



THE CHAPEL OF THE VERA CRUZ (TRUE CROSS)

Erected by the Brotherhood of the *Vera Cruz*, or True Cross, in the 16th century on the spot where the Brotherhood's confreres performed their penance or "discipline". The façade was designed by the architect Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, and the interior was remodelled in the Baroque style by Joaquín de Churriguera in the 18th century. It has a hall floor plan and a single nave, with a barrel vault featuring transverse ribs and lunettes and a blind dome underpinned by spandrels. The choir of the church raise to a three-centred arch, at the foot of the building.

The shrine located next to the façade, known as the "humilladero", marks the spot where, since 1615, the Brotherhood of the Vera Cruz has been performing the Descent from the Cross, which is an important Easter Week ceremony.

✦ **Altarpiece.** Joaquín de Churriguera, 1713 – 1714. It is divided into three sections: the middle section of which features an imposing image of the Immaculate Conception, a painted woodcarving by Gregorio Fernández, 1620. This majestic sculpture is the only piece by this important artist in Salamanca. Above it, in the upper section of the altarpiece, is the monumental assemblage of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, attributed to Salamanca-born artist José de Larra.

✦ **Altar Frontispiece.** Anonymous, 1714-1717. Crafted in shell, it contains 44 scenes from the Passion of the Christ and the life of the Virgin painted in oil on mirror.

✦ **Ornamentation throughout the church.** Joaquín de Churriguera, 1713-1714. Exuberant plant-themed decoration based on painted and golden carved plaster works with plant motifs, which are a unique example of the Churrigueresque Baroque style in the city of Salamanca.

A noteworthy feature is the abundance of seraphim angels; there are over a hundred throughout the building. Seraphims are the protectors of the Franciscan religious order, which was the origin of the Vera Cruz Brotherhood. Their presence shows that the Brotherhood also considers them a source of protection, as they are the angels which are closest to God in heaven.



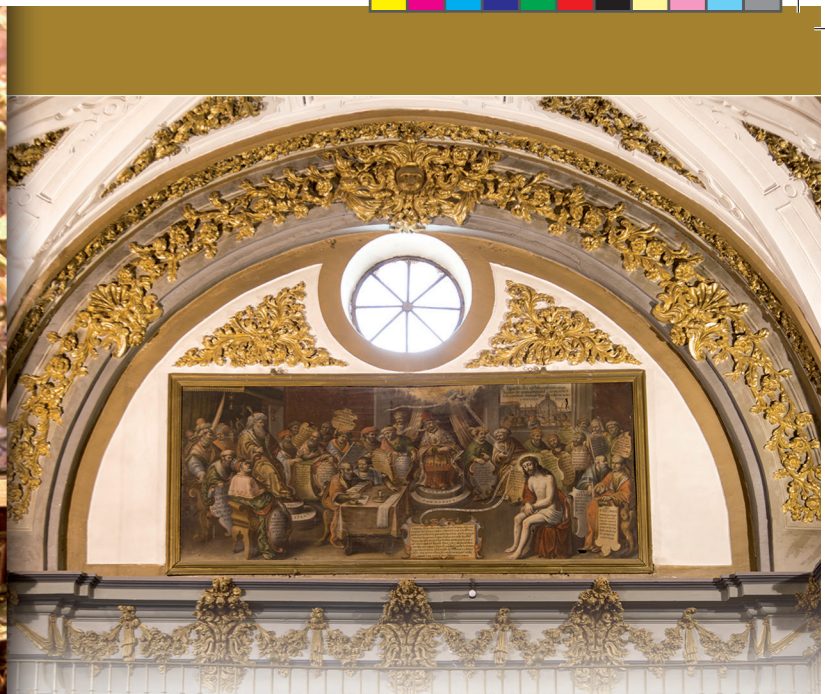
The church houses a series of valuable artistic assets, including:

✦ **Lignum Crucis Reliquary Cross.** Pedro Benítez, Cristóbal de Honorato and Domingo Nieto, 1675. Central niche on the Gospel side of the building. A magnificent piece of precious metal craftwork which holds a relic of the True Cross of Christ (Verdadera Cruz de Cristo), from which both the Brotherhood and the church take their name. It has been safeguarded and revered in this spot since it was brought over from Rome in the late 17th century.

✦ **El Juicio de Cristo (Trial of Jesus).** Anonymous, 17th century. Oil on canvas. Large canvas located above the choir of the church which depicts, in a single scene, the trial of Christ as recounted in the bible.

✦ **Santo Sepulcro.** (The Holy Sepulchre) crafted in shell, wood and silver, was donated to the brotherhood by Lorenzo García and Josefa de Aragón in 1678. It contains the pathetic image of Cristo Nuestro Bien, an articulated representation of Jesus by Salamanca-born artist Pedro Hernández, 1615. The body of Jesus is lowered from the Cross and buried in this Sepulchre on Good Friday during a solemn ceremony.

✦ **Cristo Resucitado (The Resurrection of Jesus).** Painted woodcarving attributed to Alejandro Carnicero, 1724. It depicts a perfect anatomical study and an exquisite expression of tenderness. It occupies the central niche of the wall on the Epistle side of the building. It heads up the procession on Easter Sunday celebrating the Resurrection of the Christ.



CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

This chapel is adjoined to the head of the nave. It has a square floor plan and features an opulent alcove with stained glass and lamps, which houses the image of Our Lady of Sorrows. Formerly the sacristy of the church, of which the original ceiling plasterwork has been retained, it was home to the chapel of processional insignia, and since 1718 has housed the revered effigy of Our Lady of Sorrows. The current altarpiece, altar and alcove were created by the Escuelas Salesianas de Sarriá, in Barcelona, in 1924. Its modernist style means it is flawlessly integrated with the rest of the building. The cost of the works were covered by Ms Gonzala Santana, a great benefactor of the Brotherhood.

The chapel features an impressive painted woodcarving of the **Our Lady of Sorrows**, which is attributed to Felipe del Corral, 1718. Mary, the figure of the Brotherhood's greatest devotion, is depicted at the foot of the cross with seven silver spears piercing her heart. The piece was a donation from Ms Teresa Zúñiga. It features a rich array of fabrics and textiles, some of which are over a hundred years old.





ILLUSTRIOUS BROTHERHOOD OF THE VERA CRUZ

Founded in 1506, is it the oldest Catholic fraternity in the city. It safeguards a wealth of art assets which can be enjoyed within the church. In 1525, the Brotherhood merged with the Brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception; since then, the object of its devotion has been twofold: the Vera Cruz, or True Cross, and the Immaculate Conception. The Vera Cruz also embodies and organises the processions and ceremonies for Salamanca's Easter Week, which was declared an event of International Tourist Interest in 2003. It is the only Salamanca Brotherhood that has its own temple in which to hold its services and to organise its four processions, featuring 14 religious statues (known as *pasos*) over the course of Salamanca's Easter Week.



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OPENING HOURS:
Fridays 5pm to 8pm.
Saturdays 11am to 2pm and 5pm to 8pm.
Sundays 11am to 2pm.

*On the first Sunday of every month, visitor access will be limited during the 12.30 pm to 1.15 pm services.

*Please consult special opening hours during Easter Week.

Iglesia de la Veracruz. Campo de San Francisco, s/n

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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THE CHAPEL OF THE TRUE CROSS VERACRUZ

A PASSION FOR BAROQUE



A landmark building in Salamanca, completely decorated in the Spanish Baroque style known as Churrigueresque. Architecture, painting, sculpture and decorative arts. Origins and roots in Salamanca's Holy Easter Week.