



The main altar is an early Baroque masterpiece made between 1637 and 1640. The grandiose wooden column architecture is 20.3 meters high and 14.8 meters wide and is the work of several masters in sculpting, carving and goldplating (Baltazaar Knilling and Vít Knoth of Vienna, Vít Stadler of Trnava and his assistants Ferdinand of Cifer and Kristián Knerr). Abundantly gold-plated columns segment the altar vertically. Gold plated moldings segment it horizontally on four levels.

A painting depicting the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River dominates the second floor, the birth of John the Baptist is depicted on the third floor. A painting depicting the Virgin Mary visiting St. Elizabeth is situated in the upper section of the altar. The entire altar is abundantly polychromed. The pulpit in the left temple pillar is from 1637. Sculptures of church fathers and the statue of the Madonna are on the window sill, the statue of Christ with the cross is on the canopy in the shape of a royal crown,



St. John the Baptist as a boy is on the wall. Two mortuaries – death crests, are situated on the side walls of the temple between the emporium and oratorio windows (mortuary of Mikuláš, Daniel, Alexander and František Esterházy on the left side; Ladislav, Štefan and an unknown member of the Esterházy family and of Imrich Očkaj on the right side).

The side chapels open up from the nave by semicircular vaulted arcades. On the left side of the nave, the chapels are consecrated to St. Francis Xaverský with the altar of the Holy Cross, Queen of Angels and Our Lady of Sorrows with the altars of the Virgin Mary and the entrance chapel with the entry in the former Jesuit college with the altars of St. John the Baptist and St. John Nepomuk. On the right side of the nave, the chapels are consecrated to St. Ignatius with the altar of the Virgin Mary of Czestochowa, Queen of Martyrs with the altar of St. Stephen the first Martyr, the Queen of Virgins with the altar of St. Joseph and the entrance chapel with the side entry in the cathedral. The altars in the side chapels were predominantly built in the 17th century. Massive columns in the entrance section of the cathedral support two choirs – for musicians and singers.



The fine statues along the walls of the lower choir depicting church fathers, St. Gregory the Great and Augustine to the left, and St. Hieronymus and Ambrosias to the right, originated around 1700. There are crypts under the cathedral, in which members of the Esterházy family and the Jesuit order were buried. In 1990, extensive reconstruction and restoration work began in the cathedral.

The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist is the first monumental sacral building of pure early Baroque style which transcends the borders of Slovakia in architectural and artistic value.

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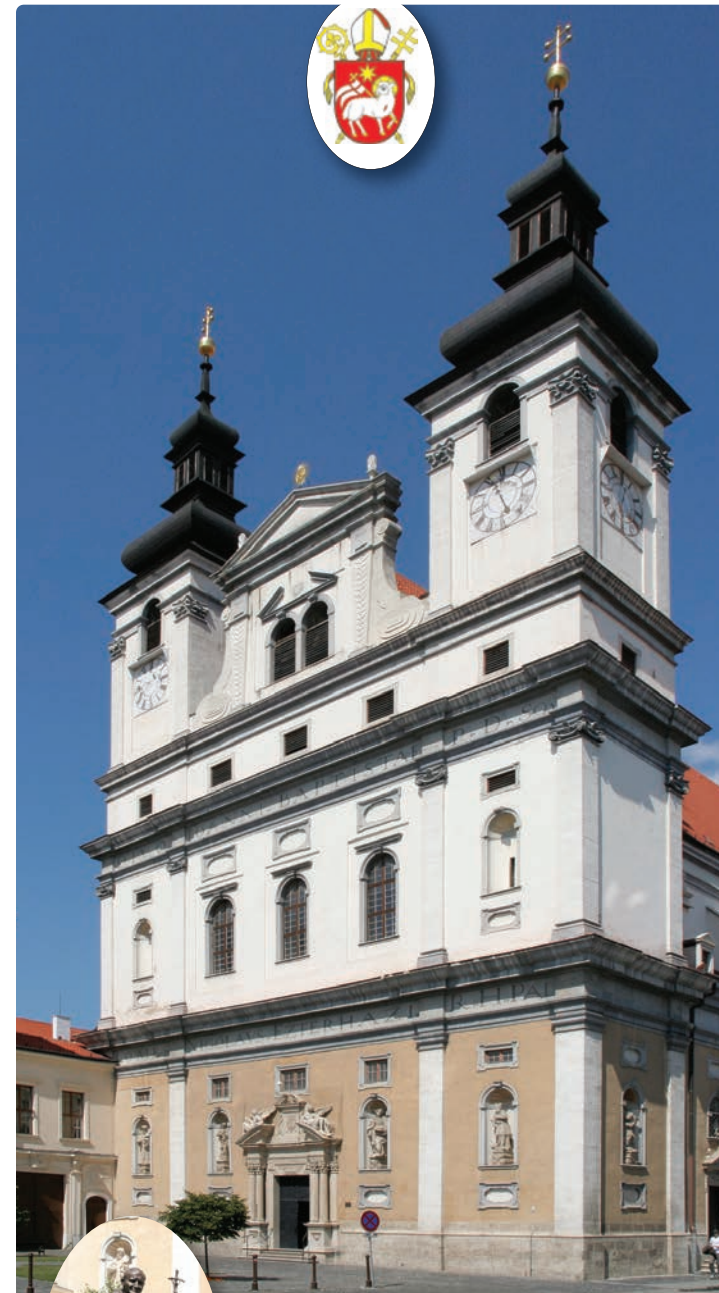
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**CATHEDRAL OF
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
TRNAVA**





CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST TRNAVA

The monumental building of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, which is a part of the complex of buildings of the former Trnava University, is situated in the northeast part of town. The cathedral was built by Trnava Jesuits on the foundations of the original medieval church and the Dominican monastery (before the Johanites) according to the model of the Roman Church Il Gesù. The donor of this Cathedral, Palatine Miklós Eszterházy, entrusted its construction to Italian masters Antonio and Pietro Spazzi in 1629. It was consecrated on August 30, 1637 by Juraj Lippai, Bishop of Eger and the first mass was celebrated by Imrich Lóši, the Archbishop of Esztergom.



After the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773 and the transfer of Trnava University to Buda in 1777, the cathedral and monastery became a shelter for military veterans and the entire complex was entitled Les Invalides. Later, it became the church for the grammar school; from 1948 – 1977 it was administered by the parish office. In 1978 it became the cathedral of the Archdiocese of Trnava. In 2003, the cathedral was visited by Pope John Paul II. A bronze statue of him situated in front of the cathedral commemorates this visit. The main two-tower façade of the cathedral has a western exposure. It is horizontally segmented by moldings and vertically segmented by pilasters with niches and windows. Above its main portal, between double columns, there is a segmented shield with figures of seated angels and the stone crest of the Esterházy family. The memorial inscription:

**DIVO IOANNI BAPTISTAE P. D. S. COMES
NICOLAUS EZTERHAZI R. H. PAL.**

(To Saint John the Baptist from Count Mikuláš Esterházy Palatine of the Kingdom of Hungary.)



is situated above the molding. Statues of Saints Joachim, Anna, Elizabeth and Zachary are situated in the side niches of the main façade. Statues of the Apostles Judas Thaddeus, John, Matthew and Bartholomew are located in the niches of the south facade. The cathedral is 61 meters long and 28.1 meters wide with an internal height of 20.3 m. There are two equally long spaces on each side of the cathedral: to the left, the former Chapel of the Holy Cross, to the right, the sacristy.

The cathedral's interior is segmented by pilasters with Ionic order capitals. The main nave has barrel vaults with lunettes, while in the chapels, cloister vaults can be found on both sides of the nave. The walls, vaults, windows and arcade feature abundant stucco ornaments. Four large paintings from the life of John the Baptist are in oval, abundantly decorated framing on the vault of the temple (the Saint at the court of Herod, in prison, decapitation and the handing of the saint's head to Salome). Blue medallions with scenes from the life of John the Baptist are situated among the lunettes. The decoration of the entire cathedral is the work of Giovanni Battista Rossa and Giacomo Tornini, Italian masters from the period of 1639 – 1655. Pietro Antonio Conti, Luca Antonio Colomba, Ján Keller and Erhard Jozef Gruber also participated in decorating the temple from 1697 to 1700.

