

## VareseNews

### Three years of celebrations for the 600th anniversary of the “Collegiata”

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Almost 600 years have passed since **7 January 1422**, when Pope Martin V addressed a papal bull to Cardinal Branda Castiglioni, authorising him to establish the Collegiate Church in Castiglione Olona; this marked the beginning of a journey which, in little more than three years, led to the consecration of the church, on 25 March 1425.

To celebrate the sixth centennial of the Collegiate Church, many initiatives are being organised, offering a varied cultural programme, **from 2022 to 2025**; at a number of levels, these initiatives will celebrate the years of intense work that led to the building of the Collegiate Church, the fulcrum of the transformation of the medieval village of Castiglione Olona into the first ideal town of the Renaissance.

The staff of the Museum began working on the programme, initially by seeking dialogue and collaboration. **A centenary committee** is being set up, which will certainly be open to new ideas, from the local area and beyond, and will always be willing to explain its objectives to anyone who wishes to support this important anniversary with financial help or technical sponsorships.

In the cardinal's curriculum vitae, an exceptional document that was found intact in his tomb, in 1935, we can read “edificavit unacum castro”: he had the Collegiate Church built together with the castle, the foundation of which was much older, and which, at the time, was in ruins, thereby creating a monument complex that was subsequently made famous by the art of Masolino da Panicale. And this is the motto chosen for the logo of the Collegiate's six hundredth anniversary.

What is being organised is being kept “under the hat” of **Cardinal Branda Castiglioni**, who was responsible for everything we want to celebrate today. Indeed, the logo contains the stylisation of the cardinal's hat, which appears on the font in the Baptistery; the font, which was made by the master sculptors of Caronno, at the time of Branda, depicts the cardinal's hat overlapping the coat of arms, with the Castiglioni lion.

In 1421, the presence of Pietro, Alberto and Giovanni Solari had already been recorded. The Solari brothers were architects and stone-cutters of a well-documented family, who, under the Viscontis and Sforzas, had an important role in the most important constructions in the Duchy of Milan, from the Duomo, to the Certosa di Pavia; the following year, they were given the job of building the Collegiate Church and a number of buildings in the centre of the village.

For this reason, 2021 will be a year of preparation for the important anniversary; from January, on the social media of the Collegiata Museum, on the **7<sup>th</sup> of every month, short, detailed descriptions will be published**, and previews will be given about the activities, which, from 2022 to 2025, the organisers hope will attract a great many people.

Translated by Debora De Benedetto, Andrea Rota and Sarah Guarneri

Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook

