

Santa Maria in Monterone



Santa Maria in Monterone is a 17th century convent church in the rione Sant'Eustachio. The dedication is to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the aspect of her Assumption.

History

It is uncertain when this church was built, but it is thought that it was one of many small parish churches founded in the later Dark Ages in the then built-up area of the city. The first documented mention is in the bull of Pope Urban III issued in 1186, giving a list of churches dependent on the basilica of San Lorenzo in Damaso.

It already had the name Monterone back then. The name seems to derive from the family Monteroni di Siena, who owned the Palazzo Sinibaldi in front of it and built a hospice next to the church for pilgrims from Siena, according to Armellini writing in 1891.

There was a restoration in 1245, mentioned in a bull of Pope Innocent IV.

In 1597 the church was flooded out in an inundation by the river, and had to be restored again. Under Pope Innocent XII in 1682, it was entirely rebuilt at the expense of the priest-in-charge Filippo Silva.

In 1730, the church was granted to the Italian Discalced Mercedarians by Pope Benedict XIII. This reform movement of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nicknamed "Mercedarians" for their work in redeeming those enslaved by Muslim raiders from North Africa, originated in Spain at the start of the 17th century.

This was the second convent of the reform in Rome, the first and major one being that at Santa

Maria in San Giovannino.

The Discalced Mercedarians were expelled from Rome in the French occupation at the end of the 18th century, and in fact became extinct in Italy.

In 1815, after the definitive restoration of papal government in Rome, the vacated complex was granted to the Redemptorists. In 1848 they undertook a restoration overseen by Pietro Camporese the Younger, part of which was the provision of a chapel dedicated to their founder, St Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori.

The Redemptorists remain in charge here, although their main convent is at Sant'Alfonso de'Liguori all'Esquilino. In 1860 a lay Confraternity was set up here by them to pray for souls in Purgatory, and this still meets in the church.

Exterior

The church has a nave of four bays with side aisles, and a rectangular apsidal sanctuary which is flanked by a pair of chapels. There are no external chapels off the aisles.

A campanile is not obvious.

The adjacent convent, on the right hand side, was built by Giuseppe Sardi for the Mercedarians in 1728. Part of it is over the right aisle of the church, which gives an odd juxtaposition to the frontage of the complex. This is accentuated by the contrasting color schemes (the convent is in orange-red, with architectural details in white) and by the Rococo details on the convent frontage.

The church stands on a little triangular piazza which amounts to a wide place in the street.

Façade

The two-storey façade is very simple, rendered in pale yellow with white architectural details. Four Doric pilasters in the first storey support an entablature with shallow posts and a blank frieze. These pilasters are doubletted, the inner ones along their inner edges and the outer ones along their outer. Between each pair of pilasters is a vertical elliptical window with a very thin frame.

The doorway has a molded doorcase and a floating segmental pediment over a very simple dedicatory inscription: Deipara sacrum MDXXXX ("Sacred to the Mother of God, 1540").

The second storey also has four pilasters, but these lack capitals. The entablature that they support lacks an architrave. Over the inner pair of pilasters only is a crowning triangular pediment, containing a Baroque tablet with curlicues and a winged putto's head. This reads: D[eo] O[ptimo] M[aximo], Deiparae Virgi[ni] Assumptae Anno Domini MDCLXXXII, Philippus Silva rector fecit.

At the ends of the parapets flanking the pediment are two flaming urn finials. They each stand on a plinth with a star and flanked by curlicues.

In between the pilasters in this storey are two windows, one above the other. The upper pair intrude into the crowning entablature. The right hand ones belong to the convent, while the top one of the two on the left is false.

Interior

The church is a little basilica, with a central nave and aisles. Two side altars are in the right hand aisle, and one in the left. The sanctuary is a rectangular apse, and is flanked by a pair of chapels on a square plan.

Nave

The nave has four bays, with the arcades supported by columns with Ionic capitals from which the molded archivolts spring. The near and far arch springers are on Doric impostes, however. These columns look ancient, but are not but seem to be in brick covered with plaster and painted to resemble granite. Perhaps the cost of the 17th century rebuilding was partly defrayed by selling the

original columns on. The capitals, however, are a mixed bunch and are genuinely ancient.

The nave side walls and arch intradoses are painted to resemble polychrome marble revetting. Sitting on the arcade arches is an entablature which runs around the interior, on which sits a semi-circular barrel vault coffered in octagons with rosettes.

A small wooden gallery is over the entrance, corbelled out on wooden beams.

Sanctuary

The apse of the sanctuary is narrower than the central nave, thus creating room for two corner piers. A triumphal arch fitted into the nave vault rests on the entablature above these, and is continued as a shallow barrel vault. This ends at a large lunette window, and has panels with grotesque decoration flanking one with the Dove of the Holy Spirit.

The altar aedicule has a pair of Corinthian columns made to look like a pinkish brecciated marble, supporting a triangular pediment with dentillations and modillions and containing a lily flower. T

he altarpiece is an oil painting by the popular late 18th century artist Pompeo Batoni, depicting SS Peter Nolasco and Peter Pascual venerating an icon of the Madonna and Child. The elliptical icon is earlier, and has been inserted into the picture. It looks 16th century.

The former saint was the founder of the Mercedarians, and the latter one of them who became a theologian and a bishop before being martyred by Muslims.

To the left is the Baroque monument to Cardinal Stefano Durazzo, 1667. A winged skeleton is shown sitting on a black marble sarcophagus and holding a cameo portrait of the cardinal. This is probably the best thing in the church.

Right aisle

On the counterfaçade to the right of the entrance is the re-set tomb slab of Giovanni da Bazzano, 1406 with an effigy in shallow relief. Next to it is a monument to Cosimo and Patrizia Simonetti Cingoli 1652, with a tondo portrait of the former.

The first altar on the right is dedicated to Christ the Nazarene. The statue of him is in a neo-Classical pedimented stone shrine with Ecce Homo on the entablature frieze.

The second altar on the right has a depiction of The Assumption of Mary by Giovanni Gagliardi.

Chapel of the Guardian Angels

The chapel at the far end of the right hand aisle is dedicated to the Guardian Angels. It has a high-quality Baroque aedicule in red-and-white and grey-green-and-white marbles, the former predominating. Ribbed Ionic columns with gilded capitals support a split segmental pediment into which is inserted a bas-relief of what looks like The Holy Family.

The altarpiece is a 19th century work showing a guardian angel presenting a child to the Madonna and Christ-Child.

On the right hand side wall is a memorial to Anna Moroni 1647, with a half-length portrait sculpture.

There is a little saucer cupola, painted in blue fading to white with a central motif of lilies and a crown.

Chapel of St Alphonsus

Pietro Camporese the Younger re-fitted the chapel at the end of the left hand aisle in 1848, in honour of St Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori. It is a sumptuous chamber, with a proper dome coffered in deep octagons and decorated in white and gold.

The paintings are described as executed by a Neapolitan artist called Vico. The altarpiece shows the saint in prayer, the left hand side wall has him with the early Redemptorist brethren and sisters, and

the right hand side wall shows him levitating. The lunettes have angels and the dome pendentives display the four Evangelists.

Left hand aisle

At the far end of the left hand aisle is a neo-Classical monument to Vincenzo Campanari, 1857 with a bust of him in a tondo. The crowning tympanum has a relief of Our Lady.

The altar in the left hand aisle is dedicated to Our Lady of Ransom, and has a painted plaster statue of the Madonna and Child. She is holding the White Scapular of the Mercedarians, otherwise known as the Scapular of Our Lady of Ransom.

The left hand side of the counterfaçade has two monuments. One is the upper part of a 15th century effigy, and the other is a triangular memorial to Cesareo Eugenio 1726.

Burials

Stefano Cardinal [DURAZZO](#), (1594-1667)
Cenotaph only, buried in Genoa

Location:

Addr: 75 Via Monterone, 00186 Roma
Coord: [41° 53' 48.5"N, 12° 28' 32.1"E](#)

Info:

Telephone: 0039 06 68803147

Fax: 0039 06 6867865

Open times:

Open 07:00am-12:00pm 04:00pm-07:00pm

Closed Sunday

Mass schedule:

Every day :08:00-18: 00 (only Monday for the confraternity)

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