

Hospital of St. Martin

(13th century)

via Pannilani, 6-8

Nothing is known about the origins of *domus Sancti Martini de Zezio*: recorded since 1209, it depended on the canons of Como cathedral, who nominated its minister, checked its administration and periodically visited it. After its incorporation with the *hospitale novum* of St. Anne in 1487, the hospice was being used as a *lazzaretto* (leper hospital) until 1516, when it passed to the Humiliati, who preserved it until 1571. In 1639 the church of the hospital became a parish, but in 1783 this title was assigned to the church of St. Agatha and the building was secularized. Its property passed to Gallio College and at the beginning of the 20th century the building that had been previously used as the hospice chapel went under extensive renovation works; parts of it are still traceable in some of the renewed rooms which were eventually designated to lay use.

What documents tell us...

From the records of town council, 1433

Since the podestà affirms (...) that a great number of pilgrims and other poor visitors complained that they had received neither hospitality nor handouts both inside and outside the city, with great disgrace for nobles and citizens of Como, and since an appreciable number of hospitals, richly equipped by the inhabitants of Como, are set in the city in order to lodge and give donations to the needy, Simone Rusca, St. Martin's confrater, promises, in the presence of the Savi di provvisione (Wisest in the city council) he should prepare one bed and give assistance to the poor.

From the report about bishop Gerardo Landriani's pastoral visitation, 1442

After being questioned regarding assistance given inside the hospital, [frater Giovanni Besozzi, minister of the domus et hospitalis] states that he is always giving shelter to the needy; there are two beds to lodge the poor and weekly he gives handouts to the indigent and pilgrims. As to the way he uses the hospital incomes, he affirms that money is spent on food and clothes for himself and for all those who live in St. Martin's, on items for the needy and on labour to keep the hospital fields and goods satisfactorily. Being also questioned about the frequency of the holy service, he affirms that he has holy Mass celebrated in the hospital church twice a week.