. Above these is a pair of oculi (porthole windows) on the same level as the marble epigraph. (1)

### **Interior:**

The plan is a simple rectangle, with a shallow rectangular apse. (1)

The small interior has a barrel-vaulted ceiling springing from ribbed Corinthian pilasters, two pairs of which support the triumphal arch. There are two side altars. (1)

The main altarpiece is by Giovanni Paolo Melchiorri. (a)

The side altar to the right has *St Michael the Archangel* by Mario, son of Luigi Garzi, who died young. (1) (2) (a)

The altar on the left has *St Anthony of Padua* by Michelangelo Cerruti. (1)

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration, Cesare Caroselli did fresco work. (1)

. In this church is preserved a relic of the swaddling clothes of the Infant Saviour. (a)

**Location:**

74 Piazza di Pasquino, Rome

Coord: [41°53'52"N 12°28'19"E](#)

**Info:**

Church closed for worship

**Links:**

1. [http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Nativit%C3%A0\\_di\\_Nostro\\_Signore\\_Ges%C3%B9\\_Cristo\\_degli\\_Agonizzanti](http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Nativit%C3%A0_di_Nostro_Signore_Ges%C3%B9_Cristo_degli_Agonizzanti)
  2. [http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti\\_dettaglio.asp?ID\\_schede=1239](http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti_dettaglio.asp?ID_schede=1239)
  3. <http://www.060608.it/en/cultura-e-svago/luoghi-di-culto-di-interesse-storico-artistico/chiese-cattoliche/chiesa-della-nativita-di-gesu.html>
- a. Donovan, Jeremiah; ROME ANCIENT AND MODERN AND ITS ENVIRONS; 1842