

SHORT HISTORY

THE LIFE OF THE 9TH DISTRICT OF BUDAPEST (Ferencváros, trans. “town of Francis”) started in 1792, with the coming to the throne of Francis I. In the lack of an own church (and school), a great desire of the district’s inhabitants, mainly German-speaking immigrants, was fulfilled on the **1st of November 1822**, when the Franciscans started their service in the provisory church built on the edge of the Bakáts Square.

Following the damages caused by the great flood from 1838, the church was closed in 1865. For the new church, the Neo-Romanesque plan of **Miklós Ybl** was selected, instead of the Gothic-Revival plan of **Frigyes Feszl** and **Imre Steindl**. The church, built with the financial support of the state and of the city, was consecrated in the honour of St. Francis of Assisi on the **24th of April 1879** by archbishop János Simor, whose coat-of-arms can be seen on the main altar. The work was admired even by the **royal pair** and also by **Mihály**

Munkácsy and **Franz Liszt**. In the following years, the Bakáts Square became richer with the Neo-Renaissance building ensemble planned by Győző Czigler, which housed the council, the school and the parish, the latter being completed in 1884.



Blown up tower, 1956

At the turn of the century, the church service was taken over by the Archdiocese of Esztergom. Though the church, **damaged during WWI and WWII** was rebuilt by the community, the Stalinist dictatorship suppressed the significant civil and caritative activity of the parish. During the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Bakáts Square was the scene of fights and executions. Following the regime change, **the life of our community was renewed**, shown also by the restored parish building, where the local Roman Catholic population can find a spiritual home for **nearly two centuries**.



The main gate, renovated in 2002

ABOUT OUR CHURCH

“AS THERE WAS NO CATHOLIC CHURCH SO FAR in the capital city which would impress one by its proportionality, elegance and uniformity” – Vilmos Kurtz, our first parish priest. The Romanesque church was the blueprint for the **St. Stephen’s Basilica** in Budapest, also planned by Miklós Ybl. The general puritan aspect given by the basilican elements are somewhat contrasted by the rich design of the sanctuary.



Small bookholder in the sacristy

The virtue of the church lies in the **richness of the details**, the furnishing was planned by Ybl himself, while the execution glorifies the work of carpenter **Endre Thék** and locksmith **Gyula Jungfer**. The wall-paintings were done by the best of their age, **Mór Than** and **Károly Lotz**. This is the first occasion in Hungary when we find a secular figure on a church mural (the last communion of John Hunyadi). The **national-themed** painting and the former stained-glass windows had caused a serious debate during planning.

The statue of St. Anthony, built in 1950 by **Béni Ferenczy**, stands out among the mainly 20th century works of fine art. The mechanical organ, planned by **Sándor Országh**, was restored and is working in its original form since 1994.

Despite the small reconstruction works, the church is severely deteriorated, as shown by the need for the protective roof above the main gate and the silence of the bells at midday. Our community calls attention to its values with a rich liturgical and cultural activity, in the hope that the **main church of Ferencváros** will be seen someday as it was envisioned by its builders.

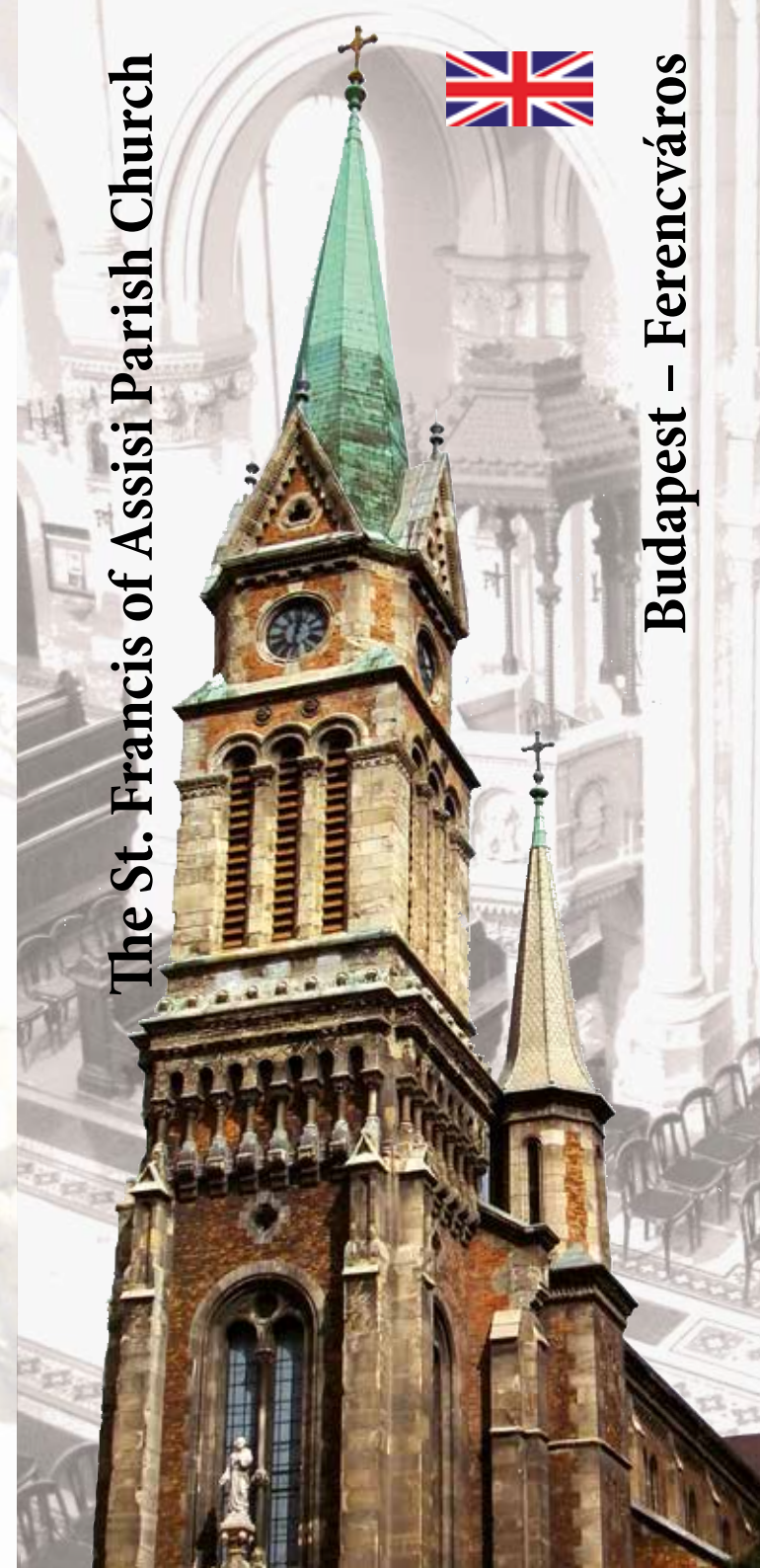


The original painting of the ceiling, kept only in the crypt

The St. Francis of Assisi Parish Church



Budapest – Ferencváros



THE TOUR OF THE CHURCH

NORTHERN SIDE-AISLE

- 1: St. Anthony – statue (BF)
- 2: Infant Jesus of Prague – relief (AK)
- 3: St. Joseph with the child Jesus – statue
- 4: **pulpit** with half-length reliefs of the Four Evangelists (LF)

TRANSEPT, NORTHERN SIDE

- 5: *on the balcony, below*: the last communion of John Hunyadi (KL), *up*: Prophet Daniel (KL)
- 6: John the Baptist (MT), *on the balcony*: St. Ambrose (MT)
- 7: St. Anne with the child Mary (MT), *on the balcony*: St. Augustine (MT)

Main entrance

ABBREVIATION OF THE NAMES (SCULPTORS)

- AC: Antal Czinder
 BF: Béni Ferenczy
 LF: Leó Feszler
 JG: Jenő Grantner
 AK: Aurél Káldor
 AS: Alajos Stróbl
 BSZ: Béla Szappanos
 GYSZ: Gyula Szász

PAINTERS

- KL: Károly Lotz
 MT: Mór Than
 IZS: Imre Zsellér

ON THE EXTERIOR WALL AND IN THE CHURCH GARDEN

- I: **main gate**, *on it, up*: St. Francis of Assisi – statue (GYSZ), *down*: Jesus Christ – relief (FL), *left and right*: Angel statues (GYSZ)
- II: Mary with the child Jesus – mosaic (IZS)
- III: St. Francis of Assisi – statue (AS)
- IV: 1956 commemoration plaque
- V: Heroes commemoration (WWI and II, 1956)
- VI: St. Joseph – mosaic (IZS)
- VII: 1956 memorial (AC)

TRANSEPT, NORTHERN SIDE (cont.)

- 8: **Side-altar of King St. Ladislaus** (MT), *on the door of the tabernacle*: Jesus blessing the fish, *below, from left to right*: winged ox (Luke the Evangelist), St. Elisabeth, St. Adalbert, St. Margareta, winged lion (Mark the Evangelist)
- 9: King St. Ladislaus wrings water from the rock (MT), *on the balcony, below*: St. Francis in front of Pope Innocent III (MT), *up*: Prophet Isaiah (MT)
- 10: The Sacred Heart of Jesus – statue (JG)

Northern side entrance

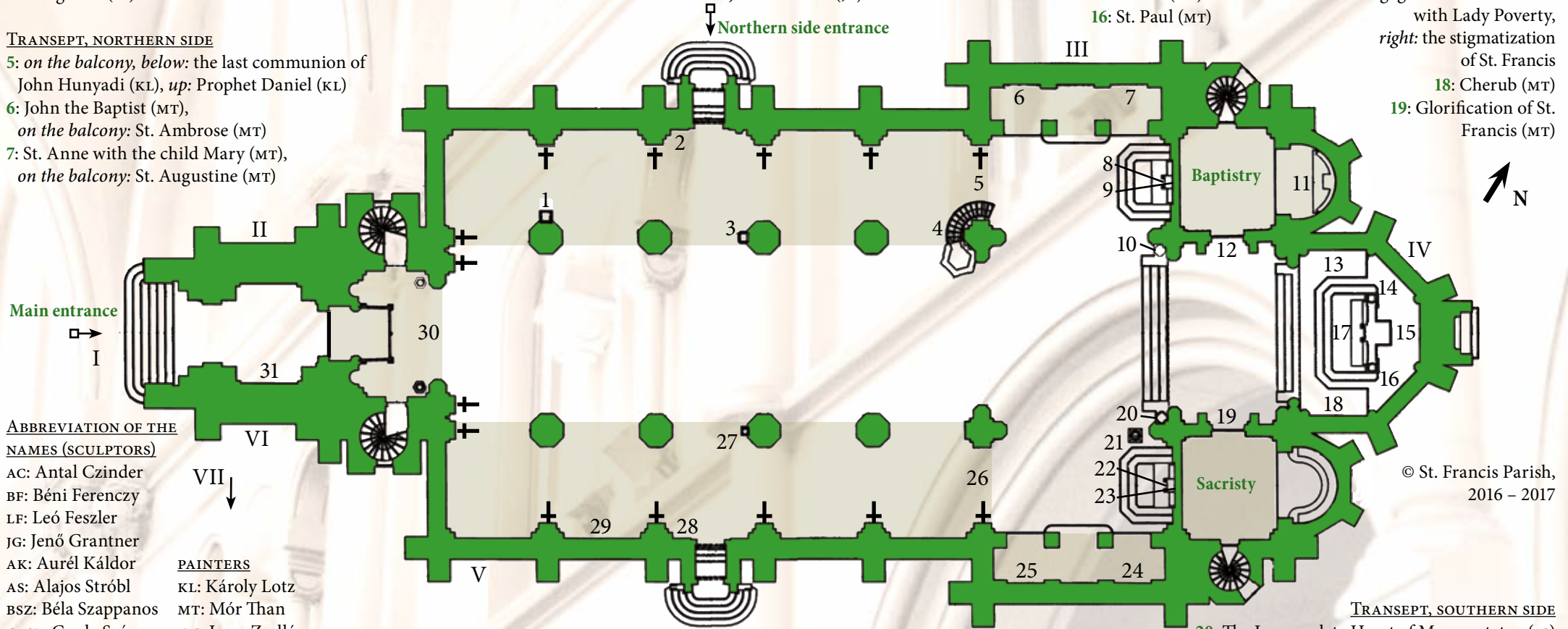
BAPTISTRY

- 11: **altar**, *on it, central*: the Paschal Lamb, *left*: the baptism of Jesus, *right*: the Ark of Noah (MT)

SANCTUARY

- 12: The death of St. Francis (MT)
- 13: Cherub (MT)
- 14: St. Peter (MT)
- 15: Christ (MT)
- 16: St. Paul (MT)

- 17: **main altar** (MT), *central*: Jesus, as a good shepherd, *left*: the engagement of St. Francis with Lady Poverty, *right*: the stigmatization of St. Francis
- 18: Cherub (MT)
- 19: Glorification of St. Francis (MT)



Southern side entrance

SOUTHERN SIDE-AISLE

- 27: Grievous Virgin Mary – statue
- 28: St. Thérèse of Lisieux – relief (BSZ)
- 29: The relic of St. Francis of Assisi

CHOIR AND FOREFRONT

- 30: *up, on the top of the organ case*: St. Cecilia, *left and right*: lilies
- 31: *up*: consecration, *down*: 1948 renovation plaque

TRANSEPT, SOUTHERN SIDE

- 20: The Immaculate Heart of Mary – statue (JG)
- 21: Baptismal font
- 22: **Side-altar of King St. Stephen** (MT), *on the door of the tabernacle*: Last Supper, *below, from left to right*: vulture (John the Evangelist), St. Gerard, St. Emeric, St. Maurus of Pécs, angel (Matthew the Evang.)
- 23: King St. Stephen is giving alms (KL), *on the balcony, below*: St. Francis preaching (MT), *up*: Prophet Jeremiah (KL)
- 24: David (KL), *on the balcony*: St. Jerome (KL)
- 25: Rebecca (KL), *on the balcony*: Saint Gregory the Great (KL)
- 26: *on the balcony, below*: The preaching of Saint John of Capistrano (KL), *up*: Prophet Ezekiel (MT)

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