



JUBILEE CHURCHES

Church of Santa Maria del Suffragio





DICASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION
SECTION FOR FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS
REGARDING EVANGELIZATION IN THE WORLD



MINISTERO
DEL TURISMO
REPUBBLICA ITALIANA

JUBILEE CHURCHES

Jubilee journeys

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4 themed routes to follow

The Jubilee is a great event for all peoples during which each and every pilgrim can immerse themselves in the endless mercy of God.

It's the Year of return to the essence of fraternity, mending the relationship between ourselves and the Father.

It's the Year that calls us to conversion, an opportunity to take stock of our lives and ask the Lord to direct them towards holiness. It's the Year of solidarity, of hope, of justice, and of commitment to the service of God, living in joy and peace with our brothers and sisters.

But, above all, the Jubilee year has at its center the encounter with Christ.

For this reason, the Jubilee asks us to get moving and to overcome the confines in our lives. When we move we don't just change place physically, but we transform ourselves too. For this reason, it's important to prepare well, to plan the route and



have a clear sight of our destination. In a sense the Holy Year pilgrimage begins before the journey itself: its starting point is the decision to do set out on the path.

To fully experience the 2025 Jubilee, through walking and prayer, four routes have been prepared for pilgrims within the city of Rome, each with its own theme.

Europe in Rome

The Pilgrim Path of the Churches of the European Union, includes visits to 28 churches and basilicas, historically linked to EU member countries for cultural or artistic reasons or because they served as places of welcome for pilgrims from individual member states of the European community.

Pilgrimage of the Seven Churches

Originally the idea of Saint Philip Neri in the 16th century, the pilgrimage of the Seven Churches is one of the most ancient Roman traditions. It's a 25 km route winding through the streets of Rome.

Jubilee Churches

This is one of the churches designated as a meeting place for pilgrims. Catecheses will be held in these churches in different languages to rediscover the meaning of the Holy Year. They will also offer the sacrament of Reconciliation and host events aimed at nourishing the faith with experiences of prayer.

Women Patrons of Europe and Doctors of the Church

This is a pilgrimage that involves stopping in prayer in those Roman Churches linked to Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), Saint Brigid of Sweden, Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus, and Saint Hildegard of Bingen.

The Church of Santa Maria del Suffragio

The Church of Santa Maria del Suffragio (fig.1), which overlooks Via Giulia, owes its origins to the work of a confraternity



fig.1

founded in 1592, approved two years later and subsequently granted the title of 'Archconfraternity'. The commitment of the members led them to want to build a church that would represent their identity and their service, a church intended, in particular, to remember in prayer those who had died. A few years later, therefore, construction began, and the architect Carlo Rainaldi was chosen to carry out their

project. Rainaldi started work in 1662 and completed it within 20 years. By 1669 the façade was ready, as evidenced by the dedication inscription: ARCHICONFRATERNITAS BEATAE MARIAE SUFFRAGII A(nno) D(omini) MDCLXIX (in the cover). The facade is divided into two orders, marked by a cornice and divided by four pilasters, where a large rectangular window and three portals with triangular or arched gables are inserted.

The interior (fig.2) has a single nave sumptuously decorated by various artists over the years and completed by Tito Armellini in 1868. The scene of the *Coronation of Mary* dates back to the same year (fig. 3) and was created by Cesare Mariani on the vault. Mary, already assumed into the glory of heaven, receives a shining crown on her head from Jesus under the presence of the Holy Spirit and the ener-



fig.2

getic blessing of the Eternal Father. The context is one of solemnity, as befits a coronation ceremony, but also of spatial

... titles which are also echoed in the arches of the windows like so many scrolls around a tree.



fig.3

infinity, because Mary is also the queen of the universe. The scene, described in the writing in two ovals 'POSUIT DIADEMA REGNI IN CAPITE EIUS' (He has placed the diadem of the kingdom on her head), is framed between the coat of arms of the Archconfraternity and that of the Pontiff at the time, Pius IX (fig.4). In the vault a series of Angels hold plaques on which the most famous Marian titles appear: *Rosa mystica*, *Sedes sapientiae*, *Stella matutina*,



fig.4

Cesare Mariani is also the author of the two *Saints* on the counter-façade (fig.5) above the organ loft and of the female figures that appear along the nave: they are the *Heroines of the Old Testament*, who in their lives foreshadow the Virgin Mary and her mission as mother of the Messiah. A plaque on the right commemorates Bartolomeo Ruspoli, who worked hard to support the building of the church, and another on the left recalls Pope Clement XIII, who gave impetus to the Archconfraternity and the con-

monument to the engraver Gaspare Moroni from 1678 and to the painter Pietro Neri from the same year: they are thought to be works by Paolo Naldini. The decoration of the chapel refers to the childhood of Jesus through three paintings by Giovanni Battista Natali: the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the *Adoration of the Magi* and the *Dream of Saint Joseph*.

There is something beautiful in this 'dialogue' between the death of human beings and the life of the Lord, who, manifested to the world in his incarnation, is

an inexhaustible source of resurrection and hope.

The second chapel is dedicated to the Virgin Mary with the title of *Consolatrix Afflictorum* (Conforter of the Afflicted). The Mother of Jesus is a perfect model of fortitude in the hour of suffering and is the sure consoler of all those who, for whatever reason, are visited by suffering. In her maternal heart our tears are welcomed and

transformed into a source of blessing and comfort. The image of Mary comes from Mexico and figures resplendently in Pietro Naldini's decorative creation, rich in white and golden stucco. Giacinto Calandrucci is the painter of *Jacob's Dream* and Girolamo Patch of the *Sacrifice of Isaac*. These two episodes narrated in the Old Testament constitute the two peak moments of every religious experience:



fig.5

struction of the sacred building.

The interior is enriched by various chapels, in which, as was common in many other churches, there is no shortage of tombs or funerary memorials. In this church, which is explicitly dedicated to intercession for the deceased, such monuments take on a particular relevance and meaning.

The first chapel on the right houses the

in the *Dream* God manifests himself as the One who is present in our life and accompanies us so that we can reach the fullness of salvation; in the *Sacrifice* the Lord presents himself as the savior even in the absurdity of pain, defeat and desolation. The faith of Abraham, the faith of Jacob, the faith of Mary constitutes the fruitful path of every believer.

The following chapel, which still features the decorative work of Naldini, who also created the busts of Gaspare and Elena Marcaccioni, displays a 16th-century *Madonna and Child and Saint John* above the altar. Nicolò Berrettoni frescoed the vault, while Giuseppe Chiari painted the *Nativity of Mary* and the *Adoration of the Magi*. Once again, the message is one of the triumph of life over the reality of death. The sanctuary (fig.6) is enlivened by frescoes by Giovanni Battista Beinaschi: on the arch of the vault is the *Eternal Father in glory* and in the lunette the *Assumption of Mary into heaven*. These two paintings interact closely with the ceiling painting and complete its message. The assumption of Mary constitutes the final stage of her earthly life and the summit of that experience of participation in the mystery of Christ and sharing of her mission which she achieved throughout her existence. In 1950, Pope Pius XII officially became

the interpreter of this faith of the Church and solemnly proclaimed the dogma of the glorification of Mary: "The immaculate Mother of God, ever virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed into celestial glory in soul and body." It is Mary's Easter, her victory over death, the definitive sign of her sharing the path of Christ. The painter presents the Virgin in a cloud of angels who support her body in the dizzying ascent towards God, who, from above, awaits his beloved daughter, Mother of the Son and



fig.6

spouse of the Spirit. In the hands of the Eternal God lies the destiny of the whole universe and this destiny moves towards definitive salvation, towards that fullness of the kingdom of which Mary is queen. All this is expressed by the painter Beinaschi, who gives the two moments an extraordinary vigor. But Mary's glory does not mean distancing herself from the world. This is de-

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monstrated by the painting above the high altar by Giuseppe Ghezzi, the *Virgin Mary and the Souls of Purgatory* (fig.7). The painting is extremely dynamic – dramatic in its diagonal setting, its warm colors, and the tension expressed by the figures of the deceased. Mary, on whose head a little angel places a crown of twelve stars, calms this agitation of movement and is presented as the summit of the composition with her sweet presen-



fig.7

ce. The religious message is very clear: thanks to her singular closeness to her Son, Mary participates in his victory over sin and death. The divine motherhood, the Immaculate Conception, the perennial virginity of Our Lady, her absolute

personal sanctity, and her total sharing in the mystery of the cross mean that she can also share the triumph of Easter glory. In this glorification Mary is not distant or extraneous to our problems and cares. No ... she continues to play the role of mediator and intercessor, because her assumption is a continuous presence in the world. "Turn your merciful eyes towards us"– with these words we invoke her and she bends towards the deceased who pray, are tormented, suffer but wait in hope for the day in which death will be definitively defeated even in our flesh and life will triumph forever.

The chapel that follows, that of the *Crucifixion*, presents to our gaze the event that is at the origin of this hope: Christ, victor of death, Lord of life. The wooden work, by an anonymous author, dates back to the 17th century and is surrounded by various reliquaries, a sign of the participation of the Saints in the school of the Divine Master. In addition to the 18th-century frescoes depicting the *Passion of Jesus* on the vault, we can note the funerary memorials of the Mazzetti di Pietralata, a family of Piedmontese origin but well integrated into the social and ecclesial life of Rome. In particular Don Angelo Mazzetti was administrator of the Archconfraternity during the Napoleonic period and also a friend of St Vincent Pallotti, who celebrated his funeral Mass. Pallotti frequented this church a lot and was well known for hearing confessions in the confessional box that we see on the left.

The sequence of chapels continues with one dedicated to St Joseph Calasanz, whose Christian witness is narrated in the paintings of Sebastiano Ceccarini, an 18th-century painter.

The chapel of *Saints Giacinto and Catherine of Siena* are rich in decoration, starting from the altar painting by Daniele Seiter. The fresco on the vault is from the brush of Giovanni Battista Cimini, who was also the artist behind the *Madonna with Child and Saints* and the *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* on the walls.

A modern witness of the Lord is the Blessed Luigi Novarese, whose mortal remains lie in this church (**fig.8**). Monsignor Novarese was the founder of various spiritual movements centered around the mystery of the cross which manifests itself in the experience of the people of God. A real 'apostle of the sick', Mgr Novarese was beatified by Pope Francis on 11

May 2013. In the same chapel is the tomb of Mgr Alfonso Carinci, who was a great



fig.8

friend of the Blessed.

Our earthly journey, of which the Jubilee is both a sign and an experience, leads us towards the definitive homeland, where one day we will be able to meet again our dearly departed loved ones whom we remember in prayer today.

May the loving presence of Mary and the example of ancient and modern Saints encourage us on the path of hope.