

Saint Secondo

III-IV Century

Legend hands down to us the story that Secondo, from noble Roman origins, perhaps was a part of the family of the “Vettii” or of the “Gens Licinia,” he was a fervent idolator and great friend of Saprizio, prefect of the Cottian Alps.

Initiated to Christianity by Calogero (who was being detained in a prison in the region of Asti), he then left with Saprizio on a trip to Tortona and during the actual journey exceptional portents took place. Greeted in Tortona by Marziano, bishop of the city, he was exhorted by him to persist on the road of conversion and of charity, and to go to Milan to be with the confessors Faustino and Giovita. Secondo, having arrived in Milan, received the blessing of Giovita who invited him to bring the Sacrament of the Eucharist to Calogero and Marziano. Having returned to Tortona, Secondo was able to find a way to enter the prison in which Marziano had in the meanwhile been confined by Saprizio who had also already condemned him to death; here Secondo stayed close to him all through the night and the following day, after the torture, he buried his body. Saprizio, aware of the conversion of Secondo to Christianity, tried to convince him to renounce it, first with flattery and then with force: Secondo, despite the tortures suffered, remained immovable in his choice.

Saprizio then condemned him to death but, during the night preceding the execution (torture), Secondo was liberated by an Angel sent from Heaven and transported to Asti, into the jail where he found Calogero already there. Saprizio, the escape discovered, returned to Asti, he sent Calogero to Albegna, where he was martyred, while Secondo, on the 30th of March of 119 A.D. was taken outside the walls of Asti and decapitated. The legend relates also that he was buried in the spot in which he was killed and that here a church dedicated to him was built. To prove the benevolence of the Saint one must remember the liberation of the city from the threatened siege in 1526 from the leader Fabrizio Maramaldo, in the service of Emperor Charles V, who at the time was the commander of the garrison of Alexandria. He had tried to enter from the portal of Saint Peter

and the district of Saint Lazarus near the Valmanera River, but was repelled and driven away by the population who invoked with fervor the protection of the Virgin Mary and of Saint Secondo. This victory was attributed precisely to divine intercession and in particular to the help of their Patron Saint Secondo. This important event was depicted in the fresco mural which is still visible on the right wall of the choir of the collegiate church dedicated to him.

