

Santissimo Nome di Gesù all'Argentina (Il Gesù)



The **Church of the Gesù** is the mother church of the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits. Officially named **Chiesa del Santissimo Nome di Gesù all'Argentina**, its façade is the first truly baroque façade. The church served as model for innumerable Jesuit churches all over the world, especially in the Americas. The Church of the Gesù is located in the Piazza del Gesù in Rome.

First conceived in 1551 by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits Society of Jesus, and active during the Protestant Reformation and the subsequent Catholic Counter-Reformation, the Gesù was also the home of the Superior General of the Society of Jesus until the suppression of the order in 1773.

History

Since 1541 the Jesuits had officiated in the small church of Santa Maria della Strada, also known as Santa Maria degli Astalli, adjoining the house in which St. Ignatius de Loyola lived, which soon proved to be too small. St. Ignatius wished to build a new, larger church on the spot and to dedicate it, as he had his order, the the Name of Jesus.

Although Michelangelo offered to design the church for free, the endeavor was funded by Alessandro Cardinal Farnese, grandson of Pope Paul III who had authorized the founding of the Society of Jesus, in 1561. Ultimately, the main architects involved in the construction were **Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola**, architect of the Farnesi, **Giovanni Tristani S.J.**, and **Giacomo della Porta**.

Construction began in 1568 after the design of **Vignola** who raised its walls to the height of the cornice, and finished by a Jesuit architect, **Giovanni de Rosis**, assisted by **della Porta**, who designed the façade, intervened actively in the construction of the cross-vault, dome, and apse. Begun in 1571, **della Porta**'s facade was practically finished by 1575, but work continued until 1577. The shield with the monogram of Jesus, placed over the main door in 1576, was executed from a wax model sent by **Bartolomeo Ammannati** in 1574.

In 1583 **Giovanni de' Vecchi**, together with a certain Andrea, perhaps Andrea Lilio of Ancona, were commissioned to decorate the dome and corbels.

The church was consecrated in 1584, and it set a pattern for Jesuit churches that lasted into the twentieth century. The Jesuit Mother Church was built according to the new requirements formulated during the Council of Trent.

In 1672, Father Gian Paolo Oliva, the Jesuit General, gave **Giovanni Battista Gaulli** the commission to decorate the church, he was only thirty-three years old at the time. In the next thirteen years, as he covered the dome vaults and pendentives of the huge church with his frescoes, he emerged as a major figure in the Roman high baroque.

From 1696 to 1700, the Chapels of St Ignatius and St Francis Xavier were fitted out by **Andrea Pozzo**, a Jesuit artist who had already proved his genius at the nearby church of Sant'Ignazio di Loyola a Campo Marzio. These altars are the apotheosis of the Baroque-style-as-theatre.

Due to the vicissitudes at the end of the 18th century, which also saw the suppression of the Jesuit order, many of the church's possessions were lost. In 1814, the Society of Jesus restored, the church was returned to the Jesuits.

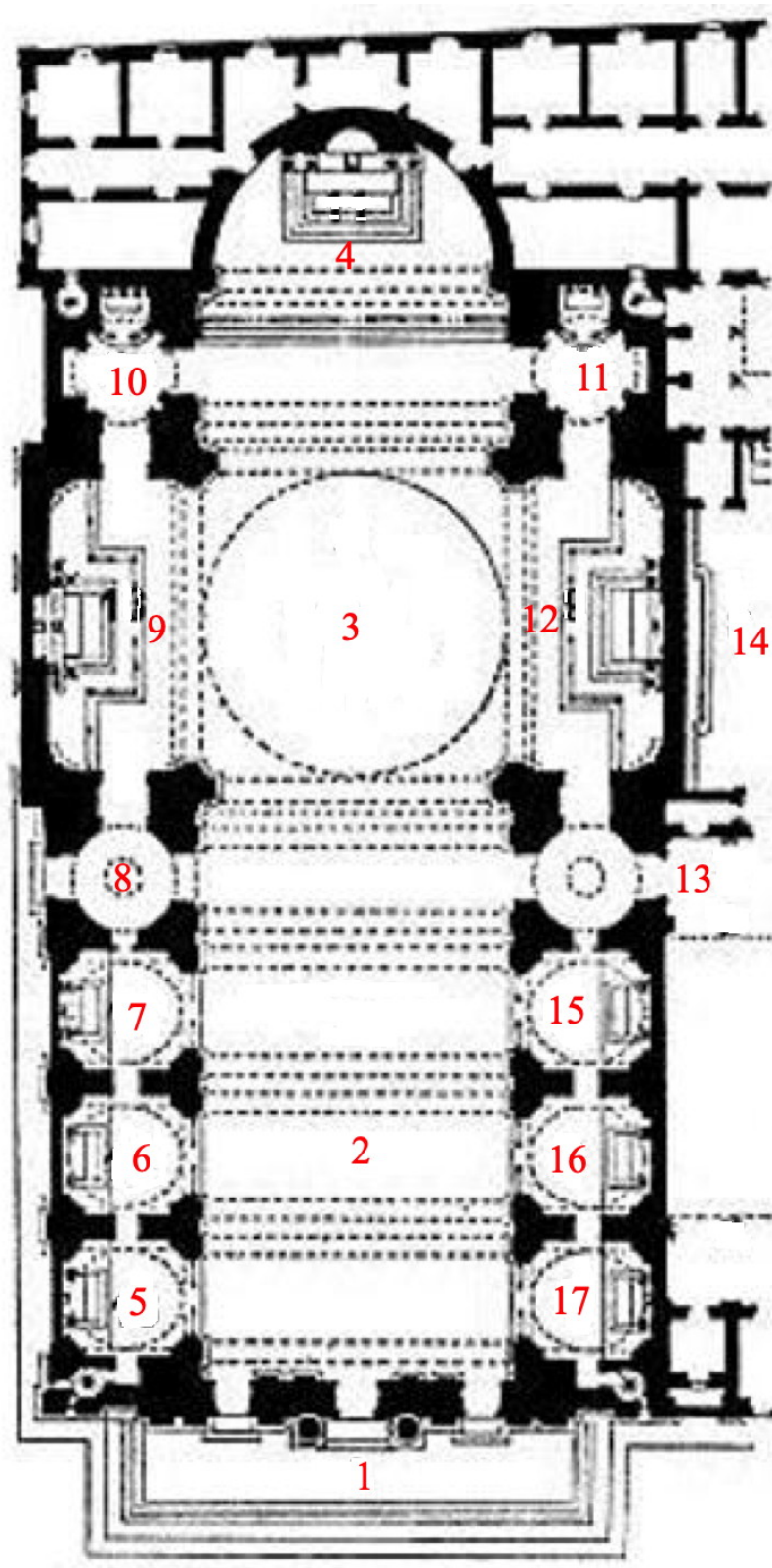
In 1840, there was an unfortunate re-ordering of the sanctuary and high altar by **Antonio Sarti**. In the process, the memorial to St Robert Bellarmine with a bust by **Bernini** was mutilated and, more seriously, the confessio or crypt chapel was destroyed. This had been dedicated to SS Abundius and Abundantius, and its ceiling had been frescoed with Evangelists and Doctors of the Church by **Baldassare Croce** in 1599. The fresco was transferred to the ceiling of the Chapel of the Sacred Heart.

From 1858 to 1861, the major decoration of the church was financed by the gift of Prince Alessandro Torlonia. The interior walls of the church were covered with the yellow marble casing which has been for seventy-five years so striking a feature of the building, and at the same time other internal modifications in the architecture were introduced, including the present high altar.

In 1873, together with almost all other Roman convents, the Jesuit convent here was sequestered by the government. However, the Jesuits were left in possession of the church, the Rooms of St Ignatius and enough accommodation to administer these. The convent has since been seriously altered and adapted for secular use.

The last notable alteration to the interior of the church was the remodelling of the Chapel of the Sacred Heart by **Aristide Leonori** in 1920.

Plan:



Exterior

Il Gesù stands in the heart of downtown Rome, on one of the city's busiest and noisiest intersections. It is a meeting place for all classes and generations of the city's population.

Façade (1)

Il Gesù's façade served as the model for Catholic churches for centuries to come. Giacomo della Porta, the same architect who completed Michelangelo's dome for St. Peter's, designed the façade

of Il Gesù. It is a variation of a classical temple front divided into two ranges with the upper story narrower to accommodate a clerestory with buttresses for the nave. Classical form is adapted to a medieval format.

The façade is constructed entirely of travertine and is adorned with Corinthian columns and pilasters. It is divided into two sections. In the lower register; double pilasters with Corinthian capitals divide the space, while half-pilasters delineate on the face of the church the dimensions of the nave within. In the niches of the lower range are travertine statues of *St. Ignatius* and *St. Francis Xavier*.

The upper section is joined to the lower section by a volute on each side. Pairs of pilasters also organize the facade's upper register. The upper-register baluster window, with its flanking columns, is also topped by a triangular tympanum. on either side of the window is an empty niche. Still higher, the large, crowning fronton bears the Farnese coat-of-arms, surmounted by a metallic cross.

The main door with a curvilinear tympanum and flanked by columns, is surmounted by a shield with the monogram of Jesus and a triangular tympanum. The entablature proclaims loudly that Card. Alexander Farnese built the church, with the family name front and center, above the main door. On either side of the shield are niches containing statues. On the left side is *St. Ignatius Loyola*, and on the right side is *St. Francis Xavier*, with his foot on a figure representing heresy.

In the center of the second story is a large window for papal appearances that would become a standard feature on all Roman churches, especially St. Peter's.

Interior

The interior consists of a wide, barrel-vaulted nave with three chapels on each side and twin circular spaces for access to the transept chapels, and a semicircular apse. The vault is interrupted by niches, in which there are windows with broken, curved tympana

Nave (2)

There is no narthex in which to linger: the visitor is projected immediately into the body of the church, a single nave without aisles, so that the congregation is assembled and attention is focused on the high altar. In place of aisles there are a series of identical chapels behind arched openings, to which entrance is controlled by decorative balustrades with gates. Each chapel is covered with a little oval dome. Low doorways connect the chapels with one another. Each archway piercing the walls and leading into the side chapels is enclosed with two pilasters ending in rich capitals. Transepts are reduced to stubs that emphasize the altars of their end walls. The church is decorated throughout with a profusion of rare marbles, gilt stuccos, frescoed barrel vaults enrich the ceiling, marble statuary and painting.

The most striking feature of the interior decoration is the large fresco on the vault of the nave, which is the grandiose *Triumph of the Name of Jesus* by **Giovanni Battista Gaulli**, who was known as il Baciccia. The painting, finished in December 1679, is illustrative of the words, "In nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, coelestium, terrestrium et infernorum", and is considered to be the Gaulli's masterpiece, and, in the opinion of some, the best painting of the sort in Rome, admirable for invention, composition, unity, and contrast of light and shade. The holy name of Jesus is encircled with celestial beings in a flood of glory; terrestrial beings follow next, floating on the clouds in every variety of attitude; and beneath are crowded the infernal beings, hurled in wild confusion in the bottomless abyss. The stuccos on the ceiling and sides of the windows were designed also by Gaulli and executed by **Antonio Raggi** and **Leonardo Retti**.

Dome

Over the square center of the Greek cross a round dome is elevated on a high drum (3), which, in turn, rests, at the intersection of the cross arms, on four arches and pendentives. The lines of the drum, punctuated by four large windows, are simple and elegant, and the design of the eight smaller windows above is quite original. Between the large windows of the drum there are niches containing statues.

Gaulli likewise painted the cupola, in which is represented the *Vision of the Glory of Heaven*. This included three great concentric rings, the lowest filled chiefly with Jesuit saints and martyrs, the next devoted to an angelic concert, and the last composed of cherubs miraculously bearing aloft the lantern, in which appears the dove of the Holy Ghost. Unfortunately, due to fading and crackling, the figures are difficult to see from the floor of the church. Gaulli designed and painted each of the four pendentives to depict a related group of four figures: prophets, patriarchs, evangelists, and doctors of the church, each assigned to its separate area.

The pipe organ was built by the Italian firm, Tamburini. It is a large three manual instrument with 5 divisions (pedal, choir, great, swell and antiphonal). The swell and choir are enclosed. The pipes are split into three separate locations within the church. Two ornamented facades flank the transept walls (Swell and Great on the left and Choir and Pedal on the right) and a small antiphonal division is located above the liturgical west entrance.

Sanctuary (4)

The sanctuary was re-ordered by Antonio Sarti in a project that lasted from 1834 to 1843. The apse, sheltering the high altar, is a semicircle, the diameter of which is a little less than the width of the nave, and of the arms of the Greek cross, which are covered by barrel vaults, which rise from a high attic. The apse ends in a semidome. Two small windows in the wall of the apse, under the entablature, and two oval windows in the attic between the entablature and the semidome of the apse allow a moderate light to fall upon the altar.

The first high altar is believed to have been designed by **Giacomo della Porta** in the 16th century. It was removed during the renovations in the 19th century and its tabernacle was subsequently purchased by archbishop Patrick Leahy for his new cathedral in Thurles, Ireland.

Three marble steps lead up to the sanctuary, which is enclosed with a handsome balustrade. The sanctuary is floored with rare marbles, and five marble steps lead up to the altar. The present high altar, designed by **Antonio Sarti**, was erected in 1843. It is in the Neo-Classical style, far removed from the Baroque opulence of the rest of the church. It is dominated by four columns of antique yellow under a neo-classical pediment. Above the pediment is the symbol of the Jesuits with a glory. **Sarti** also covered the apse with marble and made the drawings of the tabernacle. The tabernacle, constructed by **Wilhelm Hopfgarten** of Berlin of gilt metal, consisting of a square base and serves as the ciborium on which rises a beautiful circular peripteral temple of the Corinthian order. The columns of which enclose a circular aedicula, which turns on a pivot thus exposing to view the monstrance containing the Bl. Sacrament on occasion of solemn Benediction. The whole is crowned with an entablature and cupola, surmounted with the appropriate emblem of the pelican, feeding its young with its own blood.

To the rear of this golden temple rise four beautiful Corinthian columns, with gilt bases and capitals, resting on a lofty base, and sustaining an architrave and pediment. In the center between the columns is the altarpiece, a painting of the *Circumcision*, by **Alessandro Capalti**. The canvas covers a statue of the *Sacred Heart*. The hidden lifting mechanism of the painting (identical to the one in the Chapel of St. Ignatius) allows you to view the statue of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*.

In the triangular pediment is the triangular symbol of the Trinity, and above is the monogram IHS in an ornate gilded glory which contains angels. This is by **Rinaldo Rinaldi**, and the pair of angels on the ends of the pediment adoring it are by **Francesco Benaglia** and **Filippo Gnaccarini**. Above the pediment runs a handsome cornice. In the upper curve of the apse is a magnificent fresco, representing the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*. The fresco shows the scene described in the book of Revelation in which the Lamb that was slain from the beginning is enthroned, encompassed by angels offering incense, which are the prayers of the Saints, and by the twenty-four Elders, and prophetic emblem of the Great Christian Sacrifice. The apse fresco was painted by **G.B. Gaulli**, known as **Il Baciccia**, in 1679. He also executed the *Celestial Harmony* in the arch above the altar.

Of particular importance, above the door on the left, the bust of *Saint Robert Bellarmine* Jesuit, executed between 1622 and 1624 by **Gian Lorenzo Bernini**. Above the door to the right, the bust of the Jesuit saint *Giuseppe Pignatelli*, by **Antonio Solà**.

Side Chapels

The side chapels will be described in a clockwise fashion beginning from the left rear.

Cappella di San Francesco Borgia (5)

The first chapel to the left, originally dedicated to the apostles, is now dedicated to St. Francis [Borgia](#), the former Spanish Duke of Gandia, who renounced his title to enter the Jesuit order, and become its third "Preposito generale". The chapel is adorned with two columns of giallo antico.

The frescoes are as follows:

- The altarpiece: *Saint Francesco Borgia in Prayer* by **Fr. Pozzo**, surrounded by works of **Giovanni Gagliardi** of some martyrs of the Society of Jesus
- On the right: *The Conversion of S. Paul*, by **Pier Francesco Mola**
- On the left: *St. Peter in jail baptizes saints Processo & Martiniano*, by **Mola**
- On the ceiling, *The Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles*, by **Mola**
- In the right lunette: *The Martyrdom of St. Paul* with allegorical *Religion* and *Charity* are works of **Nicolò Circignani (Il Pomarancio)**.
- In the left lunette: *The Martyrdom of St. Peter*, with allegorical *Faith* and *Hope*, by **Circignani**
- In the four ovals, *The four Theological Virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude*, by **Mola**

There are four monuments from the second half of the 19th century for members of the house of Marchesi Ferrari. On the balustrade in front of this, and the other nave chapels, are marble balls also of yellow breccia. The walls of this and the other chapels are decorated with various alabasters, verde antique, nero antico and other rare marbles.

Cappella della Sacra Famiglia (6)

The second chapel on the left is dedicated to the Holy Family, commissioned by patron Cardinal Carlo Cerri, who worked for the Barberini family. The altar is by **Andrea Pozzo**, S.J. The two columns that adorn the altar are of Sicilian jasper. The front of the altar consists of Sicilian jasper, verde antique and nero antico. The frescoes in the chapel are all by **Niccolò Circignani**, and two paintings are by **Giovanni Francesco Romanelli**:

- The altarpiece: *The Holy Family*, the text reads "He was obedient to them"
- On the left: *Presentation of Jesus to the Temple*, by **Romanelli**
- On the right: *Adoration by the Magi*, by **Romanelli**
- On the vault: *Celestial celebration on the nativity of Christ*
- On the right lunette, *Annunciation to the Shepherds*
- On the left lunette, *Massacre of the Innocents*
- On the pendentives: *David, Isaiah, Zaccarias and Baruc*
- In the niche to the left of the altar is a statue of *Justice*, by **Cosimo Fancelli**
- On the right niche is another of *Fortitude*, by his brother **Giacomo Fancelli**
- In the two other niches: *Temperance* and *Prudence* are by **Domenico Guidi** and **Giovanni Lanzone**

Of the four tombs against the walls, three are of male members of the Casa Cerri; patrons of the 18th-century chapel with ties to the Barberini family of Pope Urban VIII. This is of Archbishop Antonio, his son Cardinal Carlo and another sibling. The fourth is a female member of the Casa Martinelli.

There is a basin between the inner and outer balustrade, which indicates that this chapel is probably used for baptisms. There is also an urn under the altar.

Cappella della Santissima Trinità (7)

The third chapel to the left is the Holy Trinity Chapel, commissioned initially by the clerical patron Pirro Taro, is named due to the main altarpiece. The two columns that adorn the altar are of corallina, with gilt bases and capitals; and the front of the altar consists of jasper, verde antique and nero antico. The reliquary on the altar holds the right arm of the polish Jesuit St. Andrew Bobola, martyred in 1657 and canonized by Pius XI in 1938. The frescoes completed mainly by three painters and assistants during 1588-1589.

- The altarpiece: *The Bl. Trinity with the Patriarch Prophets, Apostles, Confessors, Virgins and Martyrs*, by **Francesco Bassano the Younger**
- On the right wall: *Baptism of Christ*, by **Giovanni Battista Fiammeri**

- On the left wall: *Transfiguration*, by **Durante Alberti**
- On the left lunette, *Creation of the angels*, by **Fiammeri**
- On the right lunette, *Abraham with three angels*, by **Alberti**
- On the spandrels: *Angels with scrolls inscribed with the Divine attributes of Immutability, Eternity, Immensity, Veracity, Goodness, Providence, Mercy, Justice, Omnipotence, Wisdom and Love*, by **Ventura Salimbeni**
- On the ceiling: *The Creation of man and beasts*, by **Fiammeri**
- In the left oval: *God the Father behind a chorus of angels*, by **Salimbeni**

Between the chapels of St. Ignatius and the Trinity is the side entrance (8) of the church. In the vestibule is a large crucifix that had previously been mounted in the ante sacristy. This may have been the crucifix that was over the original altar before the 18th century rebuild. Over the entrance is the name and coat-of-arms of Prince Alessandro Torlonia, who finances the 19th century redecoration. Over the inner door of which is a painting of *The Annunciation*; and over the opposite door is another of *The Nativity of our Lord*, both by unknown artists. The dome is elaborately stuccoed and gilt.

Cappella di Sant' Ignazio (9)

The imposing St. Ignatius of Loyola Chapel, in the left transept, is the church's masterpiece, the most splendidly extravagant of Baroque altars in Rome. The chapel, designed by **Andrea Pozzo**, S. J., with some assistance from **Carlo Fontana**, in 1695-1699, houses the saint's tomb. More than 100 artists have contributed to the chapel; among the most well-known are **Pierre Le Gros**, **Bernardino Ludovisi**, **Il Lorenzone** and **Jean-Baptiste Théodon**.

Above the altar four fluted columns, gilt and inlaid with lapis lazuli, which surround a large niche, incrusting with alabaster, lapis lazuli, jasper and gilt bronze, within which stands the colossal statue of the Saint on a superb pedestal of alabaster, lapis lazuli and gilt bronze. The original statue was made by **Pierre Le Gros** in 1698 entirely of silver. The silver casting was done by **Giovanni Federico Ludovici**. But in 1797 it was damaged after the French invasion. There are two versions of the story: either it was damaged by French soldiers, or Pope Pius IV had some of the silver melted down to satisfy Napoleon's greedy demands after the Treaty of Tolentino. It was later partly reconstructed, probably by **Adamo Tadolini** working in the studio of Antonio Canova, who used bronze, plated in silver, gilt and precious stones. A large canvas of the *Saint receiving the ChiRho monogram from the celestial resurrected Christ*, attributed to **Pozzo**, conceals the statue. The large painting as well as the lowering mechanism was restored in 2007. Each afternoon at 5:30 in a mini catechetical "concert" of recorded baroque music with light and audio narration on the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the painting is lowered to reveal the statue.

Above the niche are two marble angels, bearing the monogram of the name of Jesus in rock crystal, on a shield of lapis lazuli. In the tympanum is a group of the *Holy Trinity* in statuary marble, enthroned on clouds, and encircled with rays of glory, represented by gilt bronze. The Eternal Father, the Holy Ghost and the angel supporting the globe of lapis lazuli are by **Bernardino Ludovisi**; and the Redeemer, holding in his hand a gilt bronze cross, is by **Lorenzo Ottoni**.

The frieze running round beneath the cornice is of alabaster and gilt bronze. Above the cornice are half figures in plaster, consisting of angels bearing emblems of the Church. To the right of the window is a relief, representing *St. Ignatius writing his exercises in the grotto of Manresa*; to the left is the *Saint indicting the constitutions of the Society*; to the right over the organ is a relief of the *Saint in Ecstasy*; and to the left over the choir is the *Liberation of a possessed person by the Saint*; and in the center is a fresco representing the *Saint in Glory*, by **Gaulli**. Over each of the two lateral doors are two marble angels, guarding the monogram of the Holy Name of Jesus, inscribed on a ground of lapis lazuli, encircled with a glory: those to the left are by **Francesco Maratta** and **Lorenzo Ottoni**; and those to the right are by **Camillo Rusconi**.

The pedestals of the columns and the base of the niche are of verde antique, richly incrusting with gilt-bronze and marble reliefs illustrating scenes from Loyola's ministry. The reliefs are as follows:

- the first to the left: *Conflagration Extinguished by the Intercession of the Saint*, by **René Frémin**;
- the second, *a Possessed person Exorcised by the Saint*; modeled by **Angelo de' Rossi**, and cast by

Bernardino Ludovisi;

- the third, *a Nun Restored Instantaneously to Perfect Health by Ignatius*, modeled and cast by **Peter Paul Reiff**;
- the first on the right pedestal is *S. Philip Neri meeting the Saint, and observing his head encircled with a glory*; modeled by **Francesco Nuvolone**;
- next, *the blind restored to sight and the dead to life by the oil of the lamp burning before his tomb*, modeled by **Frémin**, and cast by **Antonio Cordieri**;
- and the third is *the liberation of Christian slaves through his intercession*, modeled by Pierre-Étienne Monnot;
- in the center, over the altar, is a larger relief, also in gilt bronze, representing the *Apparition of S. Peter to S. Ignatius, after he had been wounded at Pampeluna*, modeled and cast by **Lorenzo Merlini**.

On either side of the altar are large marble tableaux of the triumphs of *Faith* and *Religion*. The group on the left is *Triumph of Faith over Idolatry* by **Jean-Baptiste Théodon**. Above this group is another representing *St. Ignatius, receiving the approbation of the Society from Paul III*, by **Angelo de Rossi**. On the right, *Religion Overthrowing Heresy and Hatred* by **Le Gros**, and above it is a group in relief of the *Canonization of S. Ignatius*, by **Bernardio Cametti**.

The altar was designed by **Pietro da Cortona** and built by **Giuseppe Rusconi**. The small tabernacle over the altar consists of alabaster, agate, lapis lazuli, and its door of solid silver is adorned with precious stones and with a silver gilt portrait of the *Risen Savior*. A gilded bronze urn from 1637 by **Alessandro Algardi** underneath the altar holds the body of St. Ignatius Loyola.

The altar-rail in the chapel is generally recognized as a masterpiece of its type. The bronze and marble balustrade is 58 feet across the chapel. The entire balustrade rests on a raised step or platform of verde antica which covers a whole gamut of greens, from very light to very dark.

It was designed by **Fr. Pozzo** (or possibly Carlo Fontana) and executed by a number of artisans and sculptors. The railing was completed in 1699.

Cappella della Madonna della Strada (10)

The small chapel on the far end of the nave, to the left of the high altar, is dedicated to Our Lady of the Wayside. The name derives from a venerated 13th century icon, from the façade of the now-lost Church in the piazza Altieri. The icon, now over the altar, was venerated by St. Ignatius. The image was cleaned and restored in 2010. The interior is designed **Giacomo della Porta** and decorated by Jesuit artist **Giuseppe Valeriano**, with the collaboration of **Scipione Pulzone**. The paintings represent scenes from the life of the Virgin. The cupola frescoes were painted by **G. P. Pozzi**, an artist active during the pontificate of Sixtus V. Its interior is adorned with eight columns. two of breccia corallina, at its entrance two of giallo antico opposite; two, to the right, of porta santa; and two to the left of African marble. The altar is adorned with two small columns of Sicilian jasper. The frescoes are as follows:

- On the left wall of the entrance: *The Assumption*
- On the right wall of the entrance: *The Immaculate Conception*
- On the right wall of the chapel: *The Nativity of the Bl. Virgin*
- To the right of the altar: *The Bl. Virgin's Presentation in the temple*
- To the left of the altar: *The Bl. Virgin's Espousal*
- In the niche to the left: *The Annunciation*
- To the left of the entrance: *The Visitation*
- On the domed ceiling: *Choirs of Angels*

The two lateral and the four central paintings serve as screens to so many depositaries of sacred relics. The floor is covered with rare marble and studded with stars of gilded bronze.

Cappella della Sacro Cuore (11)

The last chapel on the far end of the nave, to the right of the high altar, is the chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The chapel is attributed to **Giacomo della Porta**, under the direction of the Jesuit **Giuseppe Valeriano**. The chapel was originally dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi, which explains the five oil paintings on wood and canvas, of episodes from the life of St. Francis, by at least two

painters **Giuseppe Peniz**, little-known Flemish or German artist and **Paul Bril** from Antwerp. Three other painted tablets are on display in the small museum next to the sacristy today. The frescoes are by **Baldassare Croce**, 1599. In the chapel dome are painted figures of the *Evangelists and Doctors of the Church*. In the vault of the vestibule leading from the transept to the chapel is the *Temptation of St. Francis*.

Subsequently, increasing the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, it was decided to convert the chapel into a sanctuary of Italian families consecrated to the Sacred Heart. The altarpiece of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, which is painted on a copper plate, is well known from reproductions in many Catholic homes, was made by **Pompeo Batoni** in 1760.

Chapel of Saint Francis Xavier (12)

The large chapel in the right transept was designed by **Pietro da Cortona**, originally commissioned by Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Negrone. It is adorned, among other rich marbles, with four columns of a beautiful breccia, resembling Sicilian jasper, which support a majestic entablature. Above the altarpiece is a stucco relief representing *Francis Xavier welcomed to heaven by angels*, surrounded by a glory.

The silver oval reliquary conserves part of the Saint's right arm, his other remains are interred in the Jesuit church in [Goa](#). Above the oval appears an angel in gilt bronze with a lily in the right hand. The door of the tabernacle is of solid silver; and on it is a beautiful relief of the Prayer in the garden.

The altarpiece shows *Death of Francis Xavier in Shanghuan Island* by **Carlo Maratta**

- Center of the ceiling arch: *Apotheosis of St. Francis*, by **Andrea Carlone**
- The right of the arch soffit: *Baptism of an Indian princess*, by **Carlone**
- The left of the arch soffit: *St. Francis Preaching*, by **Carlone**
- The right of the window: *Repulsion of the Badages in Travancor by his words alone*, by **Carlone**
- The left of the window: *Saint Recovering a Crucifix at Sea*, by **Carlone**

Over the arch to the right is the small choir, and over that to the left is an organ. On the beautiful balustrade in front of the altar are four bronze angels bearing lighted lamps, and on the credence tables are small bronze statues of two Apostles.

In the passage between the transept and the sacristy anteroom, the monument of Stephen Tempest Esq., of Yorkshire, who died in Rome in 1822, aged 31. The simple memorial is by **Antonio Canova**.

Sacristy

The circular vestibule next leads into the outer room of the sacristy (13) and the Jesuit Professed House, where the Jesuits live. Two small marble reliefs in the narrow passageway between the chapel and the entrance atrium of the sacristy depict *The Angel Appearing to Hagar* and *The Angel Converting the Centurion Cornelius*. On the walls of the vestibule are six 19th century memorial with busts, including one memorial for a child.

In the outer room of the sacristy is the church book shop. Over the door to the Professed House, which is opposite the entry from the church, is a painting representing the *Canonization of St. Francis Borgia*. To the left of that painting is another representing *Paul III approving the Society of Jesus*. Over the opposite door is another representing the *Canonization of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier*. Next to that is a painting of *Cardinals Alessandro and Odoardo Farneses*.

The vast sacristy (14) was designed by **Girolamo Rainaldi** to be built for Card. Odoardo Farnese in the early 17th century. Large walnut cabinets and armoires line the walls, surmounted by statues of the apostles, by woodcarver **Francesco Brunelli**. The *Adoration of the Bl. Sacrament*, on the ceiling of the sacristy, is by **Agostino Ciampelli**; and the portrait of *St. Ignatius*, over the altar, is ascribed to **Diongio Carani**. Many of the rich vestments and vessels kept in the sacristy were lost during the Napoleonic occupation of Rome at the end of the 1790's.

Cappella degli Angeli (15)

The third chapel to the right is dedicated to the angels. The Jesuits were extremely empathic toward these heavenly creatures. The chapel is adorned with two small columns of verde antique. The

altarpiece and other paintings are by Federico Zuccari. Decoration of the chapel's arch, pendentives and lunettes are by Ventura Salimbeni, completed in 1600. The four angels in the niches of the pilasters were by Silla Longhi and Flaminio Vacca. Stucco angels in the vault are by Camillo Mariani. Over the altar-table is a small painting of *St. John Nepomucene*.

- The altarpiece, in oil on canvas: *St. Michael the Archangel and the Angels worshipping Trinity*
- Dome fresco: *The Assumption of the Virgin Towards Her Coronation by the Trinity*
- The lateral fresco to the right: *The Defeat of Rebellious Angels by St. Michael*
- The lateral fresco to the left: *Angels liberate souls from Purgatory*
- The pendentive to the right above the altar: *Raphael and young Tobias*
- The pendentive to the left above the altar: *Vision of Jacob*
- The pendentive to the left above the entrance: *Habakkuk Transported to Daniel in the Lions' Den*
- The pendentive to the right above the entrance: *The three children protected by angels in the fiery furnace*
- The lunette to the left: *The Penitence of the Prodigal Son*
- The lunette to the right: *Angels Collecting the Praises of the Saints for Presentation to the Lord*
- On the soffit of the entrance arch are three scenes:
 - *Lot Fleeing Sodom*
 - *The Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib (?)*
 - *The Healing of Tobit*

On the walls are four antique marble fragments of garlands of flowers and fruit from the Baths of Titus, to which sculpted cherubs' heads were added in the 1600's. On either side of the altar are two bronze angels holding a candelabra.

Cappella della Passione (16)

The next chapel is that of the Passion, the altar of which is adorned with two porphyry columns. The altarpiece used to be a large well carved gilt crucifix, but has been replaced by a later painting. The paintings in the chapel were all designed by Giuseppe Valeriani, S.J., and painted by Gaspare Celio:

- The altarpiece: *the Disposition from the Cross*
- To the right of the altar: *Christ crowned with thorns*
- To the left of the altar: *the Flagellation*
- The lateral painting to the left: *Jesus fallen beneath the Cross*
- The lateral painting to the right: *The Crucifixion*
- In the right lunette: *Christ praying in the garden of Gethsemane*
- In the left lunette: *the treason of Judas*
- In the four ovals above: *The Four Evangelists*
- Six canvases on the pilasters:
 - Christ at the column,*
 - Christ before the guards,*
 - Christ before Herod,*
 - Ecce Homo,*
 - Exit to Calvary, and*
 - Crucifixion.*
- On the ceiling vault: *The Triumph of the Cross*
- To the right of the entrance: *Isaias, and Christ clothed in fool's garments*
- To the left of the entrance: *Jeremiah and Christ blindfolded*

Below the altar is a bronze urn with the remains of 18th century Jesuit St. Giuseppe Pignatelli, canonized by Pius XII in 1954. Memorial medallions on the wall commemorate the burials of Jan Roothaan (1785-1853), and Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991), the 21st and 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

Cappella di Sant'Andrea (17)

The first chapel to the right of the nave, so named because the church previously on the site, which had to be demolished to make way for the Jesuit church, was dedicated to St. Andrew. All the painted works were completed by the Florentine Agostino Ciampelli:

- The altarpiece: *the Martyrdom of St Andrew*
- On the wall to the right: *the Martyrdom of St. Stephen*
- On the wall to the left: *the Martyrdom of St. Laurence*
- In the lunette to the right: *the Martyrdom of St. Catharine*

- In the lunette to the left: *the Martyrdom of St. Agnes*
- On the vault: *Glory of the Virgin surrounded by martyred saints Clemente, Ignatius of Antioch, Cipriano, and Policarpo*
- To the right of the altar: *St. Anastasia*
- To the left of the altar: *St. Cecilia*
- To the right of the entrance: *SS. Christina and Margaret*
- To the left of the entrance: *SS. Agatha and Lucia*
- In the pendentives: *male martyrs Saints Pancrazio, Celso, Vito, and Agapito*
- The lunettes are frescoed with *Saints Agnes & Lucy face the storm* and *St. Stephen and the Deacon St. Lawrence*.

The altar is adorned with two small columns of a yellow breccia.

Relics:

Saint Francis [Xavier](#) (1506-1552)

Saint Andrzej [Bobola](#) (1591-1657)

Artists and Architects:

Adamo [Tadolini](#) (1727-1813), Italian sculptor

Agostino [Ciampelli](#) (1565-1630), Italian painter of the Baroque period, from Florence

Alessandro [Algardi](#) (1598-1654), Italian high- Baroque sculptor, architect

Alessandro [Capalti](#) (1807-1868), Italian painter

Andrea [Carlone](#) (1626-1697), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Andrea [Lilio](#) [aka L'Anconitano] (1555-1642), Italian painter

Andrea [Pozzo](#), S. J. (1645-1709), Italian Jesuit Brother, Baroque painter and architect, decorator, stage designer, and art theoretician

Angelo [de Rossi](#) (1671-1715), Italian sculptor

Antonio [Canova](#) (1757-1822), Italian Neoclassical sculptor

Antonio Cordieri (18th cent.), sculptor

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

Antonio [Sarti](#) (1797-1880), Italian architect

Antonio [Solá](#) (1780-1861), Spanish Neoclassical sculptor

Aristide [Leonori](#) (1856-1928), Italian architect and engineer

Baldassare [Croce](#) (1558-1628), Italian painter of the late-Mannerist period

Bartolomeo [Ammannati](#) (1511-1592), Italian architect

Bernardio [Cametti](#) (1669-1736), Italian sculptor

Bernardino [Ludovisi](#) (1694-1749), Italian sculptor

Camillo [Mariani](#) (1565-1611), Italian Mannerist sculptor

Camillo [Rusconi](#) (1658-1728), Italian sculptor of the late Baroque

Carlo [Fontana](#) (1634-1714), Italian architect of the Late Baroque period

Carlo [Maratta](#) (1625-1713), Italian Late Baroque Classical painter

Cesare Gabrini (17th cent), Italian stuccoist

Cosimo [Fancelli](#) (c.1620-1688), Italian sculptor of the Baroque period from Rome

Diongio Carani (19th cent), painter

Domenico [Guidi](#) (1625-1701), Italian sculptor of the Baroque period

Durante [Alberti](#) (1538-1613), Italian painter of the late-Renaissance period.

Federico [Zuccari](#) (1541-1609), Italian Mannerist painter and architect

Filippo [Gnaccarini](#) (1804-1875), Italian Neo-Classic sculptor

Flaminio [Vacca](#) or Vacchi (1538-1605), Italian sculptor

Francesco [Bassano](#) the Younger (1549-1592), Italian painter

Francesco Benaglia (1787-1846), Italian painter, sculptor

Francesco [Brunelli](#) (1572-1635), Italian Jesuit woodcarver

Francesco [Maratti](#) (1669-1719), Italian sculptor

Francesco [Nuvolone](#) (17th cent.), Italian sculptor

G. P. Pozzi (1561-1589), Italian painter

Gaspere [Celio](#) (1571-1640), Italian painter of the late-Mannerist and early-Baroque period

Giacomo Antonio [Fancelli](#) (1619-1671), Italian sculptor, brother of Cosimo

Gian Lorenzo [Bernini](#) (1598-1680), Italian Baroque sculptor and architect [also see [here](#)]

Girolamo [Rainaldi](#) (1570-1655), Italian Mannerist architect

Giacomo (Jacopo) [Barozzi da Vignola](#) (1507-1573), one of the great Italian architects of 16th century Mannerism

Giacomo [della Porta](#) (c.1533-1602), Italian sculptor and architect
 Giovanni Battista [Fiammeri](#) (1530-1606), Florentine Jesuit painter and sculptor
 Giovanni Battista [Gauli](#) [aka *Baciccia*] (1639-1709), Italian painter of the High Baroque
 Giovanni de Rosis (1538-1610), Jesuit architect
 Giovanni [de' Vecchi](#) [aka *dal Borgo*] (1536-1614), Italian painter of the Renaissance period
 Giovanni Federico Ludovici (18th cent.), Italian sculptor
 Giovanni Francesco [Romanelli](#) (1610-1662), Italian Baroque painter from Viterbo
 Giovanni [Gagliardi](#) (act. c.1860-1908), Italian painter
 Giovanni Lanzone (18th cent.), Italian sculptor
 Giovanni Tristani (d. 1575), Jesuit architect
 Giuseppe Peniz (17th century), Flemish or German painter
 Giuseppe [Rusconi](#) (1688-1758), Italian sculptor
 Giuseppe [Valeriano](#), S.J. (1526-1596), Italian painter and architect
 Jean-Baptiste [Théodon](#) (1645-1713), French sculptor
 Leonardo [Retti](#) (1670-1709), Italian sculptor
 Lorenzo Merlini (1666-1739), Italian sculptor
 Lorenzo [Ottoni](#) [aka *Il Lorenzone*] (1658-1736), Italian sculptor
 Niccolò [Circignani](#) [aka *Il Pomarancio*] (1520-1597), Italian late-Renaissance / Mannerist painter
 Paul [Brill](#) (1554-1626), Flemish Baroque painter
 Pier Francesco [Mola](#) [aka *Il Ticinese*] (1612-1666), Italian painter of the High Baroque
 Pierre-Étienne [Monnot](#) (1657-1733), French sculptor in a late-Baroque period
 Pierre [Le Gros](#) the Younger (1666-1719), French sculptor from Paris
 Pietro Berrettini [da Cortona](#) (1597-1669), Italian Baroque painter and architect
 Peter Paul Reiff (18th cent.), sculptor
 Pompeo [Batoni](#) (1708-1787), Italian painter
 René (Renato) [Frémin](#) (1672-1744), French sculptor
 Rinaldo [Rinaldi](#) (1793-1873), Italian sculptor of the Neoclassic period
 Scipione [Pulzone](#) of Gaeta, [aka *il Gaetano*] (1550-1598), Italian late Renaissance-Mannerist painter
 Silla [Longhi](#) da Veggiù (c.1550-1617), Italian sculptor
 Ventura [Salimbeni](#) (1557-1613), Italian painter from Siena
 Wilhelm [Hopfgarten](#) (1789-1860), German sculptor

Burials:

Saint Ignatius [Loyola](#) (1491-1556)
 Saint Giuseppe [Pignatelli](#) (1737-1811)

 Giacomo Cardinal [SAVELLI](#), (1523-1587) {also see [here](#)}
 Alessandro Cardinal [FARNESE](#), *juniore*, (1520-1589) {also see [here](#)}
 Buried in the tomb he had built in front of the main altar
 Jerzy Cardinal [RADZIWIŁŁ](#), (1556-1600) {also see [here](#)}
 Buried in front of the chapel of S. Francesco d'Assisi
 Simeone Cardinal [TAGLIAVIA D'ARAGONIA](#), (1550-1604)
 Flaminio Cardinal [PIATTI](#), (1552-1611)
 Lorenzo Cardinal [BIANCHETTI](#), (1545-1612)
 Michelangelo Cardinal [TONTI](#), (1566-1622)
 Odoardo Cardinao [FARNESE](#), (1573-1626) {also see [here](#)}
 Buried in front of the main altar
 Carlo Emmanuele Cardinal [PIO](#), (1585-1641) {also see [here](#)}
 Buried next to the main altar
 Ottaviano Cardinal [RAGGI](#), (1592-1643)
 Vallicella Pier Luigi Cardinal [CARAFA](#), *seniore*, (1581-1655)
 Buried on the right side of the main door
 Juan Cardinal de [LUGO Y DE QUIROGA](#), S.J., (1583-1660)
 Buried near the tomb of St. Ignatius Loyola
 Marcantonio Cardinal [FRANCIOTTI](#), (1592-1666)
 Girolamo Cardinal [FARNESE](#), (1599-1668)
 Giovanni Stefano Cardinal [DONGHI](#), (1608-1669)
 Buried in the chapel of the *Madonna*
 Angelo Cardinal [CELSI](#), (1600-1671)

Buried in the tomb of his family
Francesco Maria Cardinal [BRANCACCIO](#), (1592-1675)
Carlo Cardinal [CARAFA DELLA SPINA](#), (1611-1680)
Johann Eberhard Cardinal [NIDHARD](#), S.J., (1607-1681)
Buried in the tomb of Cardinal Juan de Lugo
Carlo Cardinal [PIO](#), iuniore, (1622-1689)
Buried in the tomb of his uncle Cardinal Carlo Emmanuele Pio
Carlo Cardinal [CERRI](#), (1610-1690)
Gianfrancesco Cardinal [NEGRONI](#), (1629-1713)
Buried in the chapel of S. Francesco Zaverio
Galeazzo Cardinal [MARESCOTTI](#), (1627-1726)
Buried in his family's tomb
Álvaro Cardinal [CIENFUEGOS VILLAZÓN](#), S.J., (1657-1739)
Buried in the chapel of the *Madonna*
Giovanni Battista Cardinal [SPINOLA](#), (1681-1752)
Buried in the tomb of the Negorni family, without any funeral memorial
Giuseppe Cardinal [ALBERGHINI](#), (1770-1847)
Ignazio Cardinal [ALBERGHINI](#), (1789-1869)

Archbishop Antonio Cerri

Jan [Roothaan](#), S.J. (1785-1853)
21st Superior General of the Society of Jesus
Pedro [Arrupe](#), S.J. (1907 -1991)
28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus
Stephen Tempest, Esq, of Yorkshire (d. 1822)

Location:

Piazza del Gesù, 00186 Roma
Open 7.00am to 12.30pm and 4.00pm to 7.45pm
Coordinates: [41°53'46"N 12°28'47"E](#)

Info:

Contacts
Telephone: 0039 06 697001
Fax: 0039 06 69700263
Web site: www.chiesadelgesu.org

Opening times

Every day 07.00am-12.30pm 04pm-07.45pm

Camere di Sant'Ignazio

Monday to Saturday 04.00pm-06.00pm
Sunday and Holidays 10.00am-12.00am

Masses:

Weekdays 07.00am, 08.00am, 09.00am, 10.00am, 12.00am, 07.00pm
Sunday and Holidays 08.00am, 09.00am, 10.00am, 11.00am, 12.30pm, 07.00pm

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