

# Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini ai Catinari



The church of **Holy Trinity of the Pilgrims and Convalescents** is a 16th century hospice church which is now parochial, and which is located on the Piazza della Trinità dei Pellegrini in the rione Regola. The dedication is to the Holy Trinity. [1]

## History

The original church of *San Benedetto in Arenula* is mentioned in a document of Pope Urban III from 1186. In 1558 Pope Paul IV assigned the church to the Arch-confraternity of Pilgrims and Convalescents, a charitable institution founded by St Philip Neri in 1548 to care for the poor and the sick, especially for poor pilgrims. The church was in very bad condition, but the brotherhood accepted the tenancy and bought a house next door as a pilgrim hospice. [1] [a]

In the Jubilee year of 1575 they housed a recorded 140,000 pilgrims of both sexes, and the patronage they then attracted from the impressed Roman establishment enabled them to rebuild the church completely. Construction began in 1587, finished in 1597 and consecrated it in 1616, also building a purpose-designed hospice next door. The architect of the complex was **Martino Longhi the Elder**, and also later **Paolo Maggi**. [1] [a]

The fabric was not well built, and the dome threatened to collapse by the end of the 17th century. So, major interventions to prevent this were carried out by **Giovanni Battista Contini** in 1699. The present façade was added by **Francesco de Sanctis** in 1723. This architect was also responsible for the Spanish Steps. [1]

There was a major restoration of the interior from 1847 to 1853 by **Antonio Sarti**. [1]

The hospice could accommodate 500 pilgrims and feed almost a thousand, and it remained the premier accommodation in the city for poor pilgrims until the 19th century. It also served as a hospital during the fighting associated with the French occupations and the Roman Republic. However, after the conquest of Rome by the Kingdom of Italy in 1870 the Papacy refused to proclaim Jubilee years as part of its protest, and the hospice lost much of its rationale. It hospice was closed in the early 20th century, and demolished in 1940. However the Arch-confraternity still exists, and is still based at the church. [1]

In the second half of the 20th century, the church was kept open but lacked any pastoral justification for its existence as the neighborhood is very well provided with churches. However, in June 2008 the parish was established by Pope Benedict XVI as a Personal Parish of the Diocese of Rome for the exclusive celebration of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (Traditional Latin Mass/Tridentine Mass). Care of the parish has been given to the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, also known as FSSP, a Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Rite whose mission is the formation and sanctification of priests in the cadre of the traditional liturgy of the Roman rite, and the pastoral deployment of the priests in the service of the Church. [1]

## Exterior

### Façade

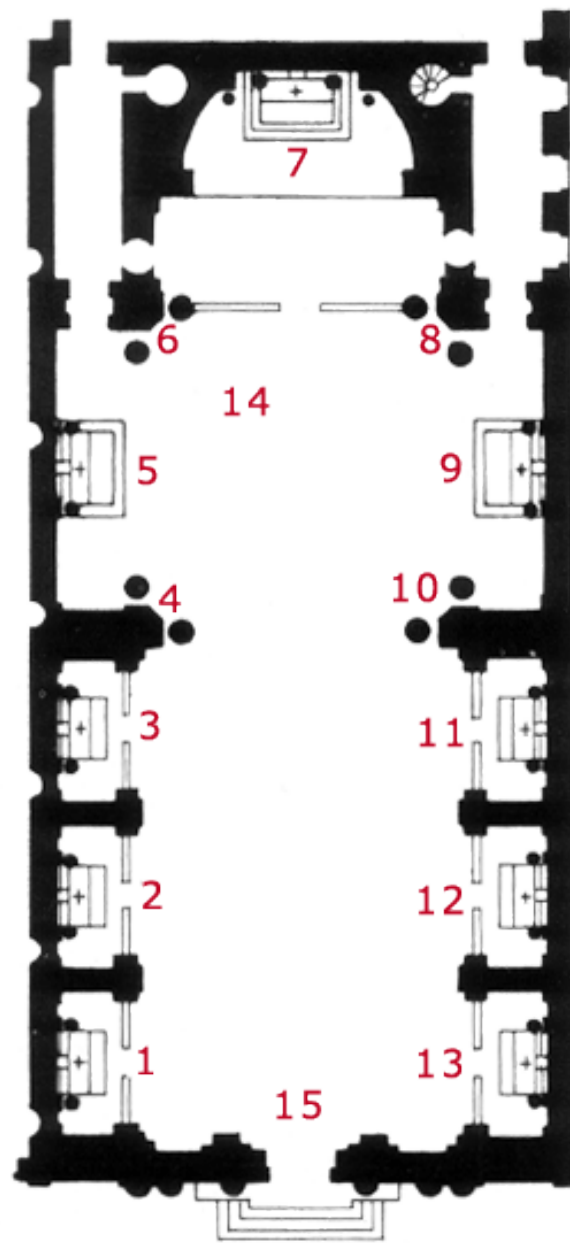
The façade is of travertine limestone, and has an orange-yellow discoloration dating from the days when the city heated itself by burning coal. It is slightly coved or concave, very Baroque, of two storeys separated by a deep entablature with a dedicatory inscription on its frieze. The large entrance doorway has a raised segmental pediment containing a winged putto's head, and flanking the entrance are two pairs of monumental Corinthian columns. Where they support the entablature the latter is brought forward, as is the façade between these columns. Here are seen two stucco statues of *Evangelists* by **Bernardino Ludovisi** in arched niches with little incurved triangular canopies. Another pair of columns flank the first four, set back so that their outer horizontal tangent is in the same plane as the door, and the outer zones of the first level are set back further again and have Corinthian pilasters. [1]

The second level is in the same style as the first, with the same number of six monumental columns except that these are in the Composite style (note the Ionic volutes above the Corinthian acanthus leaves). These columns stand on a very deep plinth set above the dividing entablature, and support a top entablature stepped vertically in the same manner as the latter. Two other statues of *Evangelists* are here also by **Ludovisi**, distinguished by having arc canopies instead of triangular ones, and the corners of the frontage have gigantic volutes. There is a large central window which is crowned by a Venetian curve (an arc between two horizontal lines) in relief over another winged putto's head. The crowning triangular pediment has its central section recessed to match the entablature it is on, and contains a triangle in glory as a symbol of the Trinity. [1]

A matching pair of little campaniles are set on the far corners of the church, behind the dome, and are very difficult to see from the ground. They are on a square plan, in white with a large arched sound-hole on each side. On top are little octagonal drums with cupolas in lead, matching the dome except that they have ogee curves. [1]

## Plan

Structurally the church has a central nave with side aisles, but the latter are divided into three chapels on each side by blocking walls. The transepts are very shallow, only as deep as the chapels. The sanctuary has a single bay as wide as the nave, and is followed by a large and high internal apse with a conch. [1]



## Interior

The present appearance of the interior results from the early 19th century restoration by Sarti. It looks sumptuous, but looks here deceive. His technique was to use a cement made up of powdered marble and pigment, allowed to dry and then polished. It certainly results in an authentic appearance. This is called scagliola, and there is a lot of it in Roman churches. It can be very difficult to distinguish it visually from real marble. [1]

### Nave

The three-bay nave has arcades separated by piers on which are shallow Corinthian pilasters done in scagliola made to resemble yellow Siena marble. These support an entablature which runs round the church, having medallions on its cornice and a frieze in the same color. Egg-and-dart molding is below the medallions. Above this entablature is an attic with decorative panels, from which the nave vault springs. Over each arcade arch is a lunette containing a rectangular window, which intrudes into the vault. Unfortunately, the 19th century frescoes of the vault by Raffaele Ferrara have been lost -presumably because the roof leaked. They are described as having been three panels in monochrome illustrating scenes from the history of the church. [1]

The arcade arches have molded archivolts springing from Doric impost. The impost piers and the intradoses have frescoes of saints. [1]

There is a pretty little wooden organ gallery over the entrance, with carved and gilded putti on its solid balustrade. [1]

### Transept

The transept of the church is dominated by the eight Corinthian columns, apparently in yellow marble, with gilded capitals which support the pendentives of the dome. They front L-shaped piers in the same order, apparently of red marble. The columns were actually as a result of emergency work carried out in 1699 by **Giovan Battista Contini** after the dome threatened to collapse. [1]

The dome (14) of the church was built in 1612 during the restoration and extension works carried out by **Paolo Maggi**. The dome, culminating in a lantern, rests on the drum punctuated by four windows alternating with gabled niches. The interior of the dome itself has decoration of coffering and gilded panels in the same style as that in the apse conch, executed around 1850. In the pendentives are depicted the four evangelists, by **Giovanni Battista Ricci**: *St. Luke* (4); *St. John* (6); *St. Matthew* (8); and *St. Mark* (10). At the top, the image of the *Eternal Father* attributed to **Reni**. [1]

The floor under the dome has an impressive polychrome marble roundel design with the shield of the Confraternity in the middle. This matches the flooring in the nave and sanctuary. [1]

### Sanctuary

The single-bay sanctuary has its own barrel vault, bounded by the triumphal arch supporting the dome and an identical arch defining the apse. The conch of the latter is coffered in squares, with gilded relief panels inserted about 1850 by one Zecchini. [1]

The high altar (7), with its four black-veined African marble Corinthian columns, is by **Domenico Pozzi** of 1616. It occupies the whole height of the apse, to the conch. The four columns are in a line, and support four very high posts. The middle two of these only support a segmental pediment. The enormous altarpiece, depicting the *Holy Trinity*, is by **Guido Reni** and was painted in 1625. The round-headed top of it is higher than the columns. Either side of the sanctuary's triumphal arch is a bronze candlestick, cast in 1616 by **Orazio Censore**. They were given to the confraternity by the municipality. [1]

The side chapels are described clockwise, beginning to the left of the entrance.

### Chapel of St Charles Borromeo (1)

The first chapel on the left is dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo. The altarpiece from 1677 by the artist **Guillaume Courtois** from Burgundy in France (hence he is nicknamed *Il Borgognone*), shows the *Blessed Virgin with Saints* that had recently been canonized, including St Charles Borromeo, St Philip Neri, St Dominic and St. Felix. [1]

The frescoes are by **Giovanni Battista Ferretti**. The paintings represent *Charity of S. Carlo Borromeo* on the left wall, on the right the *Hospitality of S. Filippo Neri*; in the vault the *Redeemer between S. Felice, to whom the Virgin offers the Child Jesus and S. Domenico who resurrected Napoleone Orsini*. In the sottarco, inscribed in compasses, four Virtues are depicted: *Justice*, *Humility*, *Charity* and *Providence*; above two angels bear symbols allusive to Carlo Borromeo and, in the middle, a radiant heart, attribute of S. Filippo Neri. [2]

On the adjacent wall there is a monument to Pietro Lupi, 1852.

### Chapel of St Augustine and St Francis of Assisi (2)

The second chapel on the left is dedicated to Saints Augustine and Francis of Assisi. The altarpiece depicts the *Virgin and Child with Saints Augustine and Francis*, by the **Cavalier d'Arpino**. The frescoes are by the Mannerist painter **Baldassare Croce**. [1]

Here are monuments to Maddalena Radice 1868 and Maria Radice 1869 by a sculptor called Grancelli or Granchelli. The bust is very good. [1]

### Chapel of St Gregory the Great (3)

The third chapel on the left, dedicated to St. Gregory the Great, points out the dependence of the ancient church of St. Benedict's Monastery of San Gregorio. The altarpiece depicts *Pope Gregory I freeing the souls in Purgatory* and is the work **Croce**, who painted all the frescoes in the chapel, which describe the life of the Pontiff.

### Altar of Our Lady, Help of the Poor, St Joseph and St Benedict (5)

In the left transept is an altar dedicated to the Virgin under the title of the *Help of the Poor*. The altarpiece depicting the saints is by **Giovanni Battista Ricci**, and is painted around an older, small icon of *Our Lady* which used to be on an outside wall of the Palazzo Capranica. It was given to the Confraternity in 1558. After a long time being in a bad state, it was finally restored recently. [1]

In 2015 the icon had been replaced with an embroidered linen with the symbol of the Virgin Mary and a crown.

### Altar of St Matthew (9)

In the right transept, the altarpiece depicts the *Apostle Matthew* in a sculpture by the Flemish artist **Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert**, an important witness in Rome Nordic mannerism. The little angel has been attributed to **Pompeo Ferrucci**. [1]

### Chapel of San Giovanni Battista de 'Rossi (11)

The first chapel to the right of the sanctuary was originally dedicated to the Virgin of the Annunciation. The chapel is now dedicated to St John Baptist de Rossi (1698-1764), who was a priest who followed a vocation among Rome's poor people similar to that of St Philip Neri. He based his operations at this church, and as a result was enshrined in this chapel after his canonization. However, in 1965 the church of San Giovanni Battista de Rossi in Rome was completed, and his relics were enshrined there instead. [1]

The frescoes in this chapel are by **Giovanni Battista Ricci** relating to the original dedication of the chapel. The altarpiece by **Antonio Bianchini** depicts the *Apotheosis of St John Baptist de Rossi*. As well as Christ, Our Lady and St John the Baptist, this depicts St Philip Neri welcoming his disciple. [1] [b]

### Chapel of San Filippo Neri (12)

The second chapel on the right is dedicated to St Philip Neri, who had so much influence on the church's foundation. The altarpiece of 1853 is by **Filippo Bigioli di Sanseverino**, and depicts the *Vision of Our Lady to St Philip*.

The frescoes depict events in the saint's life. To the right is the Saint washing the feet of pilgrims; to the left, relieving the poor. The small painting of the Virgin and Child, on the altar, is conjectured to be by Sassoferrata. [b]

### Chapel of the Crucifix (13)

The last chapel on the right contains an 18th century polychrome wood crucifix. All of the chapel frescoes relate to the Passion, and are of the school of **Giovanni de' Vecchi**.

### Sacristy

The sacristy was fitted out by **Giacomo Mola** in 1644. In here is a picture of the nobility washing the feet of poor pilgrims at the hospice, a custom introduced by St Philip Neri and which was continued until 1870.

### **Access**

According to the parish website, the church is open:  
Weekdays 7:00 to 12:00, 16:30 to 19:30,  
Sundays and solemnities 8:00 to 12:30 and 16:30 to 19:30.

### **Liturgy**

Mass is celebrated in the Extraordinary Form:

Weekdays 7:30 and 18:30,

Sundays 9:00, 11:00 (solemn high Mass) and 18:30.

On Sundays at 17:30 Vespers is sung, followed by Exposition and Benediction, except during July and August. In those two months, the 11:00 Sunday Mass is Low.

Please note that the parish uses the 1962 Missal promulgated by Pope St John XXIII, as is proper. If you are a priest wishing to celebrate a private Mass in the Extraordinary Form here, you must present your celebrate beforehand and be aware that earlier recensions of the Missal in the Extraordinary Form are not acceptable for celebration of the Mass here.

## Info

Address: Via del Corso 528, 00187 Roma

Coordinates: [41°53'36"N](#) [12°28'21"E](#)

Telephone: 0039 06 6868451

## Artists and Architects:

Antonio [Bianchini](#) (1803-1884), Italian painter

Antonio [Sarti](#) (1797-1880), Italian architect

Baldassare [Croce](#) (1558-1628), Italian painter of the late-Mannerist period

Bernardino [Ludovisi](#) (1694-1749), Italian sculptor

Domenico [Pozzi](#) (17<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian architect

Filippo [Bigioli](#) di Sanseverino (1798-1878), Italian painter

Francesco [de Sanctis](#) (1679-1731), Italian architect of the late Baroque

Giacomo [Mola](#) (1583-1650), Swiss-Italian architect

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

Giovanni Battista [Ferretti](#) (18<sup>th</sup> cent), Italian painter

Giovanni Battista [Ricci](#) [aka *Da Novara*] (1545-1620), Italian painter

Giovanni [de' Vecchi](#) [aka *dal Borgo*] (1536-1614), Italian painter of the Renaissance period

Giuseppe [Cesari](#) [aka *Cavaliere d'Arpino*] (1568-1640), Italian Mannerist painter

Guido [Reni](#) (1575-1642), Italian painter of high-Baroque

Jacob Cornelisz [Cobaert](#) (1535-1615), Flemish sculptor / goldsmith

Jacques [Guillaume] [Courtois](#) [aka *Il Borgognone*] (1628-1679), French-Italian painter and etcher

Martino [Longhi](#) the Elder (1534-1591), Italian architect

Orazio Censore († 1622), sculptor, bronze founder

Paolo Maggi (17<sup>th</sup> century), architect

Pompeo [Ferrucci](#) (1566-1637), Italian sculptor

## Burials:

Pierfrancesco Cardinal [GALLEFFI](#), (1770-1837)

Buried in the tomb of his family

Bishop P. Gioeni

Bishop V. Macedonio (d. 1778)

Bishop F. Valdes (d. 1676)

Achille Lupi

Pietro Lupi

## Links and References

[1] [Roman Churches Wiki](#)

[2] [from Italian encyclopedia](#)

[a] Lewine, Milton; THE ROMAN CHURCH INTERIOR, 1527-1580; 1963

[Italian Wikipedia page](#)

[Roma Segreta](#)

[TripAdvisor](#)

[Tourist Info web page](#)

[On restoration of the icon](#)

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