Venues

Basilica di San Giovanni and Paolo

The church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo – sometimes also referred to as San Zanipolo – is one of Venice's largest churches, and it was built to honor Sts. John and Paul. It is a parish church of the Vicariate of San Marco-Castello and is the principal Dominican church of Venice. The first church on this location was ordered by Doge Jacopo Tiepolo, who gave the land on which it stood to the Dominicans after he dreamed of a flock of white doves flying over the area, which was – at that time – swampland. The Dominicans opened the first church there in 1246. That structure was demolished in 1333 when the growing congregation prompted the need for a larger building. However, it took nearly a century to build the new church, which finally opened and was consecrated in 1430. Santi Giovanni e Paolo is built in the Italian Gothic Style and is made of brick. Many noble families favored it as a burial place and about 25 doges as well as military commanders and other famous men of the Republic, including several artists, have assumed a final resting place there, housed in ornately decorated tombs. The many tombs of notables earned the church the nickname 'Pantheon of Venice'. The artwork is plentiful. The main altar, dedicated to Vincenzo Ferrer, a Spanish Dominican saint, is decorated by a large polyptych by Giovanni Bellini and an altarpiece by Lorenzo Lotto displays the alms of Saint Anthony. The bell tower has 3 bells in D major.



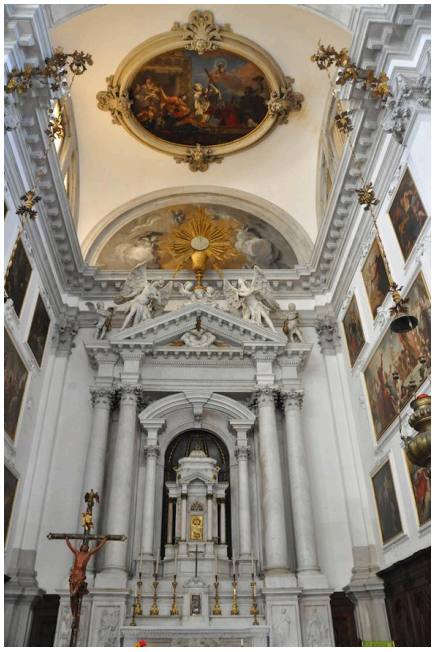


The Church of San Stae

We do not know the exact origins of the Church of San Stae, in Italian Sant'Eustachio (Saint Eustache) , but it seems that it already existed in the twelfth century. Fundamental for the understanding of the early 18th century Venetian painting, the church of San Stae (Sant'Eustachio) is strikingly coherent as an architectural whole. The lavish external façade faces the Grand Canal, and was designed by Domenico Rossi in 1709, characterized by its rich decoration thanks to the contribution from sculptors such as Giuseppe Torretto, Antonio Tarsia, Pietro Baratta, and Antonio Corradini. Giovanni Grassi's late 17th-century interior reveals a clear influence from Palladio. The single nave is flanked on each side by three open chapels; in the center of the church the flooring is occupied by a large tombstone that marks the burial place of the Mocenigo family. Passing along the altars on the right wall, you encounter significant works by Nicolò Bambini, Giuseppe Camerata, and Antonio Balestra (who decorated the chapel of the confraternity of tiraoro and battioro, adjacent to the church). The three chapels on the left host, in order, works by Giuseppe Torretto and Pietro Baratta on the Foscarini chapel, the "Assumption" by Francesco Migliori (further 1722) and "The Saints Caterina and Andrea" (1719) by Jacopo Amigoni. Furthermore, the presbytery has the most important paintings of the church: on the ceiling there is a broad canvas by Bartolomeo Letterini, "The Virtues and Two Brothers from the School of the Saints" from 1708, whilst on the two side walls – above and below, the two works by Giuseppe Angeli – "The Sacrifice of Melchisedech" and "The Fall of Manna" by Giuseppe Angeli (after 1770), are twelve smaller canvasses depicting the "Apostles". Among these various artists, these works include the following masterpieces: "The Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew" by the young Giambattista Tiepolo (1722), "The Martyrdom of Saint Giacomo" by Giambattista Piazzetta (1717), and "The Liberation of Saint Pietro" by Sebastiano Ricci (1717-24). In the sacristy there are also some

interesting works like the “Crucifixion” by Maffeo Verona (XVII century), Giambattista Pittoni’s “Trajan ordering St. Eustache to Adore Pagan idols”, and “St. Eustache in Prison” by Bartolomeo Litterini (XVIII).





The Church of San Pietro di Castello

The basilica of San Pietro di Castello played a central role in Venetian history. From 775 to 1451 it was a Diocesan Church under the Patriarchate of Grado, then later became a Cathedral in its own right and the seat of the Patriarch of Venice until 1807. San Pietro stands on the antique island of Olivolo, now known as Castello, which was the first residential settlement and became the religious, political, and commercial centre in the lagoon. The first church here was built in the VII century and was dedicated to the Byzantine Saints Sergio and Bacco; whilst the new basilica, dedicated to Saint Pietro the Apostle, was part of a group of churches that Bishop Magno had constructed in the IX century. The present building is the result of work carried out at the end of the XVI century and during the first three decades of the XVII century: the renovation of the facade is the work of Francesco Smeraldi based on original designs by Andrea Palladio in 1556. The imposing bell-tower in Istrian stone is an elegant Renaissance structure designed by Mauro Codussi (1482-1490). The internal

part of the cathedral has a Latin-cross form, divided by three naves and surmounted by a massive cupola. The predominate decoration is from the seventeenth-century, realized after the fire that destroyed the furniture and treasure of the antique church. Noteworthy is also the high altar of inlaid polychrome marble designed in 1649 by Baldassare Longhena and containing an urn with the remains of the first patriarch of Venice, Saint Lorenzo Giustiniani. To reinforce the fascinating primigenie of this antique church, on the right nave is placed the so-called Cathedral of Saint Pietro, traditionally considered the seat of Saint Antiochia and vice versa the work originated from Antiochia, but probably assembled in the XIII century utilizing an ancient Arab funeral stele with inscriptions from the Koran. The main artistic treasures of the church are found in the right and left chapels of the presbytery, respectively, the masterpiece of Pietro Liberi (1660) “The Plague of Serpents” and the unique cross of wood and embossed copper, again an assemblage of Romanesque, Byzantine and 14th-century work.





The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli

The church of Miracoli is a very special church, under a historical-artistic point of view, but also under a sentimental point of view for the Venetians. Unlike all the

other churches in the city, which have all been overlapped by different styles, the church of Miracoli was practically untouched: founded later than the others, it was designed, built, and decorated by one only artist and his workshop, perhaps in one only stage or, at the most, in two very close phases. This Venetian architecture masterpiece planned by Pietro Lombardo, comparable for it's distinctiveness to an extraordinary treasure chest sculpted and redressed of polychrome marble, is today entirely appreciated in merit of it's recent renovations (1997). The church was built between 1481 and 1489 upon commission of Angelo Amadi, who intended to hold an image of the "Virgin Mary with Child and Two Saints" in his possession – an image which, after Pope Sextus IV's declaration of the Immaculate Conception Cult, has been declared miraculous. The façade, with the original semicircular front adorned by rose windows, was realized on two orders of arcades carved in marble, and the cylindrical roofing, perfectly enclose the volume of the church. The arrangement in the underlining of the spaces, throughout pillar sheets of different colors and cornices, resend a Florentine Renaissance style, but the decoration of the chromatism clearly responds to a Venetian taste. The interior, a single nave with a raised presbytery, is decorated even more sumptuously with sculpted marble. On the altar stands Zanino di Pietro's supposedly miraculous work of the "Virgin Mary and Child" (XV century). The imposing barrel vault is decorated with wooden coffering and fifty panels depicting "Prophets and Patriarchs", painted by Pier Maria Pennachi and assistants. The pendentives of the cupola houses statues of the "Four Evangelists", probably the work of Pietro Lombardo himself – as is the splendid transenna in front of the presbytery. Above the entrance is still preserved the old wooden choir stalls (barco) of the nuns from the nearby convent, who used to gain access to the church by means of a raised passageway that has been demolished. The organ by Pugina (1919) had one keyboard and eight stop knobs. The antique organ was located to the right of the altar in the choir which was destroyed in the

nineteenth century. The doors, by Giovanni Bellini, are now preserved at the Accademia Gallery.



