

Sibonga Church in My Mind

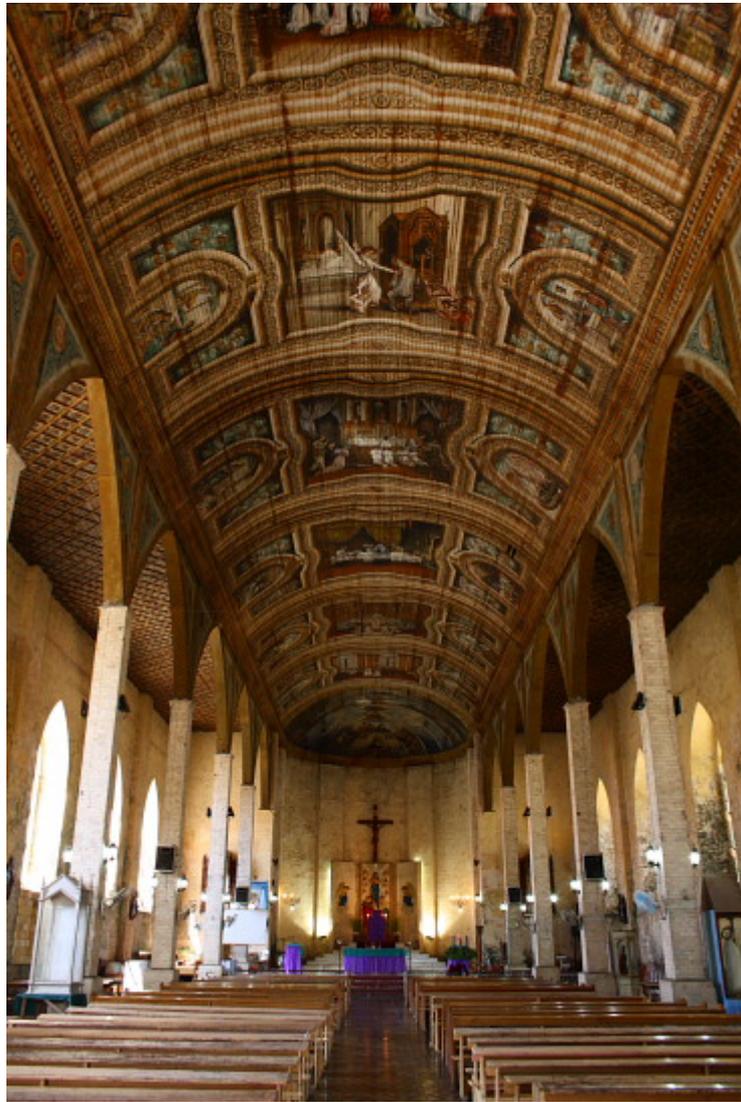
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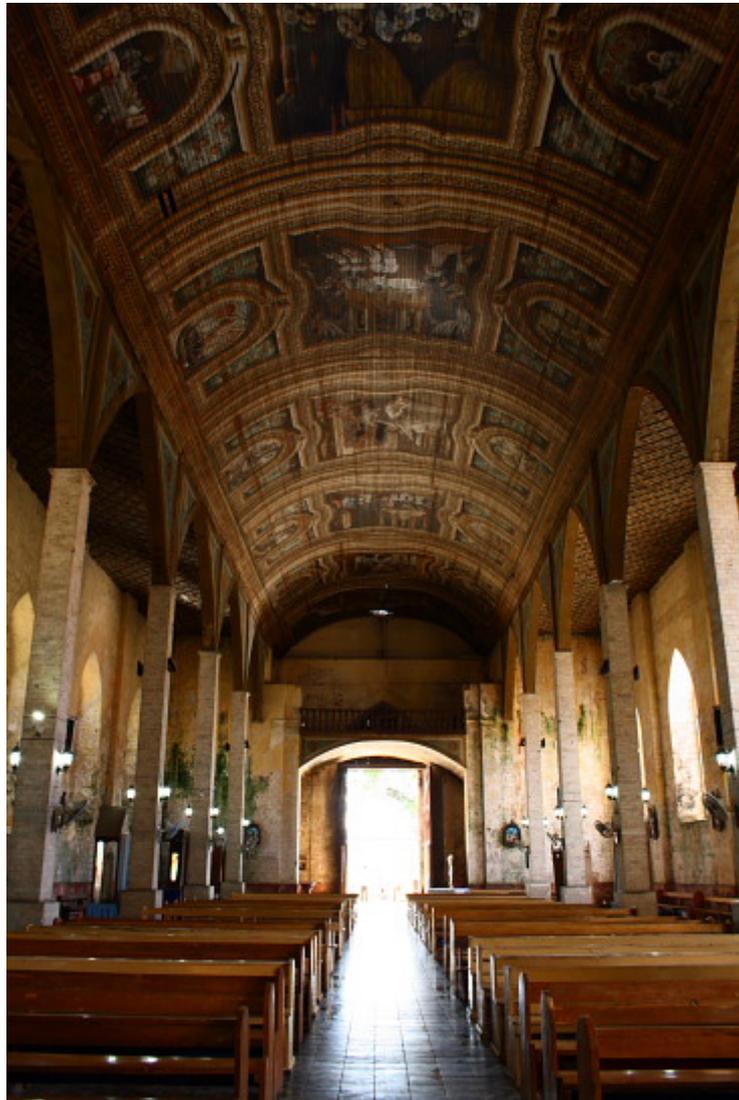
A view of the facade from the parish house.

I've been to this town several times already, the last time was yesterday during the unveiling of a national historical marker. The last visit was actually the second time where I spent more than an hour or two inside the church and the convent, the first time was during a seminar on paper conservation more than two years ago.

Although it is old, literally in the sense that it is made of cut-stones, it is yet a very simple church. You could easily pass this off when driving south especially if you've been to the magnificent churches of Argao, Carcar, Boljoon, to name a few. When you go inside, there are no eye-catching altars of carved wood. The interior is just as simple as the lines that define the exteriors of the church. But it is in its simplicity that defines its beauty.



A view of the interior toward the sanctuary.



A view of the interior toward the narthex.

In the 1930s, a Cebuano artist was tasked to paint the ceiling of the interiors with religious scenes. This was to be the crème de la crème of the church's interiors. The paintings start right from the narthex all the way to the sanctuary. At the sanctuary, the paintings feature the creation of the universe in seven days.

The church is quite large and tall, untypical for the dark and dingy interiors of most ancient churches in Cebu. Large lancet-type windows permit as much natural light to the interiors as possible. There are two belfries that flank the simple facade of the church. The parish house, a separate structure of stone is located a few meters beside it.



Details of the communion rail.



An old chariot-type carroza, now kept at the first level of the parish house.

The national highway cuts through between the public square and the church thus visitors heading south can easily spot the church. A marble plaque at the foyer of the main entrance details the consecration of the church by Manila Archbishop Jeremias Harty on November 17, 1907 after it was restored. The church was built from 1868 to 1881 while the parish house was built earlier in 1839.

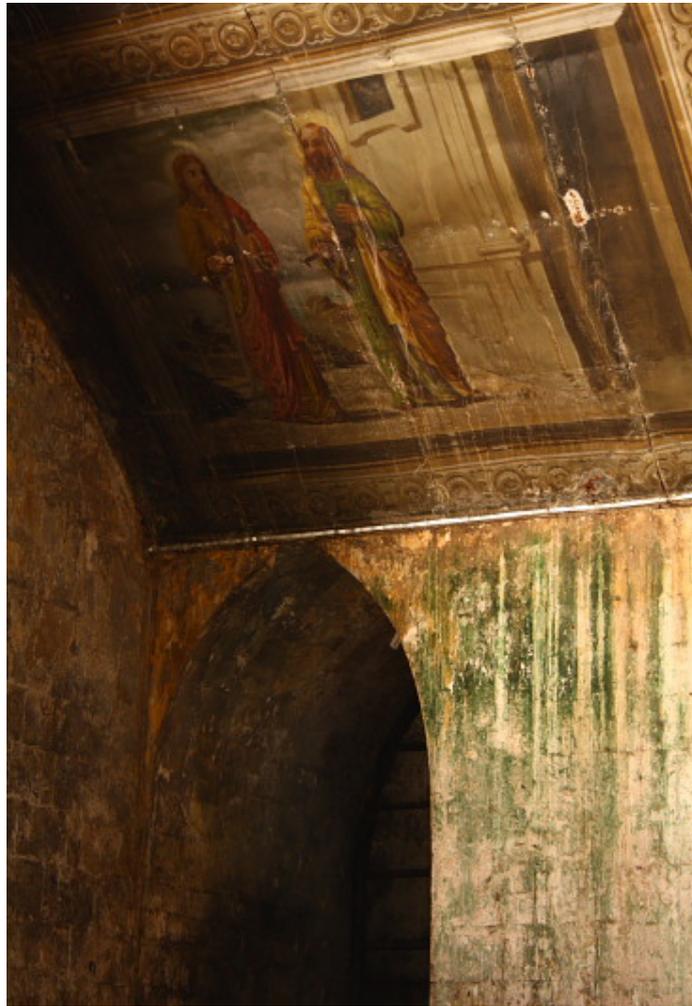
Some old theological books are kept at a cabinet inside the parish house. The reason for this is that after the second world war, the parish house served as one of the temporary classrooms of the Colegio-Seminario de San Carlos which was then gutted down during the USAFFE bombings.



A view of the top part of the facade.



A few tombstones dot the walls of the church interior.



A view of a painting and the entrance to the belfry.



Unveiling of the marker in Sibonga.

The historical marker from the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) were unveiled yesterday for the Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza Church in the southern town of Sibonga.