

# THE BRONZE DOORS OF SAINT SOSSIO'S BASILICA IN FRATTAMAGGIORE



The exterior of the basilica before the doors were changed

Saint Sossio's basilica consists of three portals. The central portal remains the largest one.

In summer 2021, for the fifth centenary of the Basilica, the three bronze doors have been replaced. The new doors were designed by the artist Eduardo Filippo.

The main portal is dedicated to Saint Sossio, while the side doors are dedicated to Saint Giuliana - one of Frattamaggiore's patron saints alongside with Saint Sossio - and to Saint Severino.

The doors were inaugurated by the bishop of Aversa, Monsignor Angelo Spinillo on the 3rd of July 2021 with a solemn Eucharistic celebration.

## Description of the doors elements



The main portal

The main portal is dedicated to Saint Sossio's life, which is depicted by a sequence of 10 panels. The largest panels are located at the top of the portal.

Two doves replace the door knobs and disguise the key hole. The doves remind the visitors that they are reaching the kingdom of peace.

The artistic language adopted by artist **Eduardo Filippio** shows deep solemnity and huge sensitivity in the hagiografic study of our Patron Saint.

The scenes take place in relief (bas-relief and high relief) with an expressive and dramatic style which uses the "non finito" technique which many other ancient masters had used previously.





## PANELS' ANALYSIS

The main portal shows two big panels in the highest register and four smaller panels in the two other registers at the bottom. In total the portal is made of 10 panels.



The big panel on the top right depicts **“Saint Sossio's Glory”**.

The figures of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit's dove (depiction of the Holy Trinity), alongside with Saint Mary, greet Saint Sossio in haven.

Saint Sossio, on his knees, receives from Jesus the palm of martyrdom. The four evangelists observe the scene. At the bottom, right under Christ's legs,

we can see the Basilica's exterior, while on the right, underneath the kneeled Saint, a view of Capo Miseno.



The big panel on the top right depicts **“Saint Sossio's martyrdom”**.

This panel is dedicated to the execution of 7 christian martyrs from Capo Miseno (Gennaro, Sossio, Festo, Desiderio, Procolo, Eutichete e Acunzio).

On the left the centurion is shown in the moment where he was about to behead the martyr. Saint Sossio, waiting for his beheading, caresses the corpse of a dead brother, while Saint Gennaro looks at the scene.

Despite how dramatic this scene seems, the martyrs' faces appear happy.



Here's **“Saint Sossio's mission”**.

Diacon Sossio is depicted while he speaks to the people, with an estatic face.

Behind him, two arches open up on the port of Capo Miseno.



**“The Holy Spirit descends on the Martyr”**

This composition is led by the two arches depicted in the background that frames Saint Sossio on the left and Saint Gennaro on the right.



**“Saint Sossio imprisoned”**.

In this panel the dramatic scene of Saint Sossio's arrest is depicted, after which he was taken to Pozzuoli's prison.



**“Saint Gennaro's visit in prison”.**

We can see the moment in which Saint Gennaro, with other martyrs, for example Saint Desiderio and Saint Festo, visits diacon Sossio in Pozzuoli's prison.

Saint Sossio is depicted semi-recumbent on the floor, tied to some chains.



**“In the amphitheater, sentenced to be devoured by beasts”.**

The seven martyr await, in prison, the moment of their execution which will take place in Pozzuoli's amphitheater.



**“Saint Sossio and Saint Gennaro's burial after their martyrdom”.**

This scene takes place in a rural scenery as we can see from the dead tree on the right.

The two martyrs Sossio and Gennaro, beheaded and wrapped in sheets, are carried to receive proper burial in the field owned by the christian Marco. Two worshippers carry the two martyrs' heads.





**“Discovery of Saint Sossio's body”.**

After Miseno's destruction in the IXth century Saint Sossio's burial was forgotten in the Cathedral's destroyed crypt.

In this rilief we can see the moment in which the monks find Sossio's remains through the debris.



**“Transfer of Saint Sossio and Saint Severino's corpses from Naples to Frattamaggiore”.**

In the recognizable urban scenery of Frattamaggiore, Sossio and Gennaro's remains arrive from the neapolitan Monastery of Saint Severino and Sossio.



At the base of the bronze door we can see, in order:

- The papal coat from the Vatican basilicas from the current Pontifex Maximus Franciscus;
- The dedicatory text “Ut inabitem, in domo Domini in longitudinem dierum”;
- Another text “Dedicationis memoriam celebrantes Ecclesia matricis Divo Sossio L.M. Parocus Sossius Rossi clerus et populus F.F. XII octobris MMXXII”;
- The coat of Aversa's diocese with references to the current bishop pro tempore Angelo Spinillo (EP. AV.).

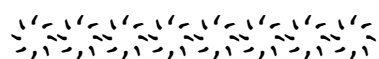


## THE TWO SIDE PORTALS



The two side portals stand out for their simplicity.

On their smooth bronze surface, we can see a relief of the Saints - Saint Severino on the left door and Saint Giuliana on the right door – with the Holy Spirit's dove and vegetal branches that cross the doors diagonally: the vine on the left door and the wheat on the right door referring to the eucaristic wine and bread.



The “Carlo Miranda” High School in Frattamaggiore (NA)

## THANKS

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