

Santa Maria del Pianto ai Catinari



Santa Maria del Pianto (Holy Mary of the Weeping) is an unfinished Baroque church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and was the result of a devotional project that ran out of energy. As a result it is hemmed in by buildings that would have been demolished had it been completed, and is not easy to find. The postal address is Via di Santa Maria de' Calderari 29 in the rione Regola, and it has two entrances. One leads off the Piazza delle Cinque Scole, and the other is on the Via di Santa Maria del Pianto. If you wish to visit, it is best to check both of these as one or the other only may be open.

History:

A painting of the Virgin with the Baby Jesus once hung under a porch in via Arco de' Cenci, by the Jewish ghetto. On the 10th of January 1546 two men were fighting there; one of the two was on the point of stabbing the opponent, when the latter cried for mercy, in the name of the Virgin. The man put away his knife, but his opponent took him by surprise and viciously killed him. Due to this treacherous murder, the Virgin's image is said to have wept real tears, witnessed by the crowd that meanwhile had gathered there.

In order to commemorate the miraculous event the fresco was detached and transferred into the close church of the Santissimo Salvatore de Caccabariis. A Confraternita named S. Maria del Pianto was thus founded and they demolished the old church and began building the new church on the site in 1612, according to a project by Niccolò Sebregondi (1580-1652).

However, money ran out before any decorations could be added to the dome or the conch of the

apse. More seriously, the nave arm of the Greek cross and the projected monumental façade were never even begun, leaving the church as an architectural fragment. From the time of this abandonment of any further work until 1891 it was administered by a pious confraternity attached to the parish church of San Carlo ai Catinari, but the government confiscated their assets in that year. In 1896 the church was struck by lightning and abandoned for a period; it was lucky not to have been demolished, but was instead acquired and restored in 1907 by the *Congregazione degli Oblati di Maria Vergine*. They remain in possession, and the church is presently used for worship by a folk-Mass group whose liturgies are lively and well attended if not to everybody's liking.

Exterior:

The only street frontage of the church is on the south side, where the brick wall of the left hand transept can be seen. Pilaster strips without capitals support an entablature with a heavy projecting cornice. Above this, the wall is in rough brick, witnessing to the lack of funds to complete the church. The octagonal rendered drum of the dome, with its pitched and tiled roof, peeps over the domestic building on the right. To the north side the dome can also be seen from the street. The drum is rendered in red ochre, now faded and peeling, and each side of the octagon is framed in yellow. The north-east face has a defunct clock, and every other face has a recessed hexagonal window low down. To the north can also be seen the little campanile on the end of the right hand transept, with four large arched soundholes, an Ionic pilaster on each corner and a tiled pyramidal cap.

Interior:

The interior, based on a Greek-cross plan, is articulated into pilaster strips and with an octagonal dome. The rich stucco decoration, with curlicues on panels and ribbed Corinthian pilasters, only goes as far as a heavy entablature with a projecting cornice. The conch and dome are undecorated. The magnificent high altar, coved with four yellow marble Corinthian columns, enshrines the original miraculous icon which is 15th century.

By the entrance is the processional banner of the original confraternity by Lazzaro Baldi, showing the *Miracle of the Weeping Madonna* on one side and the *Virgin in glory* on the other. Here also is a fragment from the original mediaeval church, a panel from a tabernacle or ambo now on the wall and featuring an arcade of four Gothic arches. It is covered in intricate geometric mosaic in white, red, black and gold.

In the transept to the right is *Madonna and Saints*, also by Baldi. On the high altar one treasures the venerated fresco of the *Madonna del Pianto*.

On the walls of the choir, *Jesus Appearing as a Beggar to St Martin* and *Jesus Debating with the Doctors in the Temple* of Agustino Ciampelli.

To the right is the tomb of Pompey Palmieri on a design by Mola.

Artists and Architects:

Agustino [Ciampelli](#) (1578–1640), Italian painter
 Jean Baptiste Mola (1616-1661), French sculptor
 Lazzaro [Baldi](#) (1624-1703), Italian painter of the Baroque period
 Niccolò Sebregondi (1580-1652), architect

Burials:

Pompey Palmieri

Location:

Addr: 29 Via Santa Maria dei Calderari, 00186 Roma

Coord: [41° 53' 35"N 12° 28' 35.3"E](#)

Info:

Open 12.00pm-01.00pm

Sunday 10.00am-12.00pm

Sunday Mass 11.00am

Telephone: 0039 06 6861796

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Email: info@italiasolidale.org

Links:

http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Santa_Maria_del_Pianto

<http://www.060608.it/en/cultura-e-svago/luoghi-di-culto-di-interesse-storico-artistico/cattolici/santa-maria-del-pianto.html>

http://www.mytravelguide.com/attractions/profile-79459005-Italy_Rome_Santa_Maria_del_Pianto.html

http://www.romaspqr.it/ROMA/CHIESE/Chiese_rinascimentali/s_maria_del_pianto.htm

[http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa_di_Santa_Maria_del_Pianto_\(Roma\)](http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa_di_Santa_Maria_del_Pianto_(Roma))

http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti_dettaglio.asp?ID_schede=27

<http://www.romeartlover.it/Vasi29.html#Maria>