

San Pantaleo



San Pantaleo is a 17th century convent church located on the Piazza di San Pantaleo in the rione Panone. The church dedicated to St Pantaleon, a 4th century martyr who is a patron saint of the medical profession because by tradition he was a physician of the emperor Galerius,, martyred under Diocletian in Nicomedia in 305. His original name was *Panteleimon* ("all-merciful one") in Greek, but this was corrupted in the late Latin. [1]

History

The church was built in the early Middle Ages, but it is uncertain when. It is listed among the branches of San Lorenzo in Damaso in a Bull of Urban III of 1186 under the name "Sancti Pantaleonis de Pretecarolis. The meaning of the name is uncertain. [1]

It is described as being restored and re-consecrated under Pope Pope Honorius III in 1216. and granted as a collegiate church to a community of "English priests". In the later Middle Ages, the

church and parish were in the charge of a chapter of secular priests. [1][3]

In 1621 Pope Paul V Borghese granted the church and the adjoining convent to Saint Joseph Calasanz (1557-1648) as a headquarters for his new religious congregation, the Poor Clerks Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools, better known as the Scolopi or Piarists. They remain in possession, and the convent is their congregational headquarters. He founded the first free public schools in Europe in 1567, called the Pious Schools. [1][3]

However the general appearance of the building remained unchanged until 1680 when the church was rebuilt by the Roman architect Giovanni Antonio de Rossi to the patronage of Cardinal Gaspare Carpegna, protector of the Order. Work proceeded until 1689 with some interruptions caused by financial problems. The orientation of the church was reversed at that time. [3]

However at the end of the 17th century the renovation of the church was completed and remained so until today, with the exception of the high altar that, and only partly designed by Nicola Salvi in 1746-48, was later redesigned Carlo Murena. [1][3]

The neoclassical facade was added in 1806 by Giuseppe Valadier, the official architect of Prince Giovanni Torlonia, who financed the project. [1]

According to an inscription in the Chapel of St. Anna, the renovated church was consecrated by Cardinal Constantino Patrizi, Vicar of Rome, and Protector of the Piarists, on June 5, 1853. [c]

In 1895 the pavement was replaced. [c]

On the occasion of the third centenary of the death of Saint Joseph Calasanz, the church was restored in 1948 and again in the late 1990's. [b]

Exterior

Façade (1)

The neoclassical facade has a rusticated flat surface on which stands the frieze in bas-relief in stucco. The design is extremely simple and revolutionary for its time, with by a single large gable overhanging arch that frames a window echoing the ancient Roman bath architecture.

The entrance is flanked by a pair of Ionic columns in the round, and has a decoration of swags on the lintel. The columns support a dedicatory inscription, and over this is a triangular pediment. [1]

The stucco frieze decorated with trophies in low relief, by Peter Aurelj harmoniously divides the two storeys. The frieze display is a medley of liturgical and sacred items depicted as if they had been washed up in a flood, which the architect described as "military-religious". The cornice above this is decorated with egg-and-dart moulding. [1][3]

The second storey has a large rectangular window tucked in between the cornice and the top of the arch. There is a small circular window in the crowning pediment. [1]

Convent

The rest of the convent is an undistinguished group of buildings to the left of the church, on a triangular plan and built around a little central cloister which has the shape of an irregular pentagon (a square with one corner cut off). This is a pleasant spot, with arcades on all sides. Some of the arcading is blind, springing from double Doric pilasters in limestone, but two sides have vaulted walkways and here the arcades have proper limestone columns. [1]

Camera di San Giuseppe

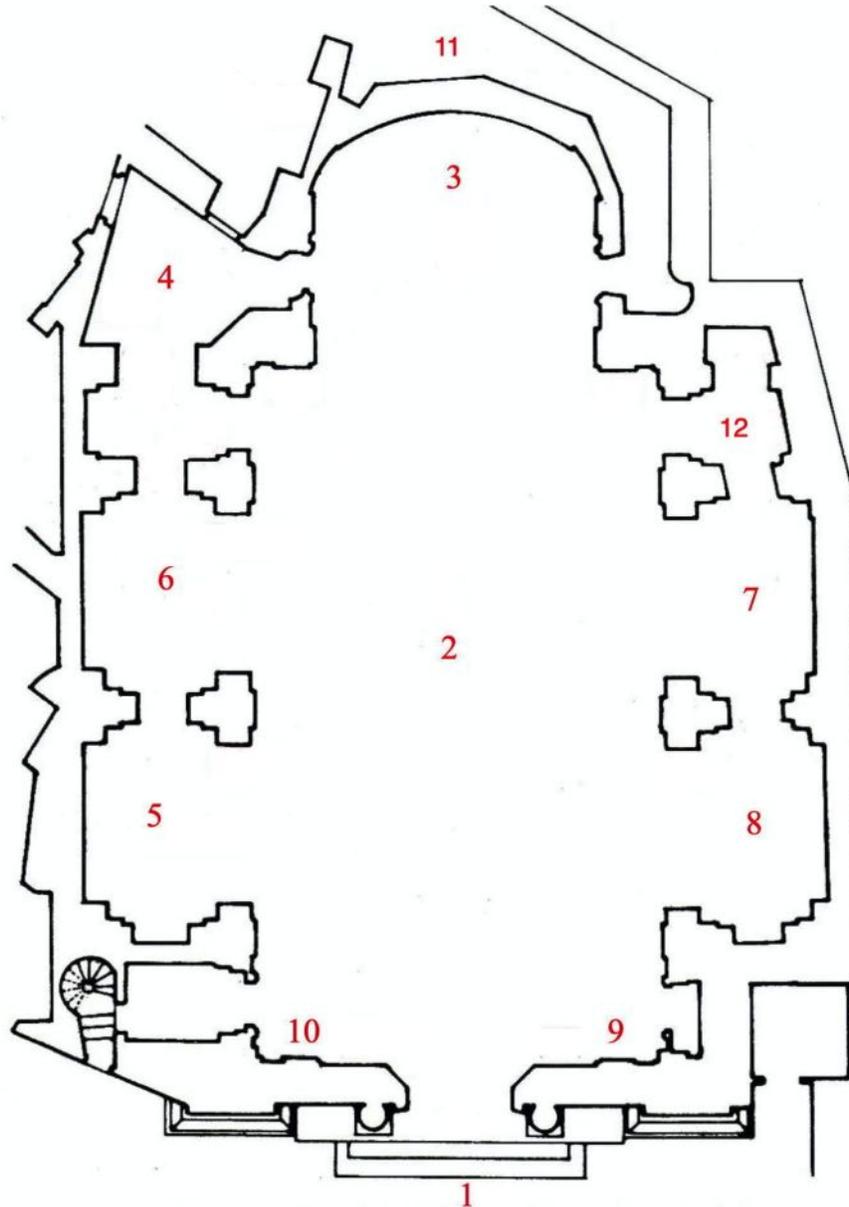
Upstairs is the convent house chapel, the Oratorio dell'Apparizione, in which St Joseph Calasanz had a vision of Our Lady. It now has paintings by Antonio Calcagnadoro 1925. Off it are the room of the saint, and the former sacristy which is a now a chapel containing relics of him. [1]

The convent preserves the room of the saint, with many relics and objects associated with him. The actual room is the one in which he lived for thirty-six years and died in 1648. Unlike other saints' rooms in Roman convents, decorated with precious marbles, gilding and stucco, has not been

embellished but retains its original furniture, fittings and items for personal use. Apparently, when hedied the brethren were rightly convinced that he would be canonized and so locked the room up instead of clearing it out for another occupant. [1]

Next to the room is another little chamber which used to be the convent chapel sacristy. This was converted into a chapel in its own right, the "Chapel of the Relics". Here is kept a reliquary containing the saint's viscera, and many personal items in display cases which occupy the walls. [1]

Plan



Interior

Nave (2)

In contrast to the rather stark facade, the interior, designed by Giovanni Antonio de Rossi, is richly Baroque. There are two chapels on each side of the nave, in large niches with trabeated rather than arched tops. They are flanked on each side by rectangular piers revetted with giallo antico marble. A ribbed Corinthian pilaster is applied to each of these, in grey with gilded ribs and capitals; the capitals are duplicated for the tops of the rest of the piers. Above each of these chapels is an arched window. [1]

The far corners of the chapels have yellow pilasters folded into them, and the chapels themselves are connected by arched side portals. The barrel-vaulted ceiling springs from the entablature, and has four windows on each side in lunettes. The outer windows are smaller, since these bays are shallower. [1]

The nave barrel vaulted ceiling, commissioned by Prince Torlonia, was frescoed by Filippo Gherardi from 1687 to 1692, the subject being the *Glory of the Name of Mary*, an eloquent example of fusion between architecture and painting by a masterly illusionist. [1]

The entablature on the countertrade is supported by a pair of ribbed and gilded pilasters, over which is applied the floating organ gallery on corbels, which has out-curving wings. Above the entablature is a large window, flanked by a pair of frescoed angels, and on it is a super-gallery or walkway which curves round to above the first pair of chapel piers. [1]

The loggia on the countertrade was decorated by Eugenio Cisterna. The organ has a very pretty gilded Baroque case, embellished with a mob of putti. The organ itself was installed in 1925. [1][5]

The last bay of the nave just before the sanctuary has a pair of floating balconies on corbels over side doorways. These are *cantorie*, for solo musicians and singers. [1]

Sanctuary (3)

The tall triumphal arch is supported by another pair of gigantic Corinthian pilasters, this time revetted with rosso antico marble. The semi-circular archivolt fits into the ceiling vault, and springs from a pair of pedestals on the entablature above these piers. The entablature frieze here, and around the apse, is also red rather than yellow as in the nave. The conch of the apse is rayed and coffered with recessed hexagonal panels. [1]

The commission to build the high altar was entrusted to Nicola Salvi in 1748, on the occasion of the beatification of Joseph Calasanz. The draft was probably the result of collaboration with his student Luigi Vanvitelli, who worked with his teacher in the last years of his life, when the disease now prevented him from working independently. Once Salvi disappeared, the commission passed definitively into the hands of Vanvitelli, who entrusted its realization first to Carlo Murena and then to Virginia Bracci, who followed it until 1768. [3][b]

The main altar is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, venerated with the title of Our Lady of the Pious Schools of San Pantaleo. The huge altar is coved, and has four rosso antico columns matching the pilasters of the triumphal arch. St Joseph Calasanz is interred beneath this high altar; hence the church is a center of his veneration. He is in an elliptical porphyry sarcophagus, designed by Carlo Murena. [1] [3]

Instead of a painted altarpiece there is a small icon of Our Lady set in a marble bas-relief by the sculptor Luigi Acquisti, with rays of glory and supported by angels. Below this is depicted the saint presenting a pair of schoolboys from the Pious School to her. The ancient icon with the Virgin that the angels support has above all a devotional interest: it was donated in 1688 to the Piarist Fathers by the devoted Perugian, Aurora Berti, whose funeral memory is visible in the counter-facade. [1][4][c]

The side chapels and memorials are described in clockwise order, beginning to the left as you enter the church.

Memorial for Alphonso Borelli (9)

Over the holy-water-font, at there left side of the door, is the monument of Alphonso Borelli of Naples, who retired into the adjoining convent, when advanced in years, to become teacher of Mathematics in the annexed schools, and died, in 1679, aged 71 years, having written a curious work on the motion of animals. [a][c]

Chapel of San Pantaleo (5)

The first chapel on the left is dedicated to St Pantaleon, which has his own chapel because the high altar is dedicated to St Joseph Calasanz. The altarpiece is an oil on canvas of 1689 by Thommaso Amedeo Caisotti *San Pantaleo healing the sick* is a copy of the original by Mattia Preti. In place of this painting in the 18th century there was a silver bust of the saint for whom the chapel is dedicated. It disappeared in the years 1798-99, during the Roman Republic. [1][4]

Chapel of St. Anne (6)

The second chapel on the left was originally dedicated to St. Catherine, but dedicated to the mother of the Virgin in 1640, following the establishment by Calasanz of the Congregation of St. Anne,

which was located in the same complex as the church. The original altar of Giovanni Antonio de Rossi was modified in the 1940s and replaced with the current one. The altarpiece of *St Anne and St Joachim teaching O/irLady*, is assigned by 18th-century sources to the little known painter Bartolomeo Bosi, and probably dates in the 1790's. [3][b]

Sacristy (4)

The triangular sacristy has a vestibule which is entered through the archway in the far left hand corner of the nave. Within the archway is a statue of St. Faustino Miguez, Sch.P. In the passage that leads to the sacristy, *Saints Justus and Pastor* by Cristo foro Roncalli. On a pillar is placed the gravestone Laudomia daughter of Giovanni Brancaleone de Carlonibus (1577), one of the thirteen participants in the Challenge of Barletta. In the sacristy is a statue of St Joseph Calasanz.

[1][2][4][5][c]

There is also here a memorial inscription for Ven. Glicerio Landriani (1588-1618) is one of Calasanz's first companions, with whom he continued until his early death, which occurred while he was still in the novitiate. Also the memorial for Blessed Pietro Casani (1570-1647) was an Italian Roman Catholic priest and a professed member of the Piarists. He became an assistant and a close personal friend of Saint Joseph Calasanz. There is also a statue of St. Pompilio Maria Pirrotti. [c]

Memorial to Alberto Langeli (12)

In the small alcove between the sanctuary and the next chapel is an epigraph for Alberto Langeli (d. 1867), pharmacist, collaborator of Professor Pietro Peretti, who in 1829 discovered a method to extract quinine "antipyretic powder", a chemical remedy to lower fever, fighting endemic malaria in the region of Rome. [c]

Chapel of St. Joseph (7)

In the second chapel on the right is the Altar of St. Joseph, consists of a sarcophagus in red marble with gilded bronze handles and crossed palm branches containing the remains of St. Flavian, martyred in the 3rd century. The altarpiece, an oil on canvas painting of *Death of St. Joseph*, is attributed to Sebastiano Ricci (1690), donated to the church in 1695 by the Genoese art dealer Pellegrino Peri. [2][3][c]

The brothers Luis and Felipe Luigioni were grant patronage over the chapel (which should henceforth be called the Luigioni Chapel) in 1858. In relation to that patronage they received the right to bury their deceased in the attached crypt. [c]

Chapel of the Crucifix (8)

The first chapel to the right is dedicated to the Crucifix. The altarpiece is a 19th-century sculptural group in painted wood representing Mary Magdalene kneeling at the foot of the Cross against the background of a frescoed landscape. [b]

An interesting epigraph records the donation and enshrinement here in 1716 of a collection of saints' relics originally gathered by Angelo Francesco di Perronis. [1][c]

Memorial to Aurora Berti (10)

Immediately to the right of the entrance is a small late Baroque polychrome marble memorial to Aurora Berti (d. 1720). She was a consecrated virgin from Perugia, hence her tondo portrait relief shows her with a veil. The epigraph describes how she had a devotion to an icon of Our Lady that she owned, and wished to be buried in front of it. Hence, she donated it to the church in 1688 and it was enshrined over the altar. [1][c]

Relics:

St. Flavian

Buried:

Saint Joseph Calasanz (1557-1648)

Alphonso Borelli (d. 1680)

Aurora Berti (d.1720)

Artists and Architects:

Antonino [Calcagnadoro](#) (1876-1935), Italian painter
Bartolomeo Bosi (18th cent), Italian painter
Carlo [Murena](#) (1713-1764), Italian architect of the late-Baroque period, {also see [here](#)}
Cristoforo [Roncalli](#) [aka *Il Pomerancio*] (1552-1626), Italian Mannerist painter
Eugenio [Cisterna](#) (1862-1933), Italian painter & mosaic designer
Filippo [Gherardi](#) (1643-1704), Italian painter of the Baroque period from Lucca
Giovanni Antonio [de Rossi](#) (1616-1695), Italian architect of the Baroque period
Giuseppe [Valadier](#) (1762-1839), Italian architect and designer, sculptor, urban planner and archeologist, a chief exponent of Neoclassicism in Italy
Luigi [Acquisti](#) (1745-1823). Italian neoclassic sculptor from Forli
Luigi [Vanvitelli](#) (1700-1773). Italian architect of the Late Baroque
Mattia [Previ](#) [aka *Il Calabrese*] (1613-1699), Italian Baroque painter
Nicola [Salvi](#) (1697-1751). Italian architect
Pietro Aurelj (19th cent), Danish sculptor
Sebastiano [Ricci](#) (1659-1734). Italian painter of the late Baroque school of Venice
Tommaso Amedeo Caisotti (17th cent), Italian painter
Virginio [Bracci](#) (1737-1815), Italian architect

Location:

Addr: Piazza San Pantaleo/Piazza dei Massimi 4 - 00186 Roma

Coord: [41° 53'49.5"N. 12° 28'23.1"E](#)

Info:

Open times: daily 7:30-13:00 & 16:00-19:00

Masses

Holidays 11.30am 7.30pm

The day before a holiday 7.30pm

Telephone: 0039 06 6840741

Fax:0039 06 68308858

Email: secgen@scolopi.net

Links and References:

1. [Roman Churches Wiki](#)
 2. [Italian Wikipedia page](#)
 3. [Romapedia web page](#)
 4. [Turismo religioso.eu](#)
 5. [Into Roma web site](#)
 6. [Tourist Information](#)
- a. Donovan, Jeremiah: ROME ANCIENT AND MODERN AND ITS ENVIRONS: 1842
 - b. Marcucci, Roberto, ed.; Tesori di arte e di fede: Il patrimonio architettonico e artistico dei Fondo Edifici di Culto: 2015; pp 231-233
 - c. Burgues, Jose P; Frases lapidarias en San Pantaleo: *Archivum scholarumplarum* , ISSN 0392-2189, No. 79, 2016, pgs. 71-100

[Wikimedia Commons Category: San Pantaleo](#)

[Rome Art Lover web page](#)

