



Comune
di Roma
tourism

***A tour around the
sights of Rome to
discover the
Masterpieces of
Michelangelo
Buonarroti.***

1. SAN PIETRO
2. THE SISTINA CHAPEL
3. THE PAULINE CHAPEL
4. CASTEL SANT'ANGELO
5. FARNESE PALACE
6. SANTA MARIA SOPRA
MINERVA
7. PIAZZA DEL CAMPIDOGLIO
[The Capitol Square]
8. SAN PIETRO IN VINCOLI
9. SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE
10. SANTA MARIA DEGLI
ANGELI
11. PORTA PIA



Michelangelo
in Rome

Roma for you
Collection of information by the Roma City Council

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A series of specialistic guides aim to prolong one's stay in Rome; a suggestion for people who have "a few extra" days and desire to deepen the knowledge of our city.

Carefully studied itineraries to accompany the visitor in the discovery of the great patrimony of the Renaissance in Rome through the testimonies of great artists such as Caravaggio, Raffaello, Michelangelo.

Walks through baroque art, to admire the splendid architectures by Bernini and Borromini.

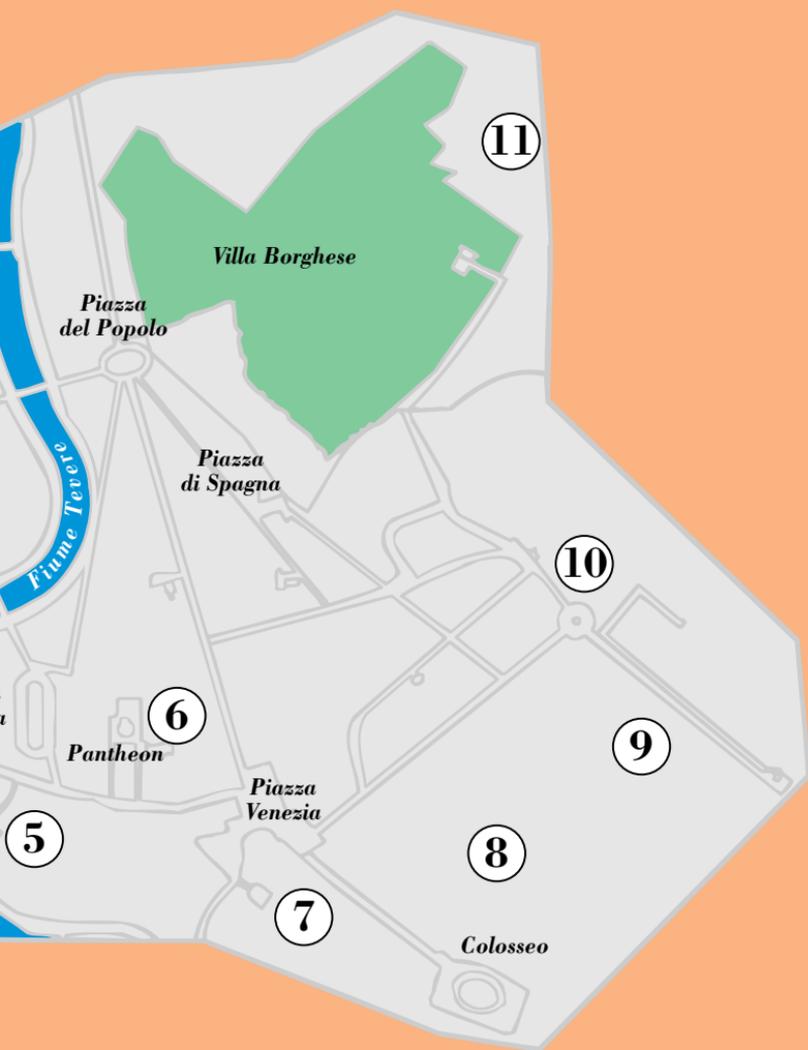
Advice for everyone, alike tourists and Romans, in order to quietly discover and enjoy the testimonies of ages that played a major part in constructing the extraordinary present image of our city.

*Tourism Office
Municipality of Rome*

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San Pietro

The Apostle Paul was martyred on the Vatican hill near the Circus of Nero. A memorial to the first Pope was soon built. Constantine built a basilica with 5 aisles over the venerated tomb in the 4th century. In 1503, after centuries of attempts at restoration, Pope Julius II decided to destroy and rebuild the new St. Peter's, following the plans of Donato Bramante. The Architect put up four pillars which were then used to support Michelangelo's great dome. The present basilica houses works and monuments of art and faith.



The dome



The Interior



Saint Peter dome

Michelangelo planned the **dome** taking inspiration from those of the Pantheon and of St. Maria del Fiore in Florence. While the interior vaulting was later modified with mosaics on the design by Cavalier d'Arpino, Della Porta completed the exterior profile, for the most part faithful to the original Michelangelo design, between 1588 and 1593 with the lantern.

The **Pietà**, considered "a wonderful thing" (Vasari), is the youthful work by the artist that he laid claim to with pride, the inscription along the belt that crosses the bust of the Virgin contains his name and Florentine origins. The sculptural group made from a single block of marble, commissioned on the 27th August, 1498 by Cardinal Jean Bilhères de Lagrulas and completed by the end of the century, was probably for the burial of the prelate in the chapel of St. Petronilla, known as the "Chapel of the King of France" through the concession by Innocent VIII.

After the demolition of the chapel, the sculpture was housed in the new choir and, from 1749, exhibited in the chapel of the Crucifix, today dedi-



The Pietà

cated to the **Pietà**. The style, typically Nordic, was transformed into a symbolic vision in which the youth of the Virgin alludes to the eternal action of the Church contemplating her dead son, the promise of redemption. After the mad attempt in 1972, this precious work is held behind a solid crystal screen.

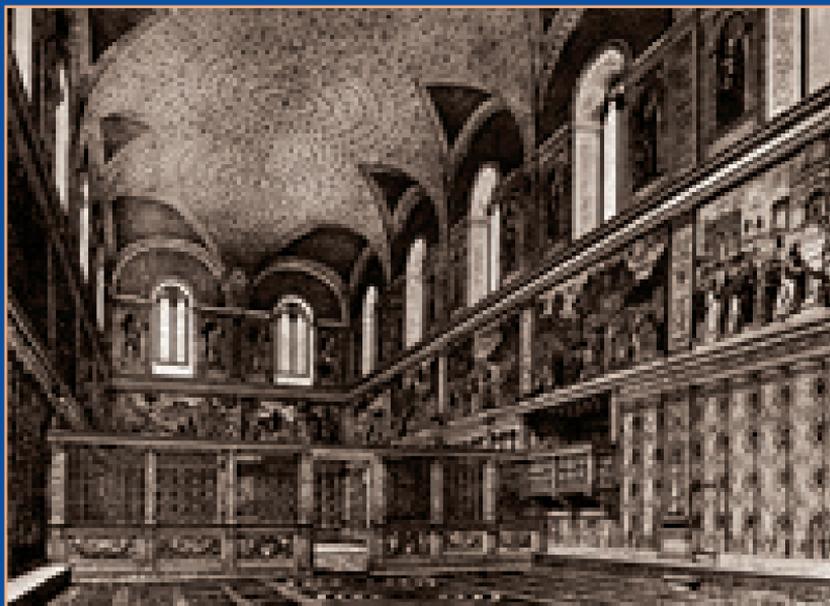
Basilica of St. Peter • Piazza San Pietro • 00193 Vatican City

Phone **06 69883462** (St. Peter's Building); **06 69885435** (Parochial Office); **06 69883712** (Sacristy)

Times of opening: *Basilica:* winter from 7 am to 6 pm; summer to 7 am from 7 pm; *Vatican Grottoes:* winter from 7 am to 5 pm; summer from 7 am to 6 pm; *Dome:* winter from 8 am to 5 pm; summer from 8 am to 6 pm; *Historic Museum of St. Peter's Treasure:* winter from 9 am to 5.30 pm; summer from 9 am to 6.30 pm

The Sistina Chapel

The chapel occupies the upper floor of a fortified centre in the Apostolic Palaces. Right from the beginning (1474), the room dedicated to the Assumption – planned on the size of the Temple of Solomon – was the pontifical chapel and seat of the Conclaves. The restoration works promoted by Sixtus IV in 1477 gave it a precious mosaic floor and marble transennas, which were moved later to enlarge the area reserved for the clergy. The two cycles of the Old and New Testaments, frescoed between 1481 and '83 by Pinturicchio, Botticelli, Cosimo Rosselli, by Ghirlandaio and students began with scenes, later destroyed, of the finding of Moses and the Nativity of Christ completed by Perugino on the wall behind the altar where the Michelangelo "The last judgment" is now.



Reconstruction of the early Sistine Chapel



The Vault

After the appearance of cracks in the walls of the **Sistine Chapel** in 1574, Michelangelo was commissioned to work on a new decoration for the **vault**, in the place of the starry sky, painted by Pier Matteo d'Amelia during the time of Sixtus IV. Despite the commission, it proved to be particularly onerous for the artist, engaged on the interminable project for the grave of Julius II, the contract was stipulated on 10th May, 1508. Right from the beginning, he wanted to emphasise the “difficulty of the work”, sustained by a only a small payment and the an-



The Sybil of Cuma

guish of not succeeding in the titanic painting, that the sculptor knew was not his profession. Having overcome the early technical problems, special scaffolding was erected. The helpers who had arrived from Florence were a reason for dissatisfaction by Michelangelo who, in the end, decided to "throw out everything they had done". It has been possible to find, through the weaker details of the first scenes near the entrance, the biggest operation by the helpers who, from the autumn of 1509, would be more and more limited to the ornamental parts and

.....

tied to the works of much less able painters. The choice of subject was similarly complex, originally including only the series of twelve Apostles arranged around the central area with geometrical decorations, later changed into the most articulated iconographic programme imposed by Buonarroti.

It is possible to interpret the architectural framework of the ceiling as a symbolic path where the



The last judgment

fate of mankind has already been marked, from primordial chaos to the Redemption. An indispensable introduction to the events illustrated in the two cycles of 15th century frescoes on the lower walls where there is a constant parallel between the Mosaic events and the life of Christ.

From the lunettes and the respective ribbing where Christ's ancestors, beginning with Abraham, are portrayed, to the four corner-stones which narrate the heroic undertakings of David, Judith, Moses and Esther as far as the marble thrones occupied by the series of *Prophets* and *Sibyls*, the divine intervention for the salvation of man is always exalted.

In the fields of the ceiling, flanked by monochrome reliefs of biblical episodes, five scenes (the *Creation of light*, the *Separation of the earth from the waters*, the *Creation of Eve*, the *Sacrifice* and the *Inebriation of Noah*) alternate with another four episodes from Genesis. The decoration above the cornice, in the large celestial ceiling, illustrates the mythical origins of the world (the *Creation of the Stars and the Planets*), populated by the forefathers (the *Creation of Adam* and *The Original sin*), up to the mythical Flood.

The work method used, starting with the last scene and, that is, from the first fresco done, allowed Michelangelo to proceed directly in the elaboration of the design and then to transposition through the traditional technique of pouncing or pricking directly into the fresh plaster. The fluid and transparent brushwork, soaked with light, exalts the plasticity of the enormous bodies, while the gamma of cold and changing colours emerged after the recent restorations (1980–89) offer an unedited version of Michelangelo's art.

Even if Julius II succeeded in seeing the grandiose work finished after the opening of the chapel on 31st October 1512, the commitment in completing the project with the **Last Judgement** on the wall behind the altar and in that of the entrance (where the *Fall of the Rebellious Angels* was foreseen) was due to Clement VII. Although already begun, the entire work was then

carried out on a smaller scale, at the expense of his successor, Paul III Farnese, maybe portrayed by the artist in the clothes of St. Peter.

The construction of the scaffolding and the removal of the frescoes, including the pair of lunettes in the ceiling that Michelangelo himself had painted, was begun on 16th April, 1535. Michelangelo was disposed to continue only after the demolition of the plaster that, on the advice of the Venetian, Sebastiano del Piombo, had been set up for oil painting and not, as the artist wanted, for the more traditional fresco technique. The tremendous apocalyptic vision – certainly relating to the Sack of Roma in 1527 – turned around the supreme gesture of Christ the Judge who marks the resurrection by the ascent of the appointed to the left and, to the right, the inexorable fall of the damned, into the violent maelstrom which the same angels are involved in, now transporting the instruments of the Passion, now to drive back the sinners to the presence of Minos wrapped round by a serpent. In his clothes, Michelangelo wanted to portray, according to Vassari, one of the first censors of the work, according to whom, the fresco “was not a work for the Chapel of the Pope but of stoves and taverns”!

The decision to destroy the frescoes pointed out by Paul IV – mitigated by the Council of Trent on the 21st January, 1564 shortly before the death of Buonarrotti – was carried out the year after with the veiling of the nudity by his disciple Daniele da Volterra, from then on known by the nickname of “Braghettone”.

Vatican Museums, Viale Vaticano, 100 • 00165 Roma
Phone 06 69884947 • 06 69884676

Times of opening: from november to february: from monday to friday from 8.45 am to 12.20 am (1.45 pm); from march to october: from monday to friday from 8.45 am to 3.20 pm (4.45 pm); Every saturdays and the last sunday's mounth from 8.45 to 12.20 am (1.45 pm)

Entrance: complete € 12,00; under 14 years, schools and students up to 26 years € 8,00.

Services: The museums have special access facilities for handicapped people.

The Pauline Chapel

The Chapel was built on the plans of Antonio da Sangallo the Younger in the spring of 1538. It was later decorated by Michelangelo as soon as he had finished work on the Sistine Chapel. The chapel which is still private, is decorated with frescoes. On the left-hand wall is the Conversion of St. Paul, a theme which certainly alludes to the name of the pontiff client (Paul III Farnese), as the Crucifixion of St. Peter on the opposite wall from 1546 to 1550, recalls the morale weight of the apostolate. Other works in the Vatican are also due to Michelangelo, like the project of the **Fortifications** already started by Sangallo and of the double **Staircase** in the Belvedere Courtyard, modified at the beginning of the 18th century through the elimination of the peperino balustrade.



The Crucifixion of St. Peter

The Pauline Chapel can only be visited with special permission
(Apply to 06 69884947 – 06 69883333)

Castel Sant'Angelo



Castel Sant'Angelo

Begun around 133 AD., Hadrian's mausoleum was completed by Antonio Pio in 139 d.C. and used as the imperial tomb. The dedication of the building is due to the miraculous appearance of the Archangel Michael, in 590 – and with it the Pons Ælius, the present day Sant'Angelo Bridge – becoming an integral part of the Aurelian defensive system.

From on high, the 18th century work by Verschaffelt recalls the first statue erected after the plague of 1348. Converted into a prison it was the theatre for the escape by Benvenuto Cellini and the disturbing presence of Cagliostro. During the Sack of Roma, Clement VII succeeded in escaping the siege through the "Passetto" which still joins it today to the Vatican. It was given up by the pontifical troops in 1870 and was restored at the beginning of the 1900s to house, from 1927, a rich collection of antique arms and a picture gallery.



Chapel of Saints Cosma and Damiana, exterior

The elegant marble **aedicule** on the southern side of the Main Courtyard was planned by Michelangelo between 1514 and 1516 as a view of the “new chapel” of Saints Cosma and Damiana erected by Leo X, whose emblem can be seen in the centre of the rosette. It was later modified by Raffaello da Montelupo. After the restoration in 1987, the original plan by Michelangelo was restored, with the exception of the seat which was added at the beginning of the century on the basis of designs then held to be authentic.

Castel Sant’Angelo National Museum, Lungotevere Castello

00193 Roma • Phone 06 39080730 - 6819111 • pren. 06 39967600

Times of opening: Every day except Mondays from 9 am to 8 pm;

Entrance: Ticket € 5,00, reduced € 2,50. Free of charge for under 18s and over 65s

Services: The museum has special access facilities for handicapped people; Audio-guide: € 3,62 (Italian, English, French, Spanish, Japanese, German); Guided tours: € 3,10 Lire, Sunday 16.30

Farnese Palace

Cardinal Alessandro Farnese had planned to erect the family palace, given to Antonio da Sangallo the Younger since 1513, on land acquired in 1495. The election of the client who became pope with the name of Paul III in 1534, caused the architect to make some modifications “appearing to him to have to do more with the palace of a pontiff than a cardinal”. The rear of the splendid residence was completed by Vignola and later by Giacomo Della Porta and then enriched by cardinal Odoardo Farnese with frescoes by Agostino and Annibale Carracci in the ceiling of the Gallery, a true milestone for the Roman baroque style. In 1731, on the death of the last male descendant, the important works of art inherited by Charles of Bourbon were moved to Naples. The palace, given to France in 1874, is still today home of the Embassy to the Italian State.



Michelangelo took over on the death of Sangallo (1546), and completed the Farnese building, finishing the main floor and part of the internal courtyard, probably joined to the second order. The substantial modification to the main elevation is due to him, with the transformation of the original central window to the present one crowned by “a coat of arms of pope Paul the third: big, beautiful and of different mar-



Balcony

bles”, it was later flanked by two other smaller coats of arms. The addition of the massive cornice, decorated with the Farnese lilies would be decisive – according to the plan presented in the spring of 1547, bitterly criticised by the followers of Sangallo – after the suitable corrections made adding to the façade, which a recent restoration has returned it to its ancient glory.

In the courtyard, the influence of Michelangelo, who was replaced after the death of the pontiff by Vignola, can be seen in the refined frieze with garlands which completes the main floor and in the personal interpretation of the classic language of the upper floor, lined with Corinthian columns.

**Farnese Palace, French Embassy, piazza Farnese, 67
00186 Roma • Phone 06 686011 - 06 68832818 • Fax 06
68809791**

Times of opening: visitable on request (fax 06 68809791)

Services: The building has special access facilities for handicapped people

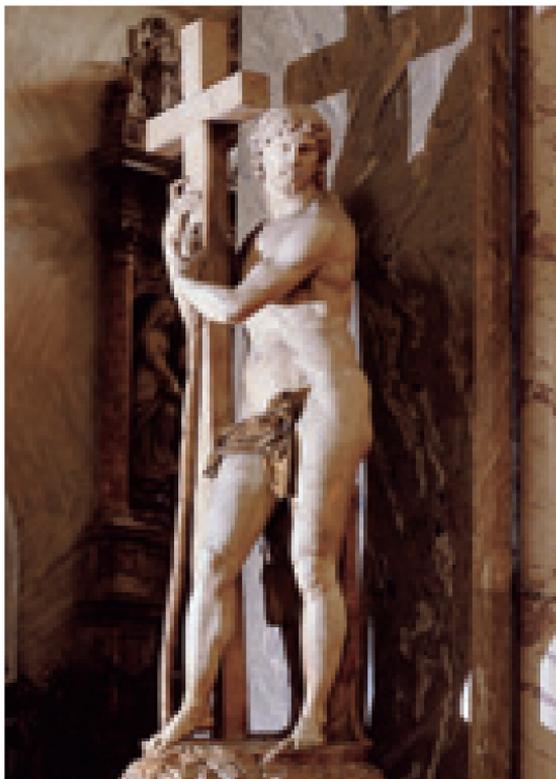
Santa Maria sopra Minerva

The name of the Dominican church erected in the area which was at one time reserved for Egyptian worship, the Iseum has always been associated with the nearby temple of Minerva Chalcidica. The interior houses exceptional works from the end of the 13th century to the 19th century, when the building underwent a radical restoration. Besides the superb cycle of frescoes by Filippino Lippi, the funeral monuments of five Pontiffs from Leo X to Benedict XIII are important.

The 1600s are well represented by the sculptures in the Aldobrandini Chapel and a famous work by Bernini. Catherine of Siena, patron saint of Italy and co-patron saint of Europe; and the Dominican painter, Fra Angelico are buried in the church.



Interior of the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva.



Christ holding the Cross

The first version of the **Christ carrying the cross**, carried out on the 15th June, 1514 for Metello Vari, was left unfinished because of a fault in the marble. The present version, outlined in Florence by Michelangelo in 1518, was completed in Roma by students in 1521. Despite the fact that the figure of Christ - whose nudity (later covered by cloth) shows him, an almost pagan hero, in the guise of the Redeemer while holding the instruments of the Passion – appears of great influence, even though it is no longer in the aedicule which was originally on the left-hand pillar of the presbytery, destroyed in the 18th century.

**Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, 42
00186 Roma • Phone 06 6793926 • Fax 06 6990672**

Times of opening: from monday to saturday from 7 am to 7 pm. On sunday from 7 am to 12 am.

Services: The church has special access facilities for handicapped people

Piazza del Campidoglio

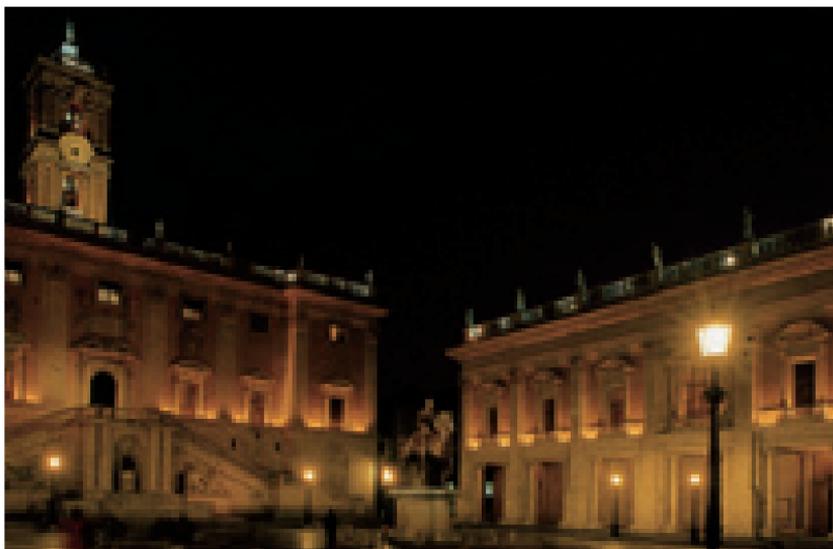
(the Capitol Square)

Although the work of re-designing the ancient Capitoline hill, seat of civic power, had already been started in the 15th century, it had a new push during the pontificate of Paul III. Connected to the Farnese family, the entire area was the object of changes by 1535. Two years later, it was decided to restore the Conservatives Palace

with the transfer of the famous equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius that the Lateran Chapter had, in vain, asked not to be moved from its original site. Michelangelo also seemed to be against the move. He was probably already involved in the project, maybe limited only to consultancy on the changes to the pedestal requested in March, 1539.

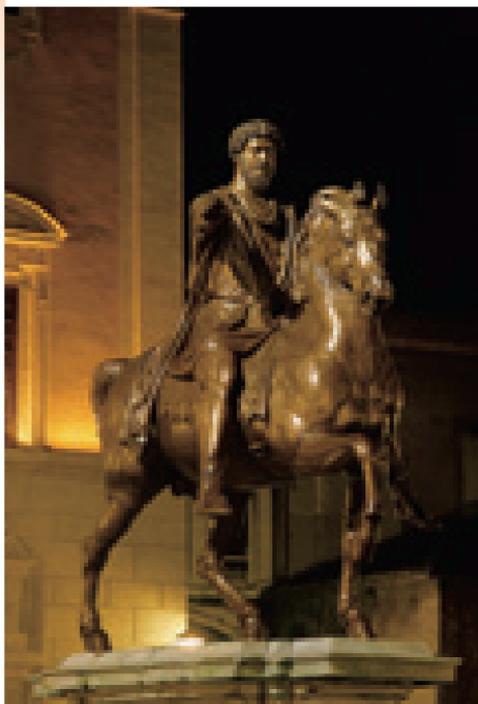


Piazza del Campidoglio



Piazza del Campidoglio by night

The square is characterised by the famous twelve-pointed star shape recalling religious reasons (the twelve apostles). After the death of Michelangelo, with the appointment of Giacomo Della Porta, Michelangelo's ideas – probably already fixed in a group project – were carried out with the completion, to the right of the square, by the elevation of the **Conservatives Palace** with the giant order, modified in part by Della Porta, who also built the facing **New Palace**, finished around 1603. Heart of the entire Michelangelo architectural accomplishment is the Senatorial Palace, erected in 1573 on the structure with the double staircase of his designing, perfectly in axis with the bell tower above, rebuilt on the plans of Martino Longhi the Elder. The effect is amplified by the access steps to the square and by the central *Fountain*, flanked by the statues of the Nile and the Tiber, added to the feet of the building at the end of the 1580s.



Marcus Aurelius

The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius is one of the rare works of its type coming down to us, probably because it was kept by Constantine, the first Christian emperor. Built in honour of Marcus Aurelius, it was original at the Lateran in the residence of his mother Domitia Lucilla, where the emperor was born. It remained at that site al through the Middles Ages, when a fountain was placed there. After the recent restoration, the splendid bronze work, once gilded, was moved inside the Conservatives Palace and replaced by a copy.

Capitoline Art Gallery • Piazza del Campidoglio • 00186 Roma
Phone 06 67102475 • Fax 06 6785488 • www.museicapitolini.org
info.museicapitolini@comune.roma.it

Times of opening: every day except Monday, 25th December, the 1st January and 1 May from 9 am to 8 pm.

Entrance: complete € 6,20; free of charge for under 18's and over 65's;
 singol prenotation € 1,50, school € 6,00, groups € 25,00;
 € 3,50 free itineraries.

San Pietro in Vincoli

*Funeral Monument
of Julius II*



The old Eudoxian Basilica, rebuilt by Sixtus III in 439-40 over older buildings gets its name from the empress Licinia Eudoxia whose mother had the chains of St. Peter brought from Jerusalem to unite them to those which had chained the apostle during his imprisonment in Roma. Tradition has it that, on contact, the two reliquaries miraculously welded together, as portrayed in the large painting in the centre of the ceiling of the nave (1705-6). The bronze funeral urn with the venerated reli-

quaries is on display in the crypt, rebuilt together with the presbyterial area during the second half of the 19th century.



Funeral Monument to Julius II, detail

The **Funeral Monument to Julius II** had a complex genesis, documented by a good five contracts, that began with the commission by the pontiff in March, 1505, for a payment of 10,000 ducats. Shortly after arriving in Florence, Michelangelo undertook the project with passion, originally destined for the Vatican Basilica and studied for a very effective arrangement. The design, approved in the following April, describes it as a colossal isolated pyramid structure, embellished on three floors with more than thirty bronze statues and bas-reliefs. The monument is characterised by a pedestal with two niches with feminine figures inside, alluding to the virtue of the deceased and directly inspired by prototypes of classic sculpture. The *Moses* was sculptured around 1515 and then re-used in the centre of the present monument where, originally, there was a door leading into the internal chapel. The modifications made to the coronation were even more complex, it was initially conceived as an independent building with the sarcophagus



Funeral Monument to Julius II, detail

gus and the statue of the pontiff supported by allegorical figures, further simplified as an architectonic structure placed on a wall with the *Virgin and Child* above.

After the temporary escape to Florence caused by the disinterest of the client, what the artist called “the tragedy of the tomb” it accompanied him in the more tormented phases of his experience as man and artist. In 1532, he finally arrived at a solution and the entire monument was rearranged, in February 1545, in the right transept of the Franciscan church of S. Peter in Vincoli of which the pontiff, belonging to the order, was owner. The pose of the pontiff is important, he is portrayed in the act of rising from the sarcophagus as if awakening from the torpor of physical death.

Church of St. Peter in Vincoli, piazza di S. Pietro in Vincoli, 4/a 00184 Roma • Phone 06 4882865 • 06 4818969

Times of opening: every day from 7 am to 12.30 am and from 3.30 am to 6 pm

Services: The church does not have special access facilities for handicapped people

Santa Maria Maggiore

Founded by Pope Liberius and, therefore, known as the Liberian Basilica, it was embellished by Sixtus III after the recognition, in the Council of Ephesus (431), of the dogma of the divine maternity of Mary to which the building was dedicated. There is evidence of splendid mosaics in the nave, mostly modified by Nicholas IV who added the mosaic in the Torriti apse. The worship of the Holy cradle was added to the Marian worship, tied to the image of the *Salus Populi Romani*, in the oratorio decorated by Arnolfo di Cambio. Covered by the new lacunar ceiling by Sangallo, it was completed with the Sistine and Pauline chapels. The reconstruction of the external apse was followed by a reconstruction both of the façade and the sumptuous ciborium on the high altar, completed for the Jubilee of 1750.



Façade



The Sforza Chapel

The **Sforza Chapel**, already given to Michelangelo by Cardinal Guido Ascanio Sforza, archpriest of Santa Maria Maggiore, was complete much later, perhaps by Guglielmo Della Porta. The extreme liberty of the chapel, whose space seems enlarged thanks to the four angular columns, comes from the central plan, drawn up in projects for the Vatican Basilica and in the contemporary church of the Florentine Nation in Roma (St. Giovanni dei Fiorentini, 1559-60).

Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Piazza di Santa Maria Maggiore • 00185 Roma • Phone 06 483195 • 06 48904392

Times of opening: every day from 7 am to 7 pm

Services: The church has special access facilities for handicapped people

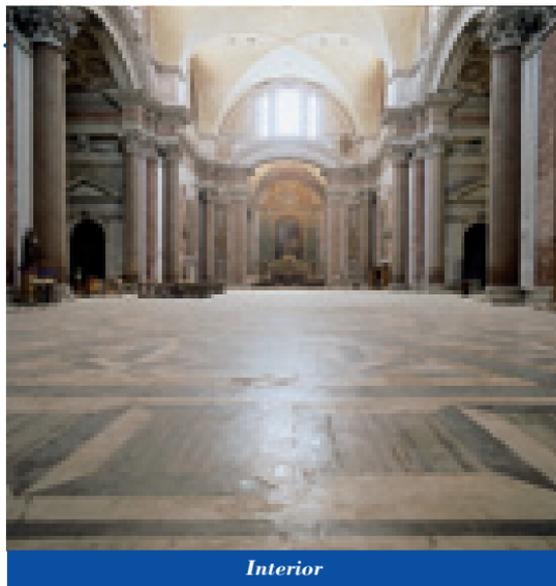
Santa Maria degli Angeli

The ancient baths of Diocletian

Built between 298 and 306 AD., the Baths of Diocletian were the most imposing of Imperial Roma, able to house double the number of users compared to the sumptuous building begun by Caracalla about eighty years before. It is still possible to assess the size of the entire complex – that source said were decorated with 3,000 baths – taking into account that its external perimeter is marked, to the south west, by the exedra formed of 19th century buildings at the Via Nazionale end and, further to the north by the hall transformed into the church of St. Bernard. Beyond the ex Carthusian convent, the central area houses public offices, the Teaching Faculty, the ex planetarium and the premises of the National Roman Museum (The ex Museum of the Baths, formed in 1889) whose important collections of antiquity have been, in part, moved to the nearby, new home of Massimo Palace and to the Altemps Palace.



The old project by Urban II for the transformation of the central area of the old Baths of Diocletian into a place of worship was re-proposed in 1541 and confirmed with the bull by Julius III on the 10th August, 1550, but



Interior

then abandoned. With respect to the new artery marked out by Pius IV, the Strada Pia; in 1561, the pontiff commissioned Michelangelo to complete the building, placed under the patronage of Cardinal Carlo Borromeo and in the meantime given over to the Carthusians who were given the honour of constructing the annexed convent. Limiting the modifications and, therefore, the expense, the works began again two years later and were completed in 1565. Respecting the original axis of the imposing baths building and using the *tepidarium* as a vestibule (originally with a dome and lantern), the image of the new church built over the pagan remains would appear as a sign of the strong religious contents, marked by the monumental transept vaults held up by the eight enormous red granite columns and by the deep rectangular choir imposed by liturgical needs and enlarged in the second half of the 18th century.

**Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, Piazza della Repubblica
00185 Roma • Phone 06 4880812 • 06 4820964**

Times of opening: every day from 7 am to 6.30 pm

Services: The church has special access facilities for handicapped people

Porta Pia

in the Aurelian Walls

The tract of the walls, called Aurelian after the emperor who had them built between 271 and 275 AD., covered the oldest republican and suburban city wall like the one over the Tiber. The structure in brickwork – with external quadrangular towers about every thirty metres – extended for almost 19 kilometres along which the most important gates opened (some rebuilt in modern times) and minor openings (*posterulae*). Reinforced by Massenzio, they were completely rebuilt first by Honorius, who doubled the height, then by Belisarius, with added backs, like those of Sangallo. Violated by Alaricus in 410, the tract of the walls near Porta Pia was the theatre of the historic “breach” into which the Italian army penetrated on 20th September, 1870. The Museum of the Walls, in the St. Sebastian Gate, documents the story of the ancient defensive structure.



The Aurelian Walls

**Museum of the Aurelian Walls, Via di Porta San Sebastiano, 18
00179 Roma • Phone 06 70475284**

Times of opening: from tuesday to saturday from 9 am to 7 pm. Sunday from 9 am to 5 pm. On july and on august from tuesday to saturday from 9 am to 1.30 pm. every mondays close

Entrance: Complete € 2,60; reduced € 1,60

Services: The Museum does not have special access facilities for handicapped people



Porta Pia

It was called **Porta Pia** in honour of Pius IV who, in replacement of the ancient Nomentana Gate, imposed the opening to connect, by way of the new urban straight stretch of the Strada Pia, the pontifical palace of Monte Cavallo (Quirinal) to the out-of-town basilica of Sant’Agnese. The project, already drawn up in January, was almost certainly given to Michelangelo on the 2nd July 1561, although it had already been started on some months before. The external portal, on Michelangelo’s design, was probably constructed by Virgilio Vespignani, author, in 1853, of the complete re-working of the attic which had, perhaps, fallen at the end of the century, crowned by the triangular pediment.

Michelangelo

The life of the Artist

Michelangelo was born on the 6th March, 1475 in the small Tuscan village of Caprese to the podestà, Ludovico di Leonardo di Buonarroto Simoni and to Francesca di Neri di Miniato del Sera. The youth, left orphan by his mother at the age of six, was introduced into the Florentine artistic circle, a long way removed from the paternal activity, in 1488, by his friend Francesco Granacci, through whom he gained a period of apprenticeship in Domenico Ghirlandaio's studio. His uncommon qualities allowed him, immediately afterwards, to become part of the Medici circle in the garden at St. Mark's and to frequent, in the Medici Palace, the elite of the humanists chosen by Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Together with his first experiences in the field of ancient statuary, drawn up in the relief of the *Battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths*, Michelangelo cultivated his poetic passion, encouraged by scholars and philosophers. The arrival of Charles VIII's army in 1494 forced him to escape from the city and take refuge in Bologna, where he completed some statues for the altar of St. Dominic's. Only during his first stay in Roma (1496 – 1501) did he succeed in getting important commissions with the patronage of the rich banker, Jacopo Galli, the buyer of his Bacchus (Florence, Bargello Museum) and guarantor for the commission for the Vatican Pietà requested by the ambassador to the king of France.

By now famous, in Florence, his impetuous and suspicious nature gained him his first disagreements with his more illustrious colleagues, including Leonardo, concerning his undertakings: the *David* (Florence, the Academy Galleries), symbol of civic virtue, and the *Battle of Cascina*, the great fresco project which he left unfinished in 1504. The *Tondo Doni* preceded the grandiose Roman commissions that the newly elected Julius II gave him from 1505 on. These were the years of the interminable project for the papal tomb that would torment him for 40 years and risk damaging the relations with the pon-

tiff after the sudden running away of the artist to Florence. It was resolved through the intervention of the gonfalonier, Piero Soderini. Haughty and proud to the point of signing his youthful masterpiece, the *Pietà*, only to hear it attributed to someone else and disposed to confront the anger of the pontiff, impatient to

see the Sistine chapel ceiling finished.

He was a solitary genius and rebel, loved, but also hated by his rivals, including Sangallo. After the important Florentine projects for the façade of St. Lorenzo's (unfinished), with the annexed New Sacristy, the *Medici Tombs* and the prodigious architectonic intuition shown in the *Laurentian Library*, Michelangelo would be once again called to Roma to the interminable Vatican building site, even to start basic urban interventions but, above all, to finish the decoration of the Sistine Chapel. The religious anxiety can be seen in this work by the artist, by now elderly - already influenced by the preaching of Savonarola - who materialises in the sublime "unfinished" of the last *Pietà*s. His spiritual association with Vittoria Colonna dates back to those years and, even before, the friendship with the nobleman Tommaso de' Cavalieri to whom he gave his designs, acquired in 1587 by the Farnese family. Many of them would be destroyed by Michelangelo himself before dying on the 18th February, 1564, in his Roman house near Santa Maria di Loreto, demolished for the construction of the General Assurance Building (tablet on the wall). The body, on the wishes of his nephew, was interred in the church of the Holy Cross at Florence.



Pietro Malandri portrait of Michelangelo

The main works by Michelangelo in the main museums and churches around the world

- **Bologna**, St. Dominic
Saints Petronio, Procolo and angel candelabra
- **Bruges**, Notre Dame
Madonna with child (Madonna di Bruges)
- **Florence**, Buonarotti House
Battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths
Madonna della scala
- **Florence**, Uffizi Gallery
Holy Family with St. Giovannino (Tondo Doni) (tempera on canvass)
- **Florence**, Academy Gallery
David
- **Florence**, Bargello National Museum
Madonna with child (Tondo Pitti)
Bacchus
- **Florence**, St. Lorenzo, New Sacristy
Funeral monuments of Giuliano duke of Nemours and Lorenzo de' Medici, duke of Urbino
Laurentian Library
- **London**, Royal Academy
Madonna with child and St. Giovannino (Tondo Taddei)
- **London**, National Gallery
Burial of Christ (tempera on panel)
- **Milan**, Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Antica (Castello Sforzesco)
Rondinini Pietà
- **Paris**, The Louvre Museum
Dying Prison and Rebel Prison
- **Siena**, Cathedral
Saints Peter, Paul, Pious and Gregory (Piccolomini Altar)