

In 1300, year of Jubilee and Universal Indulgence, the rich merchant Enrico Scrovegni bought from Manfredo Dalesmanini the ruins of the old Roman arena in Padua, the annexed buildings, orchard and vineyard for 4,000 Lire. It was a small parcel of land with no church. Enrico asked the bishop Ottobono de' Razzi for the authorisation to have one built. According to a memorial plaque now lost, three years later, on March 23 1303, Enrico inaugurated the church with a consecration ceremony. He invited Giotto to fresco it, and the painter suggested prolonging the structure of the chapel, as shown by the model presented to the Mother of God in the scene of the "Last Judgement". On March 25 1305, when the frescoes were completed, a new consecration was celebrated. After the second inauguration, Giotto left Padua (having painted the "Crucifix" in the iconostasis and the wooden panels with the twelve constellations in the Sala della Ragione) never to return. The Scrovegni Chapel (also called Arena Chapel) was to become a masterpiece of universal value.

The chapel (m 21.50x8.50x12.80), dedicated to **St. Mary of the Charity** (i.e., love of God and mankind), was frescoed with the following layout: 1) **Scenes taken from the life of Mary** (top register, near the presbytery); 2) **Scenes taken from the life of Christ** (second and third registers);



Scrovegni Chapel - Arch: Annunciation

Scrovegni Chapel - Arch: Annunciation

Giotto's Message

Claudio Bellinati

3) **Scenes taken from the history of mankind** (wall base). The cycle starts with the scene of the Rejection of Joachim's Sacrifice and ends with the "Last Judgement".

The perspective, use of colours, human emotions, nobility of characters, study of pictorial space, and beauty of matching colours of the frescoes enchant our eyes and fill our souls. Giotto recreated episodes of the lives of Mary and Christ he took both from "the popular Apocrypha" and from the authentic Gospel.

For centuries, the light, colours and subjects of Giotto's frescoes have conveyed a message of **peace** and **universal brotherhood**. The delicately painted architectural framework, green lawns and mountains carpeted by quiet forests of his frescoes convey peace, as do the faces of many figures, who also reveal ancient civility and unmistakable humanity. Giotto portrayed life as not opposing violence, but rising towards the immaterial blue of spirituality, recaling interior life and meaning that transcend human existence.

Giotto's blue (partially deteriorated over the centuries) lifts "towards the infinite distances of the spirit" (J. Itten). Although it is not lapis lazuli blue (extremely expensive), the starspangled sky of the crape vault clearly reveals that the history of mankind starts from above, takes place on earth - in civil and religious history - and returns above, where it had begun.

On February 6 2000, Padua celebrated the 7th centenary of the acquisition of the Arena and the beginning of construction work at the Scrovegni Chapel. Since then, and throughout the decade, Giotto's message has been and will be proposed to the world once again. That blue still evokes the common origin of mankind: it certainly conveys something to the Chinese, for whom blue is a symbol of immortality; to the Europeans, who see it as the victory of Humanism over Rationalism; to the Arabs, for whom blue is the colour of happiness; to the native American peoples, who associate blue to existence animated by moral values. Sky blue, like the blazing of unexpected scientific discoveries.

Padua and surroundings

Padua and its province are among the liveliest and most dynamic areas in North-East Italy. The city of Padua is one of the most charming and vital cities in Italy. Its historical centre boasts a wealth of fine medieval, renaissance and modern architecture; here a fascinating mix of historic and new, of centuries-old traditions combined with metropolitan rhythms creates a unique atmosphere. The medieval palaces, churches and cobbled streets emanate a sense of history and culture; the shops, markets and locals, a sparkling vitality and vibrant modern life. Padua is also one of the main economic centres of the Veneto region and of Italy, an important motorway, railway and waterway junction, which connects Italy with the rest of Europe.

The spas are surrounded by the Euganean Hills, a hilly area of volcanic origin covering around 19 thousand hectares. Their enchanting landscape has attracted and inspired generations of poets, writers and artists.

A countless number of Venetian villas with enchanting historical gardens, medieval walled towns, castles, monasteries and abbeys are scattered all over the area, real treasure-troves of artistic works. Culture, art, science, wellness, entertainment, shopping, good cuisine, nightlife: whether you are wishing to stay one day or for a longer holiday Padua and its province will surprise you with their outstanding variety of attractions.



Roman Arena and Scrovegni Chapel



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Provincia di Padova



Custodia di Terrasanta



Padua and surroundings

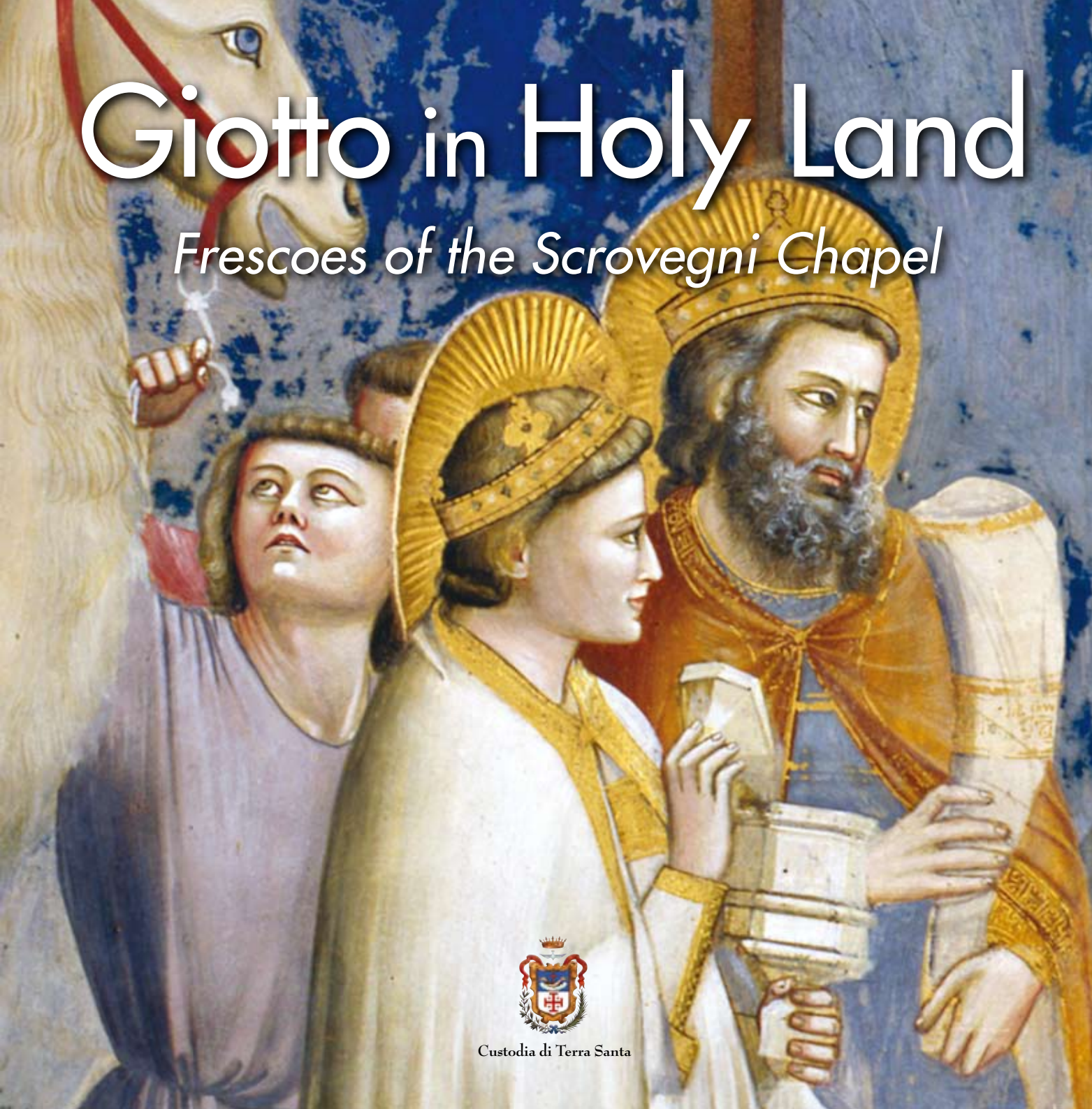
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Giotto in Holy Land

Frescoes of the Scrovegni Chapel



Custodia di Terra Santa

Giotto's Message

Claudio Bellinati

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Scrovegni Chapel - The Last Judgement

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SCROVEGNI CHAPEL Padua - Italy

Photographic reconstruction scale 1:4
Project, images and realization
of the exhibition by Giorgio Deganello
Preparation: Itaca



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Layout of Giotto's frescoes

The Annunciation:
The Angel
making

The Eternal Father
sends the
Archangel Gabriel

The Annunciation:
Mary

Judas' Treason

The Visitation



Layout of Giotto's frescoes

Joachim Driven
from the Temple

Joachim with
the Shepherds

The Angel's
Annunciation
to St. Ann

Joachim's
Sacrifice

Joachim's
Dream

The Meeting
At the Golden
Gate

The Last
Judgement

The Nativity

The Adoration
of the Magi

Presentation
of Jesus at the Temple

Flight to Egypt

Slaughter
of the Innocents

The Last Supper

The Washing
of the feet

The Kiss of Judas

Jesus before
Anna and Caiaphas

Christ Mocked



Prudence Fortitude Temperance Justice Faith Charity Hope

Layout of Giotto's frescoes

Nativity
of Mary

Presentation
of Mary
at the temple

The consignment
of the Rods

Prayer
of the Suitors

The Wedding
of Mary
and Joseph

The Bridal
Procession

Jesus
with the Doctors

The Baptism
of Christ

The Wedding
in Cana

The Resurrection
of Lazarus

Jesus enters
Jerusalem

The Merchants
Expelled
from the Temple

The Approach
to the Calvary

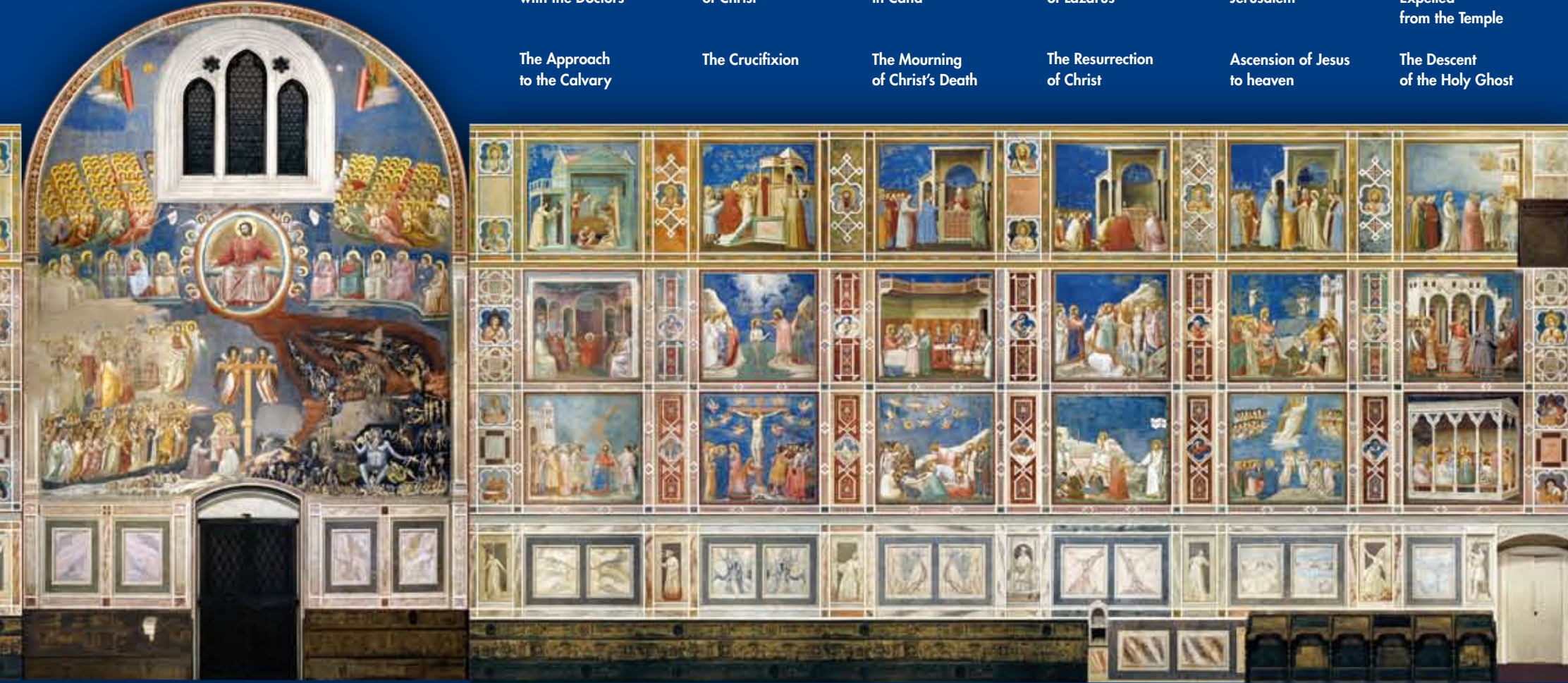
The Crucifixion

The Mourning
of Christ's Death

The Resurrection
of Christ

Ascension of Jesus
to heaven

The Descent
of the Holy Ghost



Despair Envy Infidelity Injustice Anger Inconstancy Foolishness