



The New Cathedral
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 visiting hours:
 every day
 from 7.30 a.m. to 12.00 a.m.
 from 15.00 p.m. to 19.00 p.m.



The New Cathedral is dedicated to the Assumption and its construction took about two centuries. It was built over the ruins of the ancient early Christian church of Saint Peter de Dom: today we have only a few marks of it. The old Cathedral had a longitudinal plan and it presented a nave and two aisles with twenty-eight pillars which may come from Roman buildings. After the demolition of this church, four pillars were reused: two of them were used for the portal of the Broletto, which overlooks the square, whereas the other two pillars were used for the portal of the church of Saint Mary of charity in Musei street. During some centuries, the Cathedral of Saint Peter was revised many times and it risked the collapse, until the city of Brescia ordered its demolition in 1599. The first stone was put by the bishop Marino Giorgi (also called Zorzi) on 12th May 1604. The new cathedral changed its name in Saint Mary of Assumption and was built starting with the eastern pillar on the northern side. The plan of the architect Giovan Battista Lantana from Brescia was soon replaced with the one of Lorenzo Binago from Milan who deeply changed the original project. The works went on fast for the early thirty years of XVIIth century but later slowed down in the mid-century. Then, during the XVIIIth century, the cardinal Angelo Maria Querini gave a great new impulse to the building site: in addition to the building of the walls he provided the church with all accessories and precious paintings made in Rome. During this period many famous architects worked here, like Andrea Pozzo, Giorgio Massari and Filippo Juvarra until the temple was accomplished (except the cupola) following the plan of Giovan Battista (at first) and Antonio Marchetti after, who were the two general directors over the century. The accomplishment of the cupola in 1825 marked the end of the building works. The Cathedral was consecrated after about a century on 4th July 1914 by the bishop Giacinto Gaggia. During the Second World War, on 13th July 1944, the copper cover and the wooden structure of the cupola burst into flames: this became one of the most dramatic symbols of the air raid which torture the town. The necessary repairs have been done immediately in the postwar years.

Outside the facade is made of white marble from Botticino and it is marked with high Corinthian pilasters as well as inside. The apse area is decorated with two niches where the statues of Saint Faustino and Giovita (the patrons saints of Brescia) are placed. These statues were carved by Antonio and Carlo Carra (1673) who also sculpted the statue of Saint Giovanni Battista placed over the side northern door. The impressive massive building of the cupola (which is the third bigger cupola in Italy after Saint Peter and Saint Mary del Fiore) was built on the plan of Luigi Cagnola, architect from Milan, between 1815 and 1825. He reused the idea which Antonio Marchetti had already suggested but he simplified the neoclassical shape. Eight high windows with a triangular tympanum are placed in the tambour which is split out by some columns. They function as keystones for the dome structure. The lantern presents the same combination of windows (here they are arched- curved) and columns which close the rising pattern of the building in the double cross on top. The building of the façade took about all the XVIIIth century. The lower area was planned by Giovanni Antonio Biasio, whereas the upper one together with the accomplishment of the tympanum is due to Antonio Marchetti. On the other hand, the portal was designed by Giovan Battista Marchetti and it presents the Bust of cardinal Angelo Maria Querini in its curved tympanum inside an oval-shaped space. This bust is a work by Antonio Calegari (Brescia 1699-1777) who created also the sculptures of Faith and Charity which are placed on the gable of the window in the upper area. The statues decorating the tympanum depict: at the centre the Virgin Mary's group rising to the sky together with angels; Saint Peter on the left and Saint Paul on the right. These sculptures were shaped by Giovan Battista Carboni (Brescia 1732-1790) but they were actually fulfilled by Pier Giuseppe Possenti from Bergamo (Bergamo 1750-Milano 1828) in 1792. At last, the statues on the left of Saint John the Evangelist and on the right of Saint James the apostle are works by Citerio from Como.



THE NEW CATHEDRAL OF BRESCIA



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1 The Hall way

A sort of hallway leads us to the wide space of the temple. Here some bishops' gravestones are placed. These bishops managed the diocese of Brescia. On the left there is the grave of the bishop Carlo Domenico Ferrari (1834-1846) built by the sculptor Giovanni Emanuelli (Brescia 1816-Milano 1894) in 1855 in neoclassical style. In front of it there is the grave of the bishop Girolamo Verzeri (1850-1883): it was built in 1905 on the occasion of the transfer of his mortal remains, as we can read on the memorial gravestone which his successor Giacomo Maria Corna Pellegrini placed there. On the right side there is the burial monument to the bishop Gabrio Maria Nava (1807-1831) created in shapely neoclassical style by Gaetano Monti (Ravenna 1776-1847) from Ravenna. Its bas-relief depicts the bishop's passing, whereas below there is the sorrowful statue of Charity. On the opposite wall there is the memorial tombstone of the bishop Giacomo Maria Corna Pellegrini (1833-1913) which was buried in his native village Pisogne. Below this gravestone there is the sculpture in golden bronze which portrays Saint Antonio from Padua created in 1951 and it is a work by Angelo Righetti from Brescia (1900-1972). Over the side door there is a lunette which describes the *Assumption of the Virgin Mary*: it was once situated in the Cathedral of Saint Mary de Dom and it was painted by Giuseppe Tortelli (Chiari 1662-Brescia post 1738) between 1705 and 1709.

2 The Crucifix Altar

The altar is made of yellow stone from Torri del Benaco: it presents some big mirror tables in multicolored marbles on a basic black field. It is decorated by plant and flower patterns and it dates back to the first period of the XVIIIth century. At the centre of the table there is the marble box inside of which the Saint Anatolone's bones are kept: he was the first bishop of Brescia. On the altar there is the big *Crucifix*: we can suppose that it was commissioned in 1502 by the managers of the Duomo building site from the carver Francesco Giolfino (Verona, first years of XVIth cent.). The carver set up a workshop in Brescia in contrada Santo Stefano. Near this work, which makes a very strong and dramatic impact on the observers, there is another sculpture, although it is not of the same style. It comes from the German School and it represents the *Dormitio Virginis*. The lunette above the altar is decorated with a painting of the *Sacrifice of Isaac*, created by Alessandro Bonvicino, the artist so-called Moretto (Brescia 1498-1554). This work was once placed in the Chapel of the Holiest Sacramento in Saint Peter de Dom.

3 The Blessed Sacrament chapel

The great altar was designed by the architect Rodolfo Vantini (Brescia 1791-1856) in a neoclassical style with some different eclectic elements. It was started in 1842 and it was completed in 1846. It presents precious white marbles from Carrara together with grey "bardiglio" stone. Its decorations are in golden bronze and they show the usual set of plant and flower patterns, little palms and classical Greek frets. The altarpiece depicts the *Preaching of Jesus to the people*: it is a painting by Michelangelo Grigoletti (Rorai Grande di Pordenone 1801-Venezia 1870) and it was painted in 1844. There are also two sculptures which complete the altar complex structure. They are placed on high bases and they represent *Faith* (on the left) and *Hope* (on the right). They are both works in proper neoclassical style: they were achieved by the carvers Giovanni Seleroni (Cremona XIXth cent.) and Giovanni Emanuelli (Brescia 1816-Milano 1894). They were placed in April 1853. Moreover in front of the altar there are the graves of bishops Giacinto Gaggia (1913-1933) and Giacinto Tredici (1933-1964).

4 The Saint Apollonio Altar

In 1503 the accidental finding of the bishop Sant'Apollonio's bones in the cathedral of Saint Peter de Dom, the next year gave the notaries of Brescia cause to commission the big sarcophagus designed to hold the bishop's remains. This monumental sarcophagus was achieved by 1510 and it was placed in Saint Peter de Dom until its scrapping. Later it was moved to Saint Mary Rontonda and it was finally reassembled in the New Cathedral in 1674. The sarcophagus structure is very complex: on the high large consoles there is the coffin which presents five carved episodes of Saint Apollonio life. They are: the ordering of Saints Faustino and Giovita; the Apollonio's preaching to the town; the controversy with heretic Valentino about the transubstantiation; the Calocero's baptism; the Apollonio's death. At the centre, there is a little temple which presents an arched tympanum where we can see the figures of the Virgin Mary and Child. Here there is the Saint Apollonio's statue lying in pope's clothes. Near the little temple there are also Saints Faustino and Giovita wearing Roman soldiers' costumes. The authorship of this work is still uncertain. By tradition it is attributed to Maffeo Olivieri (Brescia 1484-1544). However, it has also been associated with the Mausoleum Martinengo because of some strong stylistic similarities. This work is by Bernardino Dalle Croci (Parma-Brescia 1528).

5 The Guardian Angel's Chapel

The altar was built in 1747 on design by Do-

menico Carboni (Brescia 1727-1768). Before the altar was placed in the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli which was the Augustinian nuns' church in Brescia. It was moved here in 1801 after the clearance of this building. Then it was put in Confraternity of Divoti del Santo Angelo Custode's care. Next year Luigi Basiletti (Brescia 1780-1860) has been commissioned to paint the altarpiece about the Guardian Angel. The great late baroque work is also decorated with sculptures by Antonio Calegari which represent the *Meekness* and *Patience* (sideways the altarpiece), the *Penitence* and *Purity* (above the tympanum). They are all allegories reminding the original dedication of this altar to the Vergin Mary. The tabernacle is especially precious too: it is made of golden bronze and lapis lazuli stones: it was created by the goldsmith Giuseppe Filiberti (1748), as well as all its metal parts.

6 The Presbytery and the Chancel

The presbytery is marked by high Corinthian pilasters which support an high cornice with large consoles and a precious plant frieze. The whole furniture of the presbytery is due to the generous cardinal Angelo Maria Querini (he was bishop of Brescia from 1727 to 1755).

In 1732 in Rome he ordered Giacomo Zoboli (Modena 1682-Roma 1757) to paint the big altarpiece depicting the *Assumption of the Vergin Mary*. Moreover, the cardinal ordered to build the high altar in precious marbles, onyx and bronze, which was consecrated on 7th April 1737, and a set of branched candlesticks. In order to celebrate the Querini's generosity the managers of the Duomo building site decided to raise a memorial tablet in 1737: it was placed on the right side of the presbytery, near the altar. The epigraph is carved/engraved on a black stone slab. It is also framed by a cloth in yellow marble from Verona which is supported by two little winged puttos (they were made by Antonio Calegari). In addition, there is an oval-shaped space in pinkish marble: inside there is a bust of the cardinal Querini. This is a work by Bartolomeo Pincellotti (Carrara XVIIIth cent.-Roma 1740). Moreover, in 1739 Antonio Calegari created the two statues of *Saint Filastrio* (on the left) and *Saint Gaudenzio* (on the right) which are placed inside two niches sideways the altar. During the same year Cesare Bolognini built the new pipe organ which was later renovated in 1855 by Giovanni Tonoli. At that same time also the impressive marble frame of the altarpiece and the wooden chancel were built. The chancel was created on design by Rizzardo Carboni (XVIIIth cent.). In front of the high altar there is the grave of the cardinal Angelo Maria Querini. In 1984 according to new rules of the Second Vatican Council a new altar was placed here: on 21st June of that year it was dedicated by the bishop of Brescia Bruno Foresti. Moreover,



The inside of the Cathedral presents a Greek cross plan which is inscribed in a square: the Greek cross continues to the long presbytery. The interior is developed around the large space of the cupola. This church gives us a grandiose and solemn impression: we can notice high fluted pillars in Corinthian style that mark the whole structure of the church. Eight columns support the dome creating different light and shade effects, so called *chiaroscuro*, in combination with the marble from Botticino and the white walls of the building. On the high cornice with a plant frieze some dome vaults start: they are marked by stone arches which are decorated with coffered pattern. Moreover, there are some big windows giving brightness to the church

interior. The pinnacles of the cupola are decorated with oval-shaped medallions: inside them we can see the figures of the four Apostles Evangelists with their symbols. Matteo and Marco are works by Giovan Battista Carboni, whereas Luca and Giovanni are works by Santo Calegari the Younger (Brescia 1722-1780). They were created during 70's of the XVIIIth century. Over the cornice there is the tambour which is marked by Corinthian pillars and eight big windows. At last, the cupola vault is decorated with an octagonal coffered ceiling which presents also a flower-shaped little windows at the centre. These little windows become smaller and smaller toward the top of the cupola so they increase the vertical direction of the building.



an ambon in bronze was also placed. Both these works were created by Luciano Minguzzi (Firenze 1921-Roma 1997) and they present a touching and dramatic pattern. The altar represents an Olive branch tangle where some birds take refuge, whereas over the ambon there is a big eagle which is the symbol of the Word of God.

7 The Zorzi Chapel

The Zorzi Chapel is situated at the beginning of the left aisle: it is the first chapel which was built in 1604 on impulse from the bishop Marino Zorzi (or Giorgi) senior (1596-1631). Its plan was developed by the Barnabites Lorenzo Binago (Milano 1556-1629) who was working in Duomo building site by 1624. This chapel was completed in 1627 and it represents a remarkable example of late Mannerism architecture. There is a monumental altar in white marble from Carrara and multicolored marbles with thin Corinthian columns in green marble. These columns support a classical triangular tympanum; a big board with a curved tympanum towers over it. Its altarpiece depicts the *Virgin Mary with the Saints Carlo Borromeo, Francesco d'Assisi and the bishop Marino Zorzi*: it is a late painting by Jacopo Negretti called Palma the Younger (Venezia 1548-1628). Sideways the altarpiece there are two sculptures which are attributed to Carras' School of Brescia: they represent *Santa Caterina d'Alessandria* (on the left) and *Santa Cecilia* (on the right). At last, the painting *Angels' Glory* which is placed above the altarpiece is a work by Antonio Gandino (Brescia 1565-1630) as well as the three frescoes *Musician Angels* below the arch. In front of the chapel there is the grave of the cardinal Giovanni Molin who was bishop of Brescia from 1755 to 1773.

8 The Altar of Nicola da Tolentino

The altar was commissioned by the city of Brescia during the session on 20th July 1630 while the plague raged through the town claiming many victims. However, to fulfill this deliberation the cathedral had to wait about fifty years. Only in 1679 the grandiose altarpiece was painted by the Milanese Giuseppe Nuvolone who was Panfilo's son (Milano? 1619-1703). It depicts *Saint Nicola da Tolentino with Saints Faustino and Giovita invoking for the miracle for the end of the plague in the town of Brescia through the medium of the Madonna*. This painting presents a complex iconography and structuring: it combines a powerful realism, which is a distinctive feature of the Milanese painting of XVIIth century, with the peculiar emphasis of the baroque style.

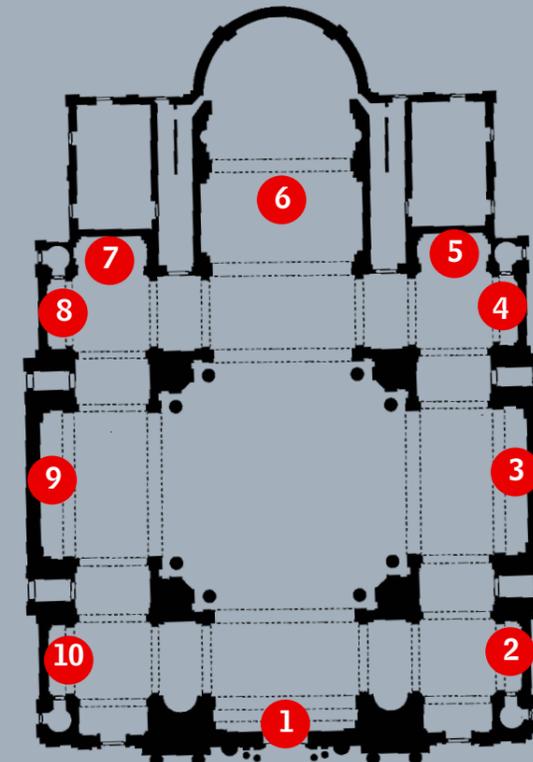
9 The monument to Pope Paul VI

The monument dedicated to Pope from Brescia Paul VI has been placed in front of the altar of the blessed Sacrament. He was Pope from 1963 to 1978 and his name was Giovan Battista Montini (Concesio 1897-Castelgandolfo 1978). This work has been promoted by the Cathedral. It has been planned and built by the sculptor Lello Scorzelli (Firenze 1921-Roma 1997). But it has been unveiled only later on 26th September 1984, for the Pope's birth jubilee. The Pope, like in the Christmas night in 1974, at the beginning of the Holy Year, is portrayed down on his knees in the doorway of the Holy Door. He holds the pastoral Cross in his arms that is the only vertical element which raises above everything. His bronze figure stands out on a slate grey slab. The bronze door knockers are decorated with two knobs which represent two episodes of

Paul the Apostle's life. They are *Jesus appears on the road to Damasco* and the *Shipwreck on the coast of Malta*. On the base in black marble from Belgium there is the Latin inscription Paulus VI Pont Max Brixiensis at its centre. On this base there are also two groups of four little board which represent several episodes of Paul VI's life and work. They are: *The closing of Second Vatican Council; The meeting with the patriarch Athenagoras I; Evil and trends of the contemporary world; The Encyclicals (on the left); The speech at the ONU summit; The attack in Manila; The renunciation of the triple crown (triregnum); The death (on the right)*. Over this monument there are three paintings by Girolamo Romanino (Brescia 1486-1561) which were once placed in front of the pipe organ Antegnati of the Cathedral of Saint Mary de Dom. They were painted between 1539 and 1541: they depict *the Birth, the Marriage and the Visit to Saint Elizabeth of the Vergin Mary*. At the bottom of the monument there is the grave of the bishop Luigi Morstabilini (1964-1983) who strongly promoted the building of this work in honour of the Pope from Brescia.

10 The baptistery

It was planned according to strict neoclassical style with Corinthian columns and pillars. Inside a niche this little temple presents the bronze sculpture of *Saint John Baptist*, a work by the sculptor Claudio Botta (Brescia 1861-1958). There is also a beautiful font in red marble from Verona. Over the side door there is the painting which was once in Saint Mary de Dom. This work by Giuseppe Tortelli depicts *Saints Faustino and Giovita adoring the Holy Cross* and it was painted between 1705 and 1709.



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