



Cathedral of St. Stanislaus

13/12/2015

Vilnius

Katedros a. 2; GPS: 54.685815°N; 25.287437°E - Vilnius - Lithuania



The first Catholic church on the site of today's cathedral was built by the Great Duke Mindaugas after his baptism in 1251. Then after a pagan insurrection, resulting in the destruction of the cathedral, a second Christianization of Lithuania took place, King Jogaila built a new Gothic church on the same spot. Over a period of time with fires, reparations and alterations, the building gained Renaissance and Baroque features. In 1623-1636 King Sigismundus III Vasa built a baroque chapel dedicated to St. Casimir to house the relics of the saintly prince. This chapel is now one of the most treasured monuments in Vilnius. Thanks to the architect Laurynas Stuoka – Gucevičius the church acquired a strictly geometrical square form typical of French Classicism. The Soviet authorities closed the Cathedral in 1950. From 1956 on, the building housed a picture gallery, concerts of organ music were held there. It was not until 1989 that the Cathedral was returned to the Catholic faithful and became the major sanctuary again. There are 11 chapels in the Cathedral. Architectural fragments, apparently the remnants of Mindaugas' first cathedral and the later pagan sanctuary, have been discovered in the crypts. The crypts also hold the earliest known Lithuanian fresco dating back to the late 14th or 15th cent.