

THE ABBEY OF “SANTA MARIA DI FONTE LAURATO”

The abbey lies three kilometers north-east of Fiumefreddo, in a green, grassy valley called Badia, at the foot of “Timpa Badia” and near the source of a river of pure and fresh water. At the beginning of the ninth century, in the place

which nowadays is called “Badia”, the Basilian monks built a church and dedicated it to Saint ‘Domenica’. The church was situated next to a cenoby which had been built long before. This old cenoby, was passed on to the Benedictines, who owned it up to the year 1035. The church and the cenoby, for unknown reasons, were

neglected for a long time,

and, for this reason, they fell to ruin.

Simon Mamistra, governor

of Calabria and ruler of Fiumefreddo, built, not too far from the old buildings, a new construction, and, since then, the new religious building has been called abbey of “*Fonte Laurato*”. The appellation “Santa Maria” was added to worship the Virgin Mary. In the year 2001, Simon Mamistra donated the abbey to Gioacchino da Fiore, a famous Calabrian abbot with mystical experience, who lived, for a short time, in the abbey of Fonte Laurato. Today we notice the traces of the main cloister, the dormitory, the refectory, the herb garden. At the end of the seventeenth century, the abbey was handed down to the order of the Cistercians.

A Cistercian bell tower, with a Byzantine Cross, overlooks the sacred building. There’s a porch, a narthex structure forming a covered approach to the entrance of the church.

The interior of the church is simple and austere: one broad nave without ceiling, so that you can see the roof supported by a wooden structure. The church consists of one main apse made of tuff stones and, at the sides, of two small, secondary apses. The High Altar is in baroque style and, above the altar, there’s an old picture of the Virgin.

The abbey was suppressed on the 13th of February 1807, as a consequence of the Calabrian antinapoleonic revolution (1806/1807), and, in 1813, it was bought from Camillo and Clemente Mazzarone: today the heirs take care of the abbey of “Fonte Laurato”.



The front of the abbey of Fonte Laurato with narthex entrance into the church. This abbey became the second mother house of the “Congregation of the Florensi” founded by J. da Fiore and approved by Celestino III, in 1196.