



● ● ● Inside
bas-relief depicting the
Virgin and Child

Interior nave

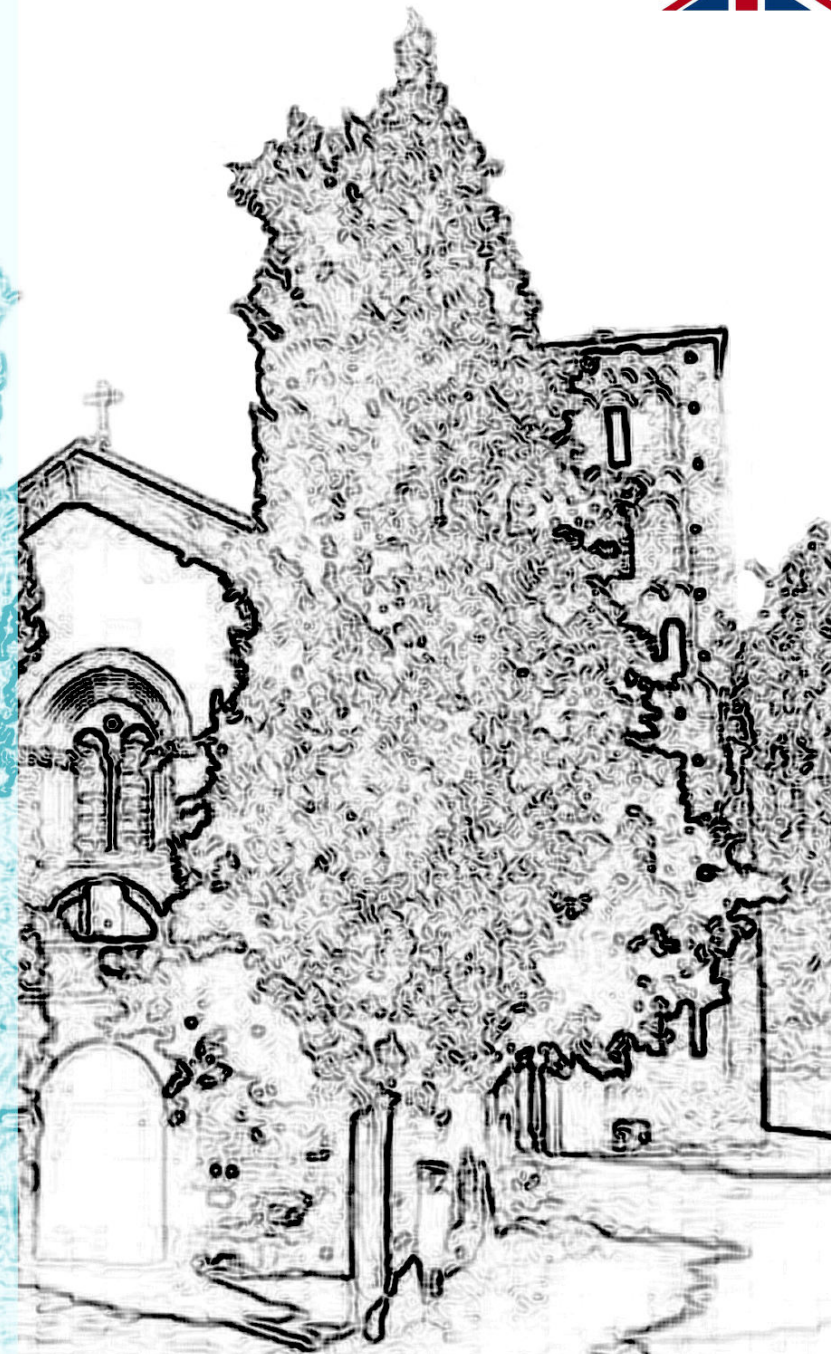


● ● ● Particular apse

● ● ● Apse external



THE PIEVE OF CORTEMILIA



Santa Maria church dates back to the 11th-12th century. During the centuries it underwent several remaking interventions but still maintains fairly large intact ancient artistic and architectural elements. According to tradition St. Francis stayed there, on his journey on the road connecting Savona to Asti, the “Magistra Langarum” road.

On the outside of the Church, two important examples of the Roman Art in “Alta Langa” are clearly visible: the apse, decorated with arches with bas-relief figures and the single-lancet windows massive bell tower.

On the façade it is possible to see a wonderful wine decorated double lancet window made of sandstone.

Over the door, a white marble bas-relief from 15th century end, likely an “ex voto” dedicated to the crowned Virgin is placed.

On the left side of the entrance, another sandstone artifact, likely representing a monk, is also visible. Beneath the barge course, some figures lead to the hypothesis the façade was completely frescoed; the images, likely portraying St. Christopher were painted in the 17th century when an extra floor was added to the building. In the internal nave, a sandstone bas relief that dates back to 12th century is visible.

It depicts the Enthroned Madonna with Child between saints and monks, surrounded by complex symbols of the first middle age Christianity.

What today is visible is the sum of various interventions that took place during the 20th century also witnessed by old photographs showing the presence of a plastered arcade made in a late period. By comparing the photographs, it appears evident the purpose of the first part of 20th century restoration activity, to bring the building to its original state even when it implied radical modifications.

More recent restoration activities have been made primarily to grant the static stability of the bell tower and of the roof. Additionally, lighter interventions aiming to restore the ancient building surfaces, mostly fair-faced walls (or dry walls) and to improve their preservation in the time have been done.

The church lost its role of parish in the middle of 19th century, when the present configuration, with the St. Michael and St. Pantaleo churches serving their relevant villages, was created.

Being positioned in a landscape of rare beauty, it gets that aura of country church that makes its character. Built against it there is another stone building, perhaps the old convent.