

# **“The Roman Stations”. A millenary tradition**

*The “Roman Stations” are an ancient liturgical tradition that, during Lent and the first week of Easter, associates each day with a specific church in Rome, within a pilgrimage journey. The term “statio” (from the Latin stare, to stop) refers to the idea of a communal pause for prayer and celebration. In past centuries, the Pope and the faithful would move in procession from the church called “collecta” to the station of the day, where the Eucharist was celebrated. This rite, while having roots in the early centuries of Christianity, retains its vitality even today, when the indication of the station church still appears in liturgical books. It is a true pilgrimage among the basilicas and shrines of the Eternal City that can be undertaken in this jubilee year not only as a path of conversion but also as a testimony of faith.*

## **Origin and diffusion**

The origins of the Roman Stations date back at least to the 3rd Century, when the Christian community was still undergoing persecutions. The earliest testimonies refer to Pope Fabian (236-250) who would visit places of worship established near the catacombs or the burial sites of martyrs, distributing to the needy what the faithful offered as alms and celebrating the Eucharist. This custom strengthened in the 4th Century, with the freedom of worship granted by Constantine: large basilicas were built, and the faithful began to gather on specific days to celebrate Mass at sites linked to the memory of the saints. Over time, the itinerary took on a more organic character, creating a true calendar of stations that touched on the various districts of Rome. The communal dimension – with the presence of the bishop, clergy, and people – thus became a visible sign of communion and testimony of faith.

It was Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) who gave structure and

regularity to the use of the Stations, especially during Lent. He established a calendar that, day by day, assigned a specific church for the main celebration. His reform did not stem from nothing, rather organized an already existing practice. Gregory wanted the procession to start from a minor church (*collecta*) and conclude in a more solemn place (*statio*), where the people, united with the Pope, celebrated the penitential rites and the Eucharist. It was a way to prepare for Easter. The very journey indicated the earthly pilgrimage towards eternity, the churches with their sacred architecture and works of art served a pedagogical function in an era when not everyone could read or access books. The relics of the martyrs preserved in those churches testified to the faith lived to the point of giving life, and their intercession brought graces to those who requested them. The celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass sanctified the participating faithful.

During the Middle Ages, the practice of the Roman Stations spread more and more, becoming not only an ecclesial event but also a significant social phenomenon. The faithful, in fact, who came from different regions of Italy and Europe, joined the Romans to take part in these liturgical gatherings.

### **Structure of the station celebration**

The characteristic element of these celebrations was the procession. In the morning, the faithful gathered in the church of the *collecta*, where, after a brief moment of prayer, they would set off in procession towards the station church, singing litanies and penitential hymns. Upon arrival, the Pope or the appointed prelate would preside over the Mass, with readings and prayers specific to the day. The use of litanies had a strong spiritual and pedagogical sense: while physically walking through the streets, prayers were offered for the needs of the Church and the world, invoking the saints of Rome and all of Christianity. The celebration culminated in the Eucharist, giving this “pause” a sacramental value and

ecclesial communion.

Lent became the privileged time for the Stations, starting from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday or, according to some customs, until the second Sunday after Easter. Each day was marked by a designated church, often chosen for the presence of important relics or for its particular history. Notable examples include *Santa Sabina on the Aventine*, where the Ash Wednesday rite usually begins, and *Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*, linked to the veneration of the relics of the Cross of Christ, a traditional destination for Good Friday. Participating in the Lenten Stations means entering a daily pilgrimage that unites the faithful in a path of penance and conversion, supported by devotion to the martyrs and saints. Each church tells a page of history, offering images, mosaics, and architectures that communicate the evangelical message in a visual form.

One of the most significant features of this tradition is the connection with the martyrs of the Church of Rome. During the period of persecutions, many Christians died for their faith. In the Constantinian and subsequent eras, basilicas or chapels were erected over their tombs. Celebrating a *statio* in these places meant recalling the testimony of those who had given their lives for Christ, reinforcing the belief that the Church is built also on the blood of the martyrs. Each liturgical visit thus became an act of communion between the faithful of yesterday and those of today, united by the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This “pilgrimage to the memory” connected the Lenten journey to a history of faith passed down from generation to generation.

### **From decline to rediscovery**

In the Middle Ages and the following centuries, the practice of the Stations experienced alternating fortunes. Sometimes, due to epidemics, invasions, or unstable political situations, it was moderated or suspended. However, liturgical books continued to indicate the Station Churches for each day, a

sign that the Church at least preserved the symbolic memory of them. With the Tridentine liturgical reform (16th century), the centrality of the Pope in such celebrations became less frequent, but the practice of citing the Station Church remained in official texts. With the renewed interest in Christian history and archaeology, the station tradition was rediscovered and proposed as a path of spiritual formation. In modern times, especially starting from Leo XIII (1878-1903) and subsequently with the popes of the 20th Century, there has been a growing interest in recovering this tradition. Various religious orders and lay associations have begun to promote the rediscovery of the “pilgrimage of the stations,” organising communal moments of prayer and catechesis in the designated churches.

Today, in an era characterised by frenzy and speed, the *statio* proposes rediscovering the dimension of “pausing”: stopping to pray, contemplate, listen, be silent, and meet the Lord. Lent is by definition a time of conversion, of more intense prayer, and of charity towards others. Undertaking a journey among the churches of Rome, even just on some significant days, can help the faithful rediscover the meaning of a penance lived not as a renunciation in itself but as an opening to the mystery of Christ.

Even today, in the Roman Calendar, the Station Church is indicated for each day. This recalls the unity of the people of God, gathered around the successor of Peter, and the memory of the saints who have spent their lives for the Gospel. Anyone who participates in these liturgies – even occasionally – discovers a city that is not just an open-air museum but a place where faith has been expressed in an original and lasting way.

Those who wish to rediscover the profound meaning of Lent and Easter can thus allow themselves to be guided by the station itinerary, joining their voice to that of the Christians of yesterday and of today in the great chorus that leads to the

Easter light.

We present below the itinerary of the Roman Stations, accompanied by the list of churches and their geographical location. It is important to note that the order of the list remains unchanged each year. Only the start date of Lent varies, and consequently, the subsequent dates. We wish a fruitful pilgrimage to those who wish to undertake, even if only in part, this journey in the Jubilee year.

			<b>Roman Station</b>	<b>Saints and Martyrs with Relics or Preserved Remains</b>
1	<a href="#">03.05</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Sabina on the Aventine Hill</a>	Saint <a href="#">Sabina</a> and Saint Serapia, martyr (d. circa 126 AD); Saints Alexander, Evens and Theodulus, martyrs
2	<a href="#">03.06</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. George at the Velabrum</a>	Saint <a href="#">George</a> , martyr (d. 303)
3	<a href="#">03.07</a>	Fri	<a href="#">Sts. John and Paul on the Caelian Hill</a>	Saints <a href="#">John and Paul</a> , martyrs (d. 362); Saint <a href="#">Paul of the Cross</a> (d. 1775), Founder of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ (the Passionists)
4	<a href="#">03.08</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. Augustine in Camp Martius</a>	Saint <a href="#">Monica</a> (d. 387), mother of Saint <a href="#">Augustine</a> ; relics of Saint Augustine
5	<a href="#">03.09</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	The heads of Saint <a href="#">Peter</a> and Saint <a href="#">Paul</a> : these relics are preserved in silver busts placed above the papal altar, visible through a gilded grille; the <a href="#">Holy Stairs</a> (in the nearby Chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum); the Last Supper Table – the table on which the Last Supper was celebrated, according to tradition (a significant relic located on the altar of the Blessed Sacrament)

6	<a href="#">03.10</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Peter in Chains on the Oppian Hill</a>	The chains of Saint Peter; relics attributed to the Seven Maccabean Brothers, figures from the Old Testament venerated as martyrs
7	<a href="#">03.11</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Anastasia on the Palatine Hill</a>	Saint <a href="#">Anastasia of Sirmium</a> (d. 304); relics of the Holy Mantle of Saint Joseph; part of the Veil of the Virgin Mary
8	<a href="#">03.12</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Mary Major</a>	The Sacred Wood of the Cradle (the manger of the Christ Child); Panniculum (a small piece of cloth, part of the swaddling clothes with which the newborn Jesus was wrapped); Saint <a href="#">Matthew</a> , Apostle (d. 70 or 74); Saint <a href="#">Jerome</a> (d. 420); Saint <a href="#">Pius V</a> , Pope (d. 1572)
9	<a href="#">03.13</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. Lawrence in Panisperna</a>	Site of the martyrdom of Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a> (d. 258); Saint Lawrence, martyr; Saint <a href="#">Crispina</a> , martyr (d. 304); Saint <a href="#">Bridget of Sweden</a> (d. 1373)
10	<a href="#">03.14</a>	Fri	<a href="#">Twelve Holy Apostles at the Trajan Forum</a>	Saint <a href="#">Philip the Apostle</a> (d. 80); Saint <a href="#">James the Less</a> , the Apostle (d. 62); Saints <a href="#">Chrysanthus and Daria</a> , martyrs (d. c. 283)

11	03.15	Sat	<p><a href="#">St. Peter in the Vatican</a></p>	<p>Saint <a href="#">Peter</a> (d. 67); Saint <a href="#">Linus</a> (d. 76); Saint <a href="#">Cletus</a> (d. 92); Saint <a href="#">Evaristus</a> (d. 105); Saint <a href="#">Alexander I</a> (d. 115); Saint <a href="#">Sixtus I</a> (d. 126–128); Saint <a href="#">Telesphorus</a> (d. 136); Saint <a href="#">Hyginus</a> (d. 140); Saint <a href="#">Pius I</a> (d. 155); Saint <a href="#">Anicetus</a> (d. 166); Saint <a href="#">Eleutherius</a> (d. 189); Saint <a href="#">Victor I</a> (d. 199); Saint <a href="#">John Chrysostom</a> (d. 407, relics in the Choir Chapel); Saint <a href="#">Leo I, the Great</a> (d. 461); Saint <a href="#">Simplicius</a> (d. 483); Saint <a href="#">Gelasius I</a> (d. 496); Saint <a href="#">Symmachus</a> (d. 514); Saint <a href="#">Hormisdas</a> (d. 523); Saint <a href="#">John I</a> (d. 526); Saint <a href="#">Felix IV</a> (d. 530); Saint <a href="#">Agapetus I</a> (d. 536); Saint <a href="#">Gregory I, the Great</a> (d. 604); Saint <a href="#">Boniface IV</a> (d. 615); Saint <a href="#">Eugene I</a> (d. 657); Saint <a href="#">Vitalian</a> (d. 672); Saint <a href="#">Agatho</a> (d. 681); Saint <a href="#">Leo II</a> (d. 683); Saint <a href="#">Benedict II</a> (d. 685); Saint <a href="#">Sergius I</a> (d. 701); Saint <a href="#">Gregory II</a> (d. 731); Saint <a href="#">Gregory III</a> (d. 741); Saint <a href="#">Zachary</a> (d. 752); Saint <a href="#">Paul I</a> (d. 767); Saint <a href="#">Leo III</a> (d. 816); Saint <a href="#">Paschal I</a> (d. 824); Saint <a href="#">Leo IV</a> (d. 855); Saint <a href="#">Nicholas I</a> (d. 867); Saint <a href="#">Leo IX</a> (d. 1054); Blessed <a href="#">Urban II</a> (d. 1099); Blessed <a href="#">Innocent XI</a> (d. 1689); Saint <a href="#">Pius X</a> (d. 1914); Saint <a href="#">John XXIII</a> (d. 1963); Saint <a href="#">Paul VI</a> (d. 1978); Blessed <a href="#">John Paul I</a> (d. 1978); Saint <a href="#">John Paul II</a> (d. 2005); a fragment of Saint Andrew's Cross; the lance of Saint Longinus; a fragment of the Cross of Christ</p>
12	03.16	Sun	<p><a href="#">St. Mary in Domnica at Navicella</a></p>	<p>Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a>, martyr (d. 258); Saint Ciriaca, martyr</p>

13	<a href="#">03.17</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Clement in Lateran</a>	Saint <a href="#">Clement I</a> , Pope and martyr (d. 101); Saint <a href="#">Ignatius of Antioch</a> , Bishop and martyr (d. c. 110); Saint <a href="#">Cyril</a> (d. 869), Apostle of the Slavs
14	<a href="#">03.18</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Balbina on the Aventine</a>	Saint <a href="#">Balbina</a> , Virgin and Roman martyr (d. 130) already venerated in early Christian times Saints Felicissimus and Quirinus (her father) associated with the martyrdom of St. Balbina
15	<a href="#">03.19</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Cecilia in Trastevere</a>	Saint <a href="#">Cecilia</a> (d. 230); Saint Valerian, Cecilia's husband, converted to Christianity and martyred (d. 229); Saint Tiburtius, brother of Valerian and companion in martyrdom; Saint Maximus, the soldier or official in charge of the execution of Valerian and Tiburtius, who later converted and was in turn martyred; Pope <a href="#">Urban I</a> (c. d. 230), who is said to have baptised Cecilia and her husband Valerian
16	<a href="#">03.20</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. Mary in Trastevere</a>	Saint <a href="#">Julius I</a> , Pope (d. 352); Saint <a href="#">Callixtus I</a> , Pope and martyr (c. d. 222); Saints Florentinus, Corona, Sabinus and Alexander, martyrs
17	<a href="#">03.21</a>	Fri	St. Vitalis in Fovea	Saints <a href="#">Vitalis</a> (d. 304), <a href="#">Valeria</a> (2nd century), <a href="#">Gervasius and Protasius</a> (2nd century)
18	<a href="#">03.22</a>	Sat	<a href="#">Sts. Peter and Marcellinus in Lateran</a>	Saints <a href="#">Marcellinus and Peter</a> , martyrs (d. 304); Saint Marcia, martyr associated with Saints Marcellinus and Peter



19	<a href="#">03.23</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. Lawrence Outside the Walls</a>	Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a> (d. 258); Saint <a href="#">Stephen</a> , Protomartyr (1st century); Saint <a href="#">Hippolytus</a> (3rd century); Saint <a href="#">Justus</a> , martyr (d. 167); Pope Saint <a href="#">Sixtus III</a> (d. 440); Pope Saint <a href="#">Zosimus</a> (d. 418); Blessed <a href="#">Pius IX</a> , Pope (d. 1878)
20	<a href="#">03.24</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Mark on the Capitoline</a>	Saint <a href="#">Mark, Evangelist</a> and martyr (1st century); Pope Saint <a href="#">Mark</a> (d. 336); Saints <a href="#">Abdon and Sennen</a> , Persian martyrs (3rd century)
21	<a href="#">03.25</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Pudenziana at the Viminal</a>	Saint <a href="#">Pudenziana</a> , martyr (2nd century); Saint <a href="#">Praxedes</a> , his sister (2nd century)
22	<a href="#">03.26</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Sixtus (Sts. Nereus and Achilleus)</a>	Saint <a href="#">Sixtus I</a> , Pope (d. 125); Saints <a href="#">Nereus and Achilleus</a> (d. 300); Saint <a href="#">Flavia Domitilla</a> , martyr (1st century)
23	<a href="#">03.27</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">Sts. Cosmas and Damian on the Via Sacra</a>	Saints <a href="#">Cosmas and Damian</a> , physicians and martyrs (d. 303); Saints Antimo and Leonzio, brothers and martyrs
24	<a href="#">03.28</a>	Fri	<a href="#">St. Lawrence in Lucina</a>	The gridiron of Saint Lawrence on which the Saint is said to have been burned alive; a vase containing St. Lawrence's burnt flesh
25	<a href="#">03.29</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. Susanna at the Baths of Diocletian</a>	Saint <a href="#">Susanna</a> , virgin and martyr (d. 294)
26	<a href="#">03.30</a>	Sun	<a href="#">Holy Cross in Jerusalem</a>	Fragments of the True Cross, part of the Titulus Crucis (the inscription "I.N.R.I."); nails from the Crucifixion and some thorns from the Crown; a fragment of the cross of the Good Thief, Saint <a href="#">Dismas</a> ; the phalanx of Saint <a href="#">Thomas the Apostle</a> (1st century)

27	<a href="#">04.31</a>	Mon	<a href="#">Sts. Four Crowned on the Caelian Hill</a>	Saints <a href="#">Castor</a> , <a href="#">Sinfroniano</a> , <a href="#">Claudius</a> and <a href="#">Nicostratus</a> , martyrs (4th century)
28	<a href="#">04.01</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Lawrence in Damaso</a>	Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a> , martyr (d. 258); Saint <a href="#">Damasus</a> , Pope and martyr (d. 384); Saints Jovinus and Faustinus, martyrs
29	<a href="#">04.02</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Paul Outside the Walls</a>	Saint <a href="#">Paul the Apostle</a> (d. 67); the chain of Saint Paul; the staff of Saint Paul
30	<a href="#">04.03</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">Sts. Sylvester and Martin on the Mountains</a>	Saints Artemius, Paulina and Sisinnius, martyrs; Blessed <a href="#">Angelus Paoli</a> (d. 1720)
31	<a href="#">04.04</a>	Fri	<a href="#">St. Eusebius on the Esquiline Hill</a>	Saint <a href="#">Eusebius</a> , presbyter and martyr (d. 353); Saints Orosius and Paulinus, priests and martyrs
32	<a href="#">04.05</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. Nicholas in Prison</a>	Saint <a href="#">Nicholas of Bari</a> (d. 270); Saints Marcellinus and Faustinus, martyrs (d. 250)
33	<a href="#">04.06</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. Peter in the Vatican</a>	
34	<a href="#">04.07</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Chrysogonus in Trastevere</a>	Saint <a href="#">Chrysogonus</a> , martyr (d. 303); Saint <a href="#">Anastasia</a> , martyr (d. 250); Saint Rufus, martyr (1st century); Blessed <a href="#">Anna Maria Taigi</a> (d. 1837)
35	<a href="#">04.08</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Mary on Via Lata</a>	Saint <a href="#">Agapitus</a> , martyr (d. 273); Saints Hippolytus and <a href="#">Darius</a> , martyrs (4th century); a fragment of the True Cross
36	<a href="#">04.09</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Marcellus on the Corso</a>	Saint <a href="#">Marcellus I</a> , Pope (d. 309); Saint Digna and Saint Emerita, martyrs
37	<a href="#">04.10</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. Apollinaris in Campo Marzio</a>	Saint <a href="#">Apollinaris</a> (2nd century); Saints Eustratius, Bardarius, Eugenius, Orestes and Eusenio, martyrs

38	<a href="#">04.11</a>	Fri	<a href="#">St. Stephen on the Caelian Hill</a>	Saint <a href="#">Stephen</a> , Protomartyr (d. 36); Saints <a href="#">Primus and Felician</a> , martyrs (d. 303); fragments of the True Cross
39	<a href="#">04.12</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. John at the Latin Gate</a>	Bone fragments or small reliquaries containing parts of the body or personal objects attributed to Saint <a href="#">John the Evangelist</a> (d. 98); Saints <a href="#">Gordianus and Epimachus</a> , martyrs (4th century)
40	<a href="#">04.13</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	
41	<a href="#">04.14</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Praxedes on the Esquiline</a>	Saint <a href="#">Praxedes</a> , martyr (2nd century); Saint Pudens, martyr (2nd century); Saint Victoria, martyr (d. 253); the Column of the Flagellation
42	<a href="#">04.15</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Prisca on the Aventine</a>	Saint <a href="#">Prisca</a> , one of the first Christian martyrs (1st century); Saints <a href="#">Aquila and Priscilla</a> , Christian spouses; fragments of the True Cross
43	<a href="#">04.16</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Mary Major</a>	
44	<a href="#">04.17</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	
45	<a href="#">04.18</a>	Fri	<a href="#">Holy Cross in Jerusalem</a>	
46	<a href="#">04.19</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	
47	<a href="#">04.20</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. Mary Major</a>	
48	<a href="#">04.21</a>	Mon	<a href="#">St. Peter in the Vatican</a>	
49	<a href="#">04.22</a>	Tue	<a href="#">St. Paul Outside the Walls</a>	

50	<a href="#">04.23</a>	Wed	<a href="#">St. Lawrence Outside the Walls</a>	Saint <a href="#">Lawrence</a> , martyr (d. 258); Saint <a href="#">Stephen</a> , Protomartyr (d. 36); Saint <a href="#">Sebastian</a> , martyr (d. 288); Saint <a href="#">Francis of Assisi</a> (d. 1226); Pope Saint <a href="#">Zosimus</a> (d. 418), Pope Saint <a href="#">Sixtus III</a> (d. 440), Pope Saint <a href="#">Hilary</a> (d. 468), Pope Saint <a href="#">Damasus II</a> (d. 1048); Blessed <a href="#">Pius IX</a> , Pope (d. 1878); fragments of the True Cross
51	<a href="#">04.24</a>	Thurs	<a href="#">Church of the Twelve Apostles</a>	Saint <a href="#">Philip the Apostle</a> (d. 80); Saint <a href="#">James the Less</a> (d. 62)
52	<a href="#">04.25</a>	Fri	<a href="#">St. Mary ad Martyres (Pantheon)</a>	Saint <a href="#">Longinus</a> , the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Jesus Christ during the Crucifixion (1st century); Saint <a href="#">Bibiana</a> , martyr (d. 362–363); Saint <a href="#">Lucia</a> , martyr (d. 304); Saints Rasus and Anastasius, martyrs; during the consecration of the church in 609 A.D. by Pope Boniface IV, the bones of at least 28 groups of martyrs were transferred here from the Roman cemeteries
53	<a href="#">04.26</a>	Sat	<a href="#">St. John Lateran</a>	
54	<a href="#">04.27</a>	Sun	<a href="#">St. Pancras</a>	Saint <a href="#">Pancras</a> , martyr (d. 304); fragments of the True Cross