



tury. In the fifth bay, the altar of the Holy Cross, dated end-17th to early-18th century, houses a reliquary shaped as a golden wooden Cross (17th century). After the sepulchral monument of the Bishops Carnevale, Negri and Capelli (20th century) is the altar of St. Joseph (17th century). Magnificent is the frontal of polychrome marble decorated with the inlay technique (pietra dura) and characterized by the crest of the noble family Boeri, who commissioned the work. The altar-

piece, depicting the *Sacred Family* is attributed to the Milanese painter Montalto (17th century). The third bay houses the altar of St. Charles (17th century). On the altarpiece is a painting representing *St. Charles in Admiration of the Crucifix*, ascribed to Camillo Procaccini. On the second bay's wall, the painting representing *The Fall of St. Paul* is attributed to il Fiamminghino (second decade of the 17th century). Next to *The Fall of St. Paul* is the imposing marble staircase that takes to the Episcopal's palace. The parapet of the stairs was made in the years 1937-40 using the small pillars of the 18th-century balustrade, not longer been used for the presbytery. The central nave houses a painted golden wood pulpit (mid-19th century). The vault was decorated in 1853-56 by the two cousins Paolo and Angelo Maggi of Sannazzaro de Burgundi (Lomellina).

In the middle of the vault there are frescoes with scenes strictly connected with the the Cathedral: the *Glory of St. Innocent*, the *Assumption of Virgin Mary to Heaven*, the *Glory of St. Lawrence*, the *Triumph of the Cross*. In the apsidal basin is the *Martyrdom of St. Marcian* and at the bottom of the vault, in smaller medallions, are some depictions of saints. On the left of the presbytery is the entrance to the sacristy, where rich wooden furnitures date back to 1845-48. The sacristy houses also several paintings, among which *Six Episodes of St. Innocent's Life*, attributed to Giuseppe Vermiglio of Alessandria, and *Tobias and the Angel* by Guglielmo Caccia called il Moncalvo (about 1625).



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DIOCESI DI  
TORTONA

# PROJECT OPEN CHURCHES

# CATHEDRAL TORTONA





The Cathedral of Tortona is dedicated to the Blessed Mary of The Assumption and to St. Lawrence. The Cardinal Gian Paolo della Chiesa of Tortona laid the foundation stone in 1574, while the Bishop Cesare Gambara consecrated the Church in 1583. During the first half of the 17th century the restoration of the building stopped due to financial problems as well as to historical events that devastated the town. The gallery called "il passetto" (literary the little step) connects the Bishop's palace to the Cathedral and was built during the episcopacy of Mons. Carlo Settala in 1661. In the second half of the 19th century the interior underwent several changes and even the façade was rebuilt by the engineer Nicolò Bruno. The **façade** was not only plastered but also crowned by a neoclassical fronton and embellished with sculptures representing God The Father, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. The interior of the church is divided into a nave and two side aisles by two series of cross-shaped pillars. The nave is barrel-vaulted with intrados, while the side aisles are covered with little cross vaults. The perimetric altars lean directly against the walls in correspondence to each bay. The sacristy is connected to the left aisle, and the bell tower is connected to the right aisle. Starting from the left aisle, the first chapel is the Baptistry's Chapel, displaying the baptismal font in green marble from Polcevera (18th century) with a copper lid datable to the 20th century. The bottom wall is decorated with a fresco representing *The Baptism of Jesus* by Giovan Mauro della Rovere, also known as il Fiamminghino (early 17th century). After the Baptistry's Chapel comes the Sepulchral Chapel dedicated to the



brothers Lorenzo and Carlo Perosi. Lorenzo Perosi, born in Tortona in 1872, was a famous composer of holy music. On the bottom wall is the painting showing the *Madonna with St. Rocco and Sebastian* by the Milanese painter Aurelio Luini (16th century). The third bay houses the oldest altar in the church, dedicated to Saint Mary of Good Counsel. The altarpiece *Virgin Mary and Child with Martyrs* (17th century) shows the Virgin Mary surrounded by St. Lucia, St. Peter Martyr, St. Apollonia, St. Agnese and St. Catherine of Alessandria. The adjacent chapel houses the altar of The Immaculate Conception (1887). In the niche is a painted and golden paper-pulp statue of the Virgin Mary by Giovanni Collina Graziani of Faenza, dated 1886. Inside the tabernacle there is a portrait of the young St. Luigi Orione made by Mario Patri of Tortona. The last altar, dedicated to the Most Sacred Crucifix, is composed by assembled pieces of different origin and age. The baroque Lord's Table shows an altar frontal in low relief with the *Martyrdom of St. Agnes*. The altarpiece (*pala*) houses a golden wooden sculptural group featuring *The Crucifixion* (16th-17th centuries). In the last bay, above an 18th-century confessional, is the painting of the *Holy Cross*, ascribed to the painter Claudio Goizer of Flemish origin (17th century). The presbytery, higher than the level of the hall, underwent a liturgical update in 2006. The new furniture (altar, ambon and chair) are made of white stone from Palestinian caves. Behind the new altar is the high altar in polychrome marble (18th century). Under the Lord's Table is the urn with the relics of St. Marcian, patron of the Diocese of Tortona. He is traditionally said to have been the first Bishop of Tortona and to have suffered martyrdom in 122 BC. Along the right side of the the presbytery's wall is the valuable church organ built by the Serassi's brothers of Bergamo between 1837 and 1838. The wooden **choir** was made by the wood carver Stefano Vil of Germany between 1591 and 1592. In the centre of the apsidal wall is a painting representing the *Martyrdom of St. Marcian*, attributed to the school of Camillo Procaccini. The altars in marble inlay in the right nave came from the Genoese Church of St. James and Philip and were restored and reassembled in the Cathedral in the second half of 19th cen-

