The Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery in Laguna is the only one of its kind in the Philippines - it is a burial site located inside, or more accurately, beneath a church. This church is rich in history - it was built and designed for funeral mass in 1845 by the Franciscan priest Fr. Vicente Velloc. He also directed the construction of an underground graveyard 15 feet below the church.

Flights of stairs lead down to the tombs; the oldest tomb was dated 1886. The underground cemetery was declared a national historical landmark by the National Historical Institute in 1978. The privileged ones buried here came from elite Catholic families.
The Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery is considered a national historical landmark because its underground crypt was used as a secret meeting place in 1896 by Filipino revolutionaries or Katipuneros, members of the KKK. During the Filipino-American War, Filipino patriots also used the underground cemetery to formulate their battle plans and to seek shelter. It also became a safehouse for Filipino guerillas during World War II. There is no famous hero buried here but perhaps, it is enough that we pay our respects to this place where our nameless heroes and patriots sought sanctuary.

Secret meeting place of Filipino patriots

At present, the church is no longer operational, regular masses are not held here anymore. But on special occasions such as the Feast of Christ the King and during Holy Week, Mass is celebrated here. The senakulo or staged presentation of Christ’s last days during the Lenten Season is also held here.

Elementary and high school students are the frequent visitors to the underground cemetery. Architecture students also come here to study the structure, while other curious tourists visit here to enjoy the peaceful scenery.

There are no entrance fees to be paid. The Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery is open on Tuesdays to Sundays, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. You may take photos of Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery but these should be for your personal use only.
Photos of Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery:

Tombs at Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery

The door leading to the church

Archway leading to the underground crypt
I used to thread the road to Underground Cemetery during my highschool days when I’m still studying in St. Mary’s Academy of Nagcarlan but it will be my first time to actually go inside the cemetery itself. This is just less than 10 minutes travel from my hometown, Rizal.
The Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery Historical Landmark is a fine example of Spanish colonial architecture. Built by the Franciscan Friar Vicente Velloc in 1845, its octagonal grounds are enclosed by a wall decorated with wrought-iron grills and stonework meant to look like drapery. - National Historical Commission of the Philippines

This arched gate will lead you into the cemetery’s inner wall.
Once you enter you have to register on a log book they keep. There's a man who guards the place. Inside there will be also an area where you can buy post cards, rosaries, novena prayers and even fans. 😊
The Chapel served as the last station of the funeral before entombment. The priest gave his last blessing here.
The chapel’s walls, ceiling and window.

Going down the Crypt. Camera flash is not allowed.
The crypt was used as a secret meeting place of the revolutionary leaders of Laguna in 1896.
The Crypt.
Loving the details of the ceiling. 😊
We tried moving the door and it's heavy.

In 1978, the Underground Cemetery was declared as a National Historical Landmark by the National Historical Institute.
Shot from the chapel door.

Me doing a jump shot in front of the arched gate.

Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery
Nagcarlan, Laguna
Open from 8:00am – 4:00pm (Tuesday-Sunday)
*No entrance fee
After a failed sunrise shoot and visit to Japanese Garden in Caliraya, Laguna, we went to Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery. It is situated along Nagcarlan-Rizal road in front of Shell Gasoline Station. It was actually my third time here but I really wanted to go back to shoot again since I don’t have a wide lens during my first visit and lost my photo files during the second.

Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery is an example of Spanish Colonial Architecture. Built in 1845 by Franciscan priest, Father Vicente Belloc. In 1973, the Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery was declared as a National Historical Landmark because its underground crypt was used as a secret meeting place by Filipino revolutionaries.
The entrance of the vicinity is arched shape made of old bricks with iron gate grills. The pathway that leads to the chapel is also made of bricks with well-maintained lawn on its sides. Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery reminds me of Paco Park in Manila, with piled tombs circling the area and a small chapel in the middle.

Upon entering the chapel’s wooden door, you will see the centerpiece image of Santo Sepulcro. No entrance fee will be collected but donation is very much welcome. Visitors are also encourage to register their name and personal details in the logbook.

Under the chapel is a crypt where the niches are located. Photography is allowed inside but the use of flash is prohibited. As for me, I always have my tripod for long exposure photography. Students are the frequent visitors, while other tourists visit here for curiosity.
The Nagcarlan Underground Cemetery is maintained by National Historical Commission of the Philippines and is open to the public from Tuesday to Sunday between 8 am-4 pm.

Ref.: http://roadworthyman.com/2012/09/04/nagcarlan-underground-cemetery/