

Varallo Sesia, Sacromonte and Oropa

Faith and devotion in Piedmont

Code B 023 – 1 day excursion

Departure from the hotel and transfer by coach to **Varallo Sesia**.

The first of the alpine Sacro Monte was built here at the end of the 15th century, following designs by Bernardino Caimi, a Franciscan friar who, returning from the Holy Land, decided to reconstruct the Holy Sites of Palestine at the top of the mountain overlooking the town. The bold project was both a spiritual and spectacular artistic achievement (finally completed at the end of the 1800s) by acclaimed artists such as Gaudenzio Ferrari.

This unique and fascinating devotional journey, enhanced by the natural surroundings, winds past 44 monumental chapels in which the episodes of the Passion of Christ are told through 1000 life-size statues set in frescoed scenes. A famous pilgrimage destination for centuries, it was influential in the creation of the other Sacro Monti in the Alpine area.

Lunch at the Hotel del Pellegrino, located in the most panoramic spot on the hill, next to the Basilica dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin.

In the afternoon depart for **Oropa** to visit the Sanctuary famous for its Black Madonna. According to legend, the statue was carved in Palestine by Luke the evangelist and then brought to Oropa by St Eusebio around the middle of the fourth century AD. It was initially placed at the foot of a rocky boulder, still visible, and subsequently transferred to a shrine around which was built the imposing Basilica, a well-known destination for religious pilgrimages.

Return to the hotel by coach.

