

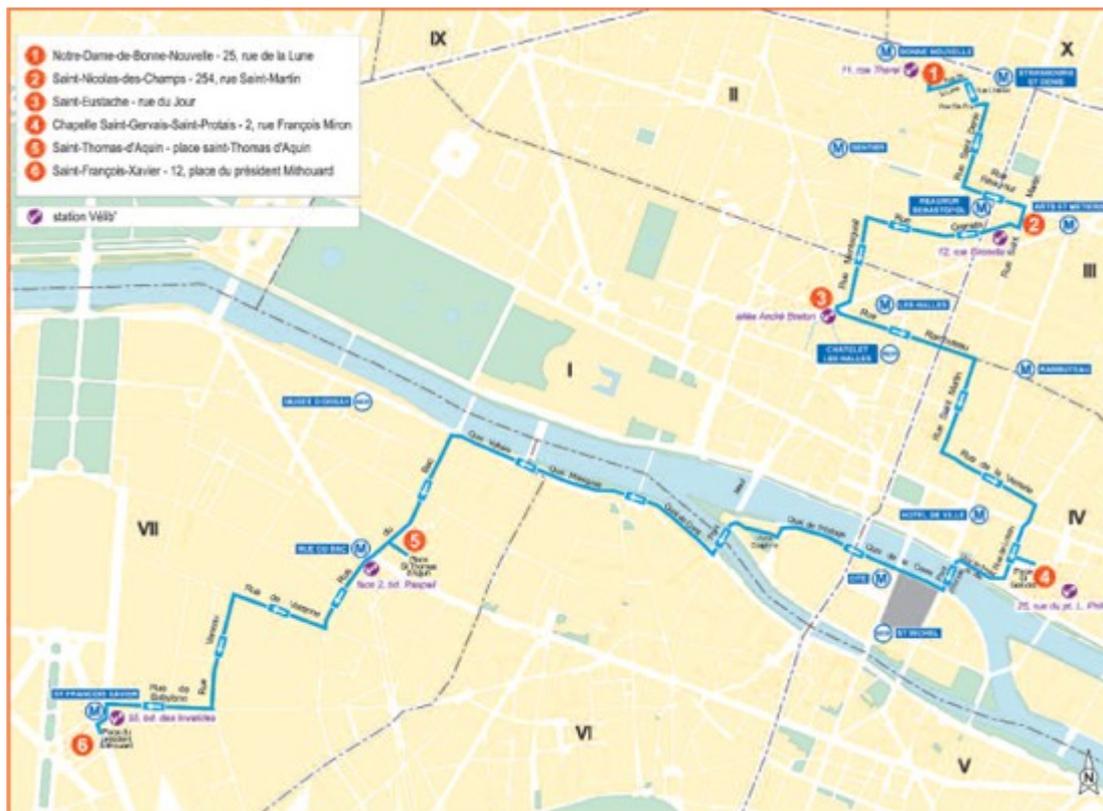
## Paintings of Italy

The churches of Paris house a rich collection of some forty original Italian paintings. However, their presence is relatively recent, mostly dating from the 19th century. Only the work by Baldassari Aloisi in Saint-Sulpice church, representing Mary helping Christ to carry his cross, is known to have been in this location before the Revolution. As regards Annunciation by Giovanni Lanfranco, currently in Notre-Dame-de Bonne-Nouvelle Church, it is possible that it adorned the Oratoire (Oratory Church) in the 18th century.

The Revolutionary and then Napoleonic campaigns brought Italian works of art from Italy and also from Spain and Austria, to the Central Museum, now the Louvre. They were often selected directly by the director of museums, Dominique Vivant-Denon. At the request of the Emperor, some of these works were given to the churches of Paris between 1802 and 1811. It was first and foremost for the celebration of the re-establishment of worship in 1802 that Notre-Dame Cathedral received three important works by Guido Reni, Ludovic Carrache and Salvator Rosa. The gift of these paintings also served as Napoleonic propaganda, aiming to make Paris the new Rome.

On the fall of the Empire, when the works of the Central Museum seized during the Napoleonic conquests were returned to their original collections, the paintings placed in the churches were not returned to their owners. Other important Italian works joined them over the course of the century thanks to donations from parishioners. All these works provide a glimpse of the different schools of art on the Italian peninsula.

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- 1 (2nd) 25, Rue de la Lune  
Notre-Dame-de-Bonne-Nouvelle Church

**Giovanni Lanfranco (1582 – 1647)**

**Annunciation**, circa 1617 – 1619 (behind the high altar)

This painting, which had been hidden since the Second Empire behind an organ which occupied the entire

base of the choir, was rediscovered in 1970 and may come from the collections of Cardinal Costaguti in Rome. The bottom part of the canvas is fairly dark, while in the top part a crescendo of light bathes the figures in an orange glow. The combination of the supernatural illumination and the full, almost realistic, forms of the characters gives this painting a dramatic effect, accentuated by the contre-jour figure of the angel, who stands out in striking fashion.

### **Lodovico Cigoli (1559 – 1613)**

#### **Virgin and Child Surrounded by Angels**, 1601 (behind the high altar to the right)

This work comes from San Domenico Church in Cesena (Emilia Romagna), which was destroyed in the 18th century and whose paintings were sold in 1797. In the 19th century, the canvas probably entered the collection of the Demidoff princes, before being given to the parish of Saint-Honoré d'Eylou in 1863. It finally became part of the decor of the choir in Notre-Dame de Bonne-Nouvelle Church in 1931. Here, the artist moved away from the mannerist style of his master Allori by using a more traditional design of the Virgin in Majesty surrounded by saints, heralding the great Baroque paintings from Bologna. Next to the Virgin are Saint Jean l'Évangéliste and Sainte Marie-Madeleine. In the lower register, the town of Cesena can be seen between Pope Pius V and Saint Dominique.



(3rd) 254, Rue Saint Martin

### **Saint Nicolas-des-Champs Church**

### **Amico Aspertini (1475 – 1552)**

#### **Holy Conversation**, 1520 – 1521 (bottom right, second chapel)

This painting was commissioned for San Tommaso di Strada Maggiore Church in Bologna by a member of the Forti family, represented to the left of the composition holding the headgear of doctors in law. Aspertini was in Rome when Michelangelo was working on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and the highly sculptural figure of the Virgin is reminiscent of the sibyls in the chapel. On the other hand, the slightly hard aspect of some of the faces makes the viewer think that the painter knew the works of Dürer.

### **Giovanni Battista Trotti (1555 – 1619)**

#### **Circumcision**, between 1594 and 1599

(choir surround, 4th chapel to the right of the axial chapel)

Allocated to Saint-Philippe-du-Roule Church in 1811 and then to Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs in 1967, this painting comes from the Saint-Nom Chapel in the Dominican church of Cremona and was given up by the Duke of Parma during the Armistice in 1796. The composition is characterised by a gathering of characters, with only one column in the background evoking the Temple in which the scene is supposed to take place. The drapes in acid colours and unusual shades and the highly meticulous workmanship are a legacy of the artist's master, Bernardo Campi.



(1st) Rue du Jour

### **Saint Eustache Church**

### **Santi di Tito (1536 – 1603)**

#### **Tobias and the Angel**, circa 1575 (choir surround, left side, 3rd chapel)

A student of Bronzino, Santi di Tito was the first painter in the Court of Cosme I of Medici. The painting was originally placed in the Sacristy of San Marco in Florence, but was then exchanged and became part of the collections of Francis II of Habsburg-Lorraine in Vienna. It was the first painting chosen by Dominique Vivant Denon at Belvedere Palace in 1809. It was given to Saint Eustache Church in 1811. The elegance of the figures, the attention to detail and the exchanges of glances make this highly sensitive work one of the most attractive of the churches of Paris.

### **Rutilio Manetti (1571 – 1639)**

#### **The Death of Sainte Marie Madeleine**, circa 1617 – 1627 (choir surround, left side, 5th chapel)

The painting, which was seized in Rome in 1798, was put into storage in Saint-Louis-des-François Church, which was used as a warehouse during the Revolutionary conquests. When it arrived in Paris, it was given to

the la Madeleine Church (now the Church of Assumption) in 1811 and then to Saint Eustache Church in 1933. Marie Madeleine is represented with her head thrown back, supported by an angel, while another angel indicates the sky to her. Near her, a skull symbolises the vanity of terrestrial life. The realistic nature of the angels' faces shows the considerable influence of Caravaggio, whereas the highly refined workmanship, particularly in the wings and drapes and the Saint's hair, is more of a reference to the Tuscan school.



(4th) 2 Rue François Miron

### Saint-Gervais – Saint-Protais Church

#### Sebastiano Ricci (1659 – 1734)

**Pope Gregory the Great and Saint Vital Saving the Souls of Purgatory**, circa 1730 – 1734 (bottom right, 3rd chapel)

This great painting previously adorned the high altar of San Vital Church in Parma. Seized in 1803, it was the most recent painting selected by the Arts Commission. It was given to Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais Church in 1811 to satisfy the churchwardens who wanted to obtain for the church famous cartoons of tapestries of the lives of the two Saints. This gift can also be explained by the presence of Saint Vital, a Roman Centurion presented here in 17th century armour, who passes for the father of Saint Gervais and Saint Protais. This composition in the form of an X places the two interceding Saints on the same diagonal as the Virgin and Child, while on the other diagonal the souls of purgatory are raised up by swirling angels. The dynamics of the scene and the clear, brilliant colours belong to the Venetian school of the Rococo period.



(7th) Place Saint Thomas d'Aquin

### Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin Church

#### Francesco Barbieri, known as Guercino (The Squinter) (1591-1966)

**The Virgin appearing to Saint Jerome**, 1650 (bottom right)

This canvas was created for the Church of the Rosary in Cento, the painter's town of birth. The iconography of the painting is rare, as the Saint, generally represented alone, is found here in the presence of the Virgin to whom the Church is dedicated. The Virgin is wearing a vividly coloured robe and dress, whereas the saint below is wrapped in a pale pink drape. The serenity and tenderness of the Virgin and Child group is contrasted with the more agitated figure of the Saint. Guercino combined the classicism tinged with idealism of Guido Reni with the more realistic style of Caravaggio.

#### Salvator Rosa (1615 – 1673)

**Assumption**, circa 1660 (bottom right, 1st bay)

This painting, commissioned for the high altar of Santa Maria della Vittoria Church in Milan, was exceptional for Salvator Rosa, as he was a painter of dramatic landscapes and battles. Here, he was pitting himself against the great genre of religious paintings by giving the scene a theatrical aspect. The entire range of feelings can be read on the faces of the agitated Apostles. The work was seized in 1796 and adorned Notre Dame Cathedral in 1802 during the celebrations of the re-establishment of worship. The canvas has been at Saint Thomas d'Aquin Church since 1963.



(7th) Place du Président Mithouard

### Saint-François-Xavier Church

#### Luca Giordano (1636 – 1705)

**The Crucifixion of Saint Pierre**, circa 1654 (behind the choir, right side, 1st chapel)

This painting, like the following one, was donated in 1905 by the Baroness of Teil. Its history is not currently known. The Saint is being crucified with his head down; the crucifixion was at his request out of humility at the

martyrdom of Christ. As can be seen from the grimacing figures of the executioners, this chiaroscuro work is influenced by the works of Ribera. The Saint stands out strikingly from the much darker background, in a very restricted work.

**Jacopo Robusti, known as Tintoretto (1518 – 1594)**

**The Last Supper, 1559 (marriage sacristy)**

This work comes from San Felice Church in Venice. The perspective places the viewer below, as the work was placed above a panel. The moment the artist has chosen to represent is that where Christ reveals to the Apostles that one of them has betrayed him, arousing different feelings in them. Judas, placed opposite Christ and shown from behind, is holding in his hand his purse, the fruit of his betrayal. By reducing the number of colours used and using chiaroscuro, the painter manages to give The Last Supper an intimate atmosphere. Before it was bought by the Baron of Teil, the work was part of the collection of Marie-Caroline, the Duchess of Berry.

Saint-Eustache  
The Death of Sainte Marie  
Madeleine, Rutilio Manetti

Notre-Dame-de-Bonne-Nouvelle  
Church  
Virgin and Child Surrounded by  
Angels, Lodovico Cigoli

Saint-Eustache Church  
Tobias and the Angel,  
Santi di Tito



Due to the provisions of the Concordat, signed in 1801 between France and the Holy See, which ratified the Revolutionary seizures of the clergy's possessions and transferred the property of the parish churches and their offices to the communes, the City of Paris currently owns around one hundred religious buildings, including a large number of Catholic churches.

The Concordat regime, which remained in force until the 1905 law separating Church and State, proved to be advantageous for religious buildings belonging to the commune. Making the works of art confiscated during the Revolution available to the clergy and an active policy of commissioning decors and constructing new buildings made the churches of Paris an artistic series of buildings of exceptional richness covering the major periods of French art, from the Classical era to the modern period.

The Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Paris is currently responsible for conserving this considerable heritage. It is in charge of its inventory, maintenance and promotion as well as the restoration work necessary to conserve the buildings which house it.