



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



Church of St. Ferdinand of the Pius House of Montedomini

The present imposing building of the Pius House of Montedomini occupies a piece of ground near the Arno, which in 1476 had been bestowed to the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova so that they could build a leprosarium, entitled to St. Sebastian, afterwards eliminated because of the Siege of 1529. The building used as a hospital was, in fact, used to build two convents of Franciscan nuns who had had to leave their original residences which were outside the city walls: Santa Maria Annunziata of Monticelli and the other, Santa Maria Assunta of Montedomini.

The communities built two adjacent monasteries, overlooking Via Dé Malcontenti and the buildings remained separate until 1808 when, following the Napoleonic suppressions, the Depository of Beggary was set up there. The architect Giuseppe Del Rosso reorganized the two monastic complexes contriving a single architectural structure, with a long unifying facade developed on via Dé Malcontenti adapting the internal spaces to the new requirements.

The institution was later transformed to accommodate poor children and old people in difficulty and assumed the name of Pius House of Work. It was recognized Pius Work in 1866, keeping the name of Montedomini, heritage of the antique convent of Poor Clare.

The plan of the church is similar to that of other 16th-century female monasteries, with the chorus reserved to the nuns on the colonnade with Tuscan capitals. On the rear walls two choruses unfold, a motif which then greatly appreciated in the Florentine architecture in the late 16th-century and in the 17th-century.

In the apsidal chapel a great wooden Crucifix and a copy of the "Madonna of the Harpies" by Andrea del Sarto are preserved. The vault of the church, in which there is the fresco of "The Virgin who passes the baby to St. Francis" realized by Veracini, shows rich architectonic quadratures. On the left side altar, a copy of the painting of Jacopo da Empoli "Sant'Ivo" and a lunette portraying "The Eternal Father" are fitted in. On the same wall a painting of Giuseppe Grifoni "Death of St. Romualdo" originating from Santa Maria degli Angeli is hanging. The altar of the right wall shows "The Adoration of the Wise Men" by Francesco Conti.

"The Last Supper" of the ex-refectory is by a Florentine artist of the middle 17th-century, while in 1925 Galileo Chini painted "Garibaldian Recollections" and "The Altar of the Homeland in Rome" in other rooms. The choice of these subjects on the part of Galileo Chini was motivated by the destination of a new wing to the survivors of the War of Independence.