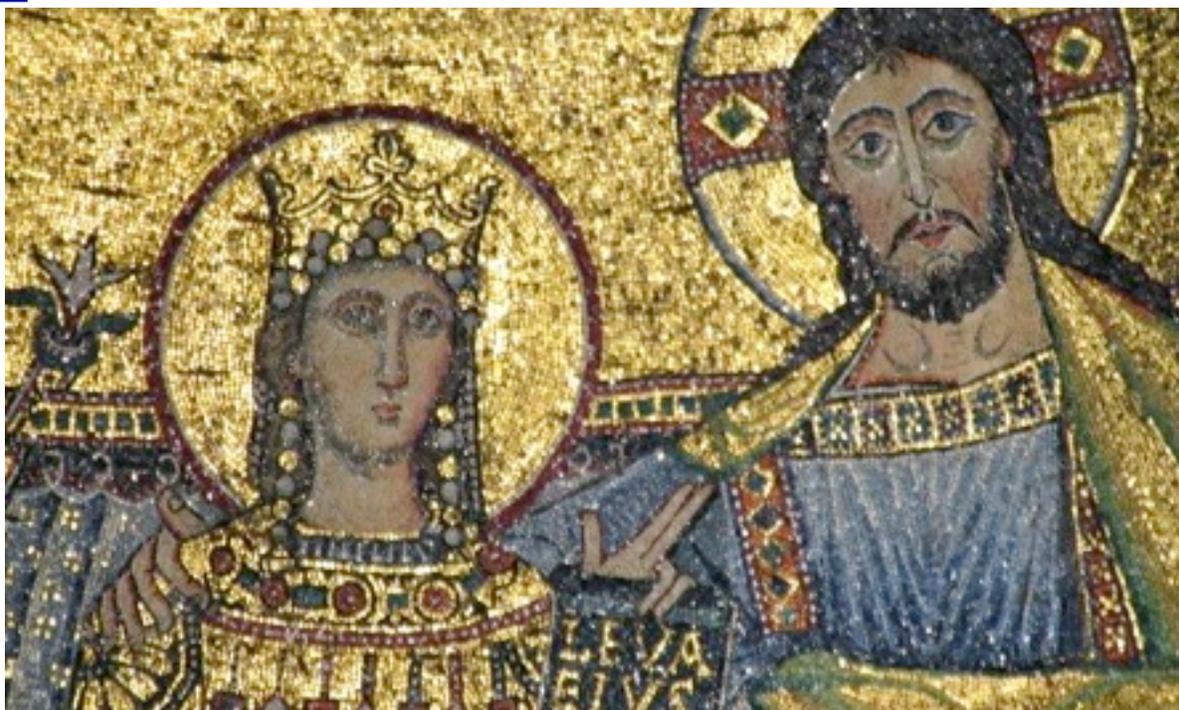


ROME

Italy



Hidden gems in hidden churches

Before getting bogged down with grand Basilica's, consider a few smaller treasures for your list: [San Clemente](#)

Nicknamed the Lasagna Church - and famous for 3 underground levels - visit remains of a pagan church, fresco's, baths and various street levels - and, if it's quiet, listen to a 1st C Roman sewer that still drains into the river Tiber.

Mosaics and frescoes on today's street level are worth a visit even if you don't venture into the damp underground.

Located between the Colosseum and San Giovanni in Laterano [Monastery Santa Quattro Coronati](#)

Byzantine frescoes tell how Pope Sylvester cured Emperor Constantine of Leprosy - an unlikely tale - but worth a visit. There's a pretty 13th C cloister too. Located between San Clemente & San Giovanni in Laterano [Scala Santa](#)

Houses the Holy Staircase, brought to Rome in 326AD - said to be the stairs leading to the judgement hall of Pontius Pilate's palace in Jerusalem - the very stairs climbed by Jesus - and attracting pilgrims for centuries - brass spy holes cover what is claimed to be the blood of Jesus. With so many visitors,

choosing to climb the stairs on your knees in the holy-year of 2015 can be a slow process, allow at least 20 mins - find them facing S Giovanni in Laterano

[Santa Maria degli Angeli](#) Stared by Michelangelo in 1563, it sits over part of Diocletian's baths. Housing a holy water-font by Rossi and, ordered for the holy-year in 1700, a meridian line runs along the left side. Located close to the main Train Station [Santa Maria Della Vittoria](#) Featured in a Dan Brown novel there's always tons of visitors, but don't let that put you off. The early Baroque church is a delight - Bernini's masterpiece, with the Ecstasy of St Teresa (1647)... find the white marble sculpture located left of the Alter. Two blocks from Plaza Repubblica. [Santa Maria in Trastevere](#)

It's worth crossing the Tiber to visit this tiny 4th C Basilica, one of the oldest in Rome. 22 Granite columns from ancient Roman buildings, fragments of earlier churches and beautifully restored mosaics in the apse [Santa Prassede](#) Byzantium mosaics are the reason to go, along with what is said to be the column Christ was tied to for flagellation. Located one street across from Santa Maria Maggiore.

