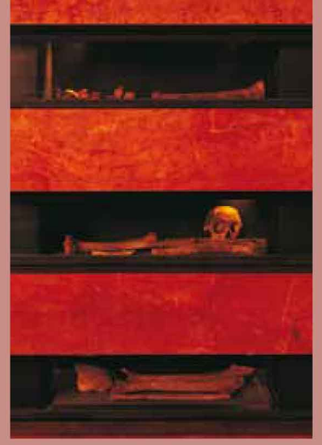
Crypt and Sacred Art Museum

The recovery of the area and museology work carried out in St. Paul's Ruins could not be complete without the organization of sacred and museum type spaces, which work as reminders of the rich history of the convension of the Far East to Christianity, a movement originated in Macau in the now disappeared Mater Dei College.

The most important of these spaces is the Crypt, specially built in the area which has been previously occupied by the chancel of the church of the Mater Dei College. The bones of the martyrs of Japan and Vietnam are thus conserved and displayed, so that worshippers may be allowed to express their devotion. The mortal remains are partially exhibited in elegant urns, opened on the



side and covered with red orange marble specially ordered from Italy. The list of the martyr's names is engraved on a plate located in the outer part of the crypt.

The niches located in the northern wall of the sanctuary, right below the balustrade, contain the rest of the remains which include those belonging to members of monastic orders or secular clergy who have been buried in the temple centuries ago. The huge stones upon which the holiest sanctuary of the church was built in 1602 have been kept disclosed and the same has been done with the remnants of a grave which is probably Father Alexandre Valignano's, the founder of the college.

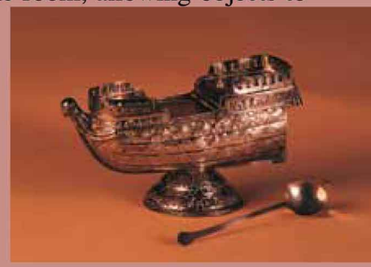
Visitors may go in and observe the crypt walking through the upper balustrade or through the lower sidewalk.

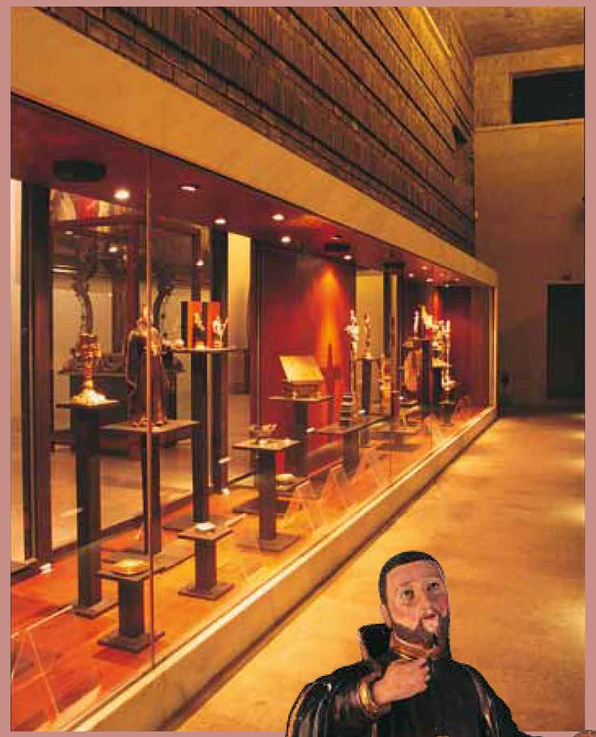
In either case, a silent and respectful attitude is requested of those who are inside of a sacred place. As a proof of the religious nature of this space, an altar carved on a sole marble block as well as a cross and tabernacle enrooted in the rock can be observed.

When leaving the quiet atmosphere of the inner area of the crypt, visitors will move into the singular adjacent room where a Sacred Art Museum has been set - up.

Belonging to the Macau diocese which authorized them to be displayed in the museum, the invaluable collections of paintings, sculptures and church regalia are exhibited as a criterious selection considered as representative of all churches and convents of Macau from the 16th to the 19th century.

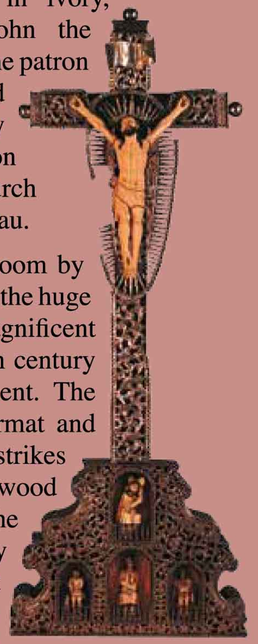
A long glassed wall divides the inner and outer parts of the room, allowing objects to be seen in two ways. From the outside walk the emphasis goes to the two beautiful Sino-Portuguese





crosses of the 17th century, in ivory, wood and silver (nos. 1 and 12); some images representing holy Jesuits (no.6, 8 and 18); a cup of the 16th century with the respective paten (nos. 4 and 10); a censer (no. 7) and pyx (no. 5) of the 17th century, with the Jesuit initials <<IHS>> both silver; two palmed

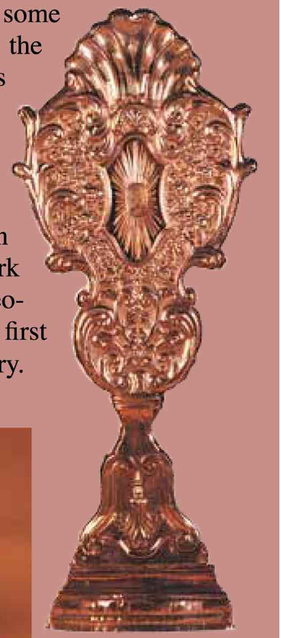
relic urns, also in silver (nos. 19 and 20); and two exceptional images – a St. Joseph with the Child Jesus (no. 15) and a St. Anne Teaching the Virgin how to read (no. 16). When walking in the inner side of the room, the following should be noted: a rare Indo-Portuguese St. Michael Archangel of the 17th century in wood (no. 22); a simple Our Lady of Conception (no. 23) in wood of the 17th century; and some other pictures in ivory, such as St. John the Baptist (no.24) the patron of Macau and a St. Anthony (no. 26), patron of the first church ever built in Macau.



However, when he enters the room by back door, the visitor is received by the huge statue of St. Augustin (no. 21), a magnificent Indo-Portuguese image of the 17th century coming from the Augustin Convent. The walls show paintings in a big format and St. Michael Archangel (no. 28) strikes for being so antique. Painted on wood and based on western models in the beginning of the 17th century by a Japanese disciple of the Jesuit painter Giovanni Nicolló, the painting was created for a chapel of the transept of the church of the Mother of God. This was the only work of art of the burned college which reached our times.

Four of the remaining paintings show scenes of the life of St. Francis of Assisi and belong to the church of the already disappeared Franciscan convent of the city, a building represented at the distance in one of the paintings (no. 32). The last panel is a modern copy of a painting executed in Macau in 1640, which shows the martyrdom of 23 Christians in Nagasaki in 1597 (no. 33). The work which is considered as the original of the painting can be seen in the Bishop's Palace.

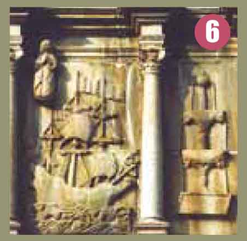
Before leaving the Museum and continuing to visit the area of the ancient vaults of the church, visitors should take some time to contemplate the most exquisite works of jewellery which is placed in the center of the room: *The Support of Our Lady of Remedies* (no. 34), in silver, a magnificent work of art of rococo and neo-classical influence of the first quarter of the 19th century.



Immaculate Conception.

Angel carrying a cross.

God-child-saviour-of the world, accompanied by symbols of his passion / redeeming death.



The sea Star guiding the Church in shape of "nau" crossing the Sea of Torments of Sin.

The power of Holy Spirit over the world.

Seven branches candle-holder.

The Beautified Francisco de Borja.

St. Ignatius, the Founder.

The **facade** is like an **altar** piece reached by going up the imposing flight of steps. The facade invites the faithful to meditate on the great truths of Christianity, preparing them to pray and celebrate the Eucharisty inside the church.

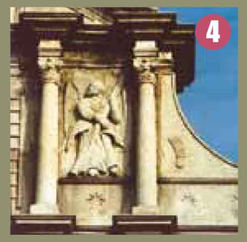
It is divided into four horizontal sections, topped with a pediment and nine vertical divisions which contain various symbols that tell a story.

Basically, the facade can be divided into two major sections: a **rectangle** corresponding to the two lower rows in which references to the apostolic and missionary work of the Society of Jesus, part of the Militant Church in its fight across the Globe, dominate. The other **triangular** section is dominated by a representation of the Holy Trinity (God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit), and the Virgin Mary, who intercedes on Man's behalf to God.

Reading from bottom to top we can see references over the doorways to the Society of Jesus (the emblem IHS, the name of Jesus)and the patron of the College (Mater Dei, the Mother of God), followed by a portrayal of the four Jesuit saints. Immediately above, the Assumption of the Virgin Immaculate is surrounded by typical Marian symbols, many of which are interpreted with oriental characteristics.

Finally, the uppermost row is dedicated to Jesus, Son of God, surrounded by symbols of His Redeeming Passion. The triangular pediment evokes God the Father and also portrays the dove of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Holy Trinity, surrounded by the Sun, the Moon and the Stars.

The Dove representing Holy Spirit. Indicating the "place" of Divinity.



Angel carrying a scourging pillar.

The Apocalyptic Woman smashing the 7-headed hydra.

Lady of Assumptions surrounded by angels celebrating Her Ascension the Heaven.

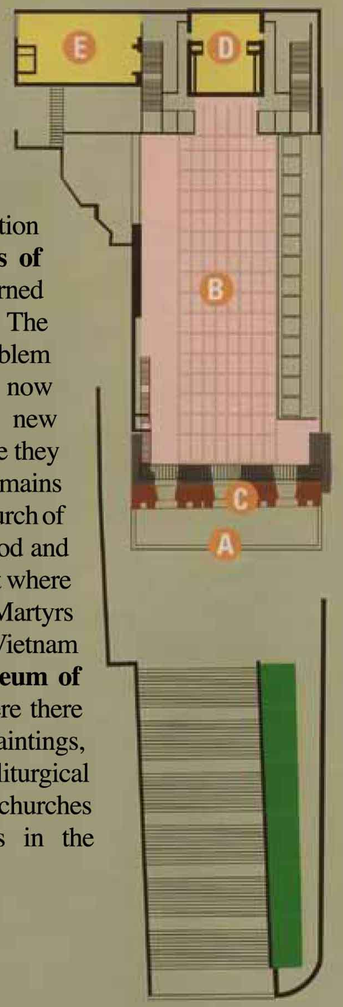
Our Lady

The façade

St. Francisco Xavier, the Apostle of the Orient.

The Beautified Luís Gonzaga.

After restoration work, the **Ruins of St. Paul's** was turned into a museum. The ruins are the emblem of Macau and now offer visitors a new monument where they can view the remains of the former Church of the Mother of God and then visit a Crypt where the relics of the Martyrs of Japan and Vietnam rest, and a **Museum of Sacred Art** where there are exhibits of paintings, sculptures and liturgical objects from churches and monasteries in the city.



Façade	A
Naves	B
Choir loft	C
Crypt	D
Museum	E

Address of Museum of Sacred Art
Rua de S. Paulo

Not for sale

MACAU GOVERNMENT TOURIST OFFICE
Alameda Dr. Carlos d'Assumpção, nºs 335-341
Edifício "Hot Line", 12º andar, Macau
www.macautourism.gov.mo
Tourism Hotline (24 Hours) : 2833 3000

MACAU

Ruins of St. Paul's Church
Museum of Sacred Art

The Jesuits settled in Macau in 1565 and soon set to work on their policy of spreading Christianity, devoting themselves to the encounter and symbiosis of eastern and western cultures while emphasising educational and missionary work.

In 1594 the educational establishments which had been founded by the Society of Jesus in Macau were further enhanced with the creation of the College of the Mother of God which became the first western style university in the Far East.

In 1602, the College gained a new church after former buildings had been destroyed by fire. This church turned out to be an impressive basilica with three naves, as can be seen in the reconstructed plans drafted according to archaeological work on the site prior to turning it into a museum. Chinese and Japanese craftsmen were involved in building the church, exemplifying the cultural encounter preached by the Jesuits. The opulence of the interior made a profound impression on various visitors over the centuries.

In 1762, with the expulsion of the Jesuits, the building was abandoned and then handed over to the Leal Senado. After a few decades, a military battalion was accommodated in the premises but in 1835 a fire erupted in the kitchens of the barracks, ravaging the other buildings and destroying the church and almost all the complex. From 1990 to 1995 work was carried out to restore the precinct where the church stood in former years, turning it into a museum.