



Name of Monument:

Pilgrim Church of the Name of the Virgin Mary, Křtiny

Also known as:

Pearl of Moravia, The First Ave, Křitejn

Location:

Křtiny, 20 km north-east of Brno, Křtiny, Moravia, Czech Republic

Date:

1660–1661; 1712–1718; 1728; 1738–1750; 1771

Artists:

František Benedikt Klíčník (1677 Ivanovice na Hané – 1755 Brno), Jan Blažej Santini Aichl (1677–1723, Prague), František Josef Ritz, Jan Jiří Etgens (1691–1757, Brno), Josef Stern (1716 Graz – 1775 Brno), Ignaz Lengelacher (1698 Unter Peissenberg – 1780 Baden), Anton Schweigl (1700 Gaiming in Tirol – 1761 Brno), Ondřej Schweigl (1735–1812, Brno) Josef Winterhalder Jr. (1743 Vöhrenbach – 1807 Znojmo), Ignác Raab (1711 Nechanice u Hradce Králové – 1787 Velehrad)

Denomination / Type of monument:

Religious – Pilgrimage Church and residences

Patron(s):

Premonstratensian order, Brno-Zábrdovice Monastery

History:

Legend has it that Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius once baptised pagans in the Křtiny Valley, hence its old name, Vallis baptismi. One of the oldest pilgrimage sites, oral tradition further credits the place with an appearance of the Virgin Mary of Křtiny in 1210 among the blossom from a horse chestnut tree in nearby Bukovinka. The first written record is in a papal decree of 1237. The statue of the Virgin Mary dates from the first half of the 14th century and was probably donated by Jindřich of Lipá. The significance of the pilgrimage site grew during the Thirty Years' War, when it became a destination for two major thanksgiving pilgrimages to the Virgin Mary, Protectress of the country. The foundation stone for the present church was laid in 1728. When the Premonstratensian order was dissolved in 1784 the incomplete residence was converted into an aristocratic palace (it became state property in 1948). The pilgrimage tradition has survived and Křtiny is among the most visited of its kind in Moravia.

Description:

The white frontage, inventively set into its environment, is decorated with statues by I. Lengelacher, installed in 1740. The unique architectural concept of the church lends a certain magic to the whole area. Santini was acquainted with the numerical symbolism of the Jewish Cabbala, which was also developed by prominent Catholic scholars, and applied its principles in his extraordinary compositions. The ground-plan layout is a circle with internal and external pentagons symbolising the Marian star. The partial merging of the central and side spaces turns a cross-shaped schema into a monumental four-conch whole.

View Short Description

Photograph: Pavel Šech





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How Monument was dated:

With the dissolution of the Zábřehovice Monastery the written records and plans disappeared and only chronicles from 1650–1710 have survived. Individual construction phases are known from prints. Records of pilgrimages are kept in the Křtiny Parish Archive; several pilgrimage books originate in the late 17th century.

Selected bibliography:

Mojmír Horyna – Jan Royt – Vladimír Hyhlík, Křtiny. Poutní kostel Jména Panny Marie, Velehrad, 1994. Bohumil Samek, Umělecké památky Moravy a Slezska I, A-J, Prague, 1994, pp. 269–275. Mojmír Horyna, Jan Blažej Santini-Aichl, Prague, 1998, pp. 331–337. Jiří Kroupa, in Jiří Kroupa (ed), Dans le miroir des ombres. La Moravie à l'âge baroque 1670–1790, Paris–Rennes–Brno, 2002, pp. 90–92, cat. 5. Jiří Kroupa, Umělcí, objednavatelé a styl. Studie z dějin umění, Brno, 2006, pp. 137–195.

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Church of the Name of the Virgin Mary with residence of the Premonstratensian order

1977

Viktor Kotrba – František Lahoda

The model shows the ideal appearance of the church and residence that were not completed. Santini's original design did not include a tower in the frontage, while the shape of

Moravská galerie v Brně

the church held more true to the Marian star, as in other of the architect's designs. The complex came into existence through the construction of the new church and its link with the Chapel of St. Anne; the chapel opposite was to be dedicated to St. Joseph.

Celebration of the Virgin Mary

1745

Jan Jiří Etgens (1691–1757, Brno)

The ceiling painting blends in with the architecture illustrating apocrypha from the Book of Sirach. The painting is a metaphorical celebration of the Virgin Mary as the embodiment of Divine Wisdom: angels with mirrors serve to enlighten visitors.



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Angel

1745

Anton Schweigl (1700 Gaiming in Tirol – 1761 Brno)

Monumental statues of angels on the perimeter ledge bear symbols of the Virgin Mary invoked by the Litany of the Virgin Mary.

Saints John and Paul

c. 1777

Josef Winterhalder Jr. (1743 Vöhrenbach – 1807 Znojmo)

The side-altar painting commemorates the penultimate abbot of the Premonstratensian Monastery (and possibly also the creator of the complex iconography of the ceiling

paintings) whose tomb lies in front of the altar. A picture of Roman martyrs, protectors from unfavourable weather, is framed by an altar by O. Schweigl. The function of the saints as the country's protectors may also be understood symbolically: a 1772 decree considerably restricted the organisation of pilgrimages, while an imperial patent from 1783 prohibited them completely. The picture in the attachment is of St. Gilbert, the abbot's favourite saint.

View of Brno and the Premonstratensian Monastery in Zábřeh

1744

Josef Tadeáš Rotter (1701 Opava – 1763 Brno)?

The church galleries contain a number of votive pictures brought by pilgrims. This monumental canvas depicts the Brno Basin with the Zábřeh Monastery which administered the pilgrimage site. The picture was donated by the canonry as an expression of thanks for the protection of Brno during the siege by Prussian and Saxon armies in 1742.