



CHURCH OF S. GIOVANNI BATTISTA (ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST)

You can find this point of interest in Ossuccio - Path 1 - Stage 3

INFORMATION

Location: the church of S. Giovanni Battista lies on a rocky butress at the East end of the island.

Paving: the footpath leading to the church is grassy; the portico has a flagstone paving, as has the church interior.

Architectural barriers: information on accessibility is available in the description of Stage 3; to access the church one must cross a low stone threshold.

Access: access is through the façade entrance, under the portico. To arrange the visit please ask the *Antiquarium*.

Services: -

Leisure and food: the surrounding green plateau is equipped with benches and small wooden tables for anyone wishing a break. On the left side of the church there is a small fountain. A bar and a restaurant are available on the island.

DESCRIPTION

(Drawn from the descriptive panels on site)

«The first building erected in this area, which dates to Roman times, was probably a patrician villa or sanctuary. A small church was built during the Early Middle Ages. The church was demolished in 1169 by the rival city of Como, allied with Frederick I Barbarossa. Excavations conducted by Belloni [between 1958 and 1963] uncovered the walls of the church (13.5 x 4 m), built on a levelled surface of the rocky outcrop on top of the remains of earlier Roman and late Roman buildings. Several graves were excavated both inside and around the church.

Legend has it that at the end of the fifteenth century an oratory was built on the ruins of the old church. By the time of Bishop Lazzaro Carafino's pastoral visit of 1635 the church had been entirely reconstructed. The bell-tower was built between 1670 and 1675. The building you visit today is similar to that described above. Inside the building you can see eighteenth century fittings and a late nineteenth century pictorial decoration».

«The inside of the Church is a single nave divided into three bays, with a rectangular apse. The recent church restoration of 2008 has brought back to life the notable pictorial decoration from between 1875 and 1899.

The decoration of the vaults of the first and third bay is particularly interesting. A large rose is depicted in among bunches of flowers.

In the second bay you can see, within a quatrefoil frame, the symbols of the Eucharist, the chalice and host silhouetted against an azure sky and surrounded by angels. One of them is holding a thurible or metal censer. To the left, within a triangular frame, there are symbols from the Old Testament (Moses' staff, the Tablets of the Commandments and a Jewish priest's mitre); to the right you can see symbols from the New Testament (the cross with the standard of the risen Christ, the crozier, a Papal tiara and a bishop's mitre). The Eucharistic symbols of the mystic lamb and the cross with the standard of the risen Christ, silhouetted against an azure sky and surrounded by angels, are painted on the vault of the presbytery within a quatrefoil frame».

Worthy of note is the «altar frontal painted with chalk paste (scagliola) depicts *St. John the Baptist* in the middle (to whom the church is dedicated), *St. Peter* on the left, and *St. Paul* on the right. Inscribed on the back is the date 1706».