



## The artworks





## The upper church



The upper church is the first one you see when you enter the Complesso museale of Santa Maria delle Anime del Purgatorio ad Arco.

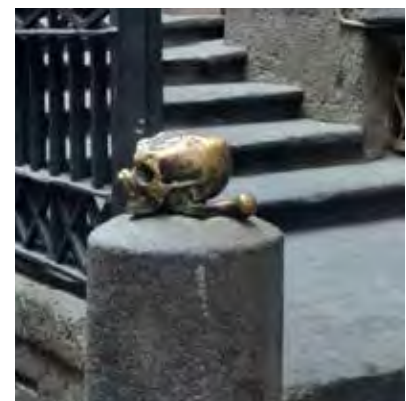
A complesso museale is made of many museum areas one close to the other.



There are 2 staircases before the entrance of the upper church.



On both sides you can see skulls made of a metal called bronze. A skull is the head of a person who died a long time ago.



This church was built a long time ago. You can see many pictures and some statues inside. At the end of the church, you can see a big stone skull with wings hiding behind the high altar.





# 1. Madonna delle Anime purganti

Massimo Stanzione





This painting is called **Madonna delle Anime purganti**.  
**Massimo Stazio** made this painting a long time ago.  
It's called like this because it shows you the **Madonna**  
with the souls in **Purgatory**.

Madonna is Mary, Jesus' mother.

When a some good some bad person dies,  
the soul goes to **Purgatory**.

Purgatory is the place where souls stay until they become good.

When souls become good, they can go to Paradise.

The **Madonna** protects **Purgatory** souls  
and every **Saturday** goes down to **Purgatory**  
to save the souls that have became good.



**In the upper part of the painting, you can see the Madonna painted in the sky on a cloud.**

The Madonna has a red dress and a blue cloak.

The Madonna is holding Child Jesus and they look downwards at the Purgatory souls.

There are little angels and some light around her.

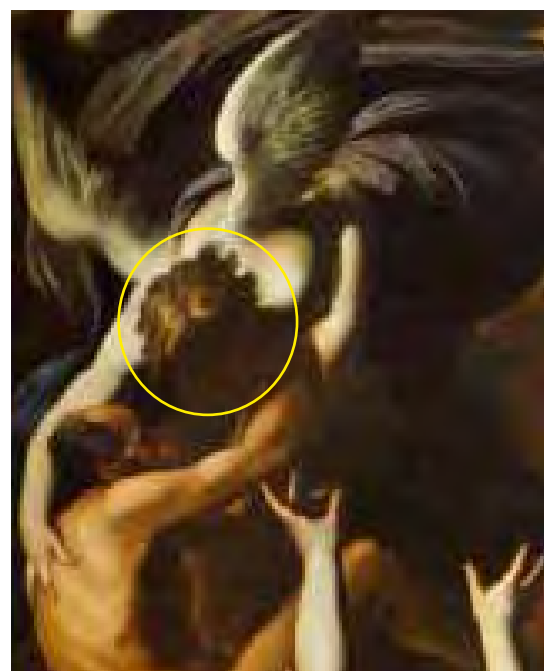
Massimo Stanzione painted a well-lit sky to let you know that the Madonna is a very important person.

In the painting, the Madonna is showing the 3 angels which are the souls that can go to Paradise.



In the painting you can see:

- on the right,  
an angel is looking  
at the Madonna  
to understand which soul to take.  
Under this angel you see the soul  
of a man with arms up,  
ready to be taken away.
- in the middle,  
an angel is about to catch a soul.  
This soul has arms up  
to be taken away too.
- on the left,  
an angel holds a man's soul.





**In the lower part of the painting,  
you see other souls in the middle of Purgatory fire.**

They are scared, they pray and have arms up towards the angel,  
hoping they can take them.

Those are the souls that haven't become good yet  
and cannot go to Paradise.

Massimo Stanzione was a very famous painter from Naples.

Many of his paintings are exposed in museum and churches in Naples.

Massimo Stanzione was a very good teacher as well.

Many painters went to his school to learn how to paint.





## 2. Giulio Mastrilli Statue Andrea Falcone



Across the upper church you can see the **Giulio Mastrilli** statue.  
Giulio Mastrilli was an important and rich **duke**.  
A duke is an important person who rules a town.  
Giulio Mastrilli gave a lot of money to make the church nicer.



When Giulio Mastrilli died,  
**Andrea Falcone** made his statue  
using marble.

The statue shows you that Giulio Mastrilli  
is very elegant.

He's on his knees on a cushion  
and he's looking at the  
**Madonna delle Anime Purganti** painting.



Find out all about the painting  
on page 46

Giulio Mastrilli is asking the Madonna  
to listen to his prayers for the Purgatory souls.  
Madonna is Mary, Jesus' mother.

Over the statue  
there are 2 little angels  
holding the Mastrilli family  
**coat of arms**.

A coat of arms is a drawing  
used a long time ago to show  
an important family.





Under the statue there is a **sarcophagus**.

A sarcophagus is a chest where they put the body of dead people.

This sarcophagus is empty,

because Giulio Mastrilli had been buried in the lower church.

On the base you can see a long-written text.

The text says that Giulio Mastrilli was a very good person and made many nice things in his life.



### 3. High altar balustrade

Dionisio Lazzari



Before the main altar you see a **balustrade**.

A balustrade is like a small low wall

that divides the **presbytery** from the **main aisle**.

The presbytery is the place with the altar used to say Mass.

The main aisle is the biggest part inside a church,  
where people can sit on the benches and pray.

A long time ago Dionisio Lazzari made this balustrade  
with a stone called marble.



To make this balustrade

Dionisio Lazzari

followed various steps:

- First, he cut many pieces of marble, in different shapes and colours. You can see white, red, yellow marble pieces.
- Then he put all the pieces together to make a big drawing. For example, in the balustrade you can see the drawing of many little columns with curls. On the balustrade top, many flowers are drawn on a black background.



In the balustrade you can also see:

- **a gate made of a metal called brass.**

The gate is there to avoid people enter where the altar is, where only priests can go





- **2 coats of arms of Mastrilli family.**

A coat of arms is a drawing used a long time ago to show an important family.

Mastrilli family was an important family in Naples and paid to have the balustrade made.

This is why you see their coats of arms.





## 4. Morte di San Giuseppe

Andrea Vaccaro



This painting is called **Morte di San Giuseppe**.

A saint is a person who prays a lot and behaves always.

Saint Joseph was Jesus' father.



In this painting you see Saint Joseph lying on a bed. He's dying.  
Around Saint Joseph you can see the those who loved him:  
his wife Mary and his son Jesus.

Andrea Vaccaro made this painting a long time ago.  
Andrea Vaccaro was a very famous painter from Naples.  
He painted many painting for the churches of his town.



In the painting Saint Joseph has white hair  
because he was very old when he died.  
**Saint Joseph was over 100 when he died.**  
His body is skinny and white.  
Andrea Vaccaro painted a white body to show  
that Saint Joseph was dying.





**On the right you see Mary sitting on a chair.**  
Mary has a veil on her head that covers her hair, and a long cloak. Mary is crying and she's very sad because her husband is dying.

**Mary is turning towards her son Jesus,**  
**who's standing next to her.**  
Mary is pointing at Saint Joseph. Jesus has a red dress and a long blue cloak. Jesus is sad but he's not crying. Jesus is peaceful because he knows that Saint Joseph's soul will go to Paradise after dying.





**In the middle of the painting, you see 2 archangels.**

An archangel is the angels' chief.

Those archangels are ready to go to Paradise with Saint Joseph's soul.

In the painting you also see:

- **archangel Gabriel**

**with a lily in his hands.**

A lily is the flower  
of the persons with good souls.

Archangel Gabriel  
is carrying a lily because  
Saint Joseph's soul is good

- **archangel Michael**  
**wearing an armour.**

An armour is a suit  
made of iron that they used  
to wear to protect themselves  
during a war.

Andrea Vaccaro painted Michael with an armour  
to tell you that he's the archangel who fights against the Devil.



People used to pray archangel Michael asking to die without pain and  
having the beloved persons with them.

**Mary and Jesus too are asking archangel Michael to protect  
Saint Joseph's soul.**



Saint Joseph had been a very good person.  
After his death, his soul could go immediately to paradise.  
This is why Jesus is peaceful.  
He knows his father's soul won't have to go to Purgatory.



Above, there are many little angels in the clouds.  
The little angel in the centre is lifting a flower crown.  
This crown is for Saint Joseph's soul when goes to Paradise.



## 5. The Opera Pia Museum



This is the **Opera Pia Purgatorio ad Arco Museum**.

Opera Pia is an association.

An association is a group of persons who do things together.

In this museum you find many objects owned by Opera Pia Purgatorio ad Arco.

Those objects are of a long time ago and they are kept in wooden closets.

In those closets you can see:

- all the precious objects and garments used by priests during Mass
- paintings by many important painters
- little statues of the Purgatory souls that were in **votive shrines** before.

The votive shrines are little houses people built along the street.

They hosted statues and saints' portraits.

A saint is a person who prays a lot and behaves always.



## Little statues of Purgatory souls

In the museum you can see many little statues of Purgatory souls, made a long time ago.

They were made in many ways and put inside **votive shrines**.

The votive shrines are little houses people used to build along the street.

They hosted statues and saints' portraits.

The shrines hosted 4 or 6 little statues one close to the others.

Those statues represent Purgatory souls with open and raised arms, asking for living people prayers.

Thanks to those prayers Purgatory souls can reach Paradise earlier.

Opera Pia put those little statues in a museum to protect and show them to everyone.





## 6. Morte di Sant'Alessio

Luca Giordano



This painting is called **Morte di Sant'Alessio**.

A saint is a person who prays a lot and behaves always.

**Luca Giordano** made this painting a long time ago.



The painting shows you Saint Alexis sitting on the floor on a straw carpet.

Saint Alexis is looking upwards, he's got long hair and a beard.

Before becoming a saint, Alexis was a very rich man.

After some time, Alexis had decided to give all his money to the poor and live as a poor himself.

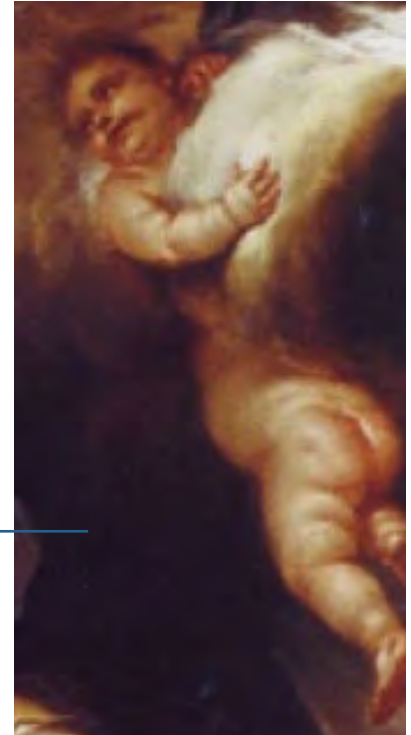
Alexis wanted to do good things as Jesus had done.

That's why Alexis has become the saint who protects **beggars**.

Beggars are poor persons who ask the other people for money and food.



Infact, in the painting you can see Saint Alexis with dirty and damaged clothes because he was living as a poor man.

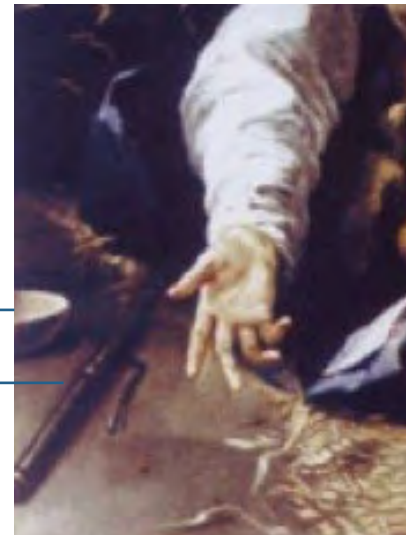


When Saint Alexis died,  
he was close to a staircase.

On the left you can see a bowl  
and a pilgrim's staff.

A pilgrim is a person who makes long trips  
to pray in faraway places.

Pilgrims used to carry a staff to lean on it  
when they were tired.







**There are many angels around Saint Alexis, looking at him.**

Some of them are little angels, others are bigger and have large wings.

The angels are all in the middle of clouds in the sky.

The sky is lit up by a strong light because it represents Paradise.

The good people's souls go to Paradise after dying.

Saint Alexis had been good and his soul can go to Paradise.



## Hurry-up Luca

**Luca Giordano** was a famous painter from Naples.  
Luca Giordano worked in many towns and countries.  
Luca Giordano used to paint paintings and frescoes.  
A fresco is a painting made on a wall.

Luca Giordano was a very good painter and had a big **workshop**.  
A painter's workshop was the place where he  
and the persons who helped him used to paint.  
At Luca Giordano's workshop many painters  
used to paint many paintings working very quickly.  
For that reason, everybody called him **Hurry-up Luca**.

# The lower church



The lower church is under the upper church.  
This is the church where they pray for the Purgatory souls.  
You must go down the stairs to visit it.

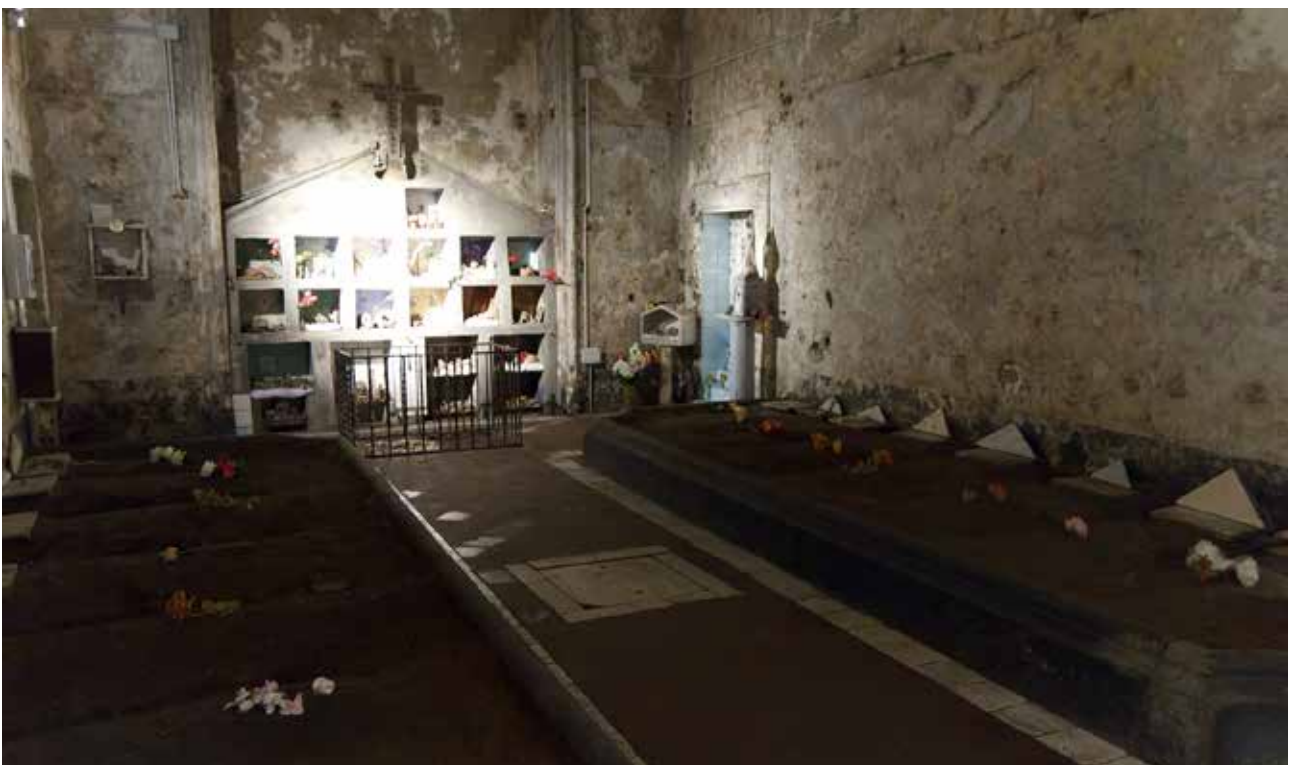
The lower church is as big as the upper church.  
A long time ago the poor were buried here,  
all together in the big tomb  
in the middle of the church.  
The poor were buried all together  
because they didn't have the money to pay  
for their own tomb.





On the left and right walls, you can see many **skulls**.  
A skull is the head of a person who died a long time ago.  
You must go left across the church  
and go through the corridor to see  
the rest of the church.

At the end of the corridor  
there is another room with many skulls.  
On the right and left sides,  
you can see some tombs in the ground.  
**Here is where the Opera Pia persons  
were buried**





## 7. Altarino di Lucia



This is the **Altarino di Lucia**.

L'Altarino is a **niche** with a bench in front of it.

A niche is a hole made in the wall to put something important inside.



Inside the niche there is Lucia's skull.

L'Altarino looks like Lucia's home.

Lucia has a white veil like a bride's veil.

This is why people call her **The Bride**.

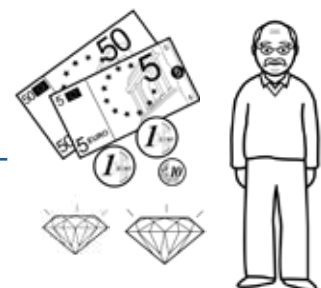
Lucia also wears a crown.



A story tells that Lucia was a prince's daughter.

The prince was called Don Domenico d'Amore.

Don Domenico wanted Lucia to get married to a rich man who was much older than she was.





Lucia however was in love with a young and handsome boy.

Lucia died from pain because he couldn't get married to the boy she loved.



Don Domenico buried Lucia in the lower church. After a long time, Lucia's story became famous, and some people put her skull in the niche. Many girls in love started praying Lucia asking for help.



**Over Lucia's niche there's another niche with the skulls of 2 persons, Antonio and Teresa.**

Antonio and Teresa were Lucia's servants and loved her a lot.

A servant is a person who works for another person, cooking, cleaning the house and washing clothes.

Teresa has a white veil on her head because was supposed to go to church with Lucia on her wedding day.



Many people love Lucia and have made her Altarino more and more beautiful.

Around the niche they put blue tiles.

On top, over the niche,

**there is Lucia's name written**

to let everybody know this is Lucia's Altarino.

On the bench there are lots of objects:

- **many silver ex-voto.**

People used to make ex-voto to thank God and the saints for recovering from an illness or after a serious accident.

The ex-voto is made in the shape of the body's part that recovered. For example, you can see ex-voto shaped like a leg.



- **pink and blue ribbons.**

These are the ribbons that people hang out of the door to celebrate a little girl or boy's birth.



- **coins and precious jewels like rings, necklaces and bracelets**



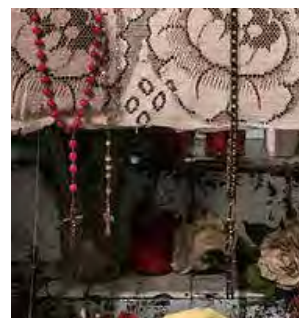




- **rosaries.**

A rosary is a necklace with a cross.

You keep it in your hand while you're praying.



- **paper flowers and notes.**

On the notes people write prayers to Lucia asking for her help and they thank her for what she did.



- **little statues of saints,**

like the one of Sant'Antonio with Child Jesus.

A saint is a person who prays a lot and behaves always.



- **pictures of dead people.**



All these objects are gifts for Lucia.

The persons she helped brought them to thank her.

Today many people come to pray Lucia

and ask for help in finding a boyfriend or a job.

Some people ask for help in having a baby

or something they really want.