

them we can see their founder Saint Pedro Nolasco, Saint Ramón Nonato, Saint Pedro Pascual, Saint Serapio Or Saint Mary de Cervellón, all of them surrounded by a great decoration full of angels, fallen leaves, flowers or garlands etc.

The right and left altar-pieces, also "churriguerescos", from the fourth part of XVII cen. show on its central panels the heavenly sight of Saint Pedro Nolasco, on the Gospel side and the Saint Ramón Nonato on the Epistle side.

The altar-pieces in the chapels were made on the decade of 1640, after finishing the temple, except the one of St. Christ of Rebate, dated from the second half of XVIII cen.

The other altar-pieces are dedicated to the Providence Virgin, Saint Crispin and Saint Crispiniano, Saint Juan Bautista, Our Lady of the snow, and Saint Antonio de Padua.

At the moment, the Merced Church is auxiliary of Saint Andrés parish from Tarazona Cathedral.

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Nuestra Señora de la
Merced Church



Although the monks in the "Mercy Order" seem to visit Tarazona first in 1221, it wasn't until 1300 that they settled in our town definitively.

After living in different places in town, on the half of XV cen. The Bishopric gave them a piece of ground, where the Saint Cross of Rebate church had been before. This church disappeared in the "Two Peters War". This was the final place to live for the monks in town.

The former Merced church was a temple with two naves, separated by arches and with two chapels on both sides. Its head was oriented to the east and placed the solar where the sacristy is now. The high

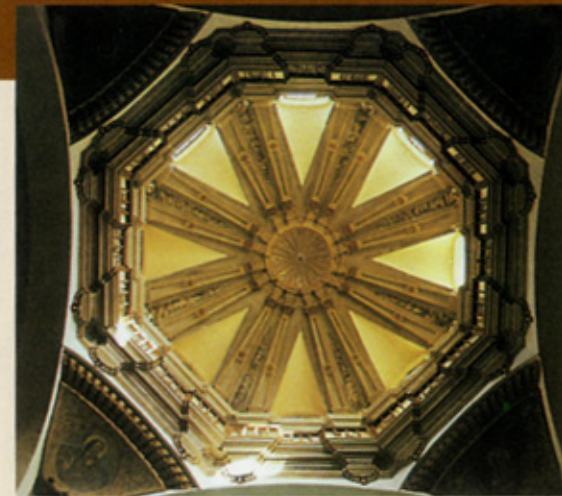


chapel was dedicated to Our Lady of the Mercy, image which presided an altar-piece made by the painter Jerónimo Cósida in 1545. Another three altar-pieces decorated the church: Our Lady of the Pains, Saint Anne, and the Saints Cosme and Damián.

At the end of XVI cen. The monks weren't satisfied with their building and convent church, so they decided to ask the council for help to build two new ones.

The town authority agreed and the monks began to acquire the houses next to their properties to start the building of their new church. At the end, in 1629 the monks signed the agreement to build it with the builder Jerónimo Baquero. Ten years later, the new Church was completely finished.

This Church represents the characteristic of some prototypical convents from the classicist architec-



ture, developed in our country between 1575 and 1630: it is a temple with latin cross plan with chapels between buttresses, covered with half barrel vaults with stalls, plain head and high choir at the base.

The façade, inspired on the italian architect Andrea Palladio, is presided by a front whose adorn belongs to the classicist architectonic vocabulary.

The carving of the Mercy Virgin is outstanding. She is dressed up in the Order's Habit. She represents the Mercy Virgin, protecting Christianity under her robe.

Inside the Church, the most outstanding piece is the high altar-piece, made by the sculptor monk Fray Pedro Puey between 1734 and 1737. This work, made in shaped wood, in which only the central niche was golden and coloured, is occupied by the Virgin (Ntra. Sra. De la Merced). It is really similar with the artistic proposals of the sculptor José Benito de Churriguera. This altar-piece shows an iconographic program where some Mercy Order monks are represented. Among