

## Description of Martyrdom cycle of frescoes

- F1 - *The Crucifixion*. In addition to Jesus on the cross, a number of martyrs are seen, including San Pietro and San Paolo, and at the foot of the cross some infants in swaddling clothes, as a reference to the Infanticide in Bethlehem. Above the fresco is the text "Rex. gloriose. martir." and under Christ "Tu vincis in martir."
- F2 - *Santo Stefano is stoned*; San Giacomo and 2 apostles submit to their martyrdom is the second fresco. At letter A, Stefano is seen being stoned, at B: the apostles being whipped (on the right) and C: San Giacomo Maggiore being beheaded (on the left). The scenes are set to take place outside Jerusalem. Above the fresco is written a passage from Psalm 78,3: "Effuderunt. sanguinem. s.s. (i) n. circuitu. hierusalem".
- F3 - *San Pietro and San Paolo* is the third fresco. In the background you can see the Colosseum and the Roman Forum. In the foreground some soldiers are raising the cross with San Pietro (A). On the left side, San Paolo is seen being beheaded (B). At the top is "Plantaverunt. ecclesiam. sanguine suo."
- F4 - *The martyrdom of Santa Tecla, San Vitale and others* is the fourth fresco. In the background, Nero's Circus is shown, where some Christians are burned alive (A) In the foreground, San Vitale is seen being buried alive (B) and Tecla, being torn to pieces between two bulls (C). Above the fresco is the text "Descendit. cum. illo. in. fovea. Sap. X.". ("...she followed him down into the dungeon..." Book of Wisdom 10,14).
- F5 - *Christians Dressed in Animal Furs and Attacked by Dogs in Nero's Circus* is the fifth fresco. The main subject is shown below the letter A. Behind, on the left, are the beheaded bodies of San Processo and San Martiniano, and San Gervaso being hanged (B). Above the fresco is "Carnes. sanctorum tuorum - bestiis terrae".
- F6 - *The Martyrdom of the Apostle John* is the sixth fresco. The saint has been immersed in a vat of boiling oil (A). In the background, Pope Cletus (Anacletus) is seen kneeling (C) and John being led away by a soldier (B). Above the fresco is written "Odor. ignis. non. erit. in. te.", which may be a paraphrase of the text in Daniel Book 3,94.
- F7 - *The Martyrs Dionigi, Domitilla, Nereo e Achilleo* is the seventh fresco. Dionigi is seen in the foreground (A). Behind, Nereo and Achilleo are beheaded (C) and the house in which Domitilla and other martyrs are imprisoned is set on fire (B). The special thing here is that the person who commissioned the paintings has been portrayed! At the front right of the picture, a gentleman with a dark beard and green cloak is seen, who is believed to be the Collegiet's leader Michele Lauretano. Above the fresco is the text "Condemnat. iustus. mortuus. vivos. impios. Sap. III." ("The righteous who died shall judge the wicked who live..." Book of Wisdom 4,16).
- F8 - *St. Ignatius of Antioch, Pope Clement, Simeon and others* is the eighth fresco. In the foreground, Ignazio di Antiochia is attacked by 6 lions (A), while San Clemente is pushed over a cliff (B) and San Simeone is crucified (C). The text above says "Dentibus. bestiarum. molar. ut. panis. mundus. inveniar".
- F9 - *The Martyrs St Eustachio, Alessandro Papa, Sinforosa and her children* appear in the ninth fresco. In the foreground Sant'Eustachio is seen with other martyrs being burned in a bronze statue (A), while Sinforosa is thrown over a cliff in the background (C), where Pope Alexander is beheaded outside a fortified city (B). Sinforosa's 7 children are tormented in different ways (D). The text above is "Tamquam auro in fornace probavit illos. Sap. III." ("He has tested them like gold in a furnace..." Book of Wisdom 3,6).
- F10 - *The Martyrdom of Santa Felicità and her seven children* is the tenth fresco. In the background is the

Roman Forum. Felicia and her seven children are tortured and killed in different ways (A, B, C). The picture also features other martyrs, for example Pope Pius is seen on the left (D). The text above reads "In. paucis. vexati. in. multis bene. disponentur. Sap.III". ("They have been chastened a little, but will receive great blessings..." Book of Wisdom 3,5).

- F11 - The *Martyrdom of San Policarpo* is the eleventh fresco. Policarpo was tried first burned at the stake, and then beheaded. The text above the image reads "In medio. ignis. non. sum. aestatus. Eccl.II"). This fresco was painted by Marcello Leopardi around 1794 to replace an earlier painting by Pomarancio, which was destroyed in 1778 when the wall between 2 sets of columns was torn down to make way for the construction of a new chapel for Santo Stefano d'Ungheria. When this did not materialize, the spaces were walled up again and provided with new frescoes, namely this one and the following one of Santa Margherita.
- F12 - The *Martyrdom of Santa Margherita* is the twelfth fresco, which, like the previous one, was done by Marcello Leopardi as a replacement for an older picture. Above the fresco is written "Fortitudo. et. decor. indumentum. eius. Proverb.31" ("She is clothed in strength and dignity.." Book of Proverbs 31, 25).
- F13 - The *Trials of the Martyrs Blandina and Attalo in Gaul* is the thirteenth fresco. French martyrs are tormented (A+D). Blandina is attacked by a bull (B). On the left in the picture, Attalo is burned alive (C). Above is the text "Aestimati. sumus. sicut. oves. occisionis. Ps. XLIII".
- F14 - *Saints Perpetua, Felicita, Vittore, Zefirino, Leonida, Basilide and a virgin from Alexandria* are seen on the fourteenth fresco, over which you can read the text "Firmamentum. est. dominus. timen. tibus. eum. Sal.24.". Perpetua and Felicita are thrown with others to the wild beasts in the arena (A), Vittore and Zefirino are tortured (B), Leonida and Basilide are killed (C) and a virgin of Alexandria is burned with liquid pitch (D).
- F15 - *Pope Calixtus, San Calepodio and Santa Martina* appear in the fifteenth fresco. At the front, Calixtus is thrown from a building into a well (A). Behind, Calepodio is dragged behind a 2 horse cart through the city and thrown into the Tiber (B) and next to him Martina is tormented (C). The text above the picture reads "Visi. sunt. oculis. insipie. tium. mori. Sap.III" ("To the foolish it looked as if they were dead..." Book of Wisdom 3,2).
- F16 - The *Martyrdom of Santa Cecilia, Pope Urban, Maximus, Pope Pontianus and others* is the sixteenth fresco. It is Santa Cecilia, who sits in the middle of the picture in a pot that is bubbling over a strong fire (A). Behind, Pope Urban is beheaded (B), while Maximus is tortured on the left side (C) and Pope Pontianus is taken away on a ship on the right side (D). Above the fresco is the text "Per. ignem. et. aquam. in. refri gerium. Ps.LXV".
- F17 - A long line of martyrs appears in the next painting, which is the seventeenth fresco. In the center Sant'Agata is seen tied to a column (A), behind Fabiano, Cornelio and Cipriano (B), on the left San Trifone suspended from a tree (C), on the right Abdon and Sennen attacked by lions (D) and behind the other martyrs. The text above the painting reads "Non. sunt. condigne. passionis huius. temporis. Rom. VIII".
- F18 - The *martyrs Apollonia, Popes Stephen and Sixtus, as well as the saints Corinta and Venanzio* appear in the eighteenth fresco, where Apollonia, tied to a tree, has her teeth extracted (A), while Venanzio is pushed over a city wall (E) and Pope Sixtus is beheaded (C). It is Corinta in the middle (D) and Pope Stefan on the right (B). The text above the image is "Custodit. dominus. omnia. ossa eorum. Ps.XXXIII".
- F19 - The *martyrs Lorenzo, Ippolito, Rufina, Seconda, Proto and Giacinto* are seen in the nineteenth fresco, where A=San Lorenzo on the grate, B=San'Ippolito being pulled by 4 horses, C=Rufina and Seconda thrown into the water from a bridge and D= Proto and Giacinto are beheaded. Above the fresco is the text "Adhaesit anima mea post te quia caro mea igne cremata est".
- F20 - The twentieth fresco depicts hundreds of martyrs being tormented and underneath it can be read that 300 martyrs were thrown into a fiery abyss under the Emperors Decius, Valerian

and Gallienus (A), 260 Christians subjected to torture (B), Tertullino and Mezzarso tormented with torches and Nemesio beheaded (C), while Sempronio, Olimpo, Teodolo and Essuperia were burned alive (D). Above the fresco, a passage from a hymn is quoted: "Ignes. nos. examinasti. sicut. examiatur. argentum. Ps. LXV"

- F21 - Martyrs Mario and Marta with their children and other martyrs is the twenty-first fresco. Here you can see below A: Mario is suspended from a gallows with a stone tied to his feet in the center of the picture, while the children are tortured on the left and Marta has had her hands cut off on the right. Under B, Cipriano and Giustina are shown in a vat of boiling liquid, under C the murder of Valentino and under D 46 Christians are killed. The text above the image comes from the Book of Wisdom 3,15: "Bonorum. laborum. gloriosus. est. fructus. Sap.III" ("Good toil bears glorious fruit...").
- F22 - The sufferings of *Agapito, Cristina, Colomba, Crisanto and Daria* is shown in the twenty-second fresco. In the center Agapito is suspended head downwards over a smoking pyre (A). In the background on the right Cristina is hit by an arrow (B), on the left Colomba is burned (C) and in the middle Daria and Crisanto are buried alive (D). The text above reads "Properavit. educere illum de medio iniquitatum. Sap.III" (Book of Wisdom 4,14: "for his soul was pleased with the Lord, therefore it hastened away from the evil world.").
- F23 - The twenty-third fresco shows, among others, the *martyrdom of Sant'Agnese and Pope Gaius*. Agnese is seen in the middle after she has been set on fire (A). Behind, Emerenziana is stoned (C), while Pope Gaius is beheaded on the left side of the picture (B) and the Christians in Nicomedia are tortured and killed (D). Above the fresco is "Fortitudo. et. laus. mea. dominus Ps. CXVIII".
- F24 - The martyrs *Erasmus, Biagio, Barbara, Eustrazio and the destruction of a city in Phrygia* are shown in the twenty-fourth fresco, where Erasmus lies in a vessel into which molten lead is poured (A), and Biagio, tied to a tree, is subjected to torture in left side (B). In the middle, some martyrs are burned, while others - including Eustrazio - lie dead on the ground (D) and Barbara is burned to the left (C). Above is the Phrygian city set on fire (E). The text above the fresco quotes a fragment of a hymn and says "Secundum. multitudinem. dolorum. consolationes. tuae laetificaverunt".
- F25 - A whole series of martyrs, including *Bonifacio, Vincenzo, Primo, Feliciano, Anastasia, Quattro Coronati, Pietro and Marcellino* are seen in the twenty-fifth fresco, which begins by showing 2 young martyrs placing their hands in a fire on a sacrificial altar (A). Higher up, from left, Bonifacio with his head down in a boiling pot (B), Vincenzo on a grate (C), Primo and Feliciano surrounded by lions (D), Anastasia in flames (E), the Four Crowned Martyrs ("I Santi Quattro Coronati") are killed (F) and Pietro, Marcellino, Isennio and other martyrs are beheaded (G). The inscription above reads "Consecratis. manus. vestras. domino. vt. detur. vobis. benedicto. Exod. 32".
- F26 - The *martyrdom of Saints Lucia and Eufemia*, as well as that of others, is found in the twenty-sixth fresco. Eufemia is buried in a snake's nest on the left, while Lucia is killed by a soldier on the right (A). Behind are martyrs who have their eyes gouged out (B). Others are placed in lead coffins and thrown into the river (C) and on the right some have been dismembered and others hanged (D). The text above is another quote from a Psalm: "Exultabunt. ossa. humiliata. Psalm. 50".
- F27 - *San Vito, San Modesto and Santa Crescenzia, as well as Sebastiano and Cosma* and many others are depicted in the twenty-seventh fresco. Vito, Modesto and Crescenzia are seen in a vat of boiling lead and pitch (A), Sebastiano is pierced by arrows (B), many martyrs are attacked by wild animals (C). Under D are seen the torments to which Cosma, Damiano, Pantaleone, Tiburzio, Saturnino, Susanna, Gorgonio, Adriani and other martyrs were subjected. And under E it is shown how the Theban Legion was slaughtered. Again, a fragment of a psalm is quoted on the field above the fresco: "Torrentem. per transivit anima no stra Psal.123".
- F28 - *Santa Caterina, the converted philosophers, Faustina, a group of soldiers, and Pope Marcellus* appear in

the twenty-eighth fresco. In the middle, Caterina is seen between two wheels (A) and a group of philosophers whom she has converted to Christianity and who are now burned together with other martyrs (B). On the right side you see Faustina, Porfirio and a group of soldiers who have been killed (C). On the left, Pope Marcellus kneels in prayer (D). Above the fresco is written "Fortitudo. et decor. indumentum. eius. Prover.31" ("She is clothed in strength and dignity.." Book of Proverbs 31, 25).

F29 - The martyrdom of the *bishops Pietro and Simeone, 40 soldiers*, and thousands of other Christians can be seen in the twenty-ninth fresco, where in the center is painted a long line of dead and mutilated martyrs (A) and others being torn apart by wild animals (B). On the left, Bishop Pietro is beheaded (C), while 40 soldiers are driven into an icy lake, where their legs are destroyed by frostbite (D), and Bishop Simeone is mutilated with other 16,000 martyrs. The text above these scenes reads "Ridebit. in. die. novissimo. Prover. 31" ("and she laughs at the morrow." Book of Proverbs 31,25).

F30 - The thirtieth fresco depicts the sufferings of *Giovanni, Paolo, Bibiana, Artemio, Pigenio*, 80 priests and other martyrs. In front, the bodies of Giovanni, Paolo and Bibiana lie on the ground (A), behind Artemio is crushed between two blocks of stone (B) and higher up a soldier throws Pigenius into the river (C). To the left lies a group of slain martyrs (D) and on the horizon a ship with 80 priests is being burned. The text frieze above the image quotes 1 Corinthians 15, 54-55: "Cum. mortale. hoc. iduerit. immortalitate - tuc. ubi. est. mors. victoria tua. Ich.XV" ("And when this perishable has put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality, then the word that is written will be fulfilled: Death is swallowed up and defeated. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?")

F31 - The martyrdom to which various believers were subjected in Africa is shown in the thirty-first fresco. In the foreground, an executioner is cutting the tongues of some martyrs (right) and another is cutting the hands of other Christians (left) (E). In the background is seen a multitude of mutilated martyrs, flanked by some beheaded and hanged. The text above is again from a hymn "Laetati. sumus. pro. diebus. quibus. nos. huillasti. anis. quibus. vidimus. mala. Psal.80".

F32 - The martyrs of the Middle Ages are seen in the thirty-second fresco, where the foreground is populated by 17 martyrs, including 2 popes, 5 bishops, 2 kings, a queen and a monk. Behind, a crowd of martyrs is being tortured and killed. At the top of the picture there is a river with ships and occasionally drowned martyrs, in front of a city of Nordic proportions. The title of this fresco is: "Laudabit. te. populus. fortis. civitas. gentium. robustarum".

Source:

[Annas Guide](#)