

IO SONO L'IMMACOLATA CONCEZIONE



*Sanctuary*  
*The Grotto of Lourdes*  
*of Blessed*  
*Claudio*

CHIAMPO (Vicenza - Italy)



ENGLISH

# *The Grotto of Lourdes*



Pilgrims worship at the Grotto

The Grotto of Lourdes is the centre of the religious movement in Chiampo.

Founded by the Order of Friars Minor, it was built in cement and iron in 1935 at the request of Blessed Claudio Granzotto, and is

a perfect replica of the Lourdes shrine in France.

The statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Carrara marble was sculpted by Blessed Claudio who transmitted his deep veneration of the Virgin Mary to this work of art.

Despite apparently insurmountable obstacles during the construction of the Grotto, Blessed Claudio insisted and prophesied: **"This Grotto will become a place of prayer and many will come to venerate the Virgin Mary..."**.

The Grotto of Lourdes



*This Grotto will become  
a place of prayer and many  
will come to venerate the Virgin Mary*

*Blessed Claudio*



# *La Pieve*



The Madonna (15th century)

La Pieve was an old rural chapel which dated back to the 10th century, and was the centre of evangelization of the Chiampo valley. It was destroyed in 1240 but was immediately rebuilt and enlarged.

During the 1640s it was renovated and the latest renovation was in 1962.

You can admire a painted marble statue of the Madonna and Child, sculpted by a local artist, which dates back to 1480, and a fine Baroque altar crafted in 1743 by an artisan from Veneto. For generations La Pieve has been the fulcrum of devotion to the Virgin Mary, and has also been mentioned in

the works of the well-known local poet Giacomo Zanella.

After the suppression of religious orders in 1866, having been expelled from Vicenza, the Franciscan Community arrived in Chiampo in 1867, and since then has become an important part of the valley, building the school and Seminary (1876-1996) as well as the Sanctuary complex with gardens and parking area for 550 cars and 20 coaches.

La Pieve



The altar of La Pieve (18th century)

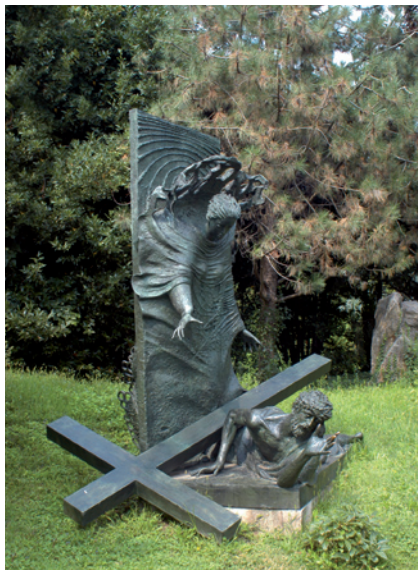


# *The Via Crucis*

The artistic Via Crucis lines the avenue of tall majestic cypress trees that leads to the Grotto and to the white monument of the Crowned Virgin, which is identical to the one at Lourdes and was built in 1954.

Finished in 1989, it winds up the hillside for 560 metres. The stations of life-size bronze statues, which are the work of six sculptors, are set against a background of geological boulders and gentle hills in a beautiful botanical garden with over 350 types of plants.

It is considered one of the most beautiful Via Crucis in the world for its setting and Franciscan meditative silence.



**The third fall of Jesus**

**The Calvary scene**



# *The Museum*

Inaugurated in 1972 by its passionate founder, Fr. Aurelio Menin, this rich cultural heritage is divided into 11 sections: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS (an interesting collection of musical instruments from various parts of the world); MINERALOGY (a splendid collection of minerals, both Italian and foreign); ZOOLOGY (a collection of 1,500 embalmed animals from various parts of the world); APPLIED GEOLOGY (a unique collection of the 74 types of marble to be found in the Chiampo valley); PHOTOGRAPHIC HERBARIUM OF THE CHIAMPO VALLEY (a splendid photographic collection of 50 “medicinal plants” indigenous to the Chiampo valley); THE GYPSOTEQUE OF BLESSED CLAUDIO (a collection of original plaster casts of the sculptures of Blessed Claudio. His prayer books and work tools are also on display); CONCHOLOGY (a collection of marine shells from various parts of the world); PALEONTOLOGY (a large collection of fossils from the Chiampo valley); PALETHNOLOGY (work tools and objects from the ancient inhabitants of the Chiampo valley); ETHNOLOGY (a rich varied collection of



Museum, Fossils sec., “Ranina”

materials from many nationalities, which have been donated by missionary Friars from Veneto); FIGURATIVE ARTS (a collection of 125 works, both paintings and modern sculptures, which were donated by the UCAI, in honour of Blessed Claudio, sculptor of marble).

The gypsoteque of Blessed Claudio





# *The church of Blessed Claudio Granzotto*

To accomodate the ever increasing number of pilgrims, in 2001 work began on the construction of **the new church to Blessed Claudio**. Taking inspiration from the fossils and shells found in the valley, the Franciscan architect Fr. Angelo Polesello and the engineer Ferruccio Zecchin designed and created a shell-shaped construction on two levels: the **crypt** with chapels and rooms, and the assembly **hall** for liturgical celebrations.

The interior of the Church of Blessed Claudio



## *Activities*

The Junior High School



As well as the Sanctuary complex, other projects and initiatives have been developed: the **magazine** “*Grotta di Lourdes del Beato Claudio*”, with over 22,000 subscribers; the **Pia Opera del Santuario**, which manages the correspondence with benefactors, subscribers and devotees; designated **areas** for spiritual meetings, conferences and study groups; the **Junior High School** Fr. Angelico Melotto; **charity groups** to finance the Franciscan Missions; a **shop** which sells religious objects; an **outdoor picnic area** and an **indoor area**

where visitors can have a packed lunch; **free meals for the poor**.

Alcantarine Franciscan Sisters, members of the Secular Franciscan Order and groups of lay volunteers help the Friars in their work.

# Blessed Claudio



Blessed Claudio

Born on August 23rd 1900 in Santa Lucia di Piave, Treviso, he graduated in Sculpture from Venice Academy of Fine Arts. He joined the Order of Friars Minor in 1933, he died in sanctity on August 15th 1947, as had been announced to him by the Madonna, and was buried next to “his” Grotto of Lourdes. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II on November 20th 1994. Friar Claudio’s holiness was characterized: by his unlimited love of God, which made his life *His splendid abode*; by his humility and deep filial devotion

to the Madonna. He lived his life in prayer; he was often seen in adoration in front of the tabernacle. He showed great charity to everybody but especially to the sick and the poor. Added to this, was his talent to create sculptural works of art infused with sensitivity and spirituality.

Blessed Claudio, a sculptor of marble, created within himself the capacity to arouse devotion to the Madonna in all those he encountered.



*I will help  
and console everybody*

*Blessed Claudio*

## HOW TO GET THERE

**BY CAR FROM VICENZA**, leave the motorway at the Alte/Montecchio Maggiore exit and take the road for Arzignano/Chiampo.

**FROM VERONA**, leave the motorway at the Montebello exit and take the road for Arzignano/Chiampo.

**BY TRAIN TO VICENZA**, near the railway station there is the bus station, take the bus for Chiampo.

## GROUPS SHOULD BOOK THEIR PILGRIMAGE

**Fr. Rector of the Sanctuary  
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A panoramic view of Chiampo

