

## **Feast of San Giuliano. (Festa di San Giuliano.) Pollina, 1986.**

This black and white photograph is taken from a low angle, as if the photographer is crouching on the ground, pointing her camera up through the crowd to the sky between the stone buildings on a narrow street.

Standing in front of the camera, their backs to the viewer, are two young girls – their upper torsos, shoulders and heads filling the central part of the picture. The taller of the two, aged about six, has turned round with a direct, unsmiling gaze, as if about to ask the photographer what she is doing there. Both girls have loose blonde hair falling to their shoulders, with a large white flower pinned at the crown of each head. They wear short sleeved, loose cotton dresses – perhaps their Sunday best?

Facing us beyond the girls are the young men of a military band, in short-sleeved white shirts, black ties and peaked caps, playing clarinets. Rising up behind them is an old stone building with a metal lantern on the corner. People are watching the parade from balconies with metal railings on both sides of the street, and a large flag is hanging down above the street from one of the balconies. The sky is dull, but bright.

San Guiliano is the Patron Saint of the village of Pollina and this festival traditionally takes place on the second Sunday of July. A statue of San Guiliano is carried along country paths, so that the Saint can protect and bless the fields, in a procession is known as the ‘procession of flour’. The statue is carried on the shoulders of devotees who wear a long-sleeved white shirt, a waistcoat and black velvet trousers, a colourful silk scarf knotted behind the back, and handmade black cotton stockings.