

a polychrome marble altar, which style can be credit to a Lombard workshop and dated mid-18th century. In the left chapel there is a wooden statue of *Our Lady of Sorrows*, sculpted by Luigi Montecucco in 1842. The altarpiece in the right chapel, representing the *Martyrdom of St. Agatha*, is attributed to Montecucco's brother Francesco. Francesco's interpretation of the story is a St. Agatha with an intense and serene look, surrounded by the three executioners who are about to torture her in obedience to her persecutor's wish, who is sitting on the left of the painting. The high altar of polychrome marble features two little angels in marble of Carrara, who are supporting the Lord's Table. At the center of the frontal is a low relief with "*Jesus Christ in the Garden*" by Antonio Riccardi, brother of Carlo Riccardi, architect and designer of the church. On the upper part of the lateral walls there are two large symmetrical apses with balustrades in marble of Varallo. The apse on the left wall is fenced off by a wooden grating with the crests of the Guidobono Cavalchini Garofoli family and it was reserved exclusively for the members of the noble family of Tortona to access the church directly from their palace. Note that the apse on the right wall is false, made



to respect the rule of symmetry. One of the most important wooden furniture of the church is the choir, displaying two rows of choir stalls, leaning in semi circle against the apsidal wall. Multilinear frames decorate the back of each stall and small pilasters separate the stalls from each-other. The choir is the original one, and it was restored between the years 2005-2006. Two large frescoes are painted on the vaults of the Church. *The Glory of St. James* was painted on the nave's vault, while *The Exaltation of the Eucharist* was painted on the presbytery's vault. The artist is unknown but the noble and pompous style suggests the influence of the Piedmontese School during the second half of the 18th century.

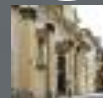
PIETRO CORDELLI\_COMUNICAZIONE pcordeilli@tin.it



DIOCESI DI  
TORTONA

PROJECT  
OPEN  
CHURCHES

S. GIACOMO  
TORTONA





The church of St. Giacomo is an excellent example of late baroque architecture, valuable as for the fact that it has not undergone crucial changes over the later centuries as well as for its plain style without the extreme decorativeness typical of that artistic period. The present-day church was consecrated in 1784, but its origin dates to the Middle Ages. The documents report that a hospice, run by the "Confraternity of Templars", was established next to the church in 1252 to host the many pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. During the 18th century the old Church was about to collapse and it was

decided to knock it down and rebuilt it in obedience to the will of the Cardinal Carlo Alberto Guidobono Cavalchini of Tortona. This fact is commemorated with a tombstone inside the Church on the right of the high altar's balustrade. The Cardinal had entrusted the Milanese architect Carlo Riccardi with the reconstruction plan. The constructions started in 1770. The **façade** stretches out into the narrow space of Lorenzo Perosi's street and is embellished by: a stringcourse, sculpted Corinthian capitals in marble of Varallo, two stone statues representing two angels, and the coat of arms of the Cardinal Guidobono Cavalchini, that is indicated by a galero (wide-brimmed hat) surrounding turquoise and gold rows above which is a crowned black eagle. The **interior** of the church is elegant with a rich ornamentation on the single nave's walls. Distinctive elements of the church are the bays overlooking the nave and the lateral chapels, that in the past may had been reserved to the aristocracy. The bays are fenced off by a balustrade in stone of Serravalle with wooden gratings, painted and golden. The two lateral chapels house a balustrade and

