Santa Maria delle Grazie - detta di San Domenico

Category: Sacred Sites
business description: The laying of the foundation stone dates back to 1481, when Father Giovanni da Taggia received the diploma appointing him Prior of the Convent.
A plaque on the architrave of the door, dated 1508, indicates the construction date as 1481, when Count Antonio Trotti was lord of the city.
The simple façade is crowned by a tympanum and features a single door; the interior has three naves with a transept, the central nave covered by a single barrel vault, while the lateral naves have four bays covered by cross vaults.
The church underwent numerous renovations over the years, and the signs are visible: originally, the brickwork was left exposed, and the wooden trusses were still visible. The rapid deterioration of the exposed parts led to the interior being plastered and whitewashed as early as 1585.
Between the 17th and 18th centuries, the church was enriched with altars and chapels built by various families and guilds of the city; the floor began to house tombs and gravestones: the area of Piazza San Domenico and the area occupied by the new building were most likely once occupied by a cemetery and perhaps also by a small chapel, of which the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie was likely an extension.
The church's life was marked by wars and the suppression of religious orders, and it experienced its most difficult period when it was transformed into a barracks in 1796.
After the Restoration of 1815 and the city's passage under the Savoy Kingdom of Sardinia, the conditions for a return to its religious function were restored; From the new State Property Agency, ownership passed to the Municipality, which entrusted its use and preservation to the Rev. Fathers of the Pious Schools, who were called to Ovada to provide public education.
Unfortunately, due to the urgent need to renovate the roof, the Piarist Fathers were forced in 1837 to sell six altars in the side aisles, causing dismay among the population and strong tensions with the Municipality itself. These tensions were only resolved in 1883.
Since then, embellishment and restoration work continued, although, sadly, some original elements of the church were removed or destroyed.
Of note is the second altar on the right, a valuable 17th-century marble work: once the high altar of the old parish church, it was placed here in 1847 after the original was sold in 1837.
Equally interesting is the altar of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary on the right wall of the transept, richly decorated with precious marbles and placed in this position in 1706. The central statue of the Madonna is the work of a student of the sculptor Filippo Parodi, himself a student of Bernini; the two lateral statues represent Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Dominic. The statue of the Madonna was crowned by 15 small oil paintings (The Mysteries of the Rosary), of which only eight are original today (the other seven were stolen in the 1980s). The altar is the one that previously stood in place of the church's high altar, which was removed to make way for a larger one.

Open daily from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM and from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Tuesdays from 4:30 PM.

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Admission fee: No

Links

https://www.cittaecattedrali.it/it/bces/175-chiesa-di-santa-maria-delle-grazie-detta-di-san-domenico-ovada-al

Photos

