

It was a church; it will become a cultural centre

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There are those that have been married here and others that christened their children; and there are some people who, in the dark of its confessionals, told their sins and received absolution: **Grantola inhabitants love that church, like a family jewel, even if today it is deconsecrated.** This is the story of the **second life of the San Carlo church.** It is a House of God, a building wanted by Saint Carlo Borromeo and completed in 1634: it has been used to celebrate Mass until 1965, when it was deconsecrated to build the new parish church. Since then and up to some years ago, the building has been used as warehouse for any kind of material. Due to this, the church slowly and constantly declined. Many decorations were removed together with the altar and also the beautiful pipe organ.

Soon it will live again, in order to provide a space for culture, thanks to the commitment of administration and to some good-hearted citizens', who offered their professional help: the restorer, who already had evaluated important interventions for the renovation of different fresco, which are in the church and which belong to different eras; an engineer from a nearby town, who confirms the stability of the church.

Then, in the past weeks, the turning point: the municipal administration finally acquired the church, in order to convert it into a valley cultural centre. **Mayor Silvano Ronzani** tells us "Yes, although many people in this town remember having prayed or listened to Mass in that church. The idea of giving new life to the old church is very sincere in town. The procedure for the acquisition of the building started in 2004 and it concluded last December. Grantola parish, the property, **sold the building for 200 thousand Euros**, an amount that the administration had in the bank, after selling another building, the old town senior centre. The objective of this acquisition, as we can see in the notary deeds, is the conversion of the building into a cultural centre. We think of **a centre that could be use by the young people of Grantola**, but also by young people of other towns (between Valtravaglia and Valcuvia areas)." In total, to sort out the deconsecrated church, we need at least 600,000 euros. "For this we will ask to public offices or interested foundations to help in this project", explains the Mayor, "the idea is to start work in 2014".

In recent years the church has been used for "profane" uses: in May 2012, in occasion of the "Corni e Pecc" event (a culinary event), a small group of people from Grantola, decided to unite to bring to life the ancient building, promoting cultural events such as theatrical performances, concerts and last but not least, the nativity scene exhibition that ended Sunday

6th January.

And the bells? “We have thought about a use for them, which doesn’t have to be different from the religious one: it will be managed by the parish for religious purposes and celebrations – the bells will ring again.”

Other historical facts about the San Carlo Church have been documented by Paolo Ricciardi – source of the photographs that accompany this article – curator of the website www.valganna.info

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