

## Oratorio di Sant'Andrea dei pescivendoli

### St. Andrew of the fishmongers

(deconsecrated)



The **Oratorio of Sant'Andrea of fishmongers**, is a desecrated church of Rome, in the neighborhood Sant'Angelo, located in Via del Foro Piscario.

### History

The city's major fish market operated locally for centuries, up until the archaeologists began to clear the area at the end of the 19th century.

In 1571 the guild of fishmongers (*Università dei Pescivendoli*) took over responsibility for the chapel of St Andrew (now the Blessed Sacrament chapel) in the local parish church of *Sant'Angelo*. Their expensive and spectacular Baroque restoration of this chapel is probably the best thing in the church.

In 1687 the confraternity took over an ancillary building next to the church, and converted it into an oratory. The consecration was two years later, with a dedication to their patron saint.

There is an urban legend that the fishmongers allegedly worshipped separately because they smelled too bad to be welcome in *Sant'Angelo*, but this is utterly fanciful. Many Roman churches had oratories like this attached, but this one was unusual in that it amounted to a separate church with two side altars (most oratories only had one main altar).

In 1801 the guild was dissolved. However, the oratory then found a use as a private place of worship of a pious confraternity associated with the Caracciolo family.

It was deconsecrated in the late 20th century, and ownership reverted to the Municipality which rents the premises out to private commercial tenants. The latest are *Leone Limentani*, an old Jewish retail firm which sells a wide range of household items, much of very high quality.

## Exterior

The facade is part of a larger domestic building, of which the oratory occupied the ground floor. It is a simple rectangular space, with a door into the right hand aisle of *Sant'Angelo*.

The doorcase has a dedicatory inscription over the lintel, reading *Locus orationis venditorum piscium* which translates "The place of prayer of those selling fish". Above this is a very fine relief of St Andrew, carrying his X-shaped cross. A boat on a rough sea is behind him, and a fish is apparently trying to chew his robe as he watches it. There is a putto's head in a scallop shell above him, and the frame is flanked by a pair of volutes with ribbons, floral motifs and acanthus leaves.

The relief is flanked by a pair of windows each crowned by a scallop shell under an detached arc cornice. Above the relief is a very large lunette window occupying the whole width of the facade. The curve of this is interesting, since it is not semi-circular but assymetric. The reason why the window is so large is because the narrow rectangular chapel had no other natural light apart from a matching window at the far end.

## Interior

The main altar had an altarpiece of *St Andrew* by [Giuseppe Ghezzi](#).

Seven paintings by [Lazzaro Baldi](#) were on the side walls, a series depicting *The Calls and Martyrdoms of SS Peter and Andrew*.

The two side altars had anonymous Flemish paintings of the 17th century.

A glass security screen has recently been installed in the front entrance, through which the interior can usually be viewed. The retail firm in occupation has very kindly been leaving the outer doors open for people to be able to window-shop the items within.

The interior is a rectangular space with a barrel-vaulted ceiling. All religious items seem to have been removed, but the background decoration survives. This is based on rectangular Corinthian pilasters springing from a string course at some distance from the floor, and these look as if they are made of red marble (but probably are not).

The paintings by Baldi ended up in the sacristy of San Cosimato in Trastevere, but it is hoped to restore these and exhibit them in a more accessible location.

## Location:

Coordinates: [41° 53' 33"N, 12° 28' 43.9"E](#)

## Links:

[http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Sant'Andrea\\_dei\\_Pescivendoli](http://romanchurches.wikia.com/wiki/Sant'Andrea_dei_Pescivendoli)  
[http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti\\_dettaglio.asp?ID\\_schede=1688](http://www.info.roma.it/monumenti_dettaglio.asp?ID_schede=1688)

[http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oratorio di Sant%27Andrea dei pescivendoli](http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oratorio_di_Sant%27Andrea_dei_pescivendoli)

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