

## Sanctuary of Beata Vergine Assunta

The Sanctuary of Beata Vergine Assunta (Our Lady of the Assumption), also called 'Lhesia de Nostra Sennora', was built in 1634 in a clearing in Orgosolo's old town surrounded with trees and plants and accessible from a gate. Since then, the building was renovated multiple times, both outside and inside.

The Romanesque, white façade has three naves and culminates in a small central bell gable with a cross on the top and two aedicules on the sides. The front door is framed by two semi-columns and topped with a granite tympanum, while two large (empty) niches open sideways: an oculus and the inscription *SPES NOSTRA SALVE* complete this quite simple front.

The interior, also painted in white, is divided by round and pointed arches. In a small chapel, inside a shrine made of gilded wood and crystal, adorned with numerous votive offerings, is a small statue of the sleeping Madonna. This statue is the subject of much veneration, so much so that the church is now considered a major shrine.

On August 15, the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is widely celebrated by the Orgoloso community, with flocks of tourists and faithful coming from across the province. The celebrations include a solemn procession during which the statue of the Madonna is carried on the shoulders of the *Confrarios* across the streets of the town centre followed by a procession of men and women dressed in traditional local clothing. A second procession takes place eight days later at night. Among the numerous civil celebrations, which between August 14 and 23 accompany the religious rites, great importance is accorded to equestrian events. On the day of 'Mesaustu,' a horse race named 'Sa Vardia' is also held on the paved roads across the town, while another special horse race dedicated to the Assumption is held two days later in the Galloppatoio Comunale (Municipal Galloping Ground).

*Text by Cecilia Mariani*

