

Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio a Fontana di Trevi



Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio is a 17th century church of Rome in Rione Trevi, located in Piazza Trevi. It is a former parish church on the Quirinale. It is famous as the church overlooking the Trevi Fountain, as the frontage is on the Piazza di Trevi.

History

Little is known about the ancient St Anastasius of Trivio Church. It may have dated back to the seventh century, when the relics of the Persian monk, Anastasius, were brought to Rome. He was known for many miraculous healings.

Middle ages

The church has its first documentary mention in 962, in a bull of Pope John XII where it is listed as a dependency of San Silvestro in Capite. The original dedication was to St Anastasius alone, and in the catalogues in the later Middle Ages it is listed as San Anastasio de Trivio. However, the saint was obscure and so the church was also listed as dedicated to St Anastasia (Sanctae Anastasiae). The dedication to St Vincent was then added. The present name is first recorded in the reign of Pope Pius V.

This was one of the many parish churches founded in the city in the 10th century, as the large territorial parishes of the original tituli were broken up. It stayed parochial for most of its existence.

Viscera of the popes

The Quirinal Palace was founded as a papal residence in 1583, and became the official residence of the popes until 1870. This technically made the popes parishioners of the church, since the palace was located in the parish (the parrochia papale).

So, beginning with Pope Sixtus V, when a newly deceased pope was embalmed his viscera were removed and put in a jar which was then kept in this church. The custom continued even after the popes were evicted from the Quirinal and moved to the Vatican, but was stopped by Pope St Pius X. The last pope to have his guts put here was Leo XIII. In total there are twenty-two sets of organs. These are referred to as praecordia,

which originally meant "diaphragm" in Classical Latin but came to mean the contents of the abdominal cavity.

Jesuates

The church became conventual in 1612, when it was handed over to a community of Jesuates (Gesuati). This originated at Siena in 1360, the founder being Giovanni Colombini. The Roman convent of this little religious order used to be at the church of San Salvatore de Cornutis nearby, but this was demolished in 1612 in order to extend the Piazza del Quirinale and build the Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi (the church and convent were allegedly already in a state of great disrepair).

The mediaeval church was completely rebuilt from its foundations in a project initiated in 1640 on the orders of Cardinal Jules Mazarin. To 1643 the work was under the supervision of **Gaspere De Vecchi**, but from 1646 until completion in 1650 the architect was **Martino Longhi the Younger** who was responsible for the spectacular façade.

However, the Jesuates were not to be in possession for very long. The order had already become degenerate, and in 1668 Pope Clement IX suppressed it.

Other religious congregations

After its renovation had been completed in 1668, the church was handed over to the Clerks Regular Minor, or Minorites. This religious order was based in Rome at San Lorenzo in Lucina. Their founder, St. Francis Caracciolo, is represented together with the church's titular saints in the large fresco on the vault, painted in 1818. The church remained in their charge until the end of the 18th century. Then they were ejected, at the beginning of the Napoleonic period.

The Clerks returned after the definitive restoration of the papal government in 1815, and arranged a restoration in 1818. However, in 1839 the little complex passed to the Camillians at Santa Maria in Trivio, named after their founder, St. Camillus de'Lellis. A chapel was dedicated to him and decorated in the 19th century with scenes from his life. They oversaw their own restoration in 1850.

From 1935 to 2002, the church was entrusted to the Cistercian Fathers.

In 2014 the church was closed for renovation and cleaning.

Recently the church was entrusted to the Diocesan clergy.

Orthodox

On 24 May 2002, Pope John Paul II granted the church to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church "for their liturgical use". This was done to express his gratitude at the warm welcome he received from that Church during his visit to Bulgaria earlier in the same month. While it is still formally owned by the Catholic Church, it is therefore now primarily an Eastern Orthodox church, under the jurisdiction of Patriarch Maxim of Sofia. When the church was closed in 2014 the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was granted the church of San Paolo alla Regola which is located in the central area of Rome.

Exterior

The fabric is in brick, but the façade is entirely in limestone. There is a slab campanile just to the left of the transept, of limestone with three bell-arches one above the other and a triangular pediment. This is next to the convent building, which has a partly octagonal plan.

Façade (1)

The façade is one of the best examples of the Baroque style in Rome. 18 columns, 10 in the lower order, 6 in the upper one, 2 at the sides of the central window, are clustered together to enhance the church's narrowness and height, giving it the appearance of thrusting upwards but at the same time monumental. The irreverent Roman populace called it "the canebrake".

Unusually, the design begins at the top and works its way down, and it is convenient to describe it in that way.

The dominant feature of the second level is the set of three nested propylaea, forming three pediments one

inside the other, the innermost one is segmental, and a total of six Composite columns. The two outer pairs of columns with their pediments are stepped slightly back in turn. Within the inner pair of columns is a rectangular window flanked by a small pair of Composite columns. This supports a triangular pediment, into which is nested a smaller pediment supported by a pair of strap corbels on the window frame from which dangle flower sprays. The cornice of this pediment is broken to accommodate a plaque with a putto's head and garland. On the larger window pediment sit two angels holding onto the coat-of-arms of Cardinal Mazarin. This spectacular piece of relief carving includes a cardinal's hat on top of the segmental pediment in the nest of three above; this hat is held by a pair of putti, and connected to the shield by stone ropes. The shield intrudes into the tympanum of the segmental pediment. The sculptor was **Antonio Raggi**.

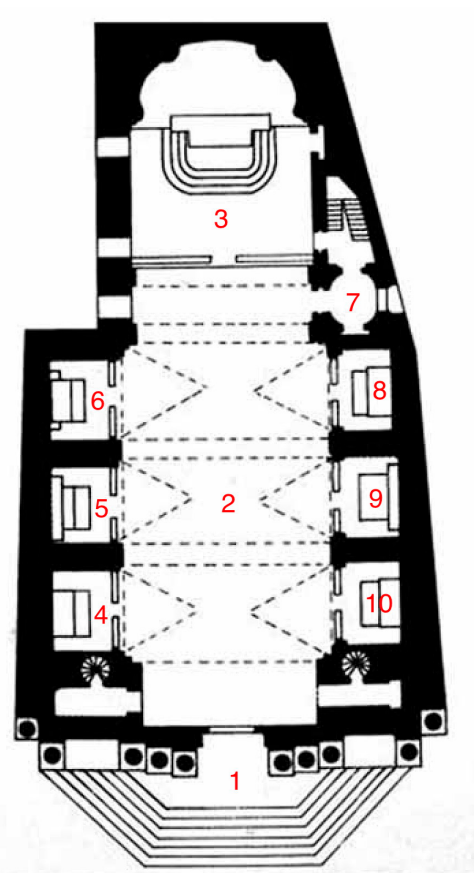
The nested propylaea stand on an attic plinth. To either side of them is a double curlicue on a sweep, and very unusually the top of each curlicue is mutated into a bare-breasted female caryatid supporting a Composite pillar capital on her head. The curlicue is embellished with a cornucopia of fruit.

The attic has a small segmental pediment above the main entrance, flanked by two halves of a larger split and separated segmental pediment. Between the smaller pediment and the window in the second storey is a small bust of a girl, which has no particular religious significance. It is perfectly aligned with the coat of arms, suggesting that she was one of Mazzarino's descendants and favorite nieces for whom he was planning prestigious marriages for the future grandeur of the family.

The first level has six columns flanking the entrance, stepped diagonally to match those above. A further pair is at the outer corners, and another two are set back behind these corners (these last two are actually at the corners of the church, since the façade is slightly narrower than it). These support an entablature dividing the storeys, which has a dedicatory inscription reading Anno Iubilei MDCL, Iulius S[anctae] R[omae] E[cclesiae] D[iaconus] Car[dinalis] Mazarinus a fundamen[tis] erexit. ("Julius Mazarinus, Cardinal deacon of the Holy Roman Church, built [this] from the foundations on the year of Jubilee 1650").

The part of this epigraph with the name of the cardinal, whose title is actually unknown, is on a prominent tablet on the entablature over the entrance. He was never ordained, so the reference to "deacon" is actually equivocal, the old pre-sacramental sense of "church servant" has to be read.

Plan



Interior

The church has a three-bay nave, with three side chapels of identical design on each side. Then comes the triumphal arch, then a very shallow transept bay, then a sanctuary with a dome and finally the apse. There is a fourth, tiny chapel off the right hand end of the transept.

Overall, the church is decorated in a technique known as *grisaille*. This involves ornamentation, mainly acanthus leaves and scrollwork, painted in monochrome. The color scheme is white on light grey with some surfaces in cream, and a few of the stucco details in gilt. This rather pallid Baroque interior is a result of the 1850 renovation.

Partly because of the changes in ownership, there are no great works of art to be viewed here.

Nave (2)

The nave has no aisles, but three chapels on each side entered through arches with molded archivolts springing from Doric pilasters. Each chapel has a short barrel vault, and some of these have frescoes.

The arches are separated by ribbed Composite pilasters, which support an entablature the cornice of which has modillions (little brackets). This runs round the entire church.

The barrel-vaulted ceiling has three lunettes on each side for windows, and a central fresco panel depicting *The Apotheosis of SS Vincent, Anastasius and Camillus* is ascribed to **Silverio Capparoni**.

The gallery over the entrance bears the organ, which has a pretty Baroque case. The plaque behind it bears an epigraph recording the donation of the church to the Camillians.

Transept

The triumphal arch has clustered ribbed Composite pilasters matching those in the nave. The small transept beyond has an undecorated barrel vault with a window on each side. In the side walls are two cantoria or balcony-boxes for solo singers and musicians.

Sanctuary (3)

The sanctuary is almost square, and has a slightly elliptical saucer dome with pendentives. The latter have frescoes of four *Angels carrying Symbols of the Cardinal Virtues*, and the dome oculus has a fresco of the *Lamb of God* in a Baroque frame. These are all by **Francesco Manno**, 1818.

The beautiful high altar is set in front of the apse, made of multicolored marbles. On top of the altar is a set of six large gilt bronze candle holders, a tall gilt bronze crucifix, and four gilt bronze busts of saints.

The enormous altarpiece is set against the back wall of the apse, and has no aedicule. Instead, it is framed by a pair of ribbed Corinthian semi-columns in front of doubled pilasters supporting the apse entablature. Above the latter is a spectacular stucco sculpture showing the monogram of Jesus in a glory on clouds, flanked by a pair of statues of the patron saints. The altarpiece, *The Saints and martyrs, Vincent and Anastasius*, is by **Francesco Pascucci** (1778). St Vincent is dressed as a deacon, and is defending his faith before the pagan authorities.

Behind the apse are kept the twenty-two marble urns containing the viscera of popes, and on the side walls of the sanctuary are bronze plaques listing them. At the center, the holy martyrs Vincent and Anastasius. Beside them, on the left, St. Anthony of Padua, one of the best-loved Christian saints; to the right the lesser-known St. Famian, a Cistercian monk who was born in Cologne in 1090.

From 2002 until 2014 the church was used by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. During that time the balustrade was surmounted by an open iconostasis for the Orthodox liturgy. This had four large icons in a very correct neo-Byzantine style. From left to right, they were: *SS Cyril and Methodius*, *Our Lady*, *Christ* and *St John the Baptist*.

The side chapels are described in clockwise order, beginning at the left rear of the church:

Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (4)

Marquis Emanuele De Gregorio had this chapel decorated in 1856. It was designed by **Giacomo Monaldi**, who painted the frescoes *Angels with the symbols of the Passion and the Eucharist* on the side walls (1846). The large canvas above the altar *Christ Showing His Sacred Heart to St Margaret Mary* is by **Giuseppe Zanetti**.

Outside is a memorial to Elena Rappini, 1859.

Chapel of St Joseph (5)

The middle chapel on the left is dedicated to St Joseph, and the altarpiece shows *St. Joseph on his deathbed between Christ and the Virgin Mary*. This is by **Giuseppe Tomasi**. The small icon on the altar is of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina.

On the right wall is the monument dedicated to the prelate Alessandro Maria Tassoni, a distinguished jurist who died in 1818. On the left wall is a monument to Fr. Luigi Togni, M.I. (1779-1849), who was Superior General of the Camillians.

Prior to the recent restoration a statue of St Anthony of Padua in an aedicule was on the pier between this chapel and the next. The aedicule was removed and the statue was moved to the altar in the chapel of St Camillus de Lellis.

Chapel of Our Lady of Grace (6)

In the third chapel on the left is an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a fragment of an early 14th century fresco set into a glory. It was placed above the altar by Pope Innocent X in 1677. Its presence has been "protected" thanks to Pope Innocent XI's particular worship of it. In 1677 he declared it the privileged altar and wanted his pericardium to be buried in this chapel and not in the apse. It was later crowned for its many miracles by the Vatican Chapter in 1679.

The *Eternal Father* is in a fresco panel in the vault. The picture on the altar is of *St Rita*.

On the right wall of the chapel is a memorial to Janus Maria Francesco Rabassa de Perellós, Marquis of Dos Aguas, Valencia, Spain, died in Rome in 1843. On the left wall is a very interesting painting of which I can find no information.

The interior decoration, now almost entirely 19th century, was repeatedly destroyed and replaced by the different congregations over the years.

Chapel of Our Lady, Queen of Heaven (7)

The little chapel off the right hand end of the transept contains a modern statue of Our Lady as Queen, and is accompanied by many ex-votos as well as pot plants.

Chapel of St Camillus de Lellis (8)

The third chapel on the right hand side is dedicated to St Camillus de Lellis, the founder of the Clerks Regular, Ministers to the Sick or Camillians.

The altarpiece, *The Vision of St. Camillo de' Lellis* (18th c.), oil on canvas, is by **Gaspare Serenari**. The side wall depictions are by **Silvio Capparoni**, 1876. On the left wall is *St. Camillo Aiding the Sick* (1876), oil on canvas, and on the right wall is *The Miraculous Dream of St. Camillo* (1870), oil on canvas.

The vault frescoes from the 19th c., *Stories in the Life of St. Camillo*, are anonymous.

A statue of *St Anthony of Padua* is on the altar

Chapel of St Jude Thaddaeus (9)

The middle chapel on the right is dedicated nowadays to St Jude, and the large picture on the altar is of him. His symbol or attribute is the little icon of Christ hanging from his neck. Many ex-voto offerings are on display, under rather sentimental frescoes of putti on the side walls.

The oil on canvas altarpiece by an unknown 19th century artist depicts *St. Philip Neri and St. Joseph Calasançio*. In the center is an image of the *Madonna and Child*, a copy of the famous painting by Pompeo Batoni that in

the church of St. Francesco a Ripa.

Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows (10)

The last chapel on the right is dedicated to the Crucifixion, and the composite altarpiece is a little crucifix within a glory over an elliptical picture of Our Lady of Sorrows. A group of benefactors renovated it in 1872, adding inlaid decoration on the walls and monochrome paintings of stories from the Passion on the vault.

The barrel vault has frescoes of *SS John the Evangelist, Veronica* (in the middle) and *St Mary Magdalen*.

As the inscription on the right indicates, this chapel housed princess Zenaide Volkonskaya's family tomb. On the left is memorial inscription for Nicolo Bufalini who died in 1727.

Here are memorials to Flavia Folchi, 1826 and Cristiano Schoster, 1829.

Bartolomeo Pinelli (1781-1835), graphic artist and engraver, was buried in the church, but without a monument and a recognizable plaque, so that even today it is not possible to find traces of his burial. The National Institute of Roman Studies placed a memorial tablet in the church in 1933 .

Artists and Architects:

Antonio Cioli (16th cent), Italian sculptor

Antonio [Raggi](#) [aka *Il Lombardo*] (1624-1686), Italian sculptor of the Baroque

Francesco [Manno](#) (1754-1831), Italian painter and architect

Francesco [Pascucci](#) (1748-c.1803), Italian painter

Gaspere [de Vecchi](#) (d. 1643), Italian architect

Gaspere [Serenari](#) (1707-1759), Italian painter

Giacomo [Monaldi](#) (1819-1905), Italian architect

Giovanni Battista Ledoux (18th cent), Italian sculptor

Giuseppe [Errante](#) (1760-1821), Italian painter

Giuseppe [Ferroni](#) (1714-1771, Italian architect

Giuseppe [Tomasì](#) (1610-1672), Italian painter

Giuseppe [Zanetti](#) (1859-1929), Italian painter, engraver

Martino [Longhi](#) the Younger (1602-1660), Italian architect of the Baroque period

Silverio [Capparoni](#) (1831-1907), Italian painter

Silvio [Galimberti](#) (1869-1956), Italian painter

Burials:

Bartolomeo [Pinelli](#) (1781-1835)

Italian illustrator and engraver

Zinaida [Volkonskaya](#) (1792-1862)

Russian writer, poet, singer and composer

Access

The church is advertised as open daily:

8:00 to noon, and 16:00 to 80:00

Liturgy

Mass daily at 18:30.

Location:

Vicolo dei Modelli 73, 00187 Roma

Coord: [41° 54' 2"N](#) [12° 29' 2"E](#)

Links & Refs:

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["De Alvariis" gallery on Flickr](#)

[Roma SPQR web-page with gallery](#)

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[Roma Segreta web-page](#)

[Church Web Site](#)

Donovan, Jeremiah; ROME ANCIENT AND MODERN AND ITS ENVIRONS; 1842

Informatinal plaques in church

Sharp, Mary; A GUIDE TO THE CHURCHES OF ROME; Chilton Books; 1966