

# Sant'Antonio dei Portoghesi in Campo Marzio



**Sant'Antonio dei Portoghesi** is the 17th century national church of Portugal, which is also titular. It is located at Via dei Portoghesi 2, in the rione Campo Marzio. The dedication is to [St Anthony of Padua](#). The official title of the church, according to the Diocese, is **Sant'Antonio in Campo Marzio**.

## History

The first church here was built 1440-1447 by Cardinal Antonio Martin de Chavez, bishop of Porto, annexed to the hospice for Portuguese pilgrims. The hospice was founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by Guiomar da Lisbona, a Portuguese expatriate lady at Rome, under Pope [Urban V](#). The church was apparently built first, and was then dedicated to Our Lady and SS Vincent and Anthony of Egypt.

The original foundation was placed under the protection of the Portuguese ambassador to the Holy See. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was decided that the premises were too cramped, and so the institution obtained several neighboring properties and set out to rebuild from 1624. The present church is a result of this, and was finished in 1638 by Martino Longhi the Younger. Significantly, the new church was re-dedicated to St Anthony of Padua, who was originally Portuguese. In 1640 a large coat of arms of the new royal family of Portugal was added to the façade, and from 1657 Carlo Rainaldi and Cristoforo Schor did further work. Rainaldi was responsible for the dome, and Schor for the apse and main altar.

With the Napoleonic occupation of Rome, the church and hospice were closed in 1799 and auctioned off. The property was restored to the Portuguese government in 1814, and the church was restored and reopened in 1842.

There was another campaign of restoration finishing in 1873, when stained glass windows were inserted and the dome frescoes painted. The architect was Francesco Vespignani.

The Portuguese government has maintained the institution since 1842, even after the Portuguese revolution in 1910 which overthrew the monarchy and which was bitterly anti-clerical. As a result of this, the pilgrimage hospice was converted into a secular college which is now called the *Istituto Portoghese di Sant'Antonio in Roma* or IPSAR. This runs the church.

Several popes, including [Clement XI](#) and [Clement XIV](#), have visited the church, mainly for diplomatic reasons. The relations between Portugal and the Holy See were tense in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and successive popes tried to create a better atmosphere.

## Exterior

The church is completely surrounded by other buildings, with only the façade being visible from the street.

The plan is based on a Latin cross inserted into a rectangle. The nave is of three bays with structural aisles, the latter being converted into self-contained chapels by blocking walls. Then comes a transept with a central dome, and finally a single-bay presbyterium with a segmental apse.

The dome is not easy to spot in views of the city. It is not hemispherical, but flattened into a hemi-ellipsoid and is of lead with eight broad ribs converging on a tall lantern on the plan of a chamfered square. There are four large round-headed windows in the larger sides of the lantern, an ogee-curved cupola ending in a ball finial and (unusually for Rome) a railed walkway around the base. The drum of the dome is an octagon with curved sides, each side alternating with a buttress and an elliptical window.

The Baroque façade (1) (1636-1638) is considered to be by **Martino Longhi the Younger**, although there seems to be some doubt as to the extent of his involvement. Cristoforo Schor modified it slightly in 1695.

It has two storeys, with the central vertical zone occupied by the main entrance slightly protruding. The first storey has bunched Doric pilasters in a rather severe style occupying the outer corners and the corners either side of this main entrance. They support an entablature with a blank frieze, and a strongly protruding cornice decorated with fronded modillions underneath.

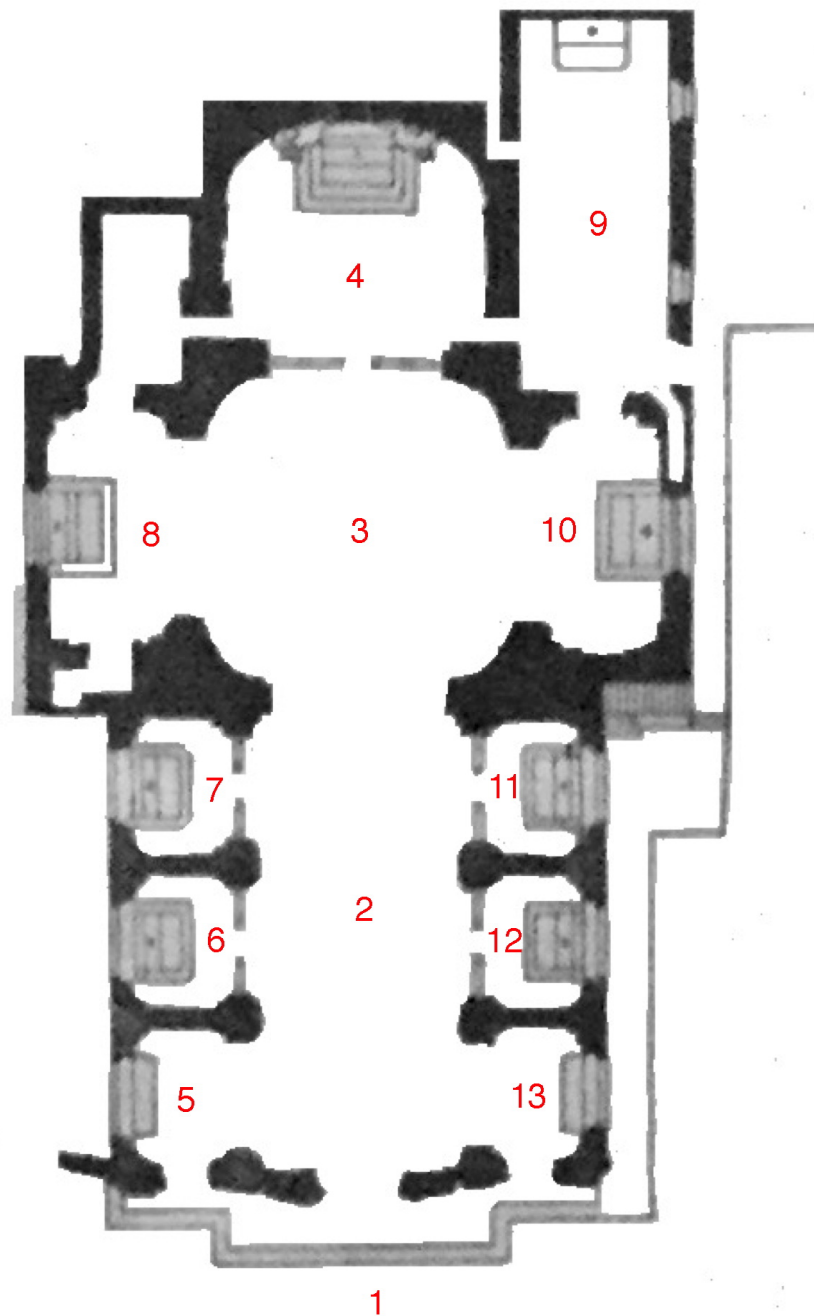
There are three doorways, with the central one being much larger than the other two and having a raised triangular pediment (tympanon in Italian) with a winged putto's head in its tympanum. Below this, the strongly molded doorcase is decorated with a scallop shell, dangling flower swags, knotted cloth drapery, fronds and curlicues. Don't miss the charming little figure of a pilgrim just above the door, and below the scallop shell. The side entrances have raised segmental pediments with similar putto's heads and flower swags.

The façade is protected by a set of wrought iron railings, which are worth a glance.

The second storey has bunched pilasters in the Composite style at its corners which support an entablature with a strongly projecting cornice (but no modillions), and a pair of pediments. A triangular pediment is inserted into the two halves of a divided and separated segmental pediment, and these halves have a pair of large angels sitting on them. The storey is bounded by a pair of curlicues that mutate, charmingly, into a pair of Tritons at their tops. Above these curlicues is a pair of blank screen walls, which do not work at all well in the design.

There is a large central window, containing stained glass depicting *St Anthony with the Holy Child* by Antonio Moroni (1825-86), who also did the other stained glass in the church. Above this is the coat-of-arms of the Royal House of Braganza, executed in florid high relief with a prominent crown. This has five smaller shields in the form of a cross, and these contains thirty silver coins which were Judas's reward.

## Plan



## Interior

Carlo Rainaldi was responsible for most of the interior, although there has been much embellishment since his time. Opinions on it are divided. The stucco decorations are by Giuliano Corsini and Andrea Bevilacqua. Some alterations were made by Francesco Vespignani in the mid 19th century restoration.

The nave (2) has arcade pillars with Ionic pilasters attached, revetted in red and white Sicilian jasper and supporting a barrel-vaulted ceiling. The stucco decoration on the barrel vault by Pompeo Gentile is fantastically elaborate, gold on white with vine tendrils running riot. It frames a central fresco depicting *The Apparition of the Crucifixion to King Alfonso I Henriques of Portugal* by Salvatore Nobili. He was the first king of Portugal, and in 1139 at the Battle of Ourique smashed a superior Muslim army and established the independence of Portugal. In the process, he had a vision of Christ and His cross and, in thanksgiving, designed the royal shield which is over the church door.

The dome (3) was completed by Rainaldi in 1657. It is lit by four elliptical windows in the drum. The interior is decorated with more lush gilded stucco in the form of a Greek cross, with the ribs meeting at a wreath around the lantern oculus, and in the quadrants are four tondi with depictions

of Blessed [Sancha of Alenquer](#), [Joanna of Portugal](#), [Mafalda of Portugal](#) and [Teresa of Portugal](#). None of these holy ladies has been canonized yet.

The presbyterium (4) was begun by Longhi, but completed by Schor. The conch of the apse is decorated in gilded stucco again, showing tendrils and diapered latticework, and with the royal arms on top of the triumphal arch. The marble work in the apse is all genuine stone, with red jasper again, green *verde antico* marble, yellow marble from Siena and *giallo antico* from Tunisia. The strongly banded yellowish stone is alabaster, and the grey-veined marble is *fior di pesco* from Carrara.

The marble revetting was added in 1774 by Francesco Ferrari, using a design by Francesco Navone. The stone came from the consignment allegedly looted from the Jesuits when they were suppressed.

The high altar is by Schor, and is stepped inwards vertically in three planes. There are four Corinthian columns in red and white *portasanta* marble with gilded capitals, which support a segmental pediment showing the steps and which is broken at the top. The frieze of the entablature and some panelling is in *verde antico*. On the two pediment curves is a pair of reclining angels, and in the tympanum is a heavenly group holding up a cross in glory. Three putti have escaped from this, and fallen down over the entablature. The Roman sculptor of these is anonymous.

The main altar frontal is in *rosso di francia* and *brocatello* marbles, with alabaster. The "altar of the people" in front is in gilded wood, and shows the AM monogram (*Ave Maria*) flanked by a pair of stylized Towers of David (another Marian symbol) and the royal coat-of-arms again.

The altarpiece shows *The Virgin handing the Holy Child to St Anthony*, and was executed in 1707 by Giacinto Calandrucci. On the side walls are depictions of *Blessed Teresa and Sancha* by Giovanni Odazzi to the left, and *Blessed Joan* by Michelangelo Cerruti to the right. Above these two paintings are two *cantorie* or balconies for solo singers, and above the entablatures in turn are two stained glass windows designed by Vespignani and executed by Moroni.

In the pavement in front of the altar is a large inscription in polychrome marbles of the ambassador Francisco de Almada e Mendonça (d. 1783), 1st Viscount of Vila Nova de Souto del Rei.

There are two chapels on each side of the nave, and two more at the ends of the transept. They are described in counterclockwise order, starting at the back left hand side.

To the left of the entrance is an alcove under the organ balcony (5) with funerary monuments for Antonio de Almeida Borges, 1658; Martin de Azpileneita [Dr. Navarro] (1491-1586); Teotónio Emanuel Ribeiro Vieira de Castro, (1859-1940).

#### Chapel of St Anthony Abbot of Egypt: (6)

On the left side, the first chapel was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin of the Pieta until the end of the 17th century. In 1674, however, appears the new dedication to S. Antonio Abata of Egypt. It is a reminder of the dedication of the original little hospice church on this site, and that church's original altarpiece hangs on the left hand side wall. It shows *SS Anthony, Vincent and Sebastian*, and is by Marcello Venusti.

This work also used to be the altarpiece here, but at some stage after the late 17th century was replaced by the present one. The altar rebuilt in the years 1935-37, the altarpiece *Madonna enthroned with the Child between the saints Francis of Assisi and Anthony of Padua*, by Antonio Aquilio (aka Antoniazio Romano) from the second half of the 15th century, came from the church Franciscan of S. Maria della Neve in Palazzolo, property of the Portuguese Institute of S. Antonio until 1915.

The altarpiece has a split, separated and bowed segmental pediment. The entablature is supported by a pair of Corinthian columns in black marble and has a frieze in *rosso di francia*, the pediment is in Sienese yellow and there is much alabaster in the panelling.

The decoration of the vault, with vegetal motifs in gray and gold tempera, as well as the wall decoration in various marbles (alabaster, Siena yellow, black veined and red of France) date back to the restoration of the chapel in the years 1935-37 (arch Ranieri Maria Apolloni). The door in walnut and eighteenth century. The balustrade, identical to those of the other three side chapels, in white

Carrara marble and polychrome marble, can be dated around the middle of the XVII drain.

On the right wall Funeral Memory, in white marble with highlights (1846), for Manuel Rodrigues Gameiro Pessao, viscount of Itabaina, minister of Brazil at the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, died in Naples on January 22, 1846. Above the memorial is a *Pietà*, probably a 17th-century copy of a painting attributed by Vasari to Pellegrino Aretusi da Modena (16th century). In the funeral floor Lapidary (1872) of Princess Anne of Braganza, daughter of John VI, who died in Rome in 1857.

#### Chapel of the Nativity: (7)

The second chapel on the left-hand side was built in 1657 by the will of the Congregation of the Portuguese Nation. The consecration recalls the oratory adjacent to the primitive Hospital, in the parish Monti, erected in the XIV century by D. Guiomar. In a brief of 1754, the chapel is also given as consecrated the Nativity of Our Lord. Afterwards he was also dedicated to the Sacrament, according to the allusion of the Eucharistic chalices placed on the cornices of the side panels.

Between 1777 and 1783, it was again decorated by Francisco Navone to receive the burial of the Portuguese Jacinto de Oliveira d'Abreu Lima. In 1786, consolidation works were carried out because of the static problems caused by the excavation of the crypt under the pavement, which in turn was rebuilt in 1977 with original marbles and following the old design. From the interventions at the end of sec. XVIII, and present the parietal decoration in varied marbles: sepiolino, vermelho de Franca e verde antigo; the two pairs of false doors with double stop (door-post ?); the pair of abacos in sepiolino and yellow marble of Sena; floral decoration in golden stucco of arabesque; the door of the copper tabernacle in relief and gold; and finally the epigraph in marble of the principal, composed of one part on the left wall and another on the right wall.

The chapel is decorated with a cycle of three paintings, signed works of Antonio Concioli. The left, the *Adoration of the Magi*; on the altar *Nativity* (dated 1782); on the right wall, *Rest during the flight to Egypt* (dated 1782).

#### Chapel of the Immaculate Conception (Sampaio Chapel): (8)

In 1627, the chapel was dedicated to Saint Elizabeth of Portugal and in 1686 to the Blessed Virgin of the Piety. In 1750, the Portuguese ambassador to the Holy See, Manuel Pereira Sampaio died naming this chapel as universal heir, who decides to consecrate to the Immaculate Conception with a project by Luigi Vanvitelli.

The works were carried out between 1754 and 1756 under the supervision of Carlo Murena, with the fluted columns in oriental flos di pesco from the Francesco Cerruti stonemason and the sarcophagus altar table by Alberto Fortini.

On the trabeation, the two statues attributed to Gaspare Sibilla, depict the Charity (on the left) and the Chastity (on the right). The altarpiece, depicting the "*Immaculate Conception*" (1754-56) and work of Giacomo Zoboli.

On the right wall the funeral monument of Manuel Pereira de Sampaio, executed by Filippo della Valle celebrates the Sampaio portraying him in his two aspects: of man (the portrait, the books, the sarcophagus), and of diplomat (the emblem of Mercury, exalted of fame). On the left wall, under the coat of arms, the honorary memorial monument, also by Vanvitelli and della Valle. The company in the medallion, supported by Fama, is represented as a symbol of Mercury and, by extension, ambassadors. Close by the motto "FIDE ET CONSILIO", alludes to loyalty. On the floor, the funeral inscription made by Cerruti and Fortini.

The chapel, like the one in front, was originally closed by a marble balustrade sold in 1807 during the Napoleonic occupation. In the second half of the 19th century, the vault was once again decorated according to a design by Francesco Vespignani made by Giuliano Corsini and Antonio Bavaiaqua. The windows by Antonio Moroni date back to the same period.

#### Chapel of St Elizabeth of Portugal: (10)

The chapel in the right arm of the transept is dedicated to St Elizabeth of Portugal. Elizabeth born in 1271 to King Peter III of Aragon, married for 12 years with King Dinis of Portugal, widowed since 1325, became Franciscan tertiary and fund the Convent of the Clarisse of Coimbra. She was

canonized by Urban VIII, in 1625.

The decoration is not original, but was done between 1789 and the closure of the church by the French. The architect was Francesco Navone, who provided a coved altarpiece with two ribbed Ionic columns in red and white *portosanto* marble supporting an entablature with the frieze in the same stone and a triangular pediment. On the pediment sit two allegorical figures, depicting *Peace* by Giovanni Grossi on the left, and *Charity* by Giacomo Galli on the right. These were virtues that the saint especially displayed. The panelling of the altarpiece is in yellow Siennese marble and *verde antico*.

The altarpiece depicts *St Elizabeth Reconciling her Husband and Son*. She was married to Denis the king of Portugal, who had his son Alfonso rebel against him. The queen prevented a civil war. The work is by Luigi Agricola, 1801. Under the altar is an urn of green brecciated marble from Egypt, a very rare type of stone mentioned by Pliny. He calls it *marmor Augustanum* or *Tiberianum* according to the pattern. Interestingly, he also calls it *memphites* after the fabulously ancient city across the river from Cairo, and the source of this could only have been the ruins being plundered for rare stone by the ancient Romans.

The ceiling vault was decorated in the second half of the 19th century by Giuliano Corsini and Andrea Bevilacqua. The stained glass windows by Antonio Moroni (late 19th century) represent Santa Maria Maddalena and Queen Santa Elisabetta. The pairs of walnut doors have two gilded metal doors by the goldsmiths Tommaso and Giuseppe Zappati.

#### Chapel of St John the Baptist: (11)

The second chapel on the right is mentioned for the first time in 1679, as dedicated to St. Joseph. In 1686, it is already remembered as it is seen today, decorated with Stories of St. John the Baptist.

Its decoration is mostly the result of the patronage of Giovanni Battista Cimini, a rich perfumer and supplier to the Pope, who lived in a house adjacent to the church who died in 1682, and his widow Caterina Raimondi who paid for continuing work over the subsequent ten years. Their combined heraldry is inlaid into the floor. The overall design was by Cesare Crovari, and the stonemason was Pietro Antonio Ripoli. The result is very rich and colorful.

The altar has a pair of Corinthian columns in what looks like Sicilian jasper, red, orange and white, with gilded capitals. They support two halves of a split, separated and angled segmental pediment on which a pair of putti are sitting comfortably. The panelling behind the columns is in the same stone, together with green and violet marbles; the color combination works better than it sounds. The altarpiece is of the *Baptism of Christ*, by Calandrucci again.

Over the altar is a stained glass window by Moroni, showing winged putto's heads flying about in heaven. The effect is incongruous; Baroque colored glass was enamelled, not stained.

Calandrucci also executed the frescoes in the lunettes over the side walls. On the left is the *Beheading of St John the Baptist*, and on the right *The Holy Family with St John the Baptist*. On the left hand wall is a painting showing the *Birth of St John the Baptist* by François Nicolas de Bar, nicknamed *Nicolò Loreense*.

The monument to Giovanni Battista Cimini below it has a bust attributed to Andrea Fucigna, 1686. On the right hand wall is *The Preaching of John the Baptist* attributed to Francesco Graziani, nicknamed *Ciccio Napoletano*, and below this the memorial to Caterina Raimondi by Fucigna again, dated 1717. Finally on this wall is a memorial to Antonio Guglielmo de Figueiredo, 1868.

Under the altar is enshrined the relics of St Felix, one of the many dubious martyrs excavated from the catacombs. Up to the 20th century, it was thought that a little glass bottle inhumed with the remains was a sure sign of a martyr because it symbolized the shed blood having been gathered up. There is absolutely no historical evidence for this, and so the "martyrs" identified by this means are spurious.

Chapel of St Catherine of Alexandria: (12) The first chapel on the right is dedicated to St [Catherine of Alexandria](#), who is popular in Portugal. Near it on the right is a memorial to Oranzio Maria Battaglia, of 1639.

The chapel has been re-ordered at least twice. At some stage the original 17th century altar was dismantled and re-erected, and the walls revetted with polychrome marble. This work was probably done in the 18th century. In 1937 the vault was re-decorated with the scrollwork and angels now to be seen there.

The altar has two Ionic columns in what looks like grey granite, supporting a triangular pediment. The altarpiece showing *St Catherine with SS Engratia and Irene* is unattributed, but is thought to have been an early work of Giovanni Battista Maino.

The right hand wall has a neoclassic monument to Alessandro de Souza Holstein by Antonio Canova, executed in 1806. The deceased was a Danish ambassador to the Holy See, with Portuguese ancestry. The piece is typical of Canova's neo-Classical style, showing a weeper at a bust in marble of uncompromising whiteness.

The left hand wall has a memorial to a Portuguese ambassador, Giovanni Pietro Miguels de Carvalho, of 1853. It uses alabaster and what is, again, meant to be *giallo antico*, one of the rarest ancient marbles known.

The organ above the entrance is in the Rococo style, the case and balustraded balcony being completely gilded. This is a seriously good organ, and IPSAR has given it its own [website](#). Note how the balustrade of the balcony curves sinuously, to front two side balconies inserted into the arcade arches of the first bay of the nave.

Under the organ balcony to the right of the entrance (13) are funerary monuments for Manuel Sueiro de Axavedo, 1700, Bento de Patisexa 1698, and Domingos Antonio Sequeira, d. 1837.

The ceiling in the [sacristy](#) (9) has a fresco of the *Miracle of St Anthony*.

## Special notes

The feast of St Anthony of Padua is celebrated on 13 June. Mass is celebrated in Portuguese at 16.00 on Sundays. As there is no Brazilian national church in Rome, this church also provides for the Brazilian community in Rome, and it is also used by many from Angola and Mozambique.

The *Portuguese Institute of St Anthony* and the *Portuguese Library* is adjacent to the church. Language courses, conferences and concerts are often arranged there.

## Artists and Architects:

Andrea Bevilacqua (19<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian sculptor  
Andrea [Fucigna](#) (c.1660-1711), Italian sculptor  
Antoniazio [Romano](#) (1430-1510), Italian Early Renaissance painter  
Antonio [Canova](#) (1757-1822), Italian sculptor  
Antonio [Concioli](#) (1739-1820), Italian painter  
Antonio Moroni (19<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian stained glass window maker  
Carlo [Murena](#) (1713-1764), Italian architect of the late-Baroque period  
Carlo [Rainaldi](#) (1611-1691), Italian architect of the Baroque period  
Cesare Crovari (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian architect  
Cristoforo [Schor](#) (early 18<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian architect  
Filippo [della Valle](#) (1698-1768), Italian late-Baroque or early Neoclassic sculptor  
Francesco Ferrari (18<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian stonemason  
Francesco [Grandi](#) (1831-1891), Italian painter  
Francesco Graziani aka *Ciccio Napoletano*, Italian painter  
Francesco Navone (18<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian architect  
Francesco [Vespignani](#) (1842-1899), Italian architect  
François [Nicolas de Bar](#) [aka Nicolò Lorensen] (1632-1695), French painter  
Gaspere Sibila (d.1782), Italian sculptor  
Giacinto [Calandrucci](#) (1646-1707), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Giacomo Galli (19th cent), Italian sculptor  
Giacomo [Zoboli](#) (1681-1767), Italian painter  
Giovanni Grossi (19th cent), Italian sculptor  
Giovanni [Odazzi](#) (1663-1731), Italian painter and etcher of the Baroque period  
Giuliano Corsini, Italian sculptor  
Luigi [Agricola](#) (early 19<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian painter  
Luigi [Vanvitelli](#) (1700-1773), Italian architect of the Late Baroque  
Marcello [Venusti](#) (1515-1579), Italian Mannerist painter  
Martino [Longhi](#) the Younger (1602–1660), Italian architect of the Baroque period  
Michelangelo [Cerruti](#) (1663-1749), Italian painter of the Baroque period  
Pietro Antonio Ripoli (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian stonemason  
Pompeo Gentile, Italian sculptor  
Ranieri Maria Apolloni (20<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian architect  
Salvatore Nobile (1865-1919), Italian painter

### **Burials, monuments and memorials**

[José da Costa Cardinal NUNES](#) (1880-1976)

Alexander de Souza  
Emanuele Rodrigues Gameiro Pessoa  
Emmanuel Pereira de Samapio (d. 1750)  
< Portuguese ambassador to the Holy See >  
Princess Anna di Braganza  
Giovanni Battista Cimini  
Caterina Raimondi  
Antonio Guglielmo de Figueiredo  
Oranzio Maria Battaglia  
Alessandro de Souza Holstein  
< Danish ambassador to the Holy See, with Portuguese ancestry >  
Giovanni Pietro Miguels de Carvalho  
< Portuguese ambassador >

### **Location:**

2 Via dei Portoghesi , 00186 Roma  
Normal opening hours: 8.30 - 13.00 and 15.00 - 18.00  
Coordinates: [41°54'6"N 12°28'28"E](#)

### **Info:**

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Open times:  
Monday to Friday 8.30 - 13.00 and 15.00 - 18.00  
Saturday 8.30am-12.00am 15.00pm-18.00pm  
Sunday 9.00am-12.00am  
**Masses**  
Sunday 17.00pm

### **Links and references:**

[Roman Churches Wikia](#)

[English Wikipedia article](#)

[060608 web page](#)

[Info Roma web page](#) (with 360 panoramic view)

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Information plaques in church