

# Presentation File

## Iconographic apparatus of Madonna del Castello: the parish church

### Structure and choices of layout

The video is divided into three parts:

1. A general introduction to the church and the three buildings that compose it (the crypt, the parish church and the shrine) to give to the spectator the essential information about the topic of the video that they are viewing, before focusing on the specific analysis of the iconographic apparatus.
2. The list of all the frescos located in the parish church. Not all of them have an image in the video because they are less important than others and therefore are difficult to find in either websites or books about the church. The list of the artworks, besides giving the name to the frescos, gives them an approximate date of execution and describes their position in the parish church.
3. The complete artistic description of two frescos, among the most important, better preserved and easier to find on websites and books: the *Christ Pantocrator* under the vault and the *Annunciation*, painted on the right.

### Contents of the video

“Madonna del Castello” is the name of the religious building located in the little town of Almenno San Salvatore. Actually, with this name we mean three buildings that have very different features.

#### **The crypt**

The most ancient part is the crypt. It is said that it was built during the Langobardic period (between the VII and VIII centuries).

#### **The parish church**

The parish church was the first known place to be consecrated to the Christian cult in the territory of Bergamo. From there the cult expanded to a wide area of influence that included Valle Imagna, Brembilla and Valle Brembana.

#### **The shrine**

The building of the shrine has a rectangular plant and one nave divided into four aisles by three Gothic arches. A Renaissance temple was placed above the altar.

#### **The frescos**

From the artistic point of view the parish church is one of the most interesting monuments in the area of Bergamo: it looks like a Paleochristian cathedral, but during the centuries it has often been modified.

The paintings are from different periods and have different values. The most important is the *Christ Pantocrator* with the symbols of the Evangelists Matthew and John of the XII century. While in the lateral recesses there are paintings from the late XIV century: on the right the *Annunciation*, an *Apostle* and *St. John the Baptist*; on the left the *Pantocrator* and *St. Antonio Abate*.

On the columns on the left there are a holy *Dominican*, the *Virgin with baby Jesus*, *St. Bartholomew* and *St. Catherine* (from XIV and XV centuries); on the right there are two paintings of the *Virgin Mary* from the XVI century.

In 1150 a big ambon made of sandstone was added to the church: on the front the symbols of the four Evangelists are carved, while there are hunting scenes on one side.

### **1 The Christ Pantocrator**

The photo shows a fresco representing the Christ Pantocrator inside a circle. The lower part is not visible because time and neglect have ruined it.

Jesus is portrayed at half-length with a halo surrounding his head. He has a serious and kind gaze oriented towards the spectator. He has a thick dark beard that makes him look very authoritative. With his right hand he is performing an act of blessing: three fingers are moved closer to symbolize the holy trinity and God.

His strong image is in reference to God and humanity: the red and gold tunic symbolizes the Divine, the blue represents the Man.

### **2 The Annunciation**

The fresco representing the Annunciation shows one of the most well-known scenes of Christianity.

Mary is on the right, sitting on a throne with her eyes towards the spectator and the archangel is on the left, looking at her. The scene is bounded by the niche in which the fresco is painted, and has a frame of golden rhombus around its outline.

The Virgin is wearing a red dress symbolising divinity, in her left hand she is holding some papers, while she is lifting the right hand. The archangel has his wings still spread out, he is wearing a white tunic, with golden crosses, symbols of purity and divinity. He is pointing towards the woman. Both of them have a halo over their heads.

### **Bibliography**

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- Cesare Rota Nodari, *Quattro Chiese X-XV sec: Itinerario d'arte tra Almenno S. Bartolomeo e Almenno S. Salvatore*, Bergamo: Provincia di Bergamo, Settore Cultura e Turismo, 2000
- Paolo Manzoni, *Madonna del Castello: La Pieve (Tomo 1)*, S. l.: s. n. 2006

### **Sitography**

- Lemine Foundation: <https://www.fondazionelemine.eu/le-chiese-del-romanico-degli-almenno/madonna-del-castello/>
- Wikipedia the shrine: [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santuario\\_della\\_Madonna\\_del\\_Castello](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santuario_della_Madonna_del_Castello)
- Wikipedia the parish church [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieve\\_di\\_Lemine](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieve_di_Lemine)