

F.V. Zahra. The Blessed Sacrament is kept in a silver tabernacle and is skilfully adorned by a silver throne dating back to the 18th century artist Annetto Pullicino (1723). The Chapel is dedicated to the Our Lady who is represented in an antique 12th century Byzantine icon depicting the Madonna and Child.

The pillars of the Presbytery are decorated by two mosaic medallions representing St. Peter and St. Paul. These are the work of Luigi Moglia (1873) of Rome, on a painting by Fra Bartolomeo della Porta.

The altarpiece of the Cathedral is the work of Mattia Preti representing the Conversion of St. Paul on his way to Damascus. The painter's greatly dramatic style is dominated by Christ appearing to St. Paul who is fearfully lying on the ground.

The painting above the altarpiece is also worth noting. It is a painstakingly, dramatic depiction of St. Paul's shipwreck amidst a raging storm and God's intervention which led to St. Paul's stay in Malta. It is an oil painting on Maltese stone by Mattia Preti



which was completed in the new choir before the big earthquake of 1693.

Four other paintings by Mattia Preti decorate the Choir together with a complete set of paintings engraved in wood on the Canons' chairs. The Choir's altar is made out of Carthage marble, as are the four pillars.

The top slab of the main altar of the Cathedral belonged to the old Cathedral main altar. It was made of precious marble and is a large part of a Lapis Lazuli completed in 1726. During the main feasts of the Cathedral, this altar is decorated by a beautiful silver frontal and by fifteen silver statues representing the Apostles, St. Paul, St. John and Our Lady.

The floor of the Chapel of the Crucifix, to the left of the main altar, is inlaid marble, the valued work of Claudio Durante from Cospicua, on a design by Francesco V. Zahra.

The Crucifix is a wooden sculpture by Fra Innocenzo da Petralia Soprana. This cross has always had an appeal devotees and until the present day, several people still come to pray before it. This is also where Malta's Saint Gorg Preca often prayed before founding the Society of Christian Doctrine known as MUSEUM.



#### Mass Times:

Weekdays: 9.00 am, 6.00 pm

Sundays and Feasts: 9.30 am, 11.00 am, 6.00 pm

#### Parish Office:

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Tel: 2145 4136

Email: parrocca.mdna@maltadiocese.org

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#### Cathedral Museum:

Tel: 2145 4697

## The Metropolitan Cathedral of Malta, Mdina



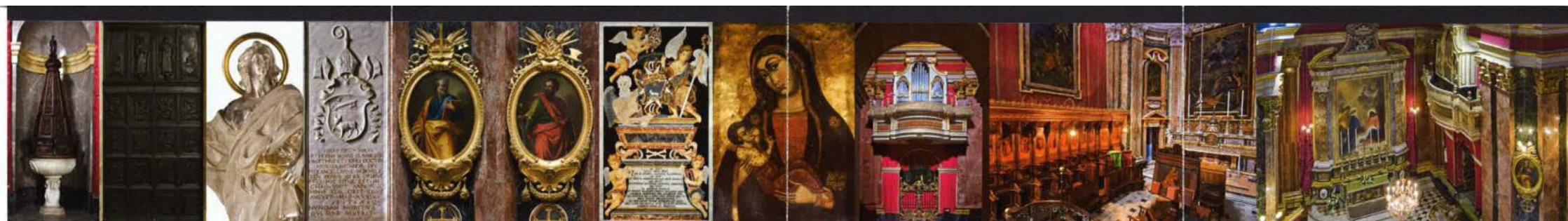
The Cathedral was built on the remains of the first Cathedral, a Norman cathedral built in medieval times, but badly damaged during the 1693 earthquake which destroyed most of the City of Mdina. The Maltese architect Lorenzo Gafa was entrusted with the plan to rebuild the new Cathedral which was completed and consecrated in 1703.

The Cathedral, which is the Mother Church of all Churches within the Maltese Archdiocese, is dedicated to the Conversion of St. Paul, the Apostle who founded the Church in Malta following his shipwreck on his way to Rome in the year 60 A.D. The feast of the Martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul and the feast of the Ascension of the Blessed Virgin are also celebrated at the Cathedral.

Upon entering the Cathedral, one notices the large number of gravestones on the tombstones of canons along the central passage; most of which are commemorations rather than tombs. Some of Malta's bishops are buried in the side chapels and







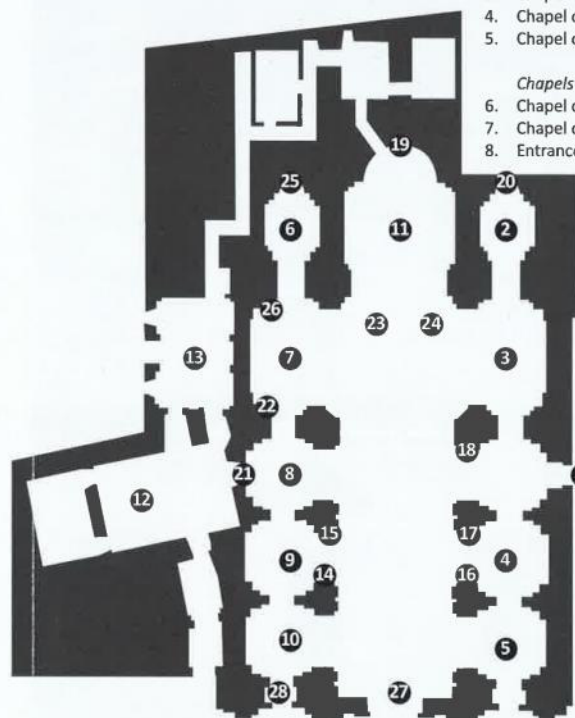
in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. There are several other tombstones in the crypt house some of which cover bishops' tombs.

The Cathedral's ceiling is covered with frescoes and with paintings depicting the life of St. Paul.

On the left of the entrance there is the Baptismal Font. A statue of St. Paul lies on top of a beautiful wooden pyramid with a marble base. The two medallions depict the Baptism of Jesus Christ and the Martyrdom of St. Paul. These are some of the rich artistic heritage which survived from the first Cathedral.

On all the naves there are several marble and bronze monuments. The last one to be laid was that of Malta's first Metropolitan Archbishop, Monsignor Michael Gonzi.

The entrance door to the Sacristy is another piece of invaluable artistry. The statues of St. Peter and St. Paul are carved in Irish bog wood, together with two coat of arms: one of Mdina and an other empty one because at the time the door was completed, in the 16th century, Malta's See was vacant. Sicilian-styled



#### 1. Visitors' Entrance

#### Chapels on the right side:

2. Chapel of the Crucifix
3. Chapel of St Publius
4. Chapel of St Cajetan
5. Chapel of St Luke

#### Chapels on left side:

6. Chapel of the Sacrament
7. Chapel of the Annunciation
8. Entrance to the Sacristy

9. Chapel of the the Virgin Mary
10. Chapel of the Pentecost
11. The Choir
12. The Sacristy
13. The Inner Sacristy

#### Monuments:

14. Bishop Sant
15. Archbishop Gonzi
16. Cardinal Sciberras
17. Bishop Caruana
18. Bishop Scicluna

#### Works of interest:

19. The choir main altar is dedicated to the Conversion of St Paul on the way to Damascus
20. The Crucifix by Frate Innocenzo of Petralia
21. The original door of the 15th century Romanesque Cathedral
22. The Apparition of St Paul during the 1429 Siege of Mdina by Mattia Preti
23. St John the Evangelist
24. St Luke
25. The icon of the Madonna of St Luke
26. The 18th century pipe organs
27. Main Entrance
28. Visitors' Exit

ACTS 27:26  
*Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island. ACTS 28:1*  
*Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. ACTS 28:10*  
*They honoured us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.*

symbols of life are seen spread all over this door, which also formed part of the medieval Cathedral and was later adapted to the present Cathedral.

A painting by Domenico Bruschi (1886) which is found in one of the side chapels is a main attraction to all the visitors of the Cathedral. Although this work of art is not baroque, the contrast of its bright colours and the images of Mary and the Angel, create an atmosphere of Divinity which is accentuated by the image of the Prophets announcing the Birth of the Messiah.

On one side of this chapel there is an organ produced by the brand A. Rossi of Naples, Italy which was completed and placed in 1774. It was restored to its original state by R. Buhagiar in 2005.

Another beautiful painting in this side chapel is the work of Mattia Preti and his Bottega which depicts the legend of St. Paul appearing on a white horse as he battled the Barbarians on Mdina's bastion walls when they attacked the city in 1429.

The Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament is a great work of art in marble and silver by the Maltese artist

