



# Rosary Basilica

## Short description

Welcome to the Rosary Basilica! Take some time and let the painting of the building have an effect on you. This explanation should help you to understand the pictorial program of this church.

On 20th August 1899, the foundation stone of what was then the Rosary Church was laid. Just about a year later, on 11th November 1900, the new building was consecrated by the Prince-Bishop of Breslau, Georg Cardinal Kopp. The brick building in the Margraviate of Brandenburg's medieval style is reminiscent of late Romanesque buildings in the Margraviate of Brandenburg, and its floor plan reveals a Greek (equal-armed) cross.

As the church was largely spared from the destruction of the Second World War, it was temporarily used as a Berlin bishop's church in the post-war period and was therefore elevated to a "Basilica minor" by Pope Pius XII on 20th October 1950.

### Painting

The interior painting by the artist from Münster/Westphalia Prof. Friedrich Stummel began in 1906. Above the right pillar in the chancel, Stummel "signed" his work ("Friedrich Stummel fecit"). The painting and furnishings of the church are so distinctive that the structurally simple interior of the church is hardly recognizable in rare photographs from before 1906. The interior painting shows the fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary - it is a painted Rosary Prayer.

The most striking wall painting in the chancel above the high altar depicts the donation of the Rosary by Mary to St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena (apse).

In the central nave of the church, the glorious mysteries of the Rosary are depicted:

- The *Resurrection of Jesus* and the *Ascension of Jesus*  
Both mysteries are illustrated in medallions in the barrel vault in front of the organ gallery.
- The *Descent of the Holy Spirit*  
This mystery was painted by Stummel in the impressive depiction of the "Miracle of Pentecost" in the apse choir arch: Mary sits enthroned among the Twelve Apostles while they receive the Holy Spirit, shown as red tongues of fire above their heads.
- The *Assumption of Mary into Heaven* and the *Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven*  
Both are depicted in the dome – surrounded by choirs of angels led by the Archangels Gabriel and Michael.

The joyful mysteries of the Rosary are portrayed in the eastern aisle.

- The *Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary*, the *Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth*, the *Presentation in the Temple* and the *Finding of Jesus in the Temple*  
These four mysteries are depicted in medallions in the eastern barrel vault in front of the depiction of the birth of Jesus.

- The *Nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem*  
This (third of the five) joyful mysteries is depicted on the eastern front wall. It was painted in 1921 by Theodor Nüttgens after Stummel's death in 1919.

The sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary can be found in the western aisle.

- The *Agony in the Garden*, the *Scourging at the Pillar*, the *Crowning with Thorns* and *The Carrying of the Cross*  
These sorrowful mysteries are illustrated in medallions in the western barrel vault in front of the depiction of the crucifixion.
- The *Crucifixion*  
You can see this fifth of the sorrowful mysteries on the western front wall.

Below the crucifixion scene, in the black fields, you can see the seven last words of Jesus on the cross.

The two side altars are dedicated to Mary Mother of God (left) and St. Joseph (right). Between the altar of Mary and the main altar there is a wooden Rosary altar, which again shows the donation of the Rosary to St. Dominic.

The driver of Colonel i.G. Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg reports that, on the evening before 20th July 1944, on the way back to his apartment in Nikolassee, Stauffenberg visited a church in Steglitz for silent prayer. Historians and Stauffenberg's family assume that it was the Rosary Church where Stauffenberg prayed on 19th July 1944.

## Organ and Bells

The organ in the Rosary Basilica was designed and built in 1966 by the organ building company Gebr. Stockmann in collaboration with Prof. Joseph Ahrens. It has three manuals (main organ, positive organ, swell organ) and 42 registers. In order to save space on the small gallery, the positive organ had to be hung up on the vault.

If you want to see and hear the bells in action, you can find them here (link to YouTube):  
[https://youtu.be/Zv\\_sWFgruLk](https://youtu.be/Zv_sWFgruLk)

We have a short film here with insights into "mysterious places" (including galleries, tower, bell cage), that are normally not accessible to the public (link to YouTube):  
<https://youtu.be/O5KtCXMi4Rk>