

The left nave leads to the side chapel of the Saints Felice and Fortunato, 1727/29, with six paintings revealing the techniques of Tiepolo and representing scenes of the saints. On the left: firing of the flanks (Balestra or Mattei); beatings (Liberi); and boiling oil (G.B. Piazzetta). On the right, martyrdom by razors (G.B. Pietolo), breaking of jaws (Diziani), and decapitation (Cignaroli). The canvas on the altar with Saint Felice, Saint Fortunato, and Saint Cecilia, protector of The Diocese, is a work of art by Fra Massimo of Verona (1662). The glass window represents the martyrs in the woods in Aquileia where they were seen praying, dates to the XIX century. The silver urn is by Aristide Naccari, 1904, and it contains the remains of the Martyr saints : the head of Saint Fortunato and the body of Saint Felice. The large altarpiece embroidered with golden filaments depicting scenes of their martyrdom was made by Venetian artists in 1900. The Glory of The Martyr Saints (1891) is located on the ceiling.

History of the Martyr Saints Felice and Fortunato

The Martyr Saints Felice and Fortunato, according to tradition, were brothers and traders from Vicenza and they were in Aquileia when they were discovered praying in the woods. During the persecution of Diocletian in the years 303-304, when they were taken in front of the prefect Fermio, they firmly declared their Christian belief. They were subjected to tortures and then decapitated alongside the Natisone River. Their remains, between Vicenza and Aquileia, after being in Grado and Malamocco, went to the episcopal seat in Chioggia in 1110 and have been kept in the Cathedral.



On the little square south of the Cathedral stands an impressive bell tower: a 56-meter-high edifice dating back to 1347; the little church of San Martino was built in 1393 for the believers of Sottomarina after the war in Chioggia between Venice and Genoa which had destroyed their towns; the Church of San Pietro e Paolo (Saint Peter and Paul), also called San Pieretto, built in 1431. From 2913 on, it will safeguard an impressionment of the Crucified Christ from the Late Renaissance. On the north side of the Cathedral, near the canal along the public garden, stands the statue of The Madonna called Refugium peccatorum rendered by A. Tagliapietra about 1710. Near the same bank of the Canal, the Diocesan Museum has rich collections of objets d'art recounting the history of the Town and the Cathedral of Chioggia.



Parrocchia Santa Maria Assunta
 Campo Duomo, 77 - 30015 CHIOGGIA (Venezia)

Telephone 041 400496
 338 6539107 (Don Angelo)
 donangelobusetto@virgilio.it
www.cattedralechioggia.it

Photo R. Donaggio

THE CATHEDRAL OF CHIOGGIA

Santa Maria Assunta

Chioggia Cathedral is the main church of this Diocese. It has been the Episcopal seat since 1110, when Bishop Enrico Grancarolo moved it from Malamocco. The Episcopacy stretches along the shoreline from Pellestrina to the delta of the Po, and from the lagoon to Cavarzere. It includes about seventy parishes. The Cathedral is dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta (St. Mary of the Assumption). The little statue of the XVII century, which dominates above the presbytery and was restored in 2013, shows the destiny of Man called to a fullness of life. The Cathedral gathers in its structure the whole passage of Christian life and also represents the unification point of Christians in the Chioggia Diocese in communion with the Bishop of Rome.



The History

Due to its majestic structure and flowing harmony, its brilliance and grace, the Cathedral is admired both inside and outside. It was built on the foundation of the previous Cathedral which was dedicated to the Nativity of Mary and dates back to the XI century; it was destroyed by a fire in the night between the 25th and 26th of December, 1623. The rebuilding was commissioned to the architect **Baldassare Longhena**, who some years later planned The Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute (Basilica of St. Mary of Health) in Venice. Construction started in 1624 and in three years the external structure was completed. From 1627 to 1671 the internal structure was built with the side altars and the larger altar as well as with paintings of high artistic value, part of which is now safeguarded in the nearby Diocesan Museum. Between 1728 and 1753 the decoration of the two side chapels was finished: firstly, the decoration on the left was dedicated to Saint Felice and Saint Fortunato, protectors of the church and of the town; later, the one on the right was dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament. The choir stall was moved in 1691 from the Abbey Maria Maddalena (Saint Mary Magdalene). On almost every wall and column of the Cathedral, monuments and commemorative stones remind us of events and characters in local history. On the floor, wide paving stones with several inscriptions show the burial of people and requests for prayers.



The nave

The imposing columns give a rhythm to the wide space of the nave, and blend Ionic and Corinthian styles harmoniously. The six big higher stained glass windows, with the ones above the gate, of the aisles, and of the presbytery, were restored in 2013, and kept in their original structures. At the same time the big roof was fixed.

In the middle of the nave, stands the majestic pulpit, of 1667 carved from Carrara marble, a work by Bartolomeo Cavaliere and relief carvings by Domenico Negri. From the pulpit the voice of bishops and preachers reached the assembly of church-goers gathering around it.

The greater altar, a very valuable work of sculpture and carving by Alessandro Tremignon, 1671-1674. On the front pediment, some marble sceneries of the life of Virgin Mary are inlaid. On the back one, sceneries of martyrdom of Saints Felice and Fortunato.

The altar is orientated to east, and it has the same original position of the early cathedral, which had the entry in the west.

The statue of St. Mary of the Assumption dominates above the apse, and it was restored in 2013.

Above the gate, a great pipe organ, a creative work of Gaetano Callido, 1788, with partial consecutive remakes

Sopra il portale d'ingresso, il grande **Organo a canne**, opera di Gaetano Callido, 1788, con parziali rifacimenti successivi.



The Right Aisle

At the front of the aisle, The Cappella del Santissimo Sacramento (The Chapel of the Holy Sacrament) enshrines the Tabernacle of the Eucharist, the heart of the Cathedral. The altar is by Longhena. At the back of the aisle, an altarpiece by Martin Tagier displays The Last Supper (1660) showing the figures of the Father and the Holy Ghost. Some Baroque stucco works by Gerolamo Gaspari are present. The paintings on the walls (Jesus and the Canaanite Woman; the Parable of the Great Banquet) and on the ceiling (The Triumph of Jesus Christ, the Lamb and God) are by Michele Shavon of Chioggia. In the side recesses we can see statues representing The Faith, The Hope, and The Religion. Along the nave, The Sumptuous Seat of Confraternity of The Holy Sacrament with scenes of The Passion and of The Last Supper credited to Andrea Brustolon. Above, there is a small panel of The Virgin and the Child credited to Cima of Conegliano; the original is in the Diocesan Museum. Then there are three altars showing Saint Liborio Bishop with a panel by Valentin Lefevre (1672) and a statue of Saint Bellino Bishop; the Protector of Adria-Rovigo; The Virgin Mary by Carmelo with a statue in African Marble. On the altar, there is a nativity scene in wood that came from Palestine, dated 2010, Saint Rocco - a wooden statue by De Porri, and a canvas with The Holy Family by Giuseppe Cherubini (1908).

The Left Aisle

On the wall at the back, is The Baptistery by Alvise Tagliapietra, 1708. The relief carving of The Baptism of Jesus is on the top of the baptismal bowl, and there are three statues representing the theological virtues of Charity, Faith, and Hope. The next altar is of Saint John the Baptist with a panel of The Baptism of Jesus by Francesco Rosa of Genoa. On the side, on the base of the processional float, are the statues of Saints Felice and Fortunato, created in alloy by Luigi Tomaz in 1980. The Altar of Santa Maria Assunta (Saint Mary of the Assumption), the most sumptuous of the lateral altars, is enriched with relief carvings, a panel by Pietro Liberi (1682), a statue of Saint Agnes, protector of the capitol of the Cathedral, by Antonio Bonazza (about 1650), the Altar of Saint Michael the Archangel, Gerolamo and Agostino with a panel by Jacopo Palma the Younger (1608); and the statues of Saint Antonio of Padua and Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (of recent craftsmanship). The original place of the side aisle was destroyed by the collapse of the transept vault in the night of the 16th of September 1988; only the back survived.

