

martyrdom of St. Agnes. Particularly valuable is the *Martyrdom of St. Agnes* on the left wall: the scene focuses on the moment when the executioner seizes the Saint's hair from behind making her un- balancing backwards, while she is offering herself to God's



Will in ecstatic serenity. The bright tones of the clothes contrast with the paleness of the martyr's face. In the foreground two executioners, punished by God, lie lifeless. An angel descending from heaven brings to St. Agnes her martyrdom symbols. The intellectual sophistication as well as the artificial qualities of this painting can be ascribed to the Mannerism movement from Emilia Romagna. Two other stories dedicated to St. Agnes are currently depicted on the vaults: the *Miracle of Lupanario* and the *Appearance of St. Agnes to her relatives*. On the vault are also the pictorial cycles of the Life of the Virgin and The life of Christ, they include: the *Introduction of the Virgin Mary to the Temple*, the *Marriage of the Virgin Mary*, the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple*, *The Visitation*, *The Annunciation*, *The Assumption*, the *Jesus and the Doctors*, the *Death of the Virgin Mary*, the *Crowning of the Virgin Mary*, *The Flight into Egypt*, the *Birth of the Virgin Mary*, *The Immaculate Conception*. The Prophets *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*, *Ezekiel*, *Isaiah* and the Doctors of the Church *Jerome*, *Augustine*, *Gregory*, *Ambrose* alternate with the stories of the Virgin Mary and Christ. The pictorial composition of the scenes was created in regard of the narrow space and of the tiles shape; as the paintings had been designed to be seen from a distance they are not rich in many details. Nevertheless, they mirror the full Counter-Reformation spirit and the stories are easily recognized by the pilgrims, to whom they are addressed for didactic aims.



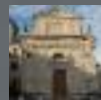
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DIOCESI DI
TORTONA

PROJECT OPEN CHURCHES

S. GIUSTINA TORRE GAROFOLI



SIPBC/ONLUS
DELEGAZIONE
DEL TORTONESE



POLO
CULTURALE
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The foundation stone of the Church of Saints Giustina and Agnes in Torre Garofoli was laid in 1590 at the presence of the Bishop Maffeo Gambaro of Tortona and the princess Cristierna di Danimarca, lady of Tortona, while the solemn consecration dates back to 1595. The history of the little Church beyond the Scrivia river is intertwined with that of the Garofoli family since the beginning. Erected in obedience to the will of the noblewoman Giustina Garofoli of Tortona, the Bishop had granted her family the right of perpetual patronage of the Church as a sign of respect and gratitude. The lower part of the **façade** is decorated with grooved pilasters and capitals rich in floral and vegetal motifs. In the upper part of the façade there is the Garofoli family crest on the left, and the Garofoli Visconti family crest on the right. The top of the façade is crowned by a neoclassical pediment. The **interior** has a single nave with a raised semicircular presbytery. The deambulatory in the apse's area is bordered by small columns. The actual look of the church reflects the reconstructions during the year 1880, when the baron Vittorio Guidobono Cavalchini Garofoli commissioned the enlargement and the decoration of the building, as it is proved by the tombstone on the counter façade. In that period the paintings by Camillo Procaccini (Pärma, 1561 - Milano, 1629) were moved from the Church of St. Francis in Tortona to the church in Torre Garofoli. In fact the Church of the Padri Minori Conventuali of St. Francis, that was knocked down in the Napoleonic era (1802), had housed two chapels. The internal chapel was dedicated to the *Immaculate Conception* and the iconography of the pictorial cycles are those of the Life of the Virgin and the Life of Christ. These

paintings were commissioned by the Lady of Tortona Cristierna di Danimarca. In the second chapel, the *Stories of the Martyrdom of St. Agnes* was commissioned by Giustina Garofoli. Both chapels were decorated by the painter Camillo Procaccini at the end of the 16th century. The assignments were given to him while he was collaborating in Milan, with other famous artists of the time, to decorate the Duomo as well as other important churches of the city. Giustina Garofoli was well-known in Tortona in the second half of the 1500s, not only for her prestige, wealth and honor but especially for her high descent and her two marriages, the first with the Milanese Fabrizio Ferrario and the second with Prospero Visconti. Cristierna di Danimarca was a landowner of Tortona and the niece of the Emperor Charles V. The twenty-four current paintings that represent the decorative elements of the Church of Santa Giustina and Agnes are believed to be part of two separate pictorial cycles originally designed by Procaccini for the Church of St. Francis. From the *Chapel of The Immaculate Conception* come the pictorial cycles of the *Life of the Virgin* and *The Life of Christ* together with those of the *Four Doctors of the Church* and the *Prophets*. From the *Chapel of St. Agnes* come the pictorial cycles of St Agnes martyrdom. The paintings are currently arranged in the Church of Saints Giustina and Agnes following the standards of beauty and symmetry.

However it was not possible to relocate them according to the painter's original design due to the different architectural structure of the Church of St. Francis. Procaccini's paintings follow the rules of the Counter Reformation: the marked sensitivity of his art together with the plain and spontaneous narrative tone emphasizes the Christian virtues and invokes in the viewer a sense of veneration for the people depicted. There are three paintings in the Church noticeable for their larger size, showing the

