



SACRI MONTI OF PIEDMONT AND LOMBARDY

# Sacro Monte of Varallo



Photo: A. Langhi



**Access to the Sacred Mount is free of charge**

**HOW TO GET THERE**

**Note:** Access by bus is subject to specific rules and payment. Info and permits: Municipal Police of Varallo - tel +39 0163 562727

**By car:** Motorway A26, exit Romagnano-Ghemme, SP 299 direction Alagna, exit Varallo, directions for Sacro Monte by cableway and on road (follow the specific signs)

**By bus:** lines for Vercelli (tel 800 912 716 - www.atapsa.it) - Novara and Milan (tel +39 0163 835222 - www.baranzelli.it) - Turin (tel +39 011 646637 https://www.canovaspa.it/)

**Info:** local public transportation: PRONTO TPL - tel 800333444 http://prontotpl.5t.torino.it

**CABLEWAY Varallo - Sacred Mount** - tel 0163 564391 - Monterosa 2000 S.p.A. - tel 0163 922922 E-mail: info@monterosa2000.it

**INFORMATION**

**Ente di gestione dei Sacri Monti**  
**Riserva speciale del Sacro Monte di Varallo (I)**  
 Località Sacro Monte, 1/A - Piazza Giovanni Paolo II - Edificio Casa Valgrana  
 13019 Varallo (VC) - tel +39 0163 53938 - fax +39 0163 54047  
 info.varallo@sacri-monti.com - https://www.sacrimonti.org/en/sacro-monte-di-varallo

**Sanctuary - Padri Oblati (O)** - Località Sacro Monte, 3  
 tel +39 0163 51131 - rettore@sacromontedivarallo.it - www.sacromontedivarallo.it

**SERVICES**

**Info-point (A)** Guardiaparco, Casa D'Adda - Conference hall (92 seats - admission with fee) tel +39 0163 564518 - +39 349 1678060 - info.varallo@sacri-monti.com

**Tourist Office** - 13019 Varallo - Corso Roma, 38 - tel +39 0163 564404  
 infovarallo@atvalesesiavercelli.it - www.atvalesesiavercelli.it

**Hotels and Restaurants**  
**Hotel Restaurant Casa del Pellegrino (N)** - tel +39 338 1910896 - info@lacasadelpellegrino.eu  
**Hotel-Restaurant Vecchio Sacro Monte (E)** - tel +39 0163 54254 - info@albergosacromonte.it

**Audio guides** available at **info-point (A)** **Park Office (I)** and **souvenir shop (M)**  
 audio-guides available in Italian and English (fee 3 €)

**Guided Tours - Info:** Riserva speciale Sacro Monte Varallo  
 tel +39 0163 53938 - info.varallo@sacri-monti.com

**Visit of the "Crucifixion" chapel (38)**, on reservation  
**Info:** Riserva Speciale Sacro Monte di Varallo  
 tel +39 0163 53938 - info.varallo@sacri-monti.com

**MUST SEE**  
**Chiesa Madonna delle Grazie (frescoes by G. Ferrari)** - piazza G. Ferrari  
**Picture-Gallery of Varallo** - via Pio Franzani, 2 - tel +39 0163 51424  
 www.pinacotecadivarallo.it  
**"Cesare Scaglia" Museum-House** - piazza San Carlo  
**Info:** Comune di Varallo - Culture Office - tel +39 0163 562729

**LINKS**  
**Comune di Varallo** - www.comune.varallo.vc.it  
**Ente di gestione delle Aree Protette della Valle Sesia** - www.areeprotettevallesesia.it  
**Unesco Italia** - www.unesco.it  
**Supervulcano della Valsesia** - www.supervulcano.it  
**Geoparco della Valsesia e della Val Grande** - www.sesiavalgrandegeopark.it

**ENTE DI GESTIONE DEI SACRI MONTI**

**Ente di gestione dei Sacri Monti (legal seat)**  
**Documentation Centre of the European Sacred Mounts, Calvaries and Devotional Complexes**  
 Cascina Valperone, 1 - 15020 Ponzano Monferrato (AL)  
 tel +39 0141 927120 - fax +39 0141 927800  
 info@sacri-monti.com - www.sacrimonti.org

Sacri Monti - Official #sacrimontisocial sacrimontidelpiemonte

**SACRO MONTE OF VARALLO**  
 Surface area: 22 hectares  
 Elevation: 455 - 650 metres  
 Environment: Mountain  
 Property: Commune of Varallo

**PROTECTED AREA**

The Sacro Monte di Varallo is the most important of the pre-alpine Sacro Monte both for its artistic and historical significance and for its naturalistic make-up, rich in autochthonous and exotic plants arranged following the patterns of the Italian Renaissance gardens which aimed at emphasizing the nearby architectural structures. Although the territory of the Reserve has been profoundly altered by man, after years of gradual abandonment, the forest covering has slowly been returning floral elements that have developed and today accounts for more than 421 species. Inside the sacred area, the natural environment has been strongly shaped by man to resemble the typical gardens of Renaissance Italy. The area features an "organ-pipe" wood of beech trees and some individual, centuries-old trees of various species, including boxwood, yew, ilex and field elm. The bird and fauna population is typical of the pre-mountain environments and not particularly significant, due to strong man-made influences. The Sacro Monte di Varallo is a protected area of Regione Piemonte (1980) and since 2012 it has been part of the Ente di Gestione dei Sacri Monti.



Photo: M. Dallago



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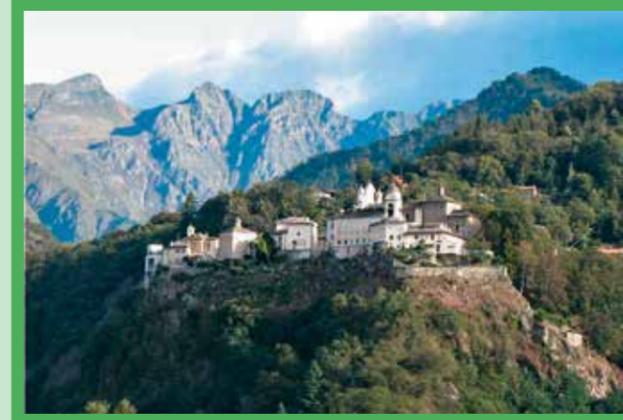
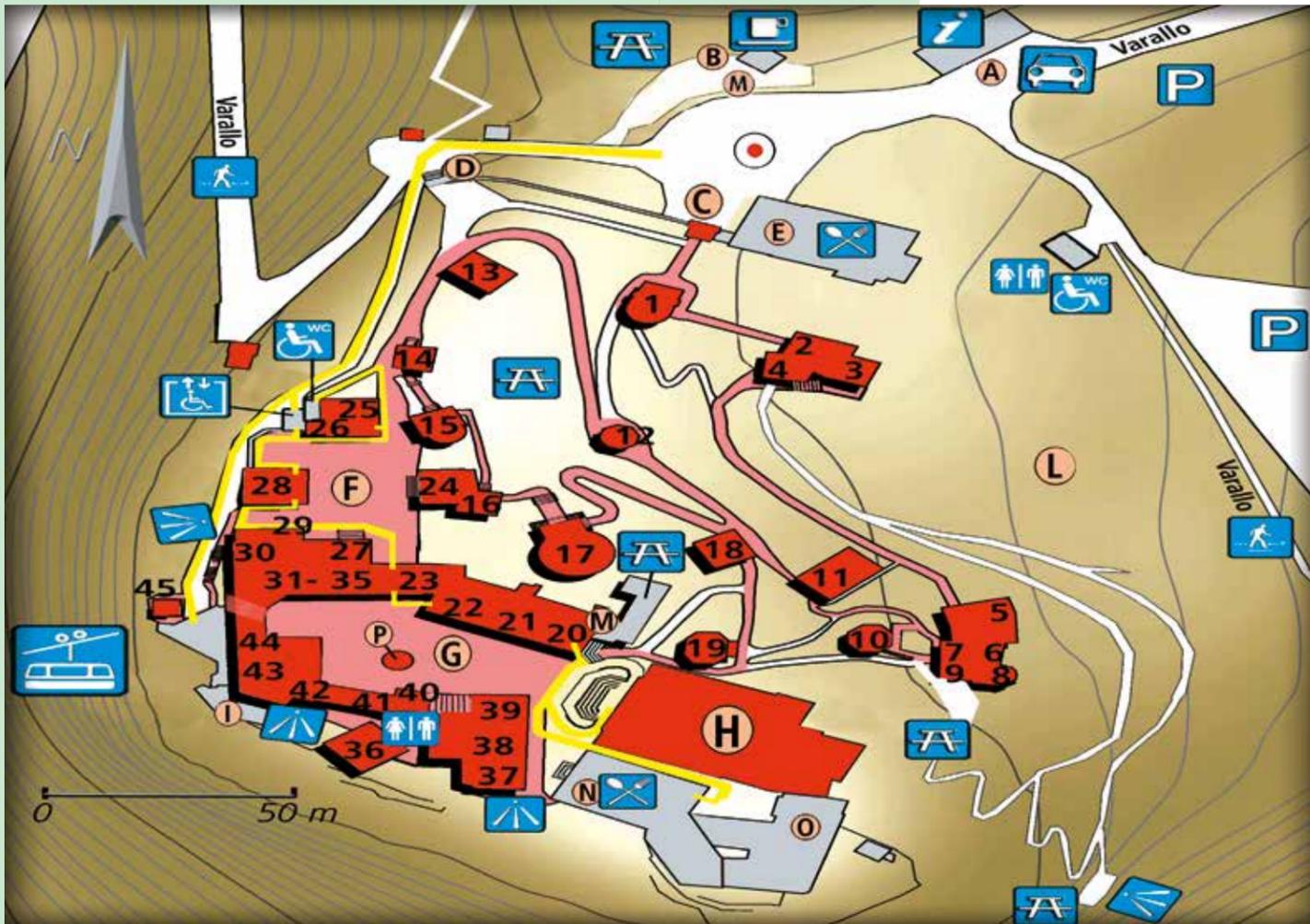


Photo: M. Dallago

## SACRI MONTI UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

"The nine *Sacri Monti* of Northern Italy are groups of chapels and other architectural handmade works built between the XVI and XVII century dedicated to different aspects of the Christian faith. Besides their symbolic and spiritual meaning, they feature notable characteristics of beauty, virtue and charm as they blend in with natural and scenic environments of hills, woods and lakes. They also contain very important artistic remains (frescoes and statues)". This is the motivation according to which in 2003 UNESCO included the "Sacri Monti di Piemonte e Lombardia" site in its World Heritage List. This prestigious acknowledgement confers universal value to seven *Sacri Monti* of Piedmont (Belmonte, Crea, Domodossola, Ghiffa, Oropa, Orta and Varallo) and two of Lombardy (Ossuccio and Varese), highlighting the extraordinary richness, qualities and values of these historical, artistic and nature gems. The chapels series depicts episodes and mysteries of sacred life through statues, paintings and frescos while blending in with the embracing environment and contributing in defining the features of each monumental complex. *Valuable examples of landscape architecture, the Sacri Monti represent an important meeting point for believers and lovers of art.* First arising on the western Alps, where this phenomenon originated more than five hundred years ago, the *Sacri Monti* then inspired similar models in many parts of Catholic Europe. The seven *Sacri Monti* of Piedmont are part of the protected area system of Regione Piemonte which provides for historical and artistic preservation, maintenance and protection of the surrounding environment.

**ON FOOT AMONG THE SACRI MONTI - UNESCO**  
**The Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy, a path where to meet art, landscape and spirituality**  
 The Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy are connected by an articulated pedestrian path that intersects and overlaps the ancient Italian and European devotional paths.  
 The complete route of the **Devoto cammino dei Sacri Monti** is being updated but it can be largely downloaded from the website [www.sacrimonti.org](http://www.sacrimonti.org)



Cartography by University of Genoa - Polytechnic School - D.S.A. Department

## LEGEND

- (A) Info-point and conference-hall
- (B) Kiosk - souvenirs
- (C) Main Entrance
- (D) Secondary Entrance
- (E) Hotel "Vecchio Albergo S. Monte"
- (F) Tribunal Square
- (G) Basilica Square
- (H) The Basilica
- (I) Park Office
- (L) Valley of Hell
- (M) Souvenirs
- (N) Hotel "Casa del Pellegrino"
- (O) Oblate Fathers Monastery
- (P) Fountain of the Risen Christ

- Bar
- Picnic area
- Information Point
- Pedestrian path
- Toilet
- Viewpoint
- Toilets equipped for disabled people
- Parking
- Lift with disabled access
- Restaurant
- Path for disabled
- Carriage road
- Arrival station cable car

## THE CHAPELS

**The Monumental Entrance (C)** was built between the 1565 and 1566 by Galeazzo Alessi design as part of the reorganization of Sacro Monte contained in "Libro dei Misteri" preserved at the Public Library of Varallo.

**Chapel 1 - Adamo ed Eva (Adam and Eve)** - The chapel was built between 1565 e il 1566; the sculptures are by Juan De Wespin, called "il Tabacchetti", and Michele Prestinari. Giovanni Antonini added some animals (late 1800s). The original frescoes by Giovanni Battista della Rovere were completely repainted by Francesco Burlazzi in the late 1800s.

**Chapel 2 - Annunciazione (The Annunciation)** - Originally the "casa di Loreto" [Loreto house] was located here, with its statue of the Mother and Child attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari. Today this statue is located in the chapel of "Joseph's Second Dream" (n. 9). Between 1573 and 1578 the present scene, composed of wooden statues attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari, was moved there.

**Chapel 3 - Visitazione (The Visitation)** - Completed just before 1544 to house "L'Annunciazione". The scene of the meeting between Mary and Elizabeth was completed between 1573 and 1578.

**Chapel 4 - Primo Sogno di Giuseppe (Joseph's First Dream)** - Completed in 1614 with the closure of one of the openings on the open portico of the ancient "Annunciazione", it houses the sculptures by Giovanni d'Enrico. The wall decorations were redone in 1927.

**Chapel 5 - Arrivo dei Magi (The Arrival of the Magi)** - Begun in 1516 after an endowment by the Milanese noble family Castellanza, it was furnished during the third decade of the 1500s with sculptures and frescoes by Gaudenzio Ferrari.

**Chapel 6 - Natività (The Nativity)** - This is one of the oldest buildings of the Sacro Monte (it already existed prior to 1514); it faithfully reproduces the cave of the Nativity of the lower Basilica in Jerusalem. The statues of Mary and Joseph are the work of Gaudenzio Ferrari; the Child is a XIX century reproduction in wood.

**Chapel 7 - Adorazione dei Pastori (The Shepherds worship Jesus)** - It existed prior to 1514, and faithfully reproduces the identical spot in the Bethlehem Basilica. The statues are by Gaudenzio Ferrari and Giovanni d'Enrico.

**Chapel 8 - Presentazione al Tempio (The Presentation at the Temple)** - The inside faithfully reproduces, to the smallest detail, the semi-circular staircase and the marble doorway of the Bethlehem Basilica. Statues and frescoes are attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari.

**Chapel 9 - Secondo Sogno di Giuseppe (Joseph's Second Dream)** - The building was already in existence in 1565; between 1570 and 1578 the statues of the angel and Saint Joseph were completed, artist still unknown. The statue of the Madonna and Child is by Gaudenzio Ferrari. The frescoes are attributed to the Cavallazzis of the late-Gaudenzian school.

**Chapel 10 - La Fuga in Egitto (The Flight to Egypt)** - The chapel was constructed between 1573 and 1578 and the interior completely furnished with statues by an unknown artist; the pictorial decorations were redone by Francesco Burlazzi (1886).

**Chapel 11 - Strage degli Innocenti (The Slaughter of the Innocents)** - The chapel was begun by the d'Enrico brothers (1586) with an endowment from Carlo Emanuele I, Duke of Savoy. The sculptures are by Giacomo Paracca Bargnola di Valsolda, Michelangelo Rossetti da Claino and Michele Prestinari; the frescoes are by Giovanni Battista and Giovanni Mauro della Rovere.

**Chapel 12 - Battesimo di Gesù (The Baptism of Christ)** - The chapel was already standing in 1578 when the statues were created, including those on the lower level. Between 1584 and 1586 the figure of God the Father was added, up above, as well as the paintings by Cristoforo Bossi.

**Chapel 13 - Tentazioni di Cristo (The Temptations of Christ)** - This is one of the oldest buildings in the complex (it already existed in 1501); by 1578 the scene that today decorates the interior (artist unknown) had been completed. The frescoes are traditionally attributed to Melchiorre d'Enrico and date to around the first decade of the 1600s.

**Chapel 14 - La Samaritana al pozzo (The Samaritan Woman at the Well)** - The Chapel was built after 1573 and seems to have been finished, down to the interior scene and the paintings, in 1583. The statues are by an unknown artist of the Milan school. The frescoes are attributed to the Valesian painter Gian Giacomo Testa.

**Chapel 15 - Il Paralitico risanato (Healing of the Lame)** - The building was nearly completed in 1578 and furnished in the first two decades of the 1600s. The sculptures are the work of Giovanni d'Enrico, the frescoes are by Cristoforo Martinoli.

**Chapel 16 - Il figlio della vedova di Naim resuscitato (Raising of the Son of the Widow of Naim)** - The chapel was built between 1573 and 1583. Were completed before the end of 1587. The frescoes are dated at the same years.

**Chapel 17 - Trasfigurazione (The Transfiguration)** - Built and furnished between 1572 and the 1670, the chapel contains statues attributed to Pietro Francesco Petera di Varallo and Giovanni Soldo da Camasco. The frescoes are by the Montalti brothers.

**Chapel 18 - Resurrezione di Lazzaro (The Resurrection of Lazarus)** - Built between 1580 and 1585, it contains sculptures attributed to Bartolomeo Badarello and Michele Prestinari and frescoes attributed to Gian Giacomo Testa. The figure of Christ was refurbished by Carlo Vanelli (1905).

**Chapel 19 - Ingresso di Gesù in Gerusalemme (Jesus's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem)** This chapel was completed and mounted between 1578 and 1583 with statues attributed to Bartolomeo Badarello and frescoes by the Della Rovere brothers. Two statues by Giuseppe Arrigoni were added and two apostles painted by Pietro Borsetti (1721-1722). Other figures in the entranceway are the work of the painter Giovanni Avondo (1817).

**Chapel 20 - Ultima Cena (The Last Supper)** - Long ago placed in a room designed to imitate the hall of the Last Supper in Jerusalem (today next to the Chapel Hall of the "Casa del Pellegrino" Hotel), the present location and interior design date back to between 1776-1779. There is a 1779 painting by Antonio Orgiazzi il Vecchio. The statues, figures in wood with painted chalk garments, are the originals and date back to the end of the 1400s, after the school of the Lombardy De Donati sculptors.

**Chapel 21 - Orazione nell'orto (Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane)** - The statues are by Giovanni d'Enrico and date back to the early 1600s. In 1776 Giovanni Battista Bernero, a sculptor at the Savoy Court, modelled and donated the statue of Saint Charles. The frescoes, completed in 1778, are by Antonio Orgiazzi il Vecchio.

**Chapel 22 - I Discepoli Dormienti (The Sleeping Disciples)** - The statues were sculpted by Giovanni d'Enrico (1605-1606) and painted by his brother Melchiorre; the paintings found today in the chapel are by Paolo Emilio Morgari (1865).

**Chapel 23 - Cattura di Gesù (The Capture of Christ)** - Built at the start of the XVII century, the chapel contains sculptures attributed to diverse artists and epochs: Giovanni Battista da Corbetta, Michele Prestinari, and Giovanni d'Enrico. The frescoes are signed and dated by Melchiorre d'Enrico (1619), Tanzio da Varallo's brother.

**Chapel 24 - Gesù al Tribunale di Anna (Christ on Trial Before Annas)** - Built between 1704 and 1740, it contains statues by Carlo Antonio Tantarini di Valsassina, completed between 1726 and 1740. Pope Anna is the work of Giovanni Battista Bernero (in 1776); the frescoes are by Sigismondo Betti (1762-1764).

**Chapel 25 - Gesù al Tribunale di Caifa (Christ on Trial Before Caiphas)** - Part of the Alessi project (1565-1569), the chapel was then built in the second decade of the 1600s and the interior furnished with statues by Giovanni d'Enrico and frescoes signed and dated by Cristoforo Martinoli (1642).

**Chapel 26 - Pentimento di Pietro (Peter Repents)** - Sculptures by Giovanni d'Enrico, frescoes by Cristoforo Martinoli (c. 1640-1642).

**Chapel 27 - Cristo condotto la prima volta al tribunale di Pilato (Christ Being Led Before Pilate for the First Trial)** - Built in the early 1600s by will of Bishop Bascapè, the sculptures and frescoes were completed between 1615 and 1618, respectively, by Giovanni d'Enrico and his brother Antonio, called "Tanzio"

**Chapel 28 - Cristo al tribunale di Erode (Christ on Trial Before Herod)** - Built between 1619 and 1627 and designed by Bartolomeo Ravelli and Giovanni d'Enrico. The interior was finished around 1630 and houses sculptures and frescoes by Giovanni d'Enrico and frescoes by Tanzio da Varallo.

**Chapel 29 - Cristo condotto la seconda volta al tribunale di Pilato (Christ Being Led Before Pilate for the Second Time)** - The space was finished by the end of 1628; sculptures by G. d'Enrico, frescoes by the Valsesian painter Pierfrancesco Gianoli (1675- 1679) and the Grandi brothers.



**Chapel 30 - La Flagellazione (The Flagellation)** - Completed in 1610, the chapel contains statues of John the Baptist by Corbetta from a previous "Flagellation" and by Giovanni d'Enrico, all completed in 1617, and frescoes by Cristoforo Martinoli (1620).

**Chapel 31 - Incoronazione di spine (The Coronation of Thorns)** - A building of the early 1600s; statues by Giovanni d'Enrico. The frescoes, by different artists, were completed in 1617.

**Chapel 32 - Cristo condotto al Pretorio (Christ Being Led into the Pretorium)** - The space, built in the early 1600s, is home to the wooden statues of Christ and the scoundrel attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari (c. 1610). Others are by Giovanni d'Enrico (c. 1640). Frescoes by Pierfrancesco Gianoli (1657).

**Chapel 33 - "Ecce homo"** - The chapel was built in the first decade of the 1600s and contains statues by Giovanni d'Enrico and frescoes by Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli called "the Morazzone" (1609-1616).

**Chapel 34 - Pilato si lava le mani (Pilate Washes His Hands)** - Built in the first decade of the 1600s, the chapel houses sculptures by Giovanni d'Enrico and frescoes by Tanzio da Varallo (c. 1618-1619).

**Chapel 35 - Condanna (The Sentencing of Christ)** - The chapel was built in the first decade of the 1600s and houses sculptures by Giovanni d'Enrico and frescoes by Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli called "the Morazzone" (1610-1616).

**Chapel 36 - Salita al Calvario (The Road to Calvary)** - The chapel was built in the last decades of the 1500s. The statues are by the Flemish artist Juan de Wespin called "the Tabacchetti" (c. 1599-1602), the frescoes are by the Morazzone (1602-1607).

**Chapel 37 - Affissione alla Croce (Christ Affixed to the Cross)** - The chapel was built in the fourth decade of the 1600s and contains sculptures by Giovanni d'Enrico and Giacomo Gerro (c. 1635-1638) as well as frescoes by Melchiorre Gherardini, called the Ceranino.

**Chapel 38 - Crocifissione (The Crucifixion)** - The chapel was built before 1514 and refurbished between 1515 and 1520 with sculptures and frescoes by Gaudenzio Ferrari; Gaudenzio's work was to become the model for the subsequent chapels.

**Chapel 39 - Deposizione dalla Croce (The Deposition from the Cross)** - Built in the fourth decade of the 1600s, it contains sculptures by Giovanni d'Enrico and Giacomo Ferro (c. 1637-1640) and frescoes (c. 1641-1642) by Melchiorre Gherardini.

**Chapel 40 - La Pietà (The Pietà)** - Formerly dedicated to "the stripping of the robes" and decorated with frescoes by Gaudenzio Ferrari, it was originally intended by Bishop Volpi to house the sculpture of the "Pietà" by Giovanni d'Enrico (c. 1628-1640).

**Chapel 41 - Deposizione di Gesù nella Sindone (The Deposition of Christ in the Shroud)** - The current sculptures (1826) are intended as a replacement scene for the original wood group of the late 1400s, called "Anointing Stone", a work attributed to the De Donati brothers and now on display in the Picture Gallery of Varallo. The paintings are by the Valsesian artist Pier Celestino Gilardi (late XIX century).

**Chapel 42 - Altare di San Francesco (Altar of Saint Francis)** - Tradition has it that Bernardino Caimi celebrated the first Masses on Sacro Monte in this chapel at this altar. Above the table, the tablet with St. Francis receiving the stigmata, by Gaudenzio Ferrari (c. 1517) was displayed. It is now housed by the Picture-Gallery of Varallo. The fresco is by Pier Celestino Gilardi (1880).

**43 Chapel - Il Santo Sepolcro (The Holy Sepulchre)** - This was the first chapel built on the Sacro Monte (1491); it reproduces, as its founder Bernardino Caimi specified, the tomb of Jesus in Jerusalem. The artist who created the Dead Christ in the sarcophagus (last decades of the 1400s) is unknown. The current pictorial decoration was realized in 1945-46. The annexed oratory dates from the early 1700s.

**Chapel 44 - San Carlo (Saint Charles)** - This is a recreation of the room where Saint Charles Borromeo stayed when visiting the Sacro Monte; the statue is the work of Joseph Arrigoni (1772). The painted decorations are contemporary (1945).

**Chapel 45 - Il Sepolcro di Maria (The Sepulchre of Mary)** - Depicts the tomb of Mary in the Holy Land and dates back to the last decade of the 1400s. The original stand-alone frescoes are on display today in the Picture-Gallery of Varallo, and are attributed to the Lombard workshop of the Scottos and to the first works by Gaudenzio Ferrari.

**The Basilica (H)** - Begun in 1614, it replaced the original which dated from the late 1400s. It is dedicated to the Madonna of the Assumption whose wooden statue attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari can still be found today in the crypt. The sculptures on the dome are by Dionigi Bussola and the frescoes by the Montalti brothers (late 1600s). The main altar and the crypt were built after a design by the Royal Architect Benedetto Alfieri (c. 1740). The statuary façade is by the architect Cerutti di Valpiana (1896).