

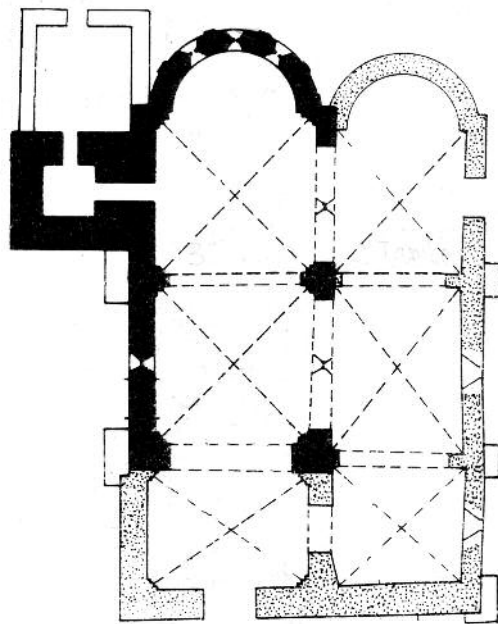


St'Agatha's Church

The worship of Saint Agatha in Moltrasio has ancient origins: a 1197 document, dated 27th of April, testifies the presence of a charity, called **Lumineria** or **Elemosina** (meaning alms), dedicated to the Sicilian Saint.

St. Agatha's Church, precious example of Romanesque architecture of Como, was firstly mentioned in a 1215 document. It is work of "Maestri Comacini" (Masters of Como) and dates back to the 11th century. The most evident modifications done in the structure of the church were the expansion of the central nave, with the building of the minor aisle, and the removal of the three-mullioned window in order to build the current entrance. The last modification of the structure was done at the beginning of the 15th century.

On the side, the plan of the church with the original nucleus marked in black and the following expansion marked by dots



In the 16th century, the inner frescos were covered and the façade was painted in red. In addition, some windows were covered and the presbytery was elevated. During this century, the church was the place of worship for Christians and it also functioned as a cemetery. It was gradually abandoned until the 17th century, when the building began to be used as a lazaretto. That is, a place to isolate people infected with the plague.

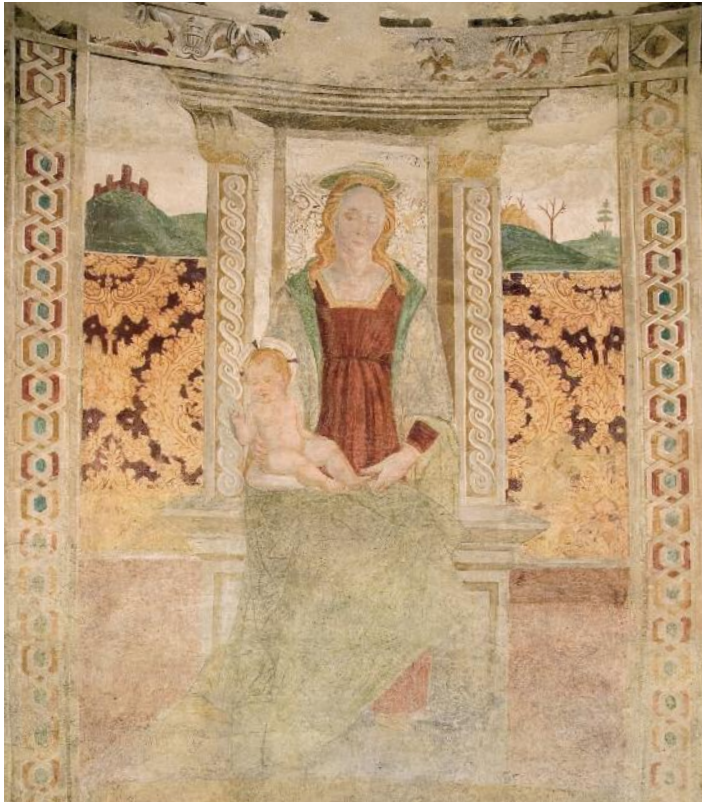


The activities of restoration and rehabilitation of the church started to take place in the 20th century. In 2006, the restoration of the frescos led to a series of significant findings.

In the minor apse, appeared part of a "Christ Pantocrator between Saint Roch and Saint Anthony Abbot", that dates back to the 16th century. It presents a traditional Christian iconography as well as some unusual features, such as the representation of Christ at an advanced age.

The fresco, through painterly affinity, can be attributed to **Giovanni Andrea De Magistris**, painter active at that time in the Valtellina area.





The "*Madonna enthroned and Child blessing*" depicted below the minor apse, also dates back to the 16th century. While, on the left side, is frescoed a 16th century "*Nursing Madonna*".

In the center of the same apse is located a 1300 wooden statue representing the *Virgin Mary and Child*.



On the soffit of the arch between the absides, there is a representation of "*Saint Brigid of Ireland*", - in fact we can see a plate in her left hand on which there are the two eyes - dressed as a nun.

Below, is located a wooden polygonal ciborium dated between 14th and 15th centuries.

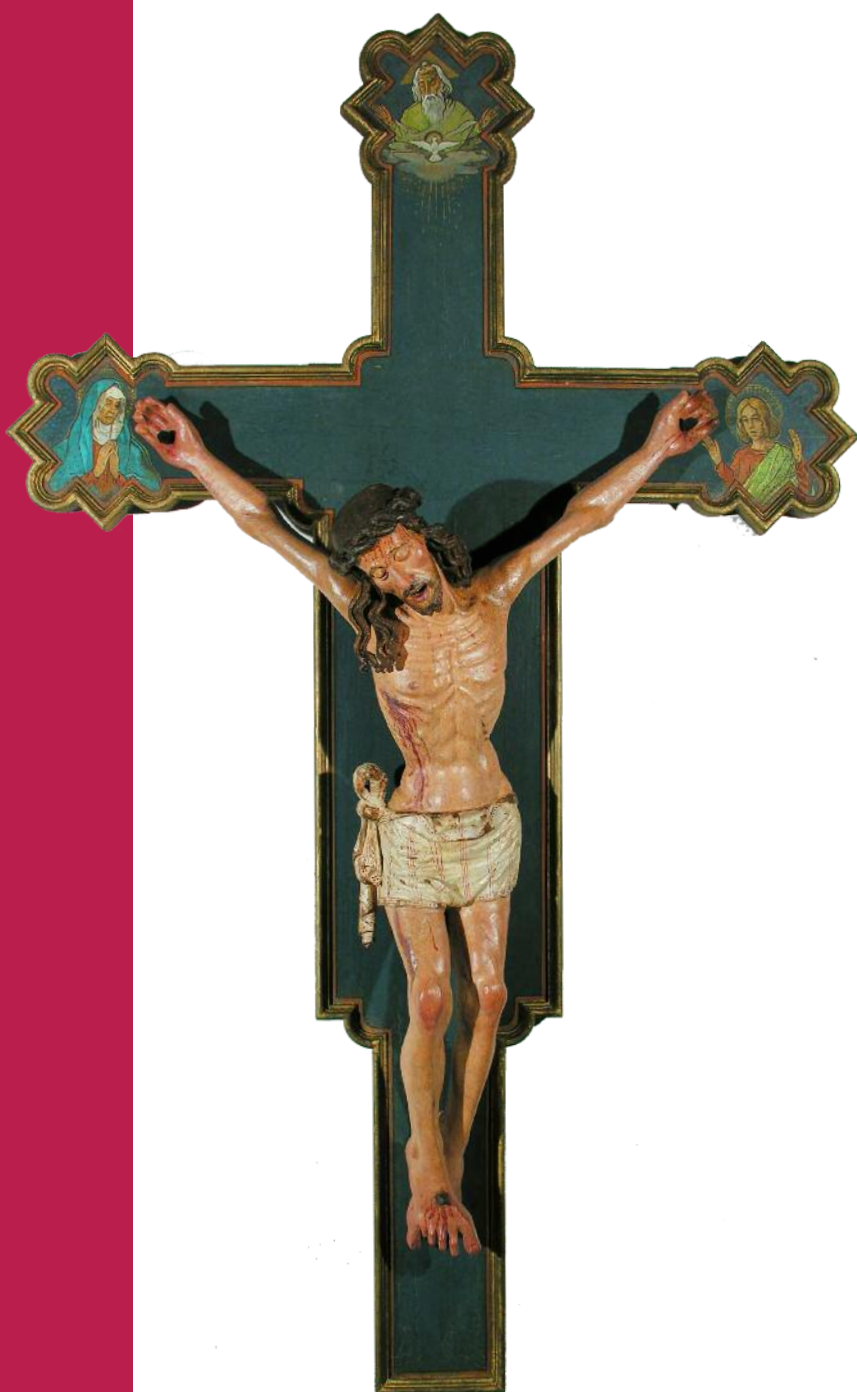




Unfortunately, only a few parts of the oldest frescoes from the Romanesque period have been preserved, but they are partially visible. Among them, it is possible to see wave-like patterns and geometric decorations. The major apse presents a gold drawing and a fresco representing spirals, dating from 1950, work of restorer **Torildo Conconi**. It is inspired to the decoration in the paleochristian basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

The decoration on the arch in front of the main entrance, depicting a hand between the sun and the moon, is from the early 20th century.

In 2016, the wooden Renaissance Christ was restored and placed in the northern wall, which is made of stone of Moltrasio. Also the paving is made of stone of Moltrasio.





Outside, there is a *Saint Cristobal* from the 13th century which, according to the popular tradition, represents the Saint standing as a giant that carries Christ child on his back.

The fresco has a large dimension so that it could be seen from Regina Street. According to the medieval belief, if the pilgrims looked at the Saint, they would not have any misfortune during the day.

In the northern part of the church, can be seen the shape of an old door that was covered, and on top of it there is a fresco representing the *Agony of Saint Agatha*.

Between the frescoes representing Saint Cristobal and Saint Agatha, until the last century it was possible to see an offering nun, evidence of the presence of a Humiliati monastery in Moltrasio.





The church presents a gabled façade, following the interior division in two naves, and mighty buttresses on the south side (the lake side). The bell tower, located on the north side, has a square plan and is composed of five rows. In the fifth row there are mullioned windows.

The current parvis used to be a cemetery; only important families could bury their dead inside the church. Today, can be seen a unique gravestone, that has written «DLP».



The old chapel and osuary near the church, in which there were displayed bones and skulls, was a symbol of memory and admonition. Nowadays, it is dedicated to *Our Lady of Grace*, featuring a 13th century marble statue of her.

On the opposite side of the church, is located the 19th century Lucini Passalacqua Chapel. The church became their ius patronatus from 1756, once the family took over ownership of the adjacent villa; previously it was property of the Odescalchi family. The chapel is decorated with frescoes from 1854, work of painter **Giovanni Darif**, and tiles that have written on them quotes from the Holy Scriptures. Work of the same painter, is also an effigy of the *Virgin Mary and Child and Young Saint John*, located in the lunette above the lateral entrance (on the south side).

