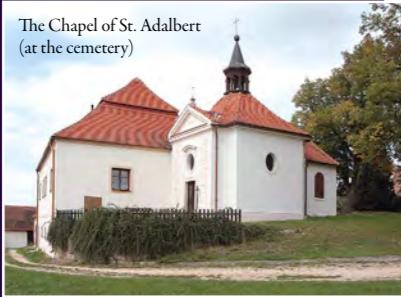


## The religious sights of Vodňany



The Church of  
St. John the Baptist  
(Kodádkova street)



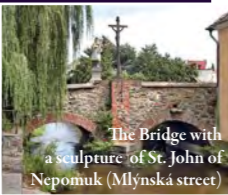
The Chapel of St. Adalbert  
(at the cemetery)

John Huss' Community Center  
(Kampanova street)

The tomb of family Suda  
(the Park of John Paul II)



The former synagogue  
(Majerova street)



The Bridge with  
a sculpture of St. John of  
Nepomuk (Mlýnská street)

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(The Parish of the Roman Catholic Church in Vodňany)  
*the owner of the building and the church administration*  
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## The old stories of the stone heads



### Unhappy love

Once upon a time there was a priest called Cyril presented in Vodňany. He was a loyal servant of either the God and his faithful flock but his private life was miserable. He didn't choose the priesthood of his own free will but to come up to his religious parents' expectations. The way to this assigned job was painful for him. As a young student he fell in love with a daughter of one townsman of Příbram. Her name was Elisabeth. She, desperate and grief-stricken, was looking for the refuge from her unhappy love in the service to God and she entered The Sister of Charity Order to treat the poor ill people in their hospital at the foot of Petřín hill in Prague. It happened once that Mother superior sent her and another nun to the way crisscross the Czech lands to get some charitable gifts for their hospital. When they reached the town of České Budějovice the older nun suddenly got ill and shortly after she was called by God to eternal life. The young nun, now called Agatha, set off on a journey alone and she came up to the town of Vodňany. At dawn she entered the Týn gate and directly turned her steps to the church, whose windows lit to the square. She humbly sank to her knees at the altar and after the Holy clerical communion she started eating her Lord's Supper. When the priest came up to her to pass her the Holy Wafer, according to the birth-mark on his hand, she realized the painful meeting the

God prepared for her. When the priest Cyril recognized her, it broke his heart and he dropped down dead. When people approached a motionless body of Agatha they found out that her soul left this world to the soul of the young priest. In the God's House they both found their death and eternal salvation. They paid the high price by the death for the love which they weren't allowed to confess in their earthly life. The inhabitants of Vodňany, moved by the destiny of two young people, had their heads carved into the stone and they decorated the walls of their church with them forever.



gave the health back to a lot of people by his erudition. In everlasting memory of this man, his head was carved in a stone by a skillful artist and it was put in a church vault to spread the immortal glory of this educated benefactor.



### The ungodly man

A long time ago a priest went across the square in Vodňany to give the last rites to a sick person. The bareheaded priest worn in a cassock and surplice was carrying a case with the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar and with holy oils. The ministrant in front of him, worn in a surplice, was ringing and the humble Christians sank to their knees to bow to a secret of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Only one person, his name isn't worth mentioning, who was very rich but who didn't take care of either his family or his house, but who was very fond of drinking in local taverns, just came out of the taproom of a bad reputation when the priest was passing by. Then this person, instead of a deep bow, stack his ungodly tongue out at the priest. At that moment he turned into a stone and his blaspheming tongue kept pulled out of his mouth. So the head was severed from the body and put below the church vault as an example to all other ungodly people, who don't show the satisfactory respect to the God.

*The selected stories connected with ornamental consoles from which the church ribbed vault projects; recorded by Josef Pytlík (1839 – 1928), a former headmaster of Vodňany schools.*

## From the history of the Church



The Church of the Birth of Our Lady in Vodňany took the appearance of the high Gothic style in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century by building of Václav. The 1<sup>st</sup> written mention about a presbytery by Mr. Jaklík and his son added to the church by V. Vogarelli (Fugeral). The church was extensively damaged by fire in 1722, then it was restored. Apparently at this time the church tower was decorated with the municipal coats of arms of Vodňany, Antonín Vokoun. In 1865 the tower was hit by a lightning and that's why during the following repairs it was thoroughly re-Gothicized in 1875 – 1876 to the present form.

In the 54-meter high tower there hang 6 bells, the largest one – Mark – was casted in 1725. Other 3 bells were casted in the bell casting of Peter Schilling in German Apolda in 1971 – 72 to complete the number of bells after the both WW. They were consecrated in June 1972. The tower,



OPP Vyskov in 1981. The construction contract of 1415 mentions the organ for the first time. The present instrument was made by Eduard Hubený from Protvín in 1926, later renewed. The singing and the musical accompaniment during the mass were provided by the literary fellowship from the half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to 1785 when this group was dissolved. The surviving hymnal from the workshop of Jan Táborský in the Museum of Vodňany, includes a unique collection of the Czech Utraquist advent and Christmas songs. In 1661 – 1783 there worked the religious brotherhood of St. Kosary in Vodňany parish, having their own altar in the church. At the south foot of the church there stands the missionary cross from 1853. Next to it, on the surface, there is a mark in memory of the bell called John, which was smashed taking down for war purposes in 1917. The church was originally surrounded by the cemetery (cancelled in 1784), where there were built chapels (not preserved today) of the Stations of the Cross in its walls in the half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But almost all inhabitants of the parish were buried at The Church of St. John the Baptist on the outskirts of the town. It was partly moved and



adapted in the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and converted into a park of John Paul II. In 2005. Since 1960 there has been used a new cemetery at the Chapel of St. Adalbert north of the town. The patron privilege to the church and the parish belonged to the Czech king, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century it was executed by the Přemonsarten monastery in Schlágl in the Upper Austria. In 1472 the privilege was given to the town of Vodňany by the king Vladislav II. and the town kept it, except for 1623 – 1710, until 1949. Since then the patron privilege has belonged to the state.



The large altar painting was given to the temple as a present by Don Balhazar (a member of the Maltese knights order, a general of the Czech kingdom and the mortgage holder of the royal town of Vodňany) and his brother Don Bartholomew. Both of them were the members of the Spanish cars' dynasty of Marradas and they are portrayed at the foot of the painting. In the middle there is sitting Our Lady with standing Jesus who is sawing up the top of the neighbouring mountain. In the upper part of the picture in the background there are the mountain peaks where there are built the known Spanish churches and monasteries. During the reconstruction of the church in 1895 the painting was removed from the high altar. These days it is to be found in the collection of the Town Museum and Gallery in Vodňany and it is exhibited in the former synagogue. In 2006 – 2008 it has been expensively restored.

In 1894 – 1897 the Church was re-Gothicized by Rudolf Stech according to the designs of Josef Mocker. At that time the interior was decorated with mural frescos, the external gables on the west front were decorated with graffiti and the windows in presbytery with window paintings after the designs of Mikoláš Aleš. It was furnished with neo-gothic furnishings. On the vault over the high altar there are painted 4 carps of Vodňany. Aleš's original sketches together with the individual items of original baroque movable charrels can be found and seen in the collection of the Town Museum and Gallery in Vodňany. They are exhibited as part of the gallery exposition in the Town Hall. The author of the Stations of the Cross and illustrations on the pulpit is Josef Bosáček, also the author of the decoration of the church. Reconstructed and decorated church was consecrated by the bishop of České Budějovice M. J. Růža on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1896. The wall decorations of the church were restored in 1927, in 1958 – 1960, 1978 – 1982 along with the church front, in 1996 – 1999 and for the last time in 2008 – 2009.

## The decoration of the Church



Legend:

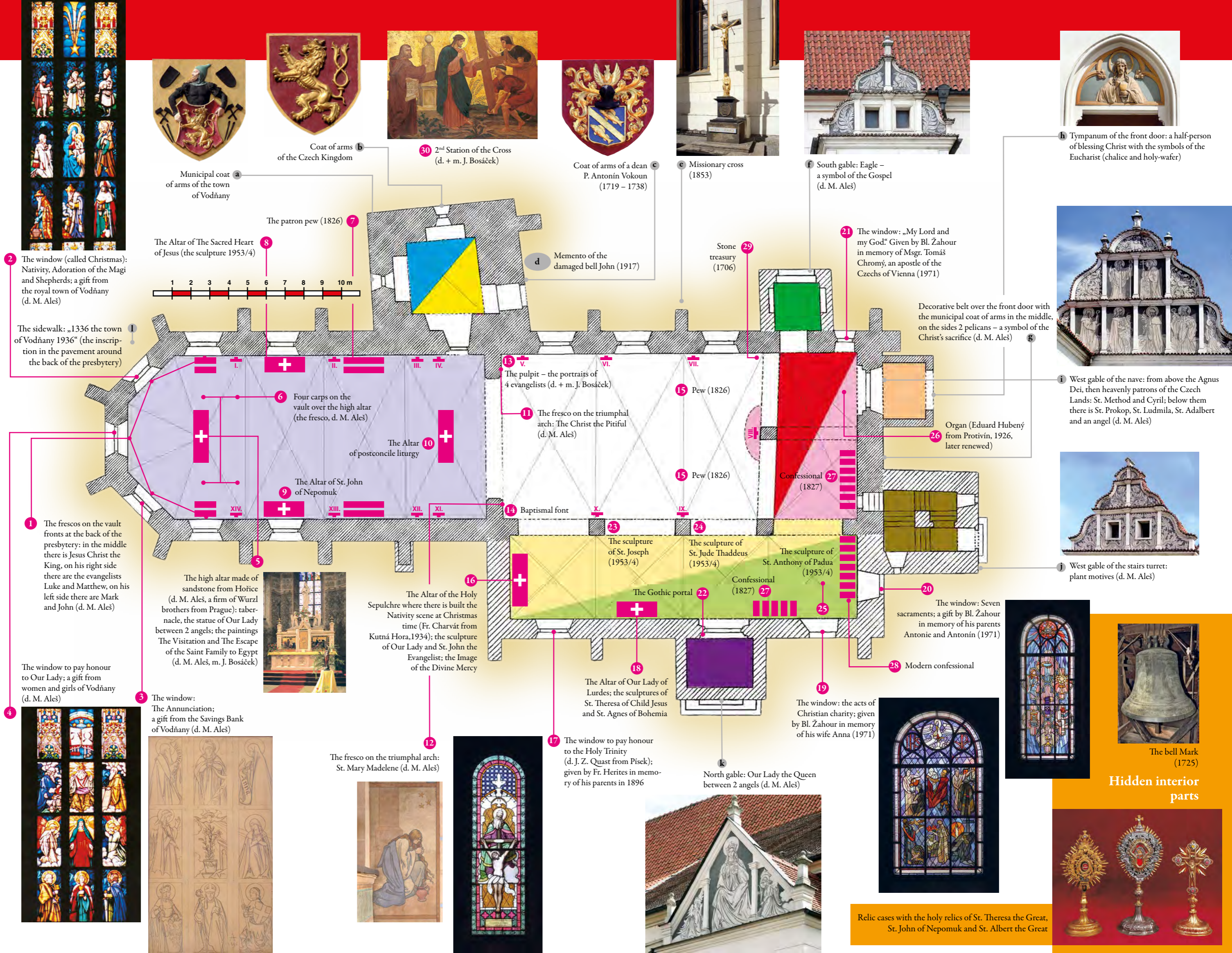
d. – design by  
m. – made by  
d. + m. – design and made by

ex  
Exterior a – I

in  
Interior 1 – 30

- presbytery
- nave
- north side aisle
- the gallery over it
- down gallery
- the organ loft over it
- the tower with 6 bells and clock
- sacristy on the ground floor
- main entrance with the hall
- side entrance with the hall
- reconciliation room
- stairs turret

- The Altar
- The patron pew
- The Confessional
- The Station of the Cross



The bell Mark (1725)

Hidden interior parts

Relic cases with the holy relics of St. Theresa the Great, St. John of Nepomuk and St. Albert the Great