

## Church of the Madonna della Neve - Tascusì Pass

The building is situated at the Tascusì pass, a crossing point that connects the valley overlooked by the villages of Fonni and Gavoi, and the valley in which the village of Desulo is located.

The church, with a rectangular ground plan and gabled roof, is set in a garden on the edge of a large forest. The base of the façade and the sides of the church are covered with schist, a local stone commonly used for building houses. At the top of the façade is a small wooden cross, while a small bell gable stands on the right side of the roof. Inside, in the niche behind the altar, is a statue of the Madonna and Child.

Tradition has it that the little church was built as a vow of gratitude by two of five Desulo traders who, on the last day of the year 1913, were caught in a terrible snowstorm while trying to return to their homes. In the storm, having reached the Tascusi pass, they lost sight of each other; only two of them, having found each other again, managed to return to their homes and, later, out of devotion and thanksgiving to the Virgin Mary, invoked at the moment of danger, they decided to erect the small chapel.

The festival dedicated to the Madonna della Neve (Saint Mary of the Snow) traditionally takes place between 4 and 5 August. This festivity in particular is shared by all three districts of the town because the traders involved in the affair came from all three of them.

It opens with a procession, preceded by the prioresses, from the Carmelite church in the *Ovolaccio* district, to the parish church of Sant'Antonio and then up to the Tascusi pass. Here, religious celebrations take place with great attendance from all the surrounding villages. The celebrations are accompanied by a corollary of singing events, dancing in the square and street markets.

*Text by Laura Melis*

