

DIOCESAN

Museum

*presentation of the
Diocesan museum*



THE MUSEUM

The museum was opened in 2001 after being restored.

The exposition area is divided in 9 different halls on 3 floors, including the ground floor where Saint Agata's Fercolo is located, Many beautiful artworks are displayed across the halls; one can admire sacred decors, elegant furniture, clothing and trinkets that once belonged to the Cathedral and to other churches.

The museum itself is located in the east wing of the Seminary palace of the cherics, next to Saint Agata's cathedral in the Duomo square, and is owned by doctor Grazia Spampinato and her coworkers,



ROOM 1-4

The first hall houses a collection of pieces from the 1693 Norman restoration, after the earthquake.

Here are stone fragments, the statue of a woman with funerary writings, a marble slab depicting Christ on a throne next to Saint Pietro and Saint Paolo and an heirloom from Federico II d'Aragona sarcophagus.

The second hall shows silver furnishings of the cathedral, the arm reliquary of Saint Giorgio, the bust reliquary of Saint Cataldo and a calice adorned with coral in the baroque style.

The coral holds a religious meaning, since it represented the blood of Medusa and the blood of Christ.

The third hall has liturgic clothes fabricated by the ancient Roman tailors. The clothes are made with colorful fabrics and shiny metals.

The fourth hall is on the second floor and was once the seminaries' studying room and now holds furniture dedicated to Saint Agata, the wooden door that, until 1732, kept the entrance to her room closed and the "Sacra suppelletile".



ROOM 5-6



The fifth hall is on the third floor: the art in this hall shows the diocese's faith. This room was- and still is- the chapel of the seminary. In the middle of the room is a big glass display case that holds the bishops' memorabilia and other things, such as the mechanical calendar built by Salvatore Franco.

In the sixth hall are paintings from different churches, shown in chronological order, like Saint Giuliano's bust, the altar's frontal of "L'assunzione della vergine fra Davide e Salomone", the silver foot of a monstrance and the golden chalice and monstrance.

ROOM 7

In the seventh hall you can find the Art Gallery.

The installments here once belonged to the cathedral, until the oppression of the monastic order.

Only a small section of them could be saved, like "La sacra famiglia" of Bernardino Niger and the sacred family's portrayal of Antonio Cavallucci.

From the episcopal palace like the paintings called "La Vergine" and "L'Eterno"

In this hall also are two of Caravaggio's paintings of the Crucifixion and punishment of Saint Pietro.

But of course there are many more paintings, like "L'adorazione dei Magi", Saint Lucia and the portrayal of Mary, Saint Giovanni and Maddalena beneath the cross.



ROOM 8, TERRACES AND UZEDA GATE

The eight hall has wooden furniture, such as the "Casciarizzo", an eighteenth-century console, liturgical vestments, etc... What stands out the most are a dalmatic wallpaper and multiple chasubles.

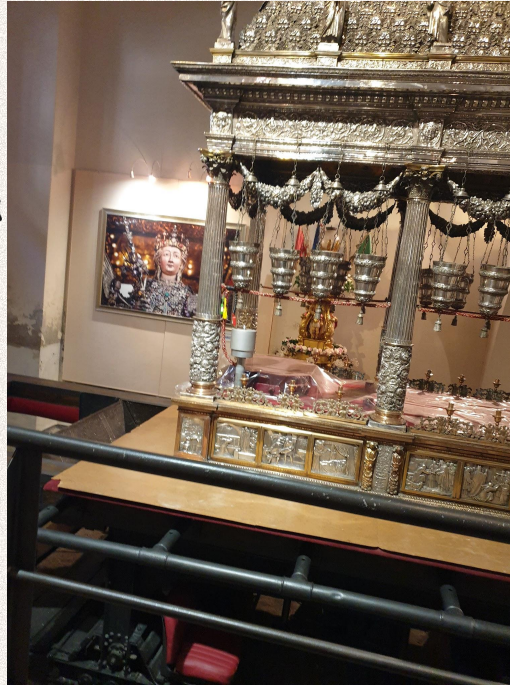
From the museum you can also access two terraces and take in the view of Etna's landscapes and Catania's baroque architecture.

The Uzeda gate was built in 1695 by Camastra's Duke demand: it connects the east wing to the main palace. Under request of Salvatore Ventimiglia, a bust of Saint Agata was placed upon the gate to watch over the city.



Saint Agata's Fercolo

The fercolo is located in its very own room. It's shaped like a rectangular temple. Supported by 6 columns is an entablature, decorated with a cross and the symbols of virginity and of the Saint's torment (a crown, a lily and a palm tree). The fercolo itself is completely enameled in silver and decorated in an arabesque style, leaves and plant crowns, and the base shows episodes of the Saint's life and miracles.



The fercolo is believed to have been built in 1519 and then decorated by Vincenzo Archifel in 1522. But the fercolo was damaged and then destroyed during WWII, and the one we now see is a restoration of it that took place at the beginning of this century. In the same room is the "Agathae" exhibition, aka a collection of photos from Saint Agata's celebration day.