

## Santa Maria della Concezione in Campo Marzio



**Santa Maria della Concezione in Campo Marzio** (St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Campo Marzio) is a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary in her Immaculate Conception, and is at Piazza Campo Marzio 45. This is the Syrian national church, and the liturgy is celebrated in the Syrian-Antiochene rite.

### History

The exact date of the first church here is uncertain. Tradition claims that it was founded some time after 750 by Byzantine-rite nuns of the convent of St Anastasia in Constantinople, who had fled from the East to avoid the iconoclast persecutions. Pope Zacharias (741-752) is said to have built a convent for them, probably on the Vicolo Valdina to the north where the original conventual church of San Gregorio Nazianzeno still stands. They had brought his relics with them from Constantinople, and the convent was originally dedicated to Our Lady and St Gregory Nazianzen. The oldest document referring to the monastery is a map of the 6 October 937 of *Regestum Sublacense*. At some point before this date the convent was transferred to the Benedictines.

In the late 11th century the nuns rebuilt their convent on a grander scale with a large cloister next to St Gregory's church. At some stage they also built a second church at the south-west angle of this cloister, dedicated to Our Lady. This church was enlarged by Giacomo della Porta in 1564. Domenico Gregorini

made some improvements in 1768. Then from 1676 to 1686 the church and convent were restored and again expanded by Giovanni Antonio de Rossi. Meanwhile, in 1580 the relics of St Gregory Nazianzen were transferred to St Peter's and the old church was downgraded to a chapel. Our Lady's church became the conventual church after the transfer, and it and the convent were dedicated to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

During the construction of an extension in 1777 the large ancient column was discovered. In 1856 the column was placed in Piazza di to serve as a base of the statue of Our Lady Immaculate, a result of the dogma proclaimed by Pius IX in 1854.

During the French occupation the nuns were expelled, the church desecrated and the complex used as military headquarters. The sisters returned in 1816, but were again expelled in 1873 by the Italian government. The complex became the central state archives and the church was deconsecrated for a period, but in the 1960's the site was purchased by the Camera dei Deputati for office accommodation. (This is the second old monastery that it now occupies, as well as Santissima Trinità della Missione.) The church was reopened for the use of expatriate Syrians in 1920, and is now officially known as *Santa Maria in Campo Marzio*.

## Exterior

The church is built on a Greek cross plan, with a saucer dome on an octagonal drum having a tall lantern decorated with volutes. There is a rectangular window in every other side of the drum, and vertical slit windows in the lantern. There is an attached apse with a semi-dome.

Unusually for a Roman church, and owing to its belonging to an enclosed nunnery, there is no street frontage. To enter, you go through a doorway in what looks like a domestic building, and emerge into a small courtyard. The frontage is ahead, with an internal vaulted porch entered by three large archways separated by a pair of granite Ionic columns and springing from Ionic pilasters on either side. Above the porch is a small range of ancillary accommodation, which hides the actual frontage of the church behind.

The street presence of the church is created by the apse, which faces down the Via della Maddalena and which has a vertical elliptical window put in by the architect as a deliberate eye-catcher.

## Interior

Its interior, which is spacious and lofty, is in form of a Greek cross, but had been deploiled of its decorations by the French, who converted it into a lottery office.

To the left on entering is a painting of the *Birth of the Bl. Virgin*; and to the right a *Pieta*.

Over the lateral altar to the left is *St. Benedict, contemplating his Sister Scholastica*, as she wings her flight to heaven, with the *birth of St. Benedict* to the right, and *our Lord appearing to him*, to the left.

Over the opposite altar is the *Baptism of our Lord*, with the *Birth of the Baptist* to the left, and his Decollation, to the right, by Pasquale Marini.

Over the next altar to the right is *St. Gregory Nazianzen*, by Luigi Garzi.

Over the opposite altar is a *Crucifix*.

Over the great altar is the *Madonna della Concezione*, and the *Assumption*, on the ceiling above, is by Placido Costanzi. The painting of the *Blessed Virgin* over the high altar, the *Madonna Advocata*, is from the 12th or 13th century.

### Special notes

Mass is celebrated according to the Syrian-Antiochene rite, but the church is in full communion with the Vatican.

### Artists and Architects:

Carlo [Maderno](#) (1556-1629), Swiss-Italian architect  
 Domenico [Gregorini](#) (1692-1777), Italian architect  
 Francesco [de Sanctis](#) (1679-1731), Italian architect of the late Baroque  
 Francesco [Peparelli](#) (d. 1641), Italian architect  
 Giacomo [della Porta](#) (1540-1602), Italian architect and sculptor  
 Giovanni Antonio [de Rossi](#) (1616-1695), Italian architect of the Baroque period  
 Luigi [Garzi](#) (1638-1721), Italian painter of the Baroque period  
 Pasquale Marini (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian painter  
 Placido [Costanzi](#) (1702-1759), Italian painter of the late-Baroque period.  
 Sebastiano [Conca](#) (c. 1680-1764), Italian painter  
 Tommaso [Mattei](#) (1680-1718), Italian architect

### Location:

Addr: 45 Piazza Campo Marzio, 00186 Roma

Location: [41°54'5"N 12°28'35"E](#)

### Info:

**Telephone:** 0039 06 6794973

The church is not open for visits

Mass schedule: Holidays: 10:30 Weekdays: 08:00

**Links:**

[http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Santa\\_Maria\\_della\\_Concezione\\_in\\_Campo\\_Marzio](http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Santa_Maria_della_Concezione_in_Campo_Marzio)

<http://www.romeartlover.it/Vasi141.htm>

[http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa\\_di\\_Santa\\_Maria\\_della\\_Concezione\\_in\\_Campo\\_Marzio](http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa_di_Santa_Maria_della_Concezione_in_Campo_Marzio)

[http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti\\_dettaglio.asp?ID\\_schede=200](http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti_dettaglio.asp?ID_schede=200)

[http://wai.camera.it/altresezionism/8180/8186/9267/9273/album\\_nuovo.asp](http://wai.camera.it/altresezionism/8180/8186/9267/9273/album_nuovo.asp)

<http://rometour.org/church-chiesa-di-smaria-campo-marzio-santa-maria-campo-marzio-rome.html>

[http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti\\_dettaglio.asp%3FID\\_schede%3D2044](http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti_dettaglio.asp%3FID_schede%3D2044)

<http://www.monasticmatrix.org/monasticon/s-maria-campo-marzio>

[http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://www.vicariatusurbis.org/%3Fpage\\_id%3D188%26ID%3D888&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dsanta%2Bmaria%2Bin%2Bcampo%2Bmarzio%26start%3D30%26sa%3DN%26biw%3D1279%26bih%3D1141](http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://www.vicariatusurbis.org/%3Fpage_id%3D188%26ID%3D888&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dsanta%2Bmaria%2Bin%2Bcampo%2Bmarzio%26start%3D30%26sa%3DN%26biw%3D1279%26bih%3D1141)

<http://www.060608.it/en/cultura-e-svago/luoghi-di-culto-di-interesse-storico-artistico/chiese-cattoliche/santa-maria-in-campo-marzio.html>

**Refs:**

Donovan, Jeremiah; ROME ANCIENT AND MODERN AND ITS ENVIRONS; 1842; Vol.II, pg 191