



# JUBILEE CHURCHES

Church of San Salvatore  
in Lauro





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



MINISTERO  
DEL TURISMO  
REPUBBLICA ITALIANA

# JUBILEE CHURCHES

## Jubilee journeys

### Church of San Salvatore in Lauro

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00120 Vatican City

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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 San Salvatore in Lauro

It may be a strange coincidence or perhaps it's a very definite choice ... but on this site there once stood a laurel forest, (*laurus* in Latin and *lauro* in popular language). And the church built next to this forest, dedicated to the Holy Savior and which has been mentioned in documents since 1192, has over time become the church of the *Marchigiani* (people from the Italian region of Le Marche), whose patron is none other than the Madonna of Loreto (*laureto*, from *laurus*).

This is the church, as it appears today after the many transformations that have taken place over the centuries. The architects Domenico Paganelli and Ottaviano Mascherino left their baroque imprint on it, but not for ever, because further interventions by Ludovico Rusconi Sassi and Antonio Asprucci in the first half of the 18th century gave it a neoclassical appearance. One only needs to look at the façade, completed by Camillo Guglielmetti in 1862 to see this change of style. Since 1668 the *Pio Sodalizio dei Piceni* has taken care of - and continues to take care of - its maintenance and manages its use by worshippers and tourists, and it was they who decided on the definitive layout to the building and the decorative appearance of the entire complex, which also includes a convent, close to which is the pretty *Fountain of the Lion* from 1579. In 1862 the church was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, under the title of Our Lady of

Loreto, as we read in the inscription on the façade: MARIAE LAURETANAE PICENI PATRONAE (To Mary of Loreto, Patroness of Piceno).



fig.1

ness of Piceno (**fig.1**). And the 'House of the Virgin', which, according to tradition was carried to Loreto by angels, appears in the bas-relief by Rinaldo Rinaldi on the entrance door of the church. The tradition is that Mary's humble home in Nazareth was removed by the angels to the Italian town of Loreto in the hills of the Marche region and to this day the shrine there is one of the most fascinating Marian sanctuaries in the world. In the bas-relief we note that Mary and the Child Jesus, sitting on the roof of the house, take part in this 'holy flight', a sign of the presence in Loreto, not only of a home, but above all, of those who lived in it. Particularly interesting is the right-hand side of the church, which overlooks Via dei Coronari, where we notice how very marked buttresses are inserted into the



wall. The 18th-century dome by Ludovico Rusconi Sassi is also impressive. The interior (**fig.2**) which awaits us is both solemn and welcoming. The single nave is punctuated by imposing monolithic columns which support a very pronounced entablature and then the barrel vault. Two funerary monuments from the second half of the 19th century appear on the counter-façade: on the right, that of Cardinal Gaspare Bernardo Pianetti by Luigi Poletti and collaborators; on the left is the monument to Cardinal Antonio Matteucci (**fig.3**), the work of Luigi Fontana. The entrance is surmounted by two pipe organs and a painting depicting *Saints Emidio, Nicholas of Tolentino and James della Marca*: three saints greatly venerated by the population of the Marche. Next, we visit the chapels along the walls



fig.3



fig.2

The first on the right is the *Pietà* chapel (fig.4), built by Carlo Francesco Bizzaccheri. We can admire here three splendid paintings by Giuseppe Ghezzi: the *Deposition of Christ* on the altar and, on the sides, *St Nicholas of Tolentino* and *Saint Anthony of Padua*. In the altarpie-



fig.4

ce, the lifeless body of Jesus lies in the arms of Mary who seems unable to support so much weight and is helped by the angels. The sliding down of the lifeless body of the Son of God out of his mother's grasp reminds us of the extraordinary promise: «If the grain of wheat that falls to the ground does not die, it remains a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit» (cf John 12:24). Recently a sculpture has been placed here depicting *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina* holding the cross of Jesus on the way to Calvary. The Ca-

puchin saint, who also physically shared the pains of Christ's passion, is depicted here as a kind of Cyrenean of our times, humble and a great disciple of the crucified Lord. The work, from 1993, is by the Spanish sculptor Seraphin.

There follows the chapel of St Charles, with a painting from 1620 by Alessandro Turchi who was known as l'Orbetto, and whose canvas is lively in color and in the dynamics of the painted figures. On the walls are the funerary monuments of Giovanni Castellani delle Carcare and the Marchesa Girolama Pallavicini Montoro, based on designs by Giovanni Domenico Pioselli. The sequence continues with the altar of the *Crucifix of Sirolo*, a wooden image carved by Francesco Bellucci in 1713. The original is kept in Numana, near Ancona, where

it arrived following the shipwreck of the ship that brought it to Italy. According to tradition, it was sculpted by Nicodemus, who with Joseph of Arimathea provided for the burial of Jesus. For a period it was kept in the castle of Sirolo, not far from Numana. A statue of the *Our Lady of Sorrows* keeps vigil next to her crucified Son. The next chapel of the Nativity houses an absolute masterpiece: the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (fig.5) by Pietro Berrettini from Cortona, dating back to around 1630. The painter, one of the fathers of

the Baroque, depicts the scene of the Nativity at the foot of a collapsed temple, a clear allusion to the pagan world in decline but whose grandeur could still be sensed. It is indeed on one of these ruins that Mary offers the newborn baby, bathed in light, to the affectionate adoration of the shepherds of Bethlehem. While one of them speaks to Joseph, another younger one brings a lamb to the feet of the Child – surely a pre-announcement of the sacrifice of Jesus who would be called the “Lamb of God”. In the background, on the left, two women talk to each other about how they can help the young mother; and help indeed comes, but from above, from the two splendid little angels who “rain” on the group gathered in a circle around the Savior of the world. This chapel also houses a relic of Saint Jude the Apostle. Next comes the altar of *Saint Emidio* (fig.6), on the right side of the transept. The painting by Pier Leone Ghezzi depicts the patron bishop of Ascoli Piceno together with other Saints from the Marche region. He extends his hand in an act of protection from the earthquake, the terrible results of which can be glimpsed under his feet. On the walls there are monuments to Cardinals Nicola Grimaldi from 1845, Gaspare Fatai Cabonico from 1851 and Raniero Simonetti from 1749. The marble bust of Pope Pius IX reminds us of the Pope’s origins in the Marche region – he was, in fact, born in Senigallia. In 1862 he inaugurated this church. His pontificate lasted 32 years, the longest in history.



fig.5

In the dome we recognize the Old Testament characters *David, Moses, Ezekiel and Isaiah* frescoed in 1862 by Luigi Fon-



fig.6



tana. The main altar is the work of Antonio Asprucci in 1792: framed by columns, it houses a 17th-century image of the *Madonna of Loreto* (fig.7) surrounded by a



fig.7

burst of clouds and angels, one of which places the crown of glory on her head. The left chapel of the transept is dedicated to the *Translation of the Holy House of Loreto*, which in the canvas by Giovanni Peruzzini dating back to 1673, shows Saint Nicholas of Tolentino and Christina of Sweden, who gave her golden scepter to the Virgin of Loreto, contemplating the scene. Next to it are the monuments of Pietro Arpi from 1870 and Giuseppe Valentini from 1757. On the door of the sacristy can be seen the monument to Cardinal Prospero Marefoschi by Carlo Monaldi based on a design by Girolamo Theodoli. Funerary plaques are also to be found in the floor of the chancel.

The chapel of *Saint Lutgarda* features a painting by Antonio Marescotti from 1679 (fig.8) and the marble furnishings created by Pietro Antonio Ripoli dating back to the same period. The saint, of Flemish origin,

had visions of the Heart of Jesus. During one of these, the event narrated in the painting occurred - the exchange of hearts between Lutgarda and her divine spouse, a sign of total belonging and sharing.

The chapel of *St Joseph*, shows the saint depicted in the altarpiece by Pier Leone Ghezzi from 1731 with Saints Joachim and Anne. It is a painting with a strong expressive impact through powerful use of color. Here are also to be found the relics of Padre Pio - Saint Pius of Pietrelcina.

The chapel of *Saint Peter in Chains* (fig. 9), dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles, shows him in the painting by Imperiale Gramatica from 1624 at the moment an angel frees him from prison. The episode is narrated in the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 12. "The Lord sent his angel ..." With these words Peter recounts the



fig.8



extraordinary event in which he had the role of supporting actor. The apostle had been imprisoned by King Herod, totally unjustly – “seeing that this was pleasing to the Jews” (Acts 12, 3). In the painting we see Peter clasped in chains languishing in a dark prison. But suddenly, an unbearable light explodes in his cell: an angel bursts into that darkness and breaks Peter’s chains, freeing him to return to his mission. “He had not yet realized that what was happening through the angel was real, he believed he was having a vision”, continues the Acts of the Apostles (12, 9). And Gramatica immortalizes him like this: in a confused state, while the angel urges him to leave the prison. On the side walls, the paintings by Domenico Corvi from 1731 continue to narrate the life of the apostle, from his liberation to his ministry of baptizing the centurion. The visit to the church is completed with a stop at the cloister and the refectory of the convent. In addition to admiring the mannerist paintings of Francesco Salviati from 1550, two 15th-century tombs offer an interesting testimony to Renaissance sculpture in Rome. These are the tombs of *Pope Eugene IV* by Isaia da Pisa and *Maddalena Orsini* by Giovanni Dalmata. While in Florence the new renaissance style was already established and developed, in Rome many artists still insisted on re-proposing late medieval forms. This visit helps us to realize how the witness of Christian life found in this place of worship has survived throughout the

centuries and continues right up to the present day, expressing itself in different ways and different languages, but always expressive of a journey of faith, spirituality and solidarity.



fig.9

May Our Lady, the Virgin of Loreto, continue to accompany this journey, which finds new impetus in the Jubilee experience, and transform it into a “flight” of hope.