

San Dimitri Chapel, Gharb

San Dimitri's chapel is found at the limits of Gharb in an area known as Fuq Ras Mitri. It was built in the fifteenth century by Dun Frangisk Depena and was subsequently restored and used up to the seventeenth century. In 1657 Bishop Baiguer profaned it because of its appalling condition. But in 1796 Dun Mario Vella (in his will) requested that the chapel be rebuilt, and left five scudi per year for its upkeep. In 1800 it was reconstructed, and consecrated by Dun Publio Refalo.

It is quite small, with a barrel vault roof and a small back sacristy. There is one stone altar. The altarpiece, painted in 1810 by an unknown artist, represents San Dimitri, and this painting was restored in 1937 by Wistin Camilleri, a Gozitan artist.

A legend is associated with this chapel, according to which an old woman known as Zgugina lived with her young son, close to the chapel. One day Turks entered Zgugina's house, ransacked it, and took her son as prisoner. Fearful and desperate the woman ran to the chapel where she asked for the Saint's intervention, promising to him to light a candle should he return her son safely back to her. San Dimitri stepped out of the picture, and rode his horse towards the ship where her son had been



taken. He returned soon after, returned the boy to his mother, and then proceeded to re-enter the picture, but not before leaving a horseshoe imprinted in the rocks.

This chapel opens irregularly, and for special occasions and weddings. Its feast is celebrated on the first Sunday following the 8th of October.

References:

- *Bezzina, J (1999) Gems of Gozo – An appreciation of twenty chapels. Gaultana*
- *Grech, P (1999) Exploring the Chapels of Gozo. Progress Press*
- *Kilin (2000) A Hundred Wayside Chapels of Malta and Gozo. Heritage Books*

Annunciation Chapel, Wied il-Lunzjata, Victoria

Between Rabat and Kercem you can find the picturesque chapel of Tal-Lunzjata which gives its name to the valley where it stands.

The chapel dates back to 1347 and when the Knights of St John came to Malta in 1530, it fell into their custody. It had an annual benefice of 30 scudi with which the person responsible for the chapel was expected to concelebrate mass every Saturday, organise the feast with a sung first vespers, and also celebrate high mass on feast day.

In the sixteenth century the chapel was rebuilt and it benefited from the devotion of a number of pilgrims. Further repair works were effected after the Second World War, and the chapel was again consecrated on the 18th October 1959.

The façade is simple, lacking any decoration whatsoever, and the door has an oculus (window) on top of it. A room was built later on at the back of chapel, upon which a bell-cot was constructed. On the façade one finds the characteristic marble plate with the Latin inscription "Non gode l'immunita ecclesias" which overlooks the small 'zuntier.'

The altarpiece by the Knight painter Fra Luca Gamier dates back to the seventeenth century. Devotees decorated it with a silver diadem of



twelve stars and a crown on the Virgin Mary's head.

Presently, the feast of the Annunciation is celebrated yearly on the 25th of March, and the chapel opens daily for mass at 5.00 pm (excluding the summer months).

References:

- *Bezzina, J (1999) Gems of Gozo – An appreciation of twenty chapels. Gaultana*
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