

Church of San Matteo

Architect Andrea Zorzi (18th century)

The bells of the Parish Church of San Matteo, which stands in the heart of the city, have marked the time in the city and countryside of Riese for centuries.

Pius X received his first sacraments in this church, testified by the inscription on the front of the baptismal font, and celebrated his first mass here after being ordained a priest.

The great altarpiece of the "Glory of Pius X" stands tall on the high altar at the back of the single nave. It was donated by the Cavaliers of the Holy Sepulchre, of which our saint was a patron.

Behind the altar, there is the Arch of St Pius X, the marble sarcophagus that was his first tomb. It was brought here from Rome.

The stairs at both the side chapels lead to a place of devotion and memories relating to Christian life at the time of Pius X: historical documents, robes, portraits, effigies, paintings, these are just some of the objects that can be admired.



Spanish monument

During his last year of life, Pius X wanted to give the parish of Riese a kindergarten, of which it was lacking. After one hundred years, the structure desired by the Holy Pontiff is still active and welcomes many children.

In a corner of the garden, protected by an imposing gate decorated by Papal crests, rises the Spanish Monument, donated to Riese by the Spanish Catholics to honour the memory of Pius X. This monument was built in 1935 and was the first demonstration of the devotion to Pius X in the period prior to his beatification, and testimony of his popularity in the world. A walk in the garden of the monument is an essential stop for those who visit Riese and the Land of Pius X.



Sarto Chapel

(20th century)

As testimony of the strong ties with his land and people, Pope Pius X wanted to build a family tomb inside the cemetery of Riese.

It is a small family chapel in neoclassical style, which houses the remains of many of his family members, including his mother Margherita Sanson: her tombstone, dictated by the Holy Pontiff is visible inside the chapel.



Villa Eger

Architect Andrea Zorzi (18th century)

Villa Eger, currently the town hall, consists of a main body, a barn, greenhouse and large park. In the past, the villa was the summer residence of the patrician families of Gradenigo and Venier.

During the 18th century, the then owner, Andrea Zorzi, Paduan architect, made some major changes to the massive central block. The large serliana on the first floor of the façade was opened and a new bright and airy staircase was built inside the building. The adjacent barn was built according to the design by Zorzi: the long façade recaptures that of the nearby Villa Emo, designed by Palladio, the side walls are marked by regular holes softened by small pediments, while large arch-shaped openings, conclude the building. The barn was used as a storeroom for products harvested from the estate attached to the villa, where much of the local population worked as labourers. At the time of Pius X, Villa Eger was the residence of Countess Gradenigo Venier, defined by her contemporaries as "beautiful by imperial decree" because she was Napoleon's lover. In this house, the countess had a literary salon that was often frequented by the young Giuseppe Sarto during summer breaks from his studies. The villa was surrounded by a garden, whose traces can be found in the greenhouse, once the winter shelter for pot plants. In the northern part of the complex is the largest green area called the "Park of Poetry" dedicated to Andrea Zanzotto. It contains rest areas, a children's playground, an amphitheatre for performances, a small artificial lake and the poetic path consisting of portals and music stands, updated every three months.

Information: www.comune.riesepiox.tv.it - Tel. 0423.753111



Riese, Land of Pius X

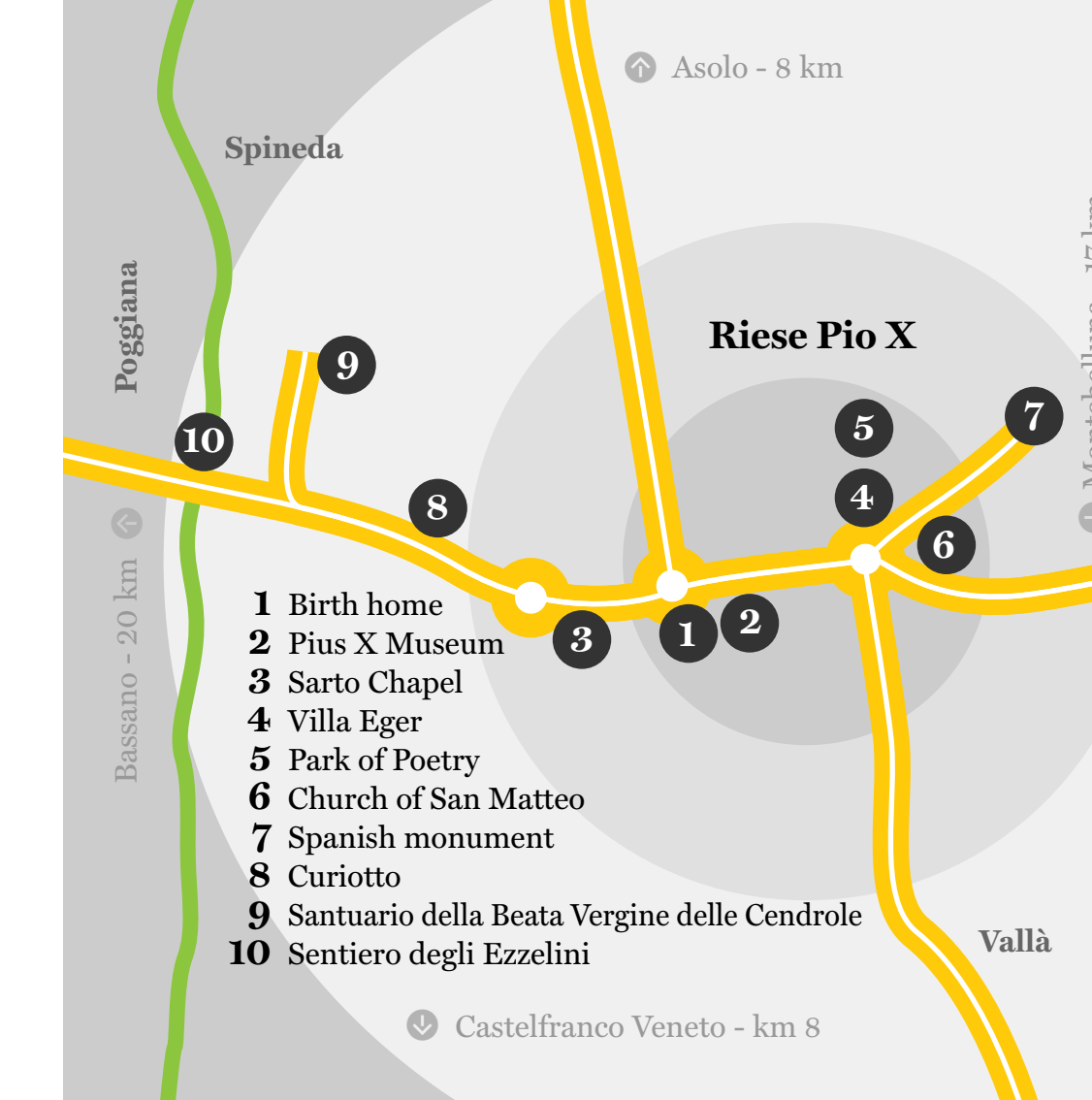
Important sites and monuments are scattered throughout the territory of Riese Pio X. The country residence of the Emiliani family rises in the naturalistic area of the "Prai" in the hamlet of Vallà. This complex of buildings was erected in the 18th century, and includes the beautiful oratory dedicated to Saint Girolamo Emiliani designed by the famous Castellian architect Francesco Maria Preti.

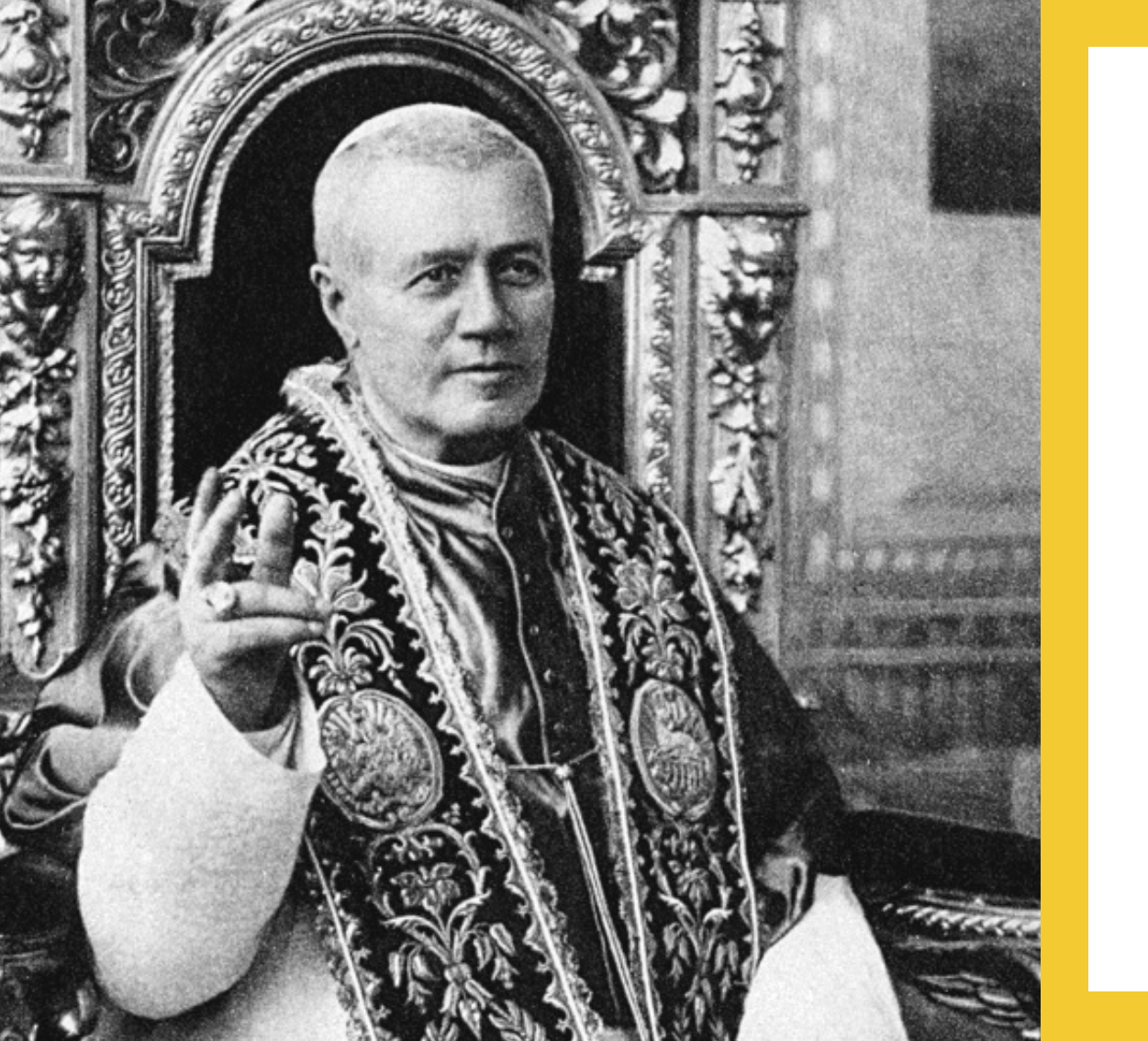
The parish church of Vallà was also designed by Preti. Unfortunately, the church dedicated to St John the Baptist underwent many changes in the 1930s and was originally built according to the principles of Harmonic Media, like other works by the Castellian architect.

The small Church of Sant'Antonio Abate is found in Spineda. It houses interesting paintings from the 17th and 18th century, but its special feature is the large fresco painting on the roof, entitled "the Assumption of Mary among the Saints Jerome, Anthony Abbot and Lucy" one of the last works by Giovan Battista Canal, painted in 1804. Although built recently (19th Century), the Church of San Lorenzo in Poggiana houses the altarpiece the "Martyrdom of St Lawrence" an extremely important Renaissance work by Jacopo Da Ponte created inside the workshop of the da Pontes, important 16th century Venetian painters. In the westernmost part of the town runs a stretch of the charming "Sentiero degli Ezzelini", a nature and pedestrian/bike trail that from Grappa descends through the Pedemontana, the Castellana and merges with the "Cammino di Sant'Antonio" to arrive at Padua.

Riese is not only a destination, but also an ideal starting point for visiting the beauties of the surrounding territory: the Castelfranco of Giorgione, Asolo and its hundred horizons, which earned it the title as one of the most beautiful towns in Italy, and the Temple and Gypsoteca of Canova in Possagno, the Brion tomb built by Carlo Scarpa in San Vito di Altivole, Villa Barbaro in Maser, and Villa Emo in Fanzolo di Veduggio. Riese is surrounded by a land of incomparable beauty and culture, the Land of Pius X.

www.riesepiox.it





Pius X

Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto (Riese 1835 – Rome 1914)

His greatness was not recognised for many years, but Giuseppe Sarto, Pope Pius X, was certainly one of the greatest popes in the history of the Church, the one who ferried in these times.

“The greatest reformer since the Council of Trent,” “innovative and conservative at the same time” are some of the opinions of leading Church historians. Elected Pope in 1903, he was the first pope of the twentieth century, succeeding Leo XIII. He led the Church until the beginning of the First World War, trying very hard to prevent its outbreak.

Born poor, he made humility the hallmark of his whole existence during the different stages of his ecclesiastic career. He was ordained a priest in 1858, became the first chaplain at Tombolo in 1858, was named archpriest of Salzano in 1867, then spiritual director and rector of the Treviso seminary, before becoming Vicar of the curia of Treviso in 1875. He was appointed Bishop of Mantua in 1884 and the Patriarch of Venice in 1894. In 1903, he succeeded Leo XIII on the papal throne.

Pope Pius X enacted many reforms during his pontificate. He reformed the Roman Curia, rewrote the catechism that bears his name (catechism which many of us have studied), allowed children to receive communion, started the reform of canonical law, opened the Vatican to the world through public hearings, renewed the sacred music, legitimised the tango which at the time was considered outrageous. He was a simple, but determined Pope, humble and great at the same time. His last will and testament gave an insight into his character. It read, “I was born poor, I lived poor, and I die poor....”

His greatness earned him canonisation in 1954: a saint and Pope to be rediscovered, even today.

What better way to do this than by discovering his land, the Land of Pius X?



Birth home

The “Casetta” (18th Century)

A fundamental part of this unique experience is a visit to the “Casetta”, the house where Pope Pius X was born on 2 June 1835. In these rooms, young Giuseppe Sarto or “Bepi” as he was called by his family received his early training from his family and the people of Riese. A simple education based on humility, sacrifice, the readiness to help one another, and a genuine and sincere faith: values that, together with his good-natured spirit and ability to face daily difficulties, have always characterised him. The “Casetta” has remained mostly unchanged over the years. The interior still retains the aspect of a typical 19th century Venetian homestead, while the furnishings and household items are the same as those used by the Sarto family. One of the most interesting rooms is the kitchen with its large fireplace, and the master bedroom where Pius X, the second of ten children, was born.

A marble plaque placed above the entrance in 1904 celebrates the election as pontiff of the then Patriarch of Venice. In 1926, the home and adjacent land were donated to the Town of Riese Pio X by Maria Sarto (1846-1930), the last of Pius X's sisters.

Each year, the “Casetta” is visited by thousands of pilgrims from around the world, who come here to give thanks and to pray to our Saint in a unique and intimate atmosphere.

In 1985, Pope John Paul II visited the “Casetta” of Pius X on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his birth.

Information: www.fondazionegiuseppesarto.it - Tel. 338.2354439



Pius X Museum

(20th Century)

The Pius X Museum was built in 1935 in the garden behind the Casetta, which was a gift from the then Bishop of Treviso, Mons. Giacinto Longhin. It is a perfectly symmetrical building divided into three sections. The museum houses personal objects belonging to Pius X which he used during his ecclesiastical life, from the time he was chaplain until he became Pope. The memorabilia includes some cassocks, everyday items, portraits of the Sarto family, rare photographic documents, sculptures, a model of the Chapel on Mount Grappa (consecrated by him as Patriarch of Venice) and the tomb of Pius X in the Vatican Grottoes.

Explanatory signs guide visitors in a chronological sense.



Curiotto

Almost every day since he was a young boy Pius X travelled across a path that connected – and still connects – Riese to the Shrine of Cendrole. The sinuous course of the path, shrouded by trees, follows the same course of the old river bed that once accompanied him. This path, where time seems to have stood still, is called the “Curiotto”. Walking along this path means looking at the same landscape that Pius X saw when he was a boy. It is kind of like walking back in time. A charming and unique experience, especially on the night of 21 August, when the path is lit up by torches placed by devotees who, during the festival of the saint, retrace the journey from his birth house to Cendrole.



Santuario della Beata Vergine

Architect Ottavio Scotti (1730)

Many people fascinated by Saint Pius X choose to come to Riese to visit the places that were so dear to him, places often unchanged over time and that retain a unique and special atmosphere.

One of these places is the Santuario delle Cendrole. In this place surrounded by the green countryside alongside the Avenale stream Saint Pius X and many visitors sought and found peace and an almost surreal tranquillity.

The area was once a game-filled forest with a chapel dedicated to the Roman goddess, Diana. After the evangelisation of the area, the pagan temple was replaced by a Christian church.

Cendrole, therefore, became a spiritual destination for people of the neighbouring areas and the first settlement of Riese. Only the dedication to the Virgin Mary remains of the first building, the current shrine, as it was rebuilt and extended several times over the centuries due to fires.

Rebuilt in 1730 by the architect Ottavio Scotti, the current building has a façade in Doric style characterised by an imposing entrance door. Once inside the door, visitors are captivated by a bright interior with a single nave.

The effigy of the Virgin of Cendrole is preserved on the Baroque altar, protected by a glass case. This sacred relic is dear to the local people and is intimately linked to the young life of Pius X and his memories as an adult. In each stage of his life, the memory of his solitary meditations was always kept alive in this place.

As testament of his special devotion to this shrine, in the fifties, an altarpiece was placed in one of the two side chapels depicting Pius X in the act of imparting the sacrament of the First Holy Communion to children.

Information: Parish of Riese Pius X – Tel. 0423.483105

