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  - Hospital +39 080 3357111
  - Carabinieri 112
  - Municipal Police +39 080 3971014
  - State Police 113
  - Fire and Rescue Service 115
  - Guardia di Finanza +39 080 9956226
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photo by VINCENZO BISCEGLIE - DOT STUDIO  
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01. Duomo di San Corrado

This church, built between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in Apulian Romanesque style, is dedicated to the patron saint of Molfetta, Saint Conrad of Bavaria. The structure features three aligned domes and two towers, of which one is a bell tower and the other was used as a watchtower. The apse, according to a typical Apulian system, is enclosed by a continuous wall interrupted by a window decorated with Kufic characters and lions. Blind arches intertwine in a motif of Arab taste. The side chapels date back to the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. The church interior is divided into three naves. The central nave is covered by three domes of different heights: the oldest and most decorated is on the transept. The capitals of the four cruciform pillars are carved with zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, and vegetal characters. Made in the twelfth century, the stoup, called of the Saracen, is located to the right of the southern entrance. A high relief in stone called of the Redeemer, graven in the thirteenth century, serves as a base for the altar.

02. Torrione Passari

Innovations made in the field of artillery between the end of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth century led to the need of adapting the defensive structures of the cities to the new firearms. Medieval walls were lowered, made thicker and protected by towers (no longer squared but circular) or by bastions. In 1512 Molfetta as well started



the strengthening of the walls and the municipality decided to build "a tower for the defense of the city in the area of Passaro sea". According to the documents, the area had been called this way at least since 1417. Passari was the name of a powerful local family that lived here, by the sea. The construction of the circular tower, in which artillery pieces would be housed, was intended to make the city safer, as the sea alone could no longer provide sufficient protection. Nevertheless, only a decade later the tower proved itself unable to protect Molfetta from the French attack by the sea that in 1529 led to the looting of the city. Torrione Passari is today one of the most beautiful and visited fortresses on the sea along the Apulian Adriatic coast. It is surrounded by a Medieval urban system that has been attracting an increasing number of visitors over the last few years thanks to a continuous process of building renovations, new tourist and cultural policies, and a more dynamic hospitality industry.

03. Church of Morte

Its date of construction is unknown. The church was cited for the first time in a parchment dated 1142. In 1614 it was sold to the archconfraternity of Morte (Death), with the obligation of providing burial for the indigent in its premises. The facade features a small bell tower and the emblem of the archconfraternity on the tympanum of its entrance portal: a skull on two crossed bones. Inside there is a system of underground rooms that were used for body decomposition. The last chamber had a direct link to the sea for the disposal of the last remains.



07. Sala dei Templari

The Knights Templar established themselves in Molfetta in 1148. Among their properties, there was a small church and some buildings in the area where Piazza Municipio is now. Sala dei Templari (Templars' Hall) is what remains of those buildings. It consists of two galleries used nowadays as an exhibition hall. During restoration works in 2003, the remains of the pre-existing buildings were found.

10. Church of Santo Stefano

Re-built and enlarged in the sixteenth century in place of an older church that dated back to the thirteenth century, this small church, home to the archconfraternity of Santo Stefano or "del sacco rosso" (of the red sack) features two aligned domes and a small bell tower covered with Majolica tiles. Kept inside are: five wooden statues related to the Passion of Christ, carved in the sixteenth century and attributed to the Neapolitan School, carried in procession on Good Friday, and the paintings: Madonna dei Martiri con i santi Liborio e Irene e San Marco Evangelista by Nicola Porta, a pupil of Corrado Giaquinto and the Madonna del Carmine con l'Arcangelo Raffaele e Tobia by Corrado Giaquinto.



11. Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta

This church became the new Cathedral in 1785 when the bones of Saint Conrad of Bavaria were moved in it from the Duomo. It was originally built in the seventeenth century as Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola, annexed to the Jesuit College that would be active until 1767 when the order was suppressed. The facade, made of local stone, is decorated with alternating solids and voids and on its top in a bottomless niche, stands a sculpture in the round of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The church interior is a feast of coloured marbles and stuccos, capitals, mouldings, decorative cartouches, floral festoons and crowns, cherubim, and statues sculpted by Tabacco brothers and Michele Cattedra. The six chapels on the sides of the nave, funded by local noble families, are enriched with precious artwork from renowned artists. Among those, two paintings in the big chapels by the presbytery stand out: the Assunta by Molfettese artist Corrado Giaquinto (1747) and the Addolorata by Neapolitan artist Fedele Fischetti (1778). The barrel vault was decorated with tempera by Michele Romano.

12. Diocesan Museum

This museum is hosted in the rooms of the seventeenth century Jesuit College. The museum route starts from the archaeological section where objects from Neolithic and Pre-Roman ages are kept, a good part of which were found at the prehistoric settlement of Pulo (in the outskirts of Molfetta). This is followed by the gallery of liturgical vestments that shows the evolution of textile manufacturing from the seventeenth century until the nineteenth century. In the "Lapidarium" fragments from the old Duomo are kept. Two more rooms house the antique statues of the Molfettese Holy Week and a collection of reliquaries from the sixteenth century. On the first floor, there is the monumental Episcopal Library, in which there are collected manuscripts, incunabula, and precious books printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The path of the picture gallery begins with the Altarpiece attributed to Marco Cardisco and continues on through artwork of Neapolitan influence, prominently from Caravaggio's school represented by fine artists such as Bernardo Cavallino, up to paintings from the famous exponent of international Baroque, Corrado Giaquinto and his pupils. The exhibition ends on the second floor with the Treasure Room in which precious pieces of furniture are kept and a collection of contemporary art.



13. Church of Purgatorio

The church of Santa Maria Consolatrice degli Afflitti (Saint Mary Comforter of the Afflicted), built in 1643, has always been known as Chiesa del Purgatorio (Church of the Purgatory). At the lower level of the late Renaissance facade, there are four niches in which the statues of Saint Stephen, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and Saint Lawrence stand while the statues of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne are on the upper tier. Inside the original plan from the sixteenth century and stuccos by Michele Cattedra from Monopoli realised in the eighteenth century, are juxtaposed. The painting representing Our lady of Sorrows was painted by Vito Calò, from Giaquinto's school. The Church, home to the archconfraternity of Death since 1738, houses the processional statues of the Holy Saturday, made by famous Molfettese artist Giulio Cozzoli.



16. Church of San Bernardino da Siena

Its sixteenth-century extensions are juxtaposed on the original fifteenth-century structure. The building was completed in 1585 with its facade and the bell gable. Inside chapels funded by prominent local families show off rich pieces of furniture and precious paintings: The Natività (1596) by Gaspar Hovic in the Gadaleta Chapel, the Madonna del Soccorso (1597) by Andrea Bordone in the de Luca Chapel, the copy of the Madonna del Cucuto by F.Cozza (1605-1682) in the Passari Chapel, the Immacolata con i Santi Francesco, Bernardino, Bonaventura e Ludovico di Tolosa (second half of the eighteenth century) on the bottom wall of the choir.

19. The Harbour

In 1824, pressed by requests from local seamen, in a time of increasing mercantile traffic and fishing development, the municipality of Molfetta commissioned the building of a port that – according to the plans – would have two piers of "San Corrado" and "San Michele", and a lighthouse. The construction began in 1844. In 1882 due to the growth of commercial traffic, the extension led to joining the two piers into one big outer pier. In 1890 "Pennello" pier was built and in 1951 works began for the construction of the Salvucci breakwater between San Giacomo cove and the Sanctuary of Madonna dei Martiri.



20. Church of San Domenico

The building of the church and the annexed monastery - both dedicated to San Domenico Soriano - began in 1636. On its facade, there are two rectangular niches that contain the statues of Saint Mary Magdalene (on the left) and Saint Catherine of Alexandria (on the right). The interior of the church is adorned with plaster frames, capitals, cherubim, and elegant stucco decorations that frame fine paintings: the Madonna del Rosario by Corrado Giaquinto, paintings with Old Testament scenes and frescos from the late eighteenth century by Nicola Porta. Also, two remarkable wooden crafts in baroque style are kept here: a pulpit made by a Neapolitan carver and the choir that houses an organ owned by the Jesuits, made by Petrus de Simone.



21. Fabbrica di San Domenico

The Fabbrica di San Domenico, formerly Monastery of San Domenico, was built between 1638 and 1774, on the initiative of a Dominican friar, who would later become bishop of Molfetta, Mons. Giacinto Petroni. Following the abolition of religious orders, the monastery was taken over by the municipality which decided to host the Benedictine nuns from 1815 until 1867, and then used the building as a school and as a barracks. Nowadays Fabbrica di San Domenico is home to the town Library, named after G.Panunzio, the Municipal Historical Archive, and hosts the ethnographic exhibition "De li mastri lavoranti vascelli nei cantieri di Molfetta" (Of the master shipbuilders in Molfetta shipyards). Of particular interest is the inner cloister that hosts numerous cultural events.

22. Cliff of "Monacelle"

According to documents from the eighteenth century, the street currently known as "Via Scogliera delle Monacelle", was once named "Vico San Domenico" and ended abruptly with steep rocks into the sea. In September 1815 the Benedictine nuns who had already been living in the Monastery of San Domenico decided to throw "large stones" into a shoal which was in the harbour right in front of the monastery. It is not sure whether their intention was to indicate the dangerous shoal to the sailors or to build a breakwater. For this reason the name was changed as there are countless documents dated to the eighteenth century with "Pietre delle Monacelle" or "Scogliera delle Monacelle". Between the late fifties and early sixties of the twentieth century, a flight of steps was built there in order to facilitate the pedestrian crossing between via San Domenico and the docks. In 2019 the flight of steps went through renovation works.

23. Basilica della Madonna dei Martiri

The current sanctuary enshrines the icon of the Holy Mary that, according to the tradition, came by sea. It was built in 1829 as an extension of a Medieval church built in 1162, of which traces still remain in the dome and in the arches of the main altar. This church was one of the stops for pilgrims on the way to the Holy Land. On the right-hand side of the apse, in an underground chamber, there is a sixteenth-century reconstruction of the Holy Sepulchre, that according to the tradition, was made of stones brought from the Holy Land by the nobleman Bernardino Lepore. The right transept houses the painting of the Madonna del Rosario (1574) by Michele Damasceno. Among others, Cesare Gonzaga, Duke of Guastalla, and the prince of Molfetta and the bishop of the town Maiorano Maiorani are depicted in it.



23. Ospedale dei Crociati

During the Middle Ages Apulia was travelled by pilgrims heading towards San Michele del Gargano and San Nicola di Bari or embarking on Jerusalem. The Ospedale dei Crociati (Crusader Hospital) built in the eleventh century, was a place of care and rest for those pilgrims, as it was close to the ancient docks of Cala San Giacomo and Cala dei Pali. Located north of the Basilica of Madonna dei Martiri, the building is characterised by essential shapes with stone arches supported by pillars that divide it into three naves. Along the perimeter wall there are shelves for lamps and niches.

24. Archaeological Civic Museum of Pulo

The Archaeological Civic Museum of Pulo takes advantage of the restoration of a historical building of the eighteenth century: Casina Cappelluti. In this former Lazaretto, archaeological remains are kept which were found during the excavation campaigns carried out from 1997 until 2008 both within the Pulo area and the Azzollini field. The collection is organised on two levels: The ground floor houses a gallery in which display panels illustrating the geomorphic features of Pulo, its flora and fauna. The other exhibition on the lower floor retraces the story of the Capuchin Monastery of the sixteenth century and of the Royal Bourbon Nitrary. The extraction of potassium nitrate for the production of gunpowder left countless archaeological remains as well. The upper floor is entirely dedicated to the prehistoric settlements in this area.

## PUBLIC TOILETS

- Banchina Seminario
- Piazza Vittorio Emanuele
- Piazza Garibaldi (Villa Comunale)
- Train station

## PARKING

- Lungomare Colonna
- Piazza Garibaldi
- Secca dei Pali

01. Duomo
02. Torrione Passari
03. Church of Morte
04. Church of S. Andrea
05. Church of S. Pietro
06. Palazzo Giovene
07. Sala dei Templari
08. Mura Urbiche
09. Arco della Porta della Città
10. Church of S. Stefano
11. Chatedral
12. Diocesan Museum
13. Church of Purgatorio
14. Villa Comunale
15. Calvario
16. Church of S. Bernardino
17. Corso Umberto I
18. Casa Poli
19. The harbour
20. Church of S. Domenico
21. Fabbrica di S. Domenico
22. Cliff of Monacelle
23. Basilica Madonna dei Martiri  
Ospedale dei Crociati
24. Archaeological Civic  
Museum of Pulo
25. Pulo



## 25. Pulo

Located 2 km away from the city centre, the Pulo is a karst formation on whose sides a large number of caves can be seen. This place is a clear example of biodiversity due to the presence of more than 200 different species of flower, which are typical of the Mediterranean maquis. Its fauna is specific to the coastline north of Bari. The area was frequented uninterruptedly from the Neolithic, 7000 years ago, until the Bronze Age. The Archaeological excavations have revealed important finds: Cardial ware (Impressed ware) defined in scientific classification as belonging to the "Civilization of Molifetta", are a significant expression of the culture which flourished on the edge of the sinkhole. In the second half of the XVIII Century, the Pulo thanks to its caves rich in nitrate, became prominent in the Kingdom of Naples and among the reigning Bourbons after the construction of a nitrary. Archaeological investigations have revealed the remains of this proto-industrial complex.



## Corrado Giaquinto

Corrado Giaquinto was born in Molifetta on 8th February 1703 and died in Naples on 18th April 1766. He was one of the most prominent painters of European Rococo, a leading figure of the art movement that moved through Naples, Rome, and Turin. After being initiated in an ecclesiastic career, he distinguished himself for his artistic talent to the point that he would be mentored by local painter Saverio Porta. He later moved to Naples where he met Mons. De Luca who became his patron. He would then be given prestigious commissions between Turin and Rome, where he painted the vault of the Ruffo chapel in the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Damaso, the vault and choir of San Giovanni Calibita on the Tiber island and the decorative program for the Basilica of Santa Croce di Gerusalemme also in Rome. Corrado Giaquinto was appointed court painter by Ferdinand VI in Madrid and then became director of the Academy of San Fernando. Many of his works are on display at the Prado museum in Madrid. In Molifetta it is possible to admire the following paintings: Madonna del Rosario (1739) in the church of San Domenico, Madonna del Carmine con l'Arcangelo Raffaele e Tobia (1740) in the church of Santo Stefano and the Assunta (1753) at the cathedral. More works, including paintings, sketches and preparatory drawings are kept in the Diocesan Museum.



## The old town

The Medieval town rises on the cape of Sant'Andrea, named after the church that was first mentioned in notary documents dated 1126. According to documents of the tenth and eleventh centuries, there were already numerous churches in the village that were surrounded by defensive walls with bastions to the south and by a building on the sea to the north. This created an original mixed defensive housing system. In the fifteenth century, the main gate was surmounted by a clock tower, which was demolished later, while a smaller gate called "Porticella" close to Piazza Municipio was torn down in the late nineteenth century. A series of parallel streets links the Duomo to Piazza Municipio where once a castle (demolished in 1416) stood. This street system which is crossed in the north-south axis, by via Piazza - the main street of the Old Town - is the result of the building densification that occurred between the eleventh and the seventeenth centuries. The most significant buildings can be seen mainly along the perimeter of the area called "Borgo" and were built right after 1529, the year of the looting by the French, which caused relevant damages to the documental and architectonic heritage of the town.

**Via Amente:** it is characterized by the presence of various noble palaces with finely decorated portals dating back to the sixteenth-seventeenth century, leaning against the city walls. Noteworthy are: at nr. 10 Palazzo de Luca, at nr. 14 Palazzo Tattoli, at nr. 32 Palazzo Passari Lupis, at nr. 48 Palazzo Monna.

**Piazza Municipio:** formerly square of the Castle. To be noted: the Renaissance facade of Palazzo Giovene (6) and the Sala dei Templari (7), what remains of the properties of the Church of San Nicola della Casa del Tempio.

**Via San Pietro:** Here is the seventeenth-century church of S. Pietro (5) built on a pre-existing Medieval church, next to the sixteenth-century convent of the Benedictine nuns.

**Via Sant'Orsola:** on the north side the structure of the ancient building by the sea can be seen. Noteworthy at nr. 13 Palazzo Galante Gadaleta, which leads to Torrione Passari (2), a cylindrical sixteenth-century fortification built to improve the defensive structures of the city and adapt them to the new firearms.

**Via Piazza:** it is accessed through the large arch of the city gate, the only one left of the medieval city wall. Noteworthy at nr. 10 and 12 is the Seat of the Nobles - of which the coat of arms of the City remains topped by the image of the Madonna dei Martiri, patron saint of Molifetta - while no traces remain of the Seat of the People. Noticeable also is the church of S. Andrea (4) originally built in the twelfth century and remodeled in the seventeenth - eighteenth centuries.

**Vico Muro:** narrow access street to the panoramic walk on the ancient walls of the village.