Santa Maria in Campitelli



Santa Maria in Campitelli is a 17th century Baroque parish, conventual and titular church at Piazza di Campitelli 9 in the rione Sant'Angelo, which is just north of the Theatre of Marcellus. The dedication is to the Blessed Virgin Mary under a local Roman title of hers, Our Lady in the Portico. Hence the church has also been known as **Santa Maria in Portico**, and the official name used by the Diocese is now Santa Maria in Portico in Campitelli. [1]

The church is located on the southwest side of the elongated Piazza di Campitelli between Palazzetto di Lorenzo and Giambattista Statue (to the left of the Church) and the Monastery of the Order of the Congregazione dei Chierici Regolari della Madre di Dio (to the right of the Church). [2]

History

The origins of the church are obscure, but it seems to have begun in the early 15th century as a small chapel dependent on Santa Maria in Aracoeli on the Capitoline hill. (The name Campitelli is thought to be possibly derived from Campodoglio, the Italian name for the hill.) The first documentary reference is to a priest appointed to it dates from 1566. In 1618 a papal decree created a new parish and entrusted it to the Congregation of the Clerks Regular of the Mother of God. They have administered the parish ever since. [1] [4]

Work began in 1619 after demolishing the homes of Della Riccia and Albertoni, a family of the Blessed Ludovica, and continued until 1648. Soon, however, even the new church proved unsuitable

for the needs of worship and new works of enlargement are useless. The new church was built by the citizens of Rome in honor of a miraculous icon of Santa Maria in Portico which halted the plague in 1656. The Senate of Rome and Pope Alexander VII felt that the icon deserved a better setting and financed the building of a new church. Pope Alexander VII Chigi laid the foundation stone on September 29, 1660. The icon was previously kept in the church of the nearby Spedale di S. Galla. The project of the new church was entrusted to Carlo Rainaldi. [1] [2] [4]

After the Rainaldi had proposed an elliptical plan, the congregation of the clerics decides to have their consultant, the architect Giovanni Antonio De Rossi work with Rainaldi. In fact, Rainaldi's solution was not considered suitable for the new cultural and political needs of the Counter-Reformation. De Rossi transformed the central elliptical shape to a basilical solution with a single aisle. The straightening of the curves, combined with the rear body of the dome, moved the focal point from the center to the back of the building. Here a spectacular Baroque Glory houses the sacred Madonna's icon. In 1667 the church was opened to the public despite the fact that only the façade was finished. [4]

The church was dedicated on July 11, 1728 by Cardinal Pompeo Aldobrandi, Bishop of Neocesarea. The church is built on the site of the antique Roman Temple of Jupiter Stator. [1]

The church has been titular since 1660. Since the time of the Old Pretender, whose son Henry Benedict Cardinal Stuart was Cardinal Deacon of the church from 1747 until his death in 1807, the church has been a center of devotion for the conversion of England. Upstairs in the attached monastery there is a hallway where are displayed on the wall five altar frontals; one of these is embroidered in gold thread with Henry's arms as Duke of York. Application to see the altar frontal may be made at the sacristy. [1] [6]

There was a restoration in 1857, when the present floor was laid. [1]

Exterior

The nave and nave transepts have pitched and tiled roofs, and the transept roofs are lower than the main nave roof. The presbyterium roof is flat, and about half the elevation of the nave roofline. It is mostly taken up by the octagonal drum of the dome, which has an oeil-de-boeuf window in each side except that over the altar. The dome itself is a segment of a sphere, slightly less than hemispherical, and is tiled with square tiles. There is a lantern with eight narrow round-headed windows separated by pilasters bearing vertical double volutes which support a cog-wheel entablature. This lantern is crowned by a lead cupola bearing a ball finial.

There is no proper campanile, but a tall belfry is placed over the first chapel on the left in 1927. It is formed of three tall brick pillars, connected by arches at the top. The four bells are hung in the spaces between the pillars. [1] [2]

Facade

The façade dates from the years 1665-1667, is built of travertine, and is dominated by strong vertical lines. This effect is achieved by incorporating large columns in the round into the façade, instead of decorating it with pilasters or semi-columns as is usual with Baroque churches. This feature arguably heralds the later neo-Classical style of architecture. The verticality is accentuated by having the entire central section of the nave frontage brought well forward, from ground level to pediment, as well as the corner elements.

The main entrance is flanked by two Ionic columns, with capitals having four volutes each with swags. These support a raised segmental pediment (short pilasters are inserted between capitals and pediment), and the central section of this is recessed. It contains a winged putto's head. The door lintel bears a proclamation of indulgence. [1]

This doorcase is inserted into a propylaeum which has two Corinthian columns bearing a raised triangular pediment with the base cut away, this pediment intruding into the façade's second storey. To either side of this, in the recessed zones of the façade, is another pair of Corinthian columns which support the entablature of the first storey. This has a dedicatory inscription on the frieze,

which runs under the pediment of the propylaeum. The cornice projects, and is decorated on its underside with rosettes. A final pair of columns occupy the projecting corners. [1]

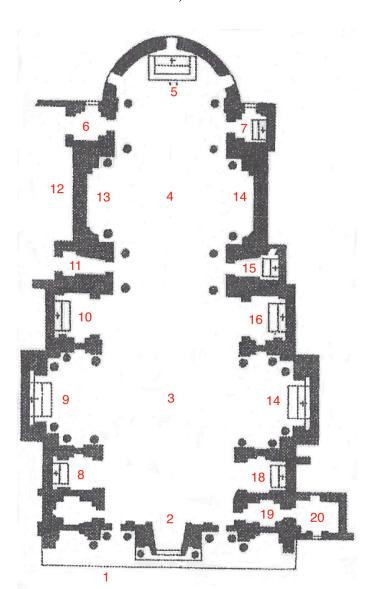
The side entrance frontages are recessed again from the nave frontage described, but the entablature with its inscription runs across them, too. The two entrances are squeezed into narrow spaces, and each has a pair of Ionic pillars bearing an entablature but no pediment. Above each is a rectangular window with a tympanum containing swags, the projecting arc of which is supported by a pair of little Doric pilasters. Finally, the outer corners of the first storey are occupied by a pair of Doric pilasters (not columns). [1]

The second storey has a large rectangular central window in the same style as those over the side entrances, except this has Corinthinan columns and the tympanum contains a large scallop shell. This window and its decoration is inserted into another propylaeum, piggybacking on the first storey one, and this has Corinthian columns supporting a segmental pediment which is inserted into the main triangular pediment of the façade. This segmental pediment contains the coat-of-arms of the city of Rome, a reminder that the church was a civic rather than a papal project. On either side of this upper propylaeum the second storey has the same design as the first one. The crowning pediment is decorated with rosettes, and has two sections either side of its middle recessed to match the rest of the façade.

The two buildings either side of the church frontage used to make up the convent of the Clerks Regular. The smaller one is still their congregational headquarters.

Plan

The plan of the church is very unusual, and is the result of the initial rejection by the Clerks Regular of Rainaldi's original proposal of an elliptical plan. The revision involved the collaboration of the architect of the Clerks, Giovanni Antonio de Rossi, with the assistance of Ercole Ferrata and



Giovanni Paolo Schor.

There are two elements to the revised plan, the first being a nave with two large transepts forming a Greek cross. In the interior corners of the cross-plan are inserted four chapels enclosed by walls. The sanctuary is the second element of the plan, and is another Greek cross except that here the transepts are shallow. There is a semi-circular apse, and a dome. Four more chapels were inserted into the angles of the cross of the sanctuary, making eight in the church overall.

Interior

The plan of the church is made by two distinct parts: first a Greek-cross building with large chapels and then a circular shrine covered by a dome. The unusual plan creates intricate and enjoyable perspectives which make this one of the most architecturally satisfying of Roman church interiors. It is coolly decorated in a pale grey, which serves to draw attention to the splendour of the shrine over the high altar. The basically rectangular nave is barrel-vaulted, and has three chapels on each side the middle two of which are very large. The nave and chapels are lined with a number of extremely large Corinthian columns and pilasters. [1]

In the nave (3) a prominent entablature with a heavy dentillate cornice runs round the interior, and this is broken at the entrance into the domed transept by an enormous archway with two arcs, one inside the other. This is supported by two pairs of enormous partly ribbed Corinthian columns standing in front of pilasters to the same scale and size, and has rosette coffering on its soffit. Four more of these columns stand at the entrances of the middle side chapels, and eight more occupy their interiors. The effect is impressive. [1]

Over the arches into the smaller side chapels are four corbelled and balustraded cantoria or operaboxes for solo musical performers. [1]

Over the entrance is the organ gallery, the organ itself dating from 1909 with a fine carved wooden neo-Baroque case, made by Rieger Orgelbau of Austria. The counterfaçade below this is revetted in grey-streaked marble with Ionic pilasters having swagged capitals. To the right of the main entrance is a neo-Baroque memorial for Mons. Francesco Nardi (19), 1877, one of the founders of "La Voce della Verità", a press organ of the Roman Society for Catholic interests. A single putto is playing with the marble drapery surrounding the bronze cameo portrait. [1] [2] [5]

In the passage to the left of the church entrance, is the Carrara marble funerary monument to Cardinal Giuseppe Bofondi from Forlì (1867). His obituary and escutcheon are applied to a huge pedestal, on which two female Virtues are sitting. To the left Prudence is leaning on a book, while, to the right, Justice holds forth a small olive-branch. On a tall octagonal pedestal is the bust of the cardinal. The monument was executed by Francesco Fabi Altini. [3] [5]

The floor, which is also in Carrara marble, originates from a refurbishment in 1857, and later renovations, including in 1986. [2]

Sanctuary

The design of the nave triumphal arch is reproduced in that of the apse, except that this has only one arc. Either side of the dome is a large lunette window within an arch, which geometrically matches the two arches just mentioned. The windows are surmounted by arcs of rosette coffering, reflected by the further coffering on the soffits of the enclosing arches. The four doorways in the corners of the sanctuary have tondi containing attributes of Our Lady.

$\underline{\text{Dome}}$ (4)

The interior of the dome has coffering of the same style, diminishing in size as it focuses on a Dove of the Holy Spirit in the oculus lantern. [1]

The rather odd blue-painted wooden pulpit is worth examining. [1]

Madonna del Portico (5)

The shrine of the Madonna del Portico is over the high altar. It was formerly considered to have been designed in 1667 by the Maltese sculptor Melchiorre Cafà, but it is now attributed to Giovanni

Antonio de Rossi with the original idea from Carlo Rainaldi. Rossi was assisted by Ercole Ferrata and Johann Paul Schor. The shrine is a gloria, an architectural use of stucco rays of light for dramatic effect. It was made less than a year after Bernini's throne of St Peter in the Basilica of St Peter, and surely imitates this. Note the twisted barley-sugar columns of the little aedicule within the gloria. [1]

The icon of the Madonna is small, only about 25 cm high, and is of silver-gilt and champlevé enamel. The icon is protected by a gilded bronze frame, commissioned by Cardinal Cesi, deacon of the church in 1596. Tradition claims that it appeared miraculously in 524 at the hospital of St Galla, a Roman woman who was helping the poor, and was venerated by Pope Gregory the Great. It is further said to have been carried in processions since 590. However, scholars have dated it to the late 13th century, so the tradition is uncertain to say the least. [1] [5]

There is a staircase behind the 'gloria' allowing a better view, but you must ask permission at the sacristy if you wish to climb these stairs. Since the original icon is hence not easily accessible for veneration, a reproduction is located in the second chapel on the right. You can also buy laminated prayer-cards featuring it from a vending machine. [1]

The marble altar was realized in 1737 thanks to the help of the Cardinals Ruspoli and Almeyda on a design by Michaelangelo Specchi. [1] [4] [5]

In the conch of the apse behind is a fresco by Giovan Battista Conti, showing *Pope Alexander VII* offering the church to Our Lady. This was painted in 1925. [1]

Chapel of the Madonella of San Marco (6)

The small chapel on the left side of the sanctuary. The sculptural work is by Filippo Carcani, Il Filippone, 1685 under the patronage of the Ruspoli family. [1] [4]

Chapel of The Holy Relics (7)

The small chapel to the right of the sanctuary contains several relics of saints, and also is access to the sacristy. The chaple contains an early 12th century Byzantine portable altar which, by tradition, belonged to St Gregory Nazianzen. It bears a mosic with very small tesserae, depicting *Christ with Our Lady and St John*, the work of "Gregorius Aurifeux", and a Stauroteca (reliquary from the 14th century) of silver and micromosaics. [1]

The side chapels will described starting from the rear left, proceding clockwise to the rear right.

Left side

<u>Chapel of Blessed Ludovica Albertoni</u> (Albertoni Chapel)

The first chapel on the left (8) is the Albertoni family chapel, designed by **Sebastiano Cipriani**, then architect of the Altieri family, who built the chapel from 1697, for Angelo Paluzzi Albertoni Altieri, Marquis of Rasina, and is dedicated to the Blessed <u>Ludovica Albertoni</u>.

The altarpiece is a bas-relief marble sculpture of *Apparition of the Holy Family to Blessed Ludovica Albertoni* by **Lorenzo Ottoni**. The vault frescoed by **Giuseppe Passeri** is the *Assumption of the Virgin*. He was also responsible for the putti in the pendentives, and the angels bearing Marian symbols in the lunette over the aedicule. [1] [5]

The lateral funeral monuments are of the parents of Prince Gaspar Altieri. The monument on the left is for Angelo Altieri, 1709 by Giuseppe Mazzuoli, with a bust by Michele Maille who died in 1703. The work completed by G. A. Lavaggi The monument on the right is for his wife, Vittoria Parabiacchi (1710), by Giacomo Antonio Lavaggi. On the sarcophagus to the left is the latin word NIHIL, meaning nothing, and on the sarcophagus to the right is the latin word UMBRA, meaning shadow. [1] [4]

In the floor is a funerary inscription for Cardinal Paluzzi degli Albertoni, who is buried here.

Chapel of San Giovanni Leonardi (Albertoni Altieri Chapel)

The second chapel on the left (9), originally dedicated to St. John the Baprist. In 1861 the chapel was rededicated to San Giovanni Leonardi, the founder of the Clerks Regular, who is enshrined in front of the altar. It was designed by Giovanni Battista Contini in 1697, and commissioned by Cardinal Paluzzo Paluzzi Altieri degli Albertoni. He was an adopted nephew of Pope Clement X (Emilio Altieri), and died in 1698. [1] [4] [5]

The aedicule is spectacular, with a pair of massive red marble Corinthian columns and superb stucco detailing. The artists concerned were Giuseppe Mazzuoli, Lorenzo Ottoni and Giacomo Antonio Lavaggi. The vault fresco of *St John the Baptist in Glory* is by Giacinto Calandrucci, 1683 (although this has also been attributed to Gimignani). The stucco putti, festoons and shells of the vault are by Francesco Cavallini. [1] [4]

The present oil on canvas altarpiece is the *Apotheosis of San Giovanni Leonardi* by Marcello Sozzi, 1860. However, the ribbon epigraph above still proclaims Non surrexit major Ioanne Baptista. [1] [4] [5]

In the floor is a funerary inscription for Cardinal Paluzzi degli Albertoni, who is buried here.

Chapel of St. Paul (Capizucchi Chapel)

The third chapel (10) on the left is the Cappella Capizucchi, dedicated to St Paul the Apostle, and was designed by Mattia de Rossi, a pupil of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, and is one of the first projects independently developed by the architect after the death of his teacher. He had been commissioned in 1685 by Cardinal Raimondo Capizucchi, a Dominican friar who died in 1691 and whose memorial is here. [5]

The altarpiece depicts the *Conversion of St Paul* by **Ludovico Gimignani** 1683, and on the frame above it is a 16th century fresco of the *Madonna and Child* rescued from the old parish church demolished to make way for the present building. [1] [5]

The vault fresco is *The Apotheosis of St Paul*, by Michelangelo Ricciolino. The stucco work, notably the shield held by two putti on the keystone of the arch, is by Luca Carcani. [1] [5]

The two lateral pyramidal monuments were erected in 1675 for the Capizucchi family. [1]

Between the chapel and the trancept is a side entrance (11) that gives access to the <u>Sala Baldini</u> (12). This room is used today for concerts and meetings. Here you can see a bust of Don Baldini, one of the church's most beloved priests. Along the walls are a number of relics in the form of busts of silver and gold from the 18th century. [2]

In the left transept (13) under the dome is a painting showing the *Birth of St John the Baptist* by "Il Baciccia", 1698. The work, which until 1861 was located in the Altieri chapel, was painted in 1698 on commission of Cardinal Paluzzo Altieri for his family chapel. In 1861 the chapel was dedicated to San Giovanni Leonardi on the occasion of his beatification, and the work of Baciccio was moved to the transept. [5]

Below it is a memorial slab for Cardinal Massimo Massimi, who died in 1954. He was not only cardinal of the church, but had been baptized here as a baby. The work is a bas-relief of *St Michael Slaying the Dragon*, and was executed in 1976 by **Guido Veroi**. [1]

Right side

To the right of the transept (14) under the dome is the spectacular memorial (6) for Cardinal Bartolomeo Pacca (died 1844), which was sculpted by Ferdinand Petrich in 1863. Some of the detailing is in the Cosmatesque style. The papal crest high up is from P. Alexander VII. [1]

<u>Chapel of St. Zita</u> (Cappella Vaselli)

Of the four small chapels (15) in the corners of the sanctuary, only this one still functions as such.

It was dedicated to St Zita because she came from Lucca, as did St Giovanni Leonardi the founder of the Clerks Regular. She is a patron of female domestic servants. [1]

The chapel is richly revetted in polychrome marble, the gift of the Vaselli family. Some memorials to them are on the walls. The original anonymous 18th century altarpiece of the saint has been replaced by an icon of the *Pietà* in Byzantine style, a gift of the artist Elsa Fratini. The altar itself is over a glass box containing a 19th century effigy of *Christ in the Tomb*. In the floor is the coat-of-arms of the Vaselli family. [1]

Chapel of St. Nicola of Bari (Capella Muta Busi)

The third chapel on the right (16) is dedicated to St Nicholas of Bari. The chapel already existed in 1492 in the former church of S. Maria in Portico, and was owned by the Muti family. In 1650, following the marriage of the last heir, Cecilia, with Giulio Bussi, the family assumed the double surname. In 1727 the chapel was re-consecrated by the archbishop of Tessalonica Zosimo Valignani, but restored in about 1800. [1] [5]

The altarpiece, *Bl. Virgin with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Nicola*, is by an unknown artist and is an academic Roman work in oils dating from the restoration. The little cupola has an attractive fresco of putti of the same period, holding a banner reading Euge serve bone ("Well done, good servant"). [1]

Chapel of St. Anne

The second chapel on the right (17) comes from the old church and was restored in 1692 to a design by Carlo Rainaldi. The chapel was initially granted in patronage to Monsignor Giovan Battista Barsotti of Lucca, benefactor of the parish; in 1664 Luigi Conti took over the patronage and was responsible for the current decoration of the chapel. Conti is remembered in an inscription dated 1743 placed in the floor in front of the balustrade. [5]

The chapel is dominated by the imposing trabeate columns that scenically punctuate the space. The entire decoration, inspired by motifs taken from Bernini models, is the work of the Baroque sculptors Michel Maille (the left hand angel holding altarpiece), Lorenzo Ottoni (the right hand angel holding altarpiece), Francesco Cavallini and Francesco Baratta, who are responsible for the stuccos of the vault and, in general, the decorative structure suggested by Rainaldi. [5]

The altarpiece painted in 1685 by Luca Giordano depicts the *Destination of the Virgin with Saints Anne and Joseph*. The altarpiece is enclosed in a rich red diaspro frame, supported at the base by two angels kneeling in marble, two flying angels also in marble, and in the apex two angels above in stucco hold the crown. The fresco in the overhead arch is attributed to Michelangelo Ricciolino, the *Glory of Saint Anna*. [1] [4]

At the left side of the chapel between the columns is the reliquary altar of Santa Galla. The original, from the Flavian period, probably comes from the temple of Apollo Sosiano or Medicus and is now kept in the church of Santa Galla on Via Ostiense. It was reused in medieval times as a high altar of the ancient church of Santa Maria in Portico. The inscription of the altar contains a long list of relics: the fragments of the cross of Christ and the sponge, of the cross of St. Andrew and parts of his bones, and the relics of 21 other martyrs including 6 women. [2] [5] [7]

Chapel of St. Michael the Archangel

The first chapel on the right (18) was originally dedicated to the Crucifixion. In 1729 the chapel was given by Pope Benedict XIII into the care of the Collegio dei Procuratori dei Sacri Palazzi Apostolici. The altarpiece is a painting in 1735 by Sebastiano Conca, *Archangel Michael victorious over a demon*, which was originally made for the church of S. Eustachio and then moved here in 1738. [1] [2] [4]

Baptistery

The right side entrance foyer gives access the small baptistery (20) closed by a 19th-century gate. Inside is a 17-century baptismal font. On the walls there are two tabernacles of the Tuscan origin dating back to the 15th century, a ciborium and a housing of the holy oils from the old church. Also, there is a modern copy of the altarpiece with the *Baptism of Jesus* by Carlo Maratta. The original is

now kept in one of the rooms inside the parish. Here also is a memorial which Count Ferdinando di Lorenzana made for his wife Luisa de Brinder Kriegelstein, who died in 1851, in Carrara marble. [2] [4] [a]

Special notes

Since the time of the Old Pretender, the church has been a center of devotion for the conversion of England. Upstairs in the attached monastery there is a hallway where are displayed on the wall five altar frontals; one of these is embroidered in gold thread with Henry's arms as Duke of York. Application to see the altar frontal may be made at the sacristy.

Artists and Architects:

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

Carlo Rainaldi (1611-1691), Italian architect of the Baroque period

Ercole Ferrata (1610-1686), Italian sculptor of the Baroque period

Filippo Carcani [aka Filippone] (17th century), Italian sculptor

Francesco Baratta (1590-1666), Italian sculptor

Francesco Cavallini (17th cent), Italian sculptor

Francesco Fabi-Altini (1830-1906), Italian sculptor

Frederick Augustus Ferdinand Pettrich (1798-1872), German sculptor

Giacinto Calandrucci (1646-1707), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Giacomo Antonio Lavaggi (d. 1718), Italian sculptor

Giovanni Antonio de Rossi (1616-1695), Italian architect of the Baroque period

Giovanni Battista Conti (1878-1970), Italian painter

Giovanni Battista Contini (1641-1723), Italian architect of the Late Baroque period

Giovanni Battista Gaulli, aka Baciccia (1639-1709), Italian painter of the High Baroque

Giuseppe Mazzuoli (1644-1725), Italian sculptor of the Baroque

Giuseppe Passeri (1654-1714), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Guido Veroi (1926-2013), Italian medalist and sculptor

Johann Paul Schor aka Giovanni Paolo Tedesco (1615–1674), Austrian designer of decorative arts in Baroque

Lorenzo Ottoni [aka Il Lorenzone] (1658-1736), Italian sculptor

Luca Carcani (18th cent), Italina stucco artist

Luca Giordano (1634-1705), Italian painter and printmaker of the late Baroque

Ludovico Gimignani (1643-1697), Italian painter during the Baroque period

Marcello Sozzi (19th cent), Italian painter

Mattia de Rossi (1637-1695), Italian architect of the Baroque period

Michel Maille [aka Michele Maglia] (1643-1703), French sculptor

Michelangelo Ricciolini (1654-1715), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Michelangelo Specchi (1684-1750), Italian Baroque architect

Sebastiano Cipriano (18th cent), Italian architect

Sebastiano Conca (c. 1680-1764), Italian painter

Burials:

Paluzzo Cardinal PALUZZI ALTIERI DEGLI ALBERTONI, (1623-1698) [also see here]

Buried in the Albertoni Altieri Chapel that he had built

Adopted nephew of Pope Clement X

Raimondo Cardinal CAPIZUCCHI, O.P., (1615-1691)

Buried in the tomb of his family in the chapel of S. Paolo

Lorenzo Cardinal ALTIERI, (1671-1741)

Buried in the tomb of his family

Marcello Cardinal PASSERI, (1678-1741)

Francesco Cardinal LANDI PIETRA, (1682-1757)

Guglielmo Cardinal PALLOTTA (1727-1795)

Filippo Cardinal CASONI, (1733-1811)

Bartolomeo Cardinal PACCA, seniore, (1756-1844)

Giuseppe Cardinal BOFONDI, (1795-1867)

Francesco Cardinal PENTINI, (1797-1869)

Massimo Cardinal MASSIMI, (1877-1954)

Angelo Altieri Nephew of Pope Clement X Vittoria Parabiacchi Wife of Angelo Altieri

Location:

9 Piazza di Campitelli, 00186 Roma coord: 41° 53′ 35.26″ N, 12° 28′ 46.19″ E

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open daily from 7.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon, and from 4.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.

Links amd References:

- 1) Roman Churches Wiki
- 2) Anna's Guide (in Danish)
- 3) RomaFelix.com
- 4) Info.Roma web stie
- 5) PoloRomano web site (no linger online)
- 6) The Jacobite Heritage web page
- 7) Church web site
- a) Information brochure from the church

Info from 060608 web site

YouTube tour of church

Impression of visitor to church

Wikemedia Commons catalog

Tesori de Roma web page

English Wikipedia web page
