

# Chiesa Gesù Divin Maestro



The Church of **Jesus the Divine Master** is a church of Rome, in the Trionfale District south of the Gemelli train station.

## History

It was built between 1966 and 1967 by architect Carlo Bevilacqua and solemnly inaugurated by Cardinal Luigi Traglia with the consecration on September 30 1967.

In 2007, a re-fitting was undertaken which involved new entrance doors in bronze and new sanctuary furnishings by Albano Poli, and in 2009 the new baptistery was blessed.

The church is home parish, established on March 2, 1964 by the Cardinal Vicar Clement Micara by Decree *Per crescente de die* and initially entrusted to the priests of the diocese of Brescia and then, from 1978 to the Roman diocesan clergy. It also is home to the cardinal title of "*Jesus the Divine Master Pineta Sacchetti*", instituted by Pope Paul VI on April 29, 1969 : it was the pope who wanted this title for the presence in the parish of the Faculty of Medicine 's University Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

## Exterior

The church has an almost circular plan. It is part of a parochial complex which includes sports and social facilities. The external wall is clad in rough stone ashlar blocks, and at the top slopes inwards in a batter to a thin strip of window, above which are the deep eaves of the roof. These are supported by concrete brackets. The conical roof is very slightly pitched, in twelve sectors which are alternately wider and narrower. In the center of the roof is a conical skylight, and on this is a very distinctive spire doubling as the campanile. Three metal sheets shaped like chopping-knives are placed together in a triangular formation with the handles meeting at the top, and the bells are housed within the resulting cage in a bar frame resembling an upside-down cross.

### Façade

The roof projects over the main entrance lobby as a floating canopy, with two shallow curves meeting at a point over the central doorway. The lobby itself has the plan of three sides of an

octagon. This has three doorways approached by a curved flight of five stairs, the central one having double doors and the other two, a single one. These are separated and flanked by four rectangular panels in pale greyish-green marble with stone frames, which support an architrave bearing a gilt dedicatory inscription: *Uno solo e il vostro maestro, Cristo Gesu*. Above this, below the roof, is a larger row of windows.

The entrances were provided in 2007 with bronze doors bearing figurative reliefs: *Christ and the Lost Sheep*, *The Call of Zacchaeus*, *The Woman Taken in Adultery* and *The Bronze Serpent*.

To the right of the entrances is a statue of *Christ*, and further to the right is a little cylindrical building with a copper cupola. This is the baptistery. The glass-walled passage linking it to the church proper has a spectacular stained glass window in its far side.

### **Interior:**

The interior is obviously round, but the worshipping area is a three-quarter circle since the free-standing altar is in the center and the zone behind it is walled off to create a sacristy. Also attached to the church is a cappella feria or chapel for weekday Masses.

The design is dominated by the open roof. Fourteen concrete ribs meet at a large concrete ring oculus, containing the lantern which sheds natural light on the altar. The roof sectors that these ribs define are alternately narrower and wider, not the same width. The ribs are in the form of thin and deep vanes in dark grey, contrasting with the cream colour of the sectors in between, and spring from a concrete ring architrave at the top of the side wall. This grey ring is supported by fourteen slab piers by, but not attached to, the side wall, which are revetted in a pale brownish marble.

The curved side walls have a striking pattern of rows of diagonally facing square apertures or open boxes, each row facing in a different direction and created by assembling marble tiles. These walls bear a set of the Stations of the Cross inaugurated in 2007, and above it is an inward batter in grey which is the same as the one you saw outside above the ashlar wall. Above the batter is a strip of stained glass window running round the interior, which is in an abstract pattern of mostly blue and white with some red and yellow.

The entrance sector is entirely in this stained glass, except for the single pair of brushed bronze doors textured like tree bark. It backs the entrance lobby. The inside of each door bears the coat-of-arms of Blessed Pope Paul VI.

The set of confessionals to the left of the sanctuary is in purple brick, and has four doors of clear glass etched in an open-weave cloth pattern. It bears an epigraph above the doors: *Beato l'uomo a cui perdonato il peccato* ("Blessed the man whose sin is forgiven").

To the right is a shrine for devotional statues, in the same purple brick with an epigraph: *Amate il Signore, voi i tutti Santi* ("Love the Lord, all you saints").

### Sanctuary

The sanctuary was completely restored in 2007.

The interior of the church is dominated by a mosaic behind the altar, which is on a slightly incurved screen wall reaching to the ceiling. It has three depictions of Christ the Master. These are *Christ Crucified*, *Christ Proclaims the Beatitudes* and *The Boy Christ Teaching the Elders in the Temple*. The first-named, which is the centerpiece, uses an extremely ancient iconographic tradition, whereby Christ is depicted clad in a dalmatic or long white robe instead of being naked. The work is by **Albano Poli**, and replaces bare brick with a central large white statue of Christ.

To the left in the screen wall is a doorway, and to the right a rectangular niche containing the tabernacle for the Blessed Sacrament in beaten copper, on a background of silver and gold mosaic with stylized flames in bright vermillion.

The sanctuary is raised, and approached by steps. The altar is on a central circular platform, with the pews facing it radially.

A new set of liturgical furnishings has recently been provided. The altar is a marble mensa on a rough-cut limestone bearing an irregular cross painted yellow. The ambo is in a similar style, being a rough limestone angle with its point chamfered and painted yellow, and bearing a pale brown marble slab as a bookrest. The seating for the ministers and servers is arranged behind the altar and to either side of the mosaic screen, and is in the same polished marble. There is a matching Paschal candlestick, a finely cut rectangular block.

### Baptistery

The baptistery is a delightful little circular room with a cupola ceiling and a wall covered in mosaic, which was inaugurated in 2009. It is approached via a glass-walled passage from the church, the right side being clear glass and the left a large stained glass window with a rising sun theme.

The portal, in grey mosaic, has an epigraph: Siamo stati sepolti con Cristo nella morte per risorgere con Lui a vita nuova ("May we be entombed with Christ in death in order to rise with him to new life") Rm 5:4.

The font itself is a rough piece of limestone, vaguely cylindrical, bearing a little bronze statue of *St John the Baptist*. Behind it on the wall is a bronze relief of *The Resurrected Christ*.

The mosaics depict *St John Baptizing by the Jordan*, *The Dove Returns to the Ark of Noah*, *The Crossing of the Red Sea* and *Christ With the Samaritan Woman at the Well*. They are by *Albano Poli*.

### Cappella Feriale

The "weekday chapel" has its interior walls in bare red brick. The bricks are imitation ancient ones, very thin, and are laid in alternately proud and recessed courses to give a patterned washboard effect.

There is a bronze crucifix on the wall behind the altar, and a good modern icon of the *Madonna and Child* to the right. To the left is the tabernacle for the Blessed Sacrament, in the same style as that in the main church. The copper door has a relief of *The Supper at Emmaus*.

### **Liturgy**

Mass is celebrated:

Weekdays 7:30 (not summer), 9:00 and 18:30 (19:00 in summer);

Sundays and Solemnities 8:00, 10:00 (9:30 in summer), 11:15 (11:00 in summer), 12:30 (12:15 in summer), 18:30 (19:00 in summer).

Lauds is celebrated at 8:00 and 9:30 (it is unusual for a church to have two times for one celebration of the Divine Office).

Rosary is at 18:00, followed by Vespers at 19:00.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Thursdays from 9:30 to 12:30, and 15:30 to 18:30.

### **Location:**

Addr: Via Vittorio Montiglio, 18 - 00168 Rome

Coord: [41° 55' 42.6"N 12° 25' 31"](#)

Artists and Architects:

Carlo Bevilacqua (20th cent), Italian architect

Albano Poli (20th cent), Italian painter, stained glass window maker, mosaic designer

### **Links:**

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa\\_di\\_Gesu\\_Divino\\_Maestro](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiesa_di_Gesu_Divino_Maestro)

<http://www.info.roma.it/=Gesu+Divino+Maestro>

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