

The saint's relic (not simply a statue, but containing parts of her skull) is placed on a 40-ton silver “fercolo” (a type of ornate carriage) and pulled on runners through the city streets by thousands of devotees, clad in traditional white sacks, using two parallel ropes.

On the evening of the 5th of February, these devotees demonstrate their devotion by carrying enormous lit votive candles (up to 100/150 kg). The streets are transformed into a river of flames and prayers. The entire city participates. Balconies are adorned with festive decoration. Houses overlooking the procession open their doors to friends and guests, who await the fercolo carrying the saint, enjoying the traditional sweets associated with the festival, primarily the so-called "minuzzze di Sant'Agata" (small cassatelle shaped like breasts).

The details of St Agatha's story are distressing and particularly horrific. It dates back to her torture at the hands of the Romans in 251 AD. Given the choice of betraying her virtue or renouncing her Christian faith, St Agatha refused either and, on the orders of the proconsul Quinziano, her breasts were removed. The festival, unsurprisingly, has a strong focus on issues of violence against women and also breast cancer prevention.

The 40 photographs on display (and the accompanying video) will illustrate, in 10 sections, the various phases of the festival, with particular attention to the religious sentiment of the faithful over the three days and two nights. Bucolo is a deeply devoted follower of the saint, and the exhibition is intended as a further act of devotion to Saint Agatha and aims to convey the love that all devotees feel for her.