

## **MONTEGALLO**

**Altitude:** 886 m

**Population:** 700

### **Location**

Composed of 23 hamlets scattered along the slopes of the upper Fluvione valley, the council seat is at Balzo, situated at the foot of the northern slope of M. Vettore.

### **Origins of the name**

The name Montegalloy derives from Castello di Santa Maria in Gallo, built in the VII century. Progressively abandoned around 1500, when the population descended to lower altitudes because it was no longer necessary to live in inaccessible places, giving birth to the existing hamlet of Balzo which was built predominantly using the sandstone of the original castle.

### **Historical Interest**

The origins of Montegalloy date back to an ancient castle which was placed under the jurisdiction of the parish of S. Maria in Lapide, which with its church and large open belfry has, for four centuries, gathered together the inhabitants of the entire valley and gave the signal to repulse the bandits "ad repellendos bannitos". Today, all that remains of the castle, perched on the hilltop (1013 m.), along the road that leads from the village to the ancient church, is the perimeter of a religious building semi-buried and a subterranean construction with a vaulted porous stone ceiling, which was used for water storage.

From 1250, Montegalloy obtained citizenship of Ascoli and was obliged to accept a citizen of Ascoli as mayor. In 1357, in the **Costituzioni Egidiane (Constitutiones by Egidio di Albornoz)**, the castle was cited as Mons Sanctae Mariae in Gallo while in 1378 it was recorded as Terra di S. Maria in Lapide. However it was only in 1580 that the name of Montegalloy definitively appeared. It is the birthplace of the Blessed Marco of Montegalloy (1425-1496), doctor and preacher, co-disciple of S. Giacomo of Marca and S. Bernardino of Siena; to him is attributed the institution of the first Monti di Pietà (pawn banks).

### **Itinerary**

Start from the piazza Taliani (1), on the right of which is an unusual circular building called the Rotonda (2) dated 1883. On the left is the town hall (3) with the adjacent Taliani building (4), dated 1834, which took its name from a noble family which owned a large part of the Montegalloy area. On the facade of the town hall is a war memorial to the fallen of the First World War, in bronze and marble. Also of note is a beautiful inscribed stone lintel, dated 1623.

The itinerary continues along via Annibal Caro, the main road of the town, where the Branconi building (5) is found, built from the materials of the old settlement in 1640 and recently restored. There is a characteristic inscription on the front door lintel, Invidia Dio e non compassione (Envy God and not compassion). At the end of the street is the Monelli building (6) (dedicated to the poet and writer of the same name, born in Montegalloy), above which emerges the church of San Bernardino (7), from the XVII century, of Romanesque style. Inside, apart from the beautiful monolithic columns made of locally quarried sandstone and a marble altar, there is a large oil painting with S. Bernardino of Siena, various other paintings and a carved inscription in memory of Cardinale Emidio Taviani (**Nunzio Apostolico ( = apostolic Nuncio) della Santa Sede ( = Holy See)**

**at the Corte di Francesco Giuseppe d'Austria**). Leaving the church, turn left and take the path which leads to the panoramic viewpoint (8) and an area equipped with a path, picnic tables and a playground for children (close by is the public swimming pool which is open to all during the summer). From here head back down to the Taliani pinewood (9), also equipped with a playground, where it is also easy to meet the squirrel, the red-breasted nuthatch and hear the song of diverse species of other typical mountain birds. From here it is possible to return to the departure point.