



Projet Erasmus+ Namur - Marsala

" Patrimonia "



A la découverte du patrimoine historique, architectural et culturel

Saint-Loup Church

Namur



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ABSTRACT

General overview

Saint-Loup Church is situated in the historic centre of Namur, is one of the jewels of the former Southern Netherlands baroque art. Built between 1621 and 1645 by architect, Pieter Huyssens, brother in the Jesus's Society, the building design is in perfect concordance with the ideas of the Catholic Reformation of the sixteenth century decided during the Trento Council. Its history is linked to the former Jesuits College adjoining it.

Its baroque style is recognizable by its vaults in ogives, its superimposed columns, its rich and opulent decoration with generally naturalistic patterns, shadows and lights,...

Historical and architectural context

In the sixteenth century, the Protestant Church is in rivalry with the Catholic Church which is openly criticized for its sloppiness. To avoid falling into decadence and prove its seriousness, the Catholic Church will have to take a series of remedial measures.

This was the essential goal of the Trent Council (1545 - 1563). At this time (1540), Jesus's Society is created by Ignatius from Loyola. The Jesuits order is born.

In these troubled moments, the city of Namur, already the seat of a bishopric since 1561 and endowed with a seminar, does not let oneself be tempted by Protestantism and maintains its attachment to the King and the Catholic Church.

In 1610, the Augustinians, order competing against the Jesuits, introduced to the town authority a request for the creation of a college. A long lasting struggle of influence is ongoing between Augustinians and Jesuits. But Namur, already sensitive to the good reputation of Jesus's Society, known for the quality of the lessons taught in its college founded in Dinant in 1564, decided to follow the path of Saint-Ignace.

Therefore are the Jesuits entrusted the youth's education.

In 1611, the Jesuits set up their new college on the site of the "School of Falcon ", a communal school already located between the current "Basse-Marcelle" and "College" streets. According to their "corporate name", as early as 1611, fathers begin with the construction of the building for the six secondary classes and their housing in 1613. This is followed by 32 years of building work during which 26 received or purchased houses will be demolished for the completion of a major program that will reshape the neighborhood in its layout and of course in its activities.

The rigorously orthogonal plan and very similar to that drawn up at the same time for the College in Dinant, was well respected. The buildings are arranged around two courtyards separated by a double gallery, between the future College street and a (disappeared) garden limited by the Basse-Marcelle Street.





Designed for the students, the first courtyard, in the west, is lined by the two wings of the school, either a main body perpendicular to College Street and a lower wing at the curb of it and at the back by half of the father's house.

The second courtyard, reserved to the fathers, receives the second half of the housing and, on the street side, in a volume prolonging the school, we find porteries and hotels. A turret staircase, at the end of the gallery, gives access to the fathers sleeping rooms.

Eventually, the culmination of this work will be the building of the college chapel, Saint-Ignace Chapel, the current Saint-Loup Church, which will be dedicated on May 28, 1645.

Dominating the whole compound to the east, the church extends in a north-south heading. A unusual layout dictated without doubt by the layout of the streets already existing and by the desire to keep the buildings together and to ensure the most possible visibility to the triumphal facade of the church.

In order to stay in the renewal spirit wished by the Council of Trent, ended in 1563, the organization of the church is redesigned and its architecture is a slightly modified.

The basic plan remains that of a basilica with its entrance on the main axis with the altar in sight ; the new building must give the impression of a unified space where the believers are closer to the priest and can clearly hear the "Good Word" proclaimed from the throne of truth. Attention is so focused on the central nave which will be well lit and on its "services" aisles where confessionals will be laid. The transept cutting the church and the rood screen hiding the altar and marked the border between the choir of the nave are removed. They are replaced by a simple communion bench. The singers and musicians are installed in a tribune above the entrance.

In 1773, Pope Clement XIV dissolved Jesus's Society. The Jesuits must leave their college. As the old St. Loup Church, next to St. John the Baptist Church, fell in ruins, the city authorities gave the parish priest and parishioners the use of St. Ignatius Chapel.

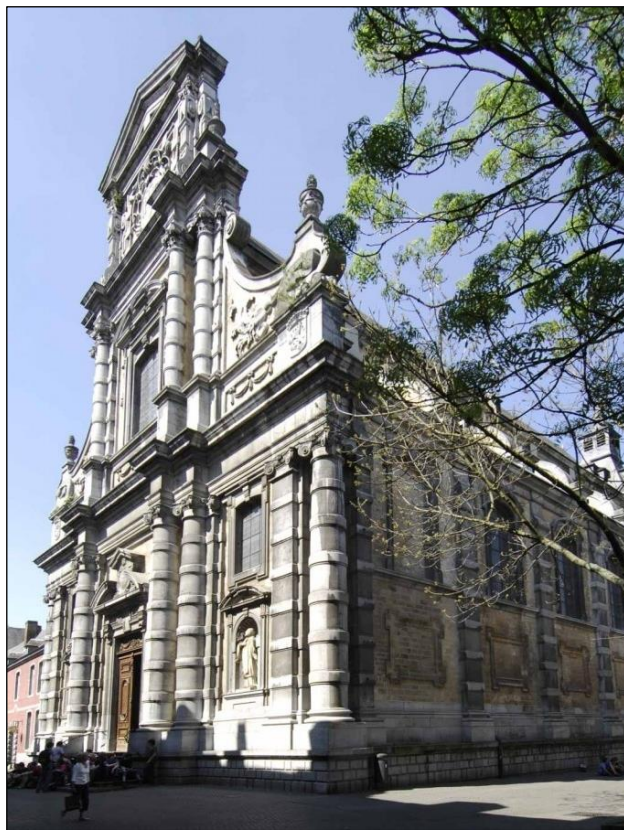
On September 14, 1777, it officially became The Saint-Loup Parish Church with the transfer of part of the Treasure and the wooden Crucifix from the high altar.



Key Dates :

- 1517: display of Luther's 95 theses at Wittenberg Church
- 1540: birth of the Society or Society of Jesus (SJ) whose constitutions are written by Ignace de Loyola
- 1542: first foundation of the Jesuits in Leuven
- 1545: Opening of the Council of Trent
- 1553: opening of the Jesuits' house in Tournai
- 1561: creation of a bishopric in Namur
- 1562: opening of the first college in Tournai
- 1564: opening of the college in Dinant
- 1610: choice of the city of Namur in favor of the Jesuits (to the detriment of the Augustinians)
- 1611: construction of the building housing the 6 secondary classes.
(to the left in the current courtyard)
- 1613: construction of the fathers' home (wing at the back of the courtyard)
- 1621: August 8: laying of the first stone of the church
- 1641: end of the construction work of the church.
- 1645: May 28: consecration of the church and inauguration of the funerary "crypt"
- 1677: end of the inside arrangements with the laying of the saint-Ignace altar.
- 1773: suppression of the Jesuits order by Pope Clement XIV. The parish priest of Saint-Loup is authorized to use the Saint-Ignace Chapel.
- 1777: Saint Ignace chapel officially becomes the Saint-Loup parish church
- 1814: rehabilitation of the Jesuits order.
- 1864 - 1867: identical rebuilding of the main facade
- 1936: the church is listed in the Real Estate Heritage of Wallonia.
- 1979 - 2011: important restoration of the building and its furniture
- 2012: creation of the association "Friends of the Saint-Loup church in Namur"
- 2013: the church is listed in the Outstanding Real Estate Heritage of Wallonia





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