

San Paolo fuori le Mura



Saint Paul's outside the Walls is a heavily restored 4th century Major basilica in Rome dedicated to St Paul, at the site of his tomb and is one of the five Patriarchal basilicas. The basilica and its attached monastery are part of Italy, but under the Lateran Treaty of 1929 the area is "extra-territorial". This means that the Vatican is entirely responsible for its administration. [1]

History

At the beginning of the 4th century, with the end of the persecutions and the promulgation of the Edicts of Tolerance in favor of Christianity, Emperor Constantine ordered the excavation of the shrine, or *cella memoriae*, the place where Christians venerated the memory of Saint Paul the Apostle, beheaded under Nero around 65-67 A.D. Above his grave, located along the Ostiense Way, in the sepulchral area that was owned by a Christian woman named Lucina, about two kilometers outside the Aurelian Walls surrounding Rome, Constantine built a Basilica which was consecrated by Pope Sylvester in 324. [1] [5]

The Constantinian basilica quickly proved inadequate. Due to the rapid increase in the number of pilgrims, the need to expand the capacity of the building, the difficulty of simply enlarging it and the impossibility of moving the tomb, between 384 and 386, Emperors Valentinian II, Theodosius and Arcadius demolished the small church and built what was then the largest basilica in Rome (became known as “the basilica of the three emperors”). The architect was one Cyriades. The focus of the basilica was the pre-existing tomb or shrine of St Paul in the first basilica, and the road junction was diverted to accommodate the larger building. [1] [2]

According to the inscription on the triumphal arch, it was consecrated in 390 by Pope Siricius, and completed in 395 under Emperor Honorius. An innovation arose from the desire to cover all the consecrated ground where the first church had stood. Therefore a transverse nave, the first transept, was built. This is the first church in the form of the Latin cross. Although heavily restored, not least after it was damaged by fire in the 19th century, the present basilica looks much the same as it did in the 4th century. [1]

After being almost completely destroyed by an earthquake and fire in 443, Pope St Leo the Great [440–461]

started restoring the church. About 50 years later, Pope St Symmachus [498–514] ordered the reconstruction of the apse, which was unsafe. Under Pope St Gregory the Great (590–604) the basilica was extensively modified. The pavement was raised to place the altar directly over Paul's tomb. A confession permitted access to the Apostle's sepulcher.

Several more restorations and changes were carried out, under Pope Sergius I [686-701] (the roof and some rooms), Pope Hadrian I [772-795] (the aisles and atrium), and Pope Leo III [795-816] (the transept, roof and floor, and added apse mosaic) after the basilica was badly damaged by an earthquake. [1]

In all of the subsequent alterations the original plan was carefully preserved, being the only specimen existing in Rome of the great basilicas, similar to what St Peter's must have been before it was replaced by its present magnificent successor. [d]

In the 7th century it was recorded that there were two monasteries attached to the basilica: St. Aristus's for men and St. Stefano's for women. Masses were celebrated by a special body of clerics instituted by Pope Simplicius. Over time the monasteries and the basilica's clergy declined; Pope Saint Gregory II [715-731] restored the former and entrusted the monks with the basilica's care. [1] [4]

In 739 and 773 the Lombards plundered the church, and in 843 Muslim pirates sailed up the Tiber and thoroughly pillaged it. By tradition, they did not find the apostle's tomb in the process because Pope Sergius III, forewarned, had walled it up. [1]

As a result of all this, in 883 the walls and tower encircling the church were completed. This was known as the "Johannipolis" (in Italian *Giovannipoli*), or "City of John" after Pope John VIII, and was built to protect the church from Lombards and Saracens. The defence works were tested in 1083–1084, when they withstood several attacks by Emperor Henry IV. [1] [4]

Meanwhile, in 937 the church was entrusted to the great reforming Benedictine abbey of Cluny in France, which re-founded the monastery here as a dependency. Its most famous superior, Hildebrand, had to restore the semi-derelict basilica and embellish the church around 1070 before he became Pope Gregory VII. A campanile was built at the entrance end of the left hand outer aisle, and a magnificent bronze door from Constantinople was provided for the main entrance in 1070, the gift from Pantaleone, a rich merchant of Amalfi. [1] [4]

Fire broke out in 1115, and Pope Innocent II [1130-1143] had a wall with columns built in the transept to support the unsafe roof. The transept was divided into two aisles by this wall. During the reign of Pope Innocent III [1161-1216] the superb cloister was begun. Also in the 13th century the altar canopy was built, and a series of paintings on the main nave walls was executed by **Pietro Cavallini**. In 1325 the façade was provided with a mosaic. [1]

Disaster struck again in 1349, when an earthquake badly damaged the basilica and destroyed the 4th century bell-tower and part of the portico. Pope Clement VI [1342-1352] had the damages repaired. In the 14th and 15th centuries the basilic was in a ruinous condition and deserted. [1]

Major restorations started under Pope Boniface IX [1389-1404], when he allowed all donations to the church to be used for repairs. Pope Martin V [1417-1431] continued the work, and in 1426 the work was intensified under the rector of the church, Gabriele Condulmer, later Pope Eugene IV. [1]

Under Pope Martin the monastery was taken away from the control of the abbey of Cluny and entrusted to the reforming Benedictine congregation of St Justina, later called the Cassinese Congregation, partly in order to remove unwanted French influence. In the process the monastery was made an abbey nullius, meaning that it was its own diocese with the abbot simultaneously a bishop. This congregation was later known as the Cassinese when the abbey of Montecassino joined it. [1]

In 1620 a chapel for the Blessed Sacrament was designed by **Carlo Maderno**, and built just to the right of the apse. [1]

In 1653 Francesco Borromini designed plans for a total restructuring of the church. Due to a lack of funds, only the roof was changed under Pope Clement X [1670-1676]. [1]

The portico was rebuilt in 1724 in preparation for the Holy Year of 1725 by **Antonio Canevari** and **Matteo Sassi**. The former one, recently built by **Alessandro Specchi**, had collapsed on 1 May 1724. The ancient narthex was demolished at this time, and columns from the early four-sided portico were removed. At the same time, a series of other restorations were completed. [1]

At the same time, a series of other restorations were completed under Pope Benedict XIV [1740-1758]. A chapel dedicated to the Crucifix was built to the left of the apse, the apse mosaic was restored (bits of the original work were removed, and are on display near the sacristy) and the series of papal portraits were brought up to date. The idea of adding a new painting for every new pope was then established. [1]

On the night between 15 and 16 July 1823, large parts of the basilica was damaged by fire, only the apse, the transept and the monastery survived. The fire was probably started by a careless worker while the roof was being repaired. The atrium and more than half of the nave were completely destroyed. It is said that Pope Pius VII [1800-1823], who was very ill and died on 20 August that year, was never told what had happened.

[1] [4] [c]

Pope Leo XII [1823-1829] decided to restore the basilica to its former glory rather than replace it with a new church in a more modern style. The first architect to lead the rebuilding was **Pasquale Belli**; **Gaspere Salvi**, **Paccagnini** and **Andrea Alippi** were appointed as Belli's assistants. Work started in 1826, after a worldwide collection of funds had been taken. Belli demolished the triumphal arch after removing and storing the mosaic, and did the same to the portico and campanile. More controversially, he demolished the nave arcades and in the process destroyed the surviving frescoes by **Cavallini**. The triumphal arch was the first part of the church to be rebuilt, in 1829 using massive columns of Montórfano granite, which were donated by the Emperor of Austria. The new columns in the nave are made out of Simpron granite: the capitals are copied from the Pantheon. [1] [d]

Pope Gregory XVI [1831-1846] took a great interest in the rebuilding; he was elected at the time when the first of the eighty columns in the nave was erected. In 1833 **Luigi Poletti** became the new chief architect. He was assisted by **Pietro Bosio**, **Pietro Camporese the Younger** and **Virginio Vespignani**. [1]

A new portico was added to the north end of the transept. At that time, the nave was nowhere near completion, and so only the transept could be used. In 1845 two new chapels off the transept were built, bringing the total to four. Pope Pius IX was able to perform a solemn consecration on 10 December 1854. [1] [2]

For the reconstruction, [Muhammad Ali Pasha](#), the Khedive of Egypt, presented to Gregory XVI thirteen masses of alabaster, four of which are from 33 to 35 feet long and from 4 to 6 feet thick, and the another five of various forms from 5 to 8 feet long and from 3 to 4 feet thick, unpolished but presenting a rich variety of veins on a ground of extraordinary whiteness.

A completely new campanile, on the site of the chapel behind the apse, was finished in 1860. Work on the façade took place between 1873 and 1884. The portico was started in 1890, and was only completed in 1928. The last work of restoration was the provision of a baptistry in 1931 (the church was parochial). This was the end of the rebuilding campaign, and little has happened to the fabric of the basilica since. [1]

Between May 2 and November 17, 2006, a delicate archaeological excavation took place in the area under the high altar. This led to the opening of the place where the sarcophagus rests. Since 2007 it has been possible to go down and pray before the sarcophagus of Paul, now partially visible. [2]

In addition to the Papal Basilica, the entire complex includes a very ancient Benedictine Abbey, restored by Odon of Cluny in 936. This Abbey remains active even today under the direction of its Abbot who retains his ordinary jurisdiction *intra septa monasterii*. The Benedictine Monks of the ancient Abbey, founded near the tomb of the Apostle by Pope Gregory II (715-731), attend to the ministry of Reconciliation (or Penance) and the promotion of special ecumenical events. [5]

The Lateran Treaties of 1929 between the Holy See and the Italian state decreed that the area and the buildings that make up the complex of St Paul Outside the Walls, notably the basilica and the abbey, belong to the Holy See and enjoy a specific juridical status, according to the norms of international law. It is placed

in the charge of an archpriest named by the Roman pontiff. The archpriest is expected to oversee the whole extra-territorial complex, coordinating the activities and promoting the goals of its various administrations, with the exception of that which falls under the competency of the abbot within the abbey that has housed a community of Benedictine monks for the past thirteen centuries. The present Archpriest of the Papal Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls is [Cardinal James Michael Harvey](#). [5]

Exterior

The fabric is in brick, although this is concealed by a greyish render on the exposed walls. The central nave walls each have ten proportionally small round-headed windows, matched by the side aisle walls. Three larger such windows occupy each of the transept ends, below the gable. The roof is pitched and tiled, with separate pitches at the same height for nave and transept. The apse conch has a semi-dome in metal. [1]

A tower campanile abuts the back of the apse. Either side of this runs a very odd screen wall, which conceals the apse and side chapels from the street. This has no structural significance, and seems to have been provided in order to prevent people entering into the corners. [1]

Quadriportico [1]

The imposing covered quadriportico that precedes the façade is a Neoclassicist addition of the 19th-century reconstruction. The original portico had been demolished in the 14th century. When the church was rebuilt after the 19th century fire, it was decided to give it an atrium in the original style. The rebuilding took more than a century, but the result is very pleasing. It was designed by **Luigi Poletti**. Some alterations to the design were made by **Virgino Vespagnani** after **Poletti's** death in 1869, and it was finally constructed by **Guglielmo Calderini** and **Giuseppe Sacconi** in the years 1890-1928. [c]

Although it was built in the same style as the first portico, it bears little resemblance to it since it is a much larger structure. The north and south side, 70 meters long, are covered on the outside by a travertine wall. The four corners have monumental propylaea, and the entrance façade has thirteen identical arches supported by Corinthian columns. There are a total of 150 such columns in the structure. The front (west) side has three rows of columns one behind the other, and on the inner side there are thirteen lunettes with paintings depicting *Christ giving a blessing* and *the Apostles*. On the north and south sides, which have double rows of columns, there are painted medallions with various Christian symbols separated by polychrome marble revetting. [1]

The statue of *St Paul* in the portico garden is by **Giuseppe Obici**, and was made in the 19th century. It shows him holding the sword with which he was beheaded, and the Latin inscription on the plinth reads *Predicatori veritatis, Doctori Gentium* ([Dedicated] to the preacher of the truth, to the teacher of the Gentiles). On the right near the atrium is a statue *St Luke* by **Francesco Fabi-Altini**. [1] [c]

Gregorian portico [7]

The left hand (north) end of the transept is a portico opening of the church. It is known as the Gregorian portico because it was built under Pope Gregory XVI [1831-1846] by **Luigi Poletti**. The twelve columns of Attic marble were recovered from the nave of the ancient basilica; one of them, in the second row on the right, bears Pope Siricius' inscription about the building of the Theodosian basilica. There are eight in front, and four behind. [1] [2]

This is the most convenient entrance to the church for most local people, since it is by the main road. It is best to start any visit to the basilica from the nave entrances, but to leave here via the north-west corner of the transept. [1]

Campanile [12]

The original bell-tower at the entrance was added in the 11th or 12th century. The first one was destroyed by an earthquake in 1349, and Pope Clement VI had a new one built. It survived the fire, but was destroyed during the rebuilding. It was replaced by a new structure by **Luigi Poletti** between 1840 and 1860, behind the apse. It's 65 meters high, with five floors. The clock faces on the second level are by **Mariano Trevellini**, and were made in 1863. The upper three floors are laid out according to the canon of Alberti, having the shapes, from bottom to top, of a square, an octagon and a circle. Their columns are arranged in the classical

manner, with the heavy Doric style at the bottom, then the lighter Ionic style and on the top level Corinthian columns. [1]

There are seven bells in the tower. **Poletti** placed four bells in it, all from the old church. Two were remelted in 1863 and 1930, and the other two, which dated to 1658, were kept here until 1959. That year, Blessed Pope John XXIII increased the number of bells to seven. [1]

Monastery

The abbey has a mediaeval cloister next to the right hand end of the transept, and can be visited. The main part of the monastery is on the east side of this, a long and rather grim three-storey block which displays its mediaeval origins in its rather autistic civic presence. There is a larger cloister to the south of the mediaeval one and which shares its south range, but this has no arcades. The large monastery garden is south of the basilica's nave. [1]

Façade Mosaics

The gold mosaics are impressing, especially on a sunny day or in the evening when the façade is floodlit. The mosaics that were here at the time of the fire were moved to the arch over the apse. The present ones were made between 1854 and 1874 by Vatican workshops, based on designs by **Filippo Agricola** and **Nicola Consoni**. In the tympanum of the pediment *Christ between the Apostles Peter and Paul*. Below is the *Lamb of God* on the mountain of Paradise. The four rivers flowing from it symbolize the gospels, and the twelve lambs drinking from the rivers symbolize the Apostles. The cities are Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The lowest section shows the Old Testament Prophets *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* and these figures are separated by three large arched windows. [1] [5] [6]

Atrium [2]

The eastern side of the portico fronts the façade, and this is where the three main entrance doors are. It has twelve pink granite Corinthian columns that are taller than the other three sides of the portico. Between the three doors are statues of *St. Peter* (right) by **Ignazio Jacometti**, and *St. Paul* (left) begun by **Salvatore Revelli** but completed by **Jacometti**. [1] [7]

Doors

Holy Door [4]

The Holy Door is to the far right. It is only open during Holy Years, and its opening is a ceremony performed by the Pope. The present door is of gilded bronze sculpted by **Enrico Manfrini**, and was installed in 2000 to replace an ordinary wooden door. There are six composite scenes depicted in relief. From top left, left to right, they are: [1]

Resurrection and Good Samaritan, and Prodigal Son (note the dog);
the Benignity of the Pope;
Pentecost (note Our Lady in the midst of the Apostles);
Preaching and Martyrdom of St Paul;
Crucifixion;
Preaching Office of the Episcopate.

The Latin inscription at the bottom reads:

Ad sacram Pauli cunctis venientibus aedem sit pacis donum perpetuoque salus
("May the gift of peace and salvation for ever be to all those coming to the holy temple of Paul").

Main door [3]

The center door, of bronze with inlaid silver, is modern, made 1929–1931 by **Antonio Maraini** after the old door had been damaged in the fire of 1823. It's 7.48 meters high and 3.35 meters wide. (The old door had been a gift from Pope Gregory VII, set up in 1070, and was made of the same materials. It is now on the inside of the Holy Door -see "Byzantine door" below.) [1]

A cross motif through the center of the door is in curlicued silver, and this has on it plaques in lapis lazuli. Four on the horizontal bar show the symbols of the Evangelists, and on the vertical bar are the symbols of the Apostles. [1]

The reliefs on the door show scenes from the lives, apostolates and martyrdoms of Sts Peter and Paul,

according to the wishes of the abbot of the monastery, Bl Ildefonso Schuster. Apart from the two central scenes, all of the events depicted took place in Rome. The reliefs depict (see drawing on the right): [1]

1. Coat of arms of the Church
2. Coat of arms of Rome
3. *The Crucifixion of St Peter*
4. *"Domine, Quo Vadis?"*
5. *Christ Giving the Keys to St Peter*
6. *Foundation of the Papal See*
7. *St Peter Baptizing in the Catacombs*
8. *The Beheading of St Paul*
9. *The Conversion of the Centurion*
10. *St Paul's Conversion*
11. *St Paul Teaching in Rome*
12. *St Paul Reaches Rome and is Welcomed by the Faithful*

San Paolo fuori le mura
Schematic drawing of
main door decorations

1	2
3	8
4	9
5	10
6	11
7	12

Flanking the main door are 19th century statues of *Sts Peter and Paul* by Gregorio Zappalà.

The Byzantine Door [4]

Within the basilica on the inside is found the Byzantine door that forms the inner section of the Holy Door. It is among the most ancient items saved from the fire of 1823. It was restored by experts and carefully integrated into the new building. Originally commissioned by Hildebrand of Soana, the future Pope St Gregory VII, who had been superior of the monastery of St Paul, it was cast in Constantinople in 1070 by an artist named Theodore. The wealthy Pantaleone, consul of Amalfi in Constantinople, financed the work which was signed by the metal founder Staurachios of Chios. Its fifty-four panels enclosed in an elegant bronze frame, illustrate scenes and characters of the Bible. The figures and the inscriptions make it a work of rare beauty. It was one of the last wishes of Pope John XXIII that the old main door be taken out of the museum and restored, and since 1967 it is used to close the inside of the Holy Door between Jubilee Years.

[1] [2] [5]

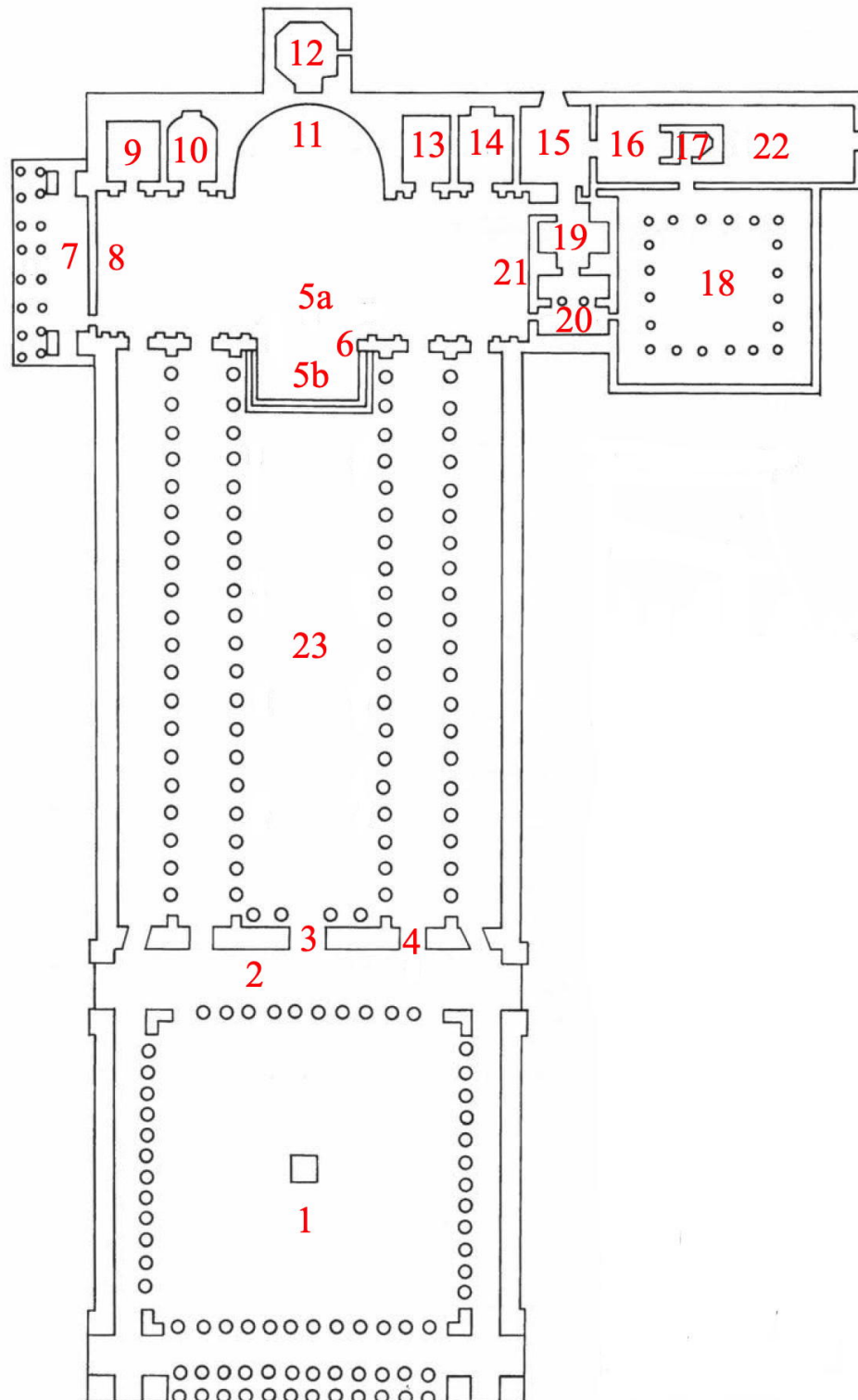
The windows and panels are divided by Corinthian pilaster strips. There are nine rows with six columns across. Left to right, top to bottom, the scenes are:

Row 1:	Annunciation	Nativity	Presentation	Martyrdom of St Philip	St Philip	Martyrdom of St James
Row 2:	Baptism of Christ	Transfiguration	Entry into Jerusalem	St James	Martyrdom of St Simon	St Simon
Row 3:	Crucifixion	Deposition from the Cross	Resurrection	Burial of St Matthew	St Matthew	Burial of St Luke
Row 4:	Appearance to the Apostles in the Upper Room	Ascension	Pentecost	St Luke	Martyrdom of St Mark	St Mark
Row 5:	The Cross	Tu quoque	Martyrdom of St Paul	Moses	Paule beate	The Cross (again)
Row 6:	Christ with Sts Paul and Panteleimon	Martyrdom of St Peter	St Peter	David	Isaiah	Hezekiah
Row 7:	Martyrdom of St Andrew	St Andrew	Burial of St John	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Daniel
Row 8:	St John the Evangelist	Martyrdom of St Bartholomew	St Bartholomew	Elijah	Elisha	Jonah
Row 9:	Eagle	St Thomas	Martyrdom of St Thomas	Obediah	Zephaniah	Eagle (again)

Interior

The new basilica has maintained the original structure with one nave and four aisles. It is 131.66 meters (432.0 ft) long, 65 meters (213 ft)-wide, and 29.70 meters (97.4 ft)-high, the second largest in Rome. The basilica is on a T-shaped plan and aligned from west to east. There is a long nave with aisles, and this has ten bays with a half-bay at each end. Then comes a very wide transept, backed by a semi-circular apse. Flanking the apse are four external side-chapels, and a further two chapels occupy the ends of the transepts. [1] [4]

Plan



Nave [23]

The nave, with two aisles on each side and twenty Corinthian columns in each arcade of Baveno granite and with Carrara marble capitals, was reconstructed 1831-1854. The plan remains as it was when the basilica was built in the 4th century, and the decoration is kept in the same style. **Pasquale Belli** made the first designs, and he was followed by **Luigi Poletti** in 1833. [1]

The counterfaçade has six semi-translucent alabaster columns given by the Khedive of Egypt, Muhammed Ali, in 1840; there are four more by the confessio. The gift itself is of historical significance, since the Khedive was in the process of turning Egypt from a neglected Turkish province into a modern state and wished to demonstrate his country's willingness to join the international community of nations. Over the entrance is the coat-of-arms of Pope Pius IX by **Giosuè Meli** supported by Angels by R: **Ignazio Jacometti** and L: **Salvatore Revelli**, 1856. [1] [c]

The Holy Water stoup at the entrance to the chapel of St Benedict is the work of **Pietro Galli** (mid-19th century): the devil tempts a child who is saved by touching the holy water. [2]

The stucco-decorated ceiling of coffered wood-work is decorated with the coats-of-arms of the popes who were engaged in the rebuilding, and is richly coffered in gold and white. [1] [4]

The lower windows have fine alabaster panes, given by King Fuad I of Egypt. [2]

The marble floor was built from material recovered from the old basilica. [c]

In the aisle on the far right, a glass-covered opening in the floor of the basilica offers a view of a number of fifth and sixth century Christian tombs from the necropolis that has been in this place since the end of the second century BC. A large section of the pavement of the nave and aisles was stratified with marble gravestones in a more or less fragmentary condition, gathered at random from the cemeteries of Ostia, of Porto, and of Rome, but especially from the catacombs of the Via Ostiensis and Via Laurentina. [1] [2]

In niches along the walls, there are statues of ten Apostles. They were made in 1882. [c]

right aisle:

St James the Elder by **Giuseppe Trabacchi**;

St Matthew by **Adalberto Cencetti**;

Judas Thaddæus by **Antonio Allegretti**;

St Simon by **Francesco Fabi-Altini** (1884), and

St Andrew by an unknown artist.

Left aisle from the high altar:

St Thomas by **Eugenio Maccagnani**;

St John and

St Bartholomew by **Luigi Guglielmi**;

St James the Younger by **Emilio Gallori** and

St Philip by an unknown artist.

Next to the confessio is *St Peter* by **Ignazio Jacometti**, and *St Paul* by **Salvatore Revelli**. [1]

The wooden model of the basilica (1844), restored by the Knights of Columbus, illuminated and mounted on a mobile support in 2006, is found in the left aisle. The architect **Poletti**, responsible for the reconstruction of the basilica, commissioned **Serafino Colagiacomini** to make it. The scale is 1:50. On close inspection, the visitor will see parts that were not implemented in the actual building. [1] [3]

Paintings on nave walls

Paintings high up on the walls depict scenes from the life and missionary travels of St Paul, taken from the Acts of the Apostles. The project was started by Pope Pius IX. It took twenty-two artists only three years to complete the work, from 1857 to 1860. The series of thirty-six fresco panels begins in the transept to the right of the apse, runs around the nave and concludes in the left hand part of the transept. It replaced the destroyed Cavallini frescoes. The series is in chronological order, starting with the Martyrdom of St Stephen

The subjects and artists are, in order:

1. *Martyrdom of St Stephen*, by Pietro Gagliardi
2. *Conversion of Saul* by Pietro Gagliardi
3. *Ananias Heals Saul's Blindness*, by Francesco Podesti
4. *Saul's Baptism* by Francesco Podesti
5. *Paul Preaches in Damascus*, by Guglielmo De Sanctis
6. *Paul Escapes from Damascus* by Guglielmo De Sanctis
7. *Council of Jerusalem* by Nicola Consoni
8. *Commission of Paul and Barnabas*, by Cesare Mariani
9. *Conversion of Sergius at Paphos*, by Cesare Mariani
10. *Paul and Barnabas at Lystra* by Cesare Mariani
11. *Stoning of Paul at Lystra* by Cesare Mariani
12. *Vision at Troas* by Luigi Cochetti
13. *Exorcism at Philippi* by Luigi Cochetti
14. *Paul and Silas Flogged at Philippi* by Vincenzo Morani
15. *Conversion of the Jailer at Philippi* by Giuseppe Sereni
16. *Paul on the Areopagus at Athens* by Giovanni Battista Pianello
17. *Paul in Corinth* by Domenico Tojetti
18. *Ephesians burning their Magic Scrolls* by Casimiro De Rossi
19. *Resurrection of Eutyches* by Natale Carta
20. *Paul Leaves for Miletus* by Marcello Sozzi
21. *Prophecy of Agabus* by Roberto Bompiani
22. *Paul and James at Jerusalem* by Cesare Dias
23. *Riot at the Temple* by Francesco Grandi
24. *Paul Speaking to the Rioters* by Francesco Grandi
25. *Paul Declaring Himself a Roman Citizen* by Natale Carta
26. *Vision to Paul in Jerusalem* by Domenico Bartolini
27. *Paul before Felix* by Domenico Bartolini
28. *Shipwreck on Malta* by Achille Scaccioni
29. *Paul and the Snake* by Achille Scaccioni
30. *Paul Cures the Father of Publius* by Nicola Consoni
31. *Paul Meets Rome's Christians* by Carlo Gavardini
32. *Paul in Rome* by Carlo Gavardini
33. *Paul's Elevation to the Third Heaven* by Francesco Coggetti
34. *Paul in the Mamertine Prison* by Francesco Coggetti
35. *Peter and Paul Say Farewell* by Filippo Baldi
36. *Martyrdom of St Paul* by Filippo Baldi

Portraits of the Popes

Along the nave, and the first aisles either side of the central nave, above the arcades, there are roundels containing portrait mosaics of all the popes from Peter to Francis. Traditionally the series was initiated by Pope Leo the Great in the fifth century, and it was continued by Cavallini when he executed his fresco panels in the nave in the 13th century. Then there was a hiatus until Pope Benedict XIV commissioned Salvatore Monosilio to make portraits up to his time. Those portraits were destroyed in the fire in 1823, apart from forty-one kept in the museum. Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) restarted the project in 1847, specifying mosaics instead of frescoes, and since then it has been updated whenever a new pope is elected. There are currently seven spaces available. [1] [6]

Many painters were involved in the restoration, including those involved in the St Paul fresco panels which are above the roundels on the nave walls. The process of converting the temporary fresco likenesses into

mosaic was only completed in 1875 by the Vatican mosaic workshop. This was because the task of determining the likeness of each pope was left not to scholars, but to **Filippo Agricola** who was the manager of the Vatican's mosaic studio. As a result, only the recent popes have true likenesses and the others are simply arbitrary portraiture. [1] [d]

Triumphal arch

Two red granite columns, of the Ionic order, more colossal than the rest, support the arch between the transept and the nave, and which in the original church was erected in 440 by Galla Placidia, the sister of the Emperor Honorius. Each of these magnificent pillars are of a single block, from the quarries of Montorfano, near Baveno, on the Lago Maggiore. [d]

The mosaic on the first arch facing the nave were originally made at the suggestion and expense of the empress Galla Placidia under Pope Leo the Great (440-461). Restorations in the ninth, twelfth, fourteenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries have so changed the work that in all probability only the design remains of the original. [a]

The figures in the upper $\frac{2}{3}$ are on a gold background. The *Head of Christ* is in the center, with his hand raised in blessing in the Byzantine manner, and to the sides are symbols of the *Evangelists*, the 24 *Ancients of the Apocalypse* and angels. Below are *Sts Peter and Paul* on blue backgrounds; St. Paul is pointing toward his tomb. An inscription along the edge mentions the Emperor Theodosius, the Dowager Empress Galla Placidia (it is often referred to as the Arch of Galla Placidia) who donated the mosaic, and Pope St Leo I who was pope at the time. However, stylistic comparisons with the mosaic at Santi Nereo e Achilleo indicates that this mosaic was completely redone around the year 800. [1]

The mosaic was damaged in the fire, but has been restored. The columns supporting the arch are new, being of Montórfano granite and 14 meters high. They replaced the equally enormous ancient cipollino marble columns which had been calcined in the fire. [1]

The inscription on the top border reads: [1]

THEODOSIUS COEPIT PERFECIT HONORIUS AULAM
DOCTORIS MUNDI SACRATAM CORPORE PAULI
("Theodosius started the church, Honorius finished it,
it is made sacred by the body of Paul the teacher of the world").

The inscription on the top border of the arch: reads: [a]

PLACIDIAE PIA MENS OPERIS DECUS HOMINE PATERNI
GAVDET PONTIFICIS STUDIO SPLENDERE LEONIS
(The devoted mind of Placidia rejoices that the glory of this work
shines through the effort of the fatherly pontiff, Leo.)

The mosaics on the back of the arch are from the 13th century. Some were made by Byzantine artists, and some are by Pietro Cavallini. They were originally on the outside of the façade, but were moved here after the fire. The mosaics are of the *Head of Christ* in the center, with His hand raised in blessing in the Byzantine manner. He is in a circle held by two angels. To the left is a winged Bull symbol of St Luke, and on the right is a confusing figure of winged Lion of St. Mark. On the sides are *St Peter* and *St Paul* seated on thrones. [6]

Confessio [5b]

The floor level of the transept was raised under Pope Gregory the Great. A crypt was opened behind the high altar at the same time but it was removed later, probably under Pope Leo III (795-816). [1]

The confessio is the most sacred spot in the basilica, since it is the nearest that you can get to the actual tomb of the apostle. It is below the high altar on the nave side, and is approached by a double staircase. The balustrade in white marble surrounding the hypogeum (the area below floor level) was erected for the 1575 Jubilee. The bronze doors of the small entrance have likenesses of *Sts Timothy and Titus*, disciples of St Paul, executed by **Pietro Tenerani**. Bishops who visit the "threshold of the Apostles" (ad Limina) come here, and to the confessio at San Pietro in Vaticano where St Peter is buried, to kneel in prayer. The present arrangement was established in 1600, under Pope Clement VIII. [1]

During archeological investigations just after the fire, a 1st or 2nd century tomb of St Paul was found. A memorial slab of three pieces of marble (2.12 m by 1.27 m) found here is now behind a grille, dating from the fourth century with the dedication PAVLO APOSTOLO MART(YRI), to Paul Apostle mart(yr), is positioned horizontally within the papal altar about 40 cm above the sarcophagus. A grating on the east side of the altar enables it to be seen. The sarcophagus of the apostle (2.55 m by 1.25 m; height, 0.97 m) in unpolished marble, is in the place where the emperor Constantine had the first altar built. Archaeological research and the excavations of 2006 brought to light the great sarcophagus that had been hidden by masonry. [1] [2] [5]

In a display case, above the confessio, before the Papal Alter, is a set of chains said to be the prison chains of St Pauls, used in the last days before his execution.

High altar and Ciborium [5a]

The high altar is a papal altar, meaning that only the Holy Father and those with special permission may celebrate Mass at it. It stands directly over the tomb of St Paul, and under its porphyry slab are the relics of St Timothy the Martyr (a different Timothy to the one already mentioned). [1]

The Gothic style ciborium (canopy) is by Arnolfo di Cambio and was his first work in Rome, made in 1285. The inscriptions on the frontage facing the nave proclaim his authorship. He was assisted by a colleague identified as Peter ("cum suo socio Petro"), which recent scholarship has identified as Pietro di Oderisio. The porphyry columns are new, but the rest of the canopy surprisingly survived the fire except for some details of the roof. In the restoration the whole structure was taken to bits, cleaned and restored and then re-assembled. In the process, it was found that some of the stonework included ancient inscriptions that had been re-used. [1]

The new porphyry columns are obviously not of the old imperial type, having a different hue and larger inclusions in the stone. They have Composite capitals embellished with angels and vine leaves, and support four trefoil arches. The spandrels of these contain little figures: *Adam and Eve*, *Cain and Abel*, the *commissioning abbot offering the canopy to St Paul* and finally two unidentified characters. Niches at the four corners contain statues of *Sts Peter, Paul, Timothy and Benedict*. There are fretwork pinnacles above these statues, and a small shrine in the center of the roof surmounted by a pyramidal spire. The interior of the canopy is adorned with rich mosaics, including depictions of animals, and four angels with candles and thuribles support the vault springers. [1] [c]

By the confessio are four alabaster columns that support nothing but air. They were part of the set given to the church by the Khedive of Egypt, and formed part of a large baldacchino that covered the altar area and overtopped the canopy. It was taken down in 1912, but the columns remain. [1]

Apse mosaic [11]

The mosaics on the arch above the apse conche are complementary to the inside of the Triumphal arch (see above). On the left is a *Madonna and Child*, and a winged Man, symbol of St. Matthew. On the right is *Saint John the Baptist* sitting on a throne, with his left hand supporting the Lamb of God, and his right hand on the head of a pope. Next to that figure is an Eagle, symbol of St. John the Evangelist. At the summit of the arch is the inscription GREGORIUS RESTITUIT 1836, indicating the restoration after the fire. [2] [6]

Innocent III [1198-1216] ordered the creation of the large mosaic in the apse (24 meters wide and 12 meters long), which at present looks much the same as it did when it was completed centuries ago. Later Pope Honorius III [1216-1227], called on another group of Venetian artists who had worked on the Basilica of Saint Mark in Venice to complete the team of mosaicists for the project. The iconography and technique are inspired by the Byzantine tradition. The mosaics were finished in 1279 under Pope Nicholas III [1277-1280]. [1] [5] [d]

At the center: On the two sides of the head of the majestic figure of *Christ the Pantocrator* are the Greek letters IC and XC that abbreviate the name of Jesus Christ and always accompany him in Byzantine art. The symbolism of the hand of Christ, three fingers represent the Trinity and the other two the two-fold nature, divine and human, of Jesus Christ. In the incarnate Word, divinity and humanity are joined together. [2]

On the right of Christ stands *St. Paul* (whose name is written in Greek and Latin) and *St. Luke*, the

“biographer” of Paul who wrote the book of Acts. On Christ’s left is *St. Peter* and his brother *St. Andrew*, the first apostle called by the Lord. They stand in a field filled with flowers and little animals. Inside the arch is intricately decorated, in the center is the name of Pope Honorius III. [1] [2]

On the open book in Christ’s hand are written the words of judgement: “Come, blessed of my Father, and receive the kingdom that has been prepared for you since the foundation of the world.” The scrolls of Peter and Paul witness to their faith: that of Paul says: “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow down in heaven, on earth and under the earth”; Peter’s says: “you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” [2]

Pope Honorius III who commissioned the mosaic is shown as a small white figure, prostrate at the right foot of Christ (beside him are the words HONORIUS PP III). In the Roman tradition, popes had been placed with the Apostles in mosaics and paintings almost as equals but the attitude of great humility displayed here is unusual. The artists, with their Venetian background, were influenced by Byzantine traditions, leading to this change. [1] [2]

In the lower register, beneath Christ is the *Hetimasia*, a Byzantine representation of an empty throne on which rest the instruments of the Passion. Above it is a jewelled cross similar to the one that the emperor Constantine (fourth century) had engraved to protect a relic of the true cross. Beneath the throne are smaller kneeling figures of an abbot with name written, Joannes Gaetani, and a monk; between them five of the Holy Innocents, vested like friars, here introduced because their relics are said to have been enshrined in this church. Unfortunately, in the restoration of the basilica, the last-named group, diminutive in scale, was completely hidden by the marble aedicula with Corinthian columns and chiselled frieze, now rising above the splendid marble throne (a modern object) at the center of the hemicycle. [1] [d]

The throne is flanked by a pair of angels as well as the Apostles carrying scrolls with the text of *Gloria in Excelsis* in a version slightly different to that used in Mass. From left to right are:

James the Great,
Bartholomew,
Thomas,
Simon the Zealot,
Matthias (replacing Judas Iscariot),
Mark,
John,
Phillip,
Matthew,
James the Less,
Jude and
Barnabas.

Note that Barnabas and Mark, not of the Twelve, replace Peter and Andrew already depicted above. Beneath the angels are seven small figures representing the Holy Innocents and the abbot and sacristan at the time of the mosaic. [1] [2]

The work was restored in 1747 by Pope Benedict XIV. Modern scholars consider that this restoration, and that after the fire, replaced most of the original tesserae. The certainly genuine portion that survives comprises the *Hetimasia*, the figure of Pope Honorius and Christ's feet. Other portions of the original work have been kept in the so-called "Gregorian Room" which is to the right of St Benedict's Chapel. [1]

Below the mosaic is the papal throne, framed by four Corinthian columns in the same style as the side altars. The throne itself is by **Poletti**, and the relief on its back showing *Christ Giving the Keys to Peter* is by **Pietro Tenerani** (1839). In the tympanum of the arch above the throne is a fresco by **Vincenzo Camuccini** (1839) of *St Paul Rapt into the Third Heaven*, with his head intact. The six large stone plaques on either side of the throne carry the names of the cardinals and bishops present in Rome for the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception who then accompanied Pope Pius IX when he consecrated the new basilica on 10 December 1854. [1] [2] [c]

Paschal candlestick [6]

The huge marble Candelabrum of the Easter Candle in the right-hand transept, standing more than 5 meters high, is by **Nichola dell'Angelo** and **Pietro Vassalletto**, and was made in the 12th century. The base and top may have been reused from an older candlestick. The former is formed of a group of humans and

animals, included sphinxes. The latter is a ring of monstrous animals supporting the calyx. The decoration on the shaft depicts seven scenes from Christ's Passion and Resurrection:

*Christ before Caiaphas,
the Mocking of Christ,
Christ before Pilate,
Pilate washing his hands,
Crucifixion,
Resurrection and
Ascension.*

Interestingly, the figure of Christ on the cross is clothed in a tunic. This is a very ancient iconographic tradition, which was dying out at the time when the candlestick was carved. [1] [5]

Transepts and Crossing

The two transept altars were made by the scalpellini Giuseppe Leonardi, Fortunato Martinori (marble work), Francesco Sibilio (work in malachite), and Vincenzo Belli and Luigi Mazzocchi were responsible for the metalwork. [c]

The nave ceiling bears the coats of arms of Gregory XVI (center), Pius VII and Pius VIII (left) and Leo XII (right). The organ in the left transept was made by the Serassi brothers of Bergamo, and the case designed by Poletti but replaced by one made by Domenico Farinati in 1895. [c]

Left Transept altar and chapels

Altar of the Conversion of St Paul [8]

This is in the left hand transept. The altar was made in the 19th century, attributed to Camuccini, using malachite and lapis lazuli provided by Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. The malachite is bright green, and the lapis is rich blue. Next to it on either side are statues of *Pope St Gregory the Great* by Massimiliano Laboureur, signed and dated 1838, and *St Bernard of Clairvaux* by Achille Stocchi, signed and dated 1836. The altarpiece, *Conversion of St Paul*, is by Vincenzo Camuccini, and it and the statues are framed by four Corinthian columns of pavonazzetto ("Peacock") marble supporting an architrave the frieze of which has a dedicatory inscription. [1] [5] [c]

To the left and right of the altar are doors that lead into the Gregorian Portico.

There are two large enclosed chapels to the left of the apse, with a set of doors by Arnaldo Foschini of 1928.

Chapel of St Stephen [9]

The first chapel on the left is that of St Stephen. It was built to a design by Luigi Poletti with marble work by the scalpellino Alessandro Banchini, 1836–45. This 19th century new-build chapel is a reminder that before his conversion, St Paul took part in the stoning of St Stephen, protomartyr of the Church. A statue of *Saint Stephen* by Rinaldo Rinaldi stands above the altar. *The Stoning of St Stephen* (1851) on the right wall is by Francesco Podesti, and the *St Stephen Condemned by the Sanhedrin* (1857–60) is by Francesco Coghetti. Part of the materials in the marble wall decoration are salvage from the early basilica. The wall pilasters are of red granite, and the dado of black and white Numidian breccia. The altar canopy has a pair of porphyry columns matching those of the altar canopy. [1] [c]

Blessed Sacrament Chapel [10]

Left of the apse is the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, and formerly known as the Chapel of the Crucifix. In 1620 a chapel was designed by Carlo Maderno. [8]

Some sources state that the chapel was designed in the Baroque style in 1725 by Carlo Maderno. This can't be true for two reasons: Carlo Maderno died in 1629; also, the chapel was the only one of the four chapels, along with the apse, to survive the devastating fire of 1823 completely intact.

The altar designed by Alessandro Specchi. On the altar is a marble tabernacle probably dating from the 18th century. The crucifix of polychrome wood by Tino di Camaino from Siena, which is from the 14th century, is

said to have spoken, or nodded, to St Bridget of Sweden when she prayed here in 1370. [1] [5] [c]

The mosaic on the left of the *Blessed Virgin with the Christ Child*, (“Theotokos Hodighitria”) in the style of a Byzantine icon, is from the 12th or 13th century. It was before this icon that St Ignatius of Loyola and his companions made their first public vows on August 22nd 1541 and hence began the history of the Society of Jesus. [1] [2]

On the pedestal at the right of the sanctuary is a polychrome wooden statue of *St Paul*, from the 14th or 15th century, which bears traces of evidence of the fire of 1823. The scratches are made by pilgrims wishing to take splinters away as relics. The depiction of the saint as a small man with a dark pointed beard is extremely ancient iconographically, and may be based on his actual appearance. [1] [5]

On the left side, the 17th century marble statue of *St Bridget* is by **Stefano Maderno** and depicts her vision before the crucifix just mentioned. Four gilded stucco angels are in the side niches. [1] [c]

The vaulted ceiling with a skylight contains monochrome frescoes of angels holding the Instruments of the Passion.

The 13th century painter Pietro Cavallini is buried in the chapel. [1]

Right Transept altar and chapels

Altar of Our Lady of the Assumption [21]

This is in the right-hand part of the transept. Like its twin in the left transept, this altar is made of malachite and lapis lazuli, again a gift from Tsar Nicholas I. Above the altar is a mosaic copy of the *Coronation of the Virgin* by **Guilio Romano**, who had followed a design of Raffaello, and now in the Vatican Museum. The two statues to either side here are *St Benedict* by **Filippo Gnaccarini**, signed and dated 1837, and *St Scholastica* by **Felice Baini**, signed and dated 1836. [1] [2] [c]

Chapel of St Lawrence [13]

This chapel, the first on the right, was reconstructed for the jubilee of 1625 by **Carlo Maderno**. It is also known as the Chapel of the Choir, as it is here that the Benedictine community sing Office and celebrate Mass. It was originally built as a chapel for the Blessed Sacrament, and was decorated with eight paintings and lunette frescoes by **Giovanni Lanfranco**, three biblical scenes remain: the *rain of quails* (first on the left) and two others now in the pinacotheca: the *Fall of Manna* and the *Veneration of the Bronze Serpent*. The chapel was restored in 1852 and redecorated in 1929 by **Arturo Viligiardi**. [1] [2] [c]

The ceiling vault has a fresco depicting events from the *life of St Lawrence*, with lots of angels in attendance, and is by **Arturo Viligiardi**. The sybils and prophets on the vault are, however, by **Anastasio Fontebuoni**.

Botched repairs to the roof have unfortunately lead to recent damage to the ceiling frescoes. The wooden stalls are a later addition, designed by **Guglielmo Calderini** and made by **Alessandro Monteneri**. [1] [2] [c]

The marble triptych above the altar is of the school of **Andrea Bregno**, 15th century, and used to be on the counterfaçade. From left to right, the saints are *Anthony of Egypt*, *Dionysius* and *Justina*. The other two murals in the chapel have Eucharistic themes; they are 19th century copies after **Giuseppe Ghezzi**: the *Last Supper* and *The Widow of Sarepta Brings Bread to Elijah*. [1] [2] [c]

Chapel of St Benedict [14]

This is the last chapel on the right, and is a sumptuous design by **Luigi Poletti**, built in 1843-45 made to recall the cella of an ancient temple. It replaced an entrance passage which was the only way into the old basilica from the Via Ostiense, as well as two small rooms. The statue of the *Saint Benedict* behind the altar is by **Pietro Tenerani**, made in the 19th century. The twelve fluted Doric columns are ancient, from the Portonaccio (Veio) excavations at Isola Farnese, and have Composite capitals decorated with flowers. The marble used is ash-grey. One of the capitals is a copy. The barrel-vaulted ceiling is spectacularly coffered in white and gold, as is the tympanum of the recessed arch above the altar. [1] [c]

The holy water stoup at the entrance to the chapel of St Benedict is the work of **Pietro Galli** (1860): the devil

tempts a child who is saved by touching the holy water. [2] [c]

former Sala Gregoriana [15]

Entering through the door from via Ostiense (open only on certain occasions) one arrives into what used to be the Sala Gregoriana. Within the last two decades the space has been converted into a new Baptistry. The chapel has eched glass panels by Albano Pali. Unfortunately, this area is rarely open to the public. [9]

Sacristy [16]

The sacristy contains a fine statue of Pope Boniface IX. A painting of *Madonna and Child with SS. Paul, Benedict, Peter, and Giustina* is attributed to Antoniazio Romano. [4] [e]

Baptistry or Chapel of St. Timothy [19]

This room is ancient, but the arrangement of the baptistry is modern as it was restored in 1930 by Arnaldo Foschini as the last phase of the restoration after the fire. It has an entrance in the south-east corner of the transept; this entrance is also the main way into the monastery. [1]

The room has vaulting supported by cipollino marble Ionic columns, and walls revetted in polychrome marble slabs in rectangular frames. All this work is ancient. The font, however, is modern, and is carved from a block of veined marble. The decoration is impressive, and features stylized animals in malachite, lapis lazuli and mother-of-pearl. [1]

Since 2008 the baptistry has served as a place of prayer for small groups of the faithful. The altar, brought here from the confessio, contains the remains of St Timothy of Antioch, a martyr of 311, and of other unknown martyrs. In the area there is a sarcophagus and other objects associated with the saint. [2]

Oratory of St Julian [20]

The frescoes of Apostles and martyrs here are from the 13th century, and part (SS Peter and Paul) has been attributed to Antonio da Viterbo, nicknamed Il Pastura. They have been repainted several times, and are not now in a good condition. The oratory is also the direct route from basilica to the cloisters, with a turnstile installed, and is also used for the sale of souvenirs. An alternative name is Sala del Martirologio. [1]

Cloister [18]

There is an admission charge, but it is one of the most beautiful and serene in all of Rome. The older of the two cloisters was built 1208–1235 by the Cosmati and the Vassalletti families who were celebrated Roman marble-craftsmen. In the center of the cloister are four squares of well-tended garden. Around them are four covered walks protected by a low wall or podium. [2] [6]

The arcades have coupled colonnettes of different forms, some round, some polygonal, some twisted and some intertwined. They, and the entablature they support, have Cosmatesque decoration. The inscription in the mosaics is a poem describing the importance of his cloister in the life of a monk, and its use as a place of contemplation and study. A few small carved animals survive between the columns, although most of these have gone. On the north side it is worth looking for a carving of Adam and Eve flanking a tree with the serpent snaking up it. [1]

In the cloister are found architectural fragments from the ancient basilica and nearly 2000 pieces of tombstones with inscriptions in Greek and Latin, that come from the nearby necropolis. Originally a pagan public cemetery it was later used by Christians. In the cloister there is a fine Roman sarcophagus from the third century, reused in the 12th as the tomb of the Pierleoni. There is also a facsimile of the front panel of a splendid sarcophagus known as the “dogmatic sarcophagus.” One of the earliest portrayals of the Trinity (the three persons on the left have the same face) is carved on it. The work was carried out at the time of the Trinitarian definition of the council of Nicaea (325). The original, discovered here after the fire of 1823, is now preserved in the Vatican Museum. [2]

Chapel of Relics [17]

Halfway along the east walk of the cloister a door opens onto the chapel of relics. Following a recent restoration the apse space has been reordered behind a glass screen. Some of the basilica’s many relics, handed down through the centuries, are placed there. They are accompanied by a description indicating their provenance and origin. The frescoes are by an unknown 18th century artist: [2] [c]

- semi-dome: *God the Father with Christ and the Virgin*;

- intrados: R: *St Peter* and L: *St Paul*;
- ceiling: R: *Sts Sebastian, Eustace, Scholastica* and *Other Saints*;
L: *Sts Benedict, Stephen, Francis of Rome, Andrew, Bartholomew* and *Other Saints*;
C: *Dove of the Holy Spirit*;
- back wall: *Putti with a Cross*,

Pinacotheca [22]

This is a large hall next to the Chapel of Relics where paintings, vestments, sacred vessels and other items from the archive and library of the abbey of St Paul are on display. The paintings on wood and canvas of the pinacotheca belong to different schools and centuries. Including, an oil on canvas painting of the *Flagellation of Jesus*, attributed to **Bramantino**, the *Virgin Mary with the Infant Christ* by **Antoniazio Romano** (15th century). Of particular interest is the facsimile copy of a manuscript Bible on parchment (the Carolingian Bible of St Paul) dating from the ninth century, the work of one of the most celebrated miniature schools of the time, that of the court of Rheims in France. The original is in the abbey archive. The works on display in the pinacotheca are periodically substituted. In this space there are also occasional temporary exhibitions. [2] [5] [10]

Exhibition Gallery

From the cloister we pass to the “exhibition gallery” which leads to the new building with its two levels: below ground the archaeological area and on the ground floor the shop and cafeteria. The exhibition gallery is almost thirty meters long. In the ten display cases are artefacts that recount the history of the basilica and the monastery of St Paul (sacred vessels, ceramics, coins and medals and the most important articles brought to light by recent excavations). [2]

Archaeological Area

In 2007, in preparation for the construction of a building to serve the needs of visitors, excavations were carried out in part of the monastery garden to the southwest of the basilica. These took some two years and rapidly revealed an impressive series of archaeological finds dating from the late antique to the late medieval period. A multifunctional building was constructed, but the area below was opened as an exhibition site for the conservation of the architectural finds. A memorial stone of the time of Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) conserved in the abbey, reports the presence at St Paul’s of a monastery of women, dedicated to St Stephen. The excavation uncovered structures possibly connected to that monastery, as well as remains originating in other periods. The finds included an ample guest area, a portico, columns, a well, a small bell tower and a part of a covered walkway that in early medieval times ran from the gate of the city called “Porta S. Paolo” to the basilica. The archaeological investigations and the work of restoration and conservation were led by the Vatican Museum in collaboration with the Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology, the School of specialisation in environmental and architectonic heritage of the University of Rome, “La Sapienza”, and the Administration of the Basilica of St Paul. The covered area of some 1000 sq. m, offers visitors a fascinating historical and artistic experience, thanks to the illustrative panels and multimedia films displayed along the route of the visit. [2]

Open air museum

The archaeological passageway along the south wall of the basilica, hosts a series of monumental capitals and sections of columns of the Theodosian basilica. [1]

Ancient cemetery

On the Via Ostiense to the north of the east end of the basilica are displayed excavated tombs of the cemetery in which St Paul was buried. These are sheltered under a pagoda roof. Closer examination is possible by means of occasional guided tours -search online for Necropoli di San Paolo. [1]

Further rock-cut tombs lurk in the escarpment to the east of the road, but are not easily accessible.

Those interested in Rome's transport history might care to note that the wide path to the west of the Necropoli is the line of the original tramway.

Access [2]

The Basilica is open every day from 07:00 to 19:00, free admission.

The Cloister is open every day from 9:00 to 17:30, admission € 4.00 (reduced € 3.00).

The Souvenir Shop is open every day from 8:00 to 19:00.

The Sacristy is open every day from 8:00 to 12:00 and from 16:00 to 18:30.

Visitors in recent years have found the monastery's public entrance shut for lunch from 13:00 to 15:00, especially in August. This was apparently owing to difficulties over staffing (the monastery provides its own staff, and does not rely on the Vatican employees in the basilica).

The monastery gardens are sometimes visitable via a guided tour. See the abbey website (link below).

The number of visitors has certainly fallen substantially since the latter part of the 20th century. On the other hand, visitors tend to be genuine pilgrims rather than tourists and this is possibly the major basilica with the most prayerful atmosphere.

It is possible to combine a visit to the basilica with one to the Trappist abbey of Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio alle Tre Fontane. The 761 bus terminates and waits for passengers at the Largo Beato Riccardi which is south of the main crossroads west of the station at San Paolo.

Liturgy

According to the Diocese, Mass is celebrated:

Weekdays 6:45, 8:00, 9:00, 10:30, 17:00 (18:00 Saturdays);

Sundays and Solemnities 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:30, 12:00, 18:00.

Vespers is celebrated in the basilica at 18:00 or 18:30 on weekdays, and 17:00 on Sundays. The rest of the Divine Office celebrated in common by the monks is usually in one of the external side chapels, and is not publicised.

It is in this Basilica that every year on the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, January 25, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity solemnly opens. The Pope has specified two privileged tasks for this Papal Basilica: the Sacrament of Reconciliation (or Penance) and the development and organization of ecumenical initiatives.

Location:

Address: 186 Via Ostiense

Coordinates: [41°51'31"N](#) [12°28'35.4" E](#)

General Information ^[2]

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Where to Find Us

Basilica Papale San Paolo fuori le Mura

Piazzale San Paolo, 1

00146 Rome – Italy

How to reach the Basilica

BUS

Line 23 (Pincherle / Parravano)

Get off at the «Ostiense / LGT S. Paolo» stop

UNDERGROUND

Line B (Laurentina)

Get off at the «Basilica di San Paolo» stop

From Termini Station

Metro Line “B” towards Laurentina, “San Paolo Basilica” stop.

Bus

Line 23 (Pincherle / Parravano)

Get off at the «Ostiense / LGT S. Paolo» stop

Guided tours

It is possible to book a guided tour of the Basilica, the Cloister, the Pinacoteca and the archaeological area.

Guide cost € 170.00 (maximum 30 people)

Reduced entrance ticket to the Cloister € 3.00 (per person)

Earphones € 1.50 (per person)

Available languages: ITA/ENG/SPA/GER/FRE

Guided tour service hours

Every day (weekdays and holidays) from 9.00 to 17.00

For reservations:

email info@basilicasanpaolo.org

Artists and Architects

Achille [Scaccioni](#) (19th cent.), Italian painter

Achille [Stocchi](#) (19th cent), Italian sculptor

Adalberto [Cencetti](#) (1847-1907), Italian sculptor

Albano [Poli](#) (20th cent), Italian painter, stained glass window maker, mosaic designer

Alessandro Massimiliano [Laboureur](#) (1794-1861), Italian sculptor

Alessandro [Monteneri](#) (1832-1920), Italian inlayer and restorer of wooden works

Alessandro [Specchi](#) (1668-1729), Italian architect and engraver

Anastasio [Fontebuoni](#) (1571-1626), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Andrea Alippi (19th cent.), Italian surveyer, architect

Andrea [Bregno](#) (1418-1506), Italian sculptor and architect of the Early Renaissance

Antoniazio [Romano](#) (1430?-1512?), Italian Early Renaissance painter (also see [here](#))

Antonio [Allegretti](#) (1840-1918), Italian sculpture

Antonio [Canevari](#) (1681-1764), Italian architect of the Rococo and Neoclassical periods

Antonio del Massaro [de Viterbo](#) [aka *Il Pastura*] (1450-1516), Italian painter

Antonio [Maraini](#) (1886-1963), Italian sculpture

Arnaldo [Foschini](#) (1884-1968), Italian architect

Arnolfo [di Cambio](#) (1240-1310), Italian architect and sculptor

Arturo [Viligiardi](#) (1869-1936), Italian painter, sculptor, architect and urbanist.

Bartolomeo [Suardi](#) [aka *Bramantino*] (c.1456-c.1530), Italian painter and architect

Carlo [Gavardini](#) (1811-1869), Italian painter

Carlo [Maderno](#) (1556-1629), Swiss-Italian architect [also see [here](#)]

Casimiro [de Rossi](#) (1818-1876), Italian painter

Cesare Dies (19th cent), Italian painter

Cesare [Mariani](#) (1826-1901), Italian painter

Domenico [Bartolini](#) (1827-1884), Italian painter

Domenico [Farinati](#) (1857-1942), Italian organmaker

Domenico [Tojetti](#) (1807-1892), Italian American painter

Emilio [Gallori](#) (1846-1924), Italian sculptor

Enrico [Manfrini](#) (1917-2004), Italian sculptor

Eugenio [Maccagnani](#) (1852-1930), Italian sculptor

Felice Bainsi (19th cent.), Italian sculptor

Filippo [Agricola](#) (1795-1857), Italian painter

Filippo Baldi (19th cent), Italian painter

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

Francesco [Coghetti](#) (1804-1875), Italian painter

Francesco [Fabi-Altini](#) (1830-1906), Italian sculptor

Francesco [Grandi](#) (1831-1891), Italian painter

Francesco [Podesti](#) (1800-1895), Italian painter

Gaspard [Salvi](#) (1786-1849), Italian architect

Giosuè Bernardino [Meli](#) (1816-1893), Italian sculptor

Giovanni Battista Pianello (19th cent), Italian painter

Giovanni [Lanfranco](#) (1582-1647), Italian Baroque painter [also see [here](#) and [here](#)]

Giulio [Romano](#) (1499-1546) Italian painter and architect

Giuseppe [Ghezzi](#) (1634-1721), Italian painter of the Baroque period

Giuseppe [Obici](#) (1807-1878), Italian sculptor

Giuseppe [Sacconi](#) (1854-1905), Italian architect

Giuseppe [Sereni](#) (1823-after 1888), Italian painter
 Giuseppe [Trabacchi](#) (1839-1909), Italian sculptor
 Gregorio [Zappalà](#) (1833-1908), Italian sculptor
 Guglielmo [Calderini](#) (1837-1916), Italian architect [also see [here](#)]
 Guglielmo [de Sanctis](#) (1829-1911), Italian painter
 Ignazio [Jacometti](#) (1819-1883), Italian sculptor
 Luigi [Cochetti](#) (1802-1884), Italian painter
 Luigi [Guglielmi](#) (1834-1908), Italian sculptor
 Luigi [Poletti](#) (1792-1869), Italian neoclassical architect
 Marcello [Sozzi](#) (19th cent), Italian painter
 Mariano Trevellini (19th cent), Italian master clockmaker
 Matteo Sassi (1646-1723), Italian architect
 Natale [Carta](#) (1790-1884), Italian Painter
 Nichola dell'Angelo (12th cent.), Italian sculptor
 Nicola [Consoni](#) (1814–1884), Italian painter
 Pasquale [Belli](#) (1752-1833), Italian architect
 Pietro Bosio (d. 1855), Italian architect
 Pietro [Camporese](#) the Younger (1792-1873), Italian neoclassical architect
 Pietro [Cavallini](#) [aka *Petrus Caballinus de Cerronibus*] (1259-ca.1330), Italian painter
 Pietro di Oderisio (13th cent.), Italian sculptor
 Pietro [Gagliardi](#) (1809-1890), Italian painter [also see [here](#)]
 Pietro [Galli](#) (1804-1877), Italian sculptor
 Pietro [Tenerani](#) (1789-1869), Italian sculptor of the [Neoclassic](#) style
 Pietro [Vassalietto](#) (1154-1186), Italian sculptor and architect
 Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino [aka [Raphael](#)] (1483-1520), Italian architect and painter of the High Renaissance
 Rinaldo [Rinaldi](#) (1793-1873), Italian sculptor of the Neoclassic period
 Roberto [Bompiani](#) (1821-1908), Italian painter
 Salvatore [Monosilio](#) (1715-1776), Italian Painter
 Salvatore [Revelli](#) (1816-1859), Italian sculptor
 Stefano [Maderno](#) (1576-1636), Italian late-Renaissance sculptor and stuccoist (also see [here](#))
[Tino di Camaino](#) (c.1280-c.1337), Italian sculptor
[Vatican Mosaic Studio](#) {also see [here](#)}
 Vincenzo [Camuccini](#) (1771-1844), Italian Neoclassic painter
 Vincenzo [Morani](#) (1809–1870), Italian painter
 Virginio [Vespignani](#) (1808-1882), Italian architect

Scalpellini (stone cutters)

Alessandro Banchini
 Camillo Focardi
 Luigi Ravaglini
 Fortunato Martinori
 Francesco Sibilio
 Giovanni Pietro Farzetti
 Giuseppe Leonardi
 Tomasso della Moda

Metal workers

Vincenzo Belli
 Luigi Mazzocchi

Burials:

St. Paul of Tarsus

Cardinal [Thibaud](#) of Ostia (d. 1188)

<in 1187 he was elected to the papacy but declined>

Gianbernardino Cardinal [SCOTTI](#), (1478?-1568)

Benito Cardinal de [SALA Y DE CARAMANY](#), O.S.B.Cas., (1646-1715)

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