

Destination: Popiglio - The Diocesan Museum of Religious Art and the Itinerary of Religious Art and Popular Worship of the Pistoia Mountains Eco-museum. **Lizzano pistoiese** - The Parish Church of S. Maria Assunta. *We also advise visits to:* **Cutigliano** - The Church of S. Bartolomeo. **S. Marcello pistoiese** - The Parish Church of S. Marcello. **Gavinana** - The Parish Church of S. Maria Assunta. **Piteglio** - The Parish Church of S. Maria Assunta.

The Diocesan Museum of Religious Art, Popiglio



The particular characteristics of Parish Church of Santa Maria Assunta at Popiglio lay behind the decision to choose it as the exhibition point for the Eco-museum's Itinerary of Religious Art. The church is in fact known as the "Cathedral of the Pistoia Mountains" thanks to its size and number of rich furnishings. It contains many prestigious paintings, sculptures and furnishings in wood and silver that were donated in the 16th century as votive offerings by the important Vannini family, who came from Popiglio, but resided in Rome. Today this collection of rare examples of **Roman Baroque** art, together with other valuable religious vestments and furnishings that come from the churches of the Pistoia Mountains, is displayed inside the Diocesan Museum, though divided into two separate groups: one in the Canon's house by the Parish Church and the other in the rooms of the Company of the Holy Sacrament, built in the same square as the church.

A stone-paved path leads from the church square to the Didactic Centre of the Museum, where various activities, like weaving, can be carried out.

The itinerary continues towards the mediaeval **Bridge of Castruccio**, which crosses over the river Lima. Built at the time of the commander Castruccio Castracani from Lucca between the 13th and 14th century, the bridge at one time marked the borders between Lucca and Pistoia. Moreover several other itineraries wind away from the town of Popiglio, some following the ancient country roads used for the Rogations, which were processions carried out to favour a good harvest, with the various halts for prayer marked by tiny tabernacles decorated with a "miniature Virgin Mary".

How to get there:

by car, from the Pistoia motorway exit: keep to the left to take the Tangenziale Nord (northern by-pass). Continue right to the end and then following directions for Abetone/Modena, take the Sr66. Drive on for about 30 km and then, at La Lima, turn left in the direction of Lucca on the Ss12; continue along this road for about 2 km to reach Popiglio. Park on the left, just before the church bell tower, on one side of the Ss12.

Info and reception: Diocesan Museum of Religious Art
Piazza della Chiesa - Popiglio

tel. 0573 97461 (Province of Pistoia - Cultural Office)

Opening hours and prices: from Apr to Jun and from Sept to Oct: Sat Sun 4-7pm - Jul and Aug: Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat Sun 4-7pm

full tickets: € 2.00 - reduced tickets: € 1.00

The Parish Church of Santa Maria Assunta, Lizzano pistoiese



This Parish Church, mentioned in documents as early as 998, has a characteristically simple and unadorned aspect though it contains many precious works of art. The two works by the della Robbia family in glazed terracotta are particularly important. The first, placed on the left wall of the church, is an altarpiece attributed to Fra Ambrogio della

Robbia and can be dated as from around the first half of the 16th century. The inner central part contains the Madonna holding the Child in her arms, surrounded by Saints. The altarpiece is also enriched with an altar-stoop decorated with busts portraying other figures of saints placed on either side

of Christ in the sepulchre.

The left wall of the church also hosts a *Madonna and Child enthroned*, a late work by the famous sculptor **Andrea della Robbia** that can be dated from around the first half of the 16th century. The fine quality of the modelling and the sweet expression on the faces of the figures testifies to the sculptor having kept up culturally with all the most modern trends in the Florentine painting of the time.

How to get there:

by car, from Popiglio: retrace your steps along the Ss12 route. On reaching La Lima, turn left onto the Ss12 in the direction of Modena/Abetone. After about 1 km, turn right into the Lizzanese provincial road to reach Lizzano.

Info and reception: Church of S. Maria Assunta

Piazza S. Maria, 4 - Lizzano pistoiese - tel. 0573 677885

Opening hours and prices: the church is always open on Sun mornings from 10am - visits are not allowed during services - those wishing to visit the church on other days are advised to phone the parish office at the number provided - entrance free





RELIGIOUS ART IN THE PISTOIA MOUNTAINS



We also advise visits to:



A short detour - certainly well worth the effort - takes you to the nearby village of **Cutigliano**, an ancient and suggestive settlement in the Pistoia Mountains. **The Church of S. Bartolomeo** is open to the public and contains two priceless 17th century canvases: the *Circumcision* and *The Madonna of the Rosary*, painted respectively by **Giovanni**

da San Giovanni and **Matteo Rosselli**.



The Parish Church of S. Marcello at **S. Marcello pistoiese** is one of the oldest religious sites in the mountains. Apart from the recently restored **18th century organ**, which is in perfect

working order, the interior contains some priceless works of art, among them, a 16th century *Deposition* attributed to the **school of Vasari** and the sculpted group in wax portraying the *Ecce Homo*, attributed to **Gaetano Giulio Zumbo**.

The ancient **Parish Church of Santa Maria Assunta** at **Gavinana** is especially rich in works of art. Particularly worthy of note are the two altar frontals in glazed terracotta by **Benedetto Buglioni**, a Florentine artist greatly influenced by the sculpture of the della Robbia family, and the valuable monumental organ of the 17th century, enlarged by **Giosuè Agati** and definitely installed by the **Tronci brothers** in the 19th century.



The Chapel of the Madonna del Latte in the **Parish Church of S. Maria Assunta** at **Piteglio**, beautifully decorated with a canvas of the *Madonna and Child with two Saints*, contains the reliquary with the Holy liquid.

