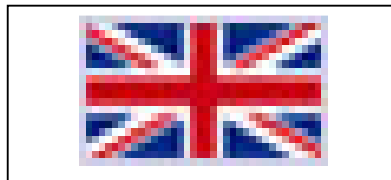


BASILICA S. FEDELE COMO

SAN FEDELES'S BASILICA COMO



San Fedele Historical account of the Basilica

San Fedele's Basilica is situated in the center of the town, in a wide square (San Fedele's square, once "Square of wheat market"). Its dating is rather uncertain.

The study of the great and interesting structure of San Fedele, however, has shown that the present planimetry of the Basilica is built on a preexisting perimeter probably of protochristian or romanesque origin.

It has been proved that in the Roman period the square was an important meeting place in the town of Como.

The origin of San Fedele is to be related to another ancient church dedicated to Saint Euphemia. In the tenth century, when San Fedele's relics were translated to the paleochristian church of St. Euphemia, the Basilica had already acquired a great importance.

It is also known that in the medieval period San Fedele's Collegiata was the main church in Como. Its clergy was powerful and numerous, having 14 canons, and its activity flourishing both from a spiritual and a material point of view. The Basilica was probably built around 1120. Anyway it had been started long before that date.

During the centuries the architectural structure was modified.

The nave, which had already undergone adjustments in the sixteenth century, was covered in the seventeenth with a barrel vault. The arches of the Women's galleries in the aisles were closed in the sixteenth century and they were

replaced by pictures, paintings and stucco-works.

In 1773 it was necessary to plan a sacristy because of liturgical requirements. It was built after destroying the little right apse.

In 1805 the height of the octagonal canopy was increased and in 1807 they completed the Chapel in the right aisle which is now dedicated to Blessed Innocent, a pope from Como whose baptism certificate is kept in the archives of the parish.

In 1808 they built the Chapel in the left aisle, now dedicated to Saint Rita.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the façade was readjusted and the bell-tower demolished and rebuilt in 1903-07.

Short artistic account

Exterior: there are three levels on the apse of the Basilica. The low level has oculi (round windows) coaxial with inner niches. The median has windows which aren't authentic (repairs were accomplished in 1800).

They correspond to the inner gallery. The upper level shows a characteristic little loggia.

The "Doorway of the Dragon" has interesting medieval basreliefs.

Interior: facing the High Altar you'll see in the side aisle on the right the triptych with Saint Sebastian, the Blessed Virgin with the Infant Jesus painted in 1504. You walk then up to the transept.

On the right you can admire the wonderful "Chapel of the Crucified". The fresco of the basin shows the Glory of Paradise, painted in 1623 by Isidoro Bianchi. The four paintings on the sides of the Altar represent scenes from the Passion and were painted by Carlo Innocenzo Carloni (1674-1750).

On the left there is the "Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary". The fresco of the basin represents the Assumption of the Virgin. It was painted in 1613 by two painters from Como: Francesco Carpano and Domenico Caresana.

The four frescoes decorating the wall are of the same period. They represent scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary.

On the wall on the right there are medieval frescoes at the bottom.

In the middle: the High Altar. The relics of Saint Martyr Fedele are kept inside the marble sarcophagus under the 14th century altar.

On the floor of the High Altar you can see four wonderful mosaics of the eighteenth century of Venetian School.