San Pietro in Montorio

San Pietro in Montorio is a church in Rome, Italy, which includes in its courtyard The Tempietto (a small commemorative martyrium) built by Donato Bramante.

History

The church of San Pietro in Montorio was built on the site of an earlier 9th-century church dedicated to St. Peter on Rome's Janiculum hill. Commissioned by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, it marks a traditional location of St. Peter's crucifixion.

The church's current Cardinal-Protector is James Francis Stafford, since 1 March 2008.

Interior

The church is decorated with artworks by prominent 16th- and 17th-century masters.

The first chapel on the right contains Sebastiano del Piombo's Flagellation and Transfiguration (1516–1524). Michelangelo, who had befriended Sebastiano in Rome, supplied figure drawings that were incorporated into the Flagellation.

The second chapel has a fresco by Niccolò Circignani (1654), some Renaissance frescoes from the school of Pinturicchio, and an allegorical sibyl and virtue attributed to Baldassarre Peruzzi.

The fourth chapel has a ceiling fresco by Giorgio Vasari. Although there is no grave marker, tradition has it that Beatrice Cenci—executed in 1599 for the murder of her abusive father and made famous by Percy Bysshe Shelley, among others—is buried either in this chapel or below the high altar.

The ceiling of the fifth chapel contains another fresco, the Conversion of St. Paul, by Vasari. The altarpiece is attributed to Giulio Mazzoni, while the funerary monument of Innocenzo Ciocchi Del Monte, Cardinal Giovanni Maria Del Monte and Roberto Nobili are by Bartolomeo Ammannati.
Until 1797, Raphael's final masterpiece, the Transfiguration graced the high altar; it is now in the Vatican pinacoteca. The altar currently displays a copy by Cammuccini of Guido Reni's Crucifixion of St. Peter (also now in Vatican museum).

The last chapel on the left contains a Baptism of Christ, attributed to Daniele da Volterra, and stucco-work and ceiling frescoes by Giulio Mazzoni.

A pupil of Antoniazzo Romano frescoed the third chapel with the Saint Anne, Virgin, and Child.

Dirck van Baburen, a central figure of the Dutch Caravaggisti, painted the Entombment for the Pietà Chapel, which is indebted to Caravaggio's example. Baburen worked with another Dutch artist, David de Heen in this chapel. The two other paintings, The Mocking of Christ and The Agony in the Garden are variously attributed to either or both of the artists.

The second chapel on the left, the Raimondi Chapel (1640), was designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. It includes Francesco Baratta's "Saint Francis in Ecstasy" and sculptures by Andrea Bolgi and Niccolò Sale.
Irish chieftains' tombs

At the high altar are two tombs: that of Hugh, Baron of Dungannon, eldest son of Hugh O'Neill, The O'Neill, 2nd Earl of Tyrone, and the tomb shared by Rory O'Donnell, 1st Earl of Tyrconnell, and his brother Cathbharr, both of them younger brothers of Red Hugh O'Donnell.

These fled Ireland in 1607. Rory O'Donnell died in 1608, his brother Cathbharr ("Calfurnius" in the inscription) and Hugh, the son of the Great Earl, died in 1609. The cause of death in all cases was fever, probably malaria. Their tombs are covered with marble inscribed slabs with coloured borders, crests and shields. They are about 12 feet from the altar on the left as you face it and are normally covered by a carpet.

Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, himself died in 1616 and was buried in the church with much less solemnity. The original simple tombstone was lost in about 1849, but the text of the short inscription was copied: "D.O.M. Hugonis principis ONelli ossa" (Dedicated to God the Best and Greatest. The bones of Prince Hugh O'Neill). In 1989, Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich laid a new marble plaque with the same inscription in approximately the original place.

The Tempietto

The so-called Tempietto (Italian: "small temple") is a small commemorative martyrium built by Donato Bramante, possibly as early as 1502, in the courtyard of San Pietro in Montorio. It is considered a masterpiece of High Renaissance architecture. Originally patronized by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain.

After spending his first years in Milan, Bramante moved to Rome, where he was recognized by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, the soon-to-be Pope Julius II. One of Bramante's earliest commissions, the "Tempietto" is one of the most harmonious buildings of the Renaissance. It is meant to mark the traditional spot of St. Peter's martyrdom.

With all the transformations of Renaissance and Baroque Rome that were to follow, it is hard to sense now what an apparition this building was in beginning of the 16th century. It is almost a piece of sculpture, for it has little architectonic use. The building absorbed much of Brunelleschi's style. Perfectly proportioned, it is composed of slender Tuscan columns, a Doric entablature modeled after the ancient Theater of Marcellus, and a dome. According to an engraving in Sebastiano Serlio's Book III, Bramante planned to set it in within a colonnaded courtyard, but this plan was never executed.
References


External links

• Satellite Photo (http://maps.google.com/maps?q=10+via+del+corso,+rome&ll=41.888796,12.466124&spn=0.003642,0.007339&t=k&hl=en) The Tempietto is the circular dome in the center, enclosed tightly by the cloister of San Pietro in Montorio. Just west is the white hemicircle of the Acqua Paola.
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