

# San Marcello al Corso



**San Marcello al Corso** is a 16th century conventual and titular church on 4th century foundations in the rione Trevi. The dedication is to Pope St Marcellus. [1]

## History

Legend claims that Pope St Marcellus (308-309) was sentenced by Emperor Maxentius to the duties of stable boy (catubulum) at the station of the Imperial mail on the Via Lata, where the Via del Corso now lies. He was freed by the people, and hidden in the house of the Roman lady Lucina. He was rearrested, and imprisoned in the stables. He died here in 309 and was buried in the cemetery of St. Priscilla. [1]

The first historical mention of the existence in Rome of a church called "of Marcello" is found in the letter of December 29, 418, with which the Prefect of Rome Simmaco informed the emperor Honorius of the contemporary election, which took place the day before, of Pope Bonifacio I, in the church of Marcello, and of Eulalio (antipope), in the Lateran basilica. Later the church is often mentioned in historical sources as the *Titulus Marcelli*. [5]

The church was restored by Pope Adrian I (772-95). This structure lies below the present church, and has been excavated. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century the remains of St. Marcellus were brought from the cemetery of Priscilla and, interred beneath the high altar; the remains are still there today. [1]

The history of San Marcello saw many lows. In 1354, the body of Cola di Rienzo was brought here three days after he had been killed in front of the steps leading to Santa Maria in Aracoeli, and hung up in the apse. [1]

In 1375, Pope Gregory XI gave the church to the Servite friars who then founded a convent here. [1]

A fire on the night of 22 May 1519 completely destroyed the church. Apart from the outer walls, the

only item that survived was a 15<sup>th</sup> century wooden crucifix which is now to be found in the Chapel of the Crucifix. The preservation of this crucifix was considered miraculous, and devotion to it increased enormously in 1522 when an epidemic stopped just when a penitential procession was held with it. These events led to the foundation of the Oratorio del Santissimo Crocifisso, built for a confraternity of the parish here and completed in 1568. [1]

Money was collected by the Servites to rebuild the church, a work which began immediately to a design by **Jacopo Sansovino** who suggested re-orienting the church to make it face the Corso. Also, he abolished the transept and side aisles in favour of two ranges of side chapels which could be patronized by noble families in exchange for funerary rights. However, in 1527 the available funds had to be used to bribe the soldiers of Emperor Charles V so that they would not plunder the complex during the Sack of Rome. This event also caused the artists at work on the interior to flee, leaving their work unfinished. **Sansovino** himself went to Venice, where he was to have a flourishing career, and the friars sold their convent building so as to have funds to continue with the church. [1]

**Antonio Sangallo the Younger** took over in 1529, only to suffer a setback in 1530 when the Tiber flooded the area. Six years later **Giovanni Mangone** was appointed to complete the project. **Annibale Lippi** designed and executed the apse in 1569, and then there was a pause in the work. The church was then judged to be finished, and finally consecrated in 1592. Meanwhile, the friars rebuilt their little convent in 1660. [1]

The present façade was a separate project, designed by **Carlo Fontana** and built between 1682 and 1686. The last interventions were the provision of the statues on the upper façade, done in 1701, and the erection of a campanile in 1703 by **Carlo Francesco Bizzaccheri**. These late works were the result of a benefaction by Roberto Orsini. [1]

From 1861 to 1867 the interior was restored by **Virginio Vespignani**, especially the sanctuary. In 1873 the Servite convent was sequestered by the Italian government, and for a time was a police law court for trying minor offences. The church, however, continued to be administered by the Servites, and in the early 20th century the convent was leased back to them. The Order's Generalate or headquarters now occupies the premises. The nearby parish church of Santa Maria in Via also belongs to the friars. [1]

## Exterior

The architecturally separate façade is stuck onto the entrance frontage, and is substantially higher than the nave roof behind. [1]

The concave Baroque façade from 1682-1683 is by **Carlo Fontana** and is now considered one of his finest works. The style has moved from the High Baroque into Late Baroque, anticipating the settecento-style. It is built in travertine. [1]

There are two storeys, with the second storey and the entrance zone below that (which front the central nave) slightly projecting in front of the two side zones which mark the side aisles. The architectural order used for the pilasters and columns is Composite, and the work is entirely in travertine limestone. The entire façade is on a plinth, with the single entrance approached by a short flight of stairs. [1]

### First storey

A pair of pilasters in shallow relief define the outer corners of the first storey, and the side corners of the entrance zone. A further pair of doubletented pilasters is tucked into the inner corners created by the projection forward of this zone. Then, a pair of free-standing columns with their own plinths are placed in front of these doublets, and two pairs of identical columns (each pair sharing a plinth) are placed flanking the entrance. Pilasters and columns support the entablature dividing the storeys, which has a zig-zag profile as a result. [1]

Above the section of entablature supported by the four entrance columns is a split segmental pediment intruding into the second storey, with the arcs made parabolic. Into the split is inserted a

molded square stone frame, which looks as if it once contained a clock. This has its own triangular pediment. [1]

The entrance doorcase is molded, and above it is a floating cornice. Above that in turn is a famous relief sculpture depicting *St Philip Benizi Refusing the Tiara* by **Antonio Raggi**, 1686, recalling the legend that the 15<sup>th</sup> century saint was elected pope but did not consider himself worthy of being the Vicar of Christ. The sculpture is in a molded tondo supported by a pair of lively and very realistic angels, and there is also a putto crawling over the top of the frame. [1] [d]

The side zones of this storey have a pair of statues of *St Philip Benizi* and *Pope St Marcellus* by **Francesco Cavallini**, 1686, in round-headed niches surmounted by crossed acanthus leaves tied with ribbon. [1]

### Second storey

The second storey is on an attic plinth. It has chamfered outer corners corresponding to the design below, and in these chamfers stand a pair of columns. The main frontage of this storey has four pilasters flanking a large rectangular window, and over this is an arched tympanum with a molded archivolt containing a spray of acanthus. [1]

Columns and pilasters support a triangular pediment, with its outer angles recessed. The tympanum of this contains an eroded relief sculpture of a heraldic shield. One very unusual and engaging feature of this façade is that the second storey has side sweeps in the form of palm fronds; you would expect arcs or volutes. [1]

Statues of *Blessed Gioacchino Piccolomini* (also known as Joachim of Siena) and *Blessed Francesco Patrizi*, another holy Servite of Siena, occupy the outer corners of the attic plinth. On the split pediment over the entrance sit allegories of *Faith* and *Hope*, looking cheerful. These statues were provided in 1703 and have been ascribed to **Andrea Fucigna**, but are now thought to be by **Cavallini** also. [1]

### **Plan**



## Interior

The interior has a single nave, with five chapels on each side. At the far end is a shallow rectangular presbyterium having a large apse both of the same height as the nave ceiling. The structural side aisles are divided into five side chapels by blocking walls. The interior decoration is very rich, with many frescoes (mostly of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) and much gilded stucco ornament. The overall color scheme of the walls is white and gold. [1]

### Nave (2)

The arches into the chapels form arcades on either side of the nave, having molded archivolt springing from Doric imposts and separated by gigantic ribbed Corinthian pilasters. The latter support an entablature running round the entire church, which has gilded acanthus scrolls on its frieze and fronded modillions (little brackets) supporting the cornice. [1]

Above the cornice, the central nave side walls have large rectangular windows separated by fresco panels illustrating *Scenes of the Passion*. This fresco cycle includes the large one of the *Crucifixion* (1613) on the counterfaçade, and two smaller ones above it. It is by **Giovanni Battista Ricci** of Novara. [1] [3]

The flat coffered wooden ceiling was executed from 1592 to 1594, at the expense of Monsignor Giulio Vitelli, with his coat of arms prominent. It is in blue, red and gold and features symbols illustrating Our Lady's titles from the Litany of Loreto. The central coffer has a carved relief of the *Immaculate Conception*. The designer was **Carlo Francesco Lambardi** and decorated by **Giovanni Francesco de' Rossi**. [1] [3] [e]

The superb pulpit (3) was designed by **Mattia de Rossi**, and executed by **Carlo Torriani** in 1673. The angel supporting it is by **Pietro Paolo Naldini**, of the school of Bernini. Below the angel is an inscription by Pope Gregory XIII dated 1578. [1] [2]

On the counterfaçade, to the left of the entrance is a very impressive Renaissance double tomb. The upper reclining effigy is of Cardinal Giovanni Michiel (5), a nephew of Pope Paul II and a generous benefactor of the Servites. According to rumor he was poisoned by one of the Borgias in 1503. The lower reclining effigy is Bishop Antonio Orso (died 1511), the Cardinal's nephew. The tomb has been attributed to **Jacopo Sansovino**. It was commissioned in 1520 by Jacopo Orso da Chioggia, a nephew of Bishop Orso. Below his effigy is a pile of books, an allusion to his extensive library, made up of about seven hundred and thirty books, which he donated to the friars. [1] [3] [c] [d]

The corresponding spot to the right of the entrance is occupied by a memorial to Cardinal Francesco Cennini de' Salamandri, by **Giovanni Francesco de Rossi**, 1668. The Cardinal is actually buried in Saint John Lateran. The cenotaph was erected by his nephew. [1] [3] [6]

### Triumphal arch

The triumphal arch (6) rests on a pier of gigantic piers, around the tops of which the entablature runs. The archivolt springs from the latter, and unusually has its keystone hidden by the nave ceiling. The spandrels have frescoes of *King David*, to the left, and *Isaiah*, to the right. At the apex is a tablet saying *Laudate servi Domini*, a quotation from the first line of Psalm 113 - "Praise, o servants of the Lord" - which is applied to the Servites whose choir is in the apse. [1]

The frescoes on the arch are all by **Ricci**. The pilasters feature the four *Latin Doctors of the Church*: *SS Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose* and *Gregory* (they are helpfully labelled). The intrados of the archivolt has two cycles of fresco panels. The outer one has *God the Father* in the middle, flanked by the four *Evangelists*, while the inner one has five scenes from the early life of Our Lady. Left to right, they are *Nativity, Presentation at the Temple, Marriage to Joseph, Annunciation and Visitation*. [1] [3]

### Sanctuary

The sanctuary (7) has one shallow bay with a barrel vault, and then an apse. The architecture of the apse is the work of the Florentine **Annibale Lippi**, who designed it in 1569. [1] [3]

The high altar is free-standing, with polychrome marble decoration but no altarpiece and was

designed by **Sebastiano Cipriano** in 1725. The original appearance was altered during the 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration work by **Virgilio Vespignani**; on that occasion the altar was rebuilt and the lower area of the apse was painted. [1] [4]

Beneath the altar is a cippus or marble memorial stone from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The front is decorated with 12<sup>th</sup> century *opus sectile*, are kept the relics of several saints, which include those of Pope Marcellus and St. Phocas, as well as Digna and Emerita. [1] [3]

To either side of the altar are cantorie or opera-boxes for solo musicians, here cantilivered out on brackets and having their balustrades gilded. [1]

The apse behind has its curve occupied by the choir stalls of the Servite friars, and at its far end is an enormous picture of *The Apotheosis of Pope St Marcellus* in an arched gilt frame which has Ionic columns. This work takes the place of the altarpiece, and was installed in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration when the apse was re-ordered. It is a free copy of a ceiling fresco in the sacristy by **Giovanni Battista Ciochi**. [1]

There is a pair of pedimented windows flanking it, and four frescoes of Servite saints. The conch of the apse has a tripartite fresco cycle by **Giovanni Batista Ricci** featuring *Our Lady* (left to right) *The Dormition*, *The Coronation* and *The Assumption*. They were commissioned by the Vitelli family. [1] [4]

#### Side entrance with access to original baptistery (8)

The baptistery has one of the oldest preserved baptismal fonts. It was made in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century, and is deep enough to allow partial immersion. It was restored in 1912. The baptistery lies under the adjacent building of the Banco di Roma. It can be accessed from the church if you ask the sacristan to unlock the door, but it can also be seen freely from the bank's offices during business hours - they have constructed a light shaft above it, allowing a nice view. [1]

#### Sacristy (9)

The sacristy is located to the right of the sanctuary. The ceiling is decorated with a fresco of *The Apotheosis of Pope St Marcellus* by **Giovanni Battista Ciochi**. There is also a very striking painting of the crucifixion attributed to **Anthony Van Dyck**. The arms of the cross are quite short, meaning that the figure of Christ hangs from arms that more-or-less vertical, rather than stretched out broadly. The face of Christ is unusual because of His bloodied nose. [1]

In an adjoining room is a Christian sarcophagus from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. [4]

Above the chapel entrance are two funerary monuments. The lower one is for Francesco Dandini, dated 1861. The upper one is for the Italian chemist and physician Domenico Morichini, 1836, by Adamo Tadolini.

The side chapels will be describe clockwise starting with the left rear.

#### Left Side Chapels

##### Chapel of the Good Shepherd (10)

The first chapel on the left is dedicated to Christ the Good Shepherd. It is modern, having been converted from a side entrance vestibule in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and designed by **Arnaldo Brandizzi** in 1954. The altarpiece depicts *St Anthony Mary Pucci*, a Servite canonized in 1962. [1]

The little cupola has a mosaic of *The Apotheosis of St Anthony Mary Pucci* by **Michelangelo Bedini**. [1]

A very interesting early 17<sup>th</sup> wall memorial is here, sumptuously decorated with red and verde antico panels and with an elliptical tondo containing a portrait of a Servite friar. Oddly, the memorial has no inscription identifying him but only a tag saying *mihi absit gloriari* ("far be it from me to be glorified"). [1]



There is a photo and information concerning Bl. Cecilia Eusepi, a professed member from the Secular Servites, for who the cause of sainthood is in process. The miracle for her beatification concerned the 4 August 1959 cure of Tommaso Ricci who survived what would have been a fatal traffic accident. [7] [e]

### Chapel of the Seven Holy Founders (11)

The second chapel on the left, under the patronage of the Massimo family, was originally dedicated to the Madonna dei Sette Dolori and in 1727 it was dedicated to the Seven Saints founders of the Order of the Servants of Mary. The altarpiece depicts *Our Lady Granting the Habit to the Holy Founders*, an early work by **Agostino Masucci** (1727). [1] [3] [e]

The fresco decoration by **Pietro Paolo Baldini** reflects the earlier dedication of the chapel. The lunette above the altar has the *Crucifixion*. The side walls have two work, *Christ Falls Under the Cross* to the right, and *The Burial of Christ* to the left. [3]

The panel on the left side below the entrance arch is *Veronica with the Vail*, and on the right side is the *Madonna of the Seven Sorrows*.

On the right wall is a memorial to Bishop Tiberio Muti, 1555, with an effigy sculpted by someone of the school of Michelangelo. [1] [e]

### Chapel of St Mary Magdalen (12)

The third chapel on the left, granted in 1549 to Cardinal Ascanio Parisani, is dedicated to St Mary Magdalen, and has an altarpiece by **Girolamo Triga** depicting *The Penitent Magdalen in the Desert*. The skull that she is holding and her loose hair are typical attributes of this subject. [1] [3] [4]

The decoration of the vault, was begun by the Flemish painter **Lorenzo da Rotterdam**, among the first foreigners to have access to the Accademia di San Luca, but was completed by **Giovanni Paolo del Colle** (1550-1551). There is depicted the *Annunciation* and the *Nativity*, in the center the coat of arms of the Parisani family, grotesques and figures of Prophets and Evangelists. [3] [e]

On the side walls are 18<sup>th</sup> century frescoes. On the left is *Blessed Francesco Patrizi having a vision of Our Lady*, and on the right is *Blessed Gioacchino Piccolomini having an ecstasy during Mass*, by Giuseppe Tomasi. [4]

### Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows (13)

The fourth chapel on the left, Cappella della Madonna Santissima dei Sette Dolori, is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, devotion to whom has been propagated by the Servite Friars throughout their history. This chapel was designed by the Florentine architect **Zanobi del Rosso**, and solemnly inaugurated on September 14, 1762. [3] [4]

The chapel walls are clad in ancient precious marble and Sicilian jasper, alternated with Siena yellow with the work of the stonecutter Alberto Fortini. [e]

The altar aedicule has a pair of Corinthian columns in a brecciated light green marble, which looks like verde antico. The altarpiece showing *Our Lady of Sorrows* is by **Pier Paolo Baldini**. Our Lady is shown with seven swords stuck into her chest, representing the Seven Sorrows. The typically devotional image was crowned by the Vatican Chapter in 1695. In 1762 it was restored by the painter **Domenico Corvi**. The precious altar frontal, of breccia corallina, peach blossom and alabaster cotognino, is by **Agostino Corandelli**. [1] [a] [e]

Above the aedicule is an unusual window in yellow glass, etched with a pair of angels adoring the Eucharist. The stucco angels are by **Tommaso Righi**. The rich ornamentation of gilded stuccos is the work of **Cintio Ferrari**. [1] [3] [a] [e]

The vault fresco is by **Antonio Bicchierai** (1730). It depicts: *The Presentation of the Child Jesus at the Temple*. The moment is depicted when St Simeon the Elder holds the Christ-Child, and predicts that a sword would pierce Our Lady's soul. Note the Solomonic columns in the background. [1] [3]

The side walls have a pair of good-quality works by **Domenico Corvi**, 1763. They depict *The Abandonment of the Baby Moses in the Reeds* on the left wall, and *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, on the right wall. [1] [e]

On the pillar between this and the next chapel, is the monument of Card. Dandini, nearly concealed by the confessional; and his portrait above is attributed to **Pellegrino Tibaldi** of Modena. On the pillar between the chapels is the monument of Doctor Morichini, the famous chemist, the friend of Sir Humphrey Davy; and his likeness in bas-relief is by **Adamo Tadolini**.

#### Chapel of St Paul (14)

The fifth chapel on the left is the Cappella Frangipani and is dedicated to St Paul. The relics of Saint Felicita and her seven martyr children are preserved here. [1] [3]

Mario Frangipani commissioned **Taddeo Zuccari** to decorate his family chapel. The pictorial decoration is one of the most significant cycles of the mid-sixteenth century. The artist undertook the works in 1558 or the beginning of the following year and died before finishing them († 1566). They were completed by his brother Federico. [1] [3] [b]

The decoration of the Frangipani Chapel offers a typical example of a Cinquecento compartmentalized chapel decorative design. The paintings illustrate the life of St. Paul. The altarpiece, painted on slate, represents *The Conversion of St. Paul*. The rest of the scenes were painted in fresco and framed in stucco relief. On the left wall is *The Blinding of Elymas*, and on the right wall - *The Healing of the Cripple at Lystra*. [b]

On the barrel-vault three scenes are painted: on the right is *The Raising of Eutychus*, with an accompanying inscription beneath:

EVTYCHES. AMORIVIS. EXCITATVS  
(the power of love arouses Eutyches)

On the left is *St. Paul Bitten by a Viper on the Island of Malta*, and the inscription beneath it:

VIPERAE. MORSVS. INNOXIVS  
(unharmd by the bite of a viper).

In the middle of the vault is *The Martyrdom of St. Paul*. [b]

The lunette above the altar is largely taken up with two sections of the semi-circular broken pediment of the frame of the altarpiece and the narrow window between them. In the remaining space on either side of the window is a figure reclining on the pediment, attended by child angels. Painted on the alabaster window is the dove of the Holy Spirit set in a brilliant sky. [b]

On either side of the pier-pilasters of the entrance arch are two figures: above - prophets, and below - what appear to be saints, although these are difficult to identify due to the poor condition of the fresco. On the soffit of the entrance arch, four ovals alternate with three medallions, all containing bust figures. The ovals feature the *Four Doctors of the Latin Church* (*St. Jerome*, *St. Gregory the Great*, *St. Ambrose* and *St. Augustine*) and the medallions feature *St. Peter*, *St. Paul* and *St. John the Baptist*. Today, it is difficult to reach a definitive idea concerning the original colors of the frescoes. Water leakage from the ceiling had damaged the frescoes on the vault. In 1965 they were restored, and areas that had been repainted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were repaired. [b]

The Frangipani Chapel was constructed as a family burial chapel. At the bottom of each of the side-walls are three marble portrait busts, of members of the Frangipani family, set into circular niches. Beneath each statue is an epitaph inscribed with biographical details of the deceased. On the left wall are the statues of Antonino the father (1546) and of his two sons, Curzio (1555) and Mario (1569), the latter of whom had commissioned the decoration. It is unknown who the sculptor was or when the statues were made, or even if they were especially made for the chapel. On the right wall are the statues of three of the younger generation of the Frangipani family: Muzio (1588), the son of Mario, and his two sons, Roberto (1622) and Lelio (1604). These statues are attributed to the Bolognese sculptor **Alessandro Algardi** and are dated to between 1630 and 1640. On either side of the altar is a marble relief with the Frangipani coat of arms: two symmetrical rampant lions holding four loaves of bread. The inscription above the altarpiece reads: [b]

D. [Divo] PAVLO APOST. MARIVS FREGE PANIVS DD [Dedicavit] MDLX.

(Mario Frangipani dedicated [the chapel] to the Apostle Saint Paul [in the year] 1560).

### Chapel of St Philip Benizi (15)

The sixth chapel on the left is dedicated to St Philip Benizi, one of the greatest saints of the Servite Order. The chapel was restored in 1725 at the expense of Cardinal Alessandro Falconieri. [1] [3]

The altarpiece is by **Pier Leone Ghezzi** in 1725, and depicts: *St Juliana Falconieri Receiving the Servite Rule from St Philip Benizi, assisted by Saint Alessio Falconieri*. She was the foundress of the Servite nuns. [1] [3]

The side wall frescoes are by **Bernardino Gagliardi**, 1652 and depict, on the left, *The Miracle of the Multiplication of the Loaves by St Philip Benizi* and, on the right, *The Funeral of St Philip Benizi*. [1]

On either side of the pier-pilasters of the entrance arch are two figures of Servite saints.

Also on the right side is a monument to Ferdinando Dandini de Sylva, 1918 by **Enrico Tadolini**. [1]

### Right Side Chapels

#### Chapel of St Peregrine Laziosi (16)

The fifth chapel on the right was granted in 1564 to the branch of the Orsini family of Toffia and already named after St. Anthony of Padua. In 1723 it was granted to Cardinal Fabrizio Paolucci de'Calboli of Forlì, who restored it and dedicated it to San Pellegrino Laziosi, a patron of cancer sufferers (his name in Italian is Pellegrino). This is because he was miraculously cured of a cancer in his leg, an event depicted in the altarpiece. [1] [3] [4]

The chapel, inaugurated on the occasion of the jubilee of 1725, was designed by the architect **Ludovico Rusconi Sassi** and is decorated with paintings by **Aureliano Milani**, and with alabaster and precious marbles by the stonemason **Francesco Armellini**. [3] [4]

The altarpiece depicting *San Pellegrino Laziosi Healed by the Redeemer*, recalls one of the most famous episodes in the life of the saint who, born in Forlì around 1265, risked his leg amputation in adulthood. On the side walls are the *Healing of a blind child*, on the right, and the *Apparition of the Madonna to St. Pellegrino*, to the left. In the vault is an 18th century fresco of the *Glory of the Holy Spirit*. [1] [3] [c]

To the right is a memorial to Cardinal Fabrizio Paolucci by **Pietro Bracci** 1726, and to the left one to Cardinal Camillo Merlini Paolucci by **Tommaso Righi** 1763. [1] [c]

#### Chapel of the Crucifix (17)

The fourth chapel on the right is dedicated to the famous 14<sup>th</sup> century crucifix that survived the 1519 fire. [1]

The original decoration was begun by **Perin del Vaga**, one of Raphael's pupils. At the Sack of Rome in 1527 he fled, and left the chapel unfinished. After peace had been restored, **Daniele da Volterra** completed the ceiling vault frescoes. They depict *The Creation of Eve* in the central panel, and *The Four Evangelists* in the two side panels. These latter have not survived well. The consensus is that **del Vaga** finished Eve, and had made a start on Mark and John on the left, which had to be finished by **da Volterra**. Then, **del Vaga's** design for Matthew and Luke on the right was executed in its entirety by **da Volterra**. [1]

The crucifix serves as the altarpiece. The aedicule has a pair of Composite columns in pink marble, and on the frieze of the entablature is an epigraph reading *Huc me meus impulit ardor* ("To this my zeal has impelled me"). The tabernacle in gold and precious stones, containing a relic of the wood of the Cross, was designed by **Carlo Francesco Bizzaccheri**, 1689. Note the great number of ex-voto offerings on the walls flanking the aedicule. [1] [3]

The crucifix used to be at the Oratorio del Santissimo Crocifisso, but was brought back here in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is sometimes moved into the sanctuary for liturgical events. At times of special intercession, such as the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council, it is carried in procession



through the streets. It has its own lay confraternity to encourage devotion to it, the Arciconfraternita del Santissimo Crocifisso di San Marcello. [1]

To the left the monument of Cardinal Ercole Consalvi (1757-1824), and of the Marquis his brother, whose profiles are seen on the medallion, and who, devotedly attached through life, are here united in death, being interred, at their common request, in the same sarcophagus, was executed, together with the statue of *Faith*, by **Rinaldo Rinaldi** of Padua. The Cardinal, as is well known, was Secretary to Pius VII., and was received with marked distinction, in England, by George IV, after the important events of 1814. [1]

On the right wall is a monument for Cardinal Carlo Grano, by **Tommaso Gismondi**, (1977). [4]

### Chapel of Our Lady of Graces (18)

The third chapel on the right, granted in 1562 to the bishop of Trivento Matteo Grifoni, whose house was located near the church, and subsequently to the Weld family, is dedicated to the Madonna delle Grazie. [3]

The back wall is frescoed by the Florentine **Francesco Salviati** shortly before his death in 1563, with episodes from the life of the Virgin. The five compartments depict:

*The Birth of the Virgin,*  
*The Annunciation,*  
*The Coronation,*  
*The Presentation at the Temple*  
and the rare theme of *The Purification of Mary*.

At the center of the wall is a *Madonna and Child*, an interesting fresco from the early years of the 14th century, surmounted by two figures of Angels holding a crown, set in a 15<sup>th</sup> century arched frame of white marble. The icon is what remains of the original fresco decoration executed shortly after 1519 by **Perin del Vaga**. [1] [3]

The Marian cycle is completed by the frescoes by **Giovanni Battista Ricci** executed around 1612. In the vault are depicted the *Marriage of the Virgin*, the *Assumption* and *Pentecost*. On the side walls are the *Adoration of the Magi* and the *Adoration of the Shepherds*. [3]

A memorial to Cardinal Thomas Weld (d. 1837) and his daughter Mary Lucy is also in this chapel. The marble bust of the deceased was sculptured by **Thomas Healy**. On the right side is the monument for Bishop Grifoui on which is seen his recumbent statue. There is also a monument to Mattia de Grifoni (d. 1567). The fine effigy, attributed to Stoldo Lorenzi, follower of Michelangelo, was put on a new tomb chest in 1651. [1] [3]

### Crypt

A staircase to the left of the altar gives access to the underlying crypt, erected by Lord Hugh Charles Clifford in 1837-1838, designed by **Agostino Gargioli**. The environment, with a Greek cross plan, is completely covered with white and gray marble, including bas-reliefs depicting the *Expulsion from the Earthly Paradise*, the *Holy Family*, the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and a *Pietà*. The four groups are the work of **Costantino Brumidi**, author also of the Angels, kneeling under the altar table and of the above alabaster group, depicting the *Crucifixion*. [3] [4]

### Chapel of SS Degna and Merita (19)

The second chapel on the right, granted to the Muti family in 1644, is dedicated to SS Degna and Merita. They are two early Roman martyrs whose relics are enshrined in a porphyry urn under the altar. The decoration with precious marbles and stuccos was realized around 1725 on a design by **Francesco Ferrari**. [1] [3] [4]

The altarpiece here depicts the *Martyrdom*, and is by **Pietro Andrea Barbieri** 1727. The vault shows *Apotheosis of the Saints*, and is by **Ignazio Stern**. [1]

The side walls have a pair of spectacular matching Baroque memorials to Giovanni Antonio Muti on the left side, and Maria Colomba Vincentini on the right side, both by **Bernardino Cametti** (1725).

The deceased are shown as if kneeling in prayer at a prie-dieu draped in a billowing cloth. The latter is carved in orange marble. [1] [4]

### Pietà (22)

In the nave between this chapel and the next is a large polychrome wooden *Pietà*, traditionally held by the Bernini school, dates to about 1700, conceived to be part of a processional apparatus for the transport, on special festive occasions, of the miraculous Crucifix. [1] [3] [5]

### Chapel of the Annunciation (20)

The first chapel on the right is dedicated to the Annunciation to Our Lady, already belonging to the Alli and Maccarani families, it was donated, in 1607 to the cavalier Prospero Alli, who provided to decorate it. [3] [4]

The altarpiece depicting the *Annunciation* is the work of **Lazzaro Baldi**. Above, in a frame surrounded by Angels, is a 15th century fresco depicting a *Madonna and Child*, perhaps from the old church. The vault was frescoed, at the beginning of the 17th century, by **Tarquinio Ligustri** who depicted a colonnade foreshortened with little putters around the crown of the Holy Spirit. On the entrance pillar, frescoes by **Silverio Capparoni**, *St Peter*, *St Paul*, *Orsola and Giacinta Marescotti*. [3] [4]

Here are memorials to Orsola Priula Maccarini (1849) on the left wall, and Onofrio Concioli (1851), on the right wall. The side walls have portraits of *St Ursula* and *St Hyacintha Mariscotti* by **Silverio Capparoni**. [1] [4]

## **Special notes**

The anniversary of the fire in 1519, and miraculous survival of the crucifix, is still marked on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Other important feasts that are celebrated with great solemnity are those of Pope St Marcellus on 16 January, The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order on 17 February, St Giuliana Falconiere on 19 June, St Philip Benizi on 23 August, the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September and all saints of the Servite Order on 16 November.

San Marcello al Corso is one of the Lenten station churches, on Wednesday after the fifth Sunday of Lent.

## **Artists and Architects:**

Adamo [Tadolini](#) (1727-1813), Italian sculptor  
Agostino Corandelli (18<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian silversmith  
Agostino Gargioli (19<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian architect  
Agostino [Masucci](#) (1691-1758), Italian painter of the late-Baroque or Rococo period  
Alberto Fortini (18<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian stonemason  
Alessandro [Algardi](#) (1598-1654), Italian high- Baroque sculptor, architect  
Annibale [Lippi](#) († 1581), Italian architect from Florence  
Andrea [Fucigna](#) (c.1660-1711), Italian sculptor  
Anthony [Van Dyck](#) (1599-1641), Flemish painter from Antwerp  
Antonio [Bicchierai](#) (1688-1766), Italian painter  
Antonio [Raggi](#) [aka *Il Lombardo*] (1624-1686), Italian sculptor of the Baroque  
Antonio da [Sangallo the younger](#) (1484-1546), Italian Renaissance architect from Florence  
Arnaldo Brandizzi (20<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian architect  
Aureliano [Milani](#) (1675-1749), Italian painter of the late-Baroque period  
Bernardino [Cametti](#) (1682-1736), Italian sculptor of the late Baroque  
Bernardino [Gagliardi](#) (1609-1660), Italian painter of the Baroque period  
Carlo [Fontana](#) (1634-1714), Italian architect of the Late Baroque period  
Carlo Francesco [Bizzaccheri](#) (1656-1721), Italian architect early Baroque and Rococo style  
Carlo Francesco [Lambardi](#) (1559-1620), Italian architect of the late-Renaissance and early-Baroque period  
Carlo Torriani (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian stonemason  
Cintio Ferrari (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian stuccoist  
Constantino [Brumidi](#) (1805-1880), Italian American painter  
Daniele Ricciarelli [da Volterra](#) (1509-1566), Italian Mannerist painter, sculptor and architect

Domenico [Corvi](#) (1721-1803), Italian painter  
 Enrico Tadolini ((1888-1967)), Italian sculptor  
 Ercole [Ferrata](#) (1610-1686), Italian sculptor of the Baroque period  
 Federico [Zuccari](#) (1541-1609), Italian Mannerist painter and architect  
 Francesco Armellini (18<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian stonemason  
 Francesco [Cavallini](#) (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian sculptor (also see [here](#))  
 Francesco [Ferrari](#) (d. 1744), Italian architect  
 Francesco Nicoletti (1709-1776), Italian architect  
 Francesco [Salviati](#) (1510-1563), Italian painter in the Mannerist period from Florence  
 (also see [here](#))  
 Giacomo [Triga](#) (1674-1746), Italian painter of the Late Baroque period  
 Giovanni Battista Ciocchi, Italian painter  
 Giovanni Battista Polenzani, Italian painter  
 Giovanni Battista [Ricci](#) [aka *da Novara*] (1537-1627), Italian painter  
 Giovanni Francesco [de Rossi](#) [aka La Vecchietta] († c.1680), Italian sculptor  
 Giovanni [Mangone](#) (d. 1543), Italian architect  
 Giovanni Paolo [del Colle](#) (c.1518-1556), Italian painter  
 Giuseppe [Tomasi](#) (1610-1672), Italian painter  
 Ignazio [Stern](#) [aka *Ignazio Stella*] (1679-1748), Austrian Baroque painter  
 Jacopo [Sansovino](#) (1486-1570), Italian sculptor and architect  
 Lazzarro [Baldi](#) (c. 1624-1703), Italian painter of the Baroque period  
 Lorenzo da Rotterdam (16<sup>th</sup> cent), Flemish painter  
 Ludovico Rusconi [Sassi](#) (1678-1736), Italian architect of the Rococo period  
 Mattia [de Rossi](#) (1637-1695), Italian architect of the Baroque period  
 Michelangelo [Bedini](#) (1904-1973), Italian painter and mosaicist  
 Orazio [Torriani](#) (or Torrigiani) (1602-1657), Italian architect and sculptor  
 Pellegrino [Tibaldi](#) (1527-1596), Italian mannerist architect, sculptor, and mural painter.  
 Pier Leone [Ghezzi](#) (1674-1755), Italian Rococo painter  
 Piero Bonaccorsi [aka Perin [del Vaga](#)] (1501-1547), Italian painter of the Late Renaissance/  
 Mannerism  
 Pietro Andrea [Barbieri](#) (18<sup>th</sup> cent.), Italian painter in the Baroque period  
 Pietro [Bracci](#) (1700-1773), Italian sculptor of the Late Baroque  
 Pietro Paolo [Baldini](#) [or Ubaldini], (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian artist of the late Baroque period  
 Pietro Paolo [Naldini](#) (1619-1691), Italian painter, sculptor  
 Rinaldo [Rinaldi](#) (1793-1873), Italian sculptor of the Neoclassic period  
 Sebastiano [Cipriano](#) (Died c.1740), Italian architect  
 Silverio [Capparoni](#) (1831-1907), Italian painter  
 Stoldo [Lorenzi](#) (1534-c. 1583), Italian Mannerist sculptor  
 Taddeo [Zuccari](#) (or Zuccaro) (1529-1566), Italian painter of the Roman Mannerist School  
 Tarquinio [Ligustri](#) da Viterbo (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian painter  
 Thomas Healy (19<sup>th</sup> cent), Irish sculptor  
 Tommaso [Gismondi](#) (1906-2003), Italian sculptor  
 Tommaso [Righi](#) (1727-1802), Italian sculptor and stuccator  
 Virginio [Vespignani](#) (1808-1882), Italian architect  
 Zanobi [Del Rosso](#) (1724-1798), Italian architect (also see [here](#))

### Relics:

[Pope St. Marcellus](#)

Interred beneath the high altar

### Burials:

Juan Cardinal de [CARVAJAL](#), (ca. 1399/1400-1469)

Giovanni Cardinal [MICHEL](#), (1446/1447-1503) (also see [here](#))

Dionisio Neagrus Cardinal [LAURERIO](#), O.S.M., (1497-1542)

Buried near the main entrance of the church

Ascanio Cardinal [PARISANI](#), (?-1549) (also see [here](#))

Buried in the chapel *della Maddalena* or *della Pietà*, founded by him in the church

Girolamo Cardinal [DANDINI](#), (1509-1559) (also see [here](#))

Giovanni Andrea Cardinal [MERCURIO](#), (1518-1568) (also see [here](#))

Stefano Cardinal [BONUCCI](#), O. Serv., (1521-1589) (also see [here](#))

Paolo Emilio Cardinal [ZACCHIA](#), (1554-1605)

No trace of his tomb is found today

Fabrizio Cardinal [PAOLUCCI](#), (1651-1726) (also see [here](#))

Buried on the left side of the chapel of *S. Pellegrino Laziosi*

Pietro Maria Cardinal [PIERI](#), O.S.M., (1676-1743) (also see [here](#))

Buried in the center of the choir, to the right of the main altar

Raffaele Cosimo Cardinal de'[GIROLAMI](#), (1670-1748)

Camillo Cardianl [PAOLUCCI](#), (1692-1763)

Buried on the right side of the chapel of *S. Pellegrino Laziosi*, over the door to the sacristy

Giuseppe Cardinal [SIMONETTI](#), (1709-1767)

Ercole Cardinal [CONSALVI](#), (1757-1824) (also see [here](#))

His heart was buried in the church S. Maria *ad Martyres* (Pantheon)

Thomas Cardinal [WELD](#), (1773-1837) (also see [here](#))

Buried next to the tombs of his daughter and son in law

Ercole Cardinal [DANDINI](#), (1759-1840)

Agostino Cardinal [RIVAROLA](#), (1758-1842) (also see [here](#))

Buried near the altar of *Vergine Addolorata*.

Luigi Cardinal [DEL DRAGO](#), (1776-1845)

Carlo Cardinal [GRANO](#), (1887-1976) (also see [here](#))

Bishop Antonio Orso († 1511)

Hugh, seventh baron of Clifford of Chudleigh

Son-in-law of Card. Weld

Mary Lucy Weld

Daughter of Card. Weld, wife of Baron Clifford

Frangipani family members

Giorgio [Baglivi](#) (1668-1707)

Armenio-Italian physician and scientist

## Location:

Addr: Piazza di San Marcello, 5

Coordinates: [41°53'55"N 12°28'54"E](#)

## Info:

Telephone: 0039 06 699301

Open 07:30-12:00 16:00-19:00 daily -except Saturday, when the morning opening is at 10:00.

Mass schedule: Holidays: 11.00, 18.00 Weekdays: 7.45, 18.00

## Links and References:

1. [Roman Churches Wiki](#)
2. [Info Roma web site](#)
3. PhotoRomano web site (no longer online)
4. <http://roma.mysupersite.it/chieseroma/rione-trevi/s.marcello/index>
5. [Church web site](#)
6. [The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Churc](#)
7. [Article on Cecilia Eusepi in Wikipedia](#)

- a. Minor, Vernon Hyde; "**Tommaso Righi's Roman Sculpture: A Catalogue**"; *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 126, No. 980 (Nov., 1984), pp. 668-675 (jstor 881872)
- b. Balass, Golda; "**Taddeo Zuccari's decoration for the Frangipani chapel in S. Marcello al Corso, Rome**"; *Tel Aviv University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Tel Aviv*, 2001
- c. Davies, Gerald S.; RENASCENCE: THE SCULPTURED TOMBS OF THE 15TH CENTURY IN ROME; 1916
- d. Donovan, Jeremiah; ROME ANCIENT AND MODERN AND ITS ENVIRONS; 1842
- e. Church information plaques
- f. S. DOC. 103-27 - CONSTANTINO BRUMIDI - ARTIST OF THE CAPITOL; 2000; Chapter 2 "The Italian Years"; pg. 19

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### Other links

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San\\_Marcello\\_al\\_Corso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Marcello_al_Corso)

<http://www.pnac.org/station-churches/week-5/wednesday-san-marcello/>

[https://www.tripadvisor.es/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g187791-d7708746-i237759311-San\\_Marcello\\_al\\_Corso-Rome-Lazio.html](https://www.tripadvisor.es/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g187791-d7708746-i237759311-San_Marcello_al_Corso-Rome-Lazio.html)

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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dealvariis/sets/72157622168260336>

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("De Alvariis" gallery on Flickr)