

# Ponte Sant'Angelo

**Ponte Sant' Angelo** (Sant'Angelo Bridge) was built from 130 to 135 AD by the emperor Publio Elio Adriano, as an access route to the tomb he had built for himself and his family beyond the river Tevere. It was initially called Elio Bridge in honor of the emperor. Then considering the triumph of Christianity (392 AD) it was renamed Ponte San Pietro, because it was the only access route to the Vatican. The bridge changed his name definitively in 590 AD when Pope Gregorio Magno, that was walking on it at the head of a procession, organized to pray for the end of the pestilence that raged in Rome, saw on the top of the castle the archangel Michele who covered the sword, as a sign that the pestilence would ceased. From that moment the bridge and the castle were called Sant'Angelo.

Ponte Sant'Angelo is the most beautiful of Rome's bridges, only partially modified in 1668 in the Baroque period, with the replacement of only two small final arches, with two others of the same size and the addition of the 10 statues representing ten different angels.

The project was commissioned to Gian Lorenzo Bernini by the pope and he realized the work as a theatrical representation in which the angels stage the passion of Christ showing each one of the symbols of the passion: the column, the flagellum, the cartouche, the crown of thorns, the cross, the nails, the sponge, the spear, the holy face. In this way Bernini created a path of penitence for the pilgrims who traveled along the bridge to reach San Pietro Basilica.

The statues of San Pietro (St. Peter) and San Paolo (San St. Paul), the protectors of the city, placed on the bridge were previously left there.

Of the statues of the angels, all made according to a design by Bernini, two are copies made by Bernini's pupils at the time, because the pope did not want to expose the original ones made by Bernini to the bad weather and had them placed in the church of Sant'Andrea dell Fratte where they are still today.

In the years of the papal state, the bridge did not have a good reputation, because it was used to expose the bodies of the condemned to death.

Today the bridge is only for pedestrians and it offers one of the most beautiful view of the city.



# Santa Maria della Pace

***Santa Maria della Pace*** is an ancient church in the heart of Rome.

Where the church was built until 1482 there was a small chapel with a picture of the Virgin and the legend says that one day this painting blew, so Pope Sixtus IV decided to built a church dedicated to the Virgin in in memory of the miracle. Some years later, the church was renamed Santa Maria della Pace.

On the building, initially formed by a single rectangular nave, various additions were made over the centuries. In 1500 Gian Lorenzo Bernini built the cloister, in 1656 Pietro da Cortona expanded the church with an octagon surmounted by a dome and renewed the façade, making the church assume the baroque appearance that distinguishes it.

The exedra façade (concave structure) faces a semicircular pronaos with Tuscan columns to simulate a theatrical stage.

Inside the church, around the nave and the octagon, there are eight chapels designed by the greatest artists of the period, including: Raffaello San Gallo, Maderno and, decorated with frescoes by famous painters, such as Raffaello, Rosso fiorentino, Peruzzi, Pietro da Cortona, Orazio Gentileschi and Lavinia Fontana, one of the few painter women of the time.

The cloister (chiostro), by Bramante (1500/1504), is annexed to the church. The square-plan structure is made up of two superimposed orders. On the first level 16 pillars surmounted by round arches form a continuous portico with frescoed cross vaults and on the second level, reduced in height, but doubled in elements with Corinthian style pilasters alternating with columns of the same style. The cloister is one of the most important Renaissance architectural works in Rome.

