

**The Danse Macabre or Dance of Death and the Seven Deadly Sins**

The most famous painting of the church remains the Danse Macabre, painted on the external southern wall, the one that, not surprisingly, dominates the cemetery.
The fresco, probably commissioned by the Confraternita dei Battuti or Disciplinati of Pinzolo, is dated 25th October 1539 with Simone II's signature appearing immediately after the horse of Death.
The Danse is opened by the sovereign Death playing the bagpipes and by two skeletons with shawms and ends with Death shooting arrows on horseback, the Archangel Michael and the Devil.
After the depiction of Christ on the cross, who was also pierced by the arrow of Death, follow in hierarchical order the pope, cardinal, bishop, priest, friar, emperor, king, queen, duke, doctor, warrior, greedy merchant, vain young man, crippled beggar, nun, lady, old woman and child. Each is accompanied by mocking skeletons holding scrolls. Under each figure an inscription recalls the leveling work of Death in ironic and mocking terms. The Seven Deadly Sins symbolized by animals, are painted in the band below the Danse, which today is almost completely erased by the wear and tear of time and weather. It is a "figurative sermon" which clearly highlights the painter's will to reach the average illiterate person who lived in these areas, and to shake the conscience of the observer and lead them to reflect on the fleetingness of life and the vanity of earthly things in front of Death, whom we all succumb to.

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# St. Vigil's Church
## Pinzolo









St. Vigil's Church in Pinzolo owes its fame to Simone II Baschenis' Danse Macabre, thanks to its bone chilling theme which is extremely rare to find on this side of the Alps. The temple has a Gothic structure, due to the restoration carried out in 1515, with a steep roof and a polygonal apse. The rugged bell tower, with a pyramidal spire and originally separated from the building, is of Romanesque structure and has undergone a series of renovations over the centuries.
The interior is divided into three naves by tonalite columns with a majestic polygonal apse. The church is almost entirely decorated by the Baschenis family, who were itinerant painters from the Averara Valley, in the Province of Bergamo. They embellished numerous churches in the Giudicarie and Trentino regions with their frescoes between the mid 15th and 16th centuries.
The exterior of the south facing façade is completely covered in frescoes that belong to three different periods, however they are united by the same motif of death. Among the oldest, which belong to the Romanesque school, we can distinguish St. Christopher with Child and St. Catherine of Alexandria, as well as some other saints. While stemming from the Gothic period, late 15th and early 16th centuries, is St. Vigil on a throne and Christ in the tomb, located inside the pointed arch niches, painted, according to some, by Dionisio Baschenis. Belonging to the same period there are the depictions of St. Michael, Supper at Emmaus, Madonna with Child, St. Bernard of Siena along with other frescoes.
Under the eave is depicted the Danse Macabre and the Seven Deadly Sins with Simone II Baschenis' signature.

Inside the church, the frescoes are distributed on the walls of the naves, the holy arch where the oldest paintings surfaced, and throughout the whole apse, highlighting the three different painting periods.
Carolingian paintings are present on the Romanesque triumphal arch, while Byzantine-style frescoes near the sacristy are attributable to the 14th century. Not to be missed is the series of panels located on the southern wall signed by Angelo Baschenis and dated 26th May 1490, of which remain The Madonna on the throne with Child, Apparition of Christ to the Marie Magdalene, The Ascension of Christ, The Disbelief of St. Thomas and The Descent of Christ to Limbo.

In 1539 Simone II covered the whole apse, skillfully adapting the frescoes to the Gothic structure of the vaults and the walls, enclosing them with refined Renaissance frames inspired from the work of the finest Lombard painters.
A dome adorned with stars is divided into six canopies, the central segments display Christ Pantocrator and St. Vigil on a throne, while in the other segments the Doctors of the Church and the Evangelists with their symbols. Finally, on the intrados of the holy arch, the kings and the prophets of the Old Testament are depicted.
In the ogival canopy adjacent to the vault, Simone painted the apostles divided into groups of three and above the altar a central panel with Christ on the Cross and Our Lady of Sorrows, St John and The three Marys.







Twenty-six episodes of St.Vigil's life can be found on the walls, from his birth to his martyrdom in Val Rendena, ending with his funeral. It is an easily understandable representation, designed to strengthen the population's faith and to counter the danger deriving from the diffusion of Protestant doctrines, which in the same years had also penetrated Trentino, merging with the ideas of social protest and anti- clericalism which resulted in the peasant revolt in 1525.