

San Potito - the patron saint of Ascoli Satriano

Patronal saint of Ascoli Satriano, Puglia, Italy

Every year in late August, the town of Ascoli Satriano in southern Italy holds a festival in honour of the patron saint, San Potito. The celebrations have both a secular emphasis in the popular festival and a religious procession and service.

The procession of San Potito



The procession begins at the Cathedral and progresses toward the San Antonio gate, then winds through narrow streets up to the castle before descending to the Porta Nuova gate and the Borgo area, up to the monastery of San Potito and finally down again to the Piazza to enter the Cathedral again. Although there have been modifications, the procession follows a route that is very similar to that taken by the enumerators of Ascoli's 18th century ecclesiastical population listings.

Senior ecclesiastics head the procession, followed by the statue of the saint and then attendants, nuns and confraternity members. Next come civic dignitaries preceded by costumed attendants and followed by the town band. The public walk behind with the particular devotees (often women) towards the front of this section. A significant number of citizens participate in the procession.



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Until the 17th century Ascoli had three patron saints: San Leone, San Biaggio and San Potito. The increasing dominance of San Potito is reflected in the growing popularity of versions of his name being given to both boys and girls from the late 17th century. In a period which has seen the increasing feminisation of saint and madonna cults throughout the Italian south, it is interesting to note that San Potito retains the dominant role in the Ascoli festival tradition.

San Potito was a christian boy, martyred in the 2nd century AD. The statue of San Potito is made from solid silver and was donated by a local doctor in the 17th century. The base was donated by migrants to America originating from the town at the beginning of this century.

The statue is surrounded by candles. During the course of the procession people pin money and, sometimes, jewellery, onto the red robe about the statue's neck in recognition of favours received and hoped for from the saint. The nail in the head of the boy saint symbolises the form of his martyrdom.



Fonte: http://www.era.anthropology.ac.uk/Era_Resources/Era/Ascoli/sanpot/sanpotidx.html

Ascoli Satriano, visitando il borgo by Piero Pota - (www.ascolisatrianofg.it)