

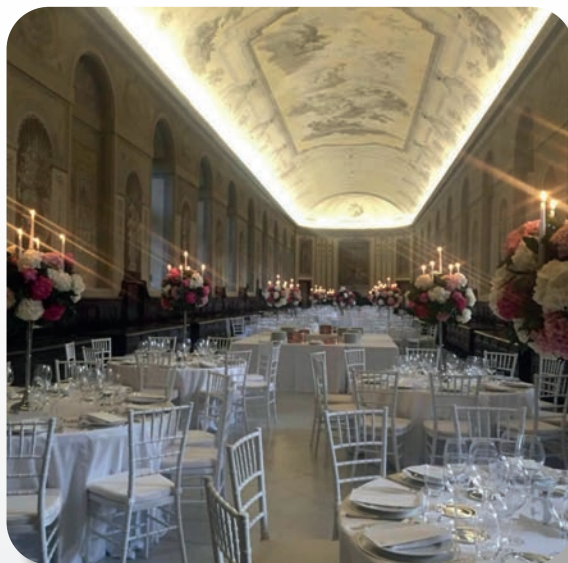
Ancient Refectory in Santa Chiara Basilica Naples

1993
30 ANNI
2023 **COLLAGE** S.p.A.





Ancient 18th-century refectory entirely frescoed, formerly used by the Clarisse nuns, and now exclusively used for private events.



THE HISTORY

1310

The construction of the complex was commissioned by King Robert of Anjou and his second wife, Sancia of Majorca. The works were carried out under the direction of Gagliardo Primario initially, and then under Lionardo di Vito. In 1340, the church was opened for worship. The Franciscan citadel was constructed by building two adjacent but separate convents: one for women, intended to accommodate the Clarisses, and the other for men, housing the Franciscan friars.



1742



Vaccaro and "modernization"

The project was entrusted to the Neapolitan architect Domenico Antonio Vaccaro. Lavish decorations gave it a Baroque appearance: the interior was covered with polychrome marbles, stuccoes, and gilded frames; the truss roof was concealed by a vault decorated by great painters of the time.

1943

The War

During the Second World War, the church was almost completely destroyed by an air raid.



1953



POST FATA RESURGO (THE RESURRECTION AFTER DEATH)

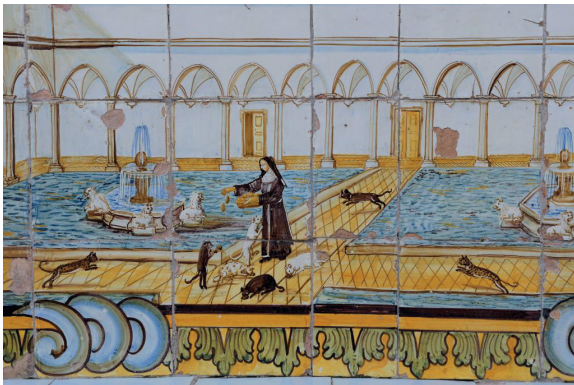
It was rebuilt and restored in the original Gothic style, and exactly ten years later, it was reopened for worship. Today, it features a facade with a broad pinnacle, on which the ancient pierced rose window is set.

THE CLOISTER



The cloister, located on an upper level compared to that of the porticos, is defined by a wall covered with majolica tiles on which the piperno pillars rest. The central area is divided into four sections by two crossing avenues that intersect perpendicularly at a roundabout. Alongside the avenues are sixty-four octagonal pillars covered with

majolica decorated with vegetal festoons composed of leaves, flowers, and fruit. The pillars, which end at the top with a piperno capital, are connected to each other by seats entirely decorated with majolica, depicting popular, rustic, maritime, and mythological scenes on their backs.



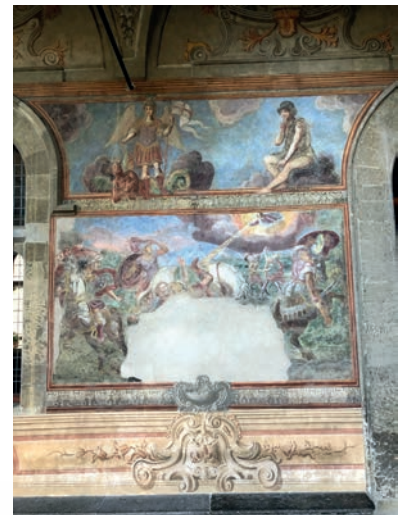
Donato e Giuseppe Massa

The decorations of the majolica tiles are credited to the artisans Donato and Giuseppe Massa, who harmonized the polychrome of the cloister with all the surrounding architectural and natural elements.

There is a single backrest depicting life in the monastery, with a depiction of a Clarisse nun feeding the cats present in the cloister.

THE FRESCOES

Immerse yourself in the beauty and historical significance of 17th-century frescoes. The walls of the four sides surrounding the cloister of Santa Chiara were decorated in the first half of the 17th century by an unknown artist, likely belonging to the school of Belisario Corenzio. From the entrance to the cloister, the first part of the wall on the right is without frescoes because they were destroyed by the tragic bombing that occurred on August 4, 1943. The frescoes surrounding the cloister depict scenes from the Old Testament. On the third wall, the biblical narrative is interrupted to accommodate a double figurative register: At the bottom, there are some Saints, including St. Francis, while at the top, theological Virtues are depicted.

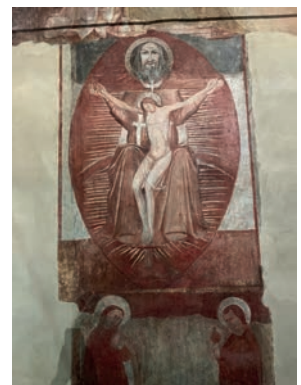


THE CHURCH



The church was opened for worship in 1340. The church today retains its original Provençal Gothic forms, with a façade featuring a large pinnacle, in which the ancient pierced rose window is set, along with the porch adorned with pointed arches. The interior consists of a single nave with ten chapels on each side. The presbytery is characterized by the presence of funerary monuments of the Angevin royal family. At the center stands the tomb of

Robert of Anjou, crafted by the Bertini brothers, while the two tombs on the right side, intended to hold the remains of Charles of Calabria and Mary of Valois, were created by the great master Tino di Camaino. The tomb on the left side, instead, belongs to Mary of Durazzo and was crafted by an anonymous sculptor, known as the "Durazzesco Master." In addition to the Angevin funerary monuments in Santa Chiara, the remains of the Bourbon family are also housed there. In 1742, the church underwent modifications by the architect Domenico Antonio Vaccaro. Lavish decorations gave the complex a Baroque appearance. On August 4, 1943, the church was almost entirely destroyed by an air raid. It was rebuilt and restored under the direction of Mario Zampino, returning to its original Gothic style. Ten years later, on August 4, 1953, the church was reopened for worship.





The Neapolitan Nativity scene. Centuries of history carefully preserved. It depicts a glimpse of 18th-century Naples. At the entrance of the cloister, you enter the room of the Nativity scene made with eighteenth and nineteenth-century figurines. The scene is expansive and, in accordance with Neapolitan nativity tradition, extends beyond the representation of the Holy Family to encompass the secular world, depicting a glimpse of 18th-century Naples.



On the slopes of the little hill, to the right, there is a cave carved into the rock where some shepherds rest, awakened later by the announcement of the angel, just as narrated in the Gospel. The rest of the representation, far from the biblical account, is enriched with elements drawn from the eighteenth-century Neapolitan reality of simple dwellings, crowded taverns, and shops bustling with peasant and common folk, artisans and musicians, beggars and nobles.

Divinity





Behind the main altar is the former Choir of the Clarisses, a space from which the nuns participated in religious services. The chapel, structured like a Cistercian chapter house, consists of three aisles, two of which are covered by ribbed vaults. The Choir, now known as the Chapel of Adoration, is a space reserved for prayer. In 1340, the church, where great artists of the time such as Tino di Camaino, the Bertini brothers, and most likely Giotto had worked, was opened for worship.

Immediately after the Bourbon chapel, there is the only fragment of fresco surviving the church's fluctuating history.

The Virgin is depicted as the diligent or sewing Virgin. Despite extensive damage to the plaster on the left portion of the fresco, one can discern, at the level of the Virgin's head, the ends of her fingers grasping a needle and deftly pulling a thread, displaying agile and lively sewing skills as she mends the crumpled cloth on her lap. The pensive Child sits beside her on the ground, with crossed legs and a finger to his mouth, symbolizing the Eucharist. Behind him, precisely aligned with the intersection of his limbs, looms a cross, a clear reference to the Passion.



The only chapel of the basilica to have preserved its eighteenth-century appearance currently houses the remains of some princes of the Bourbon family of the Two Sicilies. In particular, on the left side, there is the funerary monument of Prince Filippo, who died in 1777, son of King Charles III, executed according to the design of Ferdinando Fuga by Giovanni Attigiati, while the cherubs are the work of Giuseppe Sammartino.



