

Sant'Andrea della Valle



Sant'Andrea della Valle (St. Andrew of the Valley) is one of the three great 17th century preaching churches (the others being the Gesù and the Chiesa Nuova) built by Counter-Reformation religious orders in the Centro Storico. It is also a titular church, and a minor basilica. The dedication is to St Andrew the Apostle. (1)

History

According to the Acts of the Apostles, Sebastian was a brave Roman soldier, captain of the Praetorian under Diocletian (280). A fervent Christian, assisted the martyrs in prison, and for this reason was put to death by Diocletian. He was executed by archers in the Christian iconography is depicted pierced by numerous arrows. Legend has it that the Roman matron Lucina found his body in a sewer right where the church now stands. In the fourth century a small church was built on the site dedicated to *San Sebastiano*, which became a place of frequent pilgrimages.

The Theatines were founded in 1534 by a group of clerics centered on Cardinal Giovanni Pietro Caraffa, later Pope Paul IV, who was bishop of Chieti. Notable among them was St Cajetan, who became the second superior and is regarded as a joint founder. The motivation was to oppose the spread of Lutheran doctrines by training the faithful in the practice of right morality especially by means of preaching, and this addressed a pressing need. The new congregation decided to name itself after the city of Cheti -Theate in Latin- and it received massive benefactions. (1)

Next to the old church of San Sebastiano was the palazzo of the Siense Piccolomini family, built by

Pope Pius II in the mid 15th century when he was still a cardinal, which in 1582 was given to the Theatine Fathers by the Donna Costanza Piccolomini d'Aragona, duchess of Amalfi and descendant of the family of Pope Pius II, to be their first convent at Rome. They were asked to build a church dedicated to St Andrew, patron of Amalfi. The Theatines moved to San Silvestro al Quirinale a few years later, when Sixtus V had the road widened and demolished the church and palace - but a church dedicated to St Andrew was still built, and still controlled by the Theatines. (1) (2)

Concerning the name "della Valle", some sources state that the church was built near the valley which was there formed by the [Euripus of Agrippa](#). Another source says that that is false, that the church was named after Cardinal [Andrea della Valle](#) (d. 1534 and buried in S.M.in Aracoli (also see [here](#))), who "ordered construction of Palazzo Della Valle, the church of S. Andrea della Valle and Teatro Della Valle". If this was true, it would be the only Roman church named after its benefactor. This statement is also strange in that the church was actually built 70 years after the Cardinal's death. (1)

Work initially started under the financial patronage of Cardinal [Alfonso Gesualdo](#). In 1590 he had invited designs from two of his favored architects, **Giacomo della Porta** and **Pier Paolo Olivieri**. The latter was to be more involved in the proposed decoration, as he was also a sculptor in the late Roman Mannerist style. The foundations of the church and convent were then laid in 1591, and the main walls went up from 1594 to 1596. When **Olivieri** died in 1599 the work was continued by **Francesco Grimaldi**. By 1599 the fabric of the chapels and the nave vault were completed, but then the death of Cardinal Gesualdo in 1603 caused a financial crisis and work stopped for five years. (1) (2)

However, the Theatines found another patron in Cardinal [Alessandro Peretti-Montalto](#), grand-nephew of Pope Sixtus V. He provided a then enormous endowment, which meant that in 1608 work could restart to a more grandiose plan which was mainly the work of **Carlo Maderno**. This included the spectacular dome, second in size only to that of St. Peter's, was completed in 1622. The decorations of the lantern was the work of a young stonemason, **Francesco Borromini**. The vaults and roofs were finally all finished in 1625, and the interior decoration of the church was finally completed by 1650 when it was consecrated. There was then another pause in construction, because the Theatines had managed to spend Cardinal Peretti's endowment before providing a façade. (1) (2)

For the jubilee of 1650, the church was consecrated although the facade was not completed. However, the façade was finally started in 1655 and finished in 1665 by **Carlo Rainaldi**, to **Maderno's** original design with some artistic improvements. It was paid for by Cardinal [Francesco Peretti di Montalto](#), nephew of Cardinal Alessandro, and Pope Alexander VII Chigi also showed an interest which is why he is advertised in the dedicatory inscription. (1) (2)

The church and convent functioned undisturbed until 1873, when the Theatines were dispossessed by the Italian government in common with all other religious orders in Rome. However, they were allowed to continue administering the church and were permitted the use of a few rooms. In the 20th century the convent became the order's general headquarters again, which it remains. (1)

The internal decoration of the church remains much as it was in the 17th century, apart from the frescoed nave ceiling vault which was executed in the late 19th century and some of the chapels. Restorations of the church took place in 1869, 1887, 1905 and 1912. The decorative scheme focuses on the life and death of St Andrew, but also very strongly on Our Lady. The façade was cleaned and restored in 2012. (1)

The first act of *Tosca*, the opera by Puccini premiered in 1900, is set in this church. The Capella Attavanti which is the setting of the first act is, however, a poetic innovation. This has not stopped people such as tour-guides renaming the Cappella Barberini, first on the left, as the Cappella della *Tosca*. (1)

Apart from this church, the Theatines have one other in Rome which is the modern one of San Gaetano. (1)

Exterior

The body of the edifice is in pink brick, and the finer architectural details are in white travertine limestone. The roofs are pitched and tiled, and are hipped over the ends of the transept. (1)

The brickwork is obvious if you look at the side walls, which are identically treated. Three large lunette windows which light the side chapels are separated by shallow, broad brick pilasters which are vertically stepped, while the side entrance has a square window above. The doorcase of the entrance is surmounted by a triangular pediment into which a tondo displaying a cross is inserted; the Latin cross is the emblem of the Theatines. (1)

Façade

The facade is characterized by marked chiaroscuro, due to the abundant presence of columns and cornices with strong projection. In the façade there are the two coats of arms (pope above, the titular cardinal below).

Rainaldi's 17th century Baroque two-storey façade is an add-on, and does not relate well to the edifice behind. In fact, the entire pediment protrudes beyond the ridge of the nave roof. It is entirely in travertine. (1)

The first storey has a pair of Corinthian pilasters at its outer corners, and then eight Corinthian columns at its inner corners; the stepping in and out of the vertical zones is such that these columns are in four pairs. Pilasters and columns are on high plinths. They support an entablature the cornice of which has modillions, and the frieze of which bears a dedicatory inscription: (1)

Alexander Sept[imus] P[ontifex] M[aximus] S[ancto] Andreae Apostolo an[no] salutis MDCLXV.

In between the pairs of columns are four statues in rectangular niches crowned by pediments, the inner ones triangular and the outer ones, segmental. The statues are: *San Gaetano* and *San Sebastian* by **Domenico Guidi** (far left and near right), and *St. Andrew the Apostle* and *St. Andrew of Avellino* by **Ercole Ferrata** (near left and far right). Above are putti with symbols of martyrdom; the inner pair are in circular tondi, while the outer are enclosed in palm fronds. (1)

The single large and very tall entrance, approached by a short flight of steps, has a raised segmental pediment containing a putto's head with swags. Sitting on the pediment are two statues, *Hope* and *Strength* by **Antonio Fancelli**, gesturing to the coat-of-arms of Cardinal Francesco Peretti. (1)

The second storey is in the same style as the first, except that the eight columns are Composite not Corinthian. It is crowned by a triangular pediment with modillions, and into this pediment is inserted a smaller segmental pediment broken at the top. In the break is the coat-of-arms of Pope Alexander VII Chigi, supported by a pair of angels. In the centre of this storey is a large rectangular window with a balustraded balcony and a raised triangular pediment, and in between the pairs of columns are two empty niches with segmental pediments and the Chigi star in the lower edge of their frames. (1)

On the outer top corners of the first storey is a pair of finials in the form of six stylized mountains topped by a star, the crest of the Chigi family. To the left of the second storey is one angel with his left wing raised as if to prop up the second storey. **Rainaldi** wanted a pair of angels to replace the gigantic volutes flanking the second storey in Maderno's design, but there is only one angel here. The story is that Pope Alexander commissioned **Ercole Ferrata** to carve the two statues of angels, but did not like the first one finished and said so. The sculptor took offense and refused to carve the second one. (1)

However, there is a clue to the possible real reason in the 18th century engraving of the church façade by Giuseppe Vasi. This shows the second angel in place, together with statues occupying the now empty niches in the second storey. So, an alternative theory is that the Theatines again ran out of money before they could properly finish all the statuary on the façade, and made do with three of them in stucco including the right hand angel. These would have disintegrated by the 19th century, leaving the façade in its present state. (1)

Dome

The dome is 16.10 meters in diameter and 80 meters high, and is the third highest in Rome after St

Peter's and Santi Pietro e Paolo. The details are worth examining with binoculars. It is designed on an octagonal scheme, with a high brick drum having eight large rectangular windows with molded frames topped by little triangular pediments over swags with lions' heads. These windows are separated by coupled pairs of Ionic semi-columns with swagged capitals, supporting a cog-wheel entablature on which the actual dome rests. (1)

The dome itself is elliptical, in lead, and has eight large stone ribs running up to the lantern. At the bottom of each rib is a stylized triple mountain with a star above, which was one of the emblems on the coat-of-arms of Cardinal Peretti. Each sector has a small window, with a slightly curved top intruding into a pediment supported by strap corbels. These pediments alternate as triangular and segmental, and the windows used to light the void in between the interior and exterior domes (they are now all blocked up). Above each window is a horizontally elliptical tondo, and these tondi again have alternate decoration. Half have scallop shell ribbing above, but the others have a lion's head holding two branches from which pears dangle (binoculars are needed to see these). These are a pun on the name Peretti. (1)

The lantern is thought to have been designed by **Borromini**. There are eight narrow round-headed windows separated by pairs of conjoined Ionic pilasters with very exaggerated volutes and having a human face where the capitals join. These support a cog-wheel entablature with eight flaming torch finials, and a small cupola with a very large drum-shaped finial with a bronze star. (1)

Campanile

The church has one of the ugliest and most miserable campanili in Rome, and looks as if the Theatines were very short of money when they built it. It is perched on the buttress over the wall between the second and third chapel on the right side of the nave, and is a plain set of four brick arches of different sizes according to the size of bell. (1)

On the square in front of the church stands now the fountain of **Carlo Maderno**, placed here in 1937, from the center of the destroyed *Piazza Scossacavalli* in the Borgo. (1)

To the left side of the church is one of the so called "talking statue" of Rome - Abbot Luigi. (1)

Interior:

Layout and Plan

The interior is shaped as a Latin cross with a wide, barrel vaulted nave and not very pronounced transept, flanked by eight side chapels. The church is 262 feet long by 135 feet wide. The chapels are shallow and high, highlighting the strong vertical rhythm of the building. The nave is very bright thanks to a row of windows separated by semi-columns, a total of eight. (a)

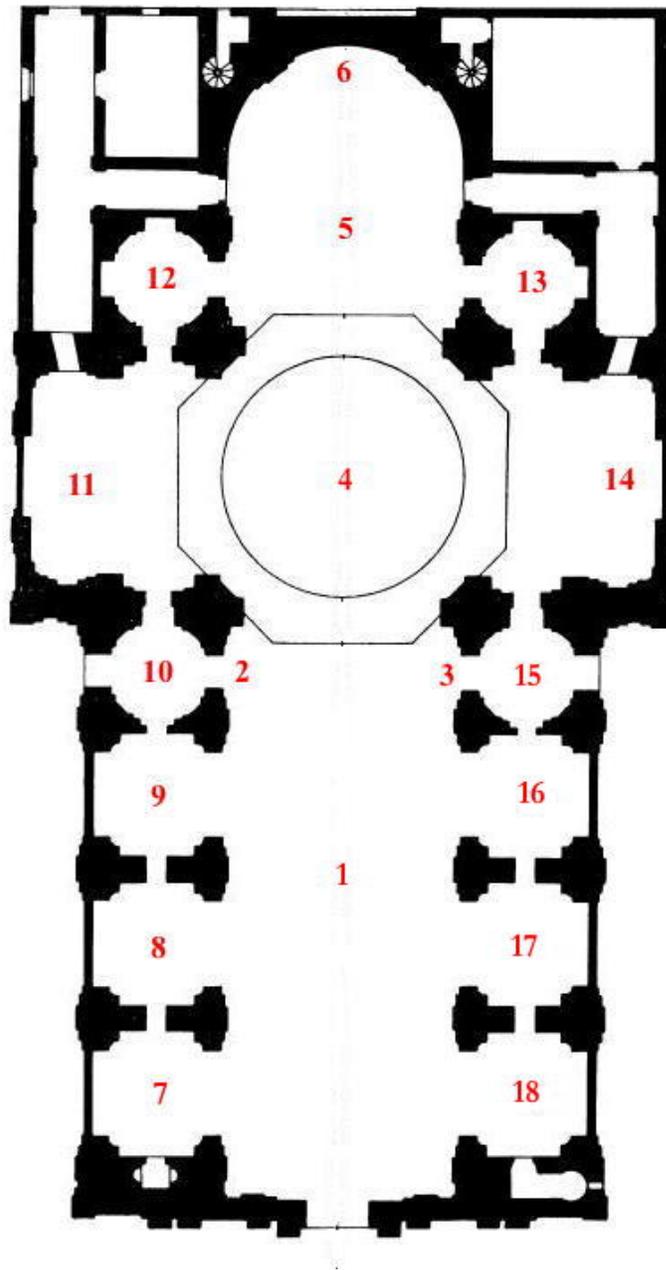
Nave

The nave has four bays. The pillars between the chapels have gigantic tripletted ribbed Corinthian pilasters in white with gilded capitals, and these support a deep entablature which runs round the entire interior. The frieze of this has an inscription in black lettering on gold taken from the legend of St Andrew's martyrdom, and the projecting cornice has both dentillations and modillions. (1)

In the spandrels of the arches of the side chapels are stucco angels by **Michele Tripisciano**, an important Italian sculptor of the end of the 19th century. The counter-façade wall above the entrance has the church organ in a gallery below the entablature, and either side of the large window are two depictions of the *Holy Family* and the *Annunciation* by **Cesare Caroselli**. (1)

Above the entablature is a high semi-circular barrel vault, with three wide coffered transverse ribs and two longitudinal ones which separate the surface into painted panels. Four windows with slightly curved tops are inserted in between the springing of the transverse ribs, and these light the nave. (1)

The decorative scheme of the vault extols the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. The four central panels depict, from the entrance: *The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise* and *The Vision of Our Lady to Sister Orsola Benincasa* by **Virginio Monti**, and *The Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception* and *The Visitation* by **Salvatore Nobile**. The panels by the windows depict *The*



Apostles and Evangelists by *Silvio Galimberti*; there are sixteen of them. (1)

Even modern guidebooks describe these 19th century paintings of the vault in contemptuous terms, but they are technically very accomplished. The picture of Adam and Eve is unusual in showing Our Lady Immaculate remaining in Paradise. Orsola Benincasa is here because she founded the Theatine Sisters of the Immaculate Conception; she is not a saint or beata (yet). (1)

Papal memorials

In the last bay of the nave are the renaissance tombs of Popes Pius II (2) (died 1464) and Pius III (3) (died 1503), both members of the Piccolomini family whose palace the church supplanted. They are located over the side exits. Both tombs were originally in the old St Peter's, and were brought here in 1614. (1)

Dome

The dome (4) is 16.10 meters (54.3 ft) in diameter and 80 meters high, making it the third highest dome in Rome, exceeded only by that of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and the newer dome of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in the EUR. It was designed by **Carlo Maderno** in 1622-1625.

The interior of the drum of the dome has pairs of Corinthian pilasters separating the windows, which have alternate triangular and segmental pediments (this design element is a feature of the church). Either side of the windows dangle chains of roses in stucco. Notice the Chigi star cropping

up again; there is a pair of them over each triangular pediment.

The fresco decoration of the dome was one of the largest commissions of its day. The work was disputed by two Carracci pupils, **Giovanni Lanfranco** and **Domenichino**. In 1608, Lanfranco had been chosen by Cardinal [Alessandro Peretti di Montalto](#), but Pope [Gregory XV](#) Ludovisi favored the Bolognese **Domenichino**. In the end, both artists were employed, although Lanfranco's lavish dome decoration set the model for such decorations for the following decades. Lanfranco's dome fresco is the the *Assumption of Our Lady Into the Glories of Paradise*, painted 1622-1625. The paintings of the *Four Evangelists* in the spandrels are by Domenichino.

Presbyterium (5)

The high altar, which was designed by **Carlo Fontana**, has no aedicule or canopy in order to give a clear view of the paintings on the walls of the presbyterium. These, and those in the conch or half-dome of the apse high above, are of very good quality. Both the altar and the tabernacle are of fine multicolored marbles.

The three large paintings on the apse wall (6) around the altar are by **Mattia Preti**, nicknamed **Il Calabrese**, and are dramatic representations of *St Andrew's Martyrdom* on an X- shaped cross. The left hand one shows the saint being raised on his cross, the central one his death on the cross, and the right hand one his burial. They count as among the artist's best works.

All of the paintings in the upper part of the apse are by **Domenichino**. At the sides of the three windows are six Virtues: *Charity, Faith, Religion, Contempt of the World, Fortitude and Christian Contemplation*. Over each of the two lateral windows are two naked figures, wreathing a festoon of fruits, from which children have taken some pears, alluding to the Peretti family, to which Cardinal A. Peretti who ordered the work.

In the center between the two lateral windows is a painting of *St. Andrew and St. John, the son of Zebadee, and St. John the Baptist, who sees the coming Redeemer*. Over the central window is *Christ calling St. Peter and St. Andrew*. Over the window to the left of center is the *Flagellation of St. Andrew*. Over the window to the right of center is the *Martyrdom of St. Andrew*. In the semicircle in the center is *St. Andrew in Glory*.

There are two frescoes over the exits to the octagonal chapels on either side of the apse. The right hand one shows *Pope Pius II Receiving the Head of St Andrew from Cardinal Bessarion* and is by Alessandro Taruffi, while the left hand one is by Carlo Cignani and shows *St Andrew Before the Governor*.

Crucifixion of St Andrew

The 17th century stucco work in the apse is by **Allessandro Algardi**. This was among his earliest undertakings, and is extremely rich in detail and gilding. The scantily clad figures in white are meant to be angels, but they don't have wings.

Sacristy

The sacristy has a painting by **Gherardo delle Notte** showing *Christ in the Presence of Caiaphas*. (1)

Side Chapels

The side chapels are identical architectural spaces, being rectangular with a little dome. But the furnishings are very different from one to another. The nave side chapels were available to noble families for use as memorial chapels. The idea was that each family would embellish and care for their chapel, in return for the privilege of commemoration in the church. The advantage of this was that different chapels would have different decorative schemes, and competition could lead to very sumptuous artworks. The disadvantage was that a family short of money, or simply losing interest, could leave chapels falling into bad repair. More than one here has had to be renovated completely. There are little arched passageways from chapel to chapel. These were intended to allow access for private Masses when the main body of the church was in use for liturgical functions. (1)

The side chapels will be described clockwise from the rear left of the church.

Cappella Barberini (7)

The first chapel on the left-hand side from the entrance is dedicated to the Barberini family. It was set up by **Matteo Castelli de Melide** from 1604 to 1616, commissioned by Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, who later became Pope [Urban VIII](#). The altar is decorated with four ribbed Corinthian columns in antique rose marble. The two lateral monuments are adorned each with two small columns of verde antique and the altar is adorned with four fluted columns of porphyry. (1) (a)

Altarpiece:

- *The Assumption* by **Domenico Passignano** (1600);

To the right:

- *The Presentation* by **Domenico Passignano**;
- The group representing a legendary miracle of *Santa Marta* (1629), *Extracting the teeth of a Dragon*, which has destroyed a female, is by **Francesco Mochi**. (a)
- Statue of *St. John the Evangelist* by **Ambrogio Bonvicino**; (1)

To the left:

- *The Visitation* by **Domenico Passignano**;
- Statues in the niches: *St. John the Baptist* (1616), by **Pietro Bernini**, and *Mary Magdalen* by **Cristoforo Stati**;
- Oil painting of *Lucia collects the body of St. Sebastian*, by **Passignano**

The two lateral lunettes:

- Paintings relating to the *Blessed Virgin* by **Domenico Passignano**

Pendentives:

- Oil paintings of the four prophets *David, Solomon, Moses and Isaiah* by **Domenico Passignano**

Dome:

- *Angels and children* by **Domenico Passignano**

Funeral monuments:

- Card. Benedetto Barberini (d.1863), and (his father ?) Prince Barberini, the two statues by G. Stati

St Sebastian in the Sewer

Interestingly, there is a prothyrium and doorway of an identical design on the other side of the chapel. If you look into the Cappella Lancelotti opposite, you will see no such doorway. This is the only asymmetric element in the design of the entire church; on the left hand side of the entrance, the façade wall is solid but on the right hand side there is a little alcove. This is the site of the original high altar of the church of San Sebastiano, which was demolished to build the present church. **Il Passignano** painted a depiction of *Lucina Finding the Body of St Sebastian in the Sewer* in here in 1616. (1)

In the aisle between these two chapels are the portraits, in porphyry, of the parents of P. Urban VIII, Antonio Barberini, a rich merchant from Ancona, and Camilla Barbadori. The monument is provided with a segmentally pedimented prothyrium having two Composite columns in verde antico marble and enclosing a funerary epitaph in bronze. (1) (a)

Cappella Benedetta delle Anime (8)

Cappella Rucellai

Cappella Ruspoli

Designed in 1610 by **Matteo Castelli de Melide**, a relative of the Borromini family. The chapel was originally given to the Rocellai family, then passed to Ruspoli family. It is dedicated to Giovanni Marinoni, Paolo Burali D'Arezzo and Giuseppe Maria Tomasi, three beatified Theatines. Therefore, it is called the Blessed Souls chapel. In 1971, the body of Cardinal [Giuseppe Maria Tomasi di Lampedusa](#) was transferred to the Theatine church of S. Andrea della Valle where it can be seen to the right of this chapel. He was canonized on Sunday October 12, 1986 by Pope John Paul II. The altarpiece is flanked by a two pairs of Corinthian columns, the inner in pink marble and the outer in black. The polychrome marble revetting on the altar wall is intricate. The two paintings on the walls used to be attributed to **Cristoforo Roncalli** (nicknamed **Il Pomarancio**), but they are now considered to be anonymous works by the 17th century Roman school of painters.

(1) (2)

Altarpiece:

- Attributed to the Sicilian painter **Francesco Manno** (1754–1831), depicts *Three Blessed Theatines : Marinoni, Burali D'Arezzo and Giuseppe Maria Tomasi*.

To the right:

- A painting of *The archangel Gabriel in the presence of the Eternal Father*.

To the left:

- A painting of *The Archangel Raphael and Tobias the Elder*

Dome:

- Fresco representing the *Gloria of the Angels* is by **Cristoforo Roncalli**

Spandrels:

- The sculpted angels are by **Ambrogio Buonvicino**.

Funeral monuments:

- To the left is the monument of Monsg. Giovanni della Casa (d. 1556), bishop of Beneventum. The celebrated author of [Il Galateo](#). (1) (a)
- Also on the left the sepulchral monument in black marble of Orazio Rucellai (d. 1673), nephew of della Casa. (1) (a)
- The right wall houses the tomb of Annibale Rucellai (d. 1601), bishop of Carcassonne, France.

Cappella di S. Sebastiano (9)

In 1869 P. Pius IX commissioned Roman architect **Filippo Martinucci** to rebuild this chapel in honor of S. [Sebastiano](#), S. [Rocco](#) and S. Marta, as protection against plague and infectious diseases. There is a plaque on the wall to that effect. There is a picture of the *Sacred Heart* on the altar. (1) (c)

Altarpiece:

- *Execution of S. Sebastiano* (1614) by **Giovanni de' Vecchi**. The painting shows that it had sustained some damage in the past.

Side walls:

- *St Rocco* and *St Martha*, and these are by **Guido Guidi**.

Ceiling:

- Children holding the cross, the chain, the arrow, the palm and the crown, alluding to the martyrdom and the Gloria of S. Sebastiano.
- In the lunette the coat of arms of Pius IX and in the triangles the monogram of Christ in the middle of the crown of palms.

Funeral monuments:

On the sides are four monuments of bianco vetato marble.

- To right, one to Vincenzo Cini, an Italian lawyer (d. 1845) and his son Raffaele; the other for Pellegrina Cini and her daughter. They are work of sculptor **Adamo Tadolini**, a student of Antonio Canova.
- On the left, one to Mons. Peter Filippo Boatti (d. 1836), by the sculptor **Giovanni Ceccarini**; the other of Filippo Boatti (d. 1861).

Funeral monument of Pope Pius II Piccolomini (2)

On the left side of the nave over the entrance chapel (10) near the transept of the pope's monument. Originally in St. Peter's, the monument was moved here here in 1614 by Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto together with that of Pius II. (2)

At the top of the monument (**Paolo Romano** and others influenced by the style of Andrea Bregno, c. 1470) two angels support the papal coat of arms: a black cross on which superimposed are five moons of gold. In the first box in relief is *The Virgin with the Holy Child*: on the one hand, Pius II still a cardinal and supported by S. Paul; on the other hand, S. Peter presenting the keys. In the second level, the pontiff's effigy lying and carved on the urn burial, in which it is written: PIUS PP. II. In the third level, the solemn procession of 1462 for the transport of the head of S. Andrea from Ponte Milvio to the Vatican basilica. Laterally, in special niches, are carved in high relief six virtues: *Science* with the torch, *Fortitude* with the column, *Prudence* with the serpent, *Justice* with the sword, *Faith* with the chalice, and *Charity* with children. The two Latin inscriptions tell of the record of Pius II and putting in place the monument in 1614. (b)

Chapel of St. [Gaetano Thiene](#) (11)

Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament

This is in the left hand end of the presbyterium, and the richness of the decoration reflects the importance of the saint to the Theatines. The altar dates from 1912 and is by **Cesare Bazzani**. It is a wonderful exercise in florid neo-Baroque, with a pair of Ionic columns in polished pink marble

supporting a split segmental pediment on which a pair of allegorical figures are sitting. Into the divide is inserted a tablet showing the *Sacred Heart in Glory*, supported from beneath by a pair of angels and from the sides by a pair of putti sheltering under a little triangular pediment. Panels of alabaster surrounded by gilded stucco work are on the walls flanking the altar. On the balustrade in front of the altar stand a pair of large statues allegorizing *Abundance* and *Wisdom* by Giulio Tadolini. The date on the frescoed arch is 1912. (1)

Altarpiece:

- *Apparition of the Virgin and Child to St. Cajetan*, was painted in 1770 by Mattia de Mare, from the previous altar. (2)

Walls:

- The frescoes on the side walls were painted by Alessio D'Elia in 1770, and illustrate events in the Saint's life.

Funeral monument:

- Near the side entrance of the chapel is the funeral monument of Count Gaspare Thiene of Vicenza, nephew of St. Cajetan (founder of the Theatins), the architecture and sculpture of which are by Domenico Guidi. It is a good example of the choice of various polychrome marbles to give a sombre effect in a major Baroque funerary memorial. The composition is framed by a large arch with a dished architrave, and consists of a bust of the deceased in white marble in front of black and over a sarcophagus in red. The epitaph below is on yellow, placed over the passageway into the next chapel and flanked by a pair of allegorical figures in white of *Charity* and *Prudence*. The other colors are dull orange, dark grey, a lighter grey and a yellow and grey striped marble framing the black tympanum with the stripes all radial. (1) (2) (a)

Cappella della Madonna della Purita (12)

In a chapel to the left of the sanctuary is a shrine to Our Lady of Purity. The chapel was originally dedicated to the Holy Family, but after restoration in 1647 it was rededicated to the Patron of the Theatine Order. Under the altar, consecrated November 20, 1725 by Theatine Bishop Georgio Lascaris, is venerated the body of St. Fortunato martyr.

Altarpiece:

- The venerated icon of the *Madonna della Purità* is above the altar, in a circular tondo surrounded by a gilded glory. It is a copy of 1647 by the Neapolitan painter Alessandro Francesi, from an original that was painted in 1641 by the Spanish artist Luis de Morales nicknamed Il Divino. The latter work is now located in the Neapolitan church of San Paolo Maggiore. On 7 December, 1678 the Chapter of the Vatican adorned the head of the Divine Mother and the Son with a single gold crown. (1) (2)

Left side:

- To the left is a *Bambino*, a statue of the Christ Child inspired by the famous one (now stolen and lost) at Santa Maria in Aracoeli. It is in a little glass box, into which the faithful drop prayer requests on bits of paper. (1)

Dome & lunettes:

- In 1912, Silvio Galimberti painted the four lunette over its arches (*Birth of Jesus, Presentation to the Temple, The Carpenter in Nazareth, Between the Doctors of the Law*) and panels of the vault (*The Choruses of Angels*). Notables are the gates and the stucco of the drum of the cupola and lantern. In spandrels the legions: RELIGION, LABOR, WISDOM, FAMILY.

Funeral monument:

- On the left wall of the chapel is the tomb and memorial plaque of Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Stoppani (d. 1774). Also, the tomb of Cardinal Pietro Vidoni (d. 1830).

Chapel of the Crucifix (13)

To the right of the sanctuary is an octagonal domed chapel (1647), with an antique crucifix above a painting of the Madonna inside a radiant halo. The chapel is rich in columns, colored marbles and gilt stuccos. The wood and marble crucifix is on a beautiful background of nero antico marble. Here, there is a picture of *Our Lady of Sorrows* on the altar in front of the crucifix surrounded by a glory. (1)

On the right side is the funeral monument of the Theatine Cardinal Saint [Giuseppe Maria Tomasi](#), a Theatine cardinal and a famous scholar and liturgist of his time. His relics are enclosed in a wax figure dressed in cardinal's robes and lying in a glass box. A contemporary portrait of him hangs above. He was only canonized in 1986. (1)

Cappella di [Andrea Avellino](#) (14)

In the right transept. Andrew Avellino is the second most important Theatine saint after Cajetan, hence his place of honor. The altarpiece is *Death of the Saint* (1625) by Giovanni Lanfranco. The altar was renewed by P. Pius IX in 1858. It has a pair of fluted Corinthian columns in red marble with gilded capitals, and is neo-Classical rather than Baroque in its design. However, it is still richly endowed with polychrome stonework. (1) (2)

Funeral monument of Pope Pius III Piccolomini (3)

To the right side of the nave above the side entrance (15) is the monument of P. Pius III Piccolomini. Modeled on the tomb of Pius II opposite, built in 1503 by **Sebastiano Ferrucci** and moved here in 1614 by Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto together with that of Pius II following the demolition of the Chapel of St. Andrew for the rebuilding of the new St. Peter's. (2)

In the first box, Pius III, kneeling at the side of the Holy Virgin, but receives the one hand the keys over the S. Peter, on the other hand, S. Paul, the soul and holds it up. In the second box, the pope carved lying on the urn in which it is written: Pius III. In the third, in excellent relief, represented his coronation. The side niches reliefs with pilasters bearing pillars and capitals and contain six statues of Saints Romuald, (first on the left below), Francis of Assisi, Pope Pius I, Gregory the Great, Andrew and James. The first inscription bears the dedication of the monument, made to him by his brothers Andrew and James; the second recalls the placement of the monument in S. Andrea della Valle in 1614. (b)

Cappella di Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore (16)

Cappella Crescenzi.

At one time this chapel was in the patronage of the Crescenzi family. The chapel, previously dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo, was rebuilt in 1887-1889 to the designs of **Aristide Leonori**, and dedicated to "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart." The altar with the pavement was donated by lawyer Camillo Grilli and consecrated on 2 February 1889. The pair of ribbed Corinthian columns have the lower third of their heights gilded as well as their capitals. (1) (2)

Altarpiece:

- The painting of the *Madonna* in an elliptical tondo surrounded by a glory is by **Silverio Capparoni** and was blessed by Pope [Pius IX](#). (1)
- The picture actually on the altar is of *Our Lady of Pompeii*, a Neapolitan devotion. (1)

Funerary Monument:

- The massive neo-Classical monument of the Contessa Praxedes Tomati-Robilant of Piedmont, attributed to **Giuseppe de Fabris** and **Rinaldo Rinaldi**, existed before the restoration. (2)

Cappella Strozzi (17)

The next chapel on the right side has a more austere Baroque style. It is attributed to **Giacomo della Porta**, possibly to the designs of **Michelangelo** himself, c. 1616, for Lione Strozzi. The fluted marble columns on the walls have gilt bronze Corinthian capitals. Between the columns, over the altar are bronze reproduction of the *Pietà*, and of the figures of *Leah* and *Rachel*, cast by **Gregorio De Rossi** from originals by **Michelangelo**. Above the statues of Leah and Rachel are two bronze bas-reliefs representing "*The deposition from the Cross*" and "*The descent into Limbo*". (1) (2)

Dome:

- The crest of the Strozzi family, Florentine bankers, consists of three crescent moons and these can be seen on the pediments of the attractive little coffered dome. Within this dome, the concentric rings of coffered squares in grey on gold, with rosettes, seem to shrink into infinity around the oculus. (1)

Funerary Monuments:

- The cenotaphs in Portovenere marble in the side walls were erected by Leone Strozzi in honor of prominent [Strozzi family](#) members: Cardinal [Lorenzo](#) (d. 1571), [Leone](#) (d. 1554), [Pietro](#) (d. 1558), both valiant men at arms, and his parents Roberto Strozzi (died 1566) and Maddalena Medici. (1) (2)

Floor:

- The floor is very pretty, also in a curved coffered design with five-petalled flowers in white with yellow centers framed in black and dark grey. (1)

Cappella Lancellotti (18)

Cappella Ginetti

The first chapel on the right side of the nave, the Cappella Lancelotti, is in a rich Baroque style and was designed by Carlo Fontana in 1670. It originally belonged to the Ginetti family, and so is sometimes called the Cappella Ginetti. It is dedicated to St Joseph. The chapel is rich in colored marbles, among which are eight columns of verdi antique, four on the altar, and four at the sides of the two lateral monuments. (1) (c)

Altar:

- The altarpiece, a sculptural relief in white marble, depicting *Angel Urges Sacred Family to Flee to Egypt* (1675) is the work of **Antonio Raggi**. He also sculpted the spectacular angel on the pediment in the style of Bernini, his teacher. (1) (2)
- **Francesco Rondone** did the figures on the ends of the altar pediment as well as the two busts to either side of the altar. The one on the right is of Giovanni Francesco Ginetti (died 1691), and on the left is Giovanni Paolo Ginetti.

Left wall:

- the allegorical figure of *Religion*, also by **Raggi**.

Funeral monuments:

- Against the left wall in a recess arch and the white statue of Cardinal Marzio Ginetti (1627-1671), kneeling on a cushion, in the act of praying. Work performed by **Francesco Rondone** in late 1600, is the founder of the chapel wrapped in the mantle, which falls to the side in elegant folds. The statue measures approximately 1.60 X 1.75 m. Above the two columns are two allegorical figures, and in the lunette, an angel, supporting the arms of the cardinal announces the resurrection of the dead. (1) (2)
- On the right wall is the statue of Cardinal Gianfrancesco Ginetti (1681-1691), grandson of the former, the two top allegorical figures: *Justice* and the *Fortitude*. (2)

Liturgy

Sunday Masses are celebrated at 8:00, 11:00, 12:00 and 19:00, also at 19:00 on Saturday evening.

The tradition started here in 1836 of erecting a large crib in the sanctuary on the feast of the Epiphany, and to leave it there for the following seven days. Each day Mass would be celebrated in one of seven rites of the Catholic church: Latin, Greek Byzantine, Maronite, Chaldean, Slav Byzantine, Syrian and Armenian with sermons given in the appropriate languages. This custom was begun by St Vincent Pallotti. (1)

Apart from the obvious one of St Andrew on 30 November, important feast-days here are the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September (because the Theatine order is dedicated to the Cross), St Andrew Avellino on 10 November, St Sebastian on 20 January and St Cajetan on 7 August. On St Cajetan's feast, which is a solemnity here, the Theatines used to process to the little chapel of San Gaetano alla Villa Medici and celebrate Mass there, but this stopped years ago. (1)

Location:

Address: Piazza Vidoni 6, 00186 Roma

Coordinates: [41°53'45"N 12°28'27"E](#)

Info:

Telephone: 0039 06 6861339

Open every day 7.30am-12.30pm 4.30pm-7.30pm

Masses

The day before a Holiday 7.00pm

Holidays 8.00am 9.00am 11.00am 12.00am 7.00pm

Artists and Architects:

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

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

Alessandro Francesi (17th cent), Italian painter from Naples

Alessandro Grancesi (17th cent), Italian painter

Alessandro Rondoni (17th cent), Italian sculptor
 Alessandro Taruffi (18th cent), Italian painter
 Alessio [d'Elia](#) (18th cent), Italian painter
 Ambrogio [Buonvicino](#) (1552-1622), Italian sculptor and stuccomaker
 Antonio [Raggi](#) aka [Il Lombardo] (1624-1686), Italian sculptor of the Baroque
 Aristide [Leonori](#) (1856-1928), Italian architect and engineer
 Carlo [Cignani](#) (1628-1719), Italian painter of the Bolognese and of the Forlivese school, active in the Baroque period.
 Carlo [Maderno](#) (1556-1629), Swiss-Italian architect [also see [here](#)]
 Carlo [Rainaldi](#) (1611-1691), Italian architect of the Baroque period
 Cesare [Bazzani](#) (1879-1939), Italian architect
 Cesare [Caroselli](#) (1847-1927), Italian painter
 Cristoforo [Roncalli](#) aka Il Pomerancio (1552-1626), Italian Mannerist painter
 Cristoforo [Stati](#) [aka da Bracciano] (1556-1619), Italian sculptor
 Domenico [Cresti](#) aka Il Passignano (1559-1638), Italian painter of a late-Renaissance or Contra-Maniera (Counter-Mannerism) style
 Domenico [Guidi](#) (1625-1701), Italian sculptor of the Baroque period
 Ercole [Ferrata](#) (1610-1686), Italian sculptor of the Baroque period
 Filippo Martinucci (19th cent), Italian architect
 Francesco [Borromini](#) (1599-1667), leading figure in the emergence of Roman Baroque architecture (but here a young stonemason)
 Francesco [Grimaldi](#) (1543-1613), Italian architect and Theatine priest
 Francesco [Manno](#) (1754-1831), Italian painter and architect
 Francesco [Mochi](#) (1580-1654), Italian early-Baroque sculptor
 Francesco Rondoni (1600-1670), Italian sculptor
 Gerard [van Honthorst](#) aka Gherardo delle Notti or Gherardo Olandese (1592-1656), Dutch painter from Utrecht
 Giacomo Antonio [Fancelli](#) (1619-1671), Italian Baroque sculptor
 Giacomo [della Porta](#) (1540-1602), Italian architect and sculptor
 Giovanni [Ceccarini](#) (1790-1861), Italian sculptor
 Giovanni [de' Vecchi](#) [aka dal Borgo] (1536-1614), Italian painter of the Renaissance period
 Giovanni [Lanfranco](#) (1582-1647), Italian Baroque painter
 Giulio [Tadolini](#) (1849-1918), Academic-trained Italian sculptor
 Giuseppe [de Fabris](#) (1790-1860), Italian sculptor of the Neoclassic period
 Gregorio de Rossi (17th cent), Italian sculptor, bronze castor
 Guido Guidi (1835-1919), Italian painter
 Luis de [Morales](#) [aka Il Divino] (1512-1586), Spanish painter
 Matteo [Castelli](#) de Melide (1555-1632), Italian architect
 Mattia de Mare, Italian painter
 Mattia [Prete](#) [aka Il Calabrese](1613-1699), Italian Baroque painter
 Michelangelo [Buonarroti](#) (1475-1564), Italian Mannerist sculptor, painter, architect
 Michele [Tripisciano](#) (1860-1913), Italian sculptor
 Paolo [Romano](#) aka Paolo Tuccone (15th cent), Italian early Renaissance sculptor and goldsmith
 Paolo Tacconi (15th cent), Italian sculptor
 Pietro [Bernini](#) (1562-1629), Italian sculptor
 Pietro Paolo [Olivieri](#) (1551-1599), Italian sculptor and architect
 Rinaldo [Rinaldi](#) (1793-1873), Italian sculptor of the Neoclassic period
 Salvatore Nobili (1865-1919), Italian painter
 Sebastiano Ferrucci (16th cent), Italian sculptor
 Silverio [Capparoni](#) (1831-1907), Italian painter
 Silvio [Galimberti](#) (1869-1956) Italian painter
 Virginio [Monti](#) (1852-1942), Italian painter

Burials:

St. Fortunato martyr

[Pope Pius II](#) {Enea Silvio [PICCOLOMINI](#), (1405-1464)}

He was one of the humanists of the Renaissance

[Pope Pius III](#) {Francesco [TODESCHINI-PICCOLOMINI](#), (1439-1503)}

Buried in the patriarchal Vatican basilica, next to his uncle Pope Pius II. During the rebuilding of the basilica, the monument was transferred to the grotto and the remains of both popes to the church of S. Andrea della Valle, next to the palace of the family; they were placed in a mausoleum erected by Cardinal Alessandro Damasceni Peretti in 1614; an epitaph, composed at a later date, was placed on the tomb.

St. Giuseppe Maria Cardinal [TOMASI DI LAMPEDUSA](#), Theat., (1649-1713) {also see [here](#)}

His incorrupt body can be seen beneath a lateral altar.

Marcantonio Cardinal [GOZZADINI](#), (1574-1623)

Bonifazio Cardinal [BEVILACQUA ALDOBRANDINI](#), (1571-1627)

Buried in the chapel of S. Sebastiano Martire

Marzio Cardinal [GINETTI](#), (1586-1671)

Buried in the chapel that he had built in the church

Ulderico [CARPEGNA](#), (1595-1679)

Buried in the Barberini chapel

Gianfrancesco Cardinal [GINETTI](#), (1626-1691)

Buried in the chapel of his family, on the left side, opposite to the tomb of his uncle Cardinal Marzio Ginetti

Carlo Cardinal [BARBERINI](#), (1630-1704)

Buried near the altar of the Barberini chapel

Carlo Cardinal [ROBERTI](#), (1605-1673)

Buried in the chapel of S. Sebastiano

Giovanni Francesco Cardinal [STOPPANI](#), (1695-1774)

Buried in the tomb he had built for himself

Pietro Cardinal [VIDONI](#), *junior*, (1759-1830)

Buried in his family's chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary *della Purità*

Benedetto Cardinal [BARBERINI](#), (1788-1863)

Buried in his family's chapel

Andrea Cardinal [PILA](#), (1811-1868)

Giovanni della [Casa](#) (1503-1556)

<Italian poet and cleric>

Contessa Praxedes Tomati-Robilant of Piedmont

Count Tieni of Vicenza

Vincenzo Cini (d. 1845) and his son Raffaele

Pellegrina Cini and her daughter

Mons. Peter Filippo Boatti (d. 1836)

Filippo Boatti (d. 1861)

Monsg. [Giovanni della Casa](#) (d. 1556), bishop of Beneventum

Orazio Rucellai (d. 1673), nephew of della Casa.

Prince Barberini

Annibal de Rucellai (1569-1601), bishop of Carcassonne, France

Antonio Barberini, a rich merchant from Ancona, and Camilla Barbadori

<parents of P. Urban VIII>

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