



CHURCH OF S. FRANCESCO (ST. FRANCIS)

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

INFORMATION

Location: the Church of S. Francesco (St. Francis) looks onto a large precinct next to the square, Piazza San Francesco.

Paving: Piazza San Francesco and the precinct are paved with porphyry cubes and stone slab strips which are laid in a concentric circular pattern, according to the plan of arch. Pini from Canzo. Two granite slabs have been placed in the area outside the Church entrance, engraved with the shapes of the *Dove* and *Noah's Ark*. The 10 steps which separate the precinct from the square are cobbled. The Church interior is paved with terracotta tiles.

Architectural barriers: there are two ways of getting to the precinct, which is closed on the left hand-side (when facing the Church) by a small stone wall. From the bottom of the square (as suggested by our itinerary) one has to climb 10 cobbled steps; from the side at a tangent to Via Gajum you can enter from an opening in the wall. To reach the Church one has to climb two steps.

Access: the portal on the façade leads to an inner door opening outwards, allowing access to the inside of the Church.

Services: the large Villa Meda parking is available in the immediate surroundings.

Leisure and food: -

DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

The Church of S. Francesco (St. Francis) is also known as *Gésa da San Mirètt*, named after the local Saint, using the diminutive to distinguish it from *San Mir* (the Shrine); it was part of a fourteenth-century Franciscan monastery. Initially dedicated to Our Lady, it changed its dedication in favour of St. Miro in a period prior to 1493; it was restored and enlarged presumably in the first half of the eighteenth century. The end of the 18th century marked the end of the presence of the Friars Minor in the adjacent convent. «In 1839 at the bequest of the Provost Don Angelo Sala and with the substantial contribution of Giovan Battista Gavazzi, the friary was transformed into a Civil Hospital to become, after the Great War, a retirement home for the elderly, a function which it held until 1979. Meanwhile, the Church changed its name to S. Francesco» (source: <http://www.comune.canzo.co.it/>), although the population still remembers it as dedicated to “fellow villager” St. Miro. At the end of the 70s of the last century restoration and conservative renovation works were started on the Church and the annexed building, which today continues its spiritual function as a monastic Oasis, according to a decision by the Archbishop of Milan's Curia.

The ochre-washed eighteenth-century façade is opened by a simple stone portal with a tympanum carrying the Franciscan coat of arms, and a shaped window which interrupts the cornice, supported by four pilasters.

The single nave interior, with original terracotta flooring, has four side chapels with marble balustrades and interesting scagliola stone frontals, two of which carry the signature of Intelvi Valley artist Giovanni Battista Rapa and the date 1740. As you enter, on the right, there is a chapel dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi, followed by the Crucifix chapel, which in a side niche houses a statue of *Our Lady of Sorrows* with its processional canopy. On the left of the entrance you meet the chapel of St. Miro (with a statue donated by Marquis Tentorio), in Baroque style, followed by that of Our Lady Immaculate. The polygonal apse is dominated by a painting of the *Crucified Christ with Saints*, with two stained glass windows depicting *St. Francis* and *St. Miro* on either side; on the side walls of the presbytery there are two valuable seventeenth century paintings with the *Transitus of St. Anthony of Padua* and the *Miracle of the reattached foot*.

Worthy of note are two eighteenth-century frescoes on the ceiling of the nave with *The dream of St. Francis* and the *Glory of St. Francis and St. Miro*.

The choir gallery is on the counter-facade complete with the organ placed there in 1822.