



## THE ROVENNA CROSS

This point of interest is found in Cernobbio - [Path 2](#) - Stage 2

### INFORMATION

**Location:** until the second half of the 19th century the precious “Rovenna Cross” was located on the Tuscan capital granite column standing next to the wall limiting the churchyard of St. Michael’s parish church, opposite to the façade. It has now been moved to a safer place.

**Paving:** the churchyard is paved with concrete flags.

**Architectural barriers:** the approx. 1.5 metre high column is placed on a 60 cm parallelepiped shaped base, which, in turn, stands on an approx. 15 cm step.

Before the column, and still on the west side of the churchyard, there are two semicircular flowerbeds, limited by 10 cm curbs, which are planted with tress and shrubs, and separated by two granulated concrete benches.

**Access:** -

**Services:** parking is available in the area.

**Leisure and Food:** there is a bar in the area.

### DESCRIPTION

The “Rovenna Cross” is a precious gilded copper cross which scholars date back to the eleventh or twelfth century. It carries three embedded rock crystals at each end. As described by Stefania Clerici in the book *Rovenna... oggi (Rovenna... today)*: “Despite death, the figure of Jesus is characterized by a serene facial expression, and is symmetrical and straight, as if still alive, in the early-medieval position of Christ triumphant. Legs are simplified and rigid, the body is thin, with long-fingered hands, signs of archaism making this composition a likely companion to Carolingian and Ottonian ones. However, Eastern hints can be found in the style of the Rovenna cross, too: for instance, the gilding, and the solemnly hieratic and frontal figure, are features mediated from Byzantine art”. We do not know when it was placed on the top of the column fronting the façade of the church of *St. Michael* (S. Michele) but it was certainly up there when, in 1861, Msgr. Vincenzo Barelli, canon of the Como Cathedral, and antiques enthusiast, saw it and understood its value, advising to keep it inside the church. Initially, it was placed on the tabernacle of the chapel on the right, and later, once restored, in an even safer place. During Pope John Paul II’s visit to Como, in May 1996, the cross was placed on the altar in the plain of Lazzago where the pope celebrated Holy Mass, and a copy, reproduced on a smaller scale, was given to him as a memento, as if to symbolize the beauty of the faith of the people of Como across the centuries.

It is considered by scholars an item of great artistic and historical importance. In 2005 it was included in the new coat of arms and banner of the Province of Como. A smaller reproduction is preserved in the church, in a painting exposed on the counter-façade.