

San Giovanni a Mazzocca is the seat of a church rebuilt in the nineties after the 1980 earthquake. Saint John the hermit in 1153 left the territory of Baselice and entered Foiano's one having obtained from Count Odoaldo the church of Saint Firmino together with its house. In 1160 the congregation moved to the now San Giovanni as the church of Saint Firmino had been destroyed by a fire. It is believed that in the Mazzocca Woods there was a temple devoted to Pollux. The establishment of the new monastery happened after the second half of the twelfth century. We deduce this thanks to Adrian IV'S papal bull of the 14th of April 1156 with which the church of Saint Firmino and S. Maria del Gualdo Mazzocca were put under the protection of the Apostolic seat. The german Pfulgk-Harting reported another papal bull by Celestino III with which the Pope put the monastery under his protection. It is dated 15th

of December 1197, a great period of splendour for the Congregation, 27 years after the death of its founder on the 14th

of November 1170.

The monastery had not always been an abbey, it became so only after the growth of its importance. It must be considered Benedictine because the monks followed the Benedictine order and not the Saint Augustine order. In 1456 a big earthquake destroyed the church, the belltower and the houses. The church was rebuilt by Domenico from Lagonissa after 1458.

During the 16th century the war and other natural disasters the monastery became isolated and no more religious men lived there anymore. Due to the papal bull of the 28th of March 1507 Pope Giulio II, the monastery was granted to the "Canonici Regolari Lateranensi". The latter did their utmost to cancel the legacy and the devotion to the Saint introducing the celebration of Saint John the Baptist. This is why San Giovanni Eremita is celebrated on the 24th

of June, day of birth of the Baptist.

The abbey became part of the allodial ownership of the Naples Reign in 1540 and abbots were appointed by the King. By 1607 most of the Abbey's lands had become the private property of the Caracciolo family from Volturara. The property was later brought by Card. Pompeo Arrigoni, which sold it to the Gesuits. The monastery was again destroyed in 1630 by a fire and the ruins were used to build a new chapel consecrated by the Archbishop Orsini on the 12th of July 1716.

In 1880 the nearly fell down and that is why the local council thanks to the generosity of the most important families the breast wall and the so called "stanze". The church was repaired again in the 30s and 60s and was finally demolished in 1980. At present there is an artificial lake on the road to San Marco dei Cavoti and a picnic area on the area where there once were the monks' lodgings.

In 2014 the church dedicated to San Giovanni became a diocesan sanctuary.

Other places to visit or see are the belltower and its square, SS Rosario church and Libera Church, the Carmine Chapel and Santa Maria and Cannella narrow roads.

The woods of Foiano are one of the biggest in the entire Fortore area. They are also a site of Community Importance and involved in several European projects.

There are also several wind farms with 56 wind turbines in the following areas: Monte Barbato, Piano del Casino, Santa Maria and Frassineta.