

On the 24th of June the community of Foiano stand by their patron saint San Giovanni Eremita (Tufara 1084 – Foiano di Val Fortore 1170), thanks to a big festival.

The celebrations take place in the church that was built upon the antique ruins of the old monastery called “Santa Maria de Gualdo Mazzoca” that was also built upon the ruins of a pagan temple consecrated to Pollux.

The construction of the monastery was authorized in 1156 by Pope Adrian IV. However, in 1456 there was a violent earthquake and in 1630 a fire that caused its total destruction. A new chapel was built on the ruins of the monastery and it was consecrated by the archbishop Orsini from Benevento in 1716.

The Saint from Foiano was the founder and the first Abbot of the Abbey “Santa Maria de Gualdo Mazzocca” (the name refers to the devotion towards Holy Mary, to the place next to the woods where the Abbey rose up, to the lord who was the owner of the bordering lands who and which later donated them to the church) from which the precepts of monasticism were spread.

He was a penitent hermit consecrated to prayer and meditation, but also a creative mind and an incessante charity worker: he would offer, together with spiritual support, also material support through a tangible action of civilization and evaluation of the human being. The aim of the monastery and the monk was the redemption of people and the realization of their rights.

In the Mazzocca area there is a monument that recalls the figure of this importante Saint also considered the “forefather of Fortore civilization” (Donato Castellucci). It was erected by the local council in 1998 thank to the project by the Architect G. Castelluci and the sculptor A. Fagioli.