

Hospital of St. Vitalis

(13th century)

viale Battisti

We have information about this hospital starting from 1221 and its construction was strongly supported by some members of Caccia family, who got the right to appoint the dean in 1256. Since then it was run by a small group of men and women and from 1356 even by three nuns who used to live at *St. Sixtus domus*, managed by Humiliati. During the first decades of the 14th century, some of the women probably moved away from that community and started the building of the nearby St. Ursula's monastery. In the second half of the 15th century, after the incorporation with the *hospitale novum* (hospital of St. Anne), the hospice probably stopped its charitable activity, but the church continued to be officiated and renewed on the initiative of the deputies of St. Anne's and the confraternity of the St. Peter and St. Vitalis. In the 18th century it became a parish, it was abandoned around 1785, consequently it was transferred and used for secular tasks up to 1884-85, when it was demolished and replaced by the railway, whereas the nowadays Pastoral Center, named "Cardinal Ferrari", was built on the area of the old hospital. The 17th century altar piece inside the church, showing *Madonna col Bambino fra i santi Vitale e Pietro* (The Virgin with Child between St. Vitalis and St. Peter), is now kept in the nearby St. Ursula's church.

What documents tell us...

From the record of a lay brother's entry in the community, 1249

I, friar Ugucione, son of the deceased Ottobuono de Polenzo from Tresivio, promise steadiness, chastity, obedience and, besides, to live with no possession at St. Vitalis' hospital situated in Como valley, built and established next to the moat of the city wall by Giovanni Caccia from Como, in compliance with the rules imposed by the above mentioned hospital.

I also donate myself and all my goods, especially a vineyard with farmstead and wine press as well as several buildings situated in Arboledo, in the district of Trevisio, to friar Martin, minister of the hospital, who acts in the name of the poor and the sick of the hospital.

From a payment receipt, 1300

All brothers, members of the hospital of St. Vitale in Como, affirm they received from Francino di Gerenzano from Como, son of the deceased Domenico, whose wife's name is Fomaxia and acts in her name, two burdens of rye and millet as preliminary payment for what he has owed them in the last years. All this has been taken from the lands situated in Nibionno, a district left to Fomaxia by her father Petraccio. Indeed, in his last will in 1297, he established that bread baked with four quartarri of rye and of millet harvested from those lands had to be annually handed, in perpetuity, to the poor of the hospital.