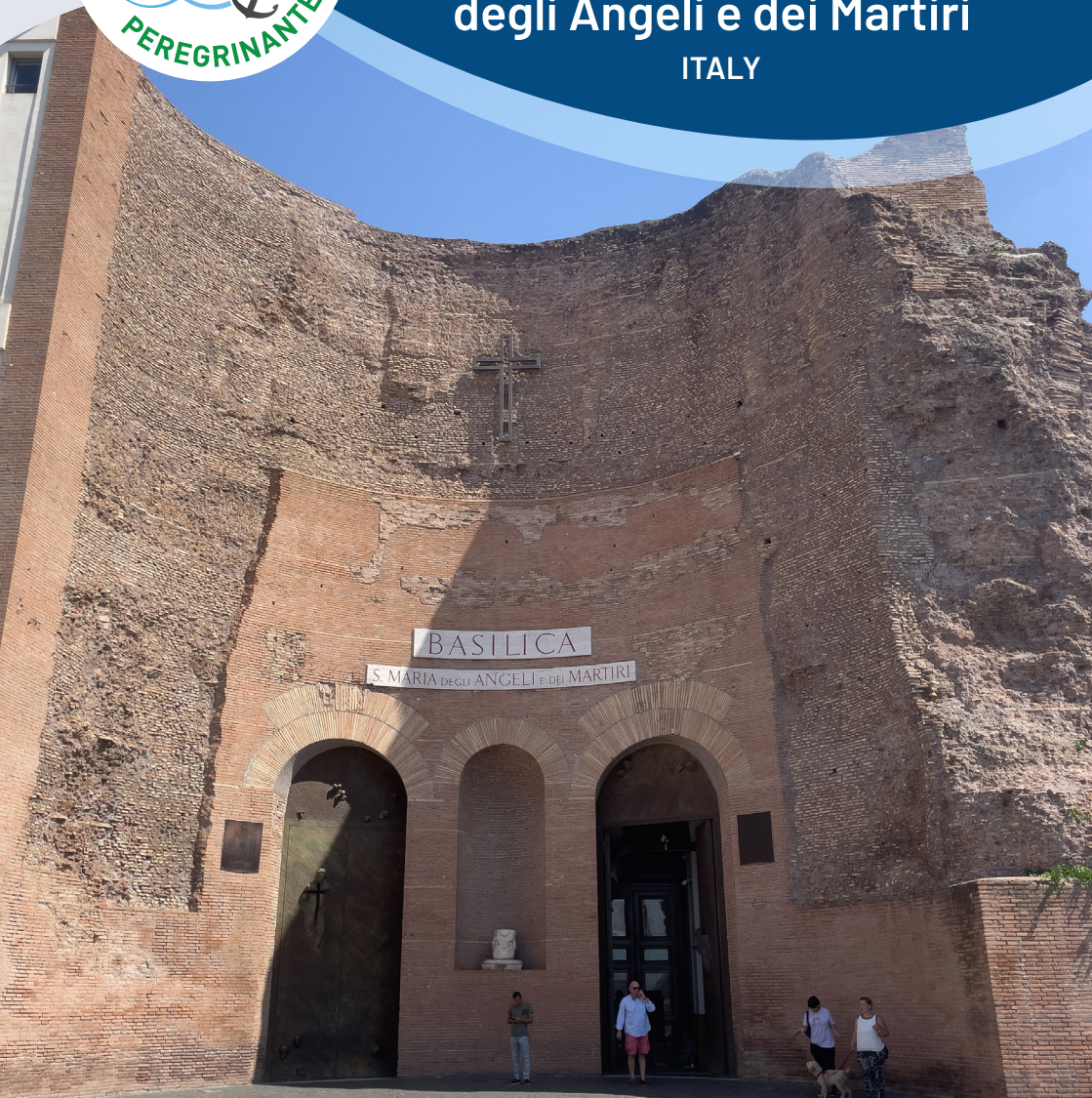




EUROPE IN ROME

Basilica of Santa Maria
degli Angeli e dei Martiri

ITALY





DICASTERIUM PRO EVANGELIZATIONE
*SECTIO DE QVAESTIONIBUS FUNDAMENTALIBUS
EVANGELIZATIONIS IN MUNDO*



MINISTERO
DEL TURISMO
REPUBBLICA ITALIANA

EUROPE IN ROME

Jubilee journeys

Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri

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Section for Fundamental Questions
regarding Evangelization in the World

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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 Basilica of our Lady of the Angels and Martyrs

Reasons for the pilgrimage

The link between Italy and the Basilica of **Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri** came about immediately after the Unification of Italy. The first reason was a very practical one – and was related to urban planning. The church lies at the end of what was at the time, the ‘new’ Via Nazionale (the street name is significant) which was officially opened in 1878 to connect the city center to the railway station. When the Victor Emmanuel Monument – the *Vittoriano* – was built in Piazza Venezia, it was visible from the square in front of the basilica.

The early urbanization of the new Italian State took place in the area around Via Nazionale with the construction, for example, of the Palace of National Exhibitions of Fine Arts (1883), the Eliseo Theater (1900), Palazzo Koch, headquarters of the Bank of Italy (1892), and also the first Anglican church in the city, the Church of St Paul Inside the Walls (1880). Via Nazionale runs almost parallel to the ancient *via Pia*, the first section of which is now known as *via del Quirinale* and later becomes *via XX Settembre*. This street name (‘20th September Street’) refers to the day of the fall of Rome to the forces of Italian unification. The *via Pia* was originally built by Pius IV together with

Porta Pia which also bears his name, it was then chosen by the Kingdom of Italy for the construction of large buildings for the various ministries, when the king occupied the Quirinal Palace which had until then been the residence of the Popes.

In short, *Santa Maria degli Angeli* was ideally positioned for the celebrations required in the new nation.

The main liturgical celebrations of the royal family were held there. For example, in 1896 the wedding of the future King Vittorio Emanuele III and the future Queen Elena of Montenegro took place in the basilica, and later, Marshal Diaz, Italy’s chief of staff during the First World War, was buried there. Thus it is traditional for liturgical celebrations of the Italian Republic to be held there – a recent example was the funeral of the Italian soldiers killed in the Battle of Nāşiriya during the Gulf War.

This basilica, in which the Italian state and the Catholic Church have co-existed in Rome since the unification of Italy, represents also the establishment of a new relationship which took decades to mature.

The two parties were not yet ready for a settled relationship when, close by, at *Porta Pia*, the history of the city changed for good, (even though a real relationship already existed before this point

which went beyond official appearances). A few details are illuminating ... for example, the troops of the new Italian Kingdom were ordered not to go beyond *Castel Sant'Angelo* after the Pope made an explicit request to the king, between 20 and 21 September 1870, to keep the Colonnades of St Peter's Square under Papal control to prevent riots. Also worth noting is that in the hours following the storming of Rome, Pius IX offered the Hospital of *Santo Spirito in Sassia* for the treatment of Italian soldiers wounded in the attack against his forces.

The two sides were not ready for a settled peace because, on the one hand, the Pope perhaps did not immediately understand that it was Providence that had freed him from the burden of leading a state. While it may have been necessary to take on political power in the early Middle Ages to prevent Roman civilization being destroyed, it was now necessary - and indeed beneficial - to renounce that power.

Similarly, the Italian authorities did not immediately understand that it was not good for the Pope to become just another citizen of the new state, without any autonomy, since his voice had to be raised for all peoples and should not be identified with that of any one nation. This was very evident when Pope Benedict XV, during the First World War, speaking as the father of all belligerents, made his famous calls for peace.

Only over time did the Popes realize that

the old Papal State, which spread over an extensive area of Italy, was an obstacle to the mission of the Papacy and that, as Pope Pius XI said on the day the Concordat was agreed, a very small territory was more historically useful: "We seem to see things as they were in Saint Francis of blessed memory: just enough [is needed] to keep body and soul together." Indeed it was that strip of territory around the Vatican which made the Pope's independence possible during the Nazi occupation of Rome during World War II.

It was only over time that the Italian state also understood that the presence of the Pope in Rome conferred prestige on the Italian nation and that it was an important element in international politics to ensure the independence of the Vatican. The Church learned to show full respect for secular political society and the State learned that a sane secularism is not anti-religious. The Church ensured respect for the full independence of democratic politics, and the State recognized the Church as a community which contributes, with its own views, to free debate in the nation.

Visiting the basilica

Entering *Santa Maria degli Angeli* means going inside an architectural structure that originated almost two millennia ago and is still standing.

In fact, the façade of the church and the transept retain exactly the same layout

It was Michelangelo who, in his design for the church, insisted on leaving the ancient Roman bath structures visible.

The entrance today takes the visitor into one of the apses of the ancient *caldarium*, and the large transept hall is the room of the ancient *tepidarium* of the baths - although the precise layout of the different

thermal areas is still debated. The façade was embellished by Vanvitelli in 1749, but it was then decided to bring the original walls back into view, so that it was immediately evident to all that this church was a repurposing of an ancient Roman building.

The baths had been abandoned for centuries and the area was, even though it lay within the walls of Rome, considered to be in the countryside, when a series of events led to its being brought back into use. First of all, a new urbanization of the area began with the construction of *via Pia* by Pius IV. Then, in 1561 Pius IV himself entrusted the new construction to Michelangelo after a Sicilian priest, Antonio Lo Duca, had a vision that encouraged him to dedicate the ancient site to



fig.1

they had when Diocletian had these walls built as parts of the largest thermal complex Rome ever had, and which, even today bears his name. (fig.1)

the seven Archangels, and the Carthusian Order agreed to build and operate a Charterhouse on this spot.

The reuse of the Baths of Diocletian con-

firms, in its own way, what is known about the transition from the Roman Empire to the Middle Ages, when, due to the barbarian invasions, nine tenths of the city was left uninhabited. Everything was re-used for the fortification of the walls, for aqueducts, for houses, for towers, for churches. Only the temples were spared and they were transformed into churches or other structures further away from the city center, such as the Baths of Diocletian.

This church was thus designed as a place of worship for an entire Carthusian community which in the meantime was building its own monastery. To appreciate the beauty of the place as it was conceived by the monks, today you need to visit the National Museum of the Roman Baths of Diocletian - the epigraphic section of the Museum - where you can see the ancient cloister which the cells overlooked. The Carthusians lived then, and still live today, in solitude, each monk cultivating his own vegetable garden, and their original cells are still clearly visible from outside, on *via Cernaia*.

Like many of the churches of Rome, the Charterhouse (or *Certosa*) experienced a double suppression, first during the French occupation, the later with the capture of Rome during Italian unification. In 1812 the *Certosa* was requisitioned by French troops in Rome and used as a barracks; indeed the upper level of the cloister was used as a store for animal fodder! The Carthusians returned after the Congress of Vienna and in 1835 restored the

choir to the apse of the Church.

The second suppression came after the unification of Italy. In 1870 the city council of Rome decided on a military use of the site and the cloister of the monastery was taken over as a military warehouse.

In 1884 the *Certosa* was definitively closed down, and the *Margherita of Savoy Hospice for the Blind Poor* was set up on the site, while some areas of the former monastic foundation were rented out as shops, warehouses and taverns.

In the 20th century, the old charterhouse was transformed into a museum, and this is still its use, while the monastic church became a parish.

Entering the basilica today, you first pass through the vestibule, in an area immediately adjacent to the ancient *caldarium*, renovated by Jacopo Del Duca, perhaps based on a design by Michelangelo. Here are buried Carlo Maratta and Salvator Rosa. The transept, the roof of which was designed by Michelangelo to maintain its Roman features, was renovated when Pope Benedict XIII, in 1727, donated to the basilica several large canvases previously painted for St. Peter's Basilica but which had been subsequently replaced by mosaic copies.

In the right transept, starting from the right wall you can see:

- The Crucifixion of Saint Peter, by Nicolò Ricciolini (1687-1772).
- The Fall of Simon Magus, by Pierre Charles Trémolières (1703-39)
- The Miracle of Saint Peter (perhaps the -

Resurrection of Tabitha), by Francesco Mancini (1679-1758)

- The Sermon of Saint Jerome, by Girolamo Muziano (1528-92)

On the left you can see:

- The Mass of Saint Basil, by Pierre Sibleyras (1699-1749)
- The Fall of Simon Magus, by Pompeo Batoni (1708-87)



fig.2

- The Immaculate Conception, by Pietro Bianchi (1679-1740)
- The Resurrection of Tabitha, by Placido Costanzi (1702-59)

The repetition of the subjects, and the non-organic nature of their arrangement, is due to the fact that they were originally designed for the various side chapels of the Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles. Above the counter-façade of the transept is the *Expulsion of Adam and Eve* by Trevisani.

At the end of the transept on the right is the Albergati Chapel, with the altarpiece painted by Ercole Graziani entitled *A miracle by Blessed Niccolò Albergati*, (a Carthusian and later bishop of Bologna and cardinal), and, alongside, two canvases by Francesco Trevisani, the *Baptism of Water* and *Baptism of Desire*. (fig.2)

At the end of the transept, on the left, is the Chapel of Saint Bruno, the founder of the Carthusian Order in the 11th century, dramatically decorated by Carlo Maratta, with an altarpiece by Giovanni Odazzi. It shows the apparition of the Virgin Mary as she hands Saint Bruno the Rule of the Carthusians, while Saint Peter is seen - representing the Church - observing the scene.

Originally the two chapels corresponded to two access doors, as is clearly visible from outside.

At the back of the sanctuary area there is the icon of Our Lady which Antonio Lo Duca had created in Venice in 1543 and which is painted in the style of Lorenzo Lotto. The Madonna is breastfeeding the Baby Jesus, while the archangels around her hold scrolls with their various tasks.

Michael *victoriosus*, Raphael *medicus*, Jophiel, *remunerator*, Zadkiel, *orator*, Gabriel, *nuncius*, Barachiel, *adjutor*, and Ariel, *fortis socius*. (fig.3)

To the memory of the angels was added that of the Christian martyrs from the time of Diocletian. He was the Emperor who began the last great persecution of Christians before Constantine. In particular, in *Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri*, seven are remembered who, according to tradition, were employed in the construction of the Baths and then martyred: Ciriaco, Largo, Marcellinus, Saturninus, Sisinnio, Smaragdo, and Trasone.

On the walls of the sanctuary area there are four works which were also brought here from St Peter's basilica:

- The Presentation of Mary in the temple, by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli.
- The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, by Domenichino
- The Baptism of Jesus, by Carlo Maratta



fig.3

- The Death of Ananias and Sapphira, by Pomarancio

A double sundial, built by Francesco Bianchini in 1702, which served to regulate the clocks of Rome until 1846, is located on the floor of the transept and is still studied throughout the world.