

San Francesco A Ripa



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San Francesco a Ripa is found in a section of Rome called Trastevere. In ancient Rome, this was the area of the Jews, and very likely where the Apostles did their first preaching.

San Francesco a Ripa was formerly the Hospital of St. Blase. It is thought that Francis obtained from the Abbot of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in 1212 a hospice in the Hospital of St. Blase, thanks to Lady Jacoba.

By 1517 the Hospital of St. Blase was gone and San Francesco became a convent of secondary importance. However, during the spiritual renewal under the so-called *Riformati*, the convento passed over to the Riformati and became the provincialate and studium for Postulator of the Reform until 1887, when it was transferred to Via Merulana, the Collegio Sant' Antonio.

In 1698 the cell of Francis was completed as it is today, and in 1701 the church's renovation was finished. The convento was closed during the French revolution. From 1809 until the fall of Napoleon, the friars of San Francesco had no peace and were forced out of their convento. Similarly, in 1848, two hundred Garibaldians camped in their house.

The cell:



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This rock is said to be the pillow of St. Francis when he stayed there. He most likely would have preached and ministered to the poor in this area. Francis most likely stayed here when he came to see Pope Innocent III.



A tapestry that was added to the cell in the 1700's.

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Note the walls. They have never been touched or cleaned. They have layers of candle soot on them. The ceiling was raised so that people of today's height could walk in the cell. People of Francis' era were very small in stature.

Pope John Paul II visited and prayed at the altar that is now in the cell.

In 1873, Rome enacted a law suppressing religious corporations and provinces. The friars of San Francesco once again had to abandon their convento. November 12, 1873 the convento became a barracks for the famous *bersaglieri*, a branch of the Italian military. This same year hundreds of homeless families invaded the convento to find shelter.

The friars were assigned a small section of the old building where the pastor and his assistants lived. In 1906 it became a parish.

The Altar

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The church of San Francesco a Ripa is the final resting place for St. Charles of Sezze and Blessed Louise Albertoni, a Secular Franciscan.

This is a Bernini sculpture of Blessed Louise. The Church is in the process of being renovated so we could only see this through a plastic door.



San Francesco A Ripa invites us to consider the role of the poor in our lives and the role the poor play in the work of evangelization. Francis, like Christ, learned that there is no substitute for direct contact with the economically poor.

Reflection

The poverty of the human person is discovered in embracing one's creatureliness in relationship to the Most High God. We are invited to find our freedom by accepting this stance in life.

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The poor invite me to recognize a sacredness in every human person and circumstance. Contact with the poor therefore provides its own kind of enrichment to each person.

In reflecting on my attitude toward material goods, opinions, judgements, good works, and accomplishments, to what do I cling and what might God be calling me to let go of in order to be free to respond wholeheartedly?