

Archaeological excavations in the Abbiate church

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The initial work to repair the church in Abbiate Guazzone has started. The funds collected so far by the newly created **Citizens' Committee** (here is the **Facebook Page**), which supports the Parish, made it possible to start the archaeological excavations **in the nave of the church**, a few days ago. The work was necessary because of a large “bubble” that had been created in the floor. The announcement of the beginning of the work was made last Sunday, 3 March, during the Holy Mass, **at the end of which, volunteers also acted as guides for the congregation.**

The excavations are being carried out by an archaeologist **with the specialised company, C&V**, who were engaged by the Committee and by the Parish, **under the authorisation of the Superintendence of Fine Arts and of the Holy See.** During the excavation, **small remains of human bones** have also been found, and given to the Parish for blessing and burial in an ossuary. “The total area involved in the work is 3.12 x 1.70 m, to a planned depth of about 20 cm,” the archaeologist explained. “We cleaned the whole area and dug down to the depth at which **a layer of filling material was found**, consisting of rubble mixed with large pebbles and sand. Then, we carried out a test on 1 x 1.6 m, to determine the thickness of the layer and the possible presence of an archaeological deposit. From this diagnostic excavation, it has emerged that there’s a muddy layer at a depth of 0.6 m from the floor level of the church, that is the foundation of a brick wall, the orientation of which diverges slightly from that of the church itself. The subsequent digging down to 1 m below the floor level didn’t provide any further information for a chronological explanation of the findings. **Only a few remains of very fragmented human bones were recovered from the earth**, which are currently being given to the Parish, who want to bless them and bury them in an ossuary.”

The Citizens' Committee is continuing to organise activities to raise the funds necessary for other work, to make the church safe: **from repairing the windows to the roof**, without forgetting **the important frescoes on the vault of the church.** “The committee created to follow the restoration work on the Abbiate church, together with the priests, want to thank **all of the professionals who are working, also free of charge**, to repair the floor,” the committee members explain unanimously. “And we also thank all of the parishioners who, with their financial support, are making these interventions possible. **There is still a lot to do** to make our church shine again, but we’re sure that, with everyone’s support, we’ll soon be able to continue with other urgent interventions, particularly on the windows, the roof and the vault. For our part, we can ensure a **constant updating and attention to how the work is progressing.** Thanks again to everyone for the love you are showing our church.”

For anyone who would like to make a donation for the restoration of the Abbiate Guazzone Church, **a dedicated current account has also been set up.** This is the IBAN: **IT47M0503450580000000004980.**

di Translated by Martina Innocenti (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)

