

ST AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH

From an old convent of Giamboniti (followers of St Giovanni Bono), the Augustines moved to the present one and built a church aside. It was twice rebuilt and restored during Malatesta's time (also for will of Violante da Montefeltro, the charitable Signora of Cesena) and, between 1516 and 1518, hosted the great Girolamo Genga from Urbino (of his wonderful *Disputa sull'Immacolata Concezione* only a copy of the *Annunciazione* is still here).

Since 1748 the whole complex underwent a complete rebuilding which led to the present forms. A first contract with G. A. Landi was broken and the project was eventually given by the great **Luigi Vanvitelli**. The works at the church lasted from 1752 to 1763, but only in 1777 the last adornments were ready and the church could be consecrated. The bell tower was realized by Pietro Carlo Borboni, the convent is due to N. Fagioli (supervision by A. Azzolini), the works of stucco to Giorgio Scala and then Maurizio Giabani, of engraving to Giovanni and Fabio Urbini, of decoration to Giuseppe Milani and his son Ferdinando.

The convent of St Augustine was one of the first to disappear after Napoleon and the church became parish church (until 2000, when it passed under the parish of the Cathedral).

The building is partly inglobated in the urban area and hardly to be appreciated in its perfection of style. Very gentle are the volutes of white Istrian stone (work of the Venetian Sebastiano Bernava). The facade is unfinished and the main entrance is the one towards Piazza Aguselli.

The interior shows one nave, with three chapels for each side; the transept hosts an imposing octagonal tribune. Beginning from the main (abandoned) entrance you can see an edicola by Fabio Urbini (1778-79) and then the first right chapel: it hosts a painting with *Le Ss. Caterina d'Alessandria, Lucia, Agata e Apollonia fra altri Ss. agostiniani e la Fede* (Milani, 1771), a niche with *S. Giovanni Battista* (rare example of paintings of the 1300's in Cesena) and two ovals with *S. Vincenzo Ferreri* and *S. Severo vescovo* and, on the left, *S. Cecilia*. The following chapel shows *I Ss. Sebastiano, Cristoforo e Rocco* by Milani, a niche with the *Madonna del Fuoco*, a *S. Pietro martire con Santi*, a statue of the *Madonna Addolorata* and a *S. Nicola da Tolentino* by Cristoforo Serra. On the following pilaster, a statue of St Augustine, here since 1930. The third chapel on the right presents a wooden ancona (M. A. Fava, 1708, and then Giovanni Urbini) with a stucco statue of *S. Francesco da Paola* (Filippo Scandellara, 1760); on the left, paintings with *S. Antonio da Padova* and *Crucifix* of 1600's; on the right, *S. Giuseppe* and *S. Francesco da Paola*. The tribune has pulpit and four confessionals by Giovanni Urbini (1765-66). The right transept is dominated by the statue of *Madonna della Divina Consolazione* (1777). The altar and the choir are due to the family Urbini: Giovanni made the choir (1769), Fabio the altar (1776) and the tabernacle, inside a precious cancel; the decoration of this part of the church belongs to Giuseppe Milani. The ancona of the altar was made by Giabani and shows a painting with *I Santi Agostino, Giovanni Evangelista e Severo vescovo* (don Stefano Montanari, 1844); the angels are by Francesco Calligari, the

greatest Cesenate sculptor of history. Above, the copy of the *Annunciazione* by Girolamo Genga (1516-18) (the original is preserved at the Museum of the Cathedral), part of the great and today shared *Disputa sull'Immacolata Concezione* (1516-18), whose main part is at Brera Museum.

In the left transept, *Crucifix* (Umbrian sculptor?, 1310 ca.). The third chapel on the left hosts the entrance to the church, with bussola by Fabio Urbini, modern cancel and frescoes by Milani. The following chapel shows *La strage degli innocenti* (G. B. Razzani, 1650 ca.) and two paintings representing *S. Giovanni Evangelista* (the one on the left belongs to Razzani). Eventually, in the first chapel, the amazing *Immacolata Concezione e i Ss. Giacomo Maggiore ed Erasmo vescovo*, one of the masterworks by Cristoforo Serra (1670); a *Battesimo di Gesù* (Teodorani, XIX sec.) and, on the right, two medals showing the two popes of Cesena Pious VI and Pious VII.

In the sacresty and in the canonica there are other paintings (a *Visitazione* is perhaps work by Bartolomeo Coda).