

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE SACRED WITHIN

The Chapel Through Art, Liturgy, and Theology in the
Early Modern Era

16 June 2026

Sala dei Papi

Santa Maria sopra Minerva
Piazza della Minerva, 42

Rome

Guendalina Serafinelli | Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata
Organizer and Chair

Register by 14 June 2026:
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PROGRAM

Welcome and Opening Remarks

9:30-9:50

Tullia Iori | Vice Chancellor for Education – Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata

Rev. Fr. Fabrizio Cambi O.P. | Prior of the Convent of Santa Maria sopra Minerva; Angelicum, Pontificia Università S. Tommaso d'Aquino

Rev. Fr. Antonio Cocolicchio O.P. | Prior Provincial of the Roman Province of St. Catherine of Siena

Introduction

9:50-10:15

Guendalina Serafinelli | Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata

Rev. Fr. Rocco Ronzani O.S.A. | Prefect of the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano; Pontificio Istituto Patristico Augustinianum

Session I

The Construction of Sacred Space, Liturgy, and Devotion

Chair: **Fabiana Spinelli** | Archive of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome

Rev. Fr. Dominik Jurczak O.P. | Angelicum, Pontificia Università S. Tommaso d'Aquino

10:15-10:35

Cappelle e altari nell'età moderna. Una lettura liturgica

Franco De Vivo | Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata

10:35-10:55

The Sacred Within the Ruins: The Transformation of Sacred Space in Gervase of Canterbury's "Tractatus de combustione et reparatione Cantuariensis ecclesiae"

Giovan Battista Fidanza | Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata

10:55-11:15

Wooden Pathological Crucifixes by Franciscan Baroque Sculptors in Chapel Contexts: Case Studies in Papal States

Discussion

11:15-11:25

Coffee break

11:25-11:40

Session II

Boundaries of the Sacred: Portraits, Performativity, and Spatial Activation

Chair: **Giovan Battista Fianza**

Gail Feigenbaum | Getty Research Institute, ret. 11:40–12:10

Unruly Portraits: Profane and Sacred in the Chapel in the Age of the Carracci and Caravaggio

Keith Sciberras | University of Malta 12:10–12:30

Caravaggio in the Oratory of the Decollato: Performance and the Activation of Ritual Space

Maria Grazia D'Amelio | Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata 12:30–12:50

“Ad perpetuam rei memoriam”. Le cappelle ipogee dei piloni della Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano

Discussion 12:50–13:00

Lunch break 13:00–14:30

Session III

Patronage, Visual Rhetoric, and Religious Identity

Chair: **Lydia Salviucci Insolera** | Pontificia Università Gregoriana

Stephanie C. Leone | Boston College 14:30–14:50

The Visual Rhetoric of Sanctity in the Chapel of San Francesco Saverio, Il Gesù

Guendalina Serafinelli | Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata 14:50–15:10

Negotiating Visibility: Artistic Patronage at SS. Domenico e Sisto in Seventeenth-Century Rome

Martina Bronzini | Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata 15:10–15:30

The Chapel of Benedict XIII at Santa Maria sopra Minerva between Devotion and Dominican Identity

Discussion 15:30–15:40

Coffee break 15:40–16:00

Keynote Lecture

Peter M. Lukehart | CASVA - The Center, National Gallery of Art, 16:00–16:45

Washington D.C.

Further Observations on the Cerasi Chapel

Discussion 16:45–17:00

The conference investigates chapels and altars of the early modern period through a theoretical framework that conceptualizes sacred space as a historically constituted medium, shaped by the convergence of artistic invention, architectural design, liturgical enactment, and theological signification.

Rather than functioning as passive backdrops to devotional practice, these spatial configurations are understood as operative structures in their own right: loci where doctrinal content is rendered visible, ritual action is performed within and through architectural form, and both collective and individual religious experience is produced, negotiated, and contested.

Bringing together interdisciplinary perspectives from art history, architectural history, liturgical studies, and theology, the conference examines how chapels and altars were planned, constructed, and decorated in dynamic articulation with the liturgical practices and theological paradigms that governed their conception, use, and institutional administration.



This conference is also supported by the funding received through the
“Ricerca Scientifica di Ateneo 2024”

Dipartimento di Storia, Patrimonio culturale, Formazione e Società
Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata

The conference will be held in Italian and English