



ABBAZIA DELL'ACQUAFREDDA (ACQUAFREDDA ABBEY)

You can find this point of interest in Ossuccio - Path 1 - Stage 4

This point of interest is not located along the itinerary but can be admired from a panoramic point on the Island's crest

DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

The Acquafredda (Italian for *coolwater*) Abbey takes its name from the water gushing from a spring nearby, and rises over the centre of Lenno, at the foot of Mount Ossino; it is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Saint Peter, and Saint Agrippinus. It was erected on land donated in 1142 to the Cistercians of Morimondo by Attone, nicknamed the *Peregrino*, from the Comacina Island.

The new Abbey, formally established in 1143, developed quickly and was an important cultural centre, also due to papal and imperial privileges. However, it progressively entered a period of decline from the 15th century onwards.

Abandoned by the monks, the deterioration became so irreparable that in 1527 the Governor of Como ordered that it be set on fire and demolished.

The complex came back to life in the 17th century, in a newly baroque style, and enjoyed a further period of splendour. At the beginning of the 18th century it was restored once again, but, at the end of the century, by order of the Austrian government the abbey was suppressed, its properties secularized, and the monks moved to the Certosa of Pavia. The complex lived alternating fortunes, until it was acquired by the Lombardy Province Order of Friars Minor Capuchin in 1934.

Of particular interest is the church, whose 17th century and 18th century features are embellished by stuccoes and decorations centred around the Marian theme and the worship of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, the "heart and soul" of the Cistercian reform; among the paintings, those attributed to Giovanni Mauro della Rovere nicknamed the Fiamminghino deserve a special mention. At the left of the choir stands the old chapel dedicated to saints Peter, Agrippinus and Dominica; it is very likely that the mortal remains of Saint Agrippinus, thirteenth bishop of Como, and his sister Dominica were transferred here, presumably after the destruction of the parish church of S. Eufemia on the Island (although a local tradition has it that the transfer took place earlier, to "put them in a safe place").

The relics of bishop Agrippinus, however, are not at the Acquafredda Abbey anymore: now they are in Delebio, in Valtellina, in the parish church of S. Carpofofo (St. Carpophorus), where they were taken in 1785 after the Abbey was suppressed, with the aid of count Francesco Peregalli, who acquired the properties that the Abbey itself held in Delebio.