

## FRANCAVILLA AL MARE

### 6) Michetti convent

Via Cirillo, 66023 Francavilla Al Mare (CH)

Just outside of the centre on a green hill overlooking the sea there is a building complex known as Michetti convent. It is made up of the church of Santa Maria del Gesù built in the fifteenth century, but renovated two centuries later, and a small Franciscan convent, bought in 1885 by Francesco Paolo Michetti to live in and use as a studio for his paintings.

Next to the church there is the charming pear shaped bell tower, typical of its era. During the last decades of the nineteenth century Michetti used the convent as a meeting point for local artists to work in peace and quiet. Some of the most famous works of Gabriele D'Annunzio were written here, for example "Il Piacere" which was his first novel in 1889 and *Il trionfo della morte* and *le vergini delle rocce*. Memories of his fervid activity in the convent were written several times in his diaries. Other artists that worked there include the musician Francesco Paolo Tosti, the author of many novels admired by the English monarchy, the sculptor Costantino Barbella and occasionally Giulio Aristide Sartorio, Edmondo De Amicis, Ugo Oietti and other leading Italian and European figures who went to visit.

Inside this simply styled building there is a small cloister exactly in the centre with an ancient well. On each side there are the so called "big eyes" which are large circular windows desired by Michetti so he could see both the sea and the surrounding countryside.

In the refectory there are dome photographs which show Michetti's interest of these mechanical objects that record reality even though cameras were at an early stage. His palette and other instruments can be seen in his adjacent study.

# Abruzzo Audioguide

