

## **Card 1 – “The Celebration of Celestinian Forgiveness as an Intangible Cultural Heritage”**

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### **Historical References**

The lighting of the fire of the Morrone is ideally placed in the place where the Benedictine Peter Angelerius, before going up to the papal throne, had spent many years of eremitical life, a cave on Mount Morrone, above Sulmona, receiving from his devotees the appellation by Pietro del Morrone. It was July 5, 1294 when he was designated by the conclave meeting in Perugia as successor to Pope Nicholas IV, whose death (1292) had left the seat vacant for more than two years. From the Hermitage of Sant'Onofrio to the Morrone in which he had retired, Pietro, on the back of a donkey and having as grooms king Carlo II d'Angiò and his son Carlo Martello, moved to L'Aquila: this is the itinerary that traces the so-called "Cammino del Perdono".

In 1294, after the coronation in the Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio, Pope Celestine V issued the Bull of Forgiveness (Bolla Celestiniana). The papal document was entrusted to the people of L'Aquila and kept inside the municipal archives because the citizens wanted it to be the civil authority to hold the Festa del Perdono, even if it respected the dictation of Pope Celestino V. Already in 1295 the Celestinian Bull was brought in the parade up to the Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio where it was shown to the faithful. From this moment on 28 August it constituted a fundamental appointment for the pilgrims and the merchants who arrived in the city. In 1983 it was decided to have the Bull accompanied by a specific character, the Lady of the Bull, who in historical costume, brings the Bull of Forgiveness accompanied by a procession to the Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio, just outside the walls of the city of L'Aquila. The Basilica, founded in 1288 at the behest of Pietro da Morrone, is representative of an architecture stratified over time and considered one of the most significant monuments of central Italy.

### **Description of the Element**

The Celestinian Perdonanza, as a living intangible cultural heritage, is a traditional celebration of the province of L'Aquila that has been handed down without interruption for centuries.

The different ritual and festive moments that characterize it take place every year between August 16th and 29th. It begins with the lighting of a symbolic fire near the Hermitage of Morrone, 10 km from Sulmona, in the presence of numerous citizens. From the fire, which represents the unifying peace among the peoples, the torch lights of the “Celestine Movement” are lit, with which they will travel all the way from the Morrone to L'Aquila, the so-called "Forgiveness Walk". Among tortuous mountain paths and busy roads, to the torch bearers carrying the “Fire of Forgiveness”, numerous citizens are queued up. From Sulmona you pass through several adjacent villages: Bagnaturo, Pratola Peligna, Raiano, Goriano Sicoli, Castel di Ieri, Castelvechio Subequo, Molina Aterno, Acciano, Fontecchio, Fagnano Alto, Prata D'Ansidoia, Villa Sant'Angelo, San Demetrio or Vestini, Sant'Eusanio, Fossa, before reaching the city of L'Aquila, in the fractions of Monticchio, Onna, Paganica and reaching L'Aquila.

At each stop a new tripod lights up, which remains burning for a day to witness that even in that village has passed and has been accepted the message of peace coming from Mount Morrone.

In each resting place of the torch a parchment is read, which is signed by every civil authority of the countries affected by the passage of the “Fire of the Morrone”, as a symbol of adherence to the values of peace, hospitality and solidarity.

The " Forgiveness Walk" ends at the historic center of the city of L'Aquila, on the evening of 23 August, when, in an atmosphere of profound collective emotion, the torch comes preceded by the

roll of the drums, the sound of the clarions and performance of flag-wavers. The Mayor of the city of L'Aquila reads the parchment signed by the mayors, outside his citizenship his thoughts and his wish for peace and solidarity addressed to everyone and lights up the last tripod of the path that remains burning until the end of the celebration cycle, that illuminates and dominates all those who approach the city to participate in the subsequent rites of the element.

From August 23rd to 28th, the city of L'Aquila is in constant ferment with artistic and cultural events of all kinds, awaiting the historic "Parade of the Celestinian Bull". In fact, on August 28, a long and participated parade winds through the central streets of the city, from the Town Hall to the Basilica of Collemaggio, to accompany the Lady of the Bull who carries the precious document to the churchyard of the Basilica. The historical parade that precedes the Lady of the Bull, is animated by the presence of drummers and trumpeters that open the historical part of the "Bull Parade" and mark the cadence of the steps of the figures with the rhythm, with their sound. In front of the Basilica the Mayor of L'Aquila declares to the population present the text of the historical "Bull of Forgiveness", document issued in 1294 by Pope Celestino V and guarded and protected by the municipality of L'Aquila. After the reading, the opening and crossing of the so-called "Holy Door of the Basilica of Collemaggio" begins, the keys of which are owned by the authorities of the Municipality of L'Aquila who is the owner of the Basilica and the only one authorized to open the same for the Celebration of Forgiveness. All the people present and all those who arrive during the night or the following day, pass through the "Holy-Door" that remains open for 24. The following day, on 29th August, at dusk, the "Holy Door of the Basilica of Collemaggio" and the Bull are closed. The Celestinian Bull is again accompanied by a historical parade to the Municipal House: at its arrival, the Mayor of L'Aquila turns off the tripod and ends the ritual cycle of the Celestinian Forgiveness Celebration.



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1. Celestinian Hermitage of Sant'Onofrio Historical (Monte Morrone- Sulmona – AQ)
2. Historical Celestinian Bull
3. Basilica of Sant Maria of Collemaggio (AQ)
4. Signature of mayors- Symbolic Bull (Forgiveness Walk)
5. Torchlight descent (Mount Morrone Forgiveness Walk)



**Parade waiting the Fire of Morrone in L'Aquila**



**Fiery tripod in L'Aquila**



**Flag-waving group- historical Bull Parade (AQ)**



**Crowd awaiting- Historical Bull Parade (in front of the Basilica of Collemaggio)**



**Historical Bull Parade (arrival in front of the Basilica of Collemaggio)**