



# THE CATACOMBS OF DOMITILLA

## Management of the Catacombs of Domitilla

On Jan. 1, 2009, the Holy See entrusted the Catacombs of Domitilla to the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), known familiarly as Divine Word Missionaries (or Steyler Missionare in German). Our goal is to care for this sacred place and to transmit to pilgrims the deep meaning of its history. The Priests and Brothers of this missionary Congregation hope to convey the cultural and spiritual complexity of these most important of Christian Catacombs to all who visit them.



SS. Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz

## The Divine Word Missionaries: Who we are?

We are a missionary religious community, made up of both Brothers and Priests, founded in 1875 by St. Arnold Janssen. We come from different countries and cultural backgrounds, and we live in international and multicultural communities, witnessing to the Good News of the Gospel and praying through God's Grace to be able to make known to all men and women the universal nature of the Church and love for the Lord.

## Our mission

In our missionary work, we give priority to the most urgent needs of people in more than 65 countries. Following the teaching of Jesus Christ, we opt to work especially among the poor and the marginalized. Our primary goal is to proclaim

the Good News where the Gospel has not yet been announced or developed sufficiently, and where Local Churches are in need of help. With deep respect for the cultural and religious traditions of the populations among which we live, we strive to enter into dialogue with everyone, announcing the Good News of the love of God.



**For further information, please feel free to visit our mission websites, some of which are listed below:**

USA: [www.divineword.org](http://www.divineword.org);  
[www.svdsouth.com](http://www.svdsouth.com); [www.svd-ca.com](http://www.svd-ca.com)

Australia:  
<http://users.bigpond.com/EspirituBern/>

Ireland and England: [www.svdireland.com](http://www.svdireland.com)  
Japan: [www.svdjpn.com](http://www.svdjpn.com)

China: [www.svdchina.org](http://www.svdchina.org)

India: [www.svdinm.org](http://www.svdinm.org)

Indonesia:  
[www.svdjawa.org](http://www.svdjawa.org)  
and [www.svdende.org](http://www.svdende.org)

Korea: [www.svd.or.kr](http://www.svd.or.kr)

Philippines: [www.svdphc.org](http://www.svdphc.org)

Vietnam: [www.svdvie.110mb.com](http://www.svdvie.110mb.com)

## How to reach the Catacombs of Domitilla

From the main Railway Station (Stazione Termini): Take bus number 714 direction 'Palazzo Sport' to Piazza dei Navigatori. Alighting from the bus, turn left along the Via delle Sette Chiese until you reach number 282.

From Piazza Venezia: Take bus number 160 direction 'Rufino', or on Sundays and holidays bus number 160 direction 'Montagnola', to Piazza dei Navigatori, then follow the directions given above.

From Largo Torre Argentina: Take bus number 30 direction 'Laurentina' to Piazza dei Navigatori, then follow the directions given above.

The entrance ticket for the Catacombs of Domitilla, which includes the guided tour, is €8,00 for adults and €5,00 for children aged 6-15.

**OPENING HOURS: from h. 9.00 until 12.00  
from h. 14.00 until 17.00  
TUESDAY IS CLOSED**



**For further information:**

Domitilla Catacombs

Via delle Sette Chiese n. 282 - 00147 ROMA (RM)

Tel.: 0039.06.5110342

Fax.: 0039.06.5110512

Website.: <http://www.domitilla.info>

E.mail: [info@domitilla.info](mailto:info@domitilla.info)

# THE CATACOMBS OF DOMITILLA





The Catacombs of Domitilla are among the most extensive in the area around Rome. They contain an underground Basilica and about 17 km (10.5 miles) of galleries and corridors spread over four different levels, with almost 150,000 burials.



During your visit you will gain in-depth knowledge of some aspects of the life of the early Christian communities, of their faith in the resurrection and in eternal life. In the wealth of symbols decorating their tombs and in the outstanding frescoes showing their relationship with God and their loving veneration of the Martyrs buried in this ancient cemetery, you can admire the rich heritage that they have left to us across the centuries.



The oldest galleries were excavated from the late 2nd to the early 3rd centuries A.D., beneath land donated to the Christians by the noble Flavia Domitilla, granddaughter of the emperor Vespasian. They were dug near a pre-existing hypogeum (underground chamber), known as the Flavian hypogeum, which contained a gallery filled with locula (a specific type of burial) and sarcophagi. Later on, next to this area, a Triclinium was built for the celebration of the refrigeria or funeral banquets in memory of the dead. You will also be able to admire the funerary chapel known as the Cubiculum of Eros and Psyche.

For safety's sake, pilgrims may only enter the catacombs accompanied by one of our qualified guides. Guided tours are offered in Italian, English, French, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese and German. Recorded tours are also available upon request in Russian, Greek, Korean, Japanese, Croatian and other languages.



The Catacombs of Domitilla are the only ones open to the public still containing an underground Basilica which you can visit. Excavated in the late 4th century A.D., during the pontificate of Pope Damasus (366-384 A.D.), they were dedicated to the holy Martyrs Nereus and Achilleus, who were first buried under the apse of the basilica, close to the grave of Petronilla.



In addition to admiring the frescoes and the wealth of Christian symbols in this ancient cemetery, you will also be impressed by the magnificent engineering skills shown in the deepest underground levels, and will come to appreciate the mastery of the workers who planned and carved out this huge labyrinth of underground passages, using skills and specialized architectural techniques handed down from the early centuries.



Upon prior reservation, pilgrim groups may also make arrangements to celebrate the Eucharist or to hold services or ecumenical liturgies either in the Basilica itself (which has space for almost 500), or in small groups in one of the smaller burial chambers outfitted for this purpose deep in the galleries of the catacombs.

