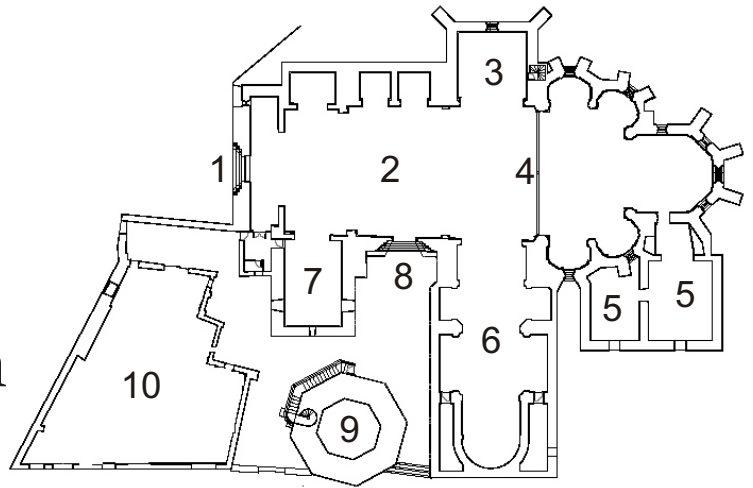


Visit to the Parish Museographic Collection of Sant Mateu and The Archpriestal Church



1. The Romanesque Church (13th century).

The first church of Sant Mateu was started to be built in the 13th century, after the reconquest of Jaume I. It was a building of a lonely nave built by means of diaphragm arches and a two-water roof. The first part of the present-day church, together with the Romanesque frontispiece, belongs to that period, from which we can also highlight the capitals, ones with vegetal motifs and others historiated. One of the scenes corresponds to the beheading of Saint John the Baptist, saint patron of the Hospital Order, lords of the town that period.

2. The Gothic Church (14th to 15th centuries).

Thanks mainly to the wool trade, the town started to increase and to get rich from the early 14th century. That made the church to be small and motivated the construction of a new one, starting from the apse, towards 1350 and that lasted through diverse phases until the end of the 15th century. The construction is marked by the postulates of style of the Mediterranean Gothic: only a much heightened nave with chapels between counterforts, which were financed by the richest families in the town in exchange for what they obtained the right to be buried in them.

3. *Virgen de la Leche* Chapel.

It is situated in one of the arms of the transept. In the front wall, some inscriptions dated from 1414 refer to the Christian-Rabbinical Congress that took place between Tortosa and Sant Mateu. On its left, there is the Trinity Altarpiece (14th century), very important in the Valencian sculpture field because of the naturalism of its works.

4. The Church Builders.

The apse, the first section to be built, was accomplished by Bernat Dalguaire and Domingo Prunyonosa (the latter being inhabitant of the town), who worked at the same time in the

cathedral of Tortosa and the church of Morella. Surrounding the rose window there are five escutcheons belonging to the Rocí and Moragues families.

5. Sacristy (18th century).

The ancient medieval sacristy was extended with the construction of a baroque nave where the vault was decorated with some graffiti. The inside room, used before as an archive, takes in nowadays the goldsmith section of the Parish Museographic Collection. The most important pieces are the Major Cross (1397) and the goblets collection of the 15th and 16th centuries.

6. San Clemente Chapel (18th century).

In 1767, a religious man born in the town and resident in Rome acquired the relics of a martyr of the early times of the Christianity. As he was a stranger, he was called Clemente because it was the name of the Pope. To welcome his relics, the town built this enormous, neoclassic chapel in one of the arms of the transept. The paintings of the vault and the dome represent the martyrdom of San Clemente. In the pendentives, the three theological virtues (faith, hope and charity) and the Church under the form of a female figure are represented. They have been dated from 1782.

7. Passion Chapel (17th century).

It was built between 1616 and 1619, financed by the notary Joan Alcalà. He was buried here and from his sepulture there is still the gravestone and the entry grate, which contains the familiar escutcheon. In the 17th century, Francisco Borrull, a bishop from Tortosa, was buried here too and his gravestone can be also seen inside the chapel.

8. Gothic Portal (15th century).

Known popularly as the *porta falsa* (false door), it is a gothic lateral door richly decorated with

vegetal motifs, human figures and fantastic animals.

9. Bell-tower (15th century).

It is separated from the church. It is an octagonal construction of 32 metres high per 32 of circumference, massif except for the snail staircase and the space where the clock machinery is placed. Once, it accomplished a double function, liturgical and defensive. Due to this, the entrance is situated some four metres above the floor. In ancient times, people acceded to it through a draw footbridge from the Abbey House, abutting the tower. The most ancient clock known in the tower is from the second half of the 16th century. It was a counterweight system that made the bells toll with the quarters and hours. During the *Germanies* War, the Bell-tower was sieged by the partidary troupes of the Emperor Charles V.

10. The Museographic Collection of Models of the Historical Buildings of the Valencian Community.

The ground floor of the Abbey House takes in a permanent collection of models of different gothic Valencian buildings. These models show the processes and building techniques that were used during the Middle Ages. They represent, thus, an interesting complement to the Archpriestal Church visit.

Declared National Monument in 1931, the Archpriestal Church of Sant Mateu is the emblematic building of the town and one of the most important gothic constructions in the Valencian Community.

Historically, its most important date is 15th August 1429. That day, the mass that put an end to the Western Schism was celebrated in it and the cardinal Gil Sanchez Muñoz renounced to his rights over the Apostolic Seat after more than 70 years of division in the Catholic Church and among the European countries.

Its role in the town and in the Maestrazgo's religious life comes from its condition of Major Church in the beginning, to become afterwards an Archpriestal Church.

Throughout the centuries, the church has guest the commendation ceremonies in which the Montesa masters swore respect to the rights and privileges of the town. At the same time, the town

swore fidelity to the Order, where all the inhabitants of the town assisted.



Parròquia de Sant Mateu



Ajuntament de Sant Mateu

