

Pordenone, former Convent of San Francesco

The Convent of the Friars Minor Conventual of St. Francis was wanted by the noble Francesco Ricchieri who, at his death in 1419, left his assets to realize the construction and allow the sustenance of the friars.

The building, consisting of a church and cloister, was built starting from 1424 on a land on the edge of the urban core of the period. According to a Latin inscription, still visible today on the side of a niche of the left aisle of the church and brought back to the lower part of the fresco above, the work was completed on 24th October 1448. The church is formed by a single room with three apses and originally inside there were numerous and valuable works performed by Giovanni Antonio de 'Sacchis, called the Pordenone (1483-1539), as fragments of scenes of *Saint Francis receiving the stigmata*, a *Magdalene* and two *wooden silhouettes* painted in oil (*San Giovanni Evangelista and Madonna dolenti*), parts of an iconostasis, now partly preserved in the Museo Civico d'Arte. Traces of the ancient decoration of the church remain above all the frescoed lunette depicting *Saint Francis receiving the stigmata* above the entrance door in the alley of San Francesco, by Giovanni Maria Zaffoni, known as Calderari (1500-1563), a pupil of Pordenone.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the complex underwent some alteration and modification. In 1769, during the domination of the Venetian Republic, the convent was suppressed and the building was auctioned off. The building then had several private owners (including Andrea Galvani) who used it for the most diverse uses: dormitory, home, kitchens, tavern, theatre, fruit market, liquor factory, while the cloister was transformed into a ballroom, theatre and cinema (Cojazzi Hall from the owners' surname). The church and cloister were taken over by the Municipality of Pordenone in the early seventies of the twentieth century, while the remaining part was purchased in 1991. The church and the cloister were subject of a first restoration by the Superintendence between 1972 and 1984. In 2000, a second renovation project made it possible to fully recover the historical complex, transforming it into an important space dedicated to culture.

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