



CHURCH OF ST. CHARLES

You can find this point of interest in Menaggio - Path 1 - Stage 2

INFORMATION

Location: the church of St. Charles looks onto a churchyard of approx. 10 x 10 metres, which, in turn, looks onto via Castellino da Castello, at the top of the mound at the back of the lake.

Paving: the churchyard has a gavel base, with a 3 metre wide cobbled strip.

Architectural barriers: access to the churchyard is by four steps. Please note: at the beginning of the cobbled strip at the centre of the churchyard there are two stone posts, 60 cm high and 25 cm wide. Access to the church is by further 3 steps.

Access: from the entrance on the façade.

Services: a number of parking spaces are available in via Nazario Sauro.

Leisure and food: cafes nearby.

DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

The church of St. Charles was built between 1612 and 1614 on the initiative of nobleman Cinzio Calvi on his own land, located near the ruins of the Castle: it is dedicated to the Milanese Saint, thirty years after the death of the Borromeo, and a mere four years after his canonization, possibly as a homage to the friendship that bound the Saint with another citizen of Menaggio, Castellino da Castello. Moreover, Calvi donated part of his wealth to the monastery of St. Mary of the Passion in Milan, owned by the Canons Regular of the Lateran, in order to compel them to serve the new church and make sure that eight of them took residence in the attached convent: four priests, a cleric, two lay brothers, and a servant. Regardless of their small number, for more than one hundred and fifty years the Canons lived in the adjacent house, serving not only the church, but the community as a whole: moreover, they had a well built near their cloister open to the inhabitants of the upper part of town, that until then had no access to water. On 5 September 1771 the parsonage was suppressed by emperor Joseph II; the church passed under the administration of the Vestry of the parish church of St. Stephen. The simple façade in undressed stone, embellished by three terracotta brick strips and opened by a wide thermal window, looks onto the small secluded churchyard, squeezed between old buildings in undressed stone, among which, on the left, was the Canons' house. The single nave interior has two side chapels. The one on the right hosts, above the altar, a canvas with *The Pietà between Saints*, by Giuseppe Vermiglio, a painter who worked for a long time for the canons of the monastery of St. Mary of the Passion in Milan. The chapel on the left is overlooked by a painting of *Saint Firmus between Saint Apollonia and Saint Agatha*, made, too, by Giuseppe Vermiglio; on the side wall a glass case holds the red mozzetta and zucchetto owned by Cardinal Andrea Carlo Ferrari, a further link with the Milanese Diocese. The church walls carry other interesting 17th century canvases: on the left, the *Death of Saint Joseph*, and the *Crucifixion with Saint Peter and Saint Andrew*, signed by Giuseppe Antonio Castelli; on the right, *The Healing of a possessed woman*. The presbytery hosts a polychrome marble altar; at the back, in a niche, stands out a gypsum statue of *Saint Charles*. On the floor, on the right in front of the altar, lies the sepulchral stone of the Calvi family, where Cinzio and his wives Caterina Camozzi and Marta Piperelli are buried. A characteristic feature of the church of St. Charles is the elegant Spanish styled bell-gable.