

## **The celebration of San Zopito, Pentecost Monday**

On Pentecost, the beautiful town of Loreto Aprutino, celebrates its patron saint, San Zopito.

### ***The story:***

*On a warm Sunday, May 22 of the year 1711, a slow procession came winding through the Abruzzo hills. It was on its way from the bishop's palace in Penne towards the small town of Loreto Aprutino. They were bringing two recently acquired relics to the local church. The relics consisted in a box with an arm and the skull of a rather obscure saint, San Zopito. He had died a martyr, or so the story goes, around the year 300 AD in Rome, and his remains had been buried in the Vatican deposits, until in 1711 Pope Clemens XI donated them to the clergy of Loreto Aprutino.*

*While the believers and their treasure were happily on their way, they passed some fields where a farmer was busy ploughing with two oxen.*

*At that moment one of the 2 animals moved away from the farmer, ignoring his calls and approaching the procession, then it bowed soberly and spontaneously as a sign of reverence.*

*Since then, every year, an ox carries the relics on Whitsuntide Monday through Loreto Aprutino.*



### ***The celebration:***

*The Festa di San Zopito is nowadays a colourful 2-day festival celebrating this oxen moment.*

*One the most beautiful rural one Abruzzo where the locals will attend church services, participate in religious processions, enjoy live music and street food.*

*The trained ox, nicknamed the 'White Knight' wears a scarlet cloak with images of the Saints, and relics, kneels and gives praise in specific areas of the town as he is a tramite (vehicle of the divine).*

*A local primary schoolgirl, dressed like an angel, stands on its back representing San Zopito.*

